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# Russia marches South: army reform and battlefield performance in Russia's Southern campaigns, 1695-1739

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# Russia marches South

## Army Reform and Battlefield Performance in Russia's Southern Campaigns, 1695-1739

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Aleksandar Stoyanov
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**I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved wife Desi**

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## A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Ottoman Turkish has been transliterated using modernTurkish orthography according to Faroqhi, S. N. and K. Fleet (eds), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*. vol. 1-3 (Cambridge University Press, 2006). In the case of Arabic and Persian words the transliteration system applied in Jackson, P. and L. Lockhart (eds), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol.6 – The Timurid and Safavid Periods (Cambridge, 1986) is applied in this thesis, but diacritical marking of long vowels has not been used. Giving the different scholarly traditions in transliteration used in the above mentioned works, some terms (for example, *vizier*) have been given under the most familiar form.

All Cyrillic names and terms will be transliterated according to the following table.

| Russian | English | Remarks |
|---|---|---|
| а | a | |
| б | b | |
| в | v | |
| г | g | As in ‘get’ |
| д | d | |
| е or ѣ | ye/e | The Russian ‘e’ is pronounced ‘ye’(as in ‘yes’), and wherever a Russian ‘e’ follows a vowel, it has been transliterated as ‘ye’. If ‘e’ follows a consonant, that consonant is soft in Russian. |
| ё | yo | yo as in ‘yonder’ |
| ж | zh | As the ‘s’ in ‘pleasure’ |
| з | z | |
| и or і | i | |
| й | y | The English letter ‘y’ has been used for both ‘й’ and ‘ы’. However, as ‘ы’ never follows a vowel and ‘й’ never follows a consonant, no confusion can arise. |
| к | k | |
| л | l | |
| м | m | |
| н | n | |
| о | o | |
| п | p | |
| р | r | |
| с | s | |
| т | t | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| у | u | As ‘oo’ in ‘boot’ |
| ф or θ | f | |
| х | kh | |
| ц | ts | |
| ч | ch | |
| ш | sh | |
| щ | shch | |
| ы | y | The English letter ‘y’ has been used for both ‘й’ and ‘ы’. However, as ‘ы’ never follows a vowel and ‘й’ never follows a consonant, no confusion can arise. |
| э | e | |
| ю | yu | |
| я | ya | |
| ь | y | Soft consonants – wherever soft consonant is followed by a vowel, the vowel is preceded by ‘y’ in the English rendering. |

**Source:** W.E.D. Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields –A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border, 1828-1921* (Nashville, 1999 – reprinted from the Cambridge, 1953 edition)

# INTRODUCTION

Ever since Vladimir Putin began reinvigorating Russia's foreign policy by placing military pressure on its neighbors and adjacent territories, the question of Moscow's military drive toward the Near East and the Caucasus has, again, become a major military and political issue for both local and international analyzers, political figures and the media in a broader perspective. Going through Chechnya, Abkhazia, Crimea and Ukraine and reviewing the current intervention in Syria and the strong political pressure, imposed on Armenia and Azerbaijan, we can argue, that for the last fifteen years Moscow has initiated a series of foreign interventions. Their aim is buttressing Russia's influence on the land route to the Indian Ocean and Central Asia, and countering the US advances in the region following the Gulf War. Support for Iran and an elaborated approach toward China have been an essential element of the new Eurasian project, developed with additional political as well as economic and cultural means.

To assume, however, that these trends are all signs of a modern process, the roots of which grow out of the Post-Soviet fragmentation of Western and Central Asia, is incorrect. Russia's interest in its southern periphery has existed for centuries and has followed a certain pattern of political and military approach. These trends have been evolving on the turn of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, via an ever-shifting and expanding notion of both direct and indirect political domination. Russia's southern interventions date back from the end of the seventeenth century, but traces could be found even earlier during the reign of Ivan IV (r. 1547-1584) and his expansion in the Lower Volga region. This long period of time has provided Russia with an abundant set of examples and practical lessons, which, if correctly understood and implemented, could provide a cutting edge in the race for political influence on the dramatic conflicts that shape the face of the twenty first-century's "Levant".

The following dissertation aims at presenting an innovative perspective on Russia's earliest involvements in the region. What is labeled "the Southern Campaigns" were, in fact, a series of military interventions, aimed at exploiting the political instability in Russia's southern periphery.[1] This was a region, stretching between the Dnieper and Volga rivers (from west to east) and from the Lower Volga in the north to as further south as Russia's forces could march. The driving force behind these incursions was the desire of Peter the Great (r. 1682-1725) and his aristocracy to expand the political, economic and cultural frontiers of the late-Muscovite and early-imperial state. The process of transition from an early modern principality into an Enlightenment-era empire has been studied by both western and Russian historians and has received substantial

[1] In the current dissertation the term "Southern campaigns" refers to all Russian military endeavours undertaken against the Ottoman and Safavid Empires and their vassals between 1695-1739.

attention in its many perspectives.[2] This dissertation aims to present a new and different perspective on Russia's southern periphery as both a frontier and a crucial battleground, the specifics of which influenced the overall development of the Russian army in the first decades of the eighteenth century. The southern frontier and the conflicts it hosted served as training ground for the reforming military machine of the tsars. For that reason they can be used for the evaluation of reform success and the study on how innovation and transition correlated in forming the patterns of Russia's early modern military evolution. The diverse geographical features and political counterparts provide a new, different perspective, through which the effectiveness of Russia's military potential can be measured. So far, martial capability has been mainly assessed in terms of the Tsardom's participation in the Great Northern War (1700-1721) and the War of the Polish Succession (1733-1738) and has received less attention in terms of Moscow's (and after 1704 - Petersburg's) confrontation with the Ottoman and Safavid empires.[3] The following research aims at expanding the existing historiography by providing further and in-depth analysis of actual battlefield performance and by presenting a new and innovative evaluation of the various factors, which have influenced the course and the outcome of the Southern Campaigns.

Generally, these factors can be divided in two main types - internal and external. The internal factors are related to the functioning of both army and state in the Petrine and post-Petrine era. These aspects include the mustering and deployment of troops, the organization of adequate logistics system and the arming of soldiers. State-influenced factors also consist of the provision of adequate transportation, the appointment of capable military commanders, as well as drawing the general strategy for upcoming conflicts. After the actual outbreak of war, the state was expected to be able to maintain its military effort by expanding its logistics on the basis of stretching lines of communication and also by providing reinforcements and diplomatic support to its field armies. All of these factors will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of Russia's military potential and actual battlefield capability. These elements will be further supplemented by more combat related aspects of the army's performance such as the conduct of sieges, the level of tactical skills, demonstrated in open engagements, as well as the ability of marching and retreating through enemy territory.

The external factors can also be divided into two general types of notions that would be taken into consideration in this work. On the one hand, the dissertation will examine the influence of the geographical features on the performance of the army: the impact of weather, terrain and abundance or absence of natural resources. On the other hand, the thesis will outline the

[2] Bibliography is discussed in a separate section below.

[3] In the dissertation the term *Safavid* is used throughout the text. However, variations of the term may appear in the footnotes and the bibliography as part of the original title of certain articles and books.

strengths and weaknesses of Russia's adversaries and will determine to what extent the success or failure of Russia's military endeavors was a product of its own strong points and flaws and to what rate was influenced by the abilities or inabilities of its opponents.

These two general types of factors will be explored in the second part of the dissertation, which will deal with the Southern Campaigns and will focus on bringing together the historical narrative of combat and the analytical evaluation of field performance. After offering a brief overview of the historical background and the existing historiography, each section will present campaign preparations in detail. The thesis will outline the main elements of logistics organization, the levying and concentration of troops toward the main military frontiers, as well as the furnishing of weapons, animals and provisions. The next step of the campaign's depiction will include the day-to-day tracking of the army's route and will present any major confrontation, which was fundamental for the development of the military enterprise. A more detailed analysis will be provided for the main battles and sieges in the course of each expedition, focusing on the applied tactics, as well as the troops and commanders' performance on the field. The last element of each campaign's study will include an overall evaluation of the gains and losses – in means of human lives, territory and material. Finally, by comparing results with those of previous campaigns, the thesis will define the main features of the army's performance and the level of logistics organization, evaluate them and place them in the general line of Russian military conduct.

In order to fully reveal and comprehend the variety of internal and external factors, the dissertation will be divided into two general parts. They will, in turn, be constructed by several chapters. The first part of the research would deal with describing and examining the state of Russia's military potential. The military establishment of the tsarist state will be analyzed in terms of its development from the time of Ivan IV throughout its evolution under the early Romanovs. Finally, the innovations and transitions, introduced during the Petrine and the post-Petrine eras will be presented. Reform trends were essential for Russia's military development, but substantial attention will also be paid to the existing material basis for Peter's army as well as its social impact in terms of expanding levies and taxes. After analyzing the Russian military establishment and its key elements, the thesis will examine the state of the Ottoman and Safavid armies and will evaluate the degree to which their military power could counter and influence the development of Russia's southern policy. Following the pattern, outlined in the description of the Russian army, Ottoman and Safavid forces will be presented in terms of their main components – regular and irregular troops, as well as through depicting their logistics capabilities and their ability to exercise and project their military potential in the adjacent territories. Apart from these two main political entities in the region, the dissertation will also present and explain the role played by the frontier

societies, which were dependent and dominated by the imperial policies of Petersburg, Istanbul and Isfahan. The Crimean Khanate, the Cossack Hetmanate, the Nogais and Kalmyks and the petty kingdoms of the Caucasus were all essential elements in the political and military developments of the Pontic and Caucasus regions. Understanding their potential for waging wars and their pursuit of political autonomy and following their own interests in the shifting frontier allegiances is as important for the outcome of this research as comprehending the key political and military aspects of imperial policy. As with the Ottoman and Safavid states, the frontiersmen will be introduced and reviewed in terms of both political and military development in the course of the seventeenth century with additional attention to their combat capabilities and manner of waging wars.

After setting the stage and presenting the key dramatis personae, the dissertation will turn to its second general part, which will focus on the Southern Campaigns, starting with the sieges of Azov and ending with the final gunshots of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739. The second part of the research will be divided into three chapters, each dealing with a set of campaigns and confrontations, marking the three general stages of Russian military development between 1695 and 1739. The first stage – that of reform and reshaping of the old army - will be examined through series of campaigns, launched against Azov (1695-1697) and, later, supplemented by Peter's march against the Swedes and the Ottomans (1711) and Apraxin's march toward Kuban. Apart from presenting a substantial figures and data research regarding the campaigns, the narrative will allow the reader to gasp the actual transition from a seventeenth-century, semi-regular army into a regular standing force from the Enlightenment Age – a goal, which Peter I pursued with more vigor than any other enterprise during his reign.

Following the study and evaluation of Russian battlefield performance in the early campaigns, the research will continue with the Persian Campaign - a certain aspect of the Petrine foreign policy, which has received insufficient historiographical attention. The expeditions, launched against the Safavid territories in Dagestan, Gilan and Shirvan will be examined in detail, paying considerable attention to the geographical factors as being essential for the outcome of the campaign. This trend is easy to justify – the Persian campaign is the only major endeavor carried out by the Russian forces outside the usual scope of their military conduct. It was the first time that a state-funded European army of such proportions marched into Asian territory, facing a whole new climate and terrain challenges. Studying the way Russian troops succumbed or overcame these new hindrances can tell us a lot more about the success rate of reform and military evolution than examining a certain trend of military action carried out by an army on the same well-known battlefields.

The final chapter of this second part will deal with the Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739. It will not be evaluated campaign by campaign, as will be

the approach in the previous chapters in order to trace the changes in military organization and battlefield performance. Instead, the war will be summarized in a joint, overall assessment of Russian military conduct, tracing certain patterns and trends, which manifested themselves throughout the entire conflict. The narrative will pay attention not only to the main vector of military engagements – the operations along the Dnieper River and in Moldavia, but will also present the campaigns of the secondary army under General P.von Lacy with its superb conduct during the invasions of Crimea. The evaluation of Russia's performance during the War of 1736-1739 will give us the necessary reasoning, upon which could be estimated not only the success rate of the army reform and military practice, but also the proportion of transition and innovation, accumulated between the establishment of the Petrine army and the reshaping of Russia's military under the reforms of Minikh.

The conclusion of this dissertation will determine the extent to which the southern frontier shaped and changed the nature of Russian warfare in the first half of the eighteenth century. The campaigns against the Ottomans and the Safavids will be used as a measuring stick to determine to what extent the Petrine and Minikh's reforms did actually upgrade the battlefield performance of the tsarist army. The trends and patterns, demonstrated in the first siege of Azov up until the Battle of Stavuchany will be used to trace and evaluate the different aspects of military conduct as well as pinpointing the notions of modernization and transition. The conclusion will also depict the southern frontier in its diversity and uniqueness in regard to the well-studied and well-known western theaters in the Baltic region and Poland. By outlining the main elements of diversity, the conclusion will present a way of understanding why certain aspects of Russian military conduct worked, and why others did not function properly.

*Sources and historiographical perspectives*

As noted above, the first part of the research will handle the overall evolution of Russia's military machine throughout the early modern period and also will outline the main military features of its political allies and adversaries. Why is this necessary? Peter's army reforms represent a watershed in Russia's military history, but they were the product of a steady evolution, rather than a rapid revolution. Hence, the military development of the past hundred and fifty years prior to Peter's reign, have to be briefly revised, and the primary focus of Russian military evolution should be determined before continuing with Peter's designs. Regarding this early period of Muscovite rise to power, both Russian and western historiography have been rather critical of the qualities of Pre-Petrine warfare.[4] Notions of backwardness regarding the combat techniques,

[4] M.C. Paul, "The Military Revolution in Russia, 1550-1682", *The Journal of Military History* 68, 1 (2004), 9-45; W.C. Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600 – 1914* (New York: The Free Press, 1992); N.L.

tactics, and armament, dominate the evaluation of Muscovite battlefield performance. While these perceptions could not be disregarded, the following dissertation will argue that military reticence and lack of western-style techniques is overly exaggerated and should be reconsidered by historians of the period. Nevertheless, the two sub-chapters dealing with the pre-Petrine warfare will comprise only a small part of the first section of this work. The primary focus of this first chapter will be Peter's reforms – their aims, application and results. On this issue, historiography breaks into three points of view. The "positivists" believe that Peter's reforms led to the creation of a regular standing army, comparable and even surpassing its western counterparts.[5] The essential part of this group of historians is comprised of Russian scholars, who firmly believe that during Peter's reign, Russia became equal of its contemporaries regarding regular standing forces and even surpassed "the West" in particular areas, such as iron production, for example. As main proponent of this theory stands one of USSR's most renowned military scholars – L. Beskrovnyy who, in his several works on eighteenth century Russian warfare, states that Peter managed to forge his new army out of the uncertainties of it predecessors' age.[6] Following the official Soviet dogma, other Russian historians were fast to follow, and no critical evaluation of the Petrine standing regular army was offered. However, the post-Soviet historiography, while critical of Peter's overall reign, remains adamant on its position regarding the status of the Petrine army. As demonstrated in the works of Kurukin and Shirokorad, Russia possessed a truly modern army, which outmatched its counterparts in the East – Persia and the Ottoman Empire.[7] To this group of scholars, we must also add several western proponents of the Petrine standing army - the works of Christopher Duffy and Michael Paul, who offer us a concise, although a bit too summarized image of the Russian army under Peter.[8] Their thesis is supported by the classical study of the Petrine Age by Reinhard Wittram, who puts much emphasis on the establishment of the navy and the conduct of the field army in the course of the Great Northern War.[9]

On the opposite side of this debate are Peter's critics. They claim that there was no such thing as a regular standing Russian army under Peter.

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Volkovskiy & D.N. Volkovski (eds), *Vse Voyny – Mirovoy Istorii po Kharperskoy entsiklopedii voennoy istorii, 1500-1750, vol.* (St.Petersburg: Poligon, 2004), 403-39.

[5] I am loosely using this term here in order to summarize the number of historians, supporting a positive approach toward Peter's reforms. The other two points of view will be referred "moderates" and "skeptics" respectively.

[6] L.G. Beskrovnyy, "Strategiya i taktika russkoy armii v poltavskiy period Severnoy voyny" in L.G. Beskrovnyy (ed.), *Poltava: K 250-letiyu Poltavskogo srazheniya; sbornik statey*, (Moscow: Akademia nauk, 1959), 21-62; L. G. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot v XVIII veke* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1958).

[7] I.V. Kurukin, *Persidkiy pokhod Petra Velikogo. Nizovoy korpus na beregah Kaspiya 1722-1735* (Moscow: Kvadriga, 2010); A. Shirokorad, *Russko-Turetskie voiny 1676-1918* (Moscow, 2000).

[8] C. Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West: Origins and Nature of Russian Military Power, 1700 – 1800* (London: Routledge, 1981); M.C. Paul, "The Military Revolution in Russia, 1550-1682".

[9] R. Wittram, *Peter I. Czar und Kaiser. Zur Geschichte Peters des Großen in seiner Zeit* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964).

According to these scholars, Peter's military reforms were the mere result of a response to military problems rather than a general strategy for army reformation. The chief proponent of this theory is William Fuller who, in his book on Russian warfare, argues that the tsarist army was far from a mighty war machine.[10] He gives a very critical overview of Peter's military reforms and plans and concludes that the resources, the society and the government of Russia were quite unable to produce not only a regular but even a standing army. Fuller's theses are accepted by Lindsey Hughes. In her book on Peter the Great, she repeats Fuller's ideas, although her narrative lacks his sharp criticism.[11] Another expository overview of Russia's army under Peter is presented by John Keep who summarizes key issues and features of the Petrine army and opens the debate on the actual quality of the Russian army during the first quarter of the eighteenth century.[12]

In the middle of these opposite theories can be situated the popular article of Richard Hellie on the Petrine army.[13] Hellie places the emphasis in his work on the idea that Peter's army reforms were not an innovation, but rather a continuation of the work of his father Aleksey I (r. 1645-1676) and his military advisors – Knyaz Golitsyn and General Gordon. Hellie points out the patterns of continuity in every aspect of Peter's reforms, comparing them to the army establishment during Aleksey's reign. What the article lacks is a clear evaluation of Peter's army outside the context of Russia's seventeenth-century war efforts. Nevertheless, in combination with Michael Paul's article, the work of Hellie is essential for understanding the evolution of Russia's armed forces during the reign of Peter the Great.

The final sub-chapter of the exposition on Russia's military evolution will deal with the post-Petrine era, and its goal is not so much to debate, but rather to outline the main features of continuity and change in the Russian army, following the death of Peter the Great in 1724. Here, the abovementioned works of Duffy, Keep, Fuller, Beskrovnyy and Shirokorad will prove most valuable in presenting the "positivist", "moderate" and "pessimist" points of view on the post-Petrine warfare.

The second chapter - entitled "Friends, Foes, and Frenemies in the South" aims at depicting the main military features of Russia's southern neighbors. In order to present the different military systems of each state and frontier society, the study will rely on both Russian and English-language works, as well as on valuable Internet sources. Regarding the Ottoman warfare, the most valuable works are the works of Gabor Ágoston on Ottoman armament, as well as

[10] Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia.*
[11] L. Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).
[12] J. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462 – 1874* (Oxford: Calderon Press, 1985).
[13] R. Hellie, "The Petrine Army: Continuity, Change and Impact", *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 8, 2 (1974), 237-53.

Rhoads Murphey's study on Ottoman logistics during the seventeenth century.[14] The Russian concept of Ottoman military is summarized in V. Penskoy's article on Ottoman military revolution.[15] Regarding the warfare of the Cossacks and their Tatar adversaries the most valuable English-language works come from two scholars – Michael Khodarkovsky and Brian Davies. They are both experts on the Eurasian Steppe frontier and their studies have contributed significantly to our understanding of the Northern Black Sea region and the Asian Steppe.[16] A valuable addition to their works is presented by Carol Stevens and Thomas Barrett, who offer us concise and well-written accounts of Cossack warfare during the seventeenth century.[17] Unlike the Ottoman military history, Russian scholars have paid significant attention to Steppe warfare and there are numerous articles about the Crimean Khanate, the Cossacks and the Caucasian states. Choosing the most accurate and concise studies would be a burdensome task for any scholar, and since this topic is not the focus of the current research, I have relied strictly on several prominent works.[18] What unites them is the vast number of primary sources, included in their bibliography, as well as the objective point of view, regarding Russia's relations with the Steppe. For the Persian military system and Safavid warfare the few available articles are included in the current research.[19] To some extent Persian warfare under the Safavids is a neglected theme by contemporary historiography and can be a niche for future research.

The Second part of this work will deal with the combat performance of the Russian Army during its southern campaigns between 1695 and 1739. This period is fundamental for understanding Russia's policy toward the Ottoman

[14] G. Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan – Military Power and Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); G. Ágoston, "Military Transformation in the Ottoman Empire and Russia, 1500–1800", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12 (2011), 281–320; G. Ágoston, "Gunpowder for the Sultan's Army: New Sources on the Supply of Gunpowder to the Ottoman Army in the Hungarian Campaigns of the 16th and 17th Centuries", *Turcica,* 25 (1993), 75-96; R. Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500 - 1700* (University College London Press, 1999).

[15] V.V. Penskoy, "Voennaya revolyutsiya i razvitie voennogo dela v Osmanskoy imperii v XV-XVII v.", *Vostok, vol.6* (Moscow, 2007), 30-40.

[16] B. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe: Russia's Turkish Wars in the Eighteenth Century* (New York & London: Continuum, 2011); B. Davies, *Warfare, State and Society on the Black Sea Steppe, 1500-1700* (New York: Routledge, 2007); M. Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002); M. Khodarkovsky, *Where Two Worlds Met: The Russian State And the Kalmyk Nomads, 1600-1771* (Cornell University Press, 2006).

[17] T.M. Barrett, *At the Edge of Empire: The Terek Cossacks and the North Caucasus Frontier, 1700 – 1860* (Oxford and Colorado: Westview Press, 1999); C. B. Stevens, *Soldiers on the Steppe: Army Reform and Social Change in Early Modern Russia* (Northern Illinois University Press, 1995).

[18] Davies, *Warfare, State and Society;* V. Ostapchuk, "Crimean Tatar Long-Range Campaigns: The View from Remmal Khoja's History of Sahib Gerey Khan" in B. Davies (ed.), *Warfare in Eastern Europe 1500-1800* (Leiden and London: Brill, 2012), 147-72.; B.G. Williams, *The Sultan's Raiders: The Military Role of Crimean Tatars in the Ottoman Empire* (Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, 2013).

[19] R. Matthee, "Unwalled Cities and Restless Nomads: Firearms and Artillery in Safavid Iran*"* in C. Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 389-417; L. Lockhart, "The Persian Army in the Ṣafavī Period", *Der Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East* 34, 1 (1959), 89-98; M. Haneda, "The Evolution of the Safavid Royal Guard", *Iranian Studies* 22, 2-3 (1989), 57-85; M. Axworthy, "The Army of Nader Shah*", Iranian Studies* 40, 5 (2007), 635-46.

Empire and serves as a starting point for what would later become the Eastern Question. It was during this period that France, England, Austria, Russia and the Ottoman Empire for the first time became engaged in both diplomatic and military terms in order to secure the balance of power in Southeastern Europe and West Asia.

Before reviewing the other sources, which will be used to describe the separate campaigns, an important work by the Russian historian Tatarnikov must be noted. His outstanding research on Russia's army armament between 1700 and 1730 presents a combination of all available sources on the matter. His precise, step by step description of the separate regiments troops and the artillery accurately depicts the way Russia's army looked during the reign of Peter I.[20] The combination of this material with the excellent analysis by Brian Davies in his study on Russo-Ottoman relations during the eighteenth century will provide the required theoretical framework, upon which the thesis is constructed.[21] When speaking of Brian Davies' profound study, a side note is necessary. Prof. Davies' book is the latest study on Russia's Southern Campaigns that has been, to my knowledge, published in any language. This fact makes it a benchmark on which any further work, such as the current, should be measured. So what would this dissertation offer, which is not covered in Brian Davies' work? First and foremost, Davies' study focuses not so much on the military performance of the Russian forces, but rather - on the social cost of Peter's (and his successors') military policy. What Davies' book clearly lacks is the evaluation of field performance of the tsarist forces in the context of the military transformations during the Petrine age. Furthermore, the Azov Campaigns and the Persian Campaign, which are instrumental in the development of the Russian army, are not included in Davies' study. It is these gaps in his, otherwise, concise work that the following thesis will exploit to its fullest.

Regarding Russia's first campaigns in the south, the research relies on three primary sources – the letters and papers of Peter the Great, the campaign journal for 1695-1704 and the personal diary of General Patrick Gordon, who commanded one third of the entire army in 1695 and 1696.[22] All documents include dispatches between Peter I and his generals, as well as a description of army numbers, the countryside, and the weather conditions. The campaigns are followed in detail in Ustryalov's work on Peter's rule, as well as the narrative of Lieutenant General P. Bobrovskiy in his history of the 13th Guards regiment.[23] The perspective of the Soviet historiography is clearly outlined in the work of

[20] K.V.Tatarnikov, *Russkaya polevaya armiya 1700-1730. Obmundirovanie i snaryazhenie* (Moscow: Lyubimaya Kniga, 2008).
[21] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution.*
[22] *Pisyma i bumagi imperatora Petra Velikago,* vol. I (St. Petersburg, 1887); *Pokhodnoy Zhurnal* 1695-1701 (St. Petersburg, 1885); M.R. Ryzhenkov (ed.), *Patrik Gordon - Dnevnik 1690-1695* (Moscow: Nauka, 2014).
[23] N.G. Ustryalov, *Istoriya tsarstvovaniya Petra Velikogo*, *vol. 2* (Saint Petersburg, 1858); P.O., Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya 13 Leyb-grenaderskago Yerevanskogo Ego Velichestva polka za 250 let, vol.1* (St. Petersburg, 1892).

Porfiryev. He emphasizes on the native developments and to a certain degree neglects the foreign influence on the evolution of Peter's army.[24]

For the Pruth Campaign of 1711, the thesis again will rely on Peter's private correspondence as well as his campaign journal.[25] Moreover, the dissertation will include the eyewitness accounts of Peter Henry Bruce, as well as the letters from Britain's ambassador in Istanbul – Sir Robert Sutton.[26] In addition to these primary sources, the thesis will also rely on the above-mentioned works by B. Davies and K. Tatarnikov.

Regarding the Persian Campaign of 1722-1724, the study will build on the leading primary source – the campaign journals of 1722 and 1723, which will be supported by additional data, derived from the works of L. Lockhart, V. Lystsov and I. Kurukin.[27] In addition to these sources, the eyewitness accounts of Peter Henry Bruce, as well as - the narrative of Abraham of Yerevan, who presents the Armenian point of perspective on Russia's southern venture, will also be examined in the current research. [28]

Finally, the Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739 will be depicted by using two most valuable sources – the memoirs of Christof von Manstein and the notes of Field-marshal Minikh. While Minikh was the commander-in-chief of the Russian army, Manstein served as colonel and had a first-hand experience of the field service and the chain of events, which shaped the conflict. In addition to these two primary sources, the dissertation will also include the above-mentioned work by B. Davies, which deals with Russia's military engagements following the death of Peter the Great. The main Russian study on the war is A. Bayov's history of the Russian army during the reign of Empress Anna Romanova.[29] His exhaustive narrative remains unmatched, even though it was written a century ago. An interesting and useful asset to these texts would be Zvegintsov's work on the Russian army during the first half of the eighteenth century.[30] While not as exhaustive as Tatarnikov, Zvegintsov presents an in-depth look at the main features of Russia's armed forces during the 1730s.

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[24] E.I. Porfiryev, *Petr I Osnovopolozhnik voennogo iskusstva russkoy regulyarnoy Armii i flota* (Moscow: Voennoe izdatelstvo, 1952).

[25] *Pisyma i bumagi imperatora Petra Velikago*, vol. 11 (Moscow, 1962); *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1711* (St. Petersburg, 1854).

[26] P.H. Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq. - a military officer in the services of Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain, containing an account of his travels in Germany, Russia, Tartary, Turkey, and the West Indies, &c, as also several very interesting private anecdotes of the Czar, Peter 1 of Russia* (Dublin, 1783); A.N. Kurat (ed.), *The Dispatches of Sir Robert Sutton, Ambassador in Constantinople, 1710-1714* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1951).

[27] I.V. Kurukin, *Persidkiy pokhod Petra Velikogo*; V.P. Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I: 1722 – 1723* (Moscow, 1951); L. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

[28] Bruce, *Memoirs ;* G.A. Bournoutian (ed.), *History of the Wars 1721 – 1738: Abraham of Yerevan* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1999).

[29] A.K. Bayov, *Russkaya armiya v tsarstvovanie imperatritsy Anny Ioannovny – Voina Rossii s Turtsiey v 1736-39, vol. 1-2* (St. Petersburg, 1906).

[30] V.V. Zvergintsov, *Russkaya Armiya 1700-1763, vol. 1* (Paris, 1967).

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After outlining the structural and analytical frame, the thesis will continue with the first part of the research. It will present an essential overview of the military potential and establishment of Russia, our protagonist in this story, and the number of its friends, foes and frenemies, who had substantial role in the Southern Campaigns, carried out between 1695 and 1739.

# PART I - CALCULATING THE FORCES

The first part of this narrative will deal with the problems of military evolution and the development of Russia's military machine as well as the fighting condition of its enemies and friends in the course of the Southern Campaigns. The following section will be divided into two general chapters, subdivided into smaller sections, which will clarify certain aspects of military doctrine: the state of the armed forces, as well as the political context, in which the forces of the countries and societies developed. The narrative will begin with Russia and then move forward to the other major and lesser players on the geopolitical chessboard of the Pontic region.

## CHAPTER 1
## Russia's Military Development

The question of Russian military capability during the eighteenth century has troubled both western and Russian historians for many years. Different authors present different notions on how Russia's military development has to be measured. Questions whether there was a standing regular force or not, or whether Peter and his successors created a concise military machine or only improvised with the available resources and the existing military system are essential not only for the history of Russia but also for the entire Eastern Europe. This notion is due to the mere fact that this region was dominated, intimidated and challenged by the power of St. Petersburg. The following chapter will try to answer central questions regarding the development of Russia's military strength during the first four decades of the eighteenth century. To appreciate the changes, which took place during this period, firstly the main trends of Muscovite military development will be discussed, since they were essential for the later transformations that took place under Peter I and his successors.

### 1.1. Military Revolution or Military Evolution? Problems and Debate in Military Historiography

In order to understand and evaluate the power of Russia under Peter the Great and to explain different aspects of the military power complex, the narrative is divided into several parts. The first part reviews the idea of the Military Revolution and its relation to the development of early modern Russia. The Military Revolution debate has existed for over sixty years after Professor Michael Roberts held his famous lecture in 1956.[1] Ever since, military historians

[1] The term "Military Revolution" regards the process of rapid (according to the theory's supporters) transformation of early modern warfare, which led to a series of changes in both the conduct of war and the structure and functioning of the early modern state. The time frame of this "revolution" is still a matter of debate

of the early modern world have struggled to establish the exact boundaries and parameters of the Military Revolution. First Geoffrey Parker and later Jeremy Black, John Lynn and David Parrott have worked on different possibilities for explaining the Military Revolution and its impact on early modern state and society. Many other volumes have also addressed the same issue, criticizing, denying or supporting the Revolutionists' theses.[2]

Nevertheless, the common feature of all these works is their emphasis on the Military Revolution in Western Europe and its impact on the development of European powers. However, none of these works establishes a strict boundary between what Europe is and what is not. For almost forty years, everybody has been talking about a European Military Revolution, but they referred to a small portion of European countries, concentrated in the western part of the continent. Furthermore, military establishment outside these states was overlooked and neglected. In some aspects, Geoffrey Parker tried to establish the impact of the Military Revolution outside Europe, but he only refers to the export of European-style warfare and does not take into consideration the developments that took place in the extra-European countries. These developments, however, often had nothing to do with European influence.[3] Until recently there was no concise study on the military events in Asia in the context of Europe's "revolution" in warfare. However during the past two decades, thanks to the ideas of globalization and supra-natural history, there have been attempts to apply the ideas of the Military Revolution in a greater scope, including the Asian states.[4]

In his book on Military Revolution in Asia, Peter Lorge tries to apply the standards developed by the Revolutionist historians to explain the development of East- and South-Asian warfare during the early modern period.[5] However, the real value of his work is that he questions the entire revolutionary concept and suggests a different approach to the problem:

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between the proponents of the theory, as are the main catalysts for the change. Different authors emphasize on various factors such as army groth, the spread of the *trace italienne* fortifications, development of the ships of the line, etc.; see M. Roberts, "The Military Revolution, 1560-1660", in C.J. Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 13-37 (Abbreviated in further notes as TMRD).

[2] G. Parker, "The Military Revolution, 1550-1660 – A Myth?", in *TMRD*, 37-55; J. Black, "A Military Revolution? A 1660-1792 Perspective", in *TMRD*, 95-117; J.A. Lynn, "Recalculating the French Army Growth during the Grand Siécle, 1610-1715", in *TMRD*, 117-49; J.A. Lynn, "The *trace italienne* and the Growth of Armies: the French Case", in *TMRD*, 169-201; D.A. Parrott, "Strategy and Tactics in the Thirty Years' War: The 'Military Revolution'", in *TMRD*, 227-53; For an exhaustive overview of the historiography on the 'Military Revolution', see C. J. Rogers, "The Military Revolution in History and Historiography", in *TMRD*, 1-13.

[3] G. Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[4] Ever since Geoffrey Parker went beyond the boundaries of Europe, military historians have studied the development of warfare outside Europe, concentrating on Asia and the colonial possessions of Western European states.

[5] P.A. Lorge, *The Asian Military Revolution: From Gunpowder to the Bomb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

> There is no question that warfare changed markedly between 1500 and 1800 in Europe. But warfare also changed in Europe between 1200 and 1500, and 1800 and 2000. The debate very often turns on the definition of ‘‘revolution’’. A ‘‘revolution’’ is clearly more than a mere change, but in what way? Many of the objections to Parker’s arguments concern the mechanisms of change rather than the fact of that change. A rather more serious objection to the idea that there was a revolution is that there is always change in warfare, and the ‘revolution’ that Parker or Roberts describes was no different than any other change. Certainly any technology that was available in the late sixteenth century had precursors, and even infantry and cavalry tactics, or fortification designs, had been evolving beforehand. [6]

Unfortunately, Lorge does not further develop his idea, which gives the opportunity to elaborate on his thesis. It is an unquestionable fact that war and human society are bonded for better or worse. Hence, any development in one of them changes the other. One may argue that explaining the relations between war and society would be like the “the chicken or the egg” dilemma. However, this is simply not the case. If we go back to the origins of warfare, we will discover that if a war is to take place, there must be at least two organized human societies to fight in it. Thus, there can be no war, unless there is a society to develop the idea of war, to create some kind of military force in order to win the war and finally to take advantage of the gains or losses of the conflict. Therefore, it is the development of human societies with their culture, technology, economics, administration and idea of government and religion that shape the way wars are fought. This notion, however, does not mean that wars cannot change human societies. A product could transform its creator, and in all spheres of human development we can find proof of this fact. If there is a revolution in warfare, first there has to be a revolution in society.

Still, as the early modern period illustrates, there were no revolutionary changes in the development of European societies during this period. There was indeed a development, but it was relatively slow and steady, and it took centuries before the medieval societies were completely transformed into modern ones. In the same sense, it took centuries before war was modified in the fashion, suggested by the Military Revolution theory. Without diving deep into the debate, also it can also be pointed out, that historians like Clifford Rogers and Jeremy Black imply the existence of several Military Revolutions that took place between the 1340s and 1790s.[7] Indeed, a lot has changed for these three and a half centuries, but human logic requires that these changes should be perceived not as a series of separate revolutions, but rather as an evolutional process. Furthermore, changes in warfare are taking place ever since war exists.

[6] Ibid.,19.
[7] Black, “A Military Revolution?”, 11; Rogers, “The Military Revolution”, 77.

If the Revolutionist idea is developed further, this will lead to the conclusion that there was a Military Revolution almost each century in the past 2 500 years. Therefore, it would be incorrect to remove warfare developments during the early modern period from the context of the general military development. Instead of having more than, say, a hundred military revolutions, it would be much easier to accept the idea of evolutional development, which was often accelerated by important discoveries in the fields of science and technology.[8]

So far, only a handful of concise studies elaborate on Russia's response to the changes in warfare that took place during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Among them are the works by R. Hellie, M. Poe, J. Keep and M. Paul.[9] While Hellie studies the transfer of seventeenth century Russian warfare into the "new style" army of Peter the Great, Paul dedicates his work entirely on pre-Petrine period and examines the influence of western warfare on Muscovy's military conduct.[10] Keep, on the other hand, presents a study of the continuous development of the Russian army and seeks the roots of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' reforms in the evolution of the Muscovite state. Another point of view is presented by Poe, who tries to fit Muscovy into the overall development of the Military Revolution debate. The main advantage of these works is that they are very informative and present considerable data, which could be applied to a concise evaluation of Russia's eighteenth-century development and military potential.[11] What the studies lack is the Russian perspective on the issue and all changes are measured by western standards. Differences between the East and the West are often labeled "backwardness" and condemned as failure. Unfortunately, the general approach toward the East and more precisely toward Eastern Europe has not changed for quite a long time. While Western Europe rediscovered Asia and Africa, led by different cultural and political motives, Eastern Europe still remains outside the general scope of Western European historiography. One of the tasks of the current work is to

[8] Indeed Clifford Rogers suggests the idea of a punctuated equilibrium evolution, but he fails to develop it and leaves his theory rather incomplete. This thesis argues that the development of warfare was a process in which each step was related to the previous and the following through social, technological and cultural links. The invention of crucial innovations accelerates greatly the military evolution process. Certainly, it is not a steady, straight continuum, but rather a scale of ups and downs, influenced by the technological development of mankind. Thus, it is better to talk about technological rather than military revolutions, since technology has proven itself to be the thing that revolves human society in a matter of years. The same frame could be applied to social change in the early modern period. The evolution of society has been accelerated by certain events and ideas such as the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation and the theories of the Enlightenment. It was the French Revolution, however, that truly revolutionized the idea of social development.

[9] R. Hellie, "The Petrine Army: Continuity, Change and Impact", *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 8, 2 (1974), 237-53; J.L. Keep, Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462–1874 (Oxford: Clerendon Press, 1985); M. C. Paul, "The Military Revolution in Russia, 1550-1682", *The Journal of Military History* 68, 1 (2004), 9-45; M. Poe , "The Military Revolution, Administrative Development and Cultural Change in Early Modern Russia", *Journal of Early Modern History* 2, 3 (1998), 247-73; M. Poe, "The Consequences of the Military Revolution in Muscovy: A Comparative Perspective", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, 4 (1996), 603-18.

[10] I will use R. Hellie's term "Petrine" in order to address different elements of Russian development under the reign of Peter I Romanov (r. 1682-1725).

[11] Keep makes broad and systematized estimates of Russia's military potential.

reverse this process and shed light at least on the Russian military evolution and the reasons why it differed from the western path.

## 1.2. Muscovy's Path to Power[12]

The second trend essential for understanding Russian power requires a new look at the main factors which influenced the military evolution in the Russian lands. These factors could be divided into two broad categories – internal and external. The internal factors are related to the administration of the Russian lands: their vastness and character, as well as the size and the composition of their population. The external factors are related to the influence of the Mongols on the development of Russia's army, the character of the neighboring lands and states and the type of armies that threatened Russia's borders.

The administration of the Russian lands was a complicated issue ever since the disintegration of Kievan Rus during the late twelfth century.[13] The vast territories between the Baltic Sea and the Volga River were fractured into dozens of small principalities, each claiming the right to inherit the title of "grand prince" and rule as a suzerain over the other states. Thus, a state of constant small-scale warfare developed in which several principalities allied against each other and fought for prestige and control over trade and taxes.[14] The core of each army was the elite cavalry unit (*druzhina*), which could be enhanced by allied or mercenary cavalry.[15] In the rare cases when infantry was required, it was levied on the growing number of serfs (*krestyyane*), which lived in the principality and served the prince or his vassals. The pre-Mongolian Russian forces were small and irregular, and the quality of their infantry was nowhere near the experienced English, Flemish or Swiss footmen.[16] When the Mongols arrived in the first half of the thirteenth century, their experienced, well-organized and numerous hordes had no trouble defeating the disintegrated Russian forces and expanding their political influence over most of Russia. The "Mongolian yoke", as Russian historians tend to describe the following two and a half centuries, brought one main significant change in the development of

[12] In the following pages, I will use Russia and Muscovy as interchangeable terms prior to Peter I's rule. In fact the question when exactly did Muscovy become Russia is still open to debate. Western historiography often places the end of this transformation in 1721 with Peter's enthronement as Emperor of All Russians, while Russian historiography puts Ivan IV's reign as the watershed between Muscovy and Russia.

[13]The first united Russian state. It was governed by the Rurik dynasty and controlled most of present-day Ukraine, Belarus and South-Western Russia.

[14] This small-scale warfare was also influenced by the nature of the Russian lands. Infantry was quite unnecessary, since the great distances were an obstacle for the usage of a regular force of footmen. Instead, Russian states relied on cavalry units – druzhina, formed from prince's personal household and his vassal nobles.

[15] The druzhina units of other Russian princes or steppe mercenaries - most commonly Kipchaks (Cummans) and Alans.

[16] For more information regarding western infantry development, see Rogers, "The Militarry Revolution ", 55-95.

Russia's art of war – the cavalry archers.[17] This development, combined with the expansion of serfdom and the vast distances on which campaigns were carried out, led to the general decline of the infantry.[18] The revival of infantry as equal participant on the battlefield remained a feature only of western warfare. Here, it is essential to note that this lack of adequate infantry does not necessarily imply that Russian warfare was falling behind the western one. If a successful application of infantry was possible in the limited fields of France, the Low Countries, and Germany, or was the best solution for war issues in the Highlands and Switzerland, this was certainly not the case in Russia. It suffices to say, that no infantry could keep up with constant marches over several hundred kilometers through a vast sea of grass, harassed by horse archers, who could destroy any infantry formation. Then we could argue that an infantry "revolution" in the manner, suggested by C. Rogers, was inapplicable to Russian conditions and that the general use of infantry against the Mongols and other Russian *knyaze* was doomed to fail.[19]

After the expulsion of the Mongols and the unification of the Northern Russian principalities under Muscovy, the ground was clear for the establishment of a new military system, which would bring Russia closer to western development and would return the general logic of military development, implied by Western historians. That, however, did not happen. Instead of limiting the size of the cavalry and expanding the infantry, the grand knyaze of Muscovy integrated other rulers' druzhini into their army and made conquered rulers part of Muscovy's nobility.[20] Noble cavalry, armed with bows and lances, remained the dominant force in Russia. Furthermore, the cavalry contingent was expanded by the inclusion of the Cossacks into the military system of Muscovy. These semi-independent free-raiders were an excellent supplement to the heavier noble cavalry units. Infantry remained irregular and was used in rare occasions, mainly as garrisons. But why did this happen? Why did not the grand knyaze change their manner of war after they managed to unify Russia into a single state? Again we must return to the reasons, listed above. It was not backwardness but pure necessity that influenced the military

[17] Instead of relying on the strong, heavily armed horsemen, the Russian reformed the druzhina and supplemented it with lighter cavalry, armed with bows and spears, resembling the Mongolian fashion. Thus, while in the West gothic knights and later *gendarmes* dominated the fields of Europe, mobile mounted warfare, based on firepower and maneuverability determined the way war was fought among the Russians. For an exhaustive study of Muscovite armament during the late medieval period, see A.N. Kirpichnikov, *Voennoe delo na Rusi v XIII-XV vv.* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1966).

[18] The main exception were the urban garrisons.

[19] Rogers, "The Military Revolution", 55-95; the idea of the lack of usefulness of western infantry models in Russia was also applied by Michael Paul. (Paul, "The Military Revolution in Russia", 36-7) Yet, Paul implies that the Military Revolution did not succeed in Russia or was greatly delayed. What the present dissertation argues is that military evolution did take place in the same time as in Western Europe, but in Russia it had its own pattern of development.

[20] For example, the Shuysky Family from Pskov, who later served as field commanders under Ivan IV (r. 1533-1584) and held a high position in the state administration. For the building of Muscovy's forces, see A.V. Chernov, *Vooruzhennye sily Russkogo gosudarstva v XV-XVII v.v.* (Moscow, 1954), 17-43 (http://nozdr.ru/militera/research/chernov_av/index.html - accessed on 15th August, 2016).

development of Muscovy. After the Mongols and other princes had been defeated, Muscovy found itself surrounded by states, which also used cavalry as the main striking force of their armies.[21] Furthermore, all these countries were far from Russia's heartland. Sending an expedition on more than a thousand kilometers was always a hard task, even without a slow-moving infantry with an enormous supply train. It was general logistical problems that limited the diversity of Muscovy's forces. There was no developed road system and for half a year the land transport was impossible due to the rains and the transformation of grasslands into a sea of mud and marshes. Thus, rivers remained the only possible option and thenceforth the medieval Russians did manage to develop their river transport at a surprisingly high level.[22] The predominance of the river transportation meant that campaigns had to be organized only in locations which were accessible by water. However, rivers had vast hinterlands that could be conquered only by a mobile and easy to transfer force, which was not entirely dependent on river transport. Cavalry seemed the only possible solution. The logistics problem was further complicated by the difficult supply of goods for the army. In the steppe, it was quite easier for a cavalry force to live off the land. The grass was found in immense proportions and horses could be used to carry the supplies of their masters. An infantry would require a supply train with oxcarts and a lot more provisions than a cavalry.[23] Also, as noted above, a supply train would significantly reduce the speed of the army, and in the steppes, speed was essential for success.

Another problem that predetermined the importance of cavalry was serfdom. Since Muscovy's economy was based on serfdom, it was the serf's duty to produce and transport food supplies for the army, repair the roads, build boats for the river transportation, etc. Furthermore, unlike Western Europe, the wealth of a nobleman was not measured by his treasury, but by the number of serfs he possessed.[24] It turns out that the only possible source for infantry recruits was also the main driving force of the state economy and the primary source of wealth for the nobility. It was against the interest of both state and nobility to allow the recruitment of peasants in the army. Unlike Western Europe, where the well-established bourgeois population was free of land labor and serfdom and could serve as the backbone of an infantry force, Russia did not

[21] The Principality of Lithuania (from 1569 The Grand Duchy of Lithuania), Poland, the State of the Teutonic Order and Livonian Knights, the Siberian and Crimean Khanates and the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan. All of these states preferred mounted warfare, due to the same reasons that influenced Muscovy – huge distances, tradition of noble cavalry usage, the impact of serfdom, as well as the general weakness of western style armies, when applied to the vast spaces of the East. The Teutonic Order is an interesting case of how a heavy armored western army had to adapt to the conditions of steppe warfare.

[22] Starting with the Viking experience in the Eastern European Rivers and continuing to the trading system of the Russian lands in the medieval period.

[23] The levying of cavalry was limited in numbers as the gathering of footmen would mean a greater number of men, who, unlike horses, could not live on water and grass.

[24] For an exhaustive narrative, regarding the impact of serfdom on Russian state and society, see R. Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy* (University of Chicago Press, 1971).

possess a significant or well-developed free urban population that could be used by the knyaze as the core of infantry units.[25]

With the advance of Muscovy in western and southern direction, however, its forces faced a new issue that had not been a problem during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries – fortified cities. The cities of Pskov, Smolensk, Kazan and Astrakhan were well fortified and a new type of force was required for their conquest – artillery.[26] When need occurred, Muscovy was fast to evolve and met this necessity by developing a large siege train.[27] Breaching the walls was one thing and maintaining the conquest was quite another. Thus, Russia finally needed to develop an infantry unit capable of seizing the city once the artillery had played its part. Furthermore, the expansion of firearms called for better garrison units for the frontier defence. Firstly, at the beginning of the sixteenth century an irregular type of gunmen was developed. They were called *pishalyniki* and their first appearance on the battlefield was during the final siege of Pskov in 1510.[28] However, these units were irregular and were disbanded after the end of the campaign season.[29] The next step in the development of the Muscovite infantry was taken by Ivan IV and was again a response to his plans for militant policy.[30] The growing power of Poland-Lithuania and Sweden, combined with the weakening of the Livonian Confederation called for more substantial infantry force, which could be used to attack and later garrison the conquered fortresses in Livonia, Samara, and the Lower Volga. Thus, the *streltsy* were established. Fortunately for Russia, the creation of a standing infantry force coincided with the expansion of firearms infantry in West. Russia did not hesitate to adopt the mass usage of firearms in the infantry, and it turned out that most of Russia's infantry were now armed with handguns. Again there was a difference in tactics. While western harquebusiers participated actively in open engagements, the streltsy were seldom sent into pitched battle, instead of being used against fixed positions or fortifications. Often protected by cavalry, they fired upon the enemy from wooden platforms, behind moats or fascines, or from mobile wooden fortifications (*gulyay-gorod* — literally 'moving city') some of which were three meters wide and erected specialy for the occasion.[31] The defensive tactic was more a response to the specifics of the landscape, than due to the backwardness of Muscovite generals. Unlike the broken terrain in Western Europe, the steppes of Eurasia were flat, and a cavalry could easily

[25] In terms of either forming a militia or levies, or using them as mercenaries.

[26] Although firearms were well known in Russia ever since 1382, but it was under Ivan III that the Muscovites began to create an efficient artillery force, see A.N. Kirpichnikov, *Voennoe delo na Rusi.*

[27] Paul, "The Military Revolution", 29; According to Michael Paul over 150 cannons were used in the siege of Kazan in 1552.

[28] Ibid., 20; Chernov, *Voorzuhennye sily,* 17-43; Chernov estimates a force of 1,000 pishalyniki during the siege, after which 500 were left as a garrison.

[29] This was nothing unusual since disbanding the army at the end of the campaigning season was the general practice among all European states during the first half of the sixteenth century. Thus, Russia was on the same level as western states and not falling behind as is the general concept; see Paul, "The military Revolution", 20.

[30] Chernov, *Vooruzhennye sily,* 43-75.

[31] Paul, "The Military Revolution", 22.

flank an unprotected infantry. In order to resist enemy cavalry attacks and cover the movement of their mounted soldiers, the streltsy mastered the usage of field fortification. The problem of supplying food and ammunition in the large distances made it necessary to station the strelcy in towns, preferably near bigger rivers.[32]

The last two decades of the sixteenth and the first twenty years of the seventeenth centuries were troublesome for Russia. The death of Ivan IV and the ruin of Muscovy after the wars against Poland-Lithuania, Crimea, and Sweden, were followed by the notorious "Time of Troubles". During this great internal and external strife, Muscovy's military potential was crippled and the lack of strong central government prevented the immediate adoption of the latest Western military techniques.[33] After peace was finally restored in 1619, Muscovy had lost Smolensk to Poland-Lithuania and Ingria to Sweden. Further expansion westward would indeed lead to a catastrophe and Mikhail I Romanov (r. 1613–1645) decided to redirect his state's effort towards the east. General peace on the western frontier and the swift success in the east further prolonged the adoption of necessary reforms in the army. Things changed under Mikhail's successor – Aleksey I (r. 1645–1676).[34] After the conquest of Siberia had brought new lands and revenues to the crown, Aleksey decided to turn his attention toward Poland and the Baltic coast. He was fast to realize the necessity for reformation of the army and for most of his reign he fought to establish a force, which could prove a match to western standards. In order to fight Sweden and Poland-Lithuania, Aleksey developed "regiments of new formation" units that were in part commanded by foreign officers and fought in the same fashion,

[32] Positioned there they could be resupplied through river transport coming from Moscow. In addition, they were well-accustomed in defending positions such as riverbanks and walled cities. (A.V. Chernov. *Vooruzhennye sily*, 43-75; Kirpichnikov, *Voennoe delo na Rusi)* Furthermore, Ivan IV established a system of settling the streltsy. Thus, in peace time, they had to support themselves by trade and by working their land and selling the harvest. Since the Muscovite state was not rich enough to pay regularly salaries to its soldiers, the central administration decided to grant land in exchange for service. This system was also applied toward the nobility. In general, it was built on the same basis as the earlier Byzantine *themata* system and the later *timar* system in the Ottoman Empire.

[33] Here it is reffered to the military reforms that took place in the Dutch Republic and Sweden. The rearrangement of "shot units" and, more importantly, the application of light field artillery did not take place in Muscovy up until the seventeenth and even eighteenth century The heavier siege artillery was not up to date with the newer and better guns developed in the context of the Thirty Years' War. Even after Muscovy was unified under Mikhail Romanov in 1613, it lacked sufficient resources to reform its forces. On the other hand, David Parrott argues that the first half of the seventeenth century did not bring any major changes in warfare but instead proved that western states could not response adequately to the new necessities, imposed by the growing armies. He concludes that actual changes took place only after 1660 with the establishment of centralized absolutist states, giving France, Sweden and Prussia as examples. It could be argued that Muscovy was again up-to-date with the West since reforms in the Muscovite army began after 1654, during the Thirteen Years' War. Nevertheless, social conditions and lack of revenue prevented the adoption of a standing army during the reign of Aleksey I.

[34] The first western-style reforms were actually introduced in 1631, when Muscovy was preparing for the Smolensk campaign against Poland-Lithuania but their success was temporary and uncertain. Therefore, it is better to perceive Aleksey as the actual reformer of the Muscovite force, since a qualitative change in the fighting style of the Russian army took place under his reign; See A.V. Chernov *Vooruzhennye sily*, 133-56, where the author is quite critical toward the state of Muscovy's military power during most of the seventeenth century.

applied by armies in Germany.[35] The war against Poland was successful and brought back some of the territories, lost during the "Time of Troubles". War with Sweden resulted in a status quo ante bellum, but nevertheless, the Russians managed to hold off the Swedish army, regarded as one of the best forces in Europe during this period. [36] However, Muscovy did not manage to produce a regular standing force and this is probably the main disadvantage of its military evolution.

### 1.3. Aleksey's Inheritance

To fully appreciate the reforms, introduced by Peter I, the general condition of the Russian army under his father, Aleksey must be presented. The second ruler of the Romanov dynasty governed Muscovy in a period of crisis and expansion during which the Russian state embarked on several aggressive campaigns against its neighbors.

During his long reign Aleksey's primary purpose was to elevate the military power of Russia to a new level, a level from which it could match and if possible – overpower its enemies on several fronts. Whether his efforts were successful or not is still a matter of debate. W. Fuller, always critical of Russian military power, points out that during the first half of the seventeenth century Russia did not possess the potential to wage offensive wars. He places logistics as the main issue behind Russian failure on the battlefield during Aleksey's reign and the Crimean Campaigns of 1687 and 1689. However, he does acknowledge that apart from Sweden Russian military technology was superior to that of its neighbors.[37] J. Keep points out that the army of Aleksey suffered from three major disadvantages – lack of money, high level of desertion and low morale. Regarding the capability of the Muscovite forces, Keep is rather

[35] It was under Aleksey that western officers began to play a greater role in the officer corps of Muscovy. Since the Russians did not have the time to create their officer corps (the Thirteen Years War began only eight years after the accession of Aleksey), foreign mercenaries and volunteers were used to accelerate the modernization of the Muscovite force. As Richard Hellie notes, the tradition of a non-native officer corps was not an "invention" of Peter I but was developed under the reign of Aleksey I in the middle of the seventeenth century. One might suppose that this was a general weakness of Russian military advance, but then the same should apply to western powers as well. Half of the military leaders and a great part of the army in most European states were foreigners. Austria relied on German, Italian and Bohemian specialists. France imported Italians, Germans and Scots. Spain had a long tradition of hiring Italians and Flemish to command their forces. Even Sweden did not hesitate to use foreign generals, the most famous example being Bernard of Saxe-Weimar. This situation did not change even during the War of the Spanish Succession when some of the major military leaders were still foreigners with regard to their subordinate armies. Notable examples are Prince Eugene of Savoy, the Duke of Berwick, the Dukes of Baden and Lorraine. Furthermore the number of foreign experts was insignificant in comparison to the number of native Russian officers, who served in the army; See N.L.Volkovskiy and D.N.Volkovskiy (eds) *Vse Voyny – Mirovoy istorii po Kharperskoy entsiklopedii voennoy istorii, 1500-1750, vol. 3* (Moscow and St. Petersburg, 2004), 421; The German manuals of war were the most popular in Russia. Furthermore, the reforms of Mikhail I and Aleksey were carried out parallel with the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and most of the foreigners, hired to transform the Muscovite force had served in that war. Thus, the general experience accumulated in Germany was transferred to Russia.

[36] The Russo-Swedish War of 1656–1658.

[37] Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, 25.

unimpressed, although he calculates a twofold increase in the army strength in comparison to the previous century. Russian historiography offers a different evaluation. Although admitting the logistical problems, Chernov stresses the importance of military reform and the gradual strengthening of the Russian army. He points out that the expenditure of "new-model" regiments and the shift in the ratio between cavalry and infantry were major signs of the beneficial changes that took place during the reign of Aleksey.[38] His opinion is further supported by V. Volkov and N.L. Volkovkiy who emphasize the importance of firearms distribution and the development of gun-wielding infantry during the seventeenth century.[39]

We can, therefore, deduce two main challenges which stood on the way of Russia's military development during the seventeenth century – the general struggle toward improvement of the quality of the army and the series of problems regarding the supply of this army faced by the central government.

*Army*

The army of Aleksey I was by no means a homogenous one. In his work on the Military Revolution in Eastern Europe Brian Davies distinguishes among fourteen different types of unit formation in the pre-Petrine Muscovite army.[40] Keep and Volkonskiy tend to summarize these in fewer groups, but in general, the army was comprised of three main parts which fell into several subdivisions, as described by both Davies and Chernov.

First there were the "old-style" formations of the noble cavalry and the streltsy, the ratio of which, in the course of the seventeenth century, dropped drastically in comparison to the regiments of the new formation. Davies divides each group into two subdivisions. The nobility (*dvoryane*) regiments comprised of the upper Muscovite and provincial high nobles, on the one hand, and the petty provincial nobles, on the other. They formed centuries (*sotnya*) and while the first served in the tsar's regiment, the second comprised the cavalry units. Each of these landlords had to provide a certain number of retainers, armed at his expense. As Chernov describes in detail, the armament of these nobles gradually changed and by 1675 ninety five per cent of the noble cavalry wore light firearms in combination with sabers and were able to carry out both ranged and hand-to-hand attacks.[41] However, the overall condition of the noble cavalry was rather poor due to their low discipline, to the complexity of the logistics, as well as to the general trend of cheating the state by hiding their real income or sending ill-fitting men for retainer service. They were also ill-prepared for war as the compulsory early military practice took part following the summer

[38] Chernov, *Vooruzhennye sily*, 156-87.
[39] V.A. Volkov, *Voyny i Voyska Moskovskogo Gosudarstva* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2004); Volkovskiy (eds), *Vse Voyny - Mirovoy istorii*, 415-8.
[40] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 58-62.
[41] Chernov, *Vooruzhennye sily*, 156-87.

harvest and for that reason - often got neglected.[42] In resonance to these embarrassments in performance, after 1654 Aleksey and later Golitsyn tended to redirect nobles from the old regiments into the regiments of the new formation. This trend explains why the noble cavalry dropped in numbers during the second half of the seventeenth century while the number of dvoryane and *deti boyarskie* grew in the regiments of the new formation.[43]

The second significant element of the Muscovite old units was the streltsy. These elite infantry units were divided into two main categories – Muscovite streltsy and provincial streltsy. The main difference between the two was the amount of payment which they received from the state as well as the degree to which they could be perceived as "standing" units. While the capital regiments received better payment and had more regular military trainings, the provincial units were often engaged in farm work in order to provide for their families and balance the insufficient funds which the state paid them on yearly basis. In general, seventeenth-century Muscovy was unable to provide the required funds for an entirely state-funded standing infantry, and that is a fact accepted by all scholars who have studied the matter – both western and Russian.[44] Therefore, the Romanov monarchs decided to apply the same general principle through which they financed the cavalry – the allowance of agricultural and petty financial activities, which were meant to compensate the lack of funds. On this basis, we could define the streltsy as landowning, semi-standing type of infantry, which differed from the newly formed regular units in Western and Central Europe. And while these Muscovite soldiers were of greater proportion compared to most western armies, their quality was falling behind.[45]

The need to improve the field performance of the Muscovite forces drove the first Romanov tsars toward the conclusion that a general change in the military was required. To respond to the shifting balance of power on the western frontier, first Mikhail, then Aleksey began to develop regiments of the new formation, which applied the experience, accumulated in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). These units were combined with the predominantly national-

[42]Ibid.; Volkovsky (eds), *Vsey Voiny*, 419-21.

[43] They were 8,000 in 1689 in comparison to the 78,000 soldiers of the new formation regiments. N.L. Volkovskiy, D.N. Volkovskiy (eds), *Vsey Voiny*, 420-21; In 1672 10 per cent of the service nobility were enlisted in the old cavalry regiments, while 50 per cent were enlisted in the new formation regiments, see Chernov, *Vooruzhennye sily*, 156-87.

[44] For example, between 1657 and 1682 (25 years), the streltsy did not receive any payment from the state. That led to a rebellion during which Sophia, daughter of Alexey, was placed as ruling steward of Ivan V and Peter I who were underage at the time.

[45] The first standing cores of Western armies after the Thirty Years War rarely numbered more than 15-20,000 in the case of Austria, and fewer than 10,000 in the case of most German states. To the contrary, during the sixteenth century the streltsy already exceeded these numbers. France and Spain are not applicable here, since these states continued to wage war and did not dismiss their wartime armies for longer periods of time. For the size of armies prior 1700s, see J. Childs, *Warfare in the Seveteenth Century* (London, 2001), 87-93.

based army in which the foreign element was rather insignificant in quantity if not in quality.[46]

The regiments of the new formation can be divided into four types: *reytary*, *gusary* (cavalry), *draguny* (dragoons) and *soldaty* (infantry).[47] As mentioned above, the greater and lesser nobility was gradually transferred from the old to the new regiments, setting the foundation of the new formation cavalry regiments. However, the new units also included the so-called *vybornye lyudi*, who were free men, but not necessarily nobles. They were also given lands in return for their service since the state was unable to provide in full their annual salaries. Impoverished and landless petty nobles were conscripted into the infantry formations as well.

However, the flow of free men and service nobility was insufficient to meet the state's needs, and enserfed men (*datochnye lyudi*) were also conscripted into the army. They were sent to different regiments than the vybornye lyudi and by the time of the Crimean Campaigns (1687, 1689) comprised a large portion of the regiments of the new formation.

The draguny were novelty for the Muscovite army, and their ranks were filled in by conscripting entire villages, or by offering service to Cossacks in exchange for payment and firearms. During campaigns, the draguny were used, together with the Cossacks, as light cavalry, scouts, workers, supporting the engineering units in times of entrenchment and siege, or as builders for the construction of roads for the army.

The soldaty were the core of the new formation regiments and comprised the main body of Muscovy's infantry. They were armed, drilled and formed according to western standards. When the first regiments began training, foreign (*nemetskiy*) officers were invited from Germany. They included not only Germans, but Scottish, Dutch, and English specialists as well. However, with the onset of the century, more and more Russian officers began to command the soldaty regiments and by the end of Aleksey's reign the vast majority of the upper and lower officer corps was comprised of natives. Like the cavalry, the infantry also had to be funded through land grants and many of the soldaty were settled in special villages or existing settlements were converted into soldaty villages.

Apart from these four state-supported types of forces, the tsars relied on auxiliary units, acquired from the steps of Ukraine, the lands along the Don and the Volga Rivers, and Siberia. These units comprised of different tribal bands

[46]The dissertation lies in the basis of Russian military thought, while western authors tend to emphasize on the importance of foreign officers and specialists when they evaluate the Muscovite forces.

[47]The reytary were modeled after the cuirassiers, while the gusaryi were influenced by Polish and Hungarian hussars. The draguny or dragoons were also borrowed from the West and offered a combination of light cavalry and infantry, using the mobility of the first and the firepower of the second. Finally, the soldaty (soldiers) were modeled according to the pike and shot principle of western armies (Volkovskiy, *Vsey Voiny*, 419); Brian Davies uses the term *kopeishchik* (lancers) when referring to the hussar regiments; Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 61-2.

and several Cossack hosts, which were to a greater or lesser extent subjected to the rule of the Muscovite tsar. Kalmyks and Circassians were the biggest ethic groups which provided cavalry support to the Russian army, but lesser tribes also contributed with soldiers. However, it was the Cossacks who played the most significant part. In addition to serving in campaigns, these bands of adventurers and frontiersmen were skillfully used by Moscow to control the steppe borderlands of the Northern Black Sea and the Volga Basin. They also provided horses for the cavalry and garrisoned the forts and defensive lines (*zasechnoy cherty*) which protected Russian heartlands from the raids of Crimean Tatars and their Kuban allies.[48]

*Logistics*

Though Muscovy was struggling to establish a modern adequate force capable of both offensive and defensive activities, this was hindered by the constant lack of funds for the army. Both Western and Russian historians agree that during the seventeenth century the Muscovite state failed to muster the resources, required for its military establishment. Although new taxes were introduced and increased, the amount of money, which could be extorted from peasants, was rather limited. State monopoly over some of the trading goods, such as salt, furs, and vodka, brought considerably more profit to the treasury but still a lot more was needed. Unlike smaller German and Italian states, Muscovy could not afford the luxury of keeping a small standing regular force. The frontiers, thousands of kilometers long, had to be protected at the cost of substantial force.

To deal with the constant lack of funds, the ruling elite in Moscow decided to use the two primary resources of Tsardom – its rather large population and the abundance of land.[49] The newly created cavalry units were compensated with land and often the vybornye lyudi received ennoblement when they entered service in the reytary or gusary regiments. This development gained them land and serfs which provided the required funds for sustaining the mounts and for purchasing new equipment. As mentioned above, the streltsy were reimbursed by allowing them to own land and to participate in trade and small-scale craftsmanship. The soldaty, on the other hand, were placed into individual settlements, which were exempt from certain taxes and received a small amount of state funding in exchange for their service.

The income was based not only on taxation, but also on agriculture production and trade profits. However, after the "Time of Troubles" these were

[48] More information about the Cossacks and the steppe soldiers will be provided in the Second Chapter of this work, see below.

[49] By 1680, the population of Russia was around 14 millionwhile its territory covered more than 9,000,000 $km^2$ (including Siberia). Russia was the third largest state in the region with regard to population (First was the Ottoman Empire with around 30 million and second was France with approximately 18 million, and first or second largest with regard to core territory (i.e. without the colonies), exceeded by the Ottoman Empire in 1683 (around 6,000,000 $km^2$).

in a precarious situation. In the 1670s, the amount of agricultural land in the fourteen core provinces of the state had shrunk to sixty per cent of its size a century earlier.[50] After Sweden had conquered Ingermanland during the War of 1615-1618, Russia was cut from the Baltic trade and Arkhangelsk remained the only Muscovite port, opened to European merchants. However, it was frozen for half a year, and since the time of Ivan IV, the trade there was dominated by the English. Furthermore, the Russians exported only raw materials, timber, hides, wheat and iron to the western manufacturers, but they were unable to sell any local industrial production. Weaponry, luxuries, even clothes and paper had to be imported, as well as spices, sulfur and saltpeter, needed for the manufacture of gunpowder. Industry remained underdeveloped and was unevenly positioned, mainly around Moscow and the Volga basin cities. Transportation was also complicated due to long distances, underdeveloped roads and river networks and because during spring and autumn the grasslands turned into marshes, drowned by rains and river flows.

These impediments were also evident during campaigns when shortages of supplies and ammunitions were obvious, even though Muscovy was able rather slowly to improve its logistics in the course of Aleksey's reign.[51] In order to cope with these problems, it was necessary to adopt a general reform of logistics and to expand trade and industry. The state also had to systematize and unite the many chancelleries (*prikazy*) which were responsible for the maintenance and muster of armed forces in order to ease and accelerate the process of army formation and eventually – its performance on the battlefield.

*Golitsyn's reforms in the 1680s*

In the context of Russian military development the period that took place between Aleksey's reign and Peter's rule was most notable for Count Golitsyn's reforms. He was a favorite of *tsarevna* Sophia and during her regency (1682–1689) he instituted a series of measures, which were meant to strengthen Russia's military potential in order to cope with Tsardom's new international role in the Holy League.[52]

Following the disaster of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1676-1681, the authorities in Muscovy decided that certain measures had to be taken in order to improve the field performance of the Muscovite forces. The first step was to transform all nobles (dvoryane and deti boyarskie) into reytary and *kopeishchiky* regiments while everyone who was not part of the gentry had to be enlisted in

[50]V.I. Moryakov, *Istoriya na Rusiya IX-XVIII vek* (Sofia: Paradigma, 2007), 179.

[51]The performance of the Russian army was far better during the Thirteen Years War (1648-1661) in comparison to the Smolensk War (1631-1634). However, during the Crimean campaigns the lack of provisioning was again evident.

[52]Following the "Eternal piece" (1686) between Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania, the tsardom was obliged to join the military effort of the Holy League against the Ottoman Empire in what was to become the War of the Holy League (1683-1699), also known as the Russo-Ottoman War of 1686-1700.

the soldaty regiments. Also, fellow-villagers of the soldaty were recruited as *prokormshchiki*. They had to maintain soldier's lands and households and to provide food for the soldaty while the latter were on a campaign.

The second change included the reorganization of the urban garrison troops – the provincial streltsy, the Cossacks and the gunmen (*lyudi pushkarskogo china*). All men from these categories, fit for regimental service, had to be enlisted as soldaty. An exception was only made for those, who did not receive payment by the state, but were refunded through land. These soldiers could choose to serve one year as regimental troops (for which they received a soldat's annual salary) or - one year as urban units, during which time they needed to earn money from their lands. Only the Moscow streltsy were kept intact, but their regiments were fixed at 1000 men each. The reform also affected the military ranks of the streltsy officer corps, replacing the *golov* with a colonel (*polkovnik*), the *polugolov* - with a lieutenant colonel (*podpolkovnik*) and the *sotnik* - with a captain (*kapitan*). The core territories of Muscovy were divided into nine military districts and each provided a certain number of soldiers for the state army. Unlike the old system, the new areas (*razryady* or *okruga*), included not only the borderlands but the inner territories as well.[53]

On paper, the army of 1680 was comprised of the following elements: 41 soldaty regiments – 61,288 (37 per cent); 21 regiments Moscow streltsy – 20,048 (12 per cent); 26 regiments of reytary and kopeishchiki – 30,472 (18.5 per cent); four Circassian regiments – 14,865 (9 per cent); supporting troops and urban garrisons - 37,927 (23,5 per cent); or 164,600 in total. These forces had to be backed by the Cossack Hetmanate with a further 50,000 increasing the total strength of the army to 214,600.[54] The infantry was 49 per cent of the entire army. However, when we exclude the auxiliary troops from Ukraine, this per centage goes up to 72 per cent, which means that Muscovy's army was no longer the cavalry force from the previous century.

In addition to these changes, Golitsyn reformed the number of prikazy, responsible for the upkeep of the army. He established three new chancelleries – *Razryadniy prikaz*, *Reytarskiy prikaz*, and *Inozemskiy prikaz*, which had to replace the old ones. However, the jurisdiction of the new prikazy was rather chaotic and they exceed their authority in certain districts and regions.[55]

On the whole, the Golitsyn reforms were able to bring some consolidation in the army. However, they did not resolve the main problems, but rather swept them under the rug. The previous formations were not disbanded or reformed in means of armament and training, but were merged with the new formation regiments. This brought down the morale and quality of the new units. The lack of centralization and coordination among the military prikazy was reduced, but

[53] The nine districts we as follows: Moskovskiy (Muscow), Severskiy (Seversk), Vladimirskiy (Vladimir), Novgorodskiy (Novgorod), Kazanskiy (Kazan), Smolenskiy (Smolensk), Ryazanskiy (Ryazan), Belgorodskiy (Belgorod) and Tambovskiy (Tambov); See A.V. Chernov, *Vooruzhennye sily*, 187-99.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

not removed and, as the Crimean Campaigns demonstrated, Muscovy once again had to reform its forces in order to improve the army's field efficiency – a goal, pursued ever since 1613.

The military evolution of Muscovy, up until the reign of Peter, calls for a general reapproach by Western military historians. It is essential to understand that Muscovy had its unique path of development, influenced by the geopolitical location of Russia. Contrary to the common belief, the events, often referred as Military Revolution, did take place in Russia generally at the same time as they did in the rest of Europe. The difference came from the background upon which the foundations of Russia's military power were built. Nevertheless, firearms, standing units, recruitment of native troops instead of mercenaries and the application of specific tactics of siege and field combat were successfully applied.[56] By 1689 Russia was able to muster the second largest army in Europe.[57] This force was as good as many western armies, and it was certainly superior to most of its enemies. Therefore, when Peter I ascended the throne his task was not to create an entirely new army out of scratch, but only to build on the foundations, established by his predecessors.

### 1.4. The Petrine Army

The overall success or failure of Peter's reforms is the main topic of the historical debate regarding Russia's military power during the first quarter of the eighteen century. There are two points of view. The first argues that under Peter, Russia formed a strong, well-organized standing army that was drilled and equipped according to European standards and was far superior to its eastern counterparts. This idea is defended by C. Duffy in his work on Russia's military development and also in R. Hellie's article on the Petrine Army.[58] Both works supplement each other presenting a concise picture of Russia's military establishment since the reign of Aleksey I Romanov. The main weaknesses of Duffy's approach are that it is too general and lacks a precise description of Russia's forces. Hellie's article is helpful in tracing Russia's military development originating in the seventeenth century, but emphasizes too much on the continuity and rather neglects the innovations, made by Peter. These works are further supported by Russian historiography, which vigorously preserves the idea of a regular, standing army, created by Peter the Great. L.G. Beskrovnyy, K. Tatarnikov and V. Lystsov argue that Russia did develop a

[56] Introduced as early as 1653, when most other armies in Europe still consisted mostly of mercenaries, see Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 80-92.

[57] For a comparison of Russia's army to those in Western Europe; see Table 3 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[58] C. Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West: Origins and Nature of Russian Military Power, 1700 – 1800* (London: Routledge, 1981); R. Hellie, "The Petrine Army: Continuity, Change and Impact", *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 8, 2 (1974), 237-53.

modern, European-style army under Peter and that this army was equal to its European counterparts.[59]

The other side of the debate is taken by Peter's critics. They claim that there was no such thing as regular standing Russian army under Peter. According to them, Peter's military reforms were a response to military problems rather than a general strategy for army reformation. The chief proponent of this theory is W. Fuller who, in his book on Russian warfare during the Romanov period, argues that the Russia's military was far from the mighty war machine described in the above-mentioned works.[60] He gives a very critical overview of Peter's military reforms and plans and concludes that in means of resources, development of society and government, Russia was quite unable to produce not only a regular but also a standing army. L. Hughes accepts Fuller's theses. In her book on Russia in the Age of Peter the Great, she repeats Fuller's ideas, although her narrative lacks Fuller's sharp criticism.[61] Another critical study of Russia's army under Peter is written by J. Keep. In his book Keep summarizes key issues and features of the Petrine army and opens a debate on the real quality of the Russian army during the first quarter of the eighteenth century.[62] Furthermore, he gives exclusive statistical data on the expenditure of Russia's military power in both funds and manpower.

*Army*

Most accounts of Peter's military reforms begin with his early years and relate the future steps, taken by the Tsar, with the experience gained from the organization and training of the two "playtime" regiments – Semyonovskiy and Preobrazhenskiy.[63] However, this is quite controversial. First and foremost, Peter was just a teenager who, like all young boys, had a romantic idea about war. Though he took his war game activities seriously, it would be too naïve to assume that his inspirations for an imperial army came only from a series of field games with several hundred of his companions.[64] Another possible reason for his inspiration for military reforms was his "Grand Tour" in Europe when he

[59] L.G. Beskrovnyy (ed.), *Poltava: K 250- letiyu Poltavskogo srazheniya; sbornik state*y (Moscow: Akademia nauk, 1958); L.G. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot v XVIII veke* (Moscow, 1958); K.V. Tatarnikov, *Russkaya polevaya armiya 1700-1730. Obmundirovanie i snaryazhenie* (Moscow: Lyubimaya kniga, 2008); V. Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I: 1722 – 1723* (Moscow, 1951); It is interesting to note, that Peter I, himself, referred to his army as a regular (*regulyarnyy*) force.

[60] W.C. Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600 – 1914* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

[61] L. Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

[62] J. L. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462 – 1874* (Oxford: Calderon Press, 1985).

[63] In Russian they are referred as *poteshnye voyska* literary meaning "amusement army". It could even be related to toy soldiers that kids play with. The idea that a royal persona should play his war games with real soldiers is evident in the practice of "living" chess games, played all over Western Europe during the eighteenth, nineteenth and even the twentieth century.

[64] This prince-soldier image is quite close to what chronicles tell us of young Alexander and his *hetairoi*. The idealization of the boy-soldier who grew up to be a conquering emperor is a common part of great men's mythology.

visited the most influential Western capitals and was fascinated by the splendor and glamour of the "civilized world". At least that is what most western studies presume. The fact is that Peter was truly inspired and amazed only by one thing – ships. It suffices to note here that Peter was quite unimpressed by the French army when he saw them parading.[65] Then it could be assumed that it was not the eyewitness of the most developed and sophisticated army that inspired his reforms either.[66] In reality, Peter drew inspiration for the structure and for composition of his infantry regiments from Saxony and Austria. He sent Adam Weyde to Dresden and Vienna in order to become familiar with the basic army regulations of the two states. These were later translated into Russian and used in the process of forming the newly recruited regiments in 1699 and 1700.[67] According to Bobrovskiy it was Peter's plan for war against Sweden that provoked the establishment of a permanent standing army in Russia. On the other hand, he notes that the regiments, established between 1699 and 1700 were poorly armed and trained and it was not until the disaster at Narva that the true process of army formation began.[68] Thus, the event that made Peter to realize that war games and parades were only the "powdered faces" of eighteen-century warfare was the Battle of Narva (1700). In this confrontation the Russians met one of the most experienced and well-trained forces in Europe and suffered a humiliating loss. The factors for the Swedish victory are examined in detail in books dealing with the Great Northern War (1700-1721).[69] What concerns the current research is that Peter understood that he had to create a coherent, better-trained force and to equip it with the best possible weapons.[70]

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[65] Peter is quoted for commenting on French troops "I have seen dolls, but not soldiers".

[66] During the Nine Years' War (1688-1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), France possessed an impressive army, probably the best in Europe. It was the genius of the Allied commanders Marlborough and Eugene and the multitude of fronts that France had to face that kept the military balance in the beginning of the eighteenth century. For an exhaustive account of the French army under Louis XIV, see J.A. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV, 1667-1714* (Harlow: Longman, 1999); J.A. Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); If we accept that the Grand Tour and the war games were the main reason for the reforms, we may not but wonder why did Russia enter the Great Northern War with an army, that was more or less structured in the same way as was the army under Golitsyn.

[67] P. Bobrovskiy, *K dvuhsotlyatiyu uchrezhdeniya regulyarnykhy voysky v Rossiy (1699-1700 po 1899-1900)*, (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya Glavnago Upravleniya Udyalov, 1899), 2.

[68] Ibid., 4; A. Bayov confirms Bobrovskiy's perspective on the influence of German military manuals, equipment and unit structure on the composition of Peter's newly recruited regiments, but notes that it was the shortage of troops after the disbandment of the Moscow streltsy and the Belgorod-line troops that led to the formation of the regular regiments between 1699 and 1700. Regarding the influence on Peter's reform policy, he clearly outlines that *Peter's genius was strong enough to succeed in the reforms he had planned on his own*. Furthermore, Bayov is quite critical toward the foreign officers, recruited by Peter for the training and the command of the new regiments; see A. Bayov, *Kurs istorii russkogo voennogo iskusstva: Vypusk II, Epokha Petra Velikogo*, (St. Petersburg: Tipografiya Gr. Skachkov, 1909), 42-3.

[69]There are numerous books and articles dealing with the Great Northern War. Almost any account on Russia's military effort under Peter is concentrated on the Northern War.

[70]Peter himself comments, that the defeat at Narva should come as no surprise, since his entire army lacked real field experience and only the two guard (*leyb*) regiments had seen any real action during the two Azov campaigns – "*Zhurnal ili podennaya zapiska blazhennyya i vechnodostoynyya pamyati gosudarya imperatora Petra Velikogo s 1698 goda dazhe do zaklyucheniya neyshtatskago mira*" (St. Petersburg: Akademia nauk, 1770), 23 (referred henceforth as *Zhurnal ili Podennaya zapiska*).

It was the course of the Great Northern War, with its victories, setbacks, and defeats that shaped the reform of the Russian army. In early modern Europe, the most suitable time to reform a state's army was during war. It provided the opportunity to instantly test against the enemy any new idea and to correct in time any shortcomings that occurred. Furthermore, it is the creation of a veteran army that is the final goal of any successful army reform.[71] Then it is not surprising that Peter experimented with different tactics and ideas during the course of the Northern War in order to find the exact formula for success. He introduced heavy cavalry and later - abolished it. He used different field configurations to determine the best way to situate his army on the battlefield. Guns of various sizes were used on some occasions to improve the firepower of regiments and to find out which caliber is the most appropriate one.[72]

Finally, it turned out that Russia's military development was shaped by the very same factors that predetermined the Muscovite military evolution during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Logistical issues required the development of a mobile army, which could easily transfer over the enormous distances between Russia's separate frontiers. The use of light, mobile cavalry by the Turks, Tatars and Kalmyks, as well as the general preference of Peter toward light, mounted forces, resulted in the dropping out of the heavy reytary, and the creation of a high number of dragoon regiments. The necessity to respond to both cavalry attacks and the powerful "*gå på"* tactics of the Swedes, led to the application of mobile field fortification.[73] Furthermore, the pike was not entirely removed from the ranks, since it was very useful in repulsing cavalry charges by the steppe hordes. Therefore, the new Russian army had a lot more to do with the old one than Keep's and Hallie's studies indicate.[74]

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[71] As David Parrott notes, it is not the tactical reforms, but the establishment of a veteran army that makes a state powerful at war. When veterans met inexperienced troops, no matter how situated and equipped the later were, experience and higher morale always prevailed. Therefore the victories of the Russian army, especially after Poltava (1709) were not due only to superiority in numbers, but also to the experience, gained by the Russian soldiers. Peter was well aware of this fact and that is the main reason for his desire to defeat the Swedes in any possible occasion after the loss at Narva. Russian operations in Estland and Ingria in 1702-1705 served to build up experienced regiments and to bring confidence to the soldiers, see Parrott, "Strategy and Tactics in the Thirty Years' War", 227-53.

[72] For different evaluation of Peter's "experiments", see Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, 56-84.

[73] For account of the heavy cavalry experience in Russia, see Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 81-2; Hellie, "The Petrine Army", 239.; The Swedes relied on the experience of their soldiers and preformed a rapid infantry attack. They used a series of volleys at around 30 ft. to disrupt enemy lines and then charged home with their bayonets. The untrained Russian conscripts proved to be disastrously vulnerable to these charges. Since Peter had to response rapidly to the aggressive Swedish offence, instead of relying on morale and drill experience, which would need time to develop, he reintroduced the mobile field fortifications. Protected by this wooden palisades and trenches, the Russians were able to break the Swedish offence and counter–attack, using volley fire and bayonets. Poltava is the classic example of this way of conducting battles.

[74] Both Keep and Hellie refer to the transition of experience, but none of them seems to take into consideration the obvious continuum of the streltsy tactics. Furthermore, as noted by Christopher Duffy, most of the streltsy were not killed or disbanded, but instead, as experienced troops, they were incorporated in the new infantry regiments. Therefore, it is no surprise that they took their manner of fighting and transferred it to the new recruits.

In general, the infantry was formed into two types of regiments: grenadier and fusilier. Initially, grenadiers comprised only separate companies within fusilier regiments, but after the Battle of Poltava (1709) these companies were merged and formed different regiments of foot. Every soldier possessed a musket and was given a uniform.[75] In response to the Swedish threat, the structure of the infantry regiments changed on several occasions between 1700 and 1711. Some regiments consisted of larger number of men than others, and special task force divisions received units according to their particular goal. In 1711 and 1712 Peter issued the first regular rules for the number of soldiers (*shchat*) that each regiment should comprise of.[76] These regulations changed during the second part of the Northern War, but after the ordinance of 1720 the numbers were fixed and differed little from those accepted in 1711.[77] Unlike Muscovite forces, the new Russian army received salaries instead of land grants. In peacetime, the regiments were garrisoned in different key cities in Russia.[78] Apart from field units, a large portion of the Petrine army was comprised of local militia and garrison troops that served mainly along the southern frontier, maintaining fortification lines that span from Dnieper to the Volga.[79] Unlike regular regiments, the militia was kept on the old principle of land grants, which had to provide food and funds for its holders in exchange for their service.[80]

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[75]During the Narva campaign, the Russian arms varied in caliber and even models. After 1711, with the expansion of the gun production facilities, the calibers were somewhat standardized. Nevertheless, calibers remained a problem as late as the Napoleonic Wars, when 28 different calibers were reported in the Russian army. The quality of the muskets was as high as any produced in Western Europe. The preferred type was the French-style flintlock musket. By the end of the Great Northern War, the weapons of the Russian infantry were of better quality and in greater quantity compared to the Swedish ones. Apart from the musket, each soldier had a bayonet knife, which was attached to the weapon, with a mechanism at the lower part of the barrel. For an exhaustive description of infantry armament, see Tatarnikov, *Russkaya polevaya armiya*, 85-99; Uniforms were copied from the so-called German fashion (*Nemetskaya moda*). They were with plain cut and were developed to allow maximal mobility as well as protection from the harsh Russian weather. The colors of the uniforms varied according to the regiments and the type of infantry. Uniforms were generally made from cloth, which after 1711 was produced in Russia. However, a cloth shortage was significant and imports reached as high as 1/3 of the total necessary amount. For an exhaustive description of Petrine uniforms, see Tatarnikov, *Russkaya polevaya armiya*, 44-71; A. Konstram, *Peter the Great's Army*, *vol. 1* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1993), 22-4 with very precise illustrations on pages 25-33.

[76]According to the ordinance of 1711, there were 42 regiments of foot – 2 regiments of the guard (leyb), 5 grenadier regiments and 35 fusilier regiments. All in all they numbered 52,164 combatants (*stroevay soldaty*) and 10,290 non-combatants, or a total of 62,454 men, see L.G. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 40;

[77]The regiments in 1720 were again 42 – 2 guard, 5 grenadier, 35 fusilier – 54,560 combatants and only 3,396 non-combatants, or a total of 57,956 men, see. Ibid, 41.

[78] For a map of the garrison arrangement of the regiments during the reign of Peter I, see J.P. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650 – 1831*, (Oxford, 2004), 45; After 1724 regiments were named after the cities in which they were stationed and recruited.

[79] Many of these troops were formed from the former streltsy, *reytary* and *kopeishchiky*, who were disbanded from field service after 1700. Therefore, the idea that Peter destroyed or disbanded completely his former army is false. In fact, the emperor used these old regiments and companies for training grounds of new recruits, taken during the annual recruitments. The only part of the old style army which was completely dissolved was the noble cavalry. L.G. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 44-7.

[80] The system of settling militia and garrison regiments on the southern frontier was already introduced by Aleksey during the seventeenth century. Peter continued the practice and supplemented the frontier with several new garrison regiments and new Cossack reinforsments. For an extensive description of the frontier service, see LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy*, 23-9 and 44-52; Konstram, *Peter the Great's Army*, 38-9; Duffy, *Russia's Military*, 125-36.

The variability of Russian cavalry types must not be underestimated. Even though the regular cavalry was comprised exclusively of dragoons, Peter could rely on the support of two prominent irregular forces – the Cossacks and the Kalmyks. The Cossacks were a frontier-based warrior society that evolved throughout the entire early modern period. By the reign of Peter, most of them were already settled on the steppe frontiers and were under relatively high state control.[81] Most of the Cossacks were Orthodox Christians, but there were also Muslims since religion was not determinative for the Cossack ethos.[82] The Kalmyks were, perhaps, the last great horde of Asia. Unlike the Tatars their ancestry could not be traced back to the Chingisid Empire and they were proud of their heritage.[83] They became very useful allies against the Nogais, the Tatars and other Central Asian tribes. Still, they could also be a threat to Russia and the frontier forces, especially around Astrakhan, where troops were always vigilant for sporadic Kalmyk raids.[84] Unlike the Cossacks, the Kalmyks were mostly Muslim, although some of them kept their old pagan practices up until the eighteenth century. In general, Cossack and Kalmyk bands slightly differed in their equipment. They were light cavalry units, armed with different types of swords and a large variety of guns. They had no standard uniforms or regimental flags. Unlike dragoons, they did not receive regular payment, but were rather allowed to keep their part of the loot and later - to trade these goods and captives in Russian and Central Asian markets.[85]

The dragoons were the only regular cavalry in the Petrine army. During the early stage of the Northern War Peter decided to trade heavy armament for mobility and the ability to fight dismounted. Similarly to Gustav II Adolf (r. 1611-1632), Peter had a preference for saber charges than to ranged attacks and he used his dragoons to flank enemy positions by dealing with enemy cavalry and chasing the defeated foes out of the battlefields. Furthermore, dragoons were used to form special task forces, which were sent on individual missions.[86]

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[81] For a concise narrative on the settlement and the administration of Cossacks, see B.J. Boeck, *Imperial Boundaries: Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[82] When it came to war religion was never essential for Russia. As early as the fifteenth century, the Muscovite state employed irregular Muslim bands in its forces. During the advance in Siberia, Muslims and pagans were often approached as possible allies. During the Persian campaign, the most active ally of Peter was the Sunni *shamkhal* of Tarki.

[83] M. Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500 – 1800* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 133-46.

[84] A good example is presented during the 1705 Revolt in the Astrakhan region, when the Kalmyks took advantage of Russia's situation and raided Russian territories in the South-East.

[85] Peter tried to limit this practice, but in the end he had to give up, because the state did not have the funds, necessary to compensate the Kalmyks for their participation in a campaign. The Cossacks, who were more bound with the Russian state had comply with the general regulations, but every now and then, they raided enemy territory and earned additional funding by selling the spoils of war or through collecting ransoms.

[86] Gustav II Adolf is credited for restoring the place of the cavalry on the battlefield, after the military developments of the sixteenth century had somewhat diminished its role. Both Michael Roberts and Geoffrey Parker are proponents of this idea, see Roberts, "The Military Revolution, 1560-1660", 13-37; Parker, "The Military Revolution, 1560-1660 – A Myth?", 37-55.; The most famous example is the "flying corpse" of

The dragoon regiments also varied in size and purpose during the first decade of the eighteenth century. In 1711 the ordinance, regarding the shchat of the different army types, prescribed a total of 33 regiments, numbering 43,824 men (34,320 combatants and 9,504 non-combatants), while the size of the regiments was fixed at 1,328 soldiers and officers. The new shchat of 1720 brought little change to the overall structure. The number of regiments was kept at 33, but the grenadier companies were taken out of fusilier regiments and gathered in their own regiments, similarly to foot grenadiers. The number of troops per regiment was reduced to 1,253, so the total number of dragoons in 1720 was 37,851 men.[87]

The artillery reform was indeed the main army innovation, introduced by Peter I. During the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, artillery was not a separate type of force, but was attached to field regiments. Furthermore, there were neither standard calibers, nor standard materials for guns: some were cast from bronze, others – from iron; some were new, others - a century old.[88] During the Battle of Narva Peter lost his entire artillery train, and though this seemed like a disaster, the determined tsar used this loss to build new, up-to-date artillery. In 1701 Peter established individual artillery corps, which was deployed separately from the infantry regiments.[89] Furthermore, as early as 1697, the Russians introduced the horse-pack mortars – half a century before western armies.[90] In general, by 1722 Russia possessed an excellent artillery train and Russian gunners were considered among the best in Europe.

The artillery itself was divided into four main elements – regimental, field, siege and garrison. Regimental artillery numbered between six and eight different types of guns for cavalry and a total of six guns and mortars for the infantry. The number of field guns varied from 157 in 1706 to 108 in 1712 and again - 108 in 1724. By 1724 the siege artillery comprised of a total of 360 guns and mortars.[91]

Peter's reforms also affected the officer corps. The establishment of military schools, as well as the general desire of Peter to promote as many local officers as possible, led to the “russification” of the officer corps. Nevertheless, some foreigners remained, especially in the infantry and artillery, where they were needed during the rearrangement of these forces. The higher echelon of the

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Menshikov, prior to the Battle of Poltava. The highly mobile Russian force was able to check the Swedish movement and to deny them the ability to resupply.

[87] Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 41-2.

[88] Paul, “The Military Revolution”, 29.

[89] The first artillery corps was comprised of 4 gunner companies, 4 mortar platoons, bridge and engineer companies and a corps of officers. They numbered 674 men in total. The first regular shchat for the artillery was issued in 1712 and the corps’ numbers were set at 20 staff-officers, 53 officers, 285 non-commissioned officers (NCOs), 984 combatants and 2,217 non-combatants. L.G. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 43; This was supplemented by the establishment of a standing horse corps to pull the artillery in 1711. It comprised of 1,986 horses and 1,255 men, see Hellie, “The Petrine Army”, 244.

[90] Ibid; the general search for mobility, demonstrated by Peter was utilized in the west as late as Napoleon. Thus, Russia was a step ahead of the West in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

[91] Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 43-4.

officer corps was comprised of Peter's childhood companions (Sheremetev, Apraksin, Menshikov) or his foreign tutors (Bruce, Lefort, Gordon). While the former were charged with commanding the field army or the navy, the latter were placed as heads of the artillery, since ballistics was still a underdeveloped discipline in Russia. Nevertheless, Peter established the first military school in St. Petersburg in 1704, and it was dedicated to the arts of artillery. By the end of Peter's reign, artillery's higher echelon also consisted of officers of Russian origin.

Although on paper any soldier could progress through the ranks, in fact, the highest positions remained a privilege of the nobility. Moreover, progressing officers of unprivileged origins were ennobled after reaching a certain rank. Thus, new military nobility came into being, supplementary to the service nobility, established by Peter through his administrative reform. By 1722 a complicated structure of ranks was developed which was finally systematized in the "Table of Ranks of 1722". In this chart military, official and civil titles were equalized to define the honors and hierarchy among them.[92]

A major problem of the Petrine army was discipline. Like any other recently reformed force, the army of Peter I was comprised mostly of fresh recruits with little or none combat experience.[93] Most of these soldiers were conscripted men, who had never before left their villages and a substantial part of them served far away from their homes. Furthermore, like any other early modern peasants, Russians were superstitious and placed great emphasis on the balance between known and unknown. Thus, when remote from their home, they were subjected to fear and superstitious beliefs.[94] Apart from the cultural shock, problems with inadequate treatment, low or no payment and shortage of food also contributed to the large number of deserters.[95] Defeats and uncertain

[92] For the complete table of ranks, see L.G. Beskrovnyy, *Khrestomatiya po Russkoy voennoy istorii* (Moscow, 1947), 143-50.

[93] The same problems could be seen in Western Armies during their formation period in the Thirty Years's War. As David Parrott notes, desertion and logistics issues were the main enemy of seventeenth century armies and commanders first had to be good administrators and only after that came the importance of their strategic skills. As with Western forces, as soon as soldiers gained experience, general problems with discipline and desertion lessened, see Parrott, "Strategy and Tactics", 240-6; Duffy, *Russia's Military Way*, 130-5.

[94] A great gap in early modern Military history lies in the impact of popular culture on the behavior of soldiers. Superstitions, rituals, and remains of pagan practices were common among early modern people, especially those who came from the rural areas. Folklore and pagan mythology, mashed up with Christianity in order to produce a series of myths, tales, and fears, concerning a person, who left home, traveled on uncertain roads and died far away from home. In Eastern Slavonic mythology, most evil creatures and the Devil himself dwelled on roads and crossroads, or in the ruins of old churches, windmills, etc. other evil spirits were related to violent death and inappropriate burial ceremony of a person. Thus, apart from the common reasons of ill-treatment, low or no payment and the low moral after a defeat, belief also had their place in the reasons for desertions.

[95] Beskrovnyy analyzes in depth the problem of desertion due to ill treatment of the recruits. They were placed in barns, locked in small chambers, sometimes a hundred people at a place. Food and clothes were of constant shortage, and diseases were quick to spread. The authorities tried hard to coup with this problem, but the harsh methods (between 1700 and 1708) and the later promises of pardon upon their return were of little help. Tattoos and signs were placed on the recruits' arms in order to distinguish them in case they deserted, but these were often scratched away by the peasants and some even went so far as to cripple themselves in order not to be recruited.

victories were also part of the problem. To cope with this situation, Peter I issued a strict and harsh military code. Capital punishment and torture were regularly applied to deserters. Another practice was to take relatives as hostages in exchange for loyalty on the field.[96] Nevertheless, general problems with desertion were constant during the first decade of the Northern War. Only after the victory at Poltava and the improvement of supply system after 1711, the overall morale of the troops rose and the level of desertion fell.[97]

*The sinews of war*

An army, no matter how well trained or experienced would not survive a single day in the field without an adequate logistical support. In Russia, the need to secure the army's supply was well understood long before the accession of Peter.[98] In general, the three most essential sinews of war are men, supplies, and money.[99] Each of these is related to the others, and none of the three could sufficiently replace the lack of the other two.[100] Peter I was well aware of this interrelation and he did everything he could in order to provide his army with this three main elements of army support.

*Logistics*

The greatest problem with logistics in Russia was distance. Since Moscow was the center of the state's supply system, supplies had to be transported from there to any frontline. Unfortunately, most fronts were over a thousand kilometers away.[101] To make things worse, the weather played very negative role in the development of logistics. Contrary to the common belief, it was spring and autumn rather than summer and winter that were problematic for army's

[96] This medieval practice was generally applied toward nobles and vassal rulers, but Peter expanded it to locals as well. When a deserter from a certain village was not captured, the village had to pay a certain fee.

[97] Duffy, *Russia's Military Way*, 130-5; Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 30-1; Problems still existed, but that was the case in all armies during this period and the Russian was no exception.

[98] For example, in 1630 the Russians began a careful preparation for the upcoming Smolensk campaign (1632-1633). Iron and copper were imported from Western Europe, food and munitions were stored in special key points on the future route of the army. Diplomatic support was provided, gaining the neutrality of Sweden and the Crimean Tatars. In the sixteenth century Ivan IV first secured his army's abundance with arms, provisions and transports and then launched his offensives, see D.L. Smith, "Muscovite Logistics, 1462–1598", *Slavonic and East European Review* 71, 1 (1993), 35-65; Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, 3-10.

[99] There is a millennium old debate between military leaders and writers on the exact nature of the sinews of war. Any great man who deals with war from Cicero onward had his own perception of what was important for the support of war efforts. In general, money, supplies and men are the three most important elements, which are interrelated and comprise the general logistics complex.

[100] Money cannot buy everything. A rich (in terms of money) state with small population and pour supplies could not maintain a military effort. A numerous population, deprived of full treasury could not wage war for a long period. An abundance of supplies without a proper army and a considerable amount of money to pay the prices of transport and service is also doomed to failure. The lack of one of the sinews would not hinder the beginning of a war, but it will certainly prevent a decisive victory.

[101] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy*, 16 - for a map, illustrating the distance from Moscow to the main frontlines and operation bases.

movement. The rains and the melting snow transformed the steppes into an enormous muddy swamp, which was impenetrable on foot. Oxen carts constantly stuck in the mud and even horses had problems traversing the knee-deep silt. Roads were scarce and most of them resembled a dirt trail, drawn by the passing carts. The road connecting the new capital Petersburg and Moscow was not in good condition. Apart from threatening the security of the new city, this resulted in a problematic communication between the administrative apparatus, situated in the capital and the supply depots, positioned in Moscow. However, Russia was blessed with navigable rivers which made possible the connections among most parts of the empire. Peter I was very keen on developing river transport and under his direction several canals were dug to enhance mobility and supply on the frontiers.[102] However, water transport was not always a possible solution and Russian forces constantly suffered from shortage of particular necessities.[103]

If distance could be overcome by different means of transportation, the supply of goods and ammunitions brought up other issues. Russia was abundant of all kinds of metals and resources, but most of them were still underdeveloped while others needed a further development to meet state's needs. First and foremost, Russia needed weapons. Guns, firearms and gunpowder were of a constant shortage during the seventeenth century and had to be imported. Peter decided to solve this problem by developing a substantial military industry, which would transform Russia into a self-sufficient force. The discovery of large deposits of iron and copper in the Urals were crucial for fulfilling Peter's ambition. Results were fascinating and by 1725 Russia became the leading distributor of high quality iron in the world. Russia's output surpassed any other state in Europe, including England and Sweden.[104] The supply of high quality iron enhanced the production of weapons, which increased fivefold between 1700 and 1706.[105] By the end of Peter's reign, however, weapons were still imported from England and the Dutch Republic. Obtaining gunpowder for the Russian army was also problematic, as its production was in the hands of private entrepreneurs, most of whom were of Russian origin. The system of gunpowder

[102] For an exhaustive description of the canal projects and their exact purposes, see LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy*, 52-60.

[103] Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, 37-56; Fuller is biased, since he fails to note that no early modern administration could handle with the vastness of Russia. If France, England or Austria were challenged by the same distances, their logistics systems would have crumbled. However, regarding the circumstances, Russia preformed surprisingly well. Therefore, Russian logistics should always be evaluated on the basis of conditions, distances and quantities and should never be viewed outside the context of general early modern development. Doing the opposite implies dangerous inaccuracy.

[104] For an exhaustive account of Russia's iron production, see N.I. Pavlenko, "Produktsiya uralyskoy metalurgii v nachale XVIII v.", in L.G. Beskrovnyy (ed.), *Poltava: K 250-letiyu Poltavskogo srazheniya; sbornik statey* (Moscow: Akademia nauk, 1959).

[105] The production of muskets was 6,000 in 1700 and grew up to 30,000 in 1706. In 1709-1710 this figure rose to 125,000, see Konstram, *Peter the Great's Army*, 34-5; Hellie, "The Petrine Army", 240; Beskrovnyy presents a concise table of firearms production between 1721 and 1751. In 1721 were produced 26,358 firearms in several different types; 28,089 were forged in 1737 and 35,951 - in 1747. In addition, thousands of old firearms were recast – 14,610 in 1730 and 57,645 in 1737; see Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 86-87.

supply was the following: the state ordered a certain amount of powder; the gunpowder manufactories produced it and delivered it to the state reserves; the reserves distributed the gunpowder to the required locations, following the instructions of the Senate and the Artillery (and later Military) department. Nevertheless, gunpowder producers were always short to meet state's needs. There are numerous examples of gunpowder shortages due to the inability of private contractors to fulfill state's orders.[106] The main reason for the shortage of powder was the lack of saltpeter.[107] Throughout his entire reign, Peter sought to fix this problem and to find new sources of saltpeter. In 1712 he issued an order for the increase of saltpeter production and during the following three years several state-owned gunpowder factories were established, most important of which were those in St. Petersburg and Moscow. By 1716 their combined output was 10,800 *puda* (176.04 tons) yearly. In 1717 a new system of mechanized gunpowder production was introduced, which increased the quality of the Russian powder. There were at least six state-owned gunpowder factories by 1714, which more or less could provide the bulk of the necessary supplies for the army.[108]

Clothing also became a challenge for the Russian state.[109] As late as 1722, Russia still had to import 1/3 of the required cloth for the making of army uniforms.[110] Textile manufactories were insufficient in numbers and their output was not of the highest quality.[111] The material was imported from England, the Dutch Republic and even from the Ottoman Empire. Unlike fabric, leather was supplied and manufactured in large numbers and by 1709 Russian leather production was able to meet state's necessities.[112] In general, the Russian army was more or less sufficiently equipped with uniforms. However, as W. Fuller notes, there were still occasions when Peter's troops were dressed in rags putting their tsar and commanders to shame.[113]

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[106]For data-abundant account of gunpowder production in Petrine Russia, see M. Lukyyanov, "Proizvodstvo Porokha v Rossii v pervoy chetveri XVIIIv.", in L.G. Beskrovnyy (ed.), *Poltava: K 250-letiyu Poltavskogo srazheniya; sbornik statey* (Moscow: Akademia nauk, 1959); The average supply of gunpowder between 1704 and 1711 was 13 to 30,000 *puda* (or 489 tons) of gunpowder per year; see Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 96.

[107] Ibid. Saltpeter was insufficient and on several occasions the state had to requisition large amounts of saltpeter in order to supply the production. On other occasions, producers asked for state funding in order to import saltpeter from Western Europe. Apart from the above-mentioned occassions, saltpeter was imported from Ukarine or the Lower Volga cities. Beskrovnyy *Russkaya armiya i flot* , 96.

[108] Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot* , 97.

[109] By 1709, the Russian field army numbered around 120,000. Each soldier had to be provided with a standart set of equipment which cost almost half of his yearly payment; see A.I. Yuht, "Russkaya promyshlenosty i snabzhenie armii obmundirovaniem i amunitsiey", in L.G. Beskrovnyy (ed.), *Poltava: K 250-letiyu Poltavskogo srazheniya; sbornik statey* (Moscow: Akademia nauk, 1959), 211.

[110] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy*, 54.

[111] Yuht, "Russkaya promyshlenosty", 211-5; Yuht provides an exhaustive narrative of the cloth-supply problems and provides an abundant amount of data.

[112] Ibid., 219.

[113] Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, 50. Nevertheless, Yuht provides information that by 1709, despite the problems with production and transportation, the state was able to provide for the general needs of the army; see Yuht, "Russkaya promyshlenosty", 227.

Another problem with the upkeep of Russia's army was horse supply. The greater part of Russia's cavalry was mounted on steppe horses, bred by the Kalmyks and other Central Asian tribes. Unlike Western European breeds, Asian horses were relatively small and could not carry significant loads.[114] Apart from the desire for better mobility, the lack of bigger horses predetermined the limited numbers of the heavy cavalry.[115] In harsh winters and when fighting outside Russian territory, horses were vulnerable to weather conditions as well as to the unknown types of poisonous grass, which often led to the death of hundreds of animals.

According to official numbers, Russia's cavalry was supposed to have 42,000 horses (33,000 for combat and 9,000 for transportation) in line with the regulations of 1711. As mentioned above, the number of dragoons, serving in the cavalry was 42,820 (34,320 combatants and 9,504 non-combatants) in the same year. These figures mean not only that there were not enough horses per soldier, but also that 1,320 cavalrymen did not possess horses at all. Furthermore, each horse was supposed to serve for ten to twelve years before it was replaced.[116] The regulations of 1720 brought few changes into the picture. The number of war horses was raised to 34,000 and the non-combat animals were supposed to be 10,000. However, the number of dragoons was also increased (37,851 dragoons in 1720), which meant that over 3,000 cavalrymen were left without horses. The state tried to establish several "horse factories" in the Volga basin to supplement the number of available mounts, but by 1740 this system had achieved unsatisfactory results. Therefore, the state had to recruit horses from the peasants and the monasteries and also to purchase significant numbers from abroad. Still, by the end of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739, the problem of insufficient mounts was not overcome.

### *Conscription*

The levy of additional recruits is the second crucial element in supporting the war effort. Conscription, rather than hiring mercenaries, was a preferred method in Russia as early as 1630.[117] The drafts were based on a system of recruiting one soldier from every 10 to 95 households.[118] Initial recruitments provided fewer people than Peter had hoped and in 1705 was introduced a new recruiting

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[114] Konstram, *Peter the Great's Army*, 9; quoting captain Jeffreyes' account of the Battle of Holowczyn (1708) "*twas seldom that we could overtake them, and never but when by chance they came into a morasses whence their horses being little and weak could not so hastly carry the out as to escape us*".
[115] Ibid., 11.
[116] Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot,* 125.
[117] Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, 1-10.
[118] Hellie, "The Petrine Army", 249. According to the law, the state was divided into sections of 20 households. Each section had to provide 1 soldier fit for battle. This practice was supplemented by additional recruits, levied among a larger portion of households. Hence - the great variety between the numbers of households per soldier; see Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 103-6; Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, 45-7; For the size of annual recruits, see Table 2 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

system, demanding one soldier from every 20 households. One mounted soldier had to be provided from every 80 families.[119] In reality, these figures varied due to additional levies, corruption and the practice of payment for a substitute. There is no consensus among historians on the exact number of recruited soldiers.[120] Numbers vary between 250,000 and 350,000 for the entire reign of Peter. If we accept Beskrovnyy's extensive examination of documents, a total of 342,000 men were called for service. Divided along the twenty-four years of recruiting under Peter, this gives us an average of 14,250 recruits per year.[121] Of an available male population of 5,528,742 this figure meant that Peter managed to mobilize 6.2 per cent of Russia's male population.[122] If by 1724 the total number of soldiers was 253,000, then Peter was able to mobilize over two per cent of Russia's population.[123] As Keep notes, twentieth-century countries with the same population as Russia had in 1700 were capable of supporting no more than 65,000 soldiers.[124] Therefore, despite the setbacks and problems of transportation and recruitment, Russia achieved exceptional success in mobilizing its war potential during the reign of Peter I.

It was not so much the size of the recruitment but the conditions of service that were problematic and led to the high rates of desertion. According to the Military Code, recruits had to anticipate in a life-term service in the army. Even after this term was reduced to twenty-five years of service, things did not change for common soldiers. In general, Russian commoners believed that a soldier could only leave the army if he was killed. Moreover, many of the recruited soldiers were loosing any hope of seeing their families again.[125] This trend led to high levels of desertion that are acknowledged even by Russian historians.[126] Since punishment and other measures of preventing desertion were unsuccessful, the only way to compensate was by carrying out new recruitments,

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[119] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 103-6; The recruiting system of 1705 was rearranged in 1708-1709, after the administrative reform and the new census of households. Until then, the recruitment was based on the old household data, gathered in 1678; V.N. Avtokratov, "Voennyy prikaz (u istorii komplektovaniya i formirovaniya voysk v Rossii v nachale XVIII v.)", in L.G. Beskrovnyy (ed.), *Poltava: K 250-letiyu Poltavskogo srazheniya; sbornik statey* (Moscow, 1959), 232-3.

[120] Keep estimates over 300,000 people for the entire reign of Peter; see J. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 107; Fuller mentions "*at least quarter of a million*"; see Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, 47; Avtokratov estimates that for the 1705-11 period, 150,000 were recruited; see Avtokratov, "Voenny Prikaz", 233; According to Bescrovnyy, at least 342,770 recruits were enlisted during Peter I's reign; see Beskrovnuyy, *Ruskaya armiya i flot*, 23-35.

[121] For a complete summary of all recruitments between 1700 and 1740, see Table 2 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[122] Duffy, *Russia's Military Way*, 127.

[123] Brian Davies, accepting J. Keep's figures, estimates a total of 289,000 soldiers in 1725. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 161; Keep, *Soldiers of the tsar*, 138; The figures in the current dissertation are based on Beskrovnyy's account, since the numbers seem more plausible and are generally accepted by modern Russian historiography.

[124] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 90.

[125] Duffy, *Russia's Military Way*, 130-6.

[126] Avtokratov quotes a case from 1707 in which out of 23,000 dragoons, only 8,000 remained at their position, while the others deserted; see Avtokratov, "Voennyy prikaz", 244.

sometimes on several occasions per year.[127] The government resorted to taking hostages among soldiers' families in order to secure their presence in the rank and file. Harsh corporal punishment was also issued in order to cow the recruits into submission. These measures were not uncommon among contemporary armies, and as with their western counterparts, in the consecutive decades Russian officers would slowly abolish the harshest forms of punishment.[128]

The cost of recruitment over the general population was staggering. Although Peter managed to provide enough men for his forces, this was achieved at a great price. The census of 1710 demonstrated that over 20 per cent of Russia's households, that were extant in 1678, no longer existed while in particular provinces this percentage reached 40 per cent.[129] Peter ordered this new data to be neglected, and further drafts were carried out according to the old lists. When censuses were conducted between 1719 and 1723, usually the aristocracy hid the exact number of serfs they owned and by doing that - greatly hindered the work of the Senate. In addition, the peasants used different means to trick the authorities in order to evade conscription.

*Money*

While the supply of men and the logistics were matters of organization, the provision of funds was an entirely different story. State revenues during the early modern period were bond tightly with war expenditures. Like his Western European counterparts, caught up in series of wars between 1700 and 1718, Peter had to find a solution to the increasing financial burden of his aggressive policy.[130] In this sense, the Northern War, with its financial and administrative needs, served as the main catalyst for the governmental and fiscal reforms in Russia. Peter developed a new system of dividing his territories – the governorships (*guberniya*). These military-administrative units served to accelerate the mobilization of funds, supplies and recruits for the war effort. Furthermore, Peter established the Senate and its relative Colleges to ease the legislative burden on the old bureaucracy and to achieve a better and more efficient administration.[131] The new system helped for the better utilization of state's resources and the higher administration served as Peter's substitute when the tsar was on a campaign. Apart from these liabilities, this new administrative apparatus had to elaborate and enact the particular laws and ordinances which implied Peter's further reforms. Thus, apart from the ruler, the Senate and the

[127] As mentioned above, after 1711 desertion levels lessened in general, but remained an issue until the end of the eighteenth century.
[128] A. Stoyanov, *Velikata Severna voyna – Triumfat na Petar I*, (Sofia: Millennium, 2015), 42.
[129] These 20 per cent can be split as follows: 4 per cent were taken in the army and fleet; 7 per cent escaped their lands; 6 per cent perished; 3 per cent were killed due to different reasons. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 113.
[130] For war expenditure of Petrine Russia, see Table 4 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[131] For an exhaustive narrative of Peter's administrative reforms, see Hughes, *Russia in the Age*, 92-135.

War College were also responsible for creating and applying the new taxation and recruitment methods.

When it comes to war economy, Peter's reign is distinctive in two aspects – the increase in both state revenue and war expenditures. Russia's income under Peter increased almost three times while military spending grew six-fold.[132] Several fixed and extraordinary taxes were imposed to cover the expenses and to balance the budget. However, by 1723 it became apparent that even the new census of 1722 was not sufficient to regulate the Treasury's problems.[133] In 1724 the new soul tax (*podushnaya podaty*) was introduced, replacing the previous household tax.Whether this tax was additional burden on the Russian population or was a form of relief as it was imposed per person, not per household is still a matter of debate. Though the tax became a main string in the state budget, it also raised widespread resentment toward the empire. Furthermore, over eighteen provinces suffered from money shortages due to the new tax.[134]

Although the extraction of more and more funds was supposed to balance the books, a deficiency in the amount of payment was present, especially in the last years of Peter's reign, as well as during the rest of the 1720s.[135] The great burden to the state was due not so much to costs related to combat, but to expenses related to maintenance. Since Peter wanted to establish a standing force, he did not disband his troops after the end of the campaign season, but garrisoned them in different regimental quarters around Russia.[136] In comparison to military expenditure under Aleksey, the standing army of Peter, which was roughly the same size, cost almost five times more.[137] Partly, these expenses were due to the state's obligation to provide uniforms and armament for the troops and partly because the regular soldiers were forbidden to plunder and did not have any rights to the spoils of war.[138]

By imposing extraordinary taxes in difficult years and by using free serf labor, the state was able to keep up with the growing expenditures and by the end of Peter's reign the situation seemed stable. However, as the reigns of his successors demonstrate, the burden of the Petrine army was too heavy for Russia

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[132] See Table 5 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[133] S.G. Strumilin, "K voprosu ob ekonomike Petrovsko epohi", in L.G. Beskrovnyy (ed.), *Poltava: K 250-letiyu Poltavskogo srazheniya; sbornik statey* (Moscow: Akademia nauk, 1959), 187.

[134] In 1724, the soul tax comprised over 51 per cent of the state income; see S.M. Troitskiy, "Istochniki dokhodov v byudzhete Rossii v seredine XVIII veke", *Istoriya SSSR, vol. 3* (1957), 176-98.

[135] Between 1724 and 1733 a shortage of over 3,200,000 rubles was present on the artillery and the navy. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 122.

[136] For a map of garrison arrangement of the regiments during the reign of Peter I, see J. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy*, 45.

[137] G. Parker claims that it was cheaper to keep a standing army, rather than reassemble the regiments for each new season. However, Parker studies Western armies only, where the percentage of foreign mercenaries was quite bigger and reorganizing regiments each year was indeed more expensive, than it was in Russia, where the rank and file was comprised exclusively by natives. Therefore, it was cheaper for seventeenth century Russia to keep an irregular force. This was another reason why the "standing army" innovation was postponed in Russia until the eighteenth century; see Table 5 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[138] Hellie, "The Petrine army", 248.

and some of Peter's military enterprises were dismissed or significantly reduced.[139]

*Russian tactics and strategy in the age of Peter I*

The development of tactics under Peter continued the pattern set by his predecessors.[140] The development of strategy, however, was brought to a whole new level. Indeed, Peter was quite different from his father and grandfather. Both of them were able rulers but were not soldiers. Peter, on the other hand, sometimes seemed more of a soldier than a ruler. His constant participation in campaigns, staff meetings and his personal intervention in the army reform made a significant impact on the development of Russian strategy and tactics.

The Northern War greatly influenced Russian tactics during the reign of Peter. In the course of this conflict, Russia faced one of the most formidable military powers in Europe – Sweden. While the quantity of Sweden's army was far from the massive forces mustered by France, its quality was unquestionable.[141] Years of combat experience, a well-organized system of recruitment and maintenance, and the constant alert against foreign incursions had transformed the Swedish force into a formidable adversary.[142] Any illusions for easy victory against Sweden were dispersed after Narva and Peter understood that he had to create a strong force to break the enemy. As described above, recruitment provided a sufficient amount of soldiers and Peter was able to form field armies of around 40,000 for each campaign season.[143] With numbers secured, it was time to concentrate on quality. After the battles in Estland and Livonia in the period 1703-1707, it became apparent that Russian arms were victorious only when the superiority of numbers was evident. Therefore, Peter advised his generals to meet the Swedes only if Russian forces were superior in numbers to the enemy. Furthermore, defensive field tactics were introduced, to break the aggressive gå på offensive, used by the Swedes. After the enemy attack had been faced, the counter-attack was led with bayonets and by the mobile dragoon cavalry. In that way, firstly, the Swedish infantry was flanked and then the enemy was chased off. To counter the Swedish cavalry Russian dragoons dismounted, formed lines and used volleys to disrupt the enemy's attack. Similar tactic was applied while mounted. The firing took place when the enemy was 30 ft. away, after which, the sabers were drawn, and a hand-to-hand combat was fought.[144] In large-scale tactics, the Russians preferred

[139] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 175-200; Duffy, *Russia's Military Way*, 42-56.
[140] Hellie, "The Petrine Army", 240.
[141] For a comparative growth of forces in Europe; see Table 3 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[142] This system was established by Charles XI and was a continuation of earlier practices, issued by Gustav II Adolf and Oxenstierna. The new organization established a standing, regular army that was well-equipped and well-trained; Denmark and Russia were always looking for an opportunity to strike Sweden during the entire seventeenth century.
[143] Hellie, "The Petrine Army", 247.
[144] Konstram, *Peter the Great's Army*, 11-2.

to draw the enemy deep into their territory, harass his army and cut his lines, using their mobile dragoons and the Cossacks. Scourged-earth tactics were also applied, a famous example being the Poltava Campaign in 1708-1709.

Peter's overall strategy was concentrated on mobility and offense, though on the battlefield he often preferred to wait for the enemy's attack and to carry out the combat in a defensive manner.[145] After destroying or weakening the enemy, a counter-attack was carried out, which was aimed at eliminating the opponent. After Poltava, due to the Ottoman intervention, Russia failed to apply this strategy against Sweden. Nevertheless, the Pruth Campaign (1711) itself was an example of Peter's desire to achieve a decisive victory and eliminate the Turks as fast as possible. The defeat by the Turks did not change Peter's attitude. He launched offensive against the Swedish domains in Finland and at the same time began to clean Poland-Lithuania from the pro-Swedish forces of Stanisław Leszczyński.[146] Russian troops continued their advance, reaching as far as Tönning.[147] After the allied territory was secured, Russia launched a final offense against Sweden's mainland and in 1721 finally achieved a victory and signed the Treaty of Nystad (1721). The same aggressive offensive was later applied against Persia. As it will be analyzed in one of the following chapters, Peter planned to penetrate deep into Persian territory and to compel the Shah to secede the provinces that Peter desired.

An essential element in the application of offensive strategy was Peter's intensive use of amphibious warfare. Unlike his predecessors, Peter understood the importance of naval superiority and he did a lot to establish and promote Russian naval power within all seas accessible by Russia. The secession of Azov (1711) to the Turks and the disbandment of the Black Sea navy did not discourage him and he continued to position his fleets in the Baltic and Caspian Seas. By 1722, Russia possessed a powerful and experienced fleet, capable of supporting land forces with both supplies and military assistance.

## 1.5. The Post-Petrine Era (1724-1739)

Following the death of Peter the Great, Russia entered a period of dynastic crisis. The government was focused on the internal policy and foreign policy was limited at least until the reign of Anna Ivanovna (r. 1730-1740) who managed to consolidate her power at the beginning of the 1730s. The overextended size of the army, which placed a major constraint on the state finances, had to be reduced and in 1729 one third of the entire army was

[145] Le Donne, *The Grand Strategy*, 38.
[146] He was Sweden's candidate for the Polish-Lithuanian crown. When Charles XII conquered Warsaw in 1706, he proclaimed Leszczyński king. After Russian forces invaded Poland-Lithuania in 1709, Leszczyńskiwas deposed and August II of Saxony was restored to the throne. During the War of the Polish Succession, Leszczyńskionce again became a candidate for the Polish-Lithuanian crown, but he lost to August III of Saxony. He became the last duke of Lorraine in 1733, but lost his title, after the duchy was annexed by France in 1735.
[147] In the present-day province of Schleswig-Holstein.

disbanded.[148] Furthermore, the upkeep of the *Nizovoy* corps on the southern Caspian coast increased the expenses to an unprecedented level.[149] To cope with popular unrest, the government under Catherine I (r. 1725-1727) and Peter II (r. 1727-1730) continually decreased the amount of the soul tax. They were, however, unable to limit the size of annual conscription, since the Nizovoy corps consumed more and more recruits each year.[150]

With the accession of Anna Ivanovna in 1730, a change began not only in the internal affairs of the empire but also in the military. Anna's reign witnessed a reversal in the ratio of Russian and foreign officers since the new empress attracted a substantial number of generals and high-ranking officers from the German states to secure her position against the influence of the powerful Russian families of Dolgorukov and Golitsyn. These new figures brought change to the overall structure of the army and their reforms (especially those, initiated by Marshal Minikh) sought to establish a "German" manner in the structure of the forces.

The question regarding the post-Petrine army has been analyzed in both Western and Russian historiography. B. Davies, C. Duffy, W. Fuller and J. Keep, together with L. Beskrovnyy and N. Petrukhintsev define the main trends in Russia's post-Petrine military development.[151] While the reign of Peter I is a subject of several debates, historiography, as a whole, has reached a consensus on the evaluation of the time of his successors. The lack of funds, the rise of social pressure and the need for reforming, rearranging and limiting the army and its expenditure were the primary issues of St. Peterburg's policymaking process during the tough years between 1725 and 1739. Apart from the internal matters, during this period, Russia took part in two major conflicts and continued to maintain a contingent in northern Persia and the Caucasus up until 1735. The disbandment of the majority of Nizovoy regiments lightened the burden on the treasury, but that was not enough and further rearrangements were required.

*Army*

Following the death of Peter I a slow, but constant process of limiting the size of the army began. As it was mentioned above, in 1729 one third of the troops were

[148] Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 34.

[149] The Nizovoy corps is a term used to describe all Russian troops stationed south of the Terek River. They were used as garrison forces for the new territories, acquired by Peter I after 1722. The establishment of Russia's "overseas" territories in the Caspian region will be discussed in detail in the chapter regarding the Persian campaign (1722-1724); A. Kurukin estimates that between 1724 and 1735 a total of 40,511 men perished from battles, diseases and other non-combat reasons. I.V. Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod Petra Velikogo. Nizovoy korpus na beregakh Kaspiya, 1722-1735* (Moscow, 2010), 207.

[150] Over 15,000 recruits were sent to the Caspian coasts between 1726 and 1730. This is over 11 per cent of the total recruits, taken in the same period; see Ibid., 209.

[151] N.N. Petrukhintsev, *Tsarstvovanie Anny Ioannovny: formirovanie vnutripoliticheskogo kursa i sudyby armii i flota* (Aleteyya, 2001).

disbanded and by 1732, when the War of the Polish Succession broke out, Minikh had to enlist large numbers of serfs in order to reinforce the army's strength. With the wars against Poland, the Tatars and the Ottoman Empire at hand, the levels of recruitment rose. The number of men taken into service was comparable only to the period around the Pruth Campaign (1711) when almost the same amount was taken into service. Only in 1733 a total of over 50,000 recruits were enlisted[152]

In the context of 1730s conflicts Russia's military élite had a ground to experiment with new tactics, armament and even unit types. Minikh tried to reintroduce the cuirassiers as a leading cavalry force but met the resentment of aristocracy. Another obstacle for the implementation of his ideas was the lack of good mounts, which could carry the heavy cavalry into battle. From the planned ten regiments only three were created and their functions remained limited.[153] Dragoons remained the main type of cavalry, supporting the infantry, while grenadier and fusilier companies continued to comprise the backbone of the army.[154]

The Tatar and the Ottoman threat in the northern Black Sea Steppe was countered by increasingthe size of the Ukraine land militia. It doubled its strenght in 1730 and increased twofold once more in 1733. Most of its regiments were mounted to cope with the Tatar light cavalry. To fund this new force, the military administration settled half of the regiments, granting additional land for their upkeep.[155]

As a military engineer, Minikh concentrated on the development of engineer corps in the Russian army, as well as on the upgrading of the artillery with emphasis on siege and mobile field units. These changes led to the establishment of separate engineering corps and to the improvement of Russian artillery performance during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739. Along with the expansion of the engineers and artillery, a series of fortification improvements were made on the zasechnoy cherty, which protected Russia's borders in the south and in the east. In addition, several fortresses were erected or upgraded on the western borderline.

Finally, Minikh's reforms dealt with the officer corps and the military administration. Admission into the officer corps was restricted only to literates and promotion of Russian officers was implemented in contrast to the early years of Anna's reign. Higher military education was expanded and by 1737 Minikh had personally developed a "professional portrait" for each of the leading officers in the army. These characteristics were to fascilitate Anna's

[152] See Table 2 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[153] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 169; Duffy, *Russia's Military Way*, 47.
[154] A major change in infantry disposition was the disbandment of grenadier regiments and their distribution as companies for the fusilier regiments, as was the case during Peter's early years. Duffy, *Russia's Military Way*, 46.
[155] While under Peter there were 6 regiments of Ukrainian and militia, their number grew to 10 in 1730 and to 20 in 1733. From these 20, 16 were mounted and 11 were "settled". Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 171.

decision when promoting different generals and colonels on particular field or administrative position.

In terms of size and unit distribution, the army underwent several changes during the 1730s. While in 1730 there were a total of 226,000 soldiers (61,100 guards; 60,988 infantry; 41,580 dragoons; 66,761 garrison infantry; 4,788 garrison cavalry; 10,842 land militia; 10,198 artillery; 41,580 Nizovoy corps; 319 generals) their number slightly increased and in 1732 there were a total of 230,354 soldiers in service. It is interesting that in 1736, on the eve of the Russo-Ottoman War (1736-1739), the number of troops differed little in comparison to the "peacetime" army of 1729. The total strength of the army was 240,405 soldiers in both field forces and garrisons. The field forces were generally decreased in comparison to 1732 due to the disbandment of part of the Nizovoy regiments in 1735. However, the Land Militia almost tripled in size : from 10,842 in 1729 to 27,693 in 1736.[156]

Regarding conscription, a total of 308,000 men were enlisted between 1731 and 1740. This number was roughly equal to the number of men, recruited during the Great Northern War.[157] The difference is that the war against Sweden continued for 21 years while the conflicts during Anna's reign went on for only 8 years. A simple calculation defines that the average annual recruitment was of 38,500 men which is 2.5 times more than the average yearly conscription during the Northern War (14,862 men per year). Therefore, though Russia was unable to expand its forces in the scale from the previous decade, the Tsardom was able to mobilize its human resources at a greater scale. Hence, the Military Chancellery's recruiting efficiency under Minikh surpassed the levels from the previous decades

*Logistics and funding*

The main logistical issues during Peter's reign continued to trouble the Empire during the 1730s. During this decade gunpowder production increased but was still on the edge of the minimum required.[158] Funding was also problematic, especially for the Nizovoy corps and the irregular contingents of Cossacks and Asian tribesmen. On the other hand, the reforms of Minikh were able if not to decrease army expenses, at least to prevent further increase in the cost of maintenance. The soul tax was reduced and even the wartime rates of the takings were less than the initial amount of money acquired per person. As a whole, the army of 1736 cost almost as much as it did in 1729.[159]

As mentioned above, the state was able to recruit a larger proportion of men than it did ten years before and this system was further improved due to the

[156]Ibid., 161 – 75.
[157] That is - 312,000. See Table 2 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[158] On paper the army required 60,000 puds. In order to fill in shortages, the state expanded smaller factories or relied on contactors. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot*, 97-8.
[159] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 175; see Table 5 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

better training, received by the recruits. An ordinance of 1730 forbade the usage of recruits for any purpose different than military training. This regulation was a significant step forward since one of the main reasons for desertion during the first decades of the eighteenth century was the unregulated use of soldiers for non-combat duties. In addition to the better treatment of troops, which after 1711 was a constant matter of concern to the state, the ability to muster soldiers for the field demonstrated the overall improvement of Russia's capability to mobilize its human potential for war purposes.

## 1.6. Conclusion

Withn regard to Russia's military development before 1740, several trends could be pointed out. First and foremost, Peter's reforms and the policy of his successors established a regular standing army, the size of which was impressive, compared to European standards. This army was still in a transitional condition - from a standing, yet semi-regular, force of the "old formation" to an entirely regular army of "new formation". However, following the army regulations of 1720, the amount of "settled" units was insignificant compared to the overall number of state-funded troops. This trend can be clearly seen in the 1730s when only the Ukrainian militia was still more or less funded through land grants. While garrison troops received remuneration in land and goods, this was done only to overcome shortages in funds and was not an official state policy as it was during Aleksey's reign. All in all, Russia was able financially to support on a regular basis the bulk of its forces and the size of its army surpassed most of that of its counterparts.

In relation to size, the army of 1736 was the same proportions as the one mustered in 1681. The differences laid in the quality of the troops, the improvements made in armament, artillery support and overall uniformity of the unit types, as well as in the regular army upkeep, training and quartering. The army of Minikh was seven times more expensive than the one, which Golitsyn started to reform in 1681. At the same time, its performance was better in the same proportion. While the old army was defeated in Crimea and at Narva, the new one was able to outmatch Sweden, conquer northern Persia, suppress uprisings along the Sothern steppes and finally push back the Ottomans from their positions in the Northern Black Sea and the Dnieper basin. Though there were many setbacks and misfortunes, mostly due to logistical issues, in the end, Russia achieved its goals.

The other side of the coin was that Russia's establishment of a regular army came at a great price. Over 720,000 men were recruited over the period in question to fill in the vacancies due to combat casualties, diseases, shortages of food, clothes, clean water and medical care. It is hard to estimate the total number of soldiers, who perished or were injured between 1700 and 1739, but

they were at least 150,000.[160] In addition, in comparison to 1678's figures, the conflicts brought a significant decrease of 20 per cent of Russia's households (calculated in 1710). On the other hand, to some extent these numbers can be misleading since it was a common practice for both landlords and serfs to hide the actual number of people in one household in order to evade conscription and taxes. Nevertheless, the toll of wars was high while population growth was rather low. The lack of money and the periodical outbursts of impoverishment were a scourge for common Russians, who were also affected by harvest failure and disease.

Unlike Britain or the Dutch Republic, who had developed a banking system back in the late seventeenth century, such a system remained underdeveloped in Russia even after the Seven Years War (1756-1763). B. Davies evaluates that Russia was rather a military-fiscal and not a fiscal-military state, which used its natural resources to compensate the lack of liquid assets.[161] However, production output increased in comparison to the seventeenth century, though it was still barely sufficient to cover army's minimal necessities. Transportation and logistics were also problematic due to the great distances, which had to be covered during campaigns. A magazine system was established during the reign of Peter, but it could only cover a certain area of operation and proved inadequate when the army marched outside Russian territory. On the other hand, the trends of combining state-organized logistics and the application of private enterprises in order to cope with the material needs of the army, indicates a significant number of similarities in comparison to contemporary western countries. While the Tsardom was far from completing what D. Parrott has labeled the "second stage of a fiscal-military state", Peter certainly managed to transform Russia's military establishment into a state-dominated army with structure and organization, similar to those of France, Britain and Austria.[162] Therefore, Davies' general assumption that Russia was still struggling to organize the waging of war only as a sole response to overwhelming wartime circumstances in the manner of late sixteenth-century states, is rather inaccurate. Instead, in order to trace the trends of state's evolution in early modern Russia, a more flexible approach for understanding the specifics of Petrine fiscal and military transition is needed.[163]

The question of whether Russia's drive toward army reform was indigenous or modeled after the trends, developed in Western Europe in the seventeenth century has dominated historiography for over fifteen decades.

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[160] B.Ts. Urlanis, *Voyny i narodonaselenie Evropy* (Moscow, 1960), 55.

[161] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 176-9; For ca comprehensive debate on the subject of military-fiscal and fiscal-military states; see C. Storrs (ed.), *The Fiscal-Military State in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Farnham: Ashage, 2009).

[162] D. Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 310-7

[163] For a balanced outline of the fiscal and military features of eighteenth-century Russia, see J. Hartley, "Russia as a Fiscal-Military state, 1689-1825", in C. Storrs (ed.), *The Fiscal-Military state in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Farnham: Ashage, 2009), 125-45

While western historiography and Russian imperial historians share the notion that Peter was inspired by his grand tour in the west, Soviet-era historians tend to emphasize on the "native" element in Russia's military evolution. As it was already noted, a certain trend of continuity is evident between what Aleksey tried to achieve with the introduction of the "new model" regiments and what Peter did by reforming the army, inherited by his father and older brother. Although Russia's first emperor was undoubtedly influenced by what he saw in France, the Netherlands and Britain, suggesting that Russia would not have made the next step in its military evolution without western influence would be imprecise. As discussed in the section on Muscovite military development, Russia developed its own unique approach toward the introduction of the lattest European trends in military development. To put it in other words, western military innovations strongly influenced the development of the Petrine army, but they were transposed in a specific way in order to answer Russia's needs. Thus, Russia's army reforms during the first half of the eighteen century were rather a unique element of early modern military transformation.

Until now, historiography has mainly dealt with numbers and idle figures on paper and has seldom diverted more attention on the actual performance of the Russian field armies during campaigns. Although general data points out that the military machine of the tsars needed further development and constantly had to be adjusted with funds, reforms and recruits, the campaigns themselves present a different story as it will be further analyzed in the main part of this dissertation. After calculating the potential of Russia and outlining its military evolution, the following chapter will deal with Peter's main opponents in the course of his ambitious "march south".

# CHAPTER 2
# FRIENDS, FOES AND FRENEMIES IN THE SOUTH

If the period from the end of the seventeenth to mid eighteenth century was a chessboard, then opposite Peter's desire to assert his authority and power over vast territory stood important political and military players who were determined to put an end to his "march".

The following chapter will be divided into several subsections, each dealing with a particular element of the complex geopolitical puzzle that the Pontic region from the first decades of the eighteenth century resembled. Firstly, the focus will be on Russia's chief adversary – the Ottoman Empire, a foe as determined and as ambitious as the tsarist state itself. Then the main features of the Crimean Khanate, as an element of the overall Ottoman military system, will be defined. However, the Khanate was a player in its own right and pursued its own interests which will also be presented in the current chapter. Next the dissertation will outline the development and the downfall of Safavid's military and political power, followed by the establishment of a new force under the ambitious and talented Nadir Shah. The subchapter "At the Edge of Empires - the Pontic Frontier and its People" will examine the soldiers of the steppe – Cossacks, Kalmyks, and Nogais, who were an essential element of the social and military ethos of the Pontic frontier and played crucial role in the events, which will be analyzed in detail in the second part of the research. Finally, a brief overview of the minor Caucasian kingdoms and states would emphasize the diversity and complexity of this contested region, destined to attract the desires of three mighty empires.

## 2.1. The Ottomans – an Empire on the Crossroads

Generally, historiography approaches the development of the Ottoman Empire in the same way as that of Russia and perceives it as a passive recipient of European military innovations and a state, the decline of which was steady and irreversible. However, as recent studies in the field demonstrate, the Ottomans were neither passive recipient, nor stuck in their backwardness.[1] On the contrary, there is evidence which prove that the Ottomans played an active role in the transformation of warfare in Europe. The following subchapter will briefly examine the Ottoman military development during the last decade of the seventeenth century and the first three decades of the eighteenth century and will aim at proving the active role, played by the Ottoman military establishment. The period between the War of the Holy League (1683-1699) and the conflicts

[1] G.Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan – Military power and Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Rh. Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* (London: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

between Russia and the Ottomans during Catherine the Great's reign is one of the least studied in the history of the sultans' realm.[2] A handful of works present the complexity of imperial transition during these turbulent decades. First and foremost, Virginia Aksan's study on the eighteenth century Ottoman warfare is a *sine qua non* for any research on the topic.[3] Further information can be found in the exhaustive works of Gabor Ágoston and the thorough study of Rhoads Murphey, whose research has done much in clarifying major issues regarding the military development of the Ottoman Empire.

*The Crescent rises*

When referring to the early Ottoman state and its war effort, the theory of C. Rogers for the "Infantry Revolution" can be applied.[4] As Rogers notes, it was the revival of infantry firepower and resistance to cavalry that transformed the medieval warfare into the modern art of war. And if in Western Europe this process developed as a steady change throughout the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in Southeastern Europe this development took a different form.[5] Briefly, the importance of infantry did not fade during the Early and High Middle Ages. Therefore, any state that struggled to impose its influence over the Balkans had to establish a powerful infantry. The Ottomans were quick in understanding this necessity and in elaborating a response to this new military challenge.[6] Initially, the Ottomans were prodigies of a semi-nomad society, the warfare of which was based on light cavalry units that consisted of volunteers and allies of the *bey*.[7] As soon as they came into contact with the Byzantine Empire, however, the beys Osman (r. 1300-1326) and Orhan (r. 1326-1362) found out that light cavalry could only raid enemy's territory, but could not

[2] The War of the Holy League continued as a conflict between the Ottomans and Russia after 1699 and was ended by the Treaty of Constantinople, signed in 1701.
[3] V. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1830: An Empire Besieged* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
[4] C. Rogers, "The Military Revolution of the Hundred Years War", in *TMRD*, 58-64.
[5] Unlike the West with its chivalry armies, the Balkans had developed a different military system, based on large infantry units, supported by light cavalry mercenaries (Cumans, Alans, Turks and Wallachians) and a heavy cavalry of service nobility (*pronoiarios, bolyari*). Due to the large number of fortified towns and the broken terrain, warfare, based on mounted power, was inappropriate. However, there is no concise study on Balkan warfare in any historical period, prior to the First Balkan War (1912-1913). There are several studies, dealing with national military history, but a comparative research which summarizes the different military systems is still absent.
[6] It took the West almost 200 years before the "Infantry Revolution" was fully developed. It took the Ottomans only 40-50 years to establish a standing, regular infantry, capable of conquering and holding enemy fortresses. If there was a revolution at all, it was the Ottoman transformation from a steppe-style, light cavalry army of irregulars into a standing, regular force of professionals.
[7] These units are generally known as *gazi* (raiders). They were considered wartime "companions" of the *bey* and had the right over 4/5 of the spoils (the other 1/5 *pencik* remained for the *bey*). The Ottomans were the first to elaborate a way of balancing the influence of the gazi and to rein them in, using different administrative and military methods; see C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

maintain the conquest.[8] As early as 1320, the Ottomans began to experiment with an infantry force of free volunteers, called *yaya*. In addition to yaya infantry, the beys transformed the cavalry units into a single light cavalry force, called *müsselem*.[9] The new infantry proved successful and by 1330 all Byzantine fortresses in Asia Minor were conquered by the Ottomans. However, during the Byzantine Civil Wars (1341-1347 and 1373-1379), which enabled the Ottoman incursion on the Balkans, it became apparent that the irregular yaya infantry was insufficient for the conquest of the well-fortified cities and towns of Southeastern Europe.[10] Therefore, the new Ottoman ruler – Murad I (r. 1362–1389) decided to reform the infantry and to establish a standing force, capable of handling the new challenges. Following the advice of his grand vizier Çandarlı Halil Hayreddin Paşa, Murad exercised his right on one fifth of all military captives and slaves and used this manpower to create a military contingent, loyal only to him. The corps, which came into being, was called "the new army" – *yeniçeri*. As military demands grew, the manpower, provided by the *pencik* tax, was deemed insufficient. Therefore, a new tax – *devşirme*, was established.[11] The new system was used for recruitment of Christian boys between the age of 8 and 16, who were converted to Islam and trained to serve the sultan as his "slaves" (*kul*).[12] The gathered manpower was used to occupy positions in the central administration or to serve in the army as either infantry (yeniçeri) or cavalry (*sipahi of the Porte*). By 1389, the Ottomans already possessed the first standing, regular army in Europe, almost 200 years before the Europeans were able to establish their own. Apart from the regular forces, a standing army of

[8] The process of Ottoman military transformation was similar to the process of Bulgarian transformation seven centuries earlier. The steppe horsemen had to develop a reliable infantry in order get a permanent hold over Byzantine territory. The Bulgarians allied themselves with the local Slavs. The Ottomans, however, carried a different tradition. This tradition was related to the Seljuk tradition from the thirteenth century when local city guilds formed military brotherhoods (*ahi*) in order to fend off Mongol raids in Central Anatolia. The ahi were similar to the Flemish urban militia that was based on the guilds and fought against the mounted French forces. Interestingly, the ahi and the Flemish infantry appeared simultaneously in two quite different backgrounds. Apart from the guild relations, the ahi were also united by their common belief, based on one of the many Sufi sects, which prospered in Asia Minor. Later, similarly to the ahi, the yeniçeri were formed around the Bektaşi sect.

[9] V.V. Penskoy, "Voennaya revolyutsiya i razvitie voennogo dela v Osmanskoy imperii v XV-XVII v.", *Vostok* 6 (Moscow, 2007), 33.

[10] In the fourthteenth century Byzantine garrisons in Asia Minor had to depend on themselves, while the Balkan states still held strong military control on their frontiers and were able to support their garrisons. Furthermore, during the period 1340-1370, both Bulgaria and Serbia were enjoying internal stability and could maintain their war against John VI Kantakouzenos and his Ottoman allies.

[11] Local Christians referred to this tax as "blood tax". In Pre-1989 historiography, the devşirme is described as one of the great atrocities, committed by the Ottomans. However, recent studies by Balkan scholars prove that in some cases the recruitment of yeniçeri was not against parents' will. Furthermore, local population developed different measures in order to evade the conscription. Early marriage of boys was the most common method, since, according to the devşirme law, married boys could not be recruited.

[12] The term *kul* represents an honorable position in the Ottoman society. Therefore, the word "slave" in its negative context is not the most accurate translation of the term. The usual age for recruitment was between 8 and 12, with older boys being an exception. Furthermore, married males were exempt from recruitment, which led to a dramatic decrease in the age, at which local Christians were wedded by their families.

service horsemen was created. They were called *timariots*, and their existence was greatly influenced by the Byzantine *pronoia* system.[13]

The second stage of the Ottoman military evolution was carried out with the spread of gunpowder and artillery. European artillery appeared at the end of the thirteen century, evolved during the fourteenth century and by the 1430s was the new "super-weapon", which greatly influenced the conduct of both siege and field combat.[14] The Ottomans were fast to apply the new technology. The first records of artillery date back to the reign of Bayezid I Yıldırım (r. 1389-1402).[15] In parallel with the usage of the new weapon, the sultans understood the need to establish permanent artillery corps, and by the reign of Murad II (r. 1421–1444; 1446-1451) regular artillery corps (*topçı*) was introduced as part of the *kapukulu ocakları*.[16] Again the Ottomans were one step ahead of the Europeans in both mobility of field and siege artillery and the existence of a regular service. [17]

The third phase of the Ottoman military evolution was the establishment of a military academy. Proponents of the Military Revolution and general Western historiography claim that it was Maurits van Oranje and his cousin Willem Lodewijk of Nassau who established the first military academy in Europe.[18] However, it turns out that the Ottomans were actually the first. The *Enderun* School was established as early as the mid-fifteenth century to educate the devşirme recruits (*acemi oğlan*) in different disciplines, prime among which were the military studies.[19] The Ottomans created a military school that provided training and practice not only for the leading administrators and commanders of the standing army, but also for each soldier. This innovation took place some 130 years before similar institutions came into existence in Western Europe.[20]

Therefore, by the beginning of the sixteenth century the Ottoman army was organized around a stable backbone of regular soldiers, paid and equipped by the sultan, trained in a military school and ready to fulfill the expansionist desire of their masters. No other army in Europe could match the quality of the Ottoman military machine. Thus, the extensive expansion that took place during

[13] Most Turkish historians try to neglect the importance of the Byzantine heritage in the Ottoman Empire. However, there are quite too many similarities and a trend of continuity must be acknowledged. The creation of the timariot system is only one of the examples for the administrative and military heritage transferred from Byzantium to the Ottoman Empire. For an overview of the historiographical debate on the succession issue, see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 29-60.

[14] Rogers, "The Military Revolution", 64-76; Gabor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 1-7.

[15] Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 28.

[16]Ibid., 29; The *kapukulu ocakları* (slaves of the Porte) is the general term, that includes the yeniçeri, the sipahi of the Porte, the artillery and supporting troops (topçı and *cebeci*) of the Ottoman standing army.

[17]As Ágoston points out, the cebeci troops were used to provide the support of the artillery train. By 1470 a mobile artillery train was finally established - that is almost 20 years before Charles VIII introduced this type of military corps in Western Europe; Ibid., 28.

[18] Roberts, M., "The Military Revolution, 1560-1660", in C.J. Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 13-37; Parker, G. "The Military Revolution, 1550-1660 – A Myth?", in C. J. Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 37-55.

[19] D. Nicolle, *The Janissaries, Osprey 'Elite' 58*, (London: Osprey, 1995), 12-4.

[20] Not to mention that the first military schools in Western Europe were accessible only for commanders and nobles, and not to the rank and file soldiers.

the reigns of Selim I Yavuz (r. 1512-1520) and Süleyman I Kanuni (r. 1520-1566) were not a surprise. The Ottomans were able to defeat and assimilate most of their enemies and became a permanent threat in the regions of Central Europe and the Mediterranean.[21]

After the death of Süleyman, the Ottoman expansion did not cease. Cyprus was conquered in 1573, proving that the Battle of Lepanto (1571) was not as decisive as assumed. The Long War with Austria (1593-1606) demonstrated that the Habsburgs had managed to establish a better firepower, but the Ottomans were fast to follow and, in the end, the sultans' forces were victorious. Internal strife, economic problems and the rise of Shah Abbas I of Persia (r. 1587-1629) pinned the Ottoman resources in Asia. Nevertheless, by 1640 the situation was under control and westward expansion continued. The Cretan War (1645-1669) revealed some of the Ottoman weaknesses. However, relying on better logistics and superiority in numbers, once more the Turks were victorious. Finally, the conflicts with Poland-Lithuania in the 1670s led to the conquest of Podolia.

*The Crescent sets*

By 1680 the Ottoman Empire had reached its territorial zenith, stretching from Hungary to Persia and from Ukraine to Sudan. The next step was to go beyond these borders and once more Austria was the main foe. The history of the War of the Holy League (1683-1699) is not a concern of the current dissertation. It suffices to note that a massive Christian coalition faced the Ottomans and their forces were scattered on three different fronts. The logistical, financial and military burden was beyond Ottoman's resources and the war was disastrous for the Empire. Hungary was lost to Austria; Russia took Azov and Venice conquered Morea. Usually, the Ottoman defeat in this war is described as fatal and irreversible. However, things were not as hopeless as they seemed. The Russians were defeated in a subsequent war (1710-1711) and Venice had to return Morea in another conflict (1714–1718). The only setback seemed the loss of Belgrade and Timişoara regions after the defeat in the Austro-Ottoman War (1716-1718). In general, supporters of the "Rise of the West" concept claim that the second Austrian victory proved that the Ottoman Empire was no longer a threat to western superiority.[22] However, in defense of the Ottomans, we must note that they faced one of the most experienced armies in Europe, commanded

[21]The Mamluk Sultanate was annexed in 1517, the Knights Hospitaller were expelled from Rhodes in 1522 and Hungary was conquered between 1526 and 1541. Only the Safavids managed to check the Ottoman advance, but not before the Porte succeed in conquering Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and Mesopotamia. One might argue that it was the Ottoman threat in the East that led to the fast evolution of the Habsburg armies (the Spanish in particular). The struggle between Charles V and Süleyman was certainly one of the reasons that enabled the creation of a high esteemed, experienced army in Spain, which later proved its potential in the Netherlands and against France.

[22] Black, J., "A Military Revolution? A 1660-1792 Perspective", in C. J. Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 99-102.

by one of the most talented military leaders of the age.[23] As will be noted below, the Ottoman army was not as efficient as it was a hundred years earlier and unlike contemporary western forces, only half of their rank and file consisted of regular soldiers.

Apart from the military issues that became apparent in the course of the seventeenth century, internal problems also contributed to the decline of Ottoman power. Firstly, a great inflation struck the Ottoman economy. As Inalcık notes in his article on Ottoman transformations, from the great devaluation of the Ottoman currency in 1598 to the seventeenth century, state financiers were under great pressure, trying to hold the fiscal policy of the state intact. Often salaries had not been paid for months, prices increased and *timar* holders became impoverished.[24] Moreover, political strife added to state problems a new set of issues. Succession crisis, supported by the growing interference of kapukulu ocakları in state affairs, led to a period of opened conflict between the yeniçeri-controlled capital and the Anatolian provincial governors, who opposed the centralization of the Empire and wanted to extend their influence over the sultan.

Local governors were supported by the new irregular, gunpowder-equipped infantry – the *sekban*. The sekban demanded to have the same rights and salaries as the yeniçeri and wanted to transform their service from irregular basis into a regular, standing force. However, the yeniçeri already were a substantial burden on state budget and an increase in the size of the regular forces would mean a financial crisis for the Empire.[25] The state, therefore, began to fight the rebellious sekban and by 1658 Anatolia was finally pacified.[26] The Ottoman Empire was stable, but it missed its chance to take the next step toward a regular, modern army. The consequences of this decision were felt severely during the War of the Holy League.[27]

[23] By 1716 Austria had won the War of the Grand Alliance (1688-1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1715). Her armies were comprised of experienced veterans, with excellent firing skills and perfect drill. This army was commanded by some of the most experienced leaders of the age, among whom was Prince Eugene of Savoy, who was one of the finest military leaders in the entire early modern period.

[24] H. Inalcık, "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700", *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (Mouton, 1980), 311-3.

[25] Murphey, R., *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700* (University College London Press, 1999), 16-7.

[26] Inalcık, "Military and Fiscal Transformation", 298.

[27] If the sekban had been transformed into a regular force, once more the Ottomans might have managed to be one step ahead of the West. However, the political influence of the kapukulu ocakları, the financial situation of the state and the inability to fully develop a general army reform, led to the maintenance of the old system. Furthermore, there was no powerful figure in the administration, able to apply the needed changes. Süleyman was long dead and the energetic Mahmud II was yet to come. In the meantime, most of the grand viziers and the chief "ministers" were devşirme recruits themselves, who would not go against their own. In order to conduct a reform, the state had to either elevate the sekban to the status of the kapukulu ocakları or to dismiss the later from all their privileges and to level the entire army. Because of political, cultural, economic and military reasons, this was far from possible during the seventeenth century.

*The Köprülü inheritance*

Unfortunately, there are few studies on Ottoman military system in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Most of the works are concentrated on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Russo-Ottoman Wars in the Age of Catherine the Great (r. 1762-1796) and the reforms of Selim III (r. 1789–1807) and Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839).[28] Furthermore, the Tulip Era (*Lale Devri*) reforms are not researched thoroughly in neither Eastern, nor Western studies. Due to these constraints, the following chapter will rely on the data regardingthe end of the seventeenth century and will try to incorporate the few available figures and sources for the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

*Regular forces*

All regular forces of the Ottoman Empire were part of the kapukulu ocakları. Their privileges, responsibilities and organization were developed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and changed little until the reformation of the army that took place after 1789. As noted above, the Ottomans were the first to create a regular, standing army in Europe and for almost two centuries their military power was superior to any other in Europe. However, as the new tactical and technological innovations accelerated the military evolution in the West, Ottoman power was surpassed and had to catch up with its enemies in Europe. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, all of Europe's major powers possessed a regular, standing army, based on experienced veterans, who had served in several conflicts, which took place between 1673 and 1721. Therefore, the Ottomans were no longer unique, nor superior to European states. However, they were neither inferior. As the following two decades proved, the Empire was still a formidable power, capable of facing primary states and winning a war.[29] Furthermore, the Ottomans possessed a superb logistical system that enabled them to support their war efforts for extended periods of time over vast distances.[30]

It is accepted in historiography that the Ottoman army was unable to follow the tactical evolution of western armies, and thus fell behind during the seventeenth century. Börekçi succeeds in proving that the yeniçeri were able to fight according to the latest firing tactics, developed by the Dutch. Furthermore, he presents several sources which suggest that the Ottomans had used volley fire

[28] G. Börekçi, "A Contribution to the Military Revolution Debate: The Janissaries Use of Volley Fire during the Long Ottoman-Habsburg War of 1593-1606 and the Problem of Origins", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 59, 4 (2006), 408–9; Börekçi gives a summary of the works dealing with Ottoman warfare.

[29] Tthe conflicts with Russia and Austria in particular (1736-1739) ended with Ottoman victory and retrival of several important territories, among which the *sancak* of Belgrade.

[30] Murphey notes that similar logistical networks were developed by the rest of Europe as late as 1720, and in some cases - even later; see Murphey, *The Ottoman Warfare*, 65-93.

as early as 1597 and suggests that they had used this technique during the Battle of Mohács in 1526. Even if the possibility that the Ottomans managed to develop the volley fire on their own is rejected, the fact remains that they were able to produce the most sophisticated maneuver, known to western armies during the early modern period. Apart from the volley fire, the Ottomans were "blamed" for their inability to create a firearms cavalry, capable of supporting the infantry in battle. In general, the timariots failed to take part in the "arms race" with the Austrians and as early as 1602 the grand vizier began complaining about the inability of the timariot cavalry to handle the imperial infantry. Similar problems became apparent during the *Celali* revolts in Anatolia where local gun-equipped bands of rebels were able to defeat the timariot forces, mounted by the capital. However, when in 1724 the Ottomans invaded Persia, their troops were supplemented by gun-wielding sipahi.[31] This change demonstrates that the confrontation with Persia and the rebellions had taught the Ottomans an important lesson and their cavalry was, at least partly, equipped with firearms in order to expand its ability to operate in the difficult terrain of West Asia.

Another element, which reveals the real potential of the Ottomans, was siege warfare. Ever since G. Parker based a significant part of his Military Revolution theory on *trace italienne*, military historians have labeled this fortress "impregnable". However, during the seventeenth century, Ottoman regular infantry, sappers and mining teams in particular, were able to reduce the trace italienne fortifications in Hungary and to conquer these citadels in a matter of days.[32] Symilarly to the performance of the French army in the west, the Ottoman experience could be used to counter Parker's theory.[33] Even though the Cretan War (1645-1669) demonstrated that the art of siege declined during the second half of the seventeenth century, the campaign in Persia revealed that the Ottomans still had a considerable potential for taking fortified positions.[34] According to Abraham of Yerevan, the Ottomans besieged Persian citadels from "all four sides", dug trenches and earthworks and carefully moved their guns closer and closer to the enemy's walls.[35] When the guns were unable to penetrate the walls, tunnels and mines were used to make a breach. Once the walls were overcome, the yeniçeri and the irregular infantry invaded the city. The tactic was the same as the one applied by western armies. The Ottomans

[31] This is a little-known chronicle by Abraham of Yerevan which gives several interesting descriptions of the Ottoman army, during its invasion in Persia. Among the reliable data, Abraham speaks of timariots equipped with firearms, who comprised a significant part of the Ottoman cavalry; see Abraham of Yerevan, *History of the Wars, 1721 – 1738*, trans. by G.A. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1999).
[32] Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, 105-33.
[33] Lynn, "The trace italienne and the growth of Armies: The French Case", *TMRD*, 169-201.
[34] The desuetude of naval power was as essential for the overall lack of success, as was the organization of the besieging forces. Once firm command was established in 1667, the course of the siege turned in favor of the Ottomans.
[35] Abraham of Yerevan, *History of the Wars*, 42-4.

were able to conquer Persian fortresses in a matter of weeks, even though most of them were naturally protected by rivers, mountains and broken terrain.

Regarding the quality of armament, Ágoston skillfully proves that the Ottoman gun industry was quite up-to-date with the developments in Western Europe.[36] Using experienced craftsmen and artisans from Europe, as well as their own capable gunsmiths, the Ottomans were able to adequately supply their forces with gunpowder and artillery pieces. Furthermore, handguns were cheap and were widely distributed throughout the entire empire.[37] In general, the Ottoman army did not lack guns and firearms as was previously supposed.[38]

Finally, in order to respond to the growing firepower of the West, the Ottomans significantly increased the number of the kapukulu ocakları and especially the yeniçeri and the topçi. The army growth is an essential factor for the development of early modern armies and it was present in the Ottoman case, as well. By 1680, the number of yeniçeri had doubled since the time of the Long War (1593-1606), and the number of artillerymen and sappers had grown threefold.[39] The above-mentioned Chronicle of Abraham of Yerevan is a useful source for the way the Ottomans supplied their effort with manpower. Although his figures apparently were exaggerated, there is no doubt that the Ottomans were able to muster and support a sizable force, equipped with firearms and guns and quite capable to overcome Persian forces and fortresses.[40]

### *Irregular forces*

Apart from the state-financed kapukulu ocakları, the Porte relied also on irregular volunteers and mercenaries, and auxiliary troops, provided by the different "privileged" social groups in the Empire. The two most important irregular forces were the timariot cavalry and the sekban infantry.

The timariots were a type of service class, who received land in exchange for military obligations. According to the annual income of their estates, each timariot had to equip not only himself, but also a certain number of armed retainers (*cebelis*). During the seventeenth century, the economic and military potential of the timariots declined significantly. Due to the problems between the central administration and the provinces, the timariot force began steadily to decline, which continued throughout the entire eighteenth century and resulted in their final abolition during the reign of Selim III (r. 1789-1807). Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the timariots did try to adjust to the new realities of war and

[36] Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 61-96.
[37] Ibid., 15-60.
[38] As Ágoston and Murphey prove, the theory that Ottoman fire-power was greatly dependant on Dutch and English imports is exaggerated; see Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 42-8; Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, 85-93.
[39] For a complete table of the Ottoman army growth, see Table 1 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[40] Abraham of Yerevan estimates that between 1724 – 1727 the Ottoman army in Persia consisted of more than 300,000 soldiers; see Abraham of Yerevan, *History of the Wars*, 46; Even though this figure is exaggerated, it shows that the size of the Ottoman field army, sent to occupy Western Persia under the command of Topal Osman Paşa, was considerable.

they adopted, though reluctantly, the firearms. Scholars tend to exaggerate the lack of firearms as a reason for the timariot decline. During the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), firearms proved to be not very effective when used in mounted warfare and as a result - a preference for close quarter combat developed. It was the growing number of infantry equipped with guns that turned the tide of battles. During the wars against Austria, it became apparent that cavalry could not break the line formation on its own and needed a more substantial support from the infantry. Therefore, the Porte decided to extend the size of the firearms infantry.

During the Long War it became apparent that yeniçeri alone were insufficient to overcome the growing firepower of the Europeans, which led to the formation of a new infantry, armed with muskets. The units that came into being were called sekban. The sekban was comprised of impoverished peasants from Anatolia, Bosnia and Albania. The usage of firearms ceased to be a monopoly of the kapukulu ocakları and was also introduced amongst the Muslim *reaya*. However, after the war was over, the sekban demanded to become regular troops on the same principle as the yeniçeri. As it was mentioned above, this was impossible and a prolonged period of sekban brigandage, especially in Anatolia, begun to trouble the Ottoman Empire.[41] The disbandment of these regiments continued to be problematic up until the nineteenth century. Part of these irregulars became the notorious *kırcali*. Others became part of the private armies of the *ayan* and fought against the regular forces of the sultan. The situation was finally brought under control in 1826 when the yeniçeri were destroyed and the Ottoman Empire established an entirely regular army. Still, volunteer units – *başıbozuk*, were to be used as late as the First World War. Abraham of Yerevan mentions irregular peasant forces which were an essential part of the Ottoman army during the campaign against Persia.[42] Auxiliary troops were provided by the local population, both Muslim and Christian. These troops were used to cover the logistical needs as well as to skirmish and to reconnoiter enemy forces. They were also used to maintain the order in the rear of the army. In exchange, these groups were exempted from certain taxes, among which - the devşirme. The privileged groups in the Balkans became the elite of the Christian peoples in the Ottoman Empire and during the nineteenth century served as the leaders of the liberation movements.[43]

*Logistics*

[41] Inalcık, "The Military and Fiscal Transformation", 299-303.
[42] Abraham of Yerevan, *The History of Wars*, 39.
[43] During the "Kırcali Era" (1770-1810) these privileged groups became the heart of the anti brigandage resistance. They armed their fellow townsmen and led them against the ravaging bands of irregulars that stormed the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The military art, armament and position of these groups are insufficiently studied and deserve a greater attention from historians both in the West and in the Balkans.

The Ottoman logistical system is extensively analyzed by Murphey in his book on Ottoman warfare. In the current dissertation only the main elements of military support, provided by the state, will beoutlined. As Murphey argues, the Ottomans possessed a unique system of supply which was able to maintain substantial armies as far as Vienna and Hamadan. This system (*menzilhane*) was based on a network of supply depots, which were prepared in advance to each campaign. This system followed the main army roads that traversed the Ottoman lands and led to the enemy's heartland. Crucial points for communication were the cities along *Via Diagonalis* in Europe and along the route from Istanbul to Bagdad in Asia.[44] As in the Russian case, river transportation was essential for supplying the army. Each river was used to transport food, guns and gunpowder from the central supply depots to the frontline. River fleets were established on the Danube, the Euphrates, and the Tigris Rivers. Smaller ships and boats were used on the Hungarian river system, as well as on the Drava and Sava Rivers. Apart from naval transport, a variety of land-based means of transportation were applied. The camel and the water buffalo were the most widespread animals, but ox-wagons were used as well. A common practice was to hire local merchants and peasants to assist with the transportation of goods and armament. These "recruits" were supervised by the individual logistics section of the kapukulu ocakları – the *cebeci*. Their increased numbers during the seventeenth century prove that the Ottomans were well aware of the importance of logistics.[45]

The primary element of army provisioning was the supply of gunpowder. As Ágoston argues, Ottoman lands had abundance of materials necessary for gunpowder production.[46] Saltpeter was found in large quantities throughout the entire empire. Wood for charcoal was available in Anatolia and the Balkans. Only sulfur was harder to find, and the Ottomans imported it from Venice and Persia.[47] Gunpowder was produced in mills, dispersed from Hungary to Egypt. The main facilities were in Istanbul, Gallipoli, Bor and Timișoara. Smaller mills existed in Buda, Belgrade, Thessaloniki, Cairo, Aleppo, and Bagdad.[48] The provisioning of gunpowder often included the transfer of resources and stocked gunpowder from provinces, far away from the theater of war, toward the frontline. For this purpose, land transport was preferred instead of naval, due to the risk of exposing gunpowder to moisture.

Most of the guns and firearms were produced in the Ottoman Empire. However, foreign pieces were used as well, either purchased or captured in battle. The most common providers of guns were the Dutch and the English, but Italians and French also imported their products. Ottoman muskets had good

[44] For the main roads and distances in the Ottoman Empire, see Map 1 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[45] See Table 1 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[46] Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 96.
[47] G. Ágoston, "Gunpowder for the Sultan's Army: New Sources on the Supply of Gunpowder to the Ottoman Army in the Hungarian campaigns of the 16th and 17th Centuries", *Turcica* 25 (1993), 75-96.
[48] For a complete distribution of resources and gunpowder mills in the Ottoman Empire, see Map 2 in the Appednix.

quality, sometimes even surpassing that of their neighbours. During the seventeenth century Spanish style muskets with matchlock mechanism were preffered, but during and after the Holy League War, flintlocks became the most common weapons used by the infantry and by some of the cavalry units.

Ammunition was harder to supply since the Ottomans lacked a standard caliber for their guns and firearms, especially regarding the irregular troops armament. However, gunsmiths were capable of producing new pieces during a siege which fit the caliber of copious munitions. The problem with munitions was not overcome up until the nineteenth century and it had impact on Ottoman military failures during the eighteenth century.

In addition, certain social groups were expected to provide horses for the army. Furthermore, each timariot was supposed to provide his and his companions' horses from his own estate. Thus, unlike the Russians, the Ottomans were able to supply themselves with horses from domestic sources. Another group – the *celepkeşan* had to provide goats and sheep for the army as well as for the sultan's household. These people possessed large herds of sheep and during the eighteenth century were able to accumulate a considerable wealth, especially during military campaigns. As Murphey notes, war was, in general, good for merchants and animal herders, since it brought them instant profit.[49]

*Continuity and change during the Tulip Era*[50]

Following the devastating defeat in the Holy League War, the Ottoman Empire went through several years of internal crisis, marked by the court's struggle for power, which resulted in the deposition of Sultan Mustafa II (r. 1695-1703) by the rebellious yeniçeri. The spark of rebellion was set off at the very beginning of the eighteenth century when Mustafa II decided to relocate his power base in Edirne and to rely more on the timariot class. He planned to do so by shifting the existing land control mechanism from a service-held domain to a hereditary one and thus to establish the timariot as a new category of troops, whose loyalty would serve as leverage for the ruler's reform project. The yeniçeri felt threatened by the actions of their master and rose in rebellion. They succeeded in defeating the makeshift army of the Sultan near Edirne. Following the deposition of Mustafa, the yeniçeri continued their revolt for several more weeks, taking full control of the capital. By all means, the entire operation was an act, which demonstrated the ability of the kapukulu ocakları to maintain the status quo.[51] As Acemoğlu and Robinson note, such rebellions were not due to

[49] Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, 85-105.
[50] The so called *Lale Devri* period took place during the reign of sultan Ahmed III and was related to a set of reforms and reformulations of the existing Ottoman order, including the military. The "tulip" in the name derives from the great admiration which Ahmed III felt for tulips, especially for those imported from the Netherlands.
[51] Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1830*, 37.

backwardness or conservatism, but were a struggle to preserve and maintain the existing order with its benefits and privileges.[52]

From 1703s events onwards, a steady process of consolidation under Ahmed III (r. 1703-1730) and a series of viziers began in the Ottoman Empire. The governors were intimidated by the 1703 revolt and their intention was not so much to reform, but rather to reestablish the "old order", taking the reign of Süleyman I as a model of how things were supposed to work efficiently. There were no grand innovations regarding military development, but rather an effort to strengthen discipline in the army and to optimize the payment and the organization of logistics. By 1700 it was apparent that the fief based timar system was no longer adequate to cope with the new European standing armies (most notably the Habsburg forces) or with the growing power of the reforming Russian state under Peter. The increase of gun-wielding units, especially in the infantry, was introduced as early as the Long War and, as it was mentioned above, the government struggled to establish infantry auxiliary forces, which were to supplement the yeniçeri on the battlefield. The control of these troops became troublesome for the state, especially after the local power elites (governors, paşas, etc.) began to establish their own provincial forces – a process that would be repeated by the ayan during the eighteenth century.[53]

With the apparent decline of the central authority's ability to muster and use the provincial forces, the ability of local power brokers to use their potential in exchange for privileges became an ever-increasing trend in Ottoman state during the eighteenth century. As Aksan argues in her study on Ottoman warfare, the first decades of the century in question saw a dramatic increase of these provincial armies, funded directly by the state. Between 1683 and 1769 the number of local militia (*levend*), mustered by governors for the state's campaigns, rose from 10,000 to 100,000.[54] This trend strikingly resembles the way the Habsburgs recruited their forces in the course of the Thirty Years War, when the state granted local power holders and mercenary captains the necessary patents and funds to equip and men armies for the campaigns in Bohemia and Germany. Of course, there were differences, but the similarities of state military problems, accompanied by strong decentralization trends are evident.

Another aspect of the provincial military organization was the existence of local privileged categories of population. In return for tax exemptions, they were obliged to support the state with specific provisions or through fulfilling

[52] D. Acemoğlu, J. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 146.

[53] Ayan were the new provincial elite, who grew stronger in the context of increased tax farming, used by the Ottoman state from 1650 onward. During the eighteenth century they expanded their economic activities by acquiring lands from displaced timariots and also by meddling in state affairs as supporters of palace fractions. By the end of the eighteenth century, many ayan, in both Europe and Asia, ruled over semiautonomous "states", which sought to establish diplomatic relations with the Ottoman adversaries.

[54] Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1830*, 57.

certain tasks. The tasks included: the maintenance of roads and bridges; working on the fortifications of border garrisons; protecting mountain passes and struggling with bandits in the densely forest areas of Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Northern Greece.[55] These privileged settlements would, later on, become the backbone of the Awakening of Balkan nationalities, providing rich and well-educated figures, who would struggle to reshape and reestablish national culture and identity. With the growth of governors' and ayan's power, these privileged categories would become a source of support for the central authority. The government would occasionally arm and finance these settlements, in exhange for their fight against the rebellious provincial power brokers, and, later on - the notorious kırcali.[56] The combination of standing garrisons (yeniçeri), local militias (levend) and the categories of privileged local population (*martolos*, *voynuk*, *derbendci*, *pandur*) formed the three-layer system, which was the pillar of the imperial military power in the course of the eighteenth century. The interrelations between these main blocks of Ottoman military power were essential for the preservation of the Ottoman state, troubled not only by external enemies, such as Persia, Russia and Austria but also by the increasing number of internal problems in the face of the growing provincial power and the emancipation of local dynasties.[57]

The second crucial element of Ottoman warfare, both regarding the offense and the defense, was the maintenance of roads and fortification systems. As mentioned above, the Ottoman forces used six main roads to distribute their military power within the primary *eyalets* of the empire – Anatolia and the Balkans.[58] These roads were related to the pattern of campaign organization and also to the mapping of troop movement outside the borders of the Ottoman state. Roads, as Murphey has proved in his study on early modern Ottoman warfare, were essential for the upkeep of the army and for the synchronization between the local economy and the necessities of the military establishment during campaign seasons. This trend continued throughout the eighteenth century. For the purpose of keeping military corridors opened, the government empowered privileged local settlements, which were mentioned above. An additional element to logistics and also to security was the frontier line of fortifications, which resembled the ancient chain of fortresses, used ever since the time of the Romans. Belgrade, Vidin, Rusçuk (Ruse), Silistre (Silistra), Ibrail (Braila), Tulcea, Ismail, Kilya, Hotyn, Bender, Akkirman, Kilburun, Ochakov, Yeni-Kale and Azov were the key points on this line, guarding the Danube and the Black

[55] M. Uyar, E.J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk* (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2009), 83.

[56] The kırcali were a phenomenon which occurred in the Ottoman Empire during the late eighteenth century. Most of them were renegades from the Russo-Turkish Wars (1768-1774 and 1787-1792). the kırcali existed as a domestic problem of the Ottoman state ever since the Long War and the introduction of armed local militias. Thus, the Balkan kırcali were nothing more than a continuation of the "practice", which was already set in motion in Anatolia during the previous century.

[57] The first decade of the eighteenth century saw the "dropping out" of Tunisia, Algiers and Tripolitania.

[58] See Map 1 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

Sea coast from enemy depredations, coming from Austria, Poland-Lithuania and Russia.[59] To this list it could be added Kaffa and Kerech in Crimea, which were used not only to distribute Ottoman influence over the Crimean Khanate, but also to protect the Azov and the Black Seas from Cossack pirates. These major fortifications were manned by elite yeniçeri, while local labor was mobilized for their maintenance. These garrisons were well-armed, supplied and numerous, often receiving reinforcements in the event of planned enemy campaigns and sieges.

The third element of any early modern military endeavor was funding. Due to the economic crises during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, the old system of self-supplying troops, centered on the timariot institution, declined. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the state had to pay to most of the soldiers under arms or to negotiate the upkeep of local militias with power-brokers from the provinces. The yeniçeri were, as usual, the best and most strictly paid troops. They received their wages on a three-month schedule, with garrison contingents receiving funds with priority.[60] In addition to the *cizye* tax, paid by non-Muslims, yeniçeri garrisons received funds from a number of farms, ascribed to their fortresses (*ocaklık*). Due to the shortage of funds, gathered for the Treasury, the state delegated to concrete contractors (*mübayaacı*) the collection of taxes and supplies from local settlements. In time, mübayaacı began to collect money instead of supplies and often manipulated the amount of cash, goods, pack animals and wagons for their benefit. These contractors soon merged with the ayan and the local paşas, forming a distinct group of local elites, which were to dominate internal policiy until the reign of Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839). As Aksan notes, over time these special taxes, issued by these new contractors, became permanent and contributed to the alienation of the local population, which was a step toward the emancipation of local nationalities.[61]

The three elements described above, outline a pattern in which continuity rather than actual change is apparent. The transformation, however, did occur in the only military sphere, in which the sultans and their viziers could meddle without attracting the attention of the kul - the artillery. The Ottomans, as noted, were probably the first in Europe to develop a siege train and maintain a high level of expertise in its arsenals and field gun crews. By 1720 it became apparent that western evolution in artillery began to overshadow the Ottoman military traditions in this field. The Empire's artillery lacked the edge it had during victorious battles such as Chaldiran (1514) and Mohács (1526). Fortune helped Mahmud I (r. 1730-1754) to find a western expert, who could modernize Ottoman artillery, using his experience, gained during the wars of Louis XIV. His name was Claude Alexandre, Comte de Bonneval, but he entered Ottoman

[59] Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1830*, 68.
[60] Ibid., 72.
[61] Ibid., 73.

history under his Muslim name - Humbaracı Ahmed Paşa. Bonneval arrived in Istanbul following the downfall of Damat Ibrahim Paşa. Sultan Mahmud I was adamant to continue the old vizier's reforms as much as he could dare, due to the yeniçeri uprising of Patrona Halil and the abdication of his uncle Ahmed IIIin 1730.[62]

Bonneval converted to Islam to silence the kul and *Shari'a* opposition toward his goals, which allowed him freedom in shaping the artillery as he willed. An engineering school (*Hedeshane*) was founded in 1734, followed by the establishment of a grenadier regiment, which included 32 French veterans, who served as NCO.[63] Bonneval, who gained experience as a quartermaster of artillery in the Habsburg Netherlands, was able to standardize the guns and munitions, used by the Ottoman gunners. He was also responsible for the increase in the number of guns, allocated to border fortresses and garrisons, as well as for the better performance of Ottoman artillery during the wars with Persia, Russia, and Austria in 1730s. After his death the *ulema* suspended the school he founded, but a new one, named Bonneval was soon established by Mahmud I's successor Mustafa III (r. 1757-1774).

During the eighteenth century the Ottoman Empire experienced a turbulent period of military and political transition. This was closely related to the state's decentralization, fueled by the downfall of the Classical Ottoman order, as deemed under the reign of Süleyman I. This transformation affected all aspects of the social, political and military development of the state. Their understanding is essential for the accurate evaluation of Ottoman military potential, especially when perceived in the context of the growing Austrian and Russian military power.

It is almost impossible to calculate the actual size of the Ottoman forces during the eighteenth century. As noted by Virginia Aksan, the Ottoman archives may never be recovered in their entirety.[64] Scraps of information do exist here and there, and the current dissertation would provide a summary of this data.[65] What is obvious is the ability of the Porte to muster and march large armies again and again in the course of the eighteenth century. The number 80,000 is constant, being visible in the Pruth Campaign, the Persian Campaign, Topal Osman Paşa's campaign against Nadir Shah in 1732, as well as during the Russo-Turkish War (1736-1739). Although Marquis de Marsigli provides us with substantial volume of numbers for the Ottoman and vassal contingents, these figures are related not so much to the eighteenth-century realities, but

[62] In 1730, similarly to the 1703 Revolt, the yeniçeri rose in rebellion to protect their privileges and political benefits from what they saw as re-emerging state desire to rein them in by promoting political "westernization". Rhetorics of protecting the rightful tradition of Islam against foreign influences were used to mask the actual political intentions of the rebels and their allies in court.

[63] Z. Acer, "Place of Reforms in Western Structuring Process of Ottoman State and Their Effect on Modernization (1718- 1789)", *Zeitschrift für die Welt der Türken* 2, 1 (2010), 135-46 (http://www.dieweltdertuerken.org/index.php/ZfWT/article/viewFile/105/zaacer- Accessed on 23.02.2016).

[64] Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1830*, 72.

[65] See tables in the Appendix for the current chapter.

rather to the War of the Holy League. Therefore we should approach these numbers with great caution.[66]

Further understanding of ayan evolution and the transformation of local privileged categories will undoubtedly clarify the trends in power transition, but also in the way the Empire's military potential functioned on regular basis. The comparative approach should also take into consideration the different way, in which Russian and Austrian armies evolved in the course of the Succession Wars, as well as the Great Northern War. The following sub-chapter will concentrate on the second major military and political factor, which influenced the development of the Pontic Steppe – the Crimean Khanate.

## 2.2. Between the Sultan and the Steppe – the Crimean Khanate

*Historiography*

The Crimean Khanate remains one of the least studied cases in European historiography. The interest on this subject rose only in the last two decades in the context of frontier studies and the new place of the Pontic Steppe and its inhabitants in the overall history of the continent. The current thesis will only outline the main features of the Crimean Khanate and its role for the expansion of Ottoman military power, and thus, only a few select sources will be taken into consideration. First and foremost, Brian Davies provides an exhaustive illustration of the Khanate's structure and military organization in his work on the warfare and societies in the Black Sea.[67] Davies' account is further expanded in an article by Victor Ostapchuk who presents an interesting case study on Tatar campaigns in the mid-sixteenth century by building upon existing primary sources. Finally, Brian Willaims' recent study on the Crimean Tatars' role in the Ottoman military system sheds further light on the role, played by the Khanate as an essential tool in Istanbul's grand strategy.[68]

*Historical background*

The arrival of the Mongols in Eastern Europe in the mid-thirteenth century had a devastating impact on the existing political order and led to a rapid reformulation of societies in the mainly Slavonic regions of present-day Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. With the turn of the fourteenth century, Chinggisid power, transfered through the Golden Horde, slowly reshaped, influenced by the adoption of Islam, as well as the incorporation of local administrative practices, merged with the original Mongolian heritage. By the

[66] L.F. Marsigli, *L'Etat Militaire de l'Empire Ottoman* (Amsterdam, 1732).
[67] B.L. Davies, *Warfare, State and Society on the Black Sea Steppe, 1500-1700* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
[68] B.G. Williams, *The Sultan's Raiders: The Military Role of Crimean Tatars in the Ottoman Empire* (Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, 2013); Williams' work includes an exhaustive list of literature on the Crimean Khanate.

year 1400, the Horde's power stabilized and formed central authority with peripheral tributaries, most of which were the principalities of the former Kievan Rus. With the growth of Lithuanian power in the western rims of the Eurasian Steppe, the Golden Horde had to abandon some of its front positions in Ukraine and tried to distribute its influence over the Russian states, which were already looking for options to overthrow the Horde's suzerainty.

It was in this context when some of the southern Tatar clans (Shirins, Barins, Argins, and Kipchaks), situated in Crimea, aligned themselves and established an independent realm, which existed outside the shadow of the Horde's authority.[69] It is hard to pinpoint accurately the beginning of this process, but by 1440, it was well on its way. The emancipation of the Crimean Tatars was led by Haji Girei (r. 1441-1466), a powerful Tatar noble of Chinggisid descendant, who was able to unify the clans and to create a khanate for himself, capturing Crimea and parts of the adjacent steppe.[70] Haji was quick to realize that in order for his realm to survive, powerful allies had to be found and soon fate smile upon the "adolescent" khanate. In 1453 Mehmed II the Conqueror, one of the most prominent warrior-rulers of his age, took Constantinople, ending a millennium of Byzantine existence. The sultan was fast to evaluate the situation in the Black Sea region and decided to continue the Ottoman expansion against the Genoese positions in Crimea and Anatolia. In 1454 a large fleet of 56 vessels and many troops was sent against Kaffa.[71] Haji Girei decided to support Mehmed's effort, hoping to gain the powerful Ottoman state as an ally. Although the siege was unsuccessful, it brought together the two countries, laying the foundations of a long, but turbulent alliance, which would last until the last decades of the eighteenth century.

The real watershed in the relations between the Crimean Tatars and the Porte came ten years later when following the death of Haji Girei, the local elite began a prolong struggle for the throne, which resulted in an all-out civil war, lasting for a decade between 1466 and 1476. Soon the confrontation attracted the attention of foreign powers and led to their interference. Both the Genoese and the Ottomans sought to promote their candidates, often shifting their bet from one Tatar *mirza* to another. In the end, Mengli I Girei (r. 1466, 1469-1475, 1478-1515) emerged victorious and with the assistance of Mehmed II asserted himself as the single ruler of the Khanate. The support of the Ottoman ruler, however, came at a price. Mehmed demanded that henceforth the Tatar nobles' choice of every ruler would be approved by the Porte. Such a development opened the doors for direct Ottoman influence not only on the ruler himself but also - on the leaders of the separate clans, who struggled for the patronage of the

[69] Davies, *Warfare, State and Society*, 6.
[70] The transliteration of the names of the Crimean rulers, the tatar clans and the toponyms in the realms of the Khanate is given according to Davies, *Warfare, State and Society.*
[71] Williams, *The Sultan's Raiders*, 2.

sultan in exchange for their vote and support for Istanbul's policies in the Khanate.

Further Ottoman influence on the Crimean realm was asserted through direct expansion. In 1475 a powerful fleet, bearing elite troops and heavy artillery, arrived in Crimea and quickly subdued local Genoese garrisons, ending the Italian presence in the Black Sea region. A chain of strategic fortresses was captured and refortified, giving Istanbul direct presence of power, which could be used to daunt local elites and project imperial policies on the northern frontier. Additional Ottoman garrisons were established in the Crimean Peninsula (Perekop, Kozlov, Arabat and Yenikale), as well as the delta of the Don River, where the old Genoese fort of Tana was reestablished as the key Ottoman strongpoint of Azov.

However, the pressure, which the Ottomans administered on their Tatar allies, must not be overestimated. It was not an actual military threat, but rather the Porte reminded its friends in Crimea what would be the consequences in case of disobedience or infidelity. Most frequently the Turks used bribes, gifts and promises of lucrative raids to seduce the Tatar elite into obeying the will of the Empire. The Khans at Bakhchisarai were constantly blandished with expensive gifts and it became a custom for the sultan to send a set of valuable tokens before any campaign, in which the Crimean horde would raid for the benefit of the Ottomans.[72] Additional subsidies were regularly paid to the prominent clan leaders, upon which fell the choice of the next ruler and who possessed sizable forces and influence.[73]

The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Crimea has been compared to many different cases – either by the way Egypt and Tunisia were incorporated in the sultan’s realm or by the way the relations with Wallachia and Moldavia were regulated. Williams would even go as far as to seek a relationship scenario, similar to the Polish-Lithuanian case of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.[74] In the words of B. Davies, apart from the military obligations to be a friend to the sultan's allies and enemy to the sultan's foes, the Khan remained sovereign over his own domains, minting his own coins, and collecting his own tribute from Poles, Muscovites, and other nomadic peoples of the Kipchak Steppe.[75] In addition, Tatar loyalty was not as adamant, as one might assume. In periods of economic crisis, when raiding was needed or on occasions, when Tatar political and military interests diverged from those of the Ottomans, the Khanate would act on its own. The appeasement of local nobles and the general population for mounting raids were the main reasons why Crimean rulers acted against the desires of their sovereigns in Istanbul. Still, in

[72] Ibid., 4.
[73] Davies, *Warfare, State and Society*, 7.
[74] Williams, *The Sultan's Raiders.*, 3.
[75] Davies, *Warfare, State and Society*, 7.

most of these cases, the Porte would reprimand the turbulent khans by exiling them and placing new, more reliable candidates on the throne of Bakhchisarai.

*A confederation of hordes*

The structure of the Crimean state has been, more or less, a puzzle for scholars, due to the shifting nature of nomad habitations, and the turbulent manner in which different clans and *ulusy* (domains) changed their pastures and areas of operation. The internal political ethos of the Crimean Khanate was never a stable one. During the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, a series of shifts within the Don-Volga-Ural Steppe occurred, which led to the transition of some clans from the eastern to the western frontiers of the Pontic Steppe. The Nogais, who inhabited present-day western Kazakhstan, slowly moved westward, pushed by the advancing Kalmyks. The first wave of newcomers, known as the Lesser Nogais, entered the Pontic Steppe in the sixteenth century and soon came into the orbit of Crimea and submitted to the rule of the Chinggisids in Bakhchisarai.

Due to the constant pressure from the Cossacks along the Volga and the Don rivers, as well as in pursuit of more lucrative frontiers for raiding, part of the Lesser Nogais resettled westward, establishing their presence in the Budjak and the Edisan.[76] This motion created lesser hordes, subjected to the Crimean Khan, stretching from the Danube Delta to the Volga River. In the 1630s, the picture once again reshaped. The Kalmyks, driven away by the Qing expansion and the rise of the Kazakhs, invaded the Lower Volga, driving beforehand a new wave of Nogais – the Greater Horde. The new Nogai diaspora settled along the Kuban and the Don rivers while more and more Nogais from the former domains of the Lesser Horde moved west to join the Budjak and Edisan Tatars.

With the advent of the eighteenth century, the lands, dominated by the Crimean khans, became less and less spacious. With the growth of Muscovite power under Aleksey I Romanov, and the establishment of the Cossack Hetmanate as a separate entity during the Khmel'nyts'kyi revolt (1648–1657), the lesser hordes were pushed back toward the coastal areas. The establishment and expansion of defensive lines, drawn by the Muscovites to limit nomadic raids into their territories, began to repay the vast efforts, invested by the Russian state. In addition, the rise of the Kalmyks, as a separate, more or less autonomous power, proved to be a significant challenge to the Crimean authority. Although for most of the seventeenth century the khans were able to sustain diplomatic relations with the Kalmyk *tayishis*, with the strengthening of Russo-Kalmyk relations under Peter I and Ayuka Khan (r. 1672-1723), the

[76] See Map 5 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

power balance in the steppe once again shifted.[77] Moreover, the Khanate was placed on defense positions due to the growing expansion of Russia in the south.

*Foe to your enemies – the Crimean gear-wheel in the Ottoman war mechanism*

In their three hundred years of service, the Crimean Tatars contributed more to the Ottoman military system than did any other of the sultan's non-Turkish subjects.[78] The value of Crimea's military potential for the success of Ottoman expansion in Europe is beyond doubt. For over two hundred years Tatar forces were an essential element of the successful Ottoman strategy for defeating eastern and central European adversaries. While the main Ottoman forces served as a shock force, labeled for shattering enemy armies in pitched battles, the Tatars were the backbone of the auxiliary forces. They were used to harass and devastate the countryside, cut lines of support and communication, and destroy any smaller enemy contingents, which strayed away from the main body of troops, such as foraging parties and late reinforcements.

The central issue when studying Crimean warfare is to determine the actual size of the forces in service of the khans, which were available for campaigning. Contemporary accounts usually tend to overestimate Tatar forces with figures reaching 200,000 or even 400,000.[79] In reality, numbers were far lesser. The actual size of mobilized Tatar forces was closely related to the figure, which was going to lead the endeavor. Thus, the Khans would marshal the most impressive armies, reaching up to 80,000 men for a single campaign (usually the number revolved around 50,000), while lesser leaders such as the *kalga-sultan*-s or the *nuraddin*-s would command smaller contingents of up to 10-20,000.[80] Another factor, which predetermined the size of the army assembled, was the actual aim of the campaign. Raids for booty and depredation would demand lesser numbers than actual military campaigns in support of sultan's forces.[81]

Once the aim was set, a call to arms (*nida*) was issued, urging the warriors of the lesser hordes and the main Crimean ulusy to mobilize according to the khan's demands. The calls, aimed at the mobilization of the Khanate's full potential, were usually mandatory for all males between fifteen and seventy.[82] As Davies notes, with the weakening of the khan's influence during the

[77] Tayishi is a member of the ruling dynasty among the Kalmyks. All terms regarding the Kalmyks are given according to Khodarkovsky, M, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002)
[78] Williams, *The Sultan's Raiders*, 1.
[79] Ibid., 5.
[80] Davies, *Warfare, State and Society*, 18.
[81] V. Ostapchuk, "Crimean Tatar Long-Range Campaigns: The View from Remmal Khoja's History of Sahib Gerey Khan" in B. Davies (ed.), *Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1500-1800* (Leiden and London: Brill, 2012), 158; Ostapchuk notes that certain lucrative raids were preserved only for trusted and loyal warriors and that Tatars aimed at excluding the non-Muslim *reaya* from these endeavors.
[82] Ibid., 157.

seventeenth century, raiding initiatives and calls for mobilization became the instruments of beys and mizras, who strived to assert their interests and policies.[83] Mobilization was usually carried out in remarkably short periods - between ten days and a month, but usually within two weeks.[84] All soldiers were required to bring with them food and supplies, three horses and their armament. Each set of five men received a cart for the transportation of their equipment and provisions.[85] The equipment of the soldiers was diverse, depending on their social status and personal wealth. Common warriors wore simple clothes, made of wool and sheepskin and used padded leather jackets as a sort of protection in combat. Wealthier Tatars had chain mails and conical helmets. The weapon diversity did not significantly change during the existence of the Crimean state. Sabers, short spears, horse-hair lassos and the composite bow were the main elements in Tatar's armament. Muskets, although known and in used in the Khanate, were reserved only for the khan's infantry contingents (consisted of yeniçeri and local mobilized Crimeans) and were perceived as rather clumsy for being used from horseback. Artillery pieces were only brought during major campaigns when pitch battles were expected. These were organized into artillery trains (*top arabacısı*), and smaller pieces were placed on armored wagons in the familiar Hussite fashion, adopted by most Central and Eastern European armies.[86]

Once mobilization began, troops were expected to gather at certain strategic locations, depending on the direction, in which the perceived campaign would venture. The most usual spot for a gathering of the whole army was e Perekop, from where raiders could march either westward against Poland-Lithuania, Moldavia, and Wallachia, north – against Russia and the Cossacks, or to the east – facing the Kalmyks, Circassians, and Persians. The Ottoman fortresses at Kinburn, Ochakov, Yenikale and the stronghold of Azov presented other favorable locations from where raids could be launched eastward. Invasion routes were projected in such a fashion as to circumvent the main Muscovite defensive lines in Ukraine. Campaigns were launched eastward, reaching the Don or the Volga rivers and then swung northward, aiming at Tula, Ryazan, and Kazan or directly against the Russian capital. For campaigns in the west, the Tatars either aimed at Kiev or crossed the river Bug, when raiding north they either aimed against Bar or marched south toward the Pruth to enter Moldavia.[87]

Climate and seasons determined the organization of raids and campaigns. By far the most profitable season was the time of harvest since the border troops of the land militia were preoccupied with harvesting their crops. The abundance of forage and food also enabled the Tatars to keep offensive raids for longer

[83] Davies, *Warfare, State and Society*, 18.
[84] Ostapchuk, "Crimean Tatar", 157; Williams, *The Sultan's Raiders*, 5.
[85] Williams, *The Sultan's Raiders.*, 5.
[86] Ostapchuk, "Crimean Tatar", 159.
[87] Davies, *Warfare, State and Society*, 18-20.

periods of time.[88] Winter was the other period during which the Tatars struke their foes, taking advantage of the fact that the steppe was frozen, along with the rivers, which facilitated the crossing of the vast expanses. Also, the winter season corresponded with the abundance of festivities, celebrated by Catholic and Orthodox Christians, giving plenty of chances for surprise attacks.

Apart from these seasonal raids and campaigns, Tatar forces (comprised of an ever-increasing proportion of Nogais, especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) engaged in prolonged military campaigns, supporting Ottoman war efforts. It could hardly be pinpointed even a single European campaign, carried out by the Porte after 1476, in which Tatar contingents were not present. The khan's warriors marched in Vienna along with Süleyman in 1529 and again in 1683. They assisted the Turks during the Long War, and also in their struggle against Persia, marching to the east as far as the Caucasus. With the intensification of Polish-Ottoman conflicts during the seventeenth century, the Crimean forces were aimed at the Commonwealth's lands more often than ever. The War of the Holy League was the climax of Tatar support and the campaigns engaged the entire potential of the Khanate. The advent of the eighteenth century did not bring any significant change. As it would be analyzed later in the dissertation, the forces under Devlet II Girei (r. 1699-1702; 1709-1713) were of vital importance for the victory over Peter at Pruth, and later on, during the War of 1735-1739, the Crimeans bore the primary burden of the conflict, absorbing substantial part of Russian military activities.

The Crimean Khanate played essential role in the establishment and upkeep of Ottoman military presence on the Northern Black Sea. It did, however, play an even greater role as autonomous power broker, able to shift the scales of any conflict in the Pontic Steppe. The political and military prestige and influence of the Khanate remained formidable throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and it was only in the late 1730s that the Tatars' ability to muster and organize their forces for raids and campaigns were significantly diminished by the growing power of imperial Russia and their Cossack and Kalmyk allies.

As it would be analyzed in the following chapters, the Tatars were an essential element of the Ottoman military mechanism, particularly regarding the security and protection of the empire's northern borderline. The well-organized and seasoned warriors of the steppe were pivotal for any successful campaign in Ukraine, Podolia, Budjak, Edisan or the Kuban Steppe. In a century, in which the Ottoman Empire, as already noted, experienced problems with mobilizing its military potential, the Tatars provided a considerable proportion of the Porte's armies and maintained the war efforts beyond the limits of Istanbul's power projection.

[88] Ostapchuk, "Crimean Tatar", 157; Davies, *Warfare, State and Society*, 20.

Having reviewed the main features of the Ottoman military system and its key gear-wheel – the Crimean hosts, the following sub-chapter will examine the other essential protagonists in the tale of Russia's southern expansion. No doubt, the first and most notable of them is the Safavids' Empire.

## 2.3. An Empire Reforged – Safavid Persia and the Rise of Nadir Shah

The eighteenth century Ottoman warfare is scarcely studied, but there are even fewer works dedicated to the Safavid art of war. In general, there are two main articles by L. Lockhart and M. Haneda, which deal with the military establishment of the Safavids.[89] These earlier works are partially supplemented by the articles of M. Axworthy and R. Matthee.[90] Some piece of information could also be found in the work of W. Floor.[91] A recent study by K. Farrokh presents considerable amount of details on the matter and examines with greater precision the wars with the Ottomans and Russia.[92] Finally, the article on the Safavid army in Encyclopedia Iranica gives an overview of the problem, but it does not provide many details.[93] The theme about the general decline of Persia during the first decades of the eighteenth century is studied in the works of Matthee and Foran.[94] Similarly to the previous part, this sub-chapter aims at presenting a balanced approach toward Safavid military power, rather than giving full description of the different unit types of the Persian army. Safavid "backwardness" has strengthened its position in historiography even more than the Ottoman case. According to most of the above-quoted works, the Safavids did not possess any artillery and gunpowder weapons were used on rare occasions and served merely as palace decorations. However, the narrative of Abraham of Yerevan tells us a different story. By using his work as a starting point, the dissertation aims at presenting a rather different image of the Safavid attitude toward guns.

*Army*

When in the beginning of the sixteenth century Shah Ismail I (r. 1501-1524) created his state, he mustered his armed forces around the core of an irregular

[89] L. Lockhart, "The Persian Army in the Ṣafavī Period", *Islam* 34, 1 (1959), 89-98; M. Haneda, "The Evolution of the Safavid Royal Guard", *Iranian Studies* 22, 2-3 (1989), 57-85.
[90] M. Axworthy, "The Army of Nader Shah", *Iranian Studies* 40, 5 (2007), 635-46; R. Matthee, "Unwalled Cities and Restless Nomads: Firearms and Artillery in Safavid Iran" in C. Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 1996), 389-417.
[91] W. Floor, *The Afghan Occupation of Safavid Persia*, *1721-1729* (Paris: Peeters Publishers, 1998).
[92] K. Farrokh, *Iran at War: 1500–1988* (London: Osprey, 2011).
[93] M. Haneda, "The Army III. Safavid Period", *Encyclopedia Iranica* (http://www.iranica.com/articles/army-iii - Accessed on 16.02.2016).
[94] J. Foran, "The Long Fall of the Safavid Dynasty: Moving beyond the Standard Views", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, 2 (1992), 281-304 (Abreviated henceforth as IJMES); R. Matthee, *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan*, (New York: I.B. Turis, 2012). R. Matthee, "The Decline of Safavid Iran in Comparative Perspective", *Journal of Persianate Studies*, 8, 2 (2015), 276-308.

force – the *qizilbash*. The qizilbash (red hats) were a military force, comprised of Turkoman tribal horsemen. Each of the tribes had its leader, and they served as the wings of the Safavid forces. In addition, the army of Ismail was supplemented by Çagatay and Kurdish irregular forces, most of them, fighting on horseback.[95] All sources and historical works agree that prior to the Battle of Chaldiran (1514) the Safavids did not use guns or firearms. The disaster, caused by the Ottoman firepower, however, was a lesson that Ismail was fast to learn. By 1516 appeared the first artillery pieces and soldiers equipped with firearms. Although their number was not significant, they became the backbone of the Safavid infantry force and during the following century rulers used them in order to invigorate their reform policy. Apart from the Turkoman qizilbash and the gunpowder infantry (*tufangchiyan*), the shahs relied on their royal guards (*qurchis*). Although their numbers were not formidable during the early Safavid period, they were well-trained and equipped and were the only regular troops in service of the shahs.[96] During the reign of Tahmasp I (r.1524-1576), the size of the tufangchiyan and the artillery corps increased, supplemented by the establishment of a new type of army – the *ghulam* (slaves). These troops were recruited among the Christian population of Caucasus (Georgians, Armenians, and Circassians) and were used to balance the influence of the qizilbash forces. The transformation from irregular tribal force into a standing army was successfully completed by Abbas I (r. 1587-1629). He reduced the strength of the qizilbash in half and regulated the structure of the ghulam and *tufangchi-aqasi* (the former *tufangchiyan)* forces. He also reformed the artillery corps and transformed it into a formidable force. [97]

After the death of Abbas, the Safavid military power experienced a period of decline. It was during Abbas II (r. 1642-1666) when stabilization was achieved. However, during his reign the artillery corps was practically abolished. While older historiographical researches have related this abolition to backwardness and disregard toward the value of artillery, Matthee argues that it was economic issues, and the general peace on Persia's borders that attributed to the decline of the gunpowder forces.[98] Furthermore, after in 1639 a peace treaty was signed with the Ottomans and a stalemate was achieved at Qandahar with the Mughals, the only major enemy left was the tribal force of the Uzbeks, who did not possess artillery or guns. In addition, Persia's geography was an obstacle for the development of an adequate artillery force. There were no navigable rivers and the land routes were through mountains and narrow passes, which made even basic soldier movement an arduous task. Unlike the Ottoman

[95] M. Haneda, "The Army III. Safavid Period" (http://www.iranica.com/articles/army-iii - accessed on 16.02.2016).
[96] For the growth of the Persian Royal Guard, see Table 3 in the Appendix for the current chapter; Haneda, "The Evolution", 57-85.
[97] Lockhart, "The Persian army", 92-3; However, Lockhart supports the idea of Sir Robert Sherley's major role in the reforms of Abbas I. This theory has been already rejected by scholars of Iranian history.
[98] Matthee, "Unwalled cities", 410; Matthee, "The Decline of Safavid", 293-6.

Empire, Persia lacked the basic resources for the production of gunpowder. While there were sulfur deposits, saltpeter and charcoal were hard to find and had to be imported. Weapon foundries were also few, the biggest being in Lar.

The narrative of Abraham of Yerevan, however, tells us a different story. During the Ottoman invasion in 1724, several cities were able to equip a considerable amount of "musketeers".[99] Furthermore, Abraham states that Persian citadels were well supplied with cannons, which were used to fend off Ottoman raids. He also deliberately compares the Safavid forces with those of the Afghans, who did not have guns and had to capture enemy strongholds by negotiating with the defenders. Another interesting fact is that the Safavids already possessed *zamburak* camel gunners, even before Nadir Shah (r. 1736-1747) reformed Persia's military system in the 1730s.[100] One last piece of evidence that the Safavids recognized the importance of gunpowder weapons could be derived from the siege of Baghdad (1638). In his concise description of the siege Murphey estimates that after in 1623 Abbas I captured the city, the fortifications were upgraded and were designed to allow the deployment of 20,000 troops, armed with muskets.[101] Thus, it could be stated that firearms were introduced in Safavid Persia at a larger scale than has been previously assumed.

However, by 1722 the Safavid military power was in regression. Lack of governmental initiative and the decline of tribal forces, combined with the lack of able field commanders led to the general disintegration of the army.[102] Resistance against the Turks and the Afghans was carried out by local garrisons, supported by the population. It was not until Nadir Shah entered into the service of Tahmasp II (r. 1722-1732) that a reinvigoration of the armed forces was carried out.[103] Therefore, when Russia invaded the Caspian shores, it did not meet a united empire, but a checkered set of semi-autonomous local governors, switching their allegiance to whoever was most powerful in the given moment.

When analyzing the facts, two distinct notions can be derived. Firstly, Persia did possess regular troops, but they served as palace guards, and their number was insignificant, compared to the size of the yeniçeri. Secondly, the Safavids recognized the importance of gunpowder as early as 1516, only 14 years after the emergence of their state. From that year on, guns played an important role in Safavid warfare, reaching their peak under Abbas I. In general, the Safavid army was less regularized than the Ottoman and the arsenal, possessed by the Persians, was far less impressive than that of the Ottomans. Nevertheless, the theory of Safavid backwardness should be reapproached.

[99] For example, the Armenian population in Yerevan managed to equip 9,000 men with firearms. In addition, 28,000 other citizens were mobilized; see Abraham of Yerevan, *History of Wars*, 25.

[100] Abraham talks about a corps of 15 Armenian *zamburaks*, accompanied a Persian envoy to the Ottoman Empire in 1727; see Abraham of Yerevan, *History of Wars*, 50.

[101] Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*, 116. As Murphey notes, each of the 10,000 embrasures was to be defended by two musketeers, one bowman and two assistants.

[102] The last more prominent leaders were the Georgian princes Gurgin Khan (King Giorgi XI of Kartli) and his nephew Khusrau Khan. They were both killed during the first Afghan rebellion in 1709.

[103] Axworthy, "The Army of Nader Shah", 637-9.

There is sufficient evidence that guns played far greater role in Safavid art of war than was previously assumed. However, after the disaster at Gulnabad (1722) and the capture of Isfahan (1722), the Safavid army rapidly vanished as force. Only local garrisons and urban militias were still resisting the invading armies of Ottomans, Afghans and Russians. Persia would have to wait half a decade before Nadir Shah would begin his process of modernization. Though this process did not give the Persians a decisive edge over the Turks, it did bring both empires on the same level and left the commanders' abilities determine the outcome of the clash of Islam's titans.

*Logistics*

Unlike the Ottoman Empire, Safavid Persia was not blessed with long-standing military routes. The harsh terrain, the severe temperature variations and the lack of water in many parts of Persia, made it a country that was hard to control and govern. As Matthee notes in his article, Persia was divided into a number of regions due to the predominantly mountainous terrain of the Iranian Plateau.[104] The capital of Isfahan was separated by mountainous ridges and deserts from the ports of the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea. Roads crossed the broken terrain and were often impassable during winter season. Furthermore, the nature of the terrain prevented the development of cart transportation, which greatly limited the supply of the armies. Then it is no surprise that the Safavid preferred mounted troops, which could carry their supplies and did not need a baggage train.[105] As noted before, the Safavid Empire lacked the resources to produce sufficient quantities of gunpowder, which also limited the use of firearms. Also, deposits of metals were scarce and were often located in border regions, which meant that they were hard to develop and maintain. Persian forces lacked the necessary logistics to build a substantial infantry force. The terrain, which prevented the movement of larger artillery pieces, also determined Persians' preference for avoiding pitched battles and sieges and relying on ambushes and raids. On the other hand, each invading army met the same limitations even on a greater scale. The Chronicle of Abraham of Yerevan is abundant with examples of how Ottoman and Afghan troops were unable to proceed with their campaigns for days and often had to change their route, due to landslides and narrow passes.

Food and water supply was also problematic. The main grain production was concentrated in the plains around Isfahan and the Caspian Sea. Also large herds of sheep and goats were bred in the mountains. However, combining these two sources of food was not an easy task, due to the problems of transportation.

[104] Matthee, "The Decline of Safavid", 283.

[105] Persian forces were always mounted, ever since the Parthian Empire. The Sassanids also relied on cavalry rather than infantry. During the Middle Ages Arabs, Khwarazmians, Mongols and Timurids used cavalry armies to control Persia. It was far easier and cheaper to use a cavalry force, rather than pay large sums for the transportation of goods on land and the usage of infantry, which would greatly reduce the mobility of the army.

Furthermore, there were no major rivers or lakes, which could serve as a water supply. The transportation of water was also hard, primary due to the high-temperature varieties in the desert and to the half-desert environment of the Iranian Plateau.

*Interlude - the downfall of the Safavid Empire*

Before analyzing Persia's military development and potential under Nadir Shah, the process of political, economic and military collapse of the late Safavid state will be examined. It is essential to understand this age of regression in order to fully grasp the context of Nadir Shah's rise as well as the historical context, which enabled Russia and the Ottoman Empire to interfere in Persian affairs for over a decade.

Historians, who study the issues of the Safavid period in Iranian history, are still unsure when exactly the decline of the Safavid Empire began. Some point out that it started after the death of Abbas I the Great in 1629, others claim that the downfall of the Safavid begin after the reign of Abbas II (r. 1642-1666).[106] It could be even speculated that it was not until 1694 that the process of decline became irreversible. What all historians agree on is that there are three main reasons, which brought down the Safavid dynasty – political, economic and military.

The first and most often quoted reason is the general incompetence of the last two Safavid shahs – Sulaiman (r. 1666–1694) and Sultan Husain (r. 1694–1722) as political leaders of Persia. Both of them are regarded as drunkards and womanizers, who had little interest in state affairs and who have been entirely subjugated to their advisors and more importantly – to the struggling fractions within the harem.[107] All available contemporary sources support this thesis.[108] Both father and son are known for spending most of their time in the harem, drinking with courtiers or hunting. There are two famous cases, describing the dullness of Sulaiman. According to Muhammad Muhsin, Sulaiman is said to have spent seven years in the harem, without leaving it.[109] On a second occasion, when Sulaiman was told about the possible advance of Ottoman armies toward Tehran, the Shah said that he did not mind, as long as they left him the capital Isfahan.[110]

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[106] For an overview of the historiographical debate on the Safavid crisis; see Foran, "The Long Fall of the Safavid Dynasty", 281-304.

[107] L. Lockhart, "*The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia*", (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 16-35.

[108] "*A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia: The Safavids and the Papal Mission of the 17th and 18th Centuries"*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1939); Father Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010); see also quoted sources in L. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty*, 16-32.

[109] Lockhart, *Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty*, 31, citing Muhammad Muhsin, Zubdat al-Tavarikh.

[110] Ibid., 30 quoting Father Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions*, 40.

It would be far too convenient, however, to blame the incompetence of the last two Safavid shahs for the downfall of Persia. Before accusing them of not being devoted enough to state affairs, a closer look at their personal life should be taken. Both Sulaiman and Husain were raised in the tradition, developed by Abbas I, that the heir apparent should be locked in the harem and not allowed to hold any offices until he inherits the throne.[111] The first twenty or so years of the two rulers' reign passed in an endless joy and carelessness, surrounded by women and *eunuchs*, who would flatter the monarch, without providing any critical judgment or guidance. Therefore, the two princes were completely unprepared for the hard task of ruling one of the most powerful states in Asia. The lockdown in the harem became a *modus vivendi* for the last two Safavids. In this matter, they were not too distinct from the Ottoman sultans since Süleyman the Magnificent, who also spent their time in the harem or hunting and had little to do with governing. However, the difference lays in the quality of the ruling apparatus. If Late Safavid Persia had a few good ministers in the period 1640–1730, the Ottomans were fortunate enough to be governed by some of the ablest grand viziers.[112] The illustrious Köprülü family and the Tulip Age viziers proved capable enough to maintain the Ottoman power and even expand the empire further or reconquer most of the lands, lost after the devastating peace of Karlowitz (1699). The Köprülü-s, however, were fortunate to have the full support of the sultans. In Persia, some viziers were selected for their qualities but were left without political backup by the ruler.[113] The appointment of ministers was shah's duty, but due to their harem-centered existence, the last Safavids were dependent on their favorites, who were the real distributors of patronage in the court.[114] New viziers had to act in the context of constant political struggle between the fractions of the Safavid court.[115] The swift change of favors brought high level of instability and insecurity inside the court, which crippled the decision-making process and the state control.[116] It must be noted that some effort was made to stabilize and strengthen the state and due to wise measures the Safavid dynasty was able to survive until 1722. However, these steps toward stability were continually hampered by struggle for political power and the antagonism of rival fractions at the heart of the Empire.

Apart from the swiftly changing ministers, two other general fractions strongly influenced the ruler – the harem and the *ulama*. The late Safavid harem

[111] Lockhart states that the tradition of keeping the heir apparent in the harem until accession was Abbas I's greatest mistake; see Lockhart, *The Fall Of The Ṣafavī Dynasty*, 25.
[112] Foran, "The Long Fall", 288-294.
[113] R. Matthee, *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline*, 249.
[114] As Matthee notes, the viziers in the Safavid Empire were never able to assert themselves as semi-autonomous power holders in the manner, achieved by the Ottoman grand viziers. This resulted in the fact that Safavid grand viziers remained counselors, servants who continued to operate at the sufferance of the ruler, rather than holders of full executive power next to a feeble shah; see Matthee, "The Decline of Safavid Iran", 292
[115] Matthee, *Persia in Crisis,* 202. Matthee notes the crucial importance of the harem and the eunuchs, to whom the last shahs of the Safavid dynasty would bestow power.
[116] Ibid, 205; Matthee pinpoints the existing tensions between members of the inner court and leaders of the clan nobility as feature of the Safavid politics after 1694.

was a huge institution. It comprised of more than 5,000 women and thousands of servants. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, during a pilgrimage to Meshed, the harem and its servants numbered 60,000 people altogether.[117] Inside the harem, there were numerous fractions, each trying to place its candidates in the administration of the state. These fractions allied themselves with different ministers and advisors and controlled them to achieve their goals. An example for the power of the harem is the fact that since the 1670s Persia was governed not by a council of ministers, but by Privy Council of the shah, comprised of the most influential eunuchs in the harem.

The third main fraction, struggling against the others, was the ulama. The Shi'i clergy had a crucial role in Safavid Persia because the state was organized on the principles of theocracy. The Shah was regarded as the incarnation of the Hidden Imam, and thus, he was perceived as the leader of all Shi'i Muslims. Nevertheless, using the weakness of the last two shahs and the instability within the court, the ulama managed to place itself above the authority of the shah, taking away his "divine" functions. The authority of the ruler was greatly undermined. Another problem, created by the conservative Shi'i imams, was the persecutions which they issued against Armenians, Jews and the Sunni Muslims.[118] These led to a series of revolts and also strengthened the position of the Ottoman and Russian empires, which proclaimed themselves defenders of Sunnis and Christians within the Persian Empire. Following the persecutions, most of the tribes and small states in the Caucasus, which were previously under Persian supremacy, transferred their allegiance to Persia's western and northern neighbors.

All these struggles for the right to distribute patronage had one main effect – they greatly vitiated the ability of the central authority to govern the realm. The swift change of ministers, governors and local magistrates led to instability of the political and administrative foundations of the Safavid Empire.[119] Threatened by constant shifts of the ruling elite, local governors aimed at securing their power by achieving autonomy. By the end of the seventeenth century uprisings and disobediences was constant feature. Regardless of the many adverse factors, the Empire managed to subject all insurrections and revolts for an extended period of time. It was only after the two other factors for the Safavid's decline emerged that the Empire crumbled. Although the general incapacity of the last Safavid shahs contributed to the downfall of their empire, it would be an exaggeration to blame them solely for the crisis that struck Persia at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

[117] Ibid, 286.
[118] Matthee, *Persia in Crisis*, 202-7.
[119] In such terms, Persia is very much like Spain in the Age of Charles II, when there was constant struggle of court fractions to remove one another from the political scene. Like Persia, Spain lacked the unifying political figure who could resolve the main issues of the state. It would not be until the advent of Philip V (in Spain) and Nadir Shah (in Persia), that the two states would overcome their internal political strifes.

The second main reason for the downfall of Safavid Persia was the state's economic crisis and its main consequence – the weakening of the army. This issue concerns several historical studies. In his article on the downfall of the Safavid dynasty Foran develops the idea that the inability of Persia to go beyond its mediatory position in the trade between Europe and Asia, combined with the high inflation, characteristic for all countries during the seventeenth century, had a devastating effect on Persia's economy. His thesis is supported by R. Ferrier, who studies the impact of European trade on Safavid economy.[120] Ferrier concludes that the outflow of money from Persia to India combined with the devaluation of the Persian monetary system and the decline of silk exports to Europe after 1680 led to general crisis in Persia's economy. A third source of information on the decline of Persia's economy is V. Lyststov.[121] Using contemporary Russian sources, he concludes that Persia's income from silk fell threefold between 1710 and 1722. However, Lystsov relates this decline to the destabilization of the Persian state and the inability of the Empire to gather its taxes and fees due to lack of control over the provinces. These points are all confirmed and extended in R. Matthee's study on the decline and fall of the Safavid Empire. According to his latest research, it was a combination of poor monetary policy; political fragmentation within court; reduction in the flow of funds and goods due to hoarding and short-sighted religious policy that spelled the doom of the Safavid state.[122]

In general, Persia suffered from being solely a mediator in the trade between Europe and Asia. Exports of raw silk and cloth could not make up for the large sums that the Empire was paying for luxury goods brought by Dutch, English and later French merchants.[123] Furthermore, the seaborne trade between India and Europe turned out to be faster and safer than the overland trade route through Persia and the Ottoman Empire. The political distortion of the Persian provinces strengthened this trend even further. The income of Persia dropped steadily until it reached its lowest level during the reign of Husain. To make things worse, Shah Husain was firmly devoted to architecture and began constructing palaces, parks, and mosques. The money for these expensive building projects had to be found elsewhere since the treasury was empty. In the late years of Sulaiman and during the entire reign of Husain, tax farming and sale of offices became standard practice. As it is well known, both methods of funding lead to a high level of corruption and are also responsible for the low quality of the administrative apparatus.[124]

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[120] R.W. Ferrier, "Trade from the Mid-fourteenth century to the end of the Safavid Period", in *Cambridge History of Iran, vol 6* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 412 – 90.
[121] V.P. Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I: 1722 – 1723* (Moscow, 1951).
[122] Matthee, *Persia in Crisis*, 248-51.
[123] Foran, "The Long Fall", 283-4.
[124] As Foran concludes, the purchase of offices often placed incapable persons on important positions. Furthermore, these people sought to restore their "investments" by requiring additional taxes, taking bribes and deflecting funds from the state income. This led to heavy losses for the state as well as public unrest due to the surcharged of the population with taxes.

Finally, the inability to provide finances for the army led to the disintegration of Persia's military power. The armies were often disbanded due to lack of money or because governors and generals mustered a force, which was armed and supported inadequately. The constant shift of positions in the high command of the army destroyed any opportunity for a consistent strategy to handle the worsening situation on all frontiers of the empire.[125] The inability to muster armies led to the humiliating necessity of begging local rulers to gather their forces for the protection of the empire. The most famous example is King Giorgi XI of Kartli, who managed to organize a 30,000 Georgian army and to suppress the revolts in Baluchistan and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the shah had to beg him personally and give away titles to receive the help of the Georgian king.[126]

Apart from the above-examined three primary factors for the decline of the Safavid Empire, a fourth one could be added – the worsening geopolitical situation in Persia. All of Persia's neighbors were eager to exploit the weakness of the Safavid state and their political development allowed to be carried out an aggressive policy against Persia.[127] The first to strike a blow against the weakening Persian state were its former client states – Baluchistan and Oman. The Baluchi tribes ravaged Persia's southern provinces on several occasions and the Oman pirates conquered some of the most important naval bases in the Persian Gulf and disrupted significantly the naval trade between Persia and the European merchant companies.[128] The next wave of anti-Persian raids came from the dependent tribes of Caucasus and Afghanistan. Urged by the Shi'i's religious persecutions, the Sunni tribes overthrew the Safavid suzerainty and began raiding Persia - pillaging the cities and disrupting the trade. The final strike came from Persia's most dangerous enemies – the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Both states were looking to exploit the weakness of Persia and to conquer as much as possible in order to achieve their economic and strategic goals.

The combination of these four major factors made it impossible for the Safavid Empire to resist. The political, military and economic problems were interrelated, and an influential figure was needed to handle the grievous situation. However, after the weak and undetermined rule of Sulaiman, Persia

[125]Ministers were often envious of the generals and used their influence on the shah, in order to remove the generals from their positions and check the power of the military. Furthermore, army commanders were often representatives of the old provincial elite, while the ministers and the central government were a type of service aristocracy that held its power due to its positions in the state administration. The struggle between the provincial and tribal leaders and the central service aristocracy began after the death of Ismail I in 1525. Relatively weak monarchs and interregnums raised the power of the old provincial elites.

[126] The titles were "Vali of Georgia", "Supreme commander of the Persian Army" and "Governor of Kerman". Furthermore, Shah Husain had to proclaim Giorgi's son – Vakhtang, ruler of Kartlia and his nephew – Khosrow – mayor of Isfahan.

[127]Oman was centralized and stabilized after the expulsion of the Portuguese from Muscat. The Baluchi were also united in their struggle to overthrow Persia's superiority. Using the weakening of the Mughal Empire and Safavid Persia, the Afghans united under the Ghilzai tribe and tried to forge their own realm in Inner Asia.

[128]These raids greatly influenced the downfall of Persia's trade.

was headed by another weak and indecisive shah, who did not possess the traits, necessary for imposing a strong will over the collapsing administration. If after the disastrous rule of Shah Safi (r. 1629–1642), the stability of Persia was saved by Abbas II, the reign of Husain, with its many mistakes and problems, sealed the faith of the Safavid dynasty. Husain did not possess the necessary will or skills to reform his realm, and the disintegration of the Safavid Empire became inevitable.

*The army of Nadir Shah*

Following the collapse of Safavid rule, Persia was shattered into several semi-autonomous regions, which resisted foreign invaders on their own. Under the banner of the last Safavid – Tahmasp II from the Afsharid dynasty – Nadir Shah, began to reestablish central authority and to reshape the scattered pieces of the former military ethos. Nadir Shah was a reformer in the same sense as Peter I – a ruler in desperate need of reforging his army, which had been soundly defeated by its enemies. It was evident that the Ottomans were the most eminent threat for Persian security. They possessed the largest army to invade Persia and were well accustomed to fight on Iranian terrain, or at least better accustomed than the Russians. The Afghans, occupying a substantial part of the former Safavid realm, were not as dangerous as the Ottomans, but were still a force to be reckoned with. On the other hand, their numbers were limited, and they had proven their inability to fight sieges or to conduct prolonged campaigns outside the frequent raids. Russians, on the contrary, were a mystery. Safavid Persia had never fought a war against the Northern Empire, nor had it met a European-style army on a grander scale. Nadir Shah made a significant and profound choice – to let the Russians occupy their Caspian forts and concentrated his efforts against the other invaders. Like Peter, he did not hesitate to copy good practices from his enemies. Ottoman military ranks and unit structure was presented on smaller scale in order to update and upgrade the older Safavid structure. Musketeers were introduced *en masse*, using Ottoman-style handguns, while cavalry practice was borrowed from the Afghans, who received Persian ranks.[129] What Nadir Shah did was not so much to reinvent the Persian army but to reinforce the old one by implementing new useful ideas, taken from his enemies. He was more of an elaborator rather than an inventor of military practice. His genius laid in his ability to pick his entourage, inspire his troops and, most of all, in his sheer tactical and strategic talent, which elevated him as one of the most successful Asian warlords of all time.

The final result of Nadir's reforms was the establishment of a standing army consisting of 200,000 troops and supporting personnel which was divided into two main bodies – cavalry and infantry. The cavalry consisted of the royal

[129] K. Farrokh, *Iran at War: 1500–1988* (London: Osprey Publishing, 2011), 91-3.

cavalry, as well as additional troops from different regions of Persia – Khorasan, Azerbaijan, Baluchistan, Afghanistan and even from the khanates of Central Asia. The infantry was comprised of three main bodies –heavy musketeers (*jazayerchi)*, light musketeers and troops armed with spears, halberds, bows and swords. They entered combat in this particular order, giving primacy to the gunmen and using the traditional infantry as a final resolution or as a reserve, which was to be deployed at crucial moments on the battlefield.

Apart from these two main bodies Nadir Shah promoted an artillery corps, comprised of a combination of standard heavy artillery and camel-mounted light artillery pieces, called zamburak. As mentioned above, the zamburak existed during the Safavid era, but it was Nadir Shah who brought them forward and deployed them with success during his campaigns against the Ottomans and the Mughals.

In terms of logistics and supply, Nadir Shah created several gun foundries and arsenals around the empire (the main were in Isfahan, Merv and Kermanshah). The state also funded the purchase of horses for the army and provided each horseman with a state-bought mount.[130]

The cost of war was to be covered by ever-increasing taxation, which landed a critical blow on the already crumbling Persian economy. Although during his lifetime Nadir Shah succeeded in building and keeping a formidable army, which was better than its enemies on every front, his death brought a general collapse not only for his army but for Persia itself. The amount of funds, necessary for the maintenance of a 200,000 strong force were beyond the scope of the Persian Empire, which lacked the economic, administrative and resource bases, on which to build and maintain a standing regular army in the manner of Europe and Russia.

Unlike the Ottoman army, which was controlled by a stable, centralized state, between 1722 and 1726 the Safavid forces were left without central command. Local garrisons and urban militia lacked the supplying system, provided by the state. Local governors were looking after their own interests and often concluded agreements with the invaders. On the other hand, where resistance was organized, the local population was able to equip a considerable amount of firearms and used them actively against the enemies. The crisid in which Persia was must not be exagerrated, since only three years after the capture of Isfahan by the Afghans and the Northwestern provinces by the Ottomans and the Russians, Shah Tahmasp II, with the assistance of Nadir Shah, was able to rebuild the Persian army. Its strength grew almost 18 times between 1725 and 1733.[131] This dramatic increase was followed by an impressive quality growth as well, with guns and artillery introduced on an unprecedented scale. For some time Nadir Shah was able to maintain a standing army with high esprit

[130] Ibid., 92-6.

[131] For the growth of the Safavid army between 1500 and 1743, see Table 2 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

de corps and armed as good as any of its opponents. Combined with the tactical and strategic genius of its master, the army of Nadir became an instrument for victories and conquest. The lack of civil, economic and administrative reforms, however, spelled doom for the grand army. Following Nadir Shah's death, the pressure on the treasury became unbearable and only in a couple of years the strong and victorious army was only a distant memory, shadowed by the reality of Afghan resurrection and Ottoman revival in Iraq.

As it was noted above, the idea that the Persian lacked firearms and regarded them as useless should be reconsidered in order for the real image of the Safavid military machine to be illustrated. Similarly to the Ottoman and Russian cases, scholars should bear in mind the geopolitical issues of a given country, when analyzing its potential. In the case of Safavid Persia, Matthee and Farrokh have certainly made a good effort, which will hopefully be followed by scholars of Iranian history.

Having reviewed the imperial powers, who opposed Russia's bid for mastery in the Pontic region, the following sub-chapter will focus on the other important element, crucial for understanding this turbulent and complicated region – the frontiersmen.

## 2.4. On the Edge of Empires - the Pontic Frontier and its People

Apart from the three regional powers – Russia, the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia, the Crimean Khanate, as noted, was the only more or less settled society of the steppe. Apart from Crimea existed several quasi-political entities, which shaped the social and political background of the Pontic frontier. These societies – the Cossacks, the Kalmyks and the Nogais, shared large number of similarities regarding the relations they sustained with imperial authority. Their resemblances make it necessary to review them as a whole, with the notion of pointing out significant similarities and differences in order to establish the primary pattern of the frontier-Empire relations, which were essential for the conduct of war in the time frame, which is examined in the present dissertation.

*Historiography*

Since the end of the Cold War, Western historiography has produced a concise and well-written amount of secondary literature, which opens the debate on the development of frontier societies in the Pontic region. On the other hand, it also shares a new, intriguing perspective what the ethos of these people was, and how did their relations with the powers in the region (especially Russia) shaped their fortunes. One of the most detailed works is that of Michael Khodarkovsky, whose approach and comparative description of the variety of peoples inhabiting the lands between the Don and the Uralus Rivers is a must for any research on

the topic of frontier warfare and societies.[132] Another invaluable source of information, regarding Cossacks, in particular, is the work of Christoph Witzenrath. In his study of Cossack society and the way it was affected by Moscow's policy, Witzenrath unravels an elaborated structure, in which economic gains and interests are used as the welding of society.[133] Cossacks remain the essential focus of most scholars of the topic, since the primary sources, available for their history, is abundant in comparison to the materials, available for the Nogais and Kalmyks. Boeck's study on the Don frontier in the Age of Peter I tells the story of imperial effort to tame and handle the semi-autonomous frontiersmen and tap their potential for the benefit of Russia's expansion.[134] The study of Thomas Barrett on the Terek Cossacks provides a case study, focused on the relations between one of the frontline Cossack hosts and the local population in the North Caucasus region in the context of Russia's imperial expansion during the eighteenth and the first half of nineteenth century.[135] Regarding the Kalmyks, a brief introduction to their history and their settlements along the Volga River can be found in U. Erdniev's research on Kalmyk ethnography and history.[136]

*A Socio-political puzzle*

Following the Time of Troubles, the newly established Romanov dynasty began to assert its power and influence along the Volga River, trying to strengthen its grip on the steppe between the rivers Don and Yaik (Ural River).[137] These territories were initially inhabited by some Cossack hosts, who, in general, acknowledged the tsar as their sovereign, as well as the powerful Great Nogai Horde, which controlled the lands between Yaik and the Lower Don. Tensions among local forces, as well as constant raids into Russia, were a scourge for the tsarist authorities who had no actual means to assert their sovereignty over the turbulent frontiersmen. Before the successful war with Poland-Lithuania (1654-1667), after which Moscow was able to strengthen its hold over the Cossacks, the tsars could hardly count on any military leverage outside the walls of their Volga garrisons, the chief of which was Astrakhan.

The Nogais, most of whom were Muslims, were likely to join forces with the Crimeans and Bashkirs, and even with the Khans of Bukhara and Khiva,

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[132] Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*.
[133] C. Witzenrath, *Cossacks and the Russian Empire, 1598-1725: Manipulation, Rebellion and Expansion into Siberia* (London: Routledge, 2007).
[134] B. J. Boeck, *Imperial Boundaries: Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[135] T.M. Barrett , *At the Edge of Empire: The Terek Cossacks and the North Caucasus Frontier, 1700-1860* (Oxford and Colorado: Westview Press, 1999)
[136] U. E. Erdinev, *Kalmyki – Istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki* (Moscow: Kalmyk Book Publishing, 1985).
[137] Time of Troubles (in Rus. *Smutnoe vremya* 1598 – 1613) was a period of internal strife, civil unrest and foreign military interventions that followed the end of the Rurik dynasty and came to an end with the accession of Mikhail Romanov as tsar.

rather than serve the interests of the Muscovite state.[138] It was precisely such an alliance that Russia came to fear the most and the *voevodas* of Astrakhan struggled hard to bring disunity among the Nogais, playing the different mizra-s and their fractions against one another. This strategy achieved an unexpected result in the 1620s, when, following the death of Khan Ishterek, his successors engaged into a kind of civil war to determine the new ruling elite. In the end, there was no single winner, and the weakened fractions were left to lick their wounds while the Don and Terek Cossacks were encouraged to attack the weakened Nogais. This situation, favorable for the Muscovites, was soon to change with the arrival of a new Asian Horde – the Kalmyks.

A factor, which contributed to the Kalmyk migration, was the rise of the Kazakhs, whose raids began to torment Kalmyk settlements in what is now Central Kazakhstan. Driven forward by their enemies in an early seventeenth-century repetition of the *Völkerwanderung*, the Kalmyks firstly settled on the eastern banks of the Yaik River, and later crossed it, entering the Eastern Volga Steppe. From there, they launched a series of raids against Russia, the weakened Nogais and went westward as far as the Perekop in Crimea, forcing all local parties to unite in order to cope with the new threat. A combination of hastily forged coalitions was able to overpower the Kalmyk hosts and drive them across the Yaik by the mid-1630s. This success was, however, short-lived. The inability of Muscovy to project its power properly into the Volga basin and to protect the Nogais from Kalmyk depredations urged the later to join forces with the Crimeans and the Dagestani. Nogais ulusy were moved westward, most of them concentrating on the Kuban River, where a significant part of the once great Horde was to live until the Age of Catherine the Great. Others sought refuge in Crimea and some even joined the Budjak Horde in what is now south-western Ukraine. In any case, the scattered Nogais had no choice but to turn to the Muscovites and raid their territories, as well as the lands, controlled by the Cossack hordes.

To cover its southern flank and secure the hold on the Volga Steppe, the tsars sought a new strategy. They allowed the Kalmyks to settle on both sides of the Volga River and concluded a series of contracts with them, stipulating that the Kalmyks were to cease raiding Russian lands in exchange for carte blanche to strike at the Tatars and Nogais. The Kalmyks were also to cooperate and support Russian military campaigns in the Pontic region and also to restrain from keeping diplomatic connections with other states, most importantly Crimea, the Ottoman Empire, and Persia. As Khodarkovsky notes in his work, this was easier said than done. Kalmyk raids were to continue in the 40s, 50s and even 60s of the seventeenth century. The pressure on Russian frontier lands was only loosened a bit after the Kalmyks received a guarantee that none of them would be forcefully converted to Orthodox Christianity and after they were

[138] Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, 127-8.

allowed free trade in Muscovite cities and towns in the Volga valley (the so-called Lower Cities) as well and Moscow itself.

The unreliable Kalmyk aid was not enough to guarantee imperial interests in the Pontic Steppe, and the tsars opted to have additional leverage to spread their influence over the region. After a series of military and diplomatic advancents against Poland-Lithuania achieved by Tsar Aleksey, the incorporation of the Cossacks became an essential part for the establishment of the Russian government. The acquisition of Left-bank Ukraine, as well as Kiev, was used to incorporate the Hetmanate as an integral part of Muscovy. Although the Cossacks would keep their autonomy as late as the Great Northern War, constant steps were undertaken to secure their allegiance and obedience. The restrictions of raiding on Crimean and Ottoman territory, as well as on the Zaporozhian Sech, combined with the ever increasing need for Russian subsidies, made the Cossack bands more and more dependent on Muscovite financial aid. The lack of local manufacturing, especially arms production, as well as the low level of farming, made the hosts compound to follow imperial dictate in exchange for guns, grain and grants. Nevertheless, in the course of the seventeenth century, the Cossacks demonstrated their resolve to follow the economic interests which lay at the heart of their *Personenverbands*, rather than the machinations of their Muscovite puppeteer wannabes.[139] The clearest example of this trend was the conquest of Azov, which was carried out by the Cossacks in 1637 when their river flotilla stormed the unprepared Ottoman garrison and captured the town. Muscovy, unwilling to risk a war with the Porte (after their humiliating defeat in the Smolensk War) withdrew its support and left the frontiersmen to their destiny. In 1642 the Turks regained Azov, following the peace they concluded with the Safavid Empire, but Cossack raids in the Black Sea continued throughout the seventeenth century, with some remarkable episodes, such as the siege of St. John Monastery near Sozopol (1629), in present-day Bulgaria. During this event, a force of 150 Cossacks, after sacking the Black Sea coast, sought refuge on the island of St. John, barricading themselves in the monastery. Here they became surrounded by a large Ottoman fleet, bearing 4,500-5,000 yeniçeri on board, which laid an eight-day siege to the monastery. The advent of an auxiliary flotilla (some 4,000 men on 80 vessels) was able to breach the Ottoman encirclement and the Cossack *chayka*-s sailedvictorious and overburdened with booty. Following the incident, Ottoman authorities razed St. John Monastery since Cossack pirates repeatedly used it as a base of operations.[140]

With Cossacks and Kalmyks proving unreliable of enforcing imperial policy, Muscovy decided to act on the notion that if you want a job to be done

[139] See Witzenrath, *Cossacks*, 31-61 for a concise explanation of the structure, formation and upkeep of the Cossack war bands.

[140] V. Karavylchev, *Ostrovniyat manastir Sv. Yoan – edna neprochetena stranitza ot tzarkovnata ni istoriya* (http://dveri.bg/99q3a - accessed on 28.01.2016)

well you should be involved personally. Following the lengthy peace after the war with Poland-Lithuania (1632-1634), Aleksey Romanov decided to invest substantial amounts of manpower and funds in the establishment of defensive lines (zasechnoy cherty) along the Volga frontier, slowly, but steadily moving the southern border of the Russia realm toward the Caspian Sea. To man these new defenses, the tsar nurtured a steady flow of serfs, fleeing away from their masters' lands. Instead of returning them to their rightful owners, the central authorities granted the serfs small tracts of land in exchange for military service, thus establishing a frontier militia, which was already mentioned in the previous chapter. Although neither aggressive nor quick, the policy of creating a firm military frontier, similar to that forged by the Habsburgs in Hungary, proved to be the lasting solution that brought Russian dominance over a region, in which ethnicity, military and political interest and religion were mashed up into a boiling caldron of trouble.

During the final decades of the seventeenth century, the situation in the Pontic Steppe began to shift once again. The rising power of the Kazakh Horde, as well as the continuing pressure of the Qing expansion, troubled the Kalmyks who began to probe for options to expand their trade and diplomatic liaisons with Crimea, Dagestan, and Bukhara. These diplomatic activities strengthened the resolve of the central government, now headed by Peter I, to assert direct military control even further in the south. Besides, Ayuka, the new Khan of the Kalmyks, certainly seemed disenchanted with Muscovite imperial designs and gave signs of following a separate political path. All this was about to change. In 1696, following an unsuccessful first attempt, Peter was able to acquire Azov from the Ottoman Empire. This victory tripped the power-balance at the Don basin and urged the Kalmyks once again to align themselves with the Russians. In the following campaign of 1697, the Kalmyks proved essential for the protection of Azov and their cavalry, led personally by Ayuka Khan, was used to keep the numerous Nogai horsemen in check.[141]

Peter I asserted Russian authority by conquest. Thereafter, he managed to reform the administrative structure of his realm, while simultaneously struggling against Sweden. The establishment of governorates (guberniya) in 1708 initiated a process of steady political centralization in the lands of the Muscovite Tsardom, which in 1721 was transformed into the Russian Empire. By that time, the Astrakhan Governorate had been established as a separate entity (1717) to buttress Russia's presence in the Pontic Steppe. Artemiy Volynskiy, an experienced diplomat who had served Peter both as an envoy and a field commander, was bestowed the governor's office and immediately began to assert his prerogatives upon the Kalmyks, the Nogais, and the Cossack hosts at Don, Terek, and Yaik rivers. Volynskiy's policy was efficient and resulted in strengthening Russia's grip on the steppe, especially after the death of Ayuka

[141] The Azov campaigns will be analyzed in detail in the following chapter.

Khan. With the intensification of the struggle for power, the governor of Astrakhan played the Nogai scenario from the previous century by severing the different fractions of the Kalmyk Khanate. The strife and instability significantly weakened the Kalmyks, and voices were spoken out for departing and returning to the Oirats' ancestral lands to the east. Troubled by the notion of a possible alliance between the Kalmyks, Crimeans, and the Kazakhs, the government in St. Petersburg decided to compromise. Furthermore, the process of Kalmyk incorporation had already begun and the prospect of the departure of these more or less predictable neighbors only to be replaced by new Asian Horde was daunting. In addition, the establishment of the Tsaritsyn defense line and the strengthening of the Terek line following the Persian Campaign meant that the Russians were now in full control of Kalmyk migration. Still, it was cheaper to compromise with the choice of a new khan. In 1736, in the context of growing tension between the Russians and the Ottomans, Donduk-Ombo was chosen as a suitable heir to the Kalmyk heritage. In turn, he provided continuous support for Russia's military efforts.

While Kalmyk autonomy was kept, although consistently limited in economic and diplomatic aspect, the case with the Cossacks took a rapid turn following the rebellions of hetmans Kondraty Bulavin (1707-1708) and Ivan Mazepa (1709). Bulavin's Rebellion was ill-organized and ill-managed, striking not so much against the established political order, but against the figure of Peter himself. Thus, a limited number of followers were gathered. In combination with the harsh winter conditions and the lack of allies, the rebellion was supressed by mid-1708, without achieving anything significant. Even so, Peter was furious because his authority was challenged by a simple Don Cossack ataman.[142] Before he could take firm measures, another Cossack rebellion sparked.

After repeatedly being abandoned by Peter in the course of the Swedish invasion of Ukraine, losing some 15,000 men in less than six months, Ivan Mazepa became disillusioned with Russia's friendship. Followed by a small number of loyal Cossacks, Mazepa deflected to Karl XII's army, hoping to gain Swedish support for the recognition of Cossack autonomy in Ukraine. Unfortunately for Mazepa, and the rest of the Cossack hosts, Peter was able to eradicate the Swedish army at Poltava, and was free to turn his undivided attention to the troublesome Cossacks. Although advised to abolish all Cossack privileges, the Tsar decided to appear as a generous and forgiving sovereign. Peter did not limit the economic autonomy of the Cossack but secured their submission to the military necessities of the Russian state. In exchange for keeping their exclusive rights and tax concessions, the Cossacks had to accept that the time of voluntary service to the State was over. From now on, the Cossack hosts were subjected to mandatory quotas, demanded by the Russian

[142] According to B. J. Boeck, it was the rebellion of Bulavin that triggered the reactionary policy of Peter toward the Cossacks; see Boeck, *Imperial Boundaries*, 187.

military, or had to pay fines in case of manpower shortages. This was first demonstrated in 1711 in the context of the Pruth Campaign when the Don Host not only gathered the greater part of the troops it was required to provide, but also paid an indemnification of 970 rubles for the number of servicemen who were absent from the levy.[143]

*Khans, hetmans and the Empire*

Apart from the process of frontier indoctrination into Russia's political order, there was the question of authority. Asserting sovereignty over their turbulent frontier subjects had been a matter of utmost importance for the Moscow grand princes and tsars ever since the fifteenth century. As already noted, the government tried to implement a combination of methods in order to impose its will over the Cossacks, Nogais and the Kalmyks, which included: direct military pressure, economic dependence and forging of military symbiosis against common enemies. In this pattern of interrelation, it was essential for the rulers in Moscow to be deemed by their frontier dependents as legitimate overlords. This was achieved either by the notion that the tsar was the representative of the Christian Lord on earth, when it came to the Orthodox Cossacks, or that the ruler of Muscovy was, in fact, the "great white Khan", who took the Golden Horde's fallen mantle, in the Steppe Hordes' perspective.

For most of the seventeenth century, Russian tsars had trouble asserting their direct political dominance over the frontiersmen. The Muscovite state lacked the military leverage to cow the inhabitants of the Pontic region into submission or even to impose the developing serfdom system, which dominated Russia Proper. The government tried to manipulate local authorities with gifts and bestowments of regal insignias in order to impose the idea that political leadership in the Frontiers had to be recognized by the authorities in Russia. It wasn't until the reign of Peter I that this line of conduct transformed from wishful thinking into reality. As noted above, the arrival of royal armies on the Lower Don and the overpowering of Cossack rebellions allowed Peter to turn a new page in frontier-imperial relations and to establish a new pattern of subordination between the government and the local authorities.

As already noted, the chief administrative measures were, aimed at the Cossack Hetmanate. Following the victory at Poltava, Peter I asserted his right to approve any chosen hetman before he came into office. Apart from that, Russian authorities, represented by the Kievan governorate, put pressure on the hetman to appoint favorable men in charge of the regimental districts, of which the Hetmanate constituted. Peter stepped even further by personally interfering in the choice of the hetman himself. As Boeck demonstrates, while studying the

[143] Ibid., 189.

Don hosts, Cossack elites had to obtain the patronage of high-ranking Russian administrators in order to secure their leading positions in the Hetmanate.[144]

In the case of the Kalmyks, state pressure had to be applied more delicately, since the Khanate, although far from its prime, was still a substantial force on its own, and the service of the Kalmyk cavalry was valued above that of the Cossacks, as demonstrated in the Azov Campaign in 1697.[145] It was not until the death of Ayuka Khan in 1724 that the government seized the opportunity for a direct intervention into Kalmyk internal affairs. By using the control over the pastures north of Tsaritsyn, the imperial authorities decided to bully the Kalmyks into accepting the Russian candidate for the throne. Without consulting with the Kalmyk nobles, and especially to the *tayishi*-s closely related to the late Ayuka Khan, the Russian opted to abolish the khan title and replace it with a viceroy of their choice.[146] The authorities in St. Petersburg decided to place their trust on Dorji-Nazar – a pro-Russian figure, who stood in the middle of the line of succession. To the dismay of the imperial officials, Dorji-Nazar refused to alienate the Kalmyks by pressing his claims. Furthermore, there were voices for the departure of the Kalmyks to Crimea. Daunted by a possible steppe alliance, the tsarist government accepted a compromise candidate - Cheren-Donduk.[147] Russia exercised its influence again in 1732 to protect Cheren-Donduk from his popular nephew Donduk-Ombo, who claimed the throne for himself. Donduk-Ombo, along with a substantial number of followers, departed toward Kuban. In the context of rising tensions between Crimea and Russia, and the fact that the Empire was preoccupied with the War of the Polish Succession, St. Petersburg once more had to step down. All of Donduk-Ombo's demands were satisfied, and he returned to the main *ulusy*.[148]

The imperial administration had greater success in subduing the Cossacks. The reig over the frontiersmen was done by the abovementioned practice of extensive patronage combined with the increased commitment of the Russian military in strengthening its control over the southern borders. In 1728, to secure his position as hetman, Daniil Pavlovich Apostol signed the so-called *Reshitelynye punkty*, which stipulated that the hetman will henceforth receive his authority from the sovereign rather than the century-old practice of election by the Cossack officers. All matters of foreign policy had to be approved by the emperor, and only border disputes could be handled by the hetman, who, however, was to keep them in accord with Russia's diplomatic obligations. Regarding military matters, the hetman was subjected to the field-marshal of the Russian army. He was also forbidden to employ more than three mercenary

[144] Ibid., 190-2.
[145] See following chapters for the difference between the subsidies and gifts, received by the Don Cossacks and the Kalmyks.
[146] Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, 140.
[147] 1724 marked a climax in Russo-Ottoman relations in the context of the war in Persia. Furthermore, up to October 1724 Peter I was recovering from an urgent medical treatment, regarding his health condition.
[148] Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, 141.

regiments in his service. In administrative terms, the members of the Cossack Hetmanate's council of commanders (which served as both Cabinet and ruling regulatory body for the existing regimental districts) were to be elected by the Russian government. In addition, tax revenues, collected within the Hetmanate borders were to be transferred into the Imperial Treasury. The juridical rights of the Hetmanate and the Russian subjects were equaled in terms of landowning, but henceforth, serfs were prohibited from settling down in the territory of the Hetmanate.[149] And if this measure was not sufficient, the next step of imperial authority institutionalization cemented Russian power over the Cossacks. In 1734, following the death of Daniil Apostol, Empress Anna decided not to hold elections for a new hetman but instead created the Governing Council of the Hetman Office. This was a six-member administrative body, headed by a Russian government representative, along with two imperial figures and three Cossack leaders. The Office ruled Ukraine on behalf of the Empire until 1750 when Empress Elisaveta (r. 1741-1762) appointed one last hetman – count Kirill Grigoryevich Razumovskiy, who held the office until 1764 when Catherine the Great abolished the Hetmanate and incorporated it into Russia.[150]

*Soldiers of the steppe*

The essential value of frontiersmen, for Russia's policy, was their military prowess. Constantly thriving on raids, "little war" and defense of border garrisons, the very ethos of the frontier people was war. Military hierarchy served as the basis of the frontier societies, with commanders of a 100, 1,000 or 10,000 men becoming administrative and political leaders as had been the practice in the Mongol Empire and the steppe realms which had preceded it. Such was the case with the Crimean Khanate, the Nogais and Kalmyks. Their khans and lesser princes (tayishi) led separate hosts into single raids or overall campaigns with the status of the endeavours determined by the rank of the respective leader. In the case of the Cossacks, where clan loyalties were replaced by the relations of the Personenverbands, the commanding officers were elected by their followers. Moreover, the officers elected their superiors on the same principle. This autonomous system of self-control contradicted the imperial desire to implement its influence, and, as noted above, Russian authorities sought different means to subdue their frontier allies and dependencies.

While the military abilities of the Cossacks remained legendary for most of the time, their well-deserved glory was earned in constant confrontation with the Crimean Tatars, Ottoman sipahis and Polish hussars. Nevertheless, as later examination of Russian campaigns will prove, the Kalmyks were in no way inferior to their Hetmanate counterparts. In fact, during the Russo-Ottoman War

[149] *Reshitelynye punkty* (http://litopys.org.ua/rigel/rig21.htm - accessed on 29.01.2016).
[150] Razumovskiy was from a Cossack family, brother of the Empress' morganatic husband - count Aleksey Razumovskiy.

of 1736-1739 it was the Kalmyks who gained the most notable victories against the Crimean contingents. With no substantial military industry, the frontier hosts had to count on continuous Russian support regarding guns, munitions and funds. This gave great leverage in the hands of the imperial administration and allowed the government to bargain its political and administrative objectives in exchange for more substantial subsidies. The principal military export, apart from manpower, was horses, which were bred in the Pontic Steppe and between the rivers Volga and Yaik. Horsepower was in constant scanty during the Sothern Campaigns and sometimes authorities had to issue and organize several musters of animals to meet the needs of a single year of campaigning.

Regarding battlefield functions, the Cossacks and Kalmyks served as scouts but also as shock cavalry, supplementing the regular dragoon regiments. Unlike the dragoons, however, Peter, and later Minikh, relied solely on the frontiersmen to intercept and raid enemy bases of operation and settlements in the steppe and Dagestan. The Cossacks and Kalmyks earned the trust of the supreme command firstly, because they gained victories on enemy territory and secondly – because much of their payment came from the loot they gathered from the state's opponents.

## 2.5. The Caucasians

The Caucasus is a classic example of a frontier region, on which multitude case-studies can be carried out in order to understand the complicated nature of frontier societies and the patterns of their development. Ever since Antiquity Caucasus served as the watershed between the grass sea of the Eurasian Steppe, populated by a variety of tribes, and the more settled and centralized kingdoms and empires which rose and fell as ages passed by. Petty mountain kingdoms, tribe confederations and lone city-states emerged and dwindled while they were struggling to retain their independence and to survive in the midst of the constant clashes between nomads and empires. This tremendous duel began with the Cimmerian invasion of Assyria in 705 BC and continued up to the early modern period. During the first half of the eighteenth century the Caucasus was more or less as divided as it is today. Georgians occupied the western parts of the region, forming several petty kingdoms that fell under the influence of the Ottoman and Safavid empires, which used them as buffer states in the religious and political depredations of each other. These were the states of Imereti, Kakheti, Kartli and Mingrelia, which were also flanked by several lesser Georgian states that were tight up in a complex scheme of interdependencies.[151] The Georgian principalities were the closest thing to an early modern state that

[151] The kingdom of Georgia fell apart after a long period of civil unrest. Ever since 1466, the parts of the state were kept apart by its neighboring empires, which feared that a united orthodox monarchy might disrupt the gentile equilibrium between the Suni Ottomans and the Shi'i Safavids. Basically, Kakheti and Kartli were under Safavid influence, while Imereti and Mingrelia, as well as Abkhazia and other Black Sea coastal territories were mastered by Istanbul.

the Caucasians were able to produce. There was some form of national governance such as tax collection and laws, but the medieval feudal system was kept intact, and the gentry possessed a considerable amount of rights and privileges. Georgian lands also included the larger towns and cities in the region such as Tiflis (Tbilisi), Gremi, Telavi and Kutaisi, but by the late seventeenth century, these territories became depopulated due to constant warfare, famine and deportation of serfs. Information on the economic and social development of these states is scarce.[152] Manufacturing and commerce, in the European and Ottoman sense, were almost non-existent since border conflicts were constant and most of the trade routes through the Caucasus were blocked by native mountain tribes. Goods were produced only locally, and export was probably insignificant. Monetary policy was offset by natural barter, and the only economic centers remained the fairs. Only slave trade seemed to flourish thanks to the constant flow of prisoners and captives emanating from strife and confrontation in the Georgian lands.[153] The only other valuable export of the Georgian kingdoms was its battle hardened troops, who served mainly under the banners of the Safavid Empire. Georgian troops were used as an infantry core of field armies and were reported to wield guns, along with other weapons. Late Safavid rulers employed approximately 15,000 Georgians in campaigns against the Afghans in central Asia. The Georgians performed well, given the experience they had accumulated while they were fighting similar foes in the Caucasus.

Unlike the divided kingdoms of the Georgians, the other large Orthodox group in the region, the Armenians, did not possess a state of their own. The territories, populated by the Armenians, were divided between the Safavid and the Ottoman empires according to the treaty of 1639 which split Armenia in half between the two states. The stability that ushered in the following decades provided the basis for reinvigoration of economic and social life in the once devastated and contested areas. Armenian merchant families, who spread their networks across the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, were able to monopolize a large share of the inland trade between the Far East and the West.[154] Penetrating as far as India and Malaya, the Armenian diaspora was able to accumulate considerable amount of goods, specie and prestige. With regard to trade inside Persia and between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, the Armenians were in a position from which they were able to compete and even overshadow the trading companies of England, the Netherlands and Portugal. Commercial ties with Russia also strengthened with the advent of the seventeenth century. In exchange for a golden throne, given to tsar Aleksey by the Armenian merchants in Persia, the Russian monarch allowed the Armenians

[152] Population of Kutaisi had fallen to only 1000 in 1670, and the once rich coastal towns were inhabited by only a few hundred each. R. G. Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, ( Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994), 52
[153] Ibid., 48-52.
[154] S. Payaslian, *The History of Armenia: From the Origins to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 107.

to monopolize the silk trade between Persia and Russia and also permitted the construction of a port on the Volga River to serve as their entrepôt in Russia.[155] Growing economic and cultural potential led to the formation of a national idea of independence from both Muslim monarchies. Russia was perceived as an essential ally in this cause, but negotiations were also conducted with the Papacy. However, by 1739 the only actual attempt to assist the formation of an independent Armenia was Peter's Persian Campaign, and that failed miserably in regard to the Armenian cause. The lack of state and the preference for commerce over strife led to the fact that Armenians did not possess an army of any kind. Their territories were fully incorporated into the Safavid and Ottoman empires, and local garrisons comprised of imperial troops. With the demise and collapse of Safavid rule in the 1720s, Armenians began to self-organize in order to protect their settlements against raging bands, Caucasian tribes and invading Ottoman troops. In 1723, the Armenian *Catholicos* (head of the Armenian Church) Asdvadzadur promised Peter to raise an army of 60,000 to support the Russians in case they cross the Caucasus and enter into Armenia. Although this figure is debatable, Armenian merchants were able to arm and pay for the protection of their cities as it is evident from the work of Abraham of Yerevan. Although they did not manufacture guns and weapons, the Armenians possessed both the money and the trade links to supply armament from both the Ottoman and the Persian empires and even beyond. Their lack of political structure, however, prevented the organization of a capable body of troops which could have any chance of fending off the depredations of the Muslim conquerors.

The last vital and significant element of Caucasian ethos were the mountain tribes and petty states, which were situated on the slopes of the high mountain and in the territories north of the Caucasus, as far as rivers Terek and Kuban. While most of these people were Sunni Muslims, there were frontier societies, which still exercised some pagan practices. Some of these societies even followed the Islam, but in in its unorthodox form, which included some practices from the Shi'i branch and even from Christianity. Sects, sufis, and other mystics, as well as the existing pre-Islamic tradition, played a substantial role in the formation of the frontiersmen’s perception of the world. The Caucasian lands resembled an even more decentralized version of the Crimean khanate: with a ruler, who had almost no authority outside his stronghold and clans who were strugling against each other, while trying to keep imperial influence away from their lands. Ottomans and Safavids claimed some degree of suzerainty to the Caucasian tribes, but it was more a pretense rather than an actual authority. The economy was non-existent apart from the slave trade and the exchange of booty and goods, pillaged from one another or during raids on the lands of Georgia and Armenia. With the advent of Russia, following the conquest of Astrakhan, the Circassians, who had remained Orthodox, separated

[155] Ibid., 108.

from the other predominantly Muslim mountain groups, but neither of them willingly obliged to imperial authority. It was impossible to sustain organized armies. The Caucasians formed bands of several hundred men that bore resemblance to the Ottoman gazi and the early Cossacks. They lived in small, non-permanent settlements, which the Russians referred to as *gorodki* (literary meaning miniature towns). These settlements were protected with a moat or had no fortifications and most of the buildings were no larger than tents. On one occasion, when Russian troops tried to pursue the Caucasians into such a village, the entire population simply left it and fled to the mountains only to return after the departure of the tsar's troops.

Regarding loyalty and support, the Georgians and the Armenians were willing to accept Russian help and authority, but only to a certain degree and with concessions from Russian side. As it turned out, as late as 1739, Russia was unable to penetrate the inner part of the Caucasian land and thus, from the very beginning, any actual cooperation between Russian and local troops was doomed to fail. Nevertheless, the Caucasian Christians continued to rely on the tsar as the leader of Eastern Christianity and the main figure, who could bring unity and independence from the century-long Muslim domination. Unlike their settled neighbors to the west and south, the Caucasian frontiersmen were suspicious of and even hostile to Russia and deemed it as simply another imperial power that threatened their autonomy and freedom.

## 2.6. Conclusion

Russia’s marches south were destined to meet a large variety of adversaries and only a few friends, with part of the later providing only reluctant assistance to the imperial cause. Russia’s policy in the Pontic region developed hand in hand with the understanding of the southern frontier and the people who inhabited it. As already demonstrated, Russian authorities would build up their experience by combining diplomatic measures with administrative methods and military pressure. This worked in the case of the Cossack and Kalmyk hosts, which were slowly incorporated into the imperial system. The settled societies – the Ottoman Empire, Persia, and the Crimean Khanate, had to be studied carefully, and the foreign policy, conducted toward them had to be woven with more tact rather than pressure.

Both the Ottoman and the Safavid empires possessed a substantial military potential, which could be mustered to protect home territories as well as their client states. While by the end of the seventeenth century Persia began to fall into a state of extensive decline, the Ottoman Empire was able to survive the dramatic setback following the War of the Holy Leagueand to rebuild its military potential to meet the challenges of the eighteenth century. Persia, although weakened demonstrated its vitality under the decisive leadership of Nadir Shah and by 1736 its military establishment had been transformed into a

powerhouse, capable not only of defending the heartlands of the empire but also of striking its neighbors with stunning success.

As for the petty borderland states of the Caucasus, their existence became more and more problematic with the assertion and strengthening of the imperial control. The events in 1722 and 1723 demonstrated that rapid shifts were to be expected not only in borderland states' allegiances but also in those of the empires. Russia would easily exchange Georgia and Armenia for the control over the Caspian coast while the Ottomans were more than willing to let the northerners ravage Crimea while their possessions in Budjak and Kaffa were left unharmed during the War of 1736-1739. This salvaging of local political and military resources for the profit of grand strategy had an undermining effect on the frontier societies, which led to their eventual downfall in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

## PART II - THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS 1695-1739

Having outlined the military basis on which Russia and its contemporaries stood during the period in question, the dissertation will study the Southern Campaigns, carried out by the Petrine army and its successors. Through these military efforts, the effect of western-style army reform on the performance of the Russian forces can be traced. In addition, the the dissertation will evaluate Russian military operations in an environmentalien to contemporary European warfare as summarized by authors such as Black, Duffy, and Parker. The following chapter will be divided into several sub-sections, each dealing with a different campaign from the first march against Azov in 1695 to the final gunshot of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739. Primary and secondary sources will be discussed accordingly and each subsection will be divided into several topics: sources and historiography, historical background and line of events. These will be followed by a detailed analysis of the principal components, defining Russia's military performance: level of logistics, speed of movement, decisiveness of military action, the abilities of the military leaders and the overall potential of the state to mobilize its resources for the conduct of war. Following the examination of each military effort, the chapter's overall conclusion will pinpoint the main trends in Russian military potential, related to the Petrine reforms and demonstrated by the actual performance of the army in the south.

## CHAPTER 3
## THE FIRST CAMPAIGNS (1695-1711)

During the reign of Peter I, Russia entered a new stage in its administrative and military evolution. This phase, as noted above, was dominated by trends of both continuity and change. The process of conquering and assimilating the vast expanses of the Eurasian Steppe was and still is one of the main elements of Russian domestic and foreign policy. The patterns of expanding, fortifying and further extending the limits of the Empire are clearly visible since the time of Ivan IV and can be traced as late as the October Revolution, after which the Soviet Union dramatically changed the mechanism by which Russia’s influence was distributed in the steppe territories. Peter followed the footsteps of his ancestors, but also struggled hard not to repeat their mistakes. He was determined to modify and upgrade his state and army in order to achieve better and long-lasting results. Whether he was successful or not is a notion yet to be defined in the following chapters.

## 3.1. The Quest for Azov (1695-1697)

*Historical Background*

The fortress of Azov was the last (or the first, depending on the perspective) entrepôt on the maritime trading route between the Pontic Steppe and the Mediterranean region. Following a long hiatus during the late Antiquity and most of the Middle Ages, it was repopulated again in the thirteenth century. The territory, known by then as Azaq (the Low Lands), was given to the Genoese by the Khans of the Golden Horde. The Italian merchants established a colony, which they named Tana (or La Tana, referring to River Don's ancient name – Tanais). In the 1470s, Tana, as well as Kaffa and Kerch, were conquered by the Ottoman Empire, following a period of rapid Black Sea expansion during the reign of Mehmed II and his illustrious grand vizier Gedik Ahmed Paşa. The vizier was able to defeat and expel the Genoese from Crimea and the Azov Sea and to establish Ottoman presence and superiority over the Pontic Steppe and Circassia. It was during the same time that the Crimean Khanate fell under Ottoman suzerainty, and the Gireis had to submit to the will of Constantinople in exchange for patronage and military aid. The Ottomans were fast to recognize the importance of the Don delta and the strategic value of Tana. They erected a mighty fortress, which was manned by a yeniçeri garrison. The new military base renamed Azak became the breaking point for any Cossack expedition in the Black Sea. The restless Don Cossack pirates were lurking on Ottoman commerce in the Pontus, and Azak stood as a bastion of Constantinople's interest in the northern corners of the Black Sea. The Cossacks were able to occupy the town briefly, transforming it into a naval base for predatory raids in the Black Sea. However, their requests for support from the tsar were without success, for neither Mikhail Romanov nor his Aleksey I were willing to risk a war against the Ottoman Empire. Finally, in 1642, the Ottomans reestablished their presence and a swift effort of buttressing the fortress was made. The walls were repaired and renovated following the pattern of trace italienne, with additional forts being built on the two sides of the Don River. Apart from guarding the trade, Azak became a valuable lodgment for Ottoman and Tatar operations against the Cossacks, and after Russia's expansion in the 1650s - against the Muscovites themselves. Following Knyaz Golytsin's failures against the Crimean Khanate (1687, 1689), Azak became a focal point of Muslim raids against the Belgorod line and the Cossack gorodki on the Don and Volga rivers. Between 1689 and 1694, Russia and its Cossack allies were in defense. Finally, in 1694, following a series of military drills and maneuvers in the so called Kozhukhovskiy pokhod (Kozhukhov Campaign), Peter decided to opt for an offensive strategy. During these military exercises, the poteshnye voyska were placed against the old soldat and streltsy units, while the noble cavalry was used as support. Artillery drills and field fortification preparations were also tested.

Peter concluded that the exercises were successful and that the army was, indeed, ready to face the Ottomans in an open battle. In addition, control over Azak would secure Russian presence on the Lower Don and serve as leverage against the "turbulent" steppe population, especially the Kalmyks and their leader - Ayuka Khan, who consistently sought to promote independent foreign policy, which contradicted Muscovite interests. Reassured of the potential of his army to strike hard and fast, Peter was convinced of the eminent success of his endeavor. He soon put his words into action and began planning for his military campaign in the south.

*Historiography*

There are several primary sources, which deal with Russia's expedition against Azov. First and foremost is the diary of General Patrick Gordon, who led a one-third of the Russian army into the campaign.[1] It is invaluable for its depth and details, regarding troop movement, covered distances, and the exact dates of events during the march south. Gordon also provides details regarding the main problems, whith which the army met in the course of the expeditions. These details are not present in official dispatches and the campaign journal and can only be trace via P. Gordon's narrative. A second useful source of information is the campaign journal of Peter I, which includes data on the weather, as well as the preparations, carried out prior and during the expedition.[2] It is tha main source through which the movement of the forces along the Volga River can be traced. Finally, there are several letters, which elucidate the course of events, most notably between Peter I and Fyodor Apraksin, and also, a report from the Habsburg envoy Otto Anton Pleyer to Emperor Leopold I (r. 1658-1705). Pleyer took part in the first Azov campaign and in the military drills, which were carried out during the previous year.[3]

The campaigns themselves are described in detail in Ustryalov's work on Peter's rule, as well as in the narrative of Lieutenant-General P. Bobrovskiy in his history of the 13th guards' Regiment.[4] The regiment was among the units, comprising Gordons's corps in all three campaigns. The date to date development of the Azov expeditions is also presented in the chronological index of the Russian army and navy operations.[5] Soviet historiography in the face of Porfiryev adds to the imperial tradition, by emphasizing on the native developments and neglecting the foreign influence on the development of Peter's

[1] M.R. Ryzhenkov (ed.), *Patrik Gordon - Dnevnik 1690-1695* (Moscow: Nauka, 2014).
[2] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1695-1703* (St. Petersburg, 1853).
[3] The letters are quoted in N. G. Ustryalov, *Istoriya tsarstvovaniya Petra Velikogo. Poteshnye I Azovskie pokhody,, vol. 2* (St. Petersburg, 1858).
[4] For Ustryalov; see ibid.; P.O. Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya 13 Leyb-grenaderskagoYerevanskogo Ego Velichestva polka za 250 let, vol. 1* (St. Petersburg, 1892).
[5] *Khronologicheskiy ukazately voennykh deystviy russkoy armii i flota* (1695-1800) (St. Petersburg, 1908).

army.[6] A concise, contemporary narrative of the campaign is given in Brian Davies's work on the warfare, state and society in the Black Sea Steppe.[7]

## 3.2. The First Azov Campaign (1695)

*Preparations*

Peter carried out a meticulous preparation, outlining in detail the number of troops, necessary for the campaign. Field-marshal Boris Sheremetev commanded a 120,000 strong force, comprised of Cossacks, streltsy and frontier garrisons.[8] This large army was to assemble in Belgorod and march against the Crimean Khanate in order to block any attempt from the Tatars to relieve Azak from the planned siege. Apart from its screening purposes, it also had to occupy the mouth of River Dnieper. Peter's plan was to capture this area in order to isolate Crimea from the Ottoman footholds in Budjak, Jedisan, and Podolia.

The capture of the fortress of Azak was entrusted to a selected task-force of some 30,000 soldiers and 200 pieces of artillery, under the joint command of Generals Patrick Gordon, Fyodor Golovin, and François Lefort. Among their forces, Peter included four of the "playtime" regiments – Semyonovskiy, Preobrazhenskiy, Lefortovskiy, and Butyrskiy. The main body of the army was comprised of the *polki novogo stroya* (the foreign-style regiments introduced during Aleksey's reign) and streltsy. In addition to the troops and weapons, Peter issued an order for 20,000 artillery shells to be included as well as gunpowder and other supplies. The army was split into three separate parts. One-third under Gordon, comprised of streltsy, soldaty from Tambov and the Butyrskiy Regiment, had to march from Tambov, following the left bank of the Don River and to blockade the fortress until the arrival of the main body of the task force.[9] Its strength was 9,393 troops, 43 guns, and ten mortars.[10] The second

[6] E.I. Porfiryev, *Petr I osnovopolozhnik voennogo iskusstva russkoy regulyarnoy Armii i flota* (Moscow: Voeenoe izdatelstvo, 1952).

[7] B. Davies, *Warfare, State and Society on the Black Sea Steppe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007)

[8] "A report from Pleyer to Emperor Leopold I, 1st January, 1696" in Ustryalov, *Istoria*, 569; This number is "paper strength", the actual number of soldiers under Sheremetev was probably lesser, due to shortages of men from conscription, as well as deserters. The numbers would fall even lesser in the course of the actual campaign due to supply shortages and further desertion.

[9] On 21st February 1695, Gordon notes that "*as soon as possible, a force of 10 000 strong, including 5-6,000 Cossacks should be sent by land in order to reach and blockade Azov*"; see Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 323. The Cossacks were assembled and sent in advance. According to the overall plan, Gordon's infantry should merge with the Cossacks upon arrival and form a vanguard of 15-16,000 men.

[10] In March, when Gordon began his expedition from Moscow, the Butyrskiy Regiment numbered only 900 men;; of whom 894 reached Tambov see Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, Apendix, 32, 77. There, further 11 regiments were added – 4 soldaty regiments, raised fresh in Tambov (3,879 men) and 7 streltsy regiments (4,620 men). The total being 9,393 (Gordon miscalculates them to be 3,384 in his notes – Ibid., 78); 31 of the 43 guns were falconets, the other 12 - howitzers; 6,000 puda (98,280 kilograms) of gunpowder and over 4,600 shells and 4,000 grenades were issued for the artillery. All these, together with the soldiers' belongings, were to be transported by 3,722 wagons and carts; see Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 348-9 - 20 May 1695.

corps, numbering 6,922, was placed under Golovin.[11] It included the Preobrazhensky Regiment in which Peter commanded the bombardier company. Finally, Lefort led the largest portion of the army – around 13,000 soldiers. Golovin and Lefort's forces were accompanied by a combined artillery train amounting 104 mortars and 44 guns of a different caliber.[12] Their forces had to follow the Volga downstream, debark at Tsaritsyn and head toward the Lower Don, where the two had to join Gordon's corps. To ship the 20,000 strong contingents, a total of 1,250 boats had to be assembled at Moscow.[13]

In addition to the military supplies, Peter issued a decree on the food rations, which had to be prepared and delivered in advance for the army's march south. The *gorodok* of Panshin was chosen as main supply base. It was situated on the lower Don, northwest from present-day Volgograd, near the town of Ilovlya. Funds were diverted from the Treasury to the Khazan to pay for the supplies, bought from ten contractors, responsible for the implementation of the tsar's orders. Peter's extensive preparations were aimed at preparing the ground for his substantial force to march upon Azov in a surprise movement and, if possible, to capture it quickly, leaving no option for the Ottoman forces to react. The great number of goods, supplied in advance was supposed to provide the Russian forces with enough provisions for the barren steppes of the lower Don, where an army, as large as the one assembled, would hardly survive without them. Peter was determined not to allow the same mistakes, which ruined Golytsin's campaign a decade earlier.

*The campaign*

Having issued all the orders and projected all the plans, Peter's generals set his will into motion. At 4 p.m., on the 8th of March 1695, the Butyrskiy Regiment of Patrick Gordon left Moscow on its way to Tambov. Gordon covered the distance from Moscow to Tambov for 11 days and arrived at the southern city on 19 March.[14] Here he waited for the assembling of the seven streltsy and began forming four soldaty regiments out of the local population. His task proved onerous since the money, which should have been gathered in advance (12,000 rubles), were still not available, and Gordon was forced to send several letters to

[11] Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 564, According to the official record, Golovin's force consisted of 8 regiments, 2 of which were soldaty and 6 – streltsy. They were also supported by 77 vessels (*strugi*).

[12] These were transferred on 8 vessel groups (*pauzok*) totaling 39 boats (strugi); 36 of the 44 guns were cast in the Netherlands (*pishscaley gollandskikh*). In addition to the guns and mortars, there were 19,974 bombs and shells for the guns (some 6,000 especially for the Dutch guns), 2,360 barrels of gunpowder (for artillery and handgun purposes), as well as additional saltpeter, sulfur, bullets and spare parts for the guns. Altogether, the 8 vessel groups carried a total of 61,754 puds (1,011 tons) of munitions and guns; see Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 562-4.

[13] *Khronologicheskiy ukazately*, 1.

[14] Altogether, the Butyrskiy Regiment covered some 350 *versta* (371 km.). The average daily speed of the regiment was 33.3 km., which was considered fast for the standards of the Age. As it will be later observed, outside the densely populated areas, the movement of the troops was obstructed by terrain, weather and the reluctance of the soldiers; see 8-20 March 1695, Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 326-30.

Moscow, urging for funds.[15] The acquisition of transportation proved to be a further predicament for the progress of the campaign. It was not until 21st April when Gordon was finally able to provide all the wagons, carts, and boats, necessary for the transportation of guns, munitions and men across the Don Steppe, which was also broken by countless streams and several rivers.[16] The specifics of the terrain required the Russian force to halt its further advance and wait for the rivers to return to their stream beds. In addition, Gordon had to wait for the screening force of Boris Sheremetev to move southwards in order to block the possible Tatar movement and hide the Scotsman's vanguard maneuvers. General Gordon had to wait in Tambov until the very end of April. On the 23rd, Gordon's corps finally left Tambov and began preparations for the crossing of the Lipovitsa River, where the general ordered the construction of five bridges. The army was able to traverse the river on 1st May and continued its way to the south. Gordon ordered his troops to move on war footing through the marshes and the broken terrain.[17] The movement was quite slow, due to the bad condition of the roads and the necessity to construct new bridges over any larger river or stream the army had to cross. Existing infrastructure was used as well, but on several occasions older bridges crumbled under the weight of Gordon's supply train. With the reluctant assistance by the Cossacks, Gordon's army was finally able to reach Azov on the 27th of July 1695, only a day before the main force under Golovin and Lefort arrived.[18] The whole plan for an advanced force, which had to reach and blockade Azak prior to the siege, thus fell apart. In the meantime, the Ottomans were able to send reinforcements via the Black Sea. Apart from the usual garrison of the fortress – some 3,000 men (two-thirds of which were yeniçeri), another 3,000 came, transported on four ships, each carrying 500 men.[19] Also, a cavalry unit, consisting of 500 men, was placed outside Azov to do reconnaissance.

While Gordon was slowly dragging his forces through the difficult terrain of the Eurasian Steppe, Lefort and Golovin boarded the massive river fleet on

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[15] 21st March, Ibid., 330; By 12th April, on Peter's order, were sent 15,000 rubles .

[16]The streltsy proved to be quite troublesome with their constant demands for more transportation vehicles and for insisting on less work on building boats and rafts. At the end, Gordon had to negotiate with the local Cossack leaders in order to build the required number of vessels. The provision of horses was also a nightmare. Out of 750 serf horses, inspected by Gordon between 1st and 25th April, only 28 were fit for service; see Gordon, *Dnevnik.*, 337-411, 5-25th - April; Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 77.

[17]The movement formation was as follows: The baggage train was in the middle of the convoy. James Gordon commanded the right flank with 3 soldaty regiments, lined up in 62 rows (*sherengi*). The right flank was held by 4 streltsy regiments, set in 65 rows. The rearguard consisted of 1 soldaty, 1 streltsy and the Butyrskiy Regiment, along with the staff; see Ibid., 80.

[18] "*The Cossacks wanted to prevent me from reaching Azov before the arrival of the main army and did all they could to embarrass my daily marches...*"; see Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 359,18th June, 1695.

[19] Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 360 – 21st June 1695; For the yeniçeri in Azov see R. Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700,* (University College London Press, 1999), 55; Murphey notes that the yeniçeri contingent, which was stationed in Azov, numbered 2,272 men. Since by definition the yeniçeri were border troops (apart from the Constantinople units), it can be accepted that the proportion of yeniçeri was kept in 1695, especially since the Empire was at war and strategic garrisons had to be kept at any cost. It is quite possible, that a considerable part of the 3,000 reinforcements were also yeniçeri.

30th April and set sail for Tsaritsyn. The unfavorable wind kept the fleet at bay for several days. However, following Peter's words, the greatest problem for the progress of the expedition were the incompetent sailors and workers, who called themselves "masters", but there was a stricking difference between the name and their actual work was. Besides, the overloading of the supply vessels, carrying the munitions and guns hindered the movement forward. The main forces were stalled in Nizhniy Novgorod until 27th May. The large fleet finally reached Tsaritsyn on 7th June and continued on foot toward Panshin, where it arrived four days later, on 11th.[20] The army finally reached the countryside near Azov in 28th, and Peter himself arrived in Gordon's camp on the next day, greeted with salutes from the artillery.

On the 30th of June, Gordon, leading his regiments, as well as 7,000 Cossacks, met an Ottoman-Tatar force that blocked his advance toward Azak. After a brief battle, the enemy attacks were repelled by the Russian infantry and artillery, and Gordon drove the Turks back to Azak. He quickly established a fortified camp in front of the town and started digging trenches. This action eliminated the danger of the arrival of the main Russian force, which established a camp in the following days. Lefort and Golovin finished their deployment on 3rd July when the siege batteries were finally set in place. Peter was the first to open fire from one of Gordon's cannons.[21] The bombardment by the entire artillery began several days later while the generals and the engineers were arguing over the best option for digging a contravallation line.[22]

In the meantime, Russian forces were struggling to capture several watchtowers, east of the fortress, to cover their right flank and also to secure the road from Panshin, from where munitions and supplies were transferred. The first one was captured on 14th July by a party of 200 Cossacks who were able to sneak their way into the tower's vicinity and to overwhelm its garrison. That same night, a Dutchman – Jakob Jansen, who had converted to Orthodox Christianity and became a member of Peter's artillerymen, deserted to the Ottomans and revealed to their commanders – Murtaza Paşa and his subordinate Murad Bey, the position of all Russian forces. Using this valuable information, on the next morning the Turks launched a sortie, taking advantage of the streltsy guards' unpreparedness. In the midst of the summer day's heat, when the Russians had the habit to take a nap, the Ottomans launched an attack on the trenches of General Leford, which were still incomplete and had not yet connected to Gordon's defense perimeter. The streltsy, who were protecting this sector, along with the sixteen batteries, were thrown in disorder. Jacob Gordon, who commanded the battery, was able to hold his position but was finally forced to retreat. Before the whole defense broke down, General Gordon led his men

[20] *Khronologicheskiy ukazately,* 1.
[21] According to Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*: "*The Grand bombardier personally threw bombs against Azov for two weeks*".
[22] For a schematic depiction of the siege; see the Appendix for the current chapter.

into a counterattack, chasing the Turks back to the moat of Azov. Here, Gordon's attack was met by a counter charge of the yeniçeri, who broke the Russians, sending soldaty and streltsy alike into a rout. Gordon, who refused to leave his position until the very end, eluded captivity by chance, due to his sons' last minute actions. The yeniçeri were able to beat Gordon's men back to their trenches, capturing part of the Russian field fortifications. After three hours of fighting, the Turks were finally driven back. The Russians lost some 4-500 killed and at least as many wounded.[23] Seven guns were captured and taken by the Ottomans, and several others were damaged. The Turks lost between 500 and 600 killed or wounded. Peter reprimanded the captains and colonels of the streltsy regiments, who failed their task to protect the fortifications. It was not until the end of July that the Russian trenches were finally completed, and the left flank of the army was protected from further Ottoman and Tatar sorties. In the meantime, Russian officers and nobles began urging Peter to assault the walls of Azov. Accrding to Gordon's assessment, the desire for an assault came from men who had no understanding of what an assault meant and who just wanted to return home as quickly as possible.[24] In any case, the efforts of Gordon to dissuade the tsar from a premature rush towards the walls of Azak failed. It was proclaimed that each volunteer for the assault would receive 10 rubles, and officers could hope for additional rewards. 2,500 Cossacks volunteered right away while the soldaty and the stretsy were not so much enthusiastic. In the end, the required 4,500 men were assembled, and a preparation for an assault on 5th August began. As Gordon puts it, all that was left for him was to follow the collective opinion in order not to be blamed for any further delays.[25]

The assaulting forces were divided into three columns. The first, led by Gordon, included the Butyrskiy and the Tambovskiy regiments. It had to take the bastions, located to the left of Gordon's position. A second column had to charge to the right, storming the fortifications near the Don River. Finally, a third party, comprised of Cossacks, had to sail up the river and attack the fortress upstream. Streltsy regiments were placed between the three columns to protect their flanks. The night before the operation, a Greek from Azov was able to desert to the Russians and to meet Gordon. The deserter reported that the Azak garrison was reduced to just 1,300 out of 6,000. According to the Greek, most of the Turks had died out of disease and of their wounds. However, the defenders were able to set counter mines against the Russian trenches. General Gordon demanded a personal meeting with the tsar to postpone the assault. The information about the small number of defenders had a different impact on

[23] Gordon lists the casualties as follows: 3-400 killed, among which 2 captains, 4 lieutenants and 5 standard-bearers. Jacob Gordon, two colonels, one lieutenant colonel, twenty other officers and around 500 were wounded in action; see Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 376-8, 15th July 1695. Bobrovskiy quotes Gordon but claims 400 killed, along with 12 officers, and up to 600 wounded, along with 24 officers; see Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 88.
[24] Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 383, 30th July, 1695.
[25] Ibid., 384.

Peter's judgment. He became adamant that now was the time to strike. Gordon had no chose but to comply.

The charge began at dawn on 5th August. The Butyrskiy and Tambovskiy regiments were thrown into attack, although they did not have any ladders to climb the walls. They stormed the bulwarks but came under heavy fire. In the meantime, the poteshnye regiments on the right flank under Golovin remained motionless, failing to support Gordon's attack. Further left, the 400 Cossacks debarked from their boats, stormed the fortress, but with no zeal whatsoever and were quickly repelled. After the first failed attack, they retreated to their vessels. Gordon was left alone in the center, taking fire from all Ottoman positions. By the time the Cossacks left their halfhearted assault, Gordon's men were reduced to one-third, the others - being dead or wounded. Since he got no words from Peter and that his men were hard pressed, Gordon sounded the retreat. The Turks had suffered no more than 200 dead and wounded while the Russians had lost a total of 1,500 soldiers and officers. The assault was a complete disaster. However, no reprimands were given on the next day. The only significant development in the siege in late August was the capture of two Turks, who, after interrogation, revealed new information on the status of the garrison. The new report showed that only one-third of the original garrison was wounded, sick or dead (that left 4,000 able to fight, which is quite different from the 1,300, reported by the Greek deserter several days earlier). Unlike the old information from 4th August, the captives revealed that the garrison had an abundant supply of food and munitions.[26] These figures explain how the Ottomans were able to launch almost daily sorties, killing several and wounding dozens of men. The surprised Russians were seldom able to wound the enemy. The siege works were also progressing chaotically and slowly. By mid September, the Russians had failed in several attempts to detonate mines under the moat and the walls of Azov. In Golovin's section, the mine was detonated on a wrong spot and instead of blowing the enemy positions it destroyed a considerable part of Golovin's trenches.[27] The second attempt to blow up the defenses took place on 25th September, followed by a new assault on the walls. Again, Gordon expressed doubts about the success of such actions and once more his protests were silenced by the common desire for a breakthrough.

Once again the army was segmented into several units, each responsible for a particular task in what was supposed to be a massive, coordinated endeavor. The extreme left flank was held by a river flotilla of Cossacks, supported by the Semyonovskiy and Preobrazhenskiy regiments. Next to them,

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[26]Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 389, 13th August 1695; Thanks to these captives Gordon found outwhat was the exact number of the enemy, who fell during the assault on 5th.

[27] Bobrovskiy, *Istorya*, 84; Golovin's engineers were able to dig under the bastions in front of their positions, but the 83 pud mine was detonated closer to Russian trenches on advise of Adam Veyde (who then served as a colonel in the Preobrazhenskiy Regiment and later became general). Due to this mistake, 30 people, among which two colonels and one lieutenant colonel, were killed, and around 100 were wounded; see Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 248-9; Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 399, 16th September 1695.

the corps of Lefort had to attack the opposing Ottoman bastions in order to draw fire away from the poteshnye units and the fleet, as well as from the main direction of the assault. Gordon's troops again had to storm the middle section of Azov's southern wall, after the detonation of a mine, which laid in a tunnel, dug by the Russians. Golovin's troops would rush to the right of Gordon's men, supporting another Cossack force, moving on the extreme right. The detonation of Gordon's mine had to be the signal for the beginning of the assault. Since all regiments were to take part in the attack, the camp had to be protected by the Cossacks, who had to monitor the surroundings for a relief attack on behalf of the Tatar cavalry.[28]

The attack began at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Two mines (93 puda) were detonated, followed by several mines, fired at the defenders. However, the counter mines, set by the Ottomans, came into use and considerably diminished the effect of those of their Russian counterpart. In addition to the smaller scale of damage done to the ramparts, the countermine led to considerable casualties among the Russian troops.[29] In any case, the mine was able to break a hole in the defense, wide 37.6 meters (20 *sazhen*). Gordon's troops rushed toward the breach, storming the moat and the outer ramparts. Their charge was supported by Lefort's forces. They were, however, unable to find a suitable spot for their assault and instead turned right, merging with the streltsy and soldaty, who were already fighting the Turks in the center. The defenders, who were able to concentrate their manpower at the breach, counterattacked. 400 yeniçeri, led personally by their ağa, made the streltsy form bulwarks in the moat. There, the Russians panicked, and chaos broke among their ranks. Gordon, seeing the fruitfulness of the attack, retreated with his forces to the closest trenches. In the meantime, the Cossacks, supported by the two poteshnye regiments on the furthest left were able to penetrate the defenses. Gordon, learning of this development, commanded the second charge at the enemy. His regiments reached the moat, but were countered by a hail of grenades and salvos from the yeniçeri and had to pull back. Finally, upon Peter's orders, Gordon sent his men for a third time, again without success. In the meantime, The Cossacks, along with the troops from Semyonovskiy and Preobrazhenskiy regiments, under the command of Fyodor Apraksin, were able to seize some of the defenses of Azov near the Don River. Their position, however, became precarious when Gordon's troops stopped pressuring the Ottoman defenders, who immediately transferred men to the west sections. Apraksin, who did not receive any assistance from the rest of the army and was pressed by the Ottomans, had to withdraw. The assault, which once again was a failure, was halted, and the Russians returned to their positions.

[28]Apart from the 500 Ottoman horsemen, additional Tatar units arrived and supported the harassment on the Russian lines and trenches. They totaled some 3-4,000 men; see Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 396, 11th September 1695.
[29]A hundred or so were wounded, and several were killed; see Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 404, 11th September 1695.

A 3,000 strong garrison was left to protect the newly established Fort Novosergievskiy gorod, which served as a starting point for further attacks on Azov. The rest of the army broke camp on 2nd October and began its march back toward Tsaritsyn. They were followed by a Tatar force of some 3,000 who attacked the Russian column on 3rd October, killing and wounding dozens and taking many men into captivity. It was Gordon's Butyrskiy Regiment which was able to withstand the charges and drive off the enemy. The withdrawal of the Russians was additionally troubled by the cold weather and the lack of supplies. Otto Anton Pleyer reports to Leopold I that along the road, many soldiers laid dead due to the frost and the lack food while steppe wolves were feasting on the dead.[30] Peter's first attempt southward had failed miserably.

*The performance of the Russian army*

While following the course of the First Azov Campaign, several features have to be pointed out. First and foremost, a number of problems can be distinguished related to the human factor behind the Russian effort. As Gordon notes on few occasions in his diary, the troops under his command were inexperienced as were the officers.[31] Unlike the Ottoman forces, comprised chiefly of the elite yeniçeri infantry, most of Peter's troops were either semi-regular streltsy or hastily assembled soldaty. As Bobrovskiy notes, only the four "new-model" regiments – the poteshny Semyonovskiy, Preobrazhenskiy, Lefortovskiy and Gordon's Butyrskiy regiments were of some considerable value, as proven in the drills the previous year. The rest of the army was of dubious quality "even given the fact that they were to fight the Turks".[32] Lack of experience was also combined with a lack of motivation and failure of discipline. The extremely long time necessary for the digging and establishing of a complete trench-line was precarious. It wasn't until September that Lefort's entrenchments were finally finished and linked to Gordon's. Thus, it took more than two months to complete this essential task for any siege of the Age. In the meantime, Ottoman sorties were able to exploit the flaws of Russian defenses and inflict considerable damage to the besieging army. Further proof of troop incompetence comes from the fact that the sentries were surprised and overwhelmed by the defenders on several occasions, of which the 15th of July sortie being the most notorious example. Given the scale of the task, Peter should have considered engaging more men in the siege. Even though his forces outnumbered the defenders 5 to 1, their total number was insufficient to blockade Azov fully and fend off attempts at reinforcing the fortress.

[30] Pleyer, "Report" in Ustrqylov, *Istoriya*, 582.
[31] For example, the journal entry for 4th August 1695 in Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 385-86, where the general evaluates the lack of experience and preparedness of his soldiers and officers for the following assault.
[32] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 77.

Commanding officers were not immune to misconduct and mistakes. Gordon and Lefort's lack of cooperation became apparent on several occasions, as well as Golovin's inability to mobilize his men during the assaults or to support his companions in battle. The failure to build a circumvallation, as well as the lack of experience on such important matters as where and how properly to detonate mines, reveals a general lack of engineering skills among the Russian military elite. Peter is also to blame. The Tsar decided to sit most of the siege out, leaving the task to a joint command of three, equally-ranked generals. This proved disastrous, since the lack of coordination, as well as a single will, directing the effort, revealed its flaws during the two failed assaults. Peter's role as a military *éminence grise* could be explained with the lack of experience and the fear of failure during his first military endeavorIt was failure in south that brought down Golytsin and Sofia in 1689, after the devastating results of the two campaigns against Crimea. Therefore, it seems legitimate that Peter wanted to see how the expedition would progress. In case of success, he would step up, being part of the expedition and claim glory and prestige for his role. In the event of failure, he would step back and blame his generals, who, he would gracefully pardon, giving them a second chance. This scenario would repeat itself four years later during the Narva Campaign. Apart from his inefficient strategic commitment, the tsar also demonstrated his youthful thirst for decisiveness.[33] In both 5th August and 25th September assaults, it was his desire for a quick endgame that drove Russian troops to the point of breaking. Neglecting Gordon's experience, Peter chose to trust his closer but unpracticed companions. What strikes is the lack of reaction from Lefort toward the rash tactics, favored by the tsar. Being an experienced soldier, he should have demonstrated more will and supported Gordon's proper evaluation. Gordon is erroneously labeled indecisive by Soviet historiography, a thesis, which is repeated in Davies's work.[34] The Soviet argument insists that instead of laying siege to Azov, Gordon lost precious time building a dock on Koysug River, north of Azak, where he would receive supplies via the Don River. In the meantime, Davies notes, that the Turks were able to reinforce the garrison. This, however, was not the case. Gordon did, in fact, station his forces on the Koysug and built a dock for purposes of supply. His intention, however, was to build it as closer to Azov as possible. His effort was sabotaged by the lack of cooperation on behalf of the Cossacks who lost several days before being able to scout adequately the area for a spot, stationed nearer Azak and more suitable for port.[35] Davies's account regarding the failure to intercept the reinforcements is

[33] Peter was 24 at the time.
[34] Davies, *War, State and Society*, 184; Davies quotes E.I. Porfiryev, *Petr I osnovopolozhnik voennogo iskusstva russkoy regulyarnoy Armii i flota* (Moscow: Voennoe izdatelstvo, 1952), 38-9.
[35] Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 65-6, 26th June 1695.

also incorrect since the garrison of Azov was strengthened as early as March when Gordon was yet in Tambov.[36]

The lack of reliability on behalf of the Cossacks was to hinder Gordon's march ever since his arrival in the Pontic Steppe. The Cossacks proved halfhearted in their support even though the general brought with him an official proclamation from Peter, demanding full support and assistance to his army. As plainly as Gordon puts it, the Cossacks would not cooperate until the tsar would arrive with the main army. They were reluctant to clash with the Tatar or Ottoman forces unless the proper number of Russian troops was present. They did prove their value during the second assault of Azov, but still - the lack of initial action, as well as the indecisiveness of the skirmishes with the Tatar forces, acting in the Russian's rear - diminished their overall contribution to the 1695 effort.

The second feature that should be noted are the logistics. The first impression is of massive provisioning of food rations and military supplies, which Peter demanded for the campaign. A closer look at the figures should be taken. According to an official report, the tsar required a total of 180,000 liters of *sbiteny*, 540,000 liters of wine, 140,000 fishes, 163, 000 kilograms of meat, etc. Though these numbers are impressive, it must be taken into account that these provisions were supposed to feed 30,000 men. Moreover, each person would receive 18 liters of wine, 6 liters of sbitny, 4 ½ fishes, 5 ½ kilogramas of ham, 1.3 kilograms of butter and 4.3 kilograms of salt. Assuming that the daily ration per soldier was 400 grams of meat, 100 grams of butter and a cup (200 ml) of wine, this means that the above-mentioned supplies would suffice for 90 days (the wine), 30 days (the sbitny), 14 days (meat), 13 days (butter) and 11 days (fish). Alcohol would probably have to replace water at some point, given the fact that the campaign takes place during the summer heats, as well as bearing in mind that at that time the Don Valley was not abundant with water, suitable for drinking. All in all, Peter had calculated a half month's share of supplies for his troops, and it took two weeks only to place the batteries correctly in front of Azov. The troops would have to rely mainly on additional supplies, which had to be brought down the Volga or the Don rivers with fleets of riverboats. In the context, the idea of Gordon for building a second naval dock on river Koysug seems even more appropriate. Securing the lines of supply was also problematic. It was not until mid-July that the Russians were able to take some of the watchtowers, held by Ottoman troops, turning them into their strong points. Even so, the Tatar and Ottoman cavalry units continued to harass the supplies of the besiegers. As the withdrawal from Azov demonstrates, food

[36] Gordon, *Dnevnik*, 360-1, 21st June 1695: "*The Greek [deserter] had come to Azov for the purpose of trading in January. On his arrival, the garrison consisted of 3,000 troops. In March, a paşa named Murtaz arrived with 1,000 additional men (...) several weeks ago, four ships arrived from Kaffa, each ship bearing 500 men of the infantry...* "

was a substantial problem for the Russians throughout the campaign, since in the end they were dying out of hunger.

Apart from food itself, transportation proved to be another point of logistics' misconduct. As early as April, Gordon was suffering from the lack of carts and wagons to transport his troops as supplies. Things reached a point where the streltsy were refusing to march unless the general would not meet their requirements for additional transportation.[37] Similar problems were encountered by Peter, regarding the riverboats which had to transfer the army from Moscow to Tsaritsyn. Even though over 1,200 vessels were required, the cargo proved to be overwhelming for the small river rafts and the longboats. In the end, the main force was significantly delayed since the headwind made navigating in the Oka and Volga rivers almost impossible. In addition, upon reaching Tsaritsyn, it turned out that the number of horses, required for the transportation of supplies, was quite insufficient, and only 500 animals were available.[38] The same problem was faced by Gordon in Tambov, where no more than 28 out of 750 horses, recruited from the serfs, turned out to be fit for service. Thus, on many occasions, soldiers had to carry the munitions and supplies together with their belongings, which significantly reduced the speed of the army. Gordon's force provides an example. While marching only with the Butyrskiy Regiment, the General was able to achieve an average speed of 33 kilometers per day. However, with the growing of his army and supply train, and with entering the marshy plains of Eastern Ukraine, crisscrossed by rivers and streams, the army speed dropped to an average of 15 kilometers per day. The river flotilla under Golovin, Lefort and Peter did not do much better.

As Brian Davies puts it, the manner in which Peter, Gordon, Golovin, and Lefort conducted their First Azov Campaign (1 May–1 October 1695) shows some effort to learn from the logistical errors that had undermined both of Golitsyn's Perekop expeditions.[39] On the other hand, the military conduct also demonstrates that the military drills and maneuvers, carried out by Peter in 1694 were simple field war games, which had little to do with actual fighting. Lack of coordination, the Peter's reluctance to assume the overall command or pass it to a single person, as well as the inadequacy of the logistics prove that Peter was on the right track, but a long way lay ahead before the expected results could be reached. The next campaign carried out in the summer of 1696 would reveal the scale of Russian adaptability toward the requirements of modern warfare.

[37] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 88.
[38] Porfiryev, *Petr I osnovopolozhnik voennogo*, 37.
[39] Davies, *War, State and Society*, 184.

## 3.3. The Second Azov Campaign (1696)

*Preparations*

Following his departure from Azov, Peter wrote letters to the king of Poland-Lithuania (at the time it was Jan III Sobieski) and to the "emperor of Rome" (*kesariya rimskago*), Leopold I that the Russian army was able to conduct a large-scale campaign, against the "enemies of Christendom", taking several fortresses on the Dnieper River and conquering a few outpost on the Don River.[40] The tsar had to admit his failure to capture Azov due to lack of guns, munitions and capable engineers.[41] Peter hoped, in his own words, and as God's will, he would be able to capture Azov next year, descending on the fortress with a larger army. To fulfill his goal, Peter asked the Polish to strike harder the Ottomans in the west and of the Austrians - to provide him with able engineers, who would assist his artillery crews.[42] Such words, coming from a proud and strong-willed man like Peter demonstrate the frustration he had felt during the last days of September 1695. Although he conducted preparations, meticulous in his perception, the whole endeavor had failed miserably, blasted by the incapability of Russian engineers and the lack of synergy between the commanding generals. Lessons, however, were learned and this time, Peter assured his allies and probably himself that the tsar would walk away with victory.

Peter began preparations for the next campaign only a week after his return from the previous one. On 27th November 1695 a military council was held, including generals Lefort and Gordon, as well as several high-ranking boyars from Peter's inner circle – Streshnev, Troekurov and Naryshkin families, which helped Peter assert his power in 1689. During the council, Peter laid out the main reasons for his lack of success – the inability to surround Azov accurately, the lack of fleet, which would block the Don's mouth and prevent Ottoman reinforcements from Azak, and finally – the absence of a single commander, undertaking the siege and responsible only to Peter.[43] The first step was to choose overalla leader for the following year. His name was Aleksey Semyonovich Shein. Shein was Russian noble of an ancient heritage.[44] His grandfather, Mikhail Shein led the Russians in the ill-fated Smolensk War (1632-1634), after which he fell from grace and was sent into exile. Aleksey Shein was able to return to favor during the regency of Sophia and took part in the two Crimean Campaigns, after which he changed side and placed his

[40] The Information was not quite correct, because Sheremetev had to abandon most of his gains when retreating back to Russian held lands.
[41] Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 257.
[42] Messengers were also sent to Venice and Berlin, asking for coordinated actions against the Turks.
[43] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 87.
[44] The Sheins descended from a Medieval Russian noble, who fought alongside prince Aleksandr at Neva (1240).

fortunes with Peter. He was elevated for commander of the guards' regiments, in which *amploa* he took part in the First Azov Campaign.

According to E. Porfiryev, Peter chose Shein, because he could use him as a façade, behind which the tsar would maintain personal command.[45] However, knowing what happened at Azov in 1695 and four years later at Narva, Porfiryev's idea can be elaborated. To put it in other words, Peter again picked a stunt double, who would take credit for any failure, or step back, overshadowed by his master's glory in case of victory. This is further confirmed by his original choice of overall commander – Knyaz Mikhail Alegukovich Cherkasskiy. Cherkasskiy was an elder man, close confidant of Peter's mother Nataliya Narishkina, who served as a voevoda of Novgorod and Kiev in the 1660s and 1670s. By the time of Azov, however, he was far from his prime and would serve well for the tsar's purpose. Cherkasskiy's ailing health, however, prevented him from joining the campaign and Peter was obliged to use Shein, another officer, whose rise to prominence was closely linked to that of Peter.

The second point of matter was the necessity for a naval force, which was to blockade the Don River. Peter proclaimed himself ship-master and appointed Leford Admiral. Several companies of the Semyonovskiy and Preobrazhenskiy regiments were attached to Lefort's command as a naval regiment.[46] It was responsible for the manning of 30 galleries and over 1300 boats, which were to transfer the army southwards.[47] The flotilla had to be built and ready to sail by March 1696. The idea of a new navy, constructed out of the blue, was, in any case, strange. Peter possessed no practical knowledge of shipbuilding and neither did his subordinates. Lefort himself was a Geneva-born Swiss, whose closest connection with water was the famous lake near his hometown. Nevertheless, Peter, stubborn and ambitious, urged the matter forward. To provide the required know-how, foreigners, mainly Dutch and Englishmen were brought in and settled in Preobrazhenskoe and Voronezh to supervise and plan the construction of the vessels.[48] In addition, the tsar mobilized a considerable number of smiths and carpenters, as well as snipers, gathered from his realm on

[45] Porfiryev, *Petr I osnovopolozhnik voennogo*, 42.

[46] The naval regiment consisted of 4,000 troops, part from the guards regiments, part provided by recruitment. They were divided into 28 companies; see Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 261; Porfiryev, *Petr I osnovopolozhnik voennogo,* 42. These 4,000 were headed by 94 officers; see V.G. Ruban, *Pokhod boyarina i bolyshago polku voevody Alekseya Semenovicha Sheina k Azovu, vzyatie sego i Lyutika goroda i torzhestennoe ottudy s pobedonosnym voinstvom vozvroshchenie v Moskvu* (St. Petersburg, 1773), 32.

[47] Bobrovskiy (*Istoriya*, 87) estimates that over 1,000 boats were required; According to Ustryalov, Peter demanded that 1,300 boats, 32 to 36 meters long and 4.7 to 5.65 meters wide (*Istoria*, 260); Almost the same amount is repeated in Porfiryev's work (E.I. Porfiryev, *Petr I osnovopolozhnik voennogo,* 42). Porfiryev elaborates on the numbers – 1,300 boats 30 to 35 meters long and 5 to 6 meters wide, in addition 300 seagoing boats and 100 wooden rafts.

[48] Most of them were acquired "willingly or unwillingly" from the port of Arkhangelsk, where Apraksin served as governor; see Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 259, quoting a letter by Peter to Apraksin. According to the letter, Apraksin was to recruit Dutch and English seamen, who were anyhow trapped in Arkhangelsk for the winter, while the White Sea was frozen. These men were to be sent to Voronezh and Preobrazhenskoe in order to support the shipbuilding. Apraksin was to reimburse them for their work and also provide transportation to and from the shipbuilding sites.

an unprecedented level.[49] Quality and determination overcame the laws of logic and by the end of March a fleet consisted of 23 galleys, two galleasses, and four branders were ready to sail down the Don River.[50] As with the choice of Shein, Peter bestowed admiralship on Lefort – a man with no knowledge of sailing, a mere puppet, leading his fleet and convinient to take any blame in case of failure.

Together with the preparation of a naval force, Peter set forth the reestablishment of the land army. For that purpose, a proclamation was read throughout Moscow, urging all servicemen to fulfill their duty and also calling for volunteers (*okhotniki*) among the local population. Ustryalov claims that the latter were in abundance, since there were a lot of hungry and poor townsmen and serfs, who sought the army as a place where they could find food, clothing and shelter. Several days later, on 13th December, a large number of serfs left their masters' estates and enlisted in Preobrazhenskoe, while their women and children settled on the tsar's property there.[51] The Cossacks hetman Mazepa was ordered to send no fewer than 15,000 men to Azov, while B. Sheremetev, voevoda of Belgorod had to dispatch a contingent of 10,000 divided into seven regiments under the command of General Karl Rigeman. The call for troops, proclaimed at the end of November resulted in the following numbers. The servicemen from Moscow provided 3,816 men, 3,500 of whom were organized into 37 cavalry companies, the commanders of which were chosen from their ranks. The other 316 were designated to perform supporting duties in the irregular forces and the supply train. They were also assigned as watchmen in the camps. Thirty soldaty regiments were raised, numbering some 32,590 men along with streltsy regiments, numbering 9,597 troops.[52] Apart from the 15,000 Cossacks, provided by Mazepa, the Don Cossacks had to raise additional 5,000 footmen and horsemen. The Kalmyks were to send 3,000 horsemen while 500 men had to be supplied by the Yaik Cossacks and the Lowland streltsy. Thus, the total number of the army, which had to march on Azov, was 69,735 men.[53]

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[49] More than 20,000 men worked at the dockyards and on the caravans bringing materials; see Porfiryev, *Petr I,* 42.

[50] E.V. Tarle, *Russkiy flot i vneshnyaya politika Petra I*, (Brask, 1994), Chapter II (http://rumarine.ru/books/4/Evgeniy-Tarle_Russkiy-flot-i-vneshnyaya-politika-Petra-I/ - accessed on 16.02.2016); Porfiryev, *Petr I osnovopolozhnik voennogo,* 42; Porfiryev gives some details about the ships. The largest galley had 38 vessels, 5 cannons and a crew of 173 men. The galleasses were larger, carrying 36 guns each.

[51] I.A. Zhelyabuzhskiy, "Dnevyie zapiski" in *Rozhdenie Imperri* (Moscow: Fond Sergeya Dubova, 1997); Later on, after the war with Sweden had begun and when Peter set forth his reforms, the aristocracy was keen on discouraging him from performing such allocations of serfs.

[52] Ustryalov estimates a total of 38,800 soldaty. This is the only figure, which differs from Ruban's account; *see following note*.

[53] Ustryalov puts the total at 75,000, while Ruban states that 64,735 "soldiers on foot and horse" comprised the army under Shein; see V.G. Ruban, *Pokhod boyarina*, 56. Ruban, however, does not take into account the 5,000 Don Cossacks, raised by their hetman Frol Minaev, who are listed in Ustryalov. If these Cossacks are applied to Ruban's account, then the number rises to a total of 69,735 soldiers. Ustryalov gives a total of 75,713 troops. However, he notes that "details on the complete composition of the army can be found in Ruban's description of Shein's campaign, issued in 1773"; see Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 262; Porfiryev givers a total of 70,000. He does not,

The soldiers from the soldaty and the streltsy regiments were divided into three corps led by Gordon (14,150), Golovin (13,738) and Rigeman (10,299).[54] Additional 4,000 men were issued as infantry in Lefort's fleet. The army had to be gathered and prepared for departure before 20th March 1696 and to arrive at Cherkassk no later than 1st May.[55] What is important to note is the disproportion between streltsy and soldaty in the composition of the infantry. While in the first campaign the streltsy were the predominant percentage of the footmen, in the second - Peter switched the emphasis on the soldaty, which now comprised over two-thirds of the infantry. This could easily be explained by the flaws and problems, which the streltsy demonstrated not only during their march south but also with their battlefield performance during the siege, especially concerning their guard duties and lack of zeal during charges and counter charges. The proportion of cavalry was also raised. While only 5-6,000 of the 30,000 at the First Azov Campaign were horsemen (a fifth), now there were aroundd 23,500 mounted troops in Peter's army (constituting over 30 per cent of the total force). Again most of them were Cossacks. Apparently Peter constructed a force, which was better suited not only for carrying out the siege but also for the protection from Tatar raids on the flanks and rear.

The letters to Vienna and Berlin proved fruitful. Leopold I, who excused himself with the preoccupation of his engineer corps in Italy and Hungary, was, despite all, able to send artillery Colonel Cassimir de Gragen, along with two

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however, state a source for the listed numbers. In addition, the figures, mentioned in his book, account for no more than 63,117; see Porfiryev, *Petr I*, 43.

[54] In detail: Gordon's force consisted of the Butyrskiy Regiment – 995 men (35 officers and staff and 960 soldiers); Four Tambov regiments – 4,298 men (198 officers and staff and 4,100 troops, 1,025 for each regiment); Two Lowland (Nizovoy) regiments – 2070 men (35 officers and staff and 2,000 troops – 1,000 per regiment); Two Ryazan regiments – 2,067 men (67 officers and staff and 2,000 troops – 1,000 per regiment); Moscow streltsy regiments - 1st – 681 men (10 officers and 671 streltsy), 2nd - 842 men (11 officers and 831 streltsy), 3rd – 618 men (9 officers and 609 streltsy), 4th – 781 men (10 officers and 771 streltsy); 5th – 581 men (9 officers and 572 streltsy), 6th – 667 men (9 officers and 658 streltsy), 7th – 585 men (9 officers and 576 streltsy), or a total of 67 officers and 4,688 streltsy. Altogether, Gordon commanded 13,748 soldiers and 402 officers and regimental staff members.

Golovin's force: Preobrazhenskiy Regiment – 810 men (35 officers and staff and 775 soldaty); Nizovoy regiments: from the Kazan prikaz - 1st – 1,031 men (30 officers and staff and 1,001 soldaty), 2nd – 1,031 men (31 officers and staff and 1,000 soldaty), 3rd – 1,031 men (31 officers and staff and 1,000 soldaty); Ryazan Regiments from the Inozemnyy (foreign) prikaz - 1st – 1,032 men (32 officers and staff and 1,000 soldiers), 2nd – 1,034 men (34 officers and 1,000 soldaty); Vladimirskiy Regiment – 776 men (32 officers and 744 soldaty); Novgorodskiy Regiment – 500 men; Smolenskiy regiments: 1st – 1,013 men (13 officers and 1,000 soldaty), 2nd – 507 men (7 officers and 500 soldaty) - altogether – 245 officers and 8,520 soldaty; Streltsy regiments: 1st – 959 men(12 officers and 947 streltsy), 2nd – 932 men (12 officers and 920 streltsy), 3rd – 633 men (9 officers, 624 streltsy), 4th – 883 men (11 officers, 872 soldaty), 5th – 683 men (9 officers, 674 streltsy), 6th – 883 men (11 officers, 872 streltsy) – altogether – 4,909 streltsy and 64 officers. In total, Golovin commanded 13,429 troops and 309 officers.

Rigeman's force: Efremovskiy Regiment – 1,724 men (28 officers and staff and 1,696 soldiers); Livenskiy Regiment – (31 officers and 1,650 soldiers); Voronezhskiy Regiment – 1,579 men (29 officers and staff and 1,550 soldiers); Dobrinskiy Regiment – (27 officers and staff and 1,570 soldiers); Usmanskiy Regiment – 1,645 men (28 officers and staff and 1617 soldiers); Kozlovskiy Regiment – 1,563 men (15 officers and staff and 1,548 soldiers); Starooskolyskiy Regiment – 511 men (20 officers and staff and 491 soldiers); altogether – 10,122 soldiers and 178 officers; see Ruban, *Pokhod boyarina*, 32-56. Porfiryev gives other numbers – 14,000 for Golovin, 14,177 for Gordon and 10,500 for Rigeman; see Porfiryev, *Petr I*, 43.

[55] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 87.

engineers – de Lavalet and Baron Borgsdorf, along with seven miners and four artillerymen. Friedrich III of Brandenburg sent two engineers – Georg Rosse and David Goltsman, along with four artillerymen. They were supposed to reach Smolensk in April. They finally came to Azov at the end of July, and proved to be vital for the fall of the fortress.[56]

*The campaign*

The campaign began on 1st April, after a harsh winter and incessant rains and storms in March, which prolonged the time, required for the preparation of the fleet. Nevertheless, by the beginning of April, the weather considerably improved and the Don River, overflowed due to the rains in March, was ideal for sailing downstream. The first unit to move southward was Gordon's corps, or, at least, part of it, comprising of four streltsy regiments and the Butyrskiy Regiment, altogether 3,500 men.[57] They had to board the large number of vessels and to escort munitions and guns, needed for the siege. The military equipment had to be stored at Novosergeevskiy fort, while food supplies had to be allocated at Korotoyak, from where the food would be transported to Azov.[58] Gordon's men along with additional 4,000 marines, embarked on one galley and 104 riverboats, and departed from Voronezh on 23rd April, a week after Lefort's naval expedition[59] Two days later he was followed by Golovin with the Preobrazhenskiy and Semyonovskiy regiments, and later on - by the rest of the army under Shein. Unlike Gordon's troops, the bulk of the land force was to travel on foot to Azov, via the Don Valley. Detached from the main force, Rigeman's corps of seven regiments moved out of Voronezh in order to serve as rearguard. Following the land force, several segments of the fleet departed during the first week of April.

Unlike the previous march south, which lasted over two months, this time, Peter's forces were able to reach Azov in only five weeks or so. Gordon arrived first under the walls of Azak on 16th May, just three weeks after departing from Voronezh and by the beginning of June was followed by the rest of the army, coming in segments. Peter, who commanded the naval vanguard, reached the Lower Don only a day after Gordon, although the tsar had left Voronezh ten days later than the general.[60] During the sailing south, on 8th May, Peter issued

[56] Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 269.

[57] Ibid.; According to Bobrovskiy, the streltsy were 2,474 men of which 128 were officers; see Bobrovskiy *Istoriya*, 88. This leaves the Butyrskiy Regiment with 1,016 officers and troops. Bogoslovskiy estimates a total of 3,474 men under Gordon, which leaves 1,000 soldiers and officers in the Butyrskiy Regiment; see M.M. Bogoslovskiy, *Petr I. Materialy dlya biografii, 1672-1697, vol 1* (Gospolitizdat, 1940) 303.

[58] There were around 94,000 ton of wheat and grains; see E.I. Porfiryev, *Petr I*, 44.These were transported on 73 boats, departing from Korotoyak on 27th April; see Bogoslovskiy, *Petr I*, 304 and 309.

[59] Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 269; *Khronologicheskiy ukazately*, 3.

[60]There seems to be a major dissonance between the sources. According to a note in Ustryalov (*Istoriya*, 272), Gordon Reached Azov on 14th May, Shein on 19th May and Lefort on 23rd May. However, a page later he contradicts, noting that Gordon and Peter came under Azov on 18th May (Ibid. 273); According to the*Khronologicheskiy ukazately*, Gordon arrived at Azov on 16th May; Bobrovskiy (*Istoriya* 88-89) supports the

the first naval regulations for his sailors. These included: the order of command, the strict line of communications, which was to be maintained, the necessity for coordination between vessels, and a ban on any shift from the predetermined course. Failing to report for duty during battle, helping another ship in distress or diverting from the course in the face of the enemy were all crimes, punishable by death.[61]

The flotilla vanguard and Gordon's troops coordinated their movement upon reaching Cherkassk and then departed for Azov, carrying with them guns and shells, stored from the previous expedition. In the meantime, Peter received a word that a Cossack band of 250 men attacked three Ottoman galleys in the mouth of the Don River. Although the Cossacks lost only four men and were able the do some damage to the enemy vessels, the boards were too high for a successful boarding and retreat was sounded, leaving the Turks' ships at sea. These vessels were carting provisions for the garrison at Azov and Peter decided to seize them as fast as possible. According to the plan, designed by the tsar, Gordon would travel downstream Don and fortify his position on Kalancha Island, where the previous year Dolgorukov's fort was built, while Peter would attack with the galleys, take the Ottoman vessels and transport the captured provisions to Gordon's position. Gordon, heaving mustered his men early in the morning, went according to the plan and by noon on 18th was able to retake Kalancha Island and thus block any attempt by the Azak garrison to assist the vessels at the Don's mouth. Gordon had left with his Butyrskiy Regiment as well as three streltsy regiments while the fourth boarded the nine galleys under Peter. A Cossack force, mounted on 40 boats, accompanied the tsar. The fleet was to travel westward and engage the Ottomans. Following a brief expedition on 19th May, Peter returned to Novosergeevskiy fort and left a Cossack force of 250 men to observe the sea. The reason for this was because a larger Ottoman fleet had arrived, and the tsar did not want to risk an open battle.[62] The following night, an Ottoman convoy of 13 transport vessels (*tunbas*) and 11 small ships, manned by yeniçeri tried to sail upstream to reach Azov.[63] As it turned out several days later, the Ottoman fleet was comprised of 13 galleys, along with the above mentioned 13 cargo ships and 11 small vessels (*ushkol*). The Cossacks under Minyaev were able to sink nine cargo ships and to capture one. The Ottomans also lost two galleys – one burned by the Cossacks and one - scuttled by themselves. The Cossacks were able to capture over 300 artillery shells, 5,000 grenades, 450 muskets and 86 barrels of gunpowder. Large quantities of grain, vinegar, rice, bread and wine syrup were also acquired along with a significant amount of cloth. Twenty-seven Turks were taken into

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date 18th May for Gordon's arrival at the Novosergeevskiy fort, after reaching Cherkassk on 14th May. The same date appears in Bogoslovskiy, *Petr I*, 312.

[61] Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 271; Bogoslovskiy, *Petr I*, 310-1.

[62] Bogoslovskiy, *Petr I*, 314; Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 275.

[63] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 89.

custody, revealing that a total of 800 reinforcements were to join the Azak garrison.[64] The victory was celebrated with gunshots from the Russian ships.

On 26th May Shein arrived together with Lefort's marines and ships, bringing the bulk of the Russian army in position for opening the trenches against Azov. Two days later, Rigeman's corps along with several thousand Cossacks also reached Azov, ending the major deployment process. The center of the Russian position was held by Golovin with the guards' regiments and the main artillery batteries. On his left Rigeman stood with his seven regiments and 4,000 Cossacks. The right flank was held by Gordon and his son Jacob, along with their soldaty regiments and streltsy. Shein broke camp at Golovin's position. On 7th June, the two forts, which according to Peter's order had to block the Don River west of Azov, were finished and the army was ready to proceed with the siege. The trenches were opened on that same day and four days later the main body of the Russian fleet blockaded the mouth of Azov with 22 galleys. Unlike the previous year, when Azak was strengthened with additional reinforcements, in 1696 the commander in chief of the fortress – Hassan Bey, received the promised 4,000 troops with a delay from Istanbul. It seems that the slow motion of Russian advance the previous year had misguided the Ottoman authorities, and the speed of the new Muscovite offensive was significantly underestimated. The biggest problem for Peter's army lay at the hands of the nuraddin sultan, the leader of the Crimean Tatars, who was able to join forces with the Nogai Horde at Kuban and to march north to relieve Azak. They raided the Russian fortifications for two weeks, but thanks to the lessons learnt in the previous years, the Muscovites were able to repulse the enemy with considerable ease. On 24th June the Moscow noble cavalry engaged a segment of the Tatar Host, striking a decisive blow, which allowed the besieging forces to continue their work on the fortress.[65] In the meantime, by 16th June, Azov was finally fully circumvallated and a combined bombardment of all batteries began. In addition, at the mouth of the Don River, the Russians were able to repulse three landing attempts by the 4,000 Ottoman reinforcements, sent from Istanbul. This made any hope for the salvation of the garrison impossible.

Nevertheless, success was not instant. While organization, transportation and deployment had considerably approved since last year, the siege works had not made significant progress. The failure to build up mining galleries was so grand that during 1696's siege the Russians decided not to use them at all. Again an assault was envisioned. Gordon, contrary to the common opinion, was obliged to begin the erection of an earthwork, which had to cross the ditch, reach the walls and even outgrow them, allowing the artillery to fire at Azov over its walls. Altogether 15,000 soldiers were daily used for the new project, with front units regularly engaging the Azak yeniçeri, who were trying to

[64] Bogoslovskiy, *Petr I*, 315.
[65] Ibid., 322.

sabotage the earthwork.[66] After a hard work under the blazing summer sun, a battery of 25 cannons was placed on the rampart following the directions of Gordon. On 15th July the engineers of Leopold I finally arrived at Azov, putting their minds into action.[67] Gordon's 25 cannon battery was rearranged and strengthened with six additional guns in order to inflict larger damage on the walls rather on the town behind them. After several days of bombardment, on 17th July, Gordon's men were able to capture a bulwark, exposed by the concentrated Russian fire. Any Ottoman resistance was quickly silenced and the Russians were able to fortify their new position. On the next day, acting on their own will, a force of 2,000 Cossacks under Frol Minaev and Ivan Lizogub was able to overcome a bastion, situated near Don, capture it and even to try to take over the central citadel.[68] Their final assault was repulsed, but the Cossacks were able to occupy the bastion. Hassan Bey was left with a single option – surrender.

Azov surrendered on 19th June. The paşa gave to Shein and Peter 16 flags and the town keys. 3,000 strong Ottoman garrisons, with their full armament, departed the fortress on a small flotilla of Russian galleys and boats, commanded by Adam Veyde. The Turks were escorted to the sea, where the Ottoman navy picked them. Ten regiments entered Azov to occupy the town, followed on the next day by the entire army. The Cossacks took advantage and tried to plunder Azak, but apart from kitchenware and private belongings, there was no treasure left for looting in the ruined town. The army remained in Azov until the end of July, when, one by one, the regiments and corps began to departure. A division of 6 soldaty and four streltsy regiments (8,305 men in total) was left under the command of *Knyaz* Pyotr Grigoryevich Lyvov.[69]

*The performance of the Russian army*

It is evident that the Russians performed better the second time, since they were able to capture their objective – Azov. However, the question remains to what extent they were successful. According to Russian historiography they were quite successful. Russian literature from both Imperial and Soviet Eras is

[66] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 91.
[67] Ruban, *Pokhod boyarina*, 120.
[68] Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 288; According to Ustryalov, boredom and lack of supplies was the major trigger for the Cossacks assault.
[69] Ruban, *Pokhod boyarina*, 161-8; In Detail: 1 regiment out of Lefort's marines – 30 officers and staff and 1,009 soldiers under the command of Colonel Aleksey Vasilyev; From Gordon's force: a regiment from Tambov and the Lowland recruits – 31 officers and 1,169 soldiers under Colonel Ivan Vilomov; Ryazan Regiment – 17 officers and 500 soldiers under Colonel Efim Efimov; Streltsy regiments - 1st – 11 officers and 677 streltsy under Colonel Feodor Afanasyev; 2nd - 9 officers, 563 streltsy and 149 soldaty under Colonel Ivan Ivanov; From Golovin's force: 1st regiment – 28 officers and staff and 1,105 soldaty under Colonel Vilim Vilimov; Ryazan Regiment – 16 officers and 500 soldaty; Moscow streltsy: 1st regiment – 10 officers and 808 streltsy under Colonel Afanasiy Alekseev; 2nd regiment – 9 officers and 621 soldaty under Colonel Tikhon Khristoforov; From Rigeman's force: Belgorod Regiment – 30 officers and 1,013 soldaty under Colonel Ivan Ivanov; Altogether – 8,305 officers and troops.

abundant with examples of the great effort which enabled substantial results in limited time in order to manifest the rise of a new military power. Either due to the adamant will and vision of the great "master"- the tsar, or to the large potential of the masses, used by the aristocratic class, Russia elevated itself a level higher. The colossal involvement of laborers in the construction of the fleet which appeared out of nowhere, the speed with which the army reached Azov – twice as fast as it did in 1695, as well as - the short period, separating the opening of the trenches (16th June) and the capitulation of Azak's garrison (18th July) are all evidences of the major transformation, which was accomplished for only a winter thanks to one determined monarch.

With regard to the army movement, the main difference between the campaign of 1695 and 1696 is the point of departure. In the previous expedition, Peter launched his fleet from Moscow, traveling via river Oka all the way down the Volga River to Tsaritsyn, roughly 2,500 kilometers. The fleet, transporting the bulk of the army, the entire siege train, as well as most of the resources, required exactly 38 days (from 30th April to 7th June) in order to reach Tsaritsyn. All in all, Peter's fleet had covered 65 kilometers per day, while Gordon marched 15 kilometers per day after departing from Tambov. In 1696 Peter traveled roughly 900 kilometers from Voronezh to Cherkassk, covering the distance for 11 days, or to put it in other words - marching 80 kilometers per day. This was significantly faster than the previous campaign, although this time there was no major issues with the weather. The same distance had to be covered on foot by the main army under Shein. The Russians performed twice as good, reaching up to 30 kilometers per day. Regarding movement speed, the Petrine force did achieve significant progress compared to the previous year. Planning of the routes, as well as placing the main supply bases was also better thought about. Voronezh, which controlled the middle Don, was excellent port, from which an expedition southward could be launched. Also, Peter picked the time accurately, waiting for the late winter and early spring rainfalls and storms to pass, and at the same time using the overflowed river, without risking the ships. Taking note of the overburdening of the boat flotilla in 1695, Peter and his generals were wise enough to transport the main army on foot and to use ships only for the few navy-transported troops, as well as to issue a demand for more vessels for the transportation of munitions and armament. All in all, over 1,500 vessels were used in comparison to roughly 1,200 the previous year. However, in 1696 most of the river boats (*strug*) were commissioned in larger size than the former, which traversed the Volga River in 1695. This allowed for a greater cargo, without slowing or hampering the movement.

The supply of the army was another important feature upon which the rate of success when it comes to military transformation could be measured. The main difference comes from the fact that the provisioning of the army was transported separately from the main force, using the Volga River. The 73 boats, which carried the supplies, reached Azov on 21st May, less than a month

from their departure from Korotoyak. The Russians did their best to provide more horses for the transportation of supplies from the Volga to Don rivers (over 800 animals were provided, compared to fewer than 500 in the previous year). Unlike the information about the previous year, the exact amount of the provisions is not known. Around 94,000 tons of grains and wheat were provided. It can be estimated that each soldier would receive 13 kilograms of grain and wheat which are the rough equivalent of 1,500 pieces of bread. Even if a man consumed single bread per day, this still left an abundant amount of the most fundamental food a soldier requires.

The next feature that should be pointed out is the establishment of a navy. All in all, approximatelly 30 vessels were built, along with over 1,300 boats and rafts. 20,000 men were gathered, involving carpenters, builders, and especially serfs. It is misleading to think that no such thing previously occured in the history of Russia. The first Russian wind-guided vessel – the Frederick was built in 1636 and sent to the Caspian Sea to protect its trade routes. It was, however, destroyed by a storm. The second famous ship – Orel, was a frigate, based on the Dutch pinnace model. It was built in 1667 for the same purpose as the Frederick, but in 1669 Orel was sunk by the rebellious Cossacks, who captured Astrakhan under the command of Stepan Razin. Apart from the ships, the Russians were quite skilled and accustomed to building riverboats of different scale. As the campaign of 1695 demonstrated, the Tsardom could provide over 1,200 vessels for a considerably short period. Therefore, the high number of boats, built in Voronezh, though still impressive is not surprising, given the fact that Peter had mobilized any able boat-builder and carpenter available in the realm. The acquisition of foreign sailors from Arkhangelsk increased the number of skilled and semi-skilled personnel significantly. Combine that with the abundance of materials, as well as people, able to carve wood for the purpose of sailing, then the establishment of thirty vessels over a period of five months would not seem as astonishing as it could be presumed.

Finally, there is the central element of capturing a fortress – the siege. When the Russians reached Azak in mid-May, they were astonished to find out that the Ottomans had not destroyed the siege works, constructed under the guidance of Gordon the previous year.[70] This gave Peter's men the chance to reoccupy their old positions and spend considerably less time in entrenching. Given the fact that Dolgorukov's fort on Kalancha Island was still standing and that a strong garrison existed at Novosergeevskiy fort, the prospects for upcoming success were far brighter. Peter did not settle for what he had received as a gift from destiny. The Kalancha fort was rebuilt and strengthened with additional guns. Two new fortifications build along the Don River, to the west of the town, possed a considerable number of cannons on their own.

[70]This had a lot to do with the fact that the 3,000 strong Ottoman garrisons had to protect Azov and observe the Russian enemies at Novosergeevskiy fort, who were of equal number. Since no reinforcements arrived prior to June 1696, the commandant of Azak did not possess the human resource to dismantle the siege works.

Finally, due to the larger number of men Peter brought, Azov was eventually circumvallated and cut from any source of supplies and reinforcements. Nevertheless, it turned out that the art of siege craft was still lacking. As already noted, mines were discarded as too dangerous, given the results from the previous year. After half a month of futile bombardment, assault seemed to be the only way, although Gordon protested vehemently, as he did the previous year. 15,000 men were preoccupied with the construction of a monumental earthwork, which would allow the army to fire at Azov over the walls (like the siege of Masada). In the meantime, front units confronted the garrison. As late as 15th June, there were no prospects of near victory. Then a miracle occurred. The arrival of the Austrian engineers and gunmen, though underestimated or neglected by Russian historiography, turned out to have a crucial role for the success of the siege.[71] Only two days after Leopold I's men came into action, the first breaches of the main walls were achieved, followed by successful penetration in the southwestern section of the fortress. Two days later, the garrison capitulated.

While the Russians were undoubtedly able to reinvigorate their effort, mobilize their potential and achieve a stunning out-performance of their previous attempt regarding logistics, movement and troop deployment, there were still some elements of the military organization, which needed to be polished. Above all, engineering was in precarious condition. It was evident that Peter's army lacked talented siege masters, who could take down enemy fortifications. While Patrick Gordon did possess some knowledge on the matter, his skills were more a product of a long military experience, rather than of particular training. While Peter did not need an engineering "rock-star"like Vauban, he could surely use men with the abilities of Grage. Though he was not a popular figure in the Habsburg army, he was still competent enough to capitalize on the chaotic preparations, arranged by the Russians upon his arrival. Peter's later reforms would emphasize on the training of an engineer corps, but it was not until the failure at Narva and the rough first two years of the Great Northern War that the Tsar decided to approach the matter more decisively.

The structuring of the land forces was also an issue of concern. What the First Azov Campaign had hinted was that the large variety of different troop types burdened the performance of the army. Peter took some steps in that direction by reducing significantly the number of streltsy in comparison to the soldaty from the semi-standing regiments. Nevertheless, the lack of a permanent force was evident in the performance of the army during field battles and in the protection of the entrenchments. The best results were achieved either by the

[71]Ustryalov disparages the role of the Austrian crew, noting that "*they arrived late, only a week before the garrison surrendered.*"; see Ustryalov, *Istoriya*, 269. Porfiryev gives no mention of the Austrians, as does Davies, who uses the former as his main source of information. Only Bobrovskiy acknowledges their important role; see Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 91.

permanent standing regiments of the toy army (poteshny voyska) – Preobrazhenskiy, Semyonovskiy, Lefortovskiy and Butyrskiy, or by the Cossacks, who, though were not regular troops, were engaged in constant "little war" in the steppe, facing Ottoman garrisons and Tatar war bands. Again, it would require the humiliation of the grand Russian army at Narva before Peter would dare to dismantle and reshape his army.

### 3.4. The Third Azov Campaign (1697)

Following the successful capture of Azov, Peter began to plan his next big endeavor – the Grand Embassy. The idea to travel around Western Europe to study and understand the latest trends in the military, naval and administrative developments was not a novelty in European history. However, the usual practice was to send agents to conduct the observation and bring back the required data. Peter, always eager to test his abilities and to acquire firsthand knowledge, decided to leave Russia, to travel incognito, and venture around the Old Continent. In the meantime, his generals would have to figure out how to proceed with the southern campaign, following a general design, laid down by Peter. The tsar urged for the construction of a naval base in the Azov Sea, as well as for strengthening and extending Russia's grip on the lower Don. The Third Azov Campaign has received far less attention than the previous ones since Peter was absent. Still, it is a crucial point in projecting imperial power southward and should be included in any conclusive study of the period.

*Reforging Azov and the establishment of a southern navy*

On the day after Azov capitulated to the Russians, Peter began to restore the fortress. All the earthworks, batteries, and trenches were dismantled. The repair of the walls, as well as the bulwark and bastion, which the Russians captured on 17th and 18th July 1696, also started. Engineers were assembled the task of surveying Azak and making a plan for reestablishment and further fortification of the town. Knyaz Lyvov was ordered to provide an inventory list of the captured military equipment in Azov and the Lyutik fort. Apart from the number of handguns and munitions, the Russians acquired 127 cannons of different caliber – 96 in Azov and 31 in the Lyutik.[72] These were redistributed among the main fortification and the supporting outer forts. Three days later, on 23rd July, a plan was brought to Peter. As it turned out, an upgrade of the fortress would consume a considerable amount of time and resources, and it was decided that only repairs of recent damage would be carried out. Rebuilding the fortifications took the army almost a month, and it was not until the end of August that Peter's forces were finally able to depart northward.

[72] Bogoslovskiy, *Petr I*, 336.

Simultaneously with the rebuilding of Azov, Peter began to investigate the Lower Don and the Azov Sea for a suitable location for the establishment of a naval base. After four days of sailing, the tsar and his generals finally spotted a suitable area. This was "rocky coast with cliffs and a deep sea level, which also possessed a spring with clear water".[73] It was called Taganrog. Here, Peter would develop the first real naval base in Russian history, giving birth to the Imperial Navy, which was, though slowly, to change permanently the balance of power in the Black Sea region.

The location was idle since the Don would quickly overflow for most of the year, being overburdened by the high tides of the Azov Sea. Such natural obstacle could not be overcome, and a base, placed in the sea itself would prove far more practical. Since at the time Peter possessed only 26 battleships – 2 galleasses and 24 galleys, it was decided that more had to be built if Ottoman naval supremacy was to be thwarted. As it turned out, the Treasury was left empty, and no money could be spared for the building of ships. To provide funding, the Duma was assembled, and the boyars voted for the establishment of "*kumpanstva*" (companies), each including several noble families and each being obliged to build one ship in 1697 and one - in 1698. Altogether, the Duma voted that 52 kumpanstva were to be established. Apart from these figures, Peter demanded new ships to be built in his absence. In total, the kumpanstva, along with the Admiralty and the Palace Department were to finance the construction of 80 vessels: one bombardier vessel, six galleys and 60 brigantines for the Azov Sea and other ten ships for the Caspian Sea. The Azov vessels were to be constructed in Voronezh while the Caspian – in Kazan. Two years later, when Peter returned from his Grand Embassy, the results were not as good as he had hoped. Work was not carried out with the vigor expected by the tsar. Money and materials were insufficient and in the end, Peter was able to man and use less than one-third of the force he envisioned.

*Preparations*

In the winter of 1696, the Russians began preparations for a new march south. No one in Moscow doubted that the Ottomans would try a counter-offensive, aimed at the capture of Azov. In the absence of Peter, Shein took again overall command of the army, while Rigeman and Gordon were to command the infantry. Gordon used the winter months to equipt his troops with new uniforms and to pay a wage to his soldiers, amounting to three rubles per soldier of the lower ranks and the NCO-s. When the spring came, Gordon was sent as a vanguard force, marching south along with 136 officers and 4,000 soldiers from the four Tambov soldaty regiments and the Butyrskiy Regiment. The main army

[73] Ibid., 337, quoting Gordon's diary form 26th to 29th July 1696.

under Shein numbered 35,167 troops, over 12,000 of which were cavalry.[74] At the beginning of April 1697 both army segments were ready to depart from Moscow.[75] A meeting point was set at Ostrogozhsk, to the south of Voronezh.

*The campaign*

Both Gordon and Shein left Moscow on 6th April. Gordon's troops had been sent in advance on 7th March, while their baggage train left Moscow on 12th. By mid-April the Butyrskiy Regiment reached the Sosna River, where Gordon caught up with them, still waiting for the four Tambov regiments, which arrived with a significant delay on 8th May. Shein reached the Urazova River on 9th May where he joined the main supply train and on the next day continued his march to Azov.[76] Somewhere east of Belgorod the two armies merged and continued their unified march south, crossing many rivers and streams, staying vigilant for any enemy movement. After crossing the river Aydar, the main army continued its progress toward Azov, while Gordon and his regiments were sent forward by Shein to act as a vanguard on the Donets Valley. Gordon's task was to reach Myortvyy Donets opposite Azov as soon as possible, repair the fleet there and establish a postal service to coordinate the movement and the objectives of the Russian forces.[77] Gordon finally reached Azov on 26th May, and while en route, he received dispatches that an Ottoman force was heading to the fortress. The Crimeans, on the other hand, did not participate in the 1697 campaign, since at the time famine ravaged Crimea.[78] Five days after Gordon, Shein also reached Azov and entrenched his forces on five hills, south of the fortress. By mid-June, Rigeman had brought the 4,000 Cossacks from Don and Ayuka Khan, the Kalmyk leader, brought his 3,000 horsemen. An interesting note by Gordon mentions that the Kalmyks received 200 sheep and 20 ovis each week for their food.[79]

While waiting for the arrival of the enemy, Shein ordered his men, following the directions of the engineer la Valet, to construct another fort south of Azov and also to implement the plans for upgrading the main fortress, as laid down the previous year. Hornworks, ravelins, and additional earthworks were to

[74] There were 9,571 reytary, kopeishchiky and servicemen of Moscow (cavalry), at least 10 regiments of soldaty (11,885 men), 5,817 streltsy (again some 10 regiments at least), 3,825 Don Cossacks, 1,066 Circassians and 3,000 Kalmyks; There is no reliable data about the size of the artillery train; see Bobrovskiy, 94, Note 89. When adding the number of men under Gordon and the Azov garrison, the total number of Russian troops, engaged in the 1697 campaigns amounts to 47,608 soldiers and officers and at least 120 artillery pieces of different caliber.

[75] The four Tambov regiments were to travel separately from Tambov, while Gordon with the Butyrskiy Regiment would depart from Moscow.

[76] There seems to be a mistake in Bobrovskiy's text, since the only river with a similar name is a small stream, 22 kilometers long in the vicinity of Arkhangelsk.

[77] Bobrovskiy is quoting Gordon's diary.

[78] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 94.

[79] Ibid. Gordon's diary for 2nd-16th June,1697; On average, this meant some 8-9 tons of meat per week, if an average sheep weights around 80 kilos, and a ovis – around 100 and only half of their weight can be used as food.

be erected, along with counterscarps. Gordon's troops were sent to build the new fortifications from the northern part of Azov, next to the Novosergeevskiy fort.

It was not until the first days of July that Shein received valuable information on the size of enemy forces. While previous rumors as usually exaggerated the actual size of the opposing side, a Cossack party under atman Aksen Boldyrev was able to cross the Kuban and investigate the enemy positions. As it turned out, the Nogais had joined the Ottoman effort, accompanied by the Kuban Tatars, as a Kalmyk ranger reported on 17th July. The entire enemy force was roughly 22,000 strong garrisons, with 2,000 horsemen acting as a vanguard.[80]

The Tatars' first attack came on 20th July, when the enemy vanguard pushed its way into the Russian camp, killing several and taking some more into captivity, before being driven back by the Russian infantry. Shein decided to pursue the Tatars and ordered his army into battle, going out of the encampment. The Tatar vanguard linked with the main force – 12,000 cavalry and 5,000 infantry and the enemies continued their attacks on the Russians.[81] The engagement continued for 4-5 hours, with several Tatar charges being met and repulsed by Russian artillery and infantry fire.[82] Shein, though outnumbering the enemy, decided not to risk an attack, which would expose his position to the enemy horsemen and held his ground instead. Having suffered 2,000 dead, the Tatars finally disengaged and retreated to the Kuban Steppe, unable to reform or continue their campaign on Azov. Russian losses are not mentioned but probably they were substantially fewer. The overall result of the engagement was that the Ottomans decided to recalculate their strategy and project their main forces against the forts on the lower Dnieper, which were taken by Sheremetev in 1695 and 1696.

Until the beginning of August the Russian army remained stationed at Azov. After that Shein began to send his regiments to home. Ayuka Khan was the first to depart, receiving a ruble per each Kalmyk and additional gifts from the Khan and his nobles. Shein himself left on 8th August, leaving behind part of the streltsy to supplement Azov's garrison. Gordon with his men joined Dolgorukov at the Belgorod Line (*cherta*) to strengthen Russian position in the face of the increasing Ottoman pressure on the Dnieper.

[80] Ibid.

[81] *Khronologicheskiy ukazately,* 4.

[82] Gordon estimates that it was 4 to 5 hours of fighting; Shein, who places the beginning of the battle at 11 a.m., uses the term "several hours", while the *Khronologicheskiy ukazately* indicates that the whole engagement, along with the earlier Tatar incursion probably continued for 10 hours; see *Khronologicheskiy ukazately*, 4; Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, 95.

*The performance of the Russian army*

The main difference between the final Azov Campaign and the military actions of 1695 and 1696 derives from the fact that Peter I was not present. The army, however, was subordinated to a single commander – the voevoda Shein, which clearly suggests that the errors of split command were overcome following the successful siege of Azov in 1696. Shein was right to choose Patrick Gordon as his second in command, owning the Scotsman's experience with the terrain as well as the execution of marches and fighting against the Turks and Tatars, which Gordon had faced since 1687.

Unlike the first two marches under Peter, there is no sufficient information about the exact road and speed of the Russian army. Bobrovskiy notes that there was a substantial delay on behalf of the Tambov soldaty regiments under Gordon. While not as fast as the movement in 1696, the speed of the Russian army was more or less the same as that in 1695. The fact, that the bulk of the forces were transferred on foot instead of using multiple ships, like in the previous year, contributes to the delay. Nevertheless, the Muscovite army was able to deploy at Azov before the enemies could organize any assault or siege.

However, the defensive tactics applied by the Russians have to be pointed out. Instead of risking a march against the Tatar and Nogai positions around the Kuban River, Shein decided to entrench himself at Azov and wait for the enemy. Two primary factors could easily explain this. First and foremost, without Peter being present, Shein did not dare to risk an offensive, which could end with a fiasco, similar to Golytsin's failure against Crimea in 1687 and 1689. Secondly, there was nothing else to gain south of Azov. Apart from the Ottoman stronghold of Kaffa, the steppe south of the Don River was desolated in relation to cities or fortresses, which could be held and maintained to achieve expansion. Even if Shein moved against the Tatars and Nogais, he could only push them further south or drive them east to Circassia. In any case, his troops would march through harsh, waterless grassland with no hope for enough supplies. This situation would have ended either with inglorious retreat somewhere in July due to insufficient food and provisions, or with the trapping of the Russians, surrounded by the enemy cavalry. This would have been a grim prospect, similar to the Crusaders' downfall at Hattin, or Crassus' disaster at Carrhae.

Regarding the actual Battle of Azov (20$^{th}$ July 1697), this campaign was also carried out carefully and without risking any chances. Shein took up a strong defensive position and waited for the enemy charges to drain the energy of the Tatars and Nogais. The Russians were in a better position – they could have remained in their camp for months without any need to strike out. If the Tatars were to achieve anything they had to charge their enemy's positions. Probably the news of an upcoming Ottoman support made them brave enough.

In any case, the attack on the Russian camp was a military folly. As the result of similar raids in 1695 and 1696 demonstrated, the mounted forces of the Tatars were more or less useless against the fortified Muscovite camps. Only in a combination with the Ottoman infantry they could stand any chance of success. Thus, the engagement must be viewed in the context of Tatar frustration due to their inability to either subdue the Russians by a surprise raid, or ambush them in an open battle. By all means this was the same driving emotion, which made the Cossacks storm Azov on several occasions during the two sieges, even though no orders for such actions were given. In any case, the deployment of the Russian army suggests two things. Firstly, the Muscovite infantry was able to stand firm in the face of enemy charges, driving off infantry and cavalry with considerable success. Secondly, Shein did not put too much trust in his cavalry, since the later was used merely to hold the army flanks, with no information suggesting that there would be Russian mounted counter-attacks against the Tatars and the Nogais. Finally, the victory was won only after the Tatars disengaged and left southward, while the Russians remained masters of the field but did not initiate a persecution, probably fearing possible traps – a tactic, very common for a retreating steppe army. Thus, Shein, though not a military genius, was able to achieve victory simply by patience and caution and to obtain all of the campaign's goals.

The Third Azov Campaign was as successful as the second one and demonstrated that the Russians were quickly learning their lessons, regarding steppe warfare and the execution of military marches on the Lower Don. While until 1687 Muscovy was on the defensive, using the military lines (cherta) to thwart Tatar raids with some success, the reforms of Aleksey and Fyodor, and the energy of Peter demonstrated that it was Russia, which from now on would go on the offensive. While movement and logistics had to be further improved, it was evident that the Russian army of the last decade of the seventeenth century was far superior in handling their task in the steppe than their ancestors during the first half of the same century or at the time of Ivan the Terrible. The increased usage of artillery and handguns had a lot to do with the greater success of the Muscovite troops not only in sieges but also when facing the enemy in the open field. In fact, it was the artillery that allowed Gordon to repulse the Ottoman-Tatar force before the first siege of Azov and again the cannons proved crucial for Shein's success in 1697. The experience acquired from the foreign engineers regarding siege warfare should not be underestimated, even though it was the Great Northern War and the sieges of Sweden's outposts in Ingria and Livonia which forged the Russian artillery as a substantial element of its military machine. The war with the Ottoman Empire wore on until 1701 with no significant action taking place between the two sides, since the Porte’s forces were preoccupied with the last Habsburg offensive in the Balkans. Following a devastating defeat at Zenta (1697), the Ottomans capitulated to Habsburg demands at Karlowitz. They were unable to

strike back north and had to submit to Peter's will, surrendering Azov and its surroundings as well as several forts on the lower Dnieper under the Treaty of Constantinople (1700).

### 3.5. The Pruth Campaign (1711)

*Historical background*

The Pruth Campaign is an essential, although not a decisive, part of the Great Northern War. Following an initial setback after the failure at Narva (1700), Russia was able to gain momentum, while Karl XII (r. 1697-1718) was preoccupied with the conquest of Poland-Lithuania. Simultaneously with Sweden's unbroken chain of successes in the south, Peter was able, by mobilizing the full potential of his realm, to mount a series of offensive expeditions and sieges, which brought down Scandinavian control over Ingria, Estland and Livonia. By 1706, when Karl triumphed in Poland, Peter became master of the North, driving the Swedes from Karelia as well. In 1707, Karl XII decided to invade Russia and to deal a decisive blow to the last remaining enemy of the Triple Alliance.[83] In 1708, the Swedes had finally subjugated both Poland-Lithuania and Saxony and Karl could focus his entire effort to the East. In midsummer 1708 the Swedes crossed the borders of Russia and tried to provoke the Russians into a decisive battle. Peter, however, decided to apply a different strategy. Scourched-earth and constant maneuvering were used to torment and outperform the enemy. The tsar was well aware that his army was no match for the Swedes, and an open battle could prove disastrous for his cause. The winter, Russia's oldest ally, came to aid. The harsh weather of November to March 1708/9's proved to be one of the chilliest in European history. The Swedish army was decimated by frost, hunger, and disease, unable to conquer any firm hold in Russia. To worsen things further, following a Russian success against a Swedish vanguard at Lesnaya (8th October 1708), Peter was able to push his enemies deeper south, away from their supply centers. By April 1709, Karl's army was in full retreat toward Ukraine.

The wounded king saw no choice but to try to obtain a permanent holding and besieged Poltava. While he led the siege, the field army was placed under Lewenhaupt to meet the relieving force, commanded by Peter and his generals, among which Boris Sheremetev and Aleksandr Menshikov. Lewenhaupt, thwarted by the poor condition of his army and the psychological pressure of a possible failure, was unable to demonstrate his full potential and the troops under his command were soundly defeated by the Russians. Three days after Poltava, the bulk of the Swedes were captured at Perevolochna (11th July 1709).

[83]Initial Alliance included Denmark-Norway, Saxony and Russia. Poland-Lithuania was engaged in 1704, while in 1701 Denmark was thrown out of the war. By 1708, Sweden had conquered almost the entire Commonwealth and subjected Saxony.

Of over 40,000 Swedes which stepped in Russia in 1708, only 15,000 remained, and they all fell into captivity, denying Sweden of the most battle ready element of its military machine. Karl XII, however, was able to run away and retreat to the Ottoman Empire, finding haven at the fortress of Bender. In 1710 Peter demanded from Ahmed III to hand over the Swedish king to the Russians. In turn, Karl was able to convince the sultan to strike the Russians in order to restore what he had been lost under the treaty of Constantinople. In November 1710 Ahmed III broke off diplomatic relations with Peter and proclaimed war, sending Tatars and Zaporozhian Cossacks against the Russian lands in Ukraine. Peter was adamant in his response – war was to be fought, and the Ottomans had to be defeated decisively. His recent victory over Sweden, the beginning of the full-scale reform of his army and the victories over the Ottomans in 1695-1697 were all factors, contributing to Peter's aplomb. The Ottomans had to be taught a lesson and Russia was to try to benefit from any future success by expanding its authority over the Pontic lands and even stretching further south - toward the Balkans.

*Historiography*

The Pruth Campaign has been studied in detail by the Russian historiography from the nineteenth century onward. Primary sources include Peter's campaign journal, as well as the Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, who served under the tsar during the march south.[84] Another valuable source is the memoirs of Jean Nicolas Moreau de Brassey, who was part of the Russian army, as well as the notes of Just Juel, Denmark-Norway's ambassador to Peter.[85] The official histories of the Guard's regiments also provide substantial information on the campaign.[86] Peter's expedition in Moldavia has also been researched by Soviet historian Porfiryev.[87] Recent insight is provided by Brian Davies in his study of empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe.[88] A brief overview is presented in Nikolay Shefov's book on Russian battles.[89] A recent article by Aleksandr Kulinich provides a short, yet exhaustive source, regarding the

[84] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1711 (St. Petersburg, 1854)*; P.H. Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq. - a military officer in the services of Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain, containing an account of his travels in Germany, Russia, Tartary, Turkey, and the West Indies, &c, as also several very interesting private anecdotes of the Czar, Peter 1 of Russia* (Dublin, 1783).

[85] *Zapiski brigadira Moro-de-Braze (Kasayushchiesy do Turetskogo pohoda 1711 goda)* – translated into Russian by A.S. Pushkin; *Zapiski datskogo poslannika v Rossii pri Petre Velikom* – printed in Russian in 1899 and reprinted in 2001.

[86] M.P. Azanchevskiy, *Istoriya Leib-gvardii Preobrazhenskogo polka* (St. Petersburg, 1859); P. Dirin, *Istoriya Leibgvardii Semenovskogo polka* (St. Petersburg, 1883).

[87] Porfiryev, *Petr I.*

[88] B.L. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe: Russia's Turkish Wars in the Eighteenth Century* (New York & London: Continuum, 2011).

[89] N. Shefov, *Bitvy Rossii* (Moscow: ACT Moskva, 2006).

preparations and the deployment of Russian forces in 1711.[90] Kulinich gives a valuable new perspective on the organization and functioning of the Petrine army on campaign. He also tries to dispel some of the myths, regarding the conduct of the campaign, which have predominated Russian historiography in the twentieth century

*Preparations*

Immediately after the Ottoman Empire proclaimed its desire for war on 10th November 1710, Peter began to plan for the upcoming year and the measures he had to take in order to deal with the new threat south. The military engagement with the Ottomans would surely bring a wave of Tatar raids in Ukraine and Belarus, as well as a possible new attack on Azov, which was *de jure* granted to Russia according to the Treaty of Constantinople, following a *de facto* occupation in 1696, as noted above. The Ottoman Empire, which was able to overcome its military embarrassment following the War of the Holy League, had replenished its Treasury while the government was headed by a war party, supported by the sultan.[91] The warmongers in the Istanbul court sought for opportunities to reconquer the lands, lost under the treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Constantinople. Russia, entangled with a hard-fought war against Sweden, seemed to be the perfect target.[92]

Peter's plan was to mobilize his resources and establish a massive body of troops which was to march south through Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldavia. The next step would be to reach the Danube and to block any Ottoman attempt to cross the great river. In the meantime, Russian contingents would assist the rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia in their uprising against the Ottoman authorities. If things had gone according to plan, all Ottoman lands north of Danube would have been occupied by Russia until the end of 1711, while a series of uprisings would have ignited among the Orthodox Serbs and the Montenegrians as Peter hoped.[93]

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[90] A.A. Kulinich, "Deyatelnosty russkogo komandovaniya v Prutskom pokhode 1711 goda*"*, *Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i yuridicheskie nauki, kulyturologiya I iskusstvovedenie. Voporsy teorii i praktiki* 5, 43 (Gramota, 2014), 109-13.

[91] It is interesting to note, that the Ottoman Empire and Russia had reached an agreement on their dispute about the future of Karl XII and in the beginning of 1710 a treaty, promoting a 30 year-long piece, was signed. The shift in the Ottoman position took place after the warlike Baltacı Mehmed Paşa, a royal eunuch, became grand vizier in the summer of 1710. Backed by the French diplomacy and the aspirations of the Crimean khan - Devlet Girei, the new vizier was able to convince Ahmed III that war was the best solution for the Empires's problems, regarding the lack of prestige of the central authority, following the Holy League War; see Kulinich, "Deyatelnost russkogo komandovaniya", 109.

[92] Later the Ottomans would fight against Venice (1714) and the Habsburg Empire (1716-1718), being able to reconquer Morea from the Serene Republic, but suffering a new military humiliation by the forces of Eugene of Savoy and loosing Serbia to the Austrians.

[93] Whether Peter was aware or not, between 1688 and 1689, the Orthodox and Catholic Bulgarians rebelled twice, rising against the Ottomans in support of the Habsburg armies fighting in Serbia. The Habsburgs were unable to support these rebellions and they were soon suppressed by the Ottoman army, initiating a series of immigrant waves, mainly toward the Banat of Timişoara. By the time Peter would march south, the Bulgarian

Peter's first task was to gather his forces and rearrange his strategy for the upcoming campaign season. While 1710 was dedicated to the capture of Livonia and Riga in particular, 1711 required the distribution of Russian troops on several fronts. The main emphasis was the southern front against the Ottomans. Here Peter allocated his main army. The tsar decided to concentrate his forces in three main columns. The first one, under Golitsin, would serve as a vanguard and secure the route via Dnieper toward northern Moldavia, and establish a chain of supply depotes along the way, preparing food and provisions for the main army, which were supposed to suffice for four months. For his task, Golitsin was to head a force of 10 dragoon regiments and to receive the tsar's permission to extract provisions from Belarus and Western Ukraine.

The main army under Sheremetev comprised of the cavalry and infantry units, distributed along the Livonian and Estland frontier. Sheremetev had to gather these forces and march south through Smolensk and Slutsk, and continue south to the Dnieper. Then Sheremetev had tocapture Iaşi – Moldavia's capital, and muster as many supplies and men as possible.

Finally, Peter himself had to lead the bulk of the infantry and the artillery, and to catch up with Sheremetev at Iaşi, from where the Russian united force would march further south and block Ottoman attempts for crossing the Danube River. Speed and surprise were the main elements of the Tsar's strategy. Peter emphasized the need to act as quickly as possible and keep the initiative in Russian hands. He wanted to see Russian forces in Wallachia by May or early June. Peter estimated rightfully that it would take only a few weeks for the Ottoman army to march from its gathering center – Edirne to the Danube, less than 400 kilometers north from the old Ottoman capital.[94]

A second force, under Apraksin, aided by the Don Cossacks and the Kalmyks was to march toward Azov and strengthen its garrison in case of possible Ottoman incursions. Finally, a 15,000 strong corps had to be sent to Pomerania to assist the Danes and the Poles in the capturing of Sweden's strongholds in the key Baltic region.

As the memoirs of Moreau de Brassey reveal, Peter's plan was to construct a formidable, yet flexible force, separated into four main divisions, along with a considerable number of cavalry, formed into two dragoon units, which could act separately as a covering force or as a vanguard of the main army. The artillery was detached as a separate unit, under General Bruce. The main infantry force – some 48,800 men were allocated amongst four infantry divisions (11,200 men divided into eight regiments of 1,400 soldiers in each division), headed by the generals Weyde, Repnin, Hallart, and Dansberg. The

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population was already badly mauled by the activities of the Ottoman army, while local resources were taped in order to feed the growing military needs of the Porte's troops. In 1711 no support came from the lands of Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia; see Cholov, *Chiprovskoto vystanie* (Sofia, 1988); I. Parvev, *Habsburgs and Ottomans Between Vienna and Belgrade* (Sofia, 1995).

[94] Porfiryev, *Petr I*, 218-25

two dragoon divisions (there were 8,000 troops into eight regiments of 1,000 in each division) were commanded by generals Carl Ewald von Rönne and Janus von Eberstadt. Peter, acting as a lieutenant-general was to command the guards' regiments (Preobrazhenskiy, Semyonovskiy, Astrakhanskiy and Ingermanlandskiy, a total of 15 battalions or 15,000 men), along with a bombardier and a cannon company (altogether 1,500 men) and a horse guard, comprised of 300 reytary (heavy cavalry). Additional troops under Menshikov were detached from the main army, serving as garrison troops for the Moldavian capital Iaşi. According to de Brassey, the main army was further supplemented by 10,000 Cossacks and 6,000 Moldavians, bringing the total number of men to 95,800.[95] However, these figures represent the official statistics of the army before its departure south. As Porfiryev notes, the Force under Sheremetev was devastated by plague during its march through Latvia and Lithuania, and in the following months many more perished from heat and diseases.[96] The idea that each regiment in the divisions was in full strength is debatable as the troops were assembled in great haste from winter quarters and garrisons, scattered throughout Livonia and Ingria. In fact, upon reaching the Pruth River in July, what left of the initial force, gathered in March, was no more than 37,538, with additional 10,000 sent forward under Rönne and several thousand left under Menshikov at Iaşi.[97] Thus, by the time Peter finally reached the borders of Wallachia, he had lost up to 32,000 men: some left as garrisons along the way, but most - perished due to hunger, dehydration or diseases. Shefov argues that Peter marched with 50,000 from Ukraine, while Porfiryev estimates that there were 51,000 troops under Peter and Sheremetev at Iaşi, from which 5,000 were the ill-trained and equipped Moldavians. The artillery consisted of some 122 cannons in different calibers. [98]

While the Russians were preparing their forces, the Ottomans did not stand idle. Baltacı Mehmed Paşa, the architect of the anti-Russian policy, took personal command of a massive force, gathered in Thrace. The sources provide very different figures regarding the total Ottoman strength. Peter Bruce estimates that a total of 200,000 Ottomans and Tatars took part in the campaign.[99] Porfiryev comes to a conclusion that there were 120,000 Ottoman

[95] *Zapiski brigadira Moro-de-Braze* (http://militera.lib.ru/memo/french/brasey/01.html - accessed on 03.08.2015); According to Peter Bruce the Russian army should have numbered 30,000 infantry separated into 5 divisions, as well as 30,000 dragoons, 50,000 Kalmyks and 20,000 Cossacks; see P. Bruce, *Memoirs,* 39. These figures, however, are not confirmed in any other sources.

[96] Porfiryev, *Petr I*, 218.

[97] A.Kulinich, "Deyatelnost", 112; De Brassey notes that during an official counting of the troops, carried out, according to Peter's personal orders, on 17th July 1711, there were no more than 47,000 troops left out of the initial 79,800, not counting the Cossacks and the Moldavians. De Brassey himself estimates that out of 4,000 troops under his command (four regiments) 724 had died by mid June, of which only 56 were killed in action on 29 June. As it is, De Brassey's brigade alone had lost over 15 per cent of its personnel without any significant action taking place; see *Zapiski brigadira Moro-de-Braze* (http://militera.lib.ru/memo/french/brasey/01.html - accessed on 03.08.2015).

[98] Porfiryev, *Petr I*, 222-23; A.Kulinich, "Deyatelnost", 112.

[99] Bruce, *Memoirs*, 42.

troops (62,000 infantry of which 20,000 yeniçeri and 58,000 cavalry, most of which sipahis) and 70,000 Tatars under Devlet Girei, which concentrated at Bender and joined the Ottomans before their first engagements with Peter's troops in the lower Pruth. The Turks' artillery train, according to Porfiryev, consisted of 444 cannons.[100] Kulinich, using Ottoman sources, provides more realistic figures, and estimates that the Ottomans were around 100,000 in total, accompanied by 35,000 Tatars and a great artillery train – probably of 407 cannons.[101] Shefov briefly notes that the entire Ottoman army at Pruth amounted to 150,000 men.[102] Further details are provided by Brian Davies who combines Ottoman sources and the figures given in the work of Virginia Aksan on eighteenth-century Ottoman wars. Davies estimates that a total of 40,000 Crimean Tatars were concentrated at Bender and marched to join Baltacı Paşa at the Pruth. According to Davies, the grand vizier would master a force of some 120,000 of which 57,000 were cavalry (20,000 sipahi and 37,000 cebelis-s and volunteers) and 63,000 infantry (23,400 yeniçeri from Rumelia and Egypt, 10-12,000 cebecis and 20,000 levends from Bosnia and Albania). Half of the Tatars had to screen the Russian movement and harass the Petrine army as often as possible.

The initial disproportion between the two armies was not as problematic for the Russians as it would later prove to be. Almost 100,000 troops were supposed to march south in order to coup with the opposing forces of 135-160,000 Turks and Tatars. Also, the Russians could muster additional troops in Azov and Ukraine and use them to divert the Tatar Host away from Moldavia. What misled Peter in his choice of strategy were three main factors – the logistics, the reconnaissance of the route ahead and the faith that a revolt in Wallachia and Moldavia would break out and that at least 50,000 rebels from the Principalities would join the tsar's army. As it turned out, these main elements of Peter's campaign plan turned out to be fallacy.

*The Balkan factors*

Before analyzing the actual development of Peter's southern march, several factors, which played a considerable influence on the political and military developments in the Balkans and the Danube region, must be noted.

First and foremost, Peter's hopes rested on the Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, which had been vassals of the Ottoman Empire since mid-fifteenth century. As early as 1709, the prince of Wallachia - Constantin Brancoveanu (r. 1688-1714), had secretly promised his support to Peter. Brancovenau hoped to use Russia in order to evade the growing Austrian influence and thwart a possible preemptive move from the Sublime Porte, which

[100] Porfiryev, *Petr I*, 218-19.
[101] Kulinich, "Deyatelnost", 112.
[102] Shefov, *Bitvy Rossii*, 456.

could try to impose its own puppet in Bucharest. Using his Orthodox faith as key to winning Russian support, Brancoveanu continued to encourage a possible Russian incursion south of the Dniester River. The central issue for the Wallachian prince was his rivalry with the Moldovian ruler Dimitrie Cantemir (r. 1693; 1710-1711), who served as the main Russian ally in the region. Brancoveanu did not want to risk his throne to the possibility that Cantemir could betray him to the Turks. The Wallachians acted cautiously and did not want to reveal openly their support to Peter's cause.

Dimitrie should not be perceived as Machiavellian type of prince who would betray his fellow Christian for the pure aggrandizement of his power and influence. In fact, Cantemir himself was a victim of Brancoveanu's political games. In 1693, when Dimitrie was to inherit the princely title of his father Constantine, Brancoveanu used his influence in Istanbul to dethrone Cantemir and to place a close friend of his – the *phanariot* Constantin Duca, as the ruler of Moldavia.[103] It was not until 1710 that Cantemir was finally able to regain his father's throne. Then, it is no surprise that Dimitrie was perceived as a threat by Brancoveanu. In the eyes of Peter, however, both princes were viewed as valuable allies, and it was possible that the tsar failed to notice the deep mistrust and even animosity between the Romanian rulers.

Regarding the rest of the Orthodox lands, Russia was to receive even less support. A possible major uprising of the Serbs never took place, with only sporadic activities by armed bands, limited to the mountanious region of Shumadija. The Montenegrians also rose against the Ottoman authorities, hoping to receive funds and help from Russia and Venice. However, this never happened and in mid-1710, Sava, the prince-bishop of Montenegro had to negotiate peace with the Porte. In the spring of 1711 the levend-s from Bosnia and Albania overwhelmed the last remaining rebel bands or simply drove them high into the mountains, where the usually dwelled. As for the Bulgarians, their earlier rebellions were decimated with a great ferocity. In the late 1680s the western lands of Moesia and Macedonia were ravaged during the final days of the Karposh's rebellion (1689) and the Chiprovtsi uprising (1688). Prior to these rebellions, the Bulgarians had risen in the old capital of Tarnovo under a Russian, named Rostislav, who claimed to be a descendant of the last ruling dynasty – the Shishmans. Finally, in 1690, a Bulgarian war-band leader – Strakhil took advantage of the Austrian offensive against Belgrade and raised a unit of 200 men, joined by 4,000 Hungarians, Bosnians and Serbs. After Strakhil evaded the Ottoman siege of Nish, he was able to return to the Ottoman Empire

[103] Phanariots were members of prominent Greek families in Phanar, the chief Greek quarter of Constantinople, where the Ecumenical Patriarchate is located, who traditionally occupied four important positions in the Ottoman Empire: Grand Dragoman, Grand Dragoman of the Fleet, Hospodar of Moldavia, and Hospodar of Wallachia. They were descendents of the Byzantine Great Houses which survived the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Due to their close ties to the Ottoman court, the Phanariots were viewed as more loyal and trustworthy than the Romanian ruling elite. This is the reason why around 1715, both Moldavia and Wallachia were bestowed to phanariot families while the local aristocracy was left aside.

and to raise a new band of brigands in 1711, acting in the Strandzha region in modern day Southeastern Bulgaria. His actions were directly related to Peter's campaign south, but the small-scale guerrilla could not alter in any way the course of the war.

*The campaign*

The march of the Russians began in March, when Sheremetev left his winter quarters in Livonia and began to traverse the broad plains of Belarus and Western Ukraine. Because he had to gather his forces from various locations, Sheremetev's column was stretched and moving slower than Peter had anticipated when he laid his plans for the campaign. While still in northwest Ukraine, Sheremetev's forces were befallen by early spring storms and heavy rainfalls, which transformed the prairie into an endless marsh, resulting in what Russians referred to as *rasputitsa*. The usual speed of the army decrised several times and even couriers, of whom Peter insisted on bringing back and forth regular reports on Sheremetev's movement, reduced their speed from the usual eighty kilometers per day to less than forty.[104] Frustrated by the delay of Sheremetev's action, Peter rearranged his orders. The Field-marshal had to gather only the dragoon regiments and march forward to the Dniester. The infantry from Livonia had to catch up with Sheremetev's troops at Iaşi along with the new recruitments, which Peter brought with himself from Smolensk via Lutsk. Moreover, Sheremetev was supposed to establish supply depots along his way, using the acquisitions, gathered earlier by Golitsin, and to provide further supplies if necessary. While Sheremetev was slowly dragging his forces through the East European marshes, the Tsar concluded a series of negotiations with Dimitrie Cantemir, which resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Lutsk on 13th April. According to the treaty, Moldavia would become a vassal of Russia and Cantemir would assist Peter with provisions and men on his way to the Danube. In return, Russia would guarantee Moldavia's autonomy and recognize Cantemir as a legitimate ruler. Prince Dimitrie had crossed his own Rubicon by signing the treaty. The Porte perceived such actions as high treason and they were punishable by torture and death.

On 7th May, Peter sent a new dispatch toward Sheremetev. The Knyaz had to gather what cavalry he could muster, along with two of the guards' regiments and travel to the Danube with great haste in order to outmaneuver the advancing Ottoman forces and to prevent them from crossing the great river. Sheremetev had to either seize the Ottoman bridgeheads or destroy them. Peter stressed the need to win over the support of the Wallachian and Moldavian rulers. Furthermore, the Tsar expected the Field-marshal to reach the Dniester on 15th May, cross it and prepare pontoon bridges for the bulk of the army.[105] What

[104] Kulinich, "Deyatelnost",110.
[105] Ibid., 111; B. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 115.

followed was one of the worst executed orders in the history of warfare. Instead of moving his men rapidly, Sheremetev took his time cautiously and advanced by 6 kilometers per day, reaching Bratslav on 16th May (according to the initial plan, he was supposed to be there in mid-April). On 12th May, he received an order to send forth a *corps volante* of some 900 dragoons and mounted grenadiers, which were supposed to reach the Moldavian capital Iaşi and raise the locals in Russian support. Only upon reaching Bratslav Sheremetev finally sent the chosen troops ahead, but insisted they should not ride their mounts, but march on foot next to them. This resulted in development which might seem comic or tragic, regarding the point of view. The corps volante managed to cross a total of 12 kilometers in the following five days, reaching the unthinkable speed of 2.5 kilometers per day.[106] The bulk of the Knyaz's forces left Bratslav on 18th May only to reach Iaşi two weeks later, on 5th June. Their movement was continuously screened by a force of 15,000 Tatars, who had moved out from Bender. At the same time, the corps volante finally reached the Dniester, building a bridge to cross the river. The detachment was attacked by 4,000 Turks, Tatars and the Polish allies of Karl XII, who tried to destroy the Russian vanguard. The Russian troops were able to take a good defensive position and to fight back the enemy forces which finally retreated to Bender. By the time Sheremetev had left Bratslav, the corps volante had finally crossed the Dnieper. While the Russians were followed by their Tatar "tail", Sheremetev decided to appease Dimitrie Cantemir's pleas for military aid and sent forth a detachment of three dragoon regiments and two companies of grenadiers, who had to to ride to Iaşi and occupy the city. The reinforcements reached the Moldavian capital as late as 29th May, just six days before Sheremetev's main force. Thus, it took the Knyaz a month just to traverse a distance of no more than 260 kilometers (an average of 8.5 kilometers per day). By the time Sheremetev reached Iaşi, the Ottomans had crossed the Danube (on 1st June) and their forces marched upstream to meet the Russians and cross the smaller rivers and streams before being caught up by the enemy vanguard. Peter was frustrated, noting to Sheremetev: "I am amazed by your slowdown!"[107] The failure of Knyaz Sheremetev to achieve his campaign goals not only allowed for a massive Ottoman army to cross freely the biggest obstacle on its route, but also cost Russia its primary military support – the Wallachians. In April Constantin Brancoveanu had gathered an army of 40,000 men and allocated it on the Wallachian-Moldavian border, waiting for the Russians. The Prince of Wallachia had only a single option – to join whichever army reached his position first. When news came that only the vanguard of Peter's army had arrived at Iaşi while the Ottoman forces were advancing in their entirety, Brancoveanu was left with no possible choice – he had to keep his throne and his head.

[106] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 115; Kulinich, "Deyatelnost", 111.
[107] Kulinich, "Deyatelnost", 111, quoting a letter from Peter to Sheremetev.

Sheremetev learned about the Ottoman progress on 8th June and decided to halt his forces at Iaşi and wait for the main army under the tsar. Another crucial mistake was made. Instead of rushing forward to destroy the existing bridges on the Pruth or, at least, sending a vanguard with this task, Sheremetev decided to stand idle and leave the whole initiative in the hands of the Turks. His decision was strongly influenced by the fact that Cantemir was able to gather only 5-6,000 ill-equipped and trained men, and that no further provisions had been brought up by the Moldavians, whose land, as it turned out, was plagued by draft, bad harvests, and swarms of locust.[108]

Peter, leading the main force of infantry, reached the Dniester on 12th July. Frustrated with Sheremetev for his poor choice of actions, the Tsar summoned a military council on 14th July. The council quickly split into two fractions. The so-called *nyemtsi* were: Hallart (Peter's chief strategist), Weyde, Bruce and Rönne, who advised Peter to cease his advance south and wait for the Ottoman army in his current position. [109] Their position was buttressed by the fact that a march further south would expose the army to flanking attacks from the Tatars. Peter did not have exact details on the size or whereabouts of the enemy forces and could easily fall into a trap. On the opposite side were the Russian generals, led by Sheremetev, who insisted that a halt at Iaşi would betray the Orthodox cause and would leave Wallachia and Southern Moldavia to the mercy of the grand vizier and his army. Peter's compatriots urged their ruler that a move against Bender, as suggested by Hallart, would only result in the escape of Karl XII while gaining no particular advantages for the Muscovite cause. Peter decided to support the "Russian" camp, and at first his decision seemed right since he received an embassy of Wallachian nobles, assuring the tsar that Brancoveanu would join him in open rebellion. It seems that these nobles were either bribed by the Ottomans to lure the Tsar or were misinformed on the latest decisions of their prince. All parts of the Petrine army finally merged on 28th June and began a march south, following an attack from some 20,000 Tatars on Sheremetev's trenches. After an initial enemy breakthrough at one of the pickets, the Tatars were repulsed by the combined fire of both infantry and artillery. Upon marching south Peter, reassured by the Wallachian nobles, decided to send a corps of 5,000 dragoons under Rönne, supported by 5,000 of Cantemir's Moldavians. Rönne had to march south, surpass any advancing enemy columns and strike deep into Wallachia, supporting

[108] Peter Bruce notes that when the bulk of the Russian army went along the Pruth (21st June), the tents of the soldiers were swarmed with locust, which followed the army on its march south and left the soldiers alone only in the end of June (27th, according to Bruce) upon the arrival of the Ottoman army; see Bruce, *Memoirs*, 42.

[109] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 116. Davies refers to them as "Germans", although nyemtsi became a term for Germans only later in the eighteenth century and during Peter's reign was still mostly used to when refering to foreigners.

Brancoveanu in his supposed revolt.[110] The rest of the army, under Peter, was to continue along the Pruth, seeking traces of the enemy forces.[111]

On 5th July, Peter finally sent a reconnaissance detachment of 1,000 mounted grenadiers and two Moldavian guides to scout the route ahead and to try to retrieve data about the size and the location of the enemy forces. The detachment was intercepted by the screening Tatar force and a quarter of its staff was wiped out during an observation of one of the bridges on the Pruth, built earlier by Sheremetev. The rest of the troops retreated and on the next day Peter arranged a new vanguard under Janus von Eberstedt and de Brassey. They had to gather most of the available cavalry (some 5,000 strong), along with 32 guns and to go forth to destroy the bridges which the Ottomans could use to cross the Pruth. A day later, the vanguard came across the Ottoman bridgeheads, only 20 miles south of Peter's main position. Instead of attacking the enemy as ordered, Janus, claiming that he had met 50,000 Turks, began retreating in a defensive formation. Ottoman and Tatar vanguard forces came out of their bridgehead fortifications and attacked the retreating Russians. Eberstedt's forces were able to maneuver swiftly into a favorable defensive position. Using a combined fire of their dragoons and the artillery, the Russians were able to beat back the enemy forces and continue their march north. There, at dawn on 8th July, they merged with the main army, though they were again under attack by a formidable detachment of Ottoman cavalry.[112] As their retreat was covered by the divisions of Sheremetev and Hallart, the forces of J.von Eberstedt were able to capture some of their pursuers. One of them, a Tatar, gave away information concerning the Ottoman forces which had crossed the Pruth. According to the captive, Baltacı Paşa had only managed to transfer one-third of his cavalry, while the bulk of the Ottoman army was still struggling to cross the river.

Wasting no time, Sheremetev and Hallart advanced with their divisions in attack formations, pushing the enemy forces away from the Russian positions. At that point the Russians could have organized a massive offense against the Ottomans, beating their troops during the crossing of Pruth as Eugene had done at Zenta. Peter, however, was misled by Janus' report of 50,000 enemies who

[110] Rönne was able to reach the town of Braila, situated on the Danube, on 14th July and capture it. By that time, however, Peter had signed the armistice at Stănileşi on 12th. Although Russian historiography tries to argue that this success was crucial for the favorable terms, delivered by the Ottomans, the fact remains that Rönne's forces played no substantial role in the development of the campaign, though denying Peter of a substantial part of his cavalry.

[111] According to Davies at that point, the tsar commanded 38,246 troops and 122 cannons; see Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution,* 116. Kulinich estimates that Peter commanded 37,538 men, of which only 6,692 were cavalry. The artillery was 122, compared to the 407 of the Ottomans; see A. Kulinich "Deyatelnost", 112. Interestingly, both authors quote one and the same source – Ya.E. Vodarskiy, *Zagadki Prutskogo pokhoda Petra I* (Moscow, 2004). Davies quotes pages 72-75, while Kulinich uses the data from page 205. Vodarskiy himself gives a total of 38,000 Russians (of which 6,600 were horsemen) and 112 guns; see Ya.E. Vodarskiy, "Legendy Prutskogo pokhoda Petra I", *Otechestvena Istorya* 5 (2004), 5.

[112] Both Davies and Kulinich dismiss Janus's report as fake. Davies argues that by the time Eberstedt's corps finally reached the Ottoman bridges, there were no more than 10,000 enemy troops. By the morning of 8th July, the Ottomans were able to transfer more of their cavalry and some 15,000 sipahi and Tatars pursued Eberstedt's force; see Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 118; A. Kulinich "Deyatelnost", 112.

had already crossed the river and decided to take a defensive position. At the same time, Baltacı Mehmed Paşa was struggling to organize and speed up the transfer of his troops, which seemed to be demoralized and not ready for a battle as the Russians expected. It was not until the morning of 9th July that the Ottomans were finally able to gather their entire army for the upcoming battle.

Meanwhile, on the night of 8th July, Peter held a new military council, on which it was decided that the army should retreat northwards cautiously, following the Pruth. The current position of Peter's forces was ill-suited for defense, since it was at the lowest point of the terrain, surrounded by hills and forests, which could be used by the enemy. The Tatar captive mentioned that the vizier could position 160 guns, which were not brought during the previous day. With only 122 cannons at his disposal, Peter could not risk to be exposed to enemy bombardment from the surrounding countryside, as his own position would render Russian long-range artillery and they would not be as useful as needed.

The Russians began their retreat at night, carefully observed by the Ottoman-Tatar force. During the next half day, the Petrine forces suffered from the scorching summer heat and the constant raids of the enemy cavalry on its dragging baggage train, protected by the guards' regiments. At 5 p.m. the Russians reached an elbow on the Pruth near Stănileşi and had to halt their march, as they were fully surrounded by the Ottoman and Tatar forces, which had positioned on the nearby hills.[113] The Russians had to dig fast to entrench their position, with the baggage train rounded up at the back as a wagenburg, while the divisions of the army took defensive positions in front of it. Only half of the Russian front was buttressed by a low-level earthwork, while the northern sector, facing the Tatars, was protected by a line of sharpened wooden stakes (*rogatky*) prepared in advance by the Russian infantry before their march south of Iaşi. The only fortune for the tsar's forces was that the enemy artillery was still dragging on, and the Ottomans had only a few mortars, as new guns were arriving gradually. The lack of proper tactics, displayed by the grand vizier aided the Russians. Instead of waiting for his artillery to arrive and properly shell the enemy positions, Baltacı Mehmed Paşa went on the offensive, using his yeniçeri, shaped in a wedge formation, without any support from the Ottoman artillery. The second grave mistake of the Ottomans was that they attacked only a single section of the Russian defense – the positions of Hallart's division. If they had used the numerical superiority to penetrate the enemy line at several points simultaneously, the ragtag Russian defense would have collapsed.[114] Instead, Hallart's soldiers were able to deploy in defensive stance, fire a storm

[113] See Scheme in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[114] According to Sutton's report the yeniçeri were likely to attack on their own, without waiting orders from the vizier. This would explain the lack of adequate tactics, but still does not excuse Baltacı Mehmed Paşa for his inability to control his men and impose discipline and order in the army ranks; see B. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 120.

of salvos at the advancing enemy, while Peter rearranged the army, throwing more regiments at the point of contact and redeploying his artillery to maximize the firepower of his defenses. The ensuing carnage resulted in over 5,000 yeniçeri being killed or wounded while the Russians lost only 2,872 men, half of whom were wounded.[115] With the fall of the night, the other infantry units arrived and the Ottomans finally arranged their entire artillery. It was, however, too late for a new offensive, for the yeniçeri were weary and their esprit de corps had dwindled on the bayonets and salvos of the Russian infantry and guns. The Ottoman artillery, on the other hand, began to bombard the Russian position. Peter called for a new military council, which had to decide the fate of the Muscovite army.

Peter sued for the only possible solution – ceasefire. The Russians were badly mauled by starvation, lack of provisions and munitions, as well as hundreds of non-combat casualties, caused by the physical exhaustion of the troops. The Russians had no knowledge of the situation in the Ottoman camp, where the yeniçeri refused to charge the enemy positions, and where diseases and heat were taking between 300 and 400 men each day.[116] The first Russian proposal was drafted by Sheremetev and called for the reconfirmation of the Treaty of Constantinople (1701). The vizier and Devlet Girei were not inclined to even discuss such terms and renewed the bombardment of the Russian positions. Several hours later, the tsar sent a new emissary – Pyotr Shafirov, who, accompanied by Captain Ostermann and several interpreters, carried conditions which, if implemented, would significantly reduce the effect of Peter's victory at Poltava. Shafirov was to offer Livonia back to Sweden, even including Pskov, if necessary. Peter would recognize Stanisław Leszczyński (the Swedish pawn, installed on the throne in Warsaw by Karl XII in 1706) as the rightful king of Poland-Lithuania and return to the Ottomans all towns and fortresses, taken by the Russians after 1695, including Azov. These terms signal the significant degree of despair that had overtaken Peter's mind at that point.

To the Tsar's relieve, the grand vizier would demand peace, based solely on the Ottoman interest, with the cause of Karl XII sweped under the rug, along with his failed promises for stronger Swedish military presence in Poland. Baltacı Mehmed Paşa pursued his master's interests and included no demands regarding either Livonia or the destruction of St. Petersburg, of which the Swedish King dreamed. Instead, the grand vizier concentrated on regaining the lost lands on the northern Black Sea coast and on decreasing Russian political influence in Poland-Lithuania and the Zaporozhian Host. Although not all of these terms came into being, by 1713, after two more declarations of war on

[115] A. Kulinich, "Deyatelnost", 112; Porfiryev, *Petr I*, 223-4; According to Kulinich 1,485 Russians were killed while 1,388 were wounded. The Ottoman loses differ. Again according to Kulinich, who quotes Sutton's report on the battle, the Ottomans lost between 2,000 and 9,000 men, while Porfiryev maintains that the Turks suffered no less than 8,000. Davies does not quote specific numbers on the casualties, while Vodarskiy, as Kulinich, uses the numbers, given in Sutton's report; see Ya.E. Vodarskiy, "Legendy", 14.
[116] Ya.E. Vodarskiy, "Legendy", 14; Porfiryev, *Petr I*, 224-5.

behalf of the Ottomans, Russia finally returned Azov and destroyed the arsenal at Taganrog, and at the same time the Tsar evacuated his troops from Right-bank Ukraine. The Pruth Campaign, which ended in a tactical stalemate turned out to be a strategic Ottoman victory, rendering Peter's early policies toward the Black Sea utterly useless.

*The performance of the Russian army*

The Pruth Campaign was the first major setback in Russian military enterprise on the Black Sea frontier since Golytsin's fiasco in 1689 at Perekop. Unlike the lover of his older sister, Peter would not come out of the fight without any political consequences. Russia lost its hold on the Azov Sea and was forced to destroy its only military and naval base south of Voronezh at Taganrog. The Black Sea ships were not sunken, but sent north to Voronezh via the Don, from where they could, in practice, be sent again southwards to retake Azov, but still, they would have to go along way.

Although politically and chronologically the Pruth Campaign has been well studied by historians, especially in Russia, the evaluation of the actual performance of the Petrine army has usually been left behind, since it would trigger too much criticism, adding to the already existing negative notions, regarding the Tsar's probably biggest military failure.[117] Only recent studies by Vodarskiy, Davies and Kulinich have begun to pose questions about the actual degree of success and failure, demonstrated by the Muscovite forces. The evaluation of Peter's opponents is a topic of a different debate and the study of the eighteenth-century Ottoman army is a field for future analysis. Regarding the performance of the Russian army, measured by the progress of Peter's military reforms, two main trends of discussion could be pointed out – the battlefield performance of the troops and the organization of the army (logistics, command, and planning).

The battlefield performance of the Russians was their main strongpoint, since the higher percentage of engagements was won by the Petrine army. The first evidence of the Russian military prowess was the siege of Belaya Tserkovy at the end of March (25-26$^{th}$), when a regiment of only 500 troops and an indefinite number of Cossacks fought off an invading force of Tatars, Zaporozhian Cossacks, and Poles, under Devlet Girei's son. After two daring sorties, the Russians were able to fight off the superior enemy, losing only eight men to a few hundred of the enemies.[118] In the following collisions, almost

[117] It can be argued that the defeat at Narva was Peter's main misfortune in terms of warfare. However, that is not correct, as Peter did not personally lead the army at Narva, nor the defeat of the Russian army resulted in any major territorial losses, as happened after the Battle of Stănileşti and the following treaty.

[118] According to the *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel* the forces under Devlet Girei were over 33,000 strong, which is an obvious exaggeration. According to the same source, the forces of Devlet lost 1,000 men; see *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel*, 39. In his notes Just Juel (http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/rus11/Jul/frametext9.htm - accessed on 06.08.2015) quotes even more astonishing numbers – 65,000 in total: 40,000 Tatars, 20,000

always the Russians gained the upper hand. The vanguard, sent by Sheremetev in May, was able to beat back a far greater Tatar force, as was the case with the forces of Eberstedt which faced the Ottoman-Tatar vanguard on 8th July. The Russians were again successful on the afternoon of the 8th while Sheremetev and Hallart drove off the Ottomans, who were pursuing Ebestedt. Finally, Peter's army was able to repulse all enemy raids during the exhausting march on the 9th, after which the Russians were able to halt the offensive of at least 20,000 yeniçeri – the best units available under Baltacı Mehmed Paşa. The grudging acknowledgement, made by the Polish leader at Pruth – Poniatowski, as well as his Swedish allies in the face of Lieutenant-general Axel Sparre, only serves to sum up that Peter more or less had accomplished what he had struggled to achieve with his reforms: "the [Russian] army is a regular army and the Turks cannot surpass it in firepower and will lose heart and accomplish nothing".[119]

Despite the ailing mistakes, made on a strategic level, the Russian's tactical performance was beyond doubt superior to that of their enemies. Lessons learned in Livonia, Ingria and especially in the winter of 1708/9 against the Swedes have been understood, if not by most of the generals, at least by the regular troops of the rank and file. The chaos, evident in the fighting against similar enemies at Azov, was replaced by a strict and regulated execution of maneuvers and concentrated fire. The panic and lack of synergy between the separate units, which tormented the Petrine forces at Azov and later at Narva, was exchanged for a proper coordination and the ability to redeploy adequately even under direct attack.[120] The resilience, sometimes due to sheer physical stubbornness, was to become a trade mark of the Russian infantry, which was going to win awe from its enemies and allies during the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and later during the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815).

If the rank and file could take the credit for the more or less honorable field performance, the primary stress of the criticism should be aimed at the people organizing and marshalling the Petrine army. At first glance, the entire responsibility for the Russian military failure could be thrown on Eberstedt for his inability to destroy the Ottoman bridgehead at Pruth, or on Sheremetev, for

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Cossacks and 5,000 Poles. Juel's account was based on the vocal narrative of Grigoriy Ivanovich Angelkov – the brigadier who fought off the enemy raid. The fact, that Angelkov held the rank of brigadier means that the forces under his disposal were bigger than a regiment, which was commanded by a colonel. Thus, Angelkov could indeed have only 500 regular troops, but the Cossacks under his command must have been at least twice as many. It must be noted that Belaya Tserkovy was the last garrison west of Kiev, protecting the most important Russian city in Ukraine. It is hardly plausible, that Peter had left it protected by only a handful of men, especially given the fact that Karl XII was still close by in Bender. The fact that the Tatars were commanded by one of Devlet Girei's sons – the khan of the Budjak Horde means that the Tatars against Belaya Tserkovy could not have been as many as the troops under his father at Pruth. It can only be speculated on the exact number of troops that besieged the garrison, but they probably did not exceed 10,000 in total, given that there were at least 2,000 Russians and Cossacks against them. This still gave the attackers a 5:1 advantage.

[119] Quoted in B. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 120. This comment was made prior to the yeniçeri's attack on the Russian camp in the afternoon of 9th July. Poniatowski and Sparre advised the grand vizier to blockade the Russians and starve them.

[120] This was already evident at Narva, when Sheremetev's infantry executed an excellent maneuver to break the last desperate charge of the Swedish dragoons and heavy horses.

his numerous delays along the way south. Things, however, were a bit more complicated than that. As Kulinich notes in his article, the failure of the Pruth Campaign began on the first day of its planning.[121] The entire logistic scheme was based on the misleading conception of Peter that sufficient provisions could have been gathered from the population of Ukraine and Belarus. As it seems, Peter failed to acknowledge the fact that only a year before, these very lands had been devastated by the ravaging Swedish forces, during their desperate march toward Moscow and later on – toward Poltava. What the Swedes did not gather, the Russians took to feed the grand army, mustered by Peter to screen his opponent's maneuvers.[122] A year later, the local population was still struggling to reinvigorate the agriculture, while simultaneously was trying to pay the annual taxes for support of the Tsar's aggressive policy in Livonia and the siege of Riga. During the Pruth Campaign Peter required from the same people to provide for four months, for a third consecutive year, this time for an army of almost 80,000 men. Golitsin, who was charged with the task, expressed his concern on several occasions, noting that the volumes of provisions, envisioned by the tsar were impossible to achieve. By the spring of 1711, only 13,000 quarters of bread were gathered, along with 6,000 sheep, 2,400 horses, and 4,200 oxen.[123] To clarify the numbers, the 3,000 Kalmyks, fighting under Azov in 1697 would consume 300 sheep per week. The animals, gathered by Golitsin would have been enough for 3,000 men for 20 weeks – the exact time, required by Peter. The trouble came from the fact that Peter's army numbered 79,000. As for the bread, a quarter was the daily portion for a single soldier.

There was also a lack of warhorses – the constant scourge of the Russian logistics under Peter.[124] In May, Knyaz Dolgorukiy's dragoon regiments did not have enough horses, and some 2-300 men had to march on foot.[125] The similar problem must have troubled Sheremetev in June when he forbade his dragoons to ride their animals, which were probably exhausted by the summer heat and were insufficient in numbers. The hope that the Moldavians and the Wallachians would provide further supplies on the spot would prove to be a chimera. Moldavia had been devastated by droughts and swarms of locust, which destroyed even the small quantities of grain that the locals were able to collect. While Peter was negotiating the armistice with Baltacı Mehmed Paşa, the latter sent part of his supplies to the ailing Russians - 180 tons of bread, ninety tons of rice and over three tons of coffee.[126] During their return march north, the army was so exhausted that it marched only two hours a day.[127]

[121] Kulinich, "Deyatelnost", 110.
[122] The winter of 1708/9 sought the entanglement of no less than 150,000 men in a rather limited areal.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Similar trends regarding the Persian campaign would be observed in the following subchapter.
[125] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 115.
[126] Vodarskiy, "Legendy", 14.
[127] Ibid.

Given these circumstances, it is a small wonder that the Russians were able to march the tremendous distance of over 1,200 kilometers, and to be able to fight well enough as they did not lose any major engagement.[128] Though the army covered this space for four months it was still a feat.[129] This was a distance of which western armies did not need to concern, given the distances between the main supply centers and the frontlines. In comparison, the Ottomans had to march 400 kilometers from Edirne to the Danube, which was still a long way to go, compared to the movement of French forces during the contemporaneous War of the Spanish Succession. The Turks would also benefit from their long-standing logistics system, closely linked to the obligations of the local population.[130] A further problem for the movement of the Muscovite forces was the lack or even the absence of road infrastructure, as well as the limited amount of drinking water. Most of the march in Moldavia went through an area, which Dimitrie Cantemir described as a desert.[131] To sum up – the combination of bad logistical planning, the problems with the weather (great number of rainfalls and storms in the spring and blistering heat in the summer), as well as the lack of proper infrastructure, contributed to the slow progress of the Russian army, and led to a significant number of casualties, exceeding the combat loses in a ratio of at least 10:1.

Last but not least, the performance of the commanders should be judged. Regarding Davies, the main reason for the failure of the campaign was the native noblemen-generals, serving under Peter. The so-called "foreign" party (nyemtsi) was the one giving better advices. In contrast, the too stubborn and not so competent leaders of Peter's Muscovite clique repeatedly failed to obey their direct orders and demonstrated lack of good decision-making. Such perception of the campaign is as erroneous as the desire of Russian historians to blame the Romanian princes for misleading Peter and failing to support his cause. Indeed, Sheremetev was the one among Russian generals bearing the greatest responsibility, as he was the one to keep the vanguard regiments and he was the person who had to establish a proper chain of supply depots for the bulk of the army and also to prepare a series of bridges along the way. Though Sheremetev did demonstrate a certain lack of decisiveness and resolve, the Knyaz was limited in various ways by the logistical factors already clarified above.

The small number of pack animals and horses for the cavalry, as well as the permanent lack of provisions, were a constant scourge for the movement of Sheremetev's division. When we add the 15,000 – 20,000 Tatars, regularly screening his movements and threatening his flanks, the picture of the sluggish

[128] Kulinich, "Deyatelnost", 111.
[129] Thus, the average daily speed was 10 kilometers per day, making the rate far less impressive than the distance itself.
[130] The influence of the local population for the effectiveness of Ottoman logistics is an interesting topic,which require further study. So far, local historiography has done a lot in the study of the so-called privileged casts in the local society but seldom do these studies connect to the overall Ottoman military effort.
[131] Kulinich, "Deyatelnost", 111.

advance transforms into a process of bitter struggle to carry on marching against all odds. It is true that at certain points of the campaign the Knyaz did not act with the required skill, but this only complemented the already existing problems, and was not a primary factor which hindered the Russian progress. The same can be said about Janus von Eberstedt's actions. Though being one of the so-called "foreigners", Eberstedt was not immuned to the mistakes of his Russian colleagues. During the episode of 8th July 1711, Eberstedt's ill-thought decision to retreat rather than to attack was the direct reason for the encirclement of the Russian army at Stănileşti. As for the advice of Hallart that Peter should take Bender instead of marching south, Davies expresses the notion that such a move might have won Peter the war.[132] According to Davies, such an offence could have brought Karl XII into Russian hands or, at least, Peter could barter Bender for Azov in consecutive diplomatic negotiations. This idea, however, is far from flawless. First and foremost, Bender was far less significant than Azov and Ahmed III, a sagacious politician, would have never opted for such a deal to be made. Furthermore, the rhetoric of Sheremetev, regarding Karl XII's possible escape as soon as the first Russian units appeared in sight was very correct. Though the king of Sweden was by no means a coward, he was determined to win over the foolhardy Ottoman support but if he had fallen in Russian hands he would not have achieved his goals easily. The march against Bender would have denied the Russians any opportunity to attract local allies and would have left the Moldavians and Wallachians to the mercy of the grand vizier. The situation should be rethought through the eyes of the contemporaries. While Bender promised a hard-fought siege with doubtful consequences and no possible allies, the march to the Danube held the possibility of tens of thousands local reinforcements, as well as the probability of better provisioning for the starving army.

No analysis of the strategic flaws of the Pruth Campaign would be full without turning attention to Peter himself. The tsar's major mistake came from his adverse judgment of the resilience of his fellow Orthodox Christian rulers on the Danube. While in no way Panslavist, as Davies incorrectly notes, Peter was seeing himself as a unifying figure of the Eastern Christians, who bore the legacy of Rome and Constantinople, and who was the only great, independent Orthodox monarch in the world. The religious rhetoric, however, is not as convincing, as the practical necessities for more men and supplies and for gaining a better strongpoint against the Ottomans.[133] Peter did take into consideration the possible scenario of marching against Bender and ultimately, he made the right decision to go further south. Capturing Moldavia and Wallachia and setting his army on the borders of the Ottoman heartlands would

[132] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 123.

[133] The lack of religious loyalty was demonstrated by Peter during his Persian campaign, as it will be observed later.

have been of far greater strategic value, than marching a thousand kilometers only to besiege a fortress in the middle of the Jedisan Steppe.

Peter's other main flaw came from his lack of perception regarding the resources his state could muster, as well as from his wishful thinking towards the movement of his army from Livonia to Wallachia in just three months. As it was mentioned above, in 1695 and 1696, his army needed no less than two months to deploy to an area, which was just at the borders of Russia Then the army was less massive and had a greater number of cavalry. During all Azov Campaigns, river transportation proved crucial for the speed of the Russian progress. In Moldavia, however, Peter could not count on even a single vessel, and all munitions, food, and baggage had to be transferred to foot. In addition, the army had to march through one of the most unfavorable regions in Europe – the Pripyat marshes. Even during World War II, while planning operation Barbarossa, the German General staff avoided to send troops through Pripyat and to use the marshy countryside as a border, separating the Army Groups Center and South. Peter would demand a daring and over the top feat of his men, both from the ordinary soldiers and the generals, organizing the whole enterprise. As noted above, the fact that the Russians we able to reach the Pruth in the first place was already a small wonder, owing to both the resilience of the army and the Tsar's will to go forth with his plans. It was a march achieved not due to, but, rather, despite of the logistics.

Although the political results of the campaign were rather disastrous for Russia, the field experience, gained by the troops and the officers proved crucial for Peter's further campaigns during the Great Northern War. Without the Pruth example, Russia's later engagements in Holstein and Schleswig would not have been possible, and neither would the conquest of Finland. The lessons of combining navy and land forces for mutual support, as well as establishing a solid chain of magazine and supplies, although learned the hard way, proved invaluable for the development of Russian strategic thought in the long run.

## 3.6. The Kuban Campaign (1711)

*Historical background*

So far, Russian historiography has perceived the Kuban Campaign as a secondary endeavor, aimed at supporting Peter's expedition in Moldavia by diverting the forces of the Kuban and Crimean Tatars and their local allies. According to the old-school theory, the army of P.M. Apraksin (brother of the famous Admiral F.M. Apraksin), was set in motion only to act as a divertion, which was to draw a substantial number of enemy forces away from the western theater of operations. Recent research, however, has focused on the notion, that the Kuban Campaign was an independent offensive. It was aimed at countering Tatar incursions against Azov and cutting possible Kuban Host support for the

main forces of Crimea. Moreover to assert and extend Russian control over the steppe south of Azov and also to link Peter's domains with the Circassian allies of St. Petersburg. The size of the invading force, the timeline of the campaign, the overall results of the incursion, as well as the way Peter perceived the offensive, point to the fact that it was not a mere distraction, but rather an all-out commitment. Ever since the end of the Holy League War, the Crimean Khanate has continuously hosted raids against Russian possessions in Ukraine and along the Don. The acquisition of Azov was also related to constant confrontation with the Kuban Host. Thus, the upkeep of a substantial garrison was required in order to secure Russia's newly incorporated territories. Apart from the purely strategic factors, a campaign against the Kuban Host was also perceived necessary due to the substantial number of renegade Cossacks who sought asylum under the Nogai Host following the uprisings in 1704 and the Mazepa rebellion. These so-called *Nekrasovtsy* were further supplemented by the old-believer (*staroobryadny*) Cossacks, who denounced the tsar's authority. The incorporation of these renegades and their purging was an essential element of Russian policy along the Volga and the Don for the whole of eighteenth century, as demonstrated during Pugachev's Rebellion in 1773-5.

*Historiography*

Apraksin's campaign along the Kuban River has received insubstantial attention from scholars of the period outside of Russia. The bulk of available data can be extracted from a number of articles, published in several periodicals. The primary source on the subject is General Nikolay Brandenburg's publication from 1867.[134] This text is based on a primary source – the "Posluzhnogo spiska Kubanskogo pokhoda", drawn by Count Apraksin himself in 1711. This document includes a substantial number of notes, regarding the preparation of the campaign, as well as names of officers and troops, participating in it. According to Brandenburg's own evaluation, only one-fourth of the whole text is of any particular use - regarding the development and outcome of the campaign.[135] Additional information can be acquired from modern scholars, dealing with the Kuban expedition. Yu.V. Priymak has contributed with two recent papers, regarding the preparations, historical context and development of the Kuban Campaign, demonstrating critical approach toward the existing sources and the notions, established by Brandenburg.[136] He presents a revisionist, with regard to Soviet-era works, perspective on the logistics, organization and conduct of the Russian army.The campaign is briefly presented

[134] N. Brandenburg, "Kubanskiy pokhod 1711" in *Voennyy sbornik* 3 (1867), 29-42.
[135] Ibid., 29
[136] Yu.V. Priymak, "Kuban campaign of P. M. Apraksin's troops in 1711 (From the History of the Ottoman-Russian wars 1710-1713)", *Nauchnye problemy gumanitarnykh issledovaniya,* 1 (2012), 88-94; Yu.V. Priymak, "Diplomatic, Military and Political Activity of Russia in the Sea of Azov and the Northwest Caucasus in the context of Kuban Campaign in 1711", *Nauchnye problemy gumanitarnykh issledovaniya* 11 (2011), 43-8.

from Tatar perspective in an article by O.G. Sanin, who aims at presenting the overall participation of the Crimean Khanate in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1710-1711.[137]

*Preparations*

Following a series of winter and spring raids, carried out by the Crimean Tatars, Peter I decided to retaliate along the entire southern front. Apart from the force operating along the western front, the Tsar designated a second army to be gathered in central Ukraine and operate along the Dnieper in order to advance against the Perekop. This force was bestowed to Buturlin and Skoropadskiy, who were unable neither to muster the perceived forces, nor to attack Devlet Girei's army in such manner, as to divert his forces away from the Moldavian theater. The second army, which had to operate outside the scope of Peter's direct command, was the one designed to act toward the Kuban. Its creation was not a mere response to the Tatar incursions in the early months of 1711. The Kuban expedition was meticulously prepared by Peter himself as early as the first days of January 1711.[138] The task of commanding the offensive was given to Count P. M. Apraksin, governor of Kazan. His forces were supposed to operate along the Volga, collecting reinforcements on their way south and to link with the Kalmyks under Ayuka Khan at Tsaritsyn. Apraksin took his time for the preparation of his main forces in Kazan and set sail along the Volga River on 13th May 1711, ahead of some 2,987 troops.[139] In addition to these soldiers sailing along the Volga, a cavalry force was sent by land, trough Sinbirsk and Saratov. There were a total of 3,566 horsemen, of which 200 were sent toward the Kama River, probably to purchase additional horses for the campaign.[140] Apraksin arrived in Tsaritsyn on 30th May 1711 and waited there for the arrival of Colonel Richter, who came from Astrakhan ahead of 1,113 troops from the Astrakhan Regiment. The soldiers (some 20,474 strong) were quartered in Tsaritsyn to wait for the Kalmyk forces, which arrived on 27th June.[141] Brandenburg makes an interesting note that some of the Kalmyks were even wearing heavy armor, probably mimicking contemporary s. The number of regular foot and cavalry units was further supplemented by 1,000 Yaik Cossacks, and a number of deti boyarskie and *inozemtsy* ( foreigners) bringing the overall strength of Apraksin forces to 13,888 men. When it combined with

[137] O.G. Sanin, "Krimskoe Khanstvo v Russko-turetskoy voyne 1710-1711 goda", *Istoriko-publitsisticheskiy alymanakh "Moskva-Krym", vol. 2* (Moscow, 2000), 76-87.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Brandenburg, "Kubanskiy pokhod", 30; Brandenburg makes a mistake in calculating the available footmen. He lists 590 soldiers from the governors' own battalion, as well as 1,197 from the Kazan regiment and 1,200 from Afanasiy Mamonov's regiment. Brandenburg mistakenly calculates them as 2,897 men.
[140] Ibid. These included 600 men from Apraksin's own squadron, as well as 1,333 soldiers from the Kazanskiy dragoon regiment and 1,092 troops from the Sviyazhinskiy dragoon regiment.
[141] Priymak, "Kuban campaign", 89; Brandenburg, "Kubanskiy pokhod", 32.

the Kalmyk contingent under Ayuka's son Chakdorjap, the Kuban army increased to 34,362 strong.

Further diplomatic measures, undertaken by Knyaz Aleksandr Bekovich-Cherkasskiy provided the support of the Kabardian clans, which were drawn into the Russian sphere of influence.[142]

*The campaign*

Apraksin left Tsaritsyn on 3rd July 1711 ahead of his combined forces, advised by two generals and 5 adjutants. His army was to proceed to Azov and enter the Kuban Steppe from there, crossing the Don close to the key fortress. Brandenburg has meticulously listed the day to day route from Tsaritsyn to Azov, an advance, which took thirty four days of marching.[143] The march was carried out in twenty nine stages, covering 816 kilometers or roughly 28.1 kilometers per stage, which was quite an impressing speed, especially given the nature of the terrain.[144] The fact that the Tsaritsyn-Azov route had become a vital military highway probably did buttress the army's ability for rapid progression, given the established communication lines and the well-studied roads, water sources and pastures, which were in constant use since 1695.

The army arrived at Azov on 5th August and remained there for ten days in order to replenish its supplies and to give rest to the troops. The march was resumed on 14th August. Here it is essential to note that by the time Apraksin reached Azov the Pruth Campaign had already ended. He, however, had not received any news about the signing of the peace treaty between Russia and the Porte, in which an article was included regarding the Kuban Host and the suspension of any Cossack or Kalmyk incursions in its territories. According to Russian sources, Apraksin became aware of the treaty in mid-September and continued his operations until then, as if the war with the Ottomans and Tatars was still ongoing. Whether this is true or the Kuban Campaign was continued as a form of retaliation and revenge for what had happened in Moldavia is still a matter of open debate.

In any case, the Kuban valley represented a tempting target with its abundance of livestock and rather limited defenses. According to contemporary Ottoman sources, the fortifications, held by the Porte apart from Taman, were in desuetude, with insignificant number of troops guarding their half-demolished walls.[145] The overall strength of the Kuban Host's forces, along with the 10,000 renegade Cossacks and staroobrydny, was some 23,000, most of whom were poorly armed and ill-trained. Artillery was practically non-existent outside the walls of Ottoman fortifications and even there, the number of available guns was

[142] Priymak, "Diplomatic, Military and Political Activity", 47.
[143] Brandenburg, "Kubanskiy pokhod", 33.
[144] The army marched 25 days and rested nine, which brings the medium marching speed per day at 32 kilometers per day – a rather astonishing figure for the Age.
[145] Priymak, "Kuban campaign", 89.

insignificant. Apraksin would enjoy the advantage of both numbers and quality – a rarity in the context of Russo-Ottoman confrontation throughout history.

The initial stages of the campaign were rather devoid of events. For two weeks the Russians marched through barren, lifeless steppe, without encountering any resistance whatsoever. On 26th August, approximately 160 kilometers north of the Kuban River, Apraksin separated his forces in two columns. The vanguard contingent, commanded by Colonel Ivan Lyvov and consisting of 18,460 men, moved forward with the idea to prevent the concentration of enemy forces following a series of skirmishes with the Nogais on 24th. The only major enemy concentration was vanquished on 29th near the Kuban River, with 5,000 of the Tatars drowning in the river and almost 22,000 falling into captivity (women and children included). The Kalmyks and the dragoons were able to wipe out the entire force of the nureddin-sultan – some 12,000 men, killing all but 700 who were listed among the overall number of captured.[146] Along with the decisive victory came the opportunity for unopposed plunder. By the end of August, Apraksin was able to acquire 2,000 camels, 39,200 horses, 190,000 cattle and 227,000 sheep.[147]

After devastating the entire Kuban valley, Apraksin marched northeast along the river and then back to Azov through the Kuban Steppe. It was in the beginning of September that the Russians received news of a 4,000 Nogai force, returning home after a raid in the Ukraine during the early months of the summer. A strong detachment of Kalmyks was sent forward and the Nogais were badly mauled, losing all of their booty, along with several thousand Russian captives, who were freed by the Kalmyks. A few days later, the main force under Count Apraksin was attacked by 7,000 men, led by the nureddin-sultan himself. Of these, 3,000 were the *Nekrasovtsy* Cossacks. The battle between the two forces took place on 6th September and ended with a new decisive Russian victory, which significantly weakened the Kuban Hosts' capacity to raid in the following years. However, it was at this point that Count Apraksin received the news of the disaster at Pruth and decided to end his offensive in haste. The possibility of a new, larger Tatar force, coming from the west to relieve the Nogais was vexing and the Count would not risk to be cut off from his main supply base. He retreated in good order towards Azov and then traveled further north to Tsaritsyn, finally reaching Kazan on 29th December 1711.

*The performance of the Russian army*

Apraksin's campaign along the Kuban was probably the first successful military endeavor, carried out in such proportions by the Russian state against the Pontic nomads. The operation's decisiveness and positive results were in striking

[146] Brandenburg, "Kubanskiy pokhod", 38.
[147] Priymak, "Kuban campaign", 89.

contrast to the performance of the armies of Golytsin during the offensives against Crimea in 1685 and 1687. The devastating results of the latter were probably among the reasons why Peter did not want to risk a direct expedition in the steppes for two and a half decades. The fact that the Tsar was willing to send a force of such proportions forward meant that a substantial military self-esteem had been acquired after the successful campaign against Sweden in 1708-1709 and the suppressing of the Mazepa uprising.

Lessons from the three Azov Campaigns have apparently been well learned and Peter opted for a small-sized, regular force, with no substantial artillery or baggage train attached to it, supplemented by a considerable number of local specialist troops – the Kalmyks. The usage of small-scale, independent units was to prove very successful in the following military expeditions, both in Persia and against the Crimean Tatars. What the Kuban Campaign clearly demonstrates is that high-quality, limited-quantity military units were far better suited for achieving considerable success against mobile and evasive enemies in comparison to massive, slow-moving armies, drawn in the fashion of European standards of the Age.

As with the overall conduct along the Pruth expedition, Russian forces on the Kuban performed excellently, winning every engagement with the enemy. Discipline was high, battle orders were well executed and the insignificant number of casualties – 31, demonstrates that Apraksin and his men enjoyed a considerable advantage in terms of quality with regard to their opponents. A fact stands out - that the Count's forces were always superior to their enemies in terms of numbers with the combination of mobile, offensive tactics and the correct disposition of forces. This is a clear indication of not only better military capabilities with regard to the previous expeditions, but also of a buildup in the tactical and strategic thinking of Russian generals. While Shein was reluctant to risk an open battle with the Kuban Host in 1697, Apraksin managed to strike his opponents one at a time, defeating the entire Kuban Host in three separate instances and denying them any chance of concentration.

Logistics prove to work quite fine during the Kuban Campaign. Although the army passed through tracts of uninhabited, waterless regions, there are no indications that sickness, hunger or lack of drinkable water posed any problem for Apraksin's advance. There are no certain figures regarding the size of the baggage train or the way provisions were prepared and distributed during the march to the Kuban River and back. The fact that the army managed to keep its strength and to proceed in a rather unprecedented marching speed throughout the entire campaign, on the other hand, indicates that the Kuban expedition was probably the best organized in terms of army supply for the entire period analyzed in this dissertation.[148] The combination of high marching speed and

[148] Even after entering the barren steppe, Apraksin's men would continue their advance with a medium speed of approximately 25-28 kilometers per day.

excellent upkeep leave no place for doubt in the ability of Count Apraksin to organize and manage his forces.

Although military success in the east was overshadowed by the Pruth disaster, the Kuban Campaign should be regarded as one of the finest examples of Russian military capability during the first decades of the eighteenth century. The pattern of using a second army in the east to open another front against the Ottomans and their local allies would become a *condicio sine qua non* for future campaigns up until the First World War. During the Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739, General Peter von Lacy would follow Apraksin's steps in operating with a small-scale, mobile force and extracting considerable gains while keeping losses generally low. Another valuable (in Russian terms) example, set by Apraksin and followed by commanders in the generations to come, was the devastation of steppe countryside and the destruction or acquisition of the nomads' main source of income – their cattle. Although not as significant as territorial gains, the destruction of the nomadic economy would devastate the Hosts' potential for waging offensive wars against Russia and in general attributed considerably to the long term success of St. Petersburg in subduing the Pontic Steppe and its people.

## 3.7. Conclusion

The review of the early Southern Campaigns has outlined several essential trends of the development in the Russian army, which remained fundamental for its further evolution. First and foremost, the rank and file would constantly improve their discipline, military skills and would enjoy increasing superiority over local opponents. Secondly, the military and administrative apparatus would try to plan each consecutive campaign on the basis of previous experience, the disaster at Pruth serving as an important example. The launching of Russia's campaigns in Germany and Denmark after 1713 would have been impossible without the experience, gained during the campaigns in Moldavia. The basic idea of how offensives should be undertaken and which main objectives should be set in order to overcome Tatar and Ottoman resistance was also outlined during these early confrontations with the Porte and its minions. Whether Russia and its administration – civic and military, were able to capitalize on the experience accumulated between 1695 and 1711, is a subject of the following pages of this dissertation.

Following the defeat at Pruth, Peter transferred his attention exclusively in the Baltic region. His expeditions in Finland and the campaigns against Schleswig and Bremen were followed by the slow-motion of the Great Northern War's final years. In 1716 Peter began to probe for suitable means to exert Russian influence toward Inner Asia and sought a possible way of establishing a land route to India and to the lucrative trading networks of the Far East. The rapid development of the Persian crisis and the failure of the ill-fated expedition

of Knyaz Bekovich-Cherkasskiy convinced the Tsar that the route to India went through Dagestan. Before the ink had dried on the peace treaty with Sweden, Peter was already planning his next big move – the invasion of Persia.

# CHAPTER 4
# THE PERSIAN CAMPAIGN (1722-1724)

Peter's campaign in Persia is probably the least studied element of the tsar's military endeavors. The following subchapter would try to present a concise description of Russia's Caucasian adventure as well as a detailed evaluation of the factors, which influenced the performance of the Petrine army. Regarding the dissertation itself, the description of Peter's march south would serve as the primary contribution of the research.

The march to present-day Azerbaijan and Iran was the final stage of Peter's military activities and was the first one carried out after the military reforms of the tsar had been fully completed. The campaign along the shores of the Caspian Sea was the first European expedition to this region since the time of Alexander the Great. Before describing in details the Russian preparations and activities, some notes are necessary, regarding the decline of the Persian political and military power, which enabled not only Russia but also the Ottoman Empire and the Afghans to try to carve out substantial chunks of the ailing Safavid state. The political situation in the Caucasus is a direct consequence of the developments that took place in the Safavid state, which were discussed in a previous chapter.

## 4.1. Historical Context - The Power Vacuum in the Caucasus

Power and control are very fluid terms when it comes to the Caucasus. Ever since the Middle Ages, greater powers have tried to establish their suzerainty over the region. Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, Persians and later Russians all launched offensives in the mountainous region, hoping to gain control. However, none of them succeeded in establishing a centralized local administration that could rein in the tribal chieftains and local princes. In most of the cases, empires had to rely on bribes, patronage or puppet-rulers in order to exercise their policy in the Caucasus region. The broken terrain, combined with the high ethnic diversity of the population, made it impossible for one country to extend its control over the entire area. Religious and ethnic animosity was often the reason for the shift of imperial boundaries, and greater states were unable to maintain their position in these remote, mountainous lands. This led to a perpetual power-vacuum that escalated in times of instability of some of the empires, which claimed suzerainty over the region.

Following the disintegration of Safavid power during the second decade of the eighteenth century, the people of the Caucasus decided to take matters in their own hands. Local tribe leaders and governors overthrew the authority of the shah and proclaimed their independence. In addition, peasants and townsfolk

had grown weary of the ever-increasing taxes and the religious persecutions of the Shi'i clergy and rose in support of their local rulers, who promised religious tolerance and lower taxation.

As a consequence, several "rebellious" states emerged in the Caucasus region. The most powerful of them was the union of the Lezgins – Caucasian tribes, unified by their common ancestry and the Sunni faith. They ravaged the provinces of Shirvan and Gilan and defeated local supporters of the shah. The Lezgins hoped to receive Ottoman support and thus - to protect their autonomy. The correspondence between their leaders and the grand vizier Ibrahim Paşa is one of the main primary sources, regarding the period of the Persian Campaign.[1]

Several governors in Shirvan proclaimed themselves independent and sought the support of the Ottoman or the Russian Empire in order to secure their position. The most prominent of them was Shamkhal Adil Girei, who controlled most of the present-day Dagestan.[2] Adil Girei carefully chose his allies among the warring parties and gave his support to whoever had the strongest force in the region. He opted to ally himself with Peter I and to help him with the conquest of Derbent and the establishment of the Svyatoy Krest fort on the Kuma River. Another powerful local ruler was Sultan Mahmud of Utamysh.[3] He had a 12,000 strong army of Kabardians and Tatars and was allied with the Lezgins.[4] Unlike the Shamkhal, Mahmud was a supported the Ottomans and hoped that the Sublime Porte will acknowledge his authority in the Caucasus.

Apart from the Muslim local leaders, several Orthodox factions existed. The most influential was that of the king of Kartli – Vakhtang VI (r. 1716-1724). He rose to power after his father Giorgi XI became the supreme commander (*beglerbeg*) of the Persian army in 1700. When the Lezgins ravaged Shirvan and Gilan in 1717, Vakhtang gathered a 60,000 strong Georgian army to subject them.[5] However, the advisors of Shah Husain, jealous and frightened of Vakhtang's power, convinced the Shah to order the disbandment of the Georgian army. The Georgian prince had to obey and to return his army to

[1], C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, "An Unpublished Document on the Campaign of Peter the Great in the Caucasus", *Journal of the Royal Asian Society, vol. LIV* (London, 1967), 174 – 8.

[2] Aadil Girei was the shamkhal of Tarki and served as the governor of Dagestan for the Safavid Empire. His family name "Girei" suggests a relation to the ruling dynasty of the Crimean Khanate. Such a relation could prove to be very important for the shamkhal, since he could use it to secure his protection by the Crimean Khanate and thus - by the Ottoman Empire. Whether such a family relation is possible is a question that would be hard to answer. It is known, however, that the Crimean royal house – the Gireis married to Caucasian royal families in order to extend their influence in the area and block Russia's advance south during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus, a possibility remains, that the shamkhal of Tarki was indeed a relative of the Crimean Khan. A further proof of a relationship is the fact, that although the shamkhal allied himself with Russia, there was no punitive expedition against his territories neither by the Lezgins, nor by the Ottomans.

[3] Peter Henry Bruce refers to him as "sultan Udenich"; see P.H. Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq. - a military officer in the services of Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain, containing an account of his travels in Germany, Russia, Tartary, Turkey, and the West Indies, &c, as also several very interesting private anecdotes of the Czar, Peter 1 of Russia* (Dublin, 1783), 327-8.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Foran, "The Long Fall of the Safavid Dynasty: Moving beyond the Standard Views", *IJMES* 24, 2 (1992), 294.

Kartli, but proclaimed that he would offer no further support to the Persians.[6] During the Afghan invasion of Persia (1721), Vakhtang sent several embassies to Peter I in which he promised his allegiance in order to obtain the Tsar's help. The second powerful Orthodox faction was that of the Armenians, headed by their Catholicos Asdvadzadur.[7] Armenians held a very influential position in Safavid Persia, since most of the leading merchant families were Armenian.[8] During the Afghan invasion, the Armenians took control of Yerevan – a key point in controlling the route from Georgia to Persia and from Anatolia to the Caspian Sea. Supported by Russia's diplomacy, Vakhtang and Asdvadzadur reached an agreement and gathered a 40,000 strong army to help Russia's invasion. The Georgian-Armenian alliance threatened the interests of the Ottoman Empire and the Sublime Porte decided to support the Lezgins and the Sultan of Ultamysh against the Caucasian Christians.

By the time Russia decided to launch its offensive, the Caucasus region was significantly destabilized and fractured into several small states and independent tribal territories. During the winter of 1721/2, both Ottomans and Russians sought to gain the support of the local power-holders in order to strengthen their strategic position. On the other hand, local factions intended to use the strength of the neighboring empires to achieve their goals. The inability of Russia, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire to assert direct control over the Caucasus predetermined the outcome for the local power-holders. Once again, though on the war of the mighty, they would manage to keep their autonomy.

## 4.2. Historiography

Regarding the historiography of the Persian Campaign, there are only three works that analyze in detail Peter's southern project. The earliest is written by the Soviet historian V. Lystsov, who studied the campaign as a political and economic continuity of the Petrine policy, following the Northern War. [9] The second book is Lockhart's narrative on the fall of the Safavid dynasty.[10] Lockhart places Peter's campaign in the context of the expansionist policy, carried out by the Afghans under Shah Mahmud Hotaki and the Ottomans under the grand vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa, as well as during the resistance of the

[6] He was afraid that if he continued on his behalf, the shah might depose him of his titles. This would have given the other Georgian nobles the right to depose Vakhtang, just as they deposed his father. Determined to keep his throne, Vakhtang accepted the terms of Shah Husain. For an exhaustive description of the Georgians and their relation to the fall of Safavid Persia; see D.M. Lang, "Georgia and the Fall of the Ṣafavi Dynasty", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14, 3 (1952), 523-39.

[7] Catholicos is a title, equivalent to "patriarch". The catholicos was the leader of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

[8] For the Armenian trade families and their enterprises in Asia; see V. Baladouni and M. Makepeace (eds.), *Armenian Merchants of the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: English East India Company Sources* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1999).

[9] V. Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I: 1722 – 1723* (Moscow, 1951).

[10] L. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

Persians under Nadir Shah. According to Lockhart's evaluation, Russia wanted to counter the Ottoman incursion in the southern Caspian coast, and to expand its trade towards Central Asia and India. The newest work on the Persian Campaign is written by the Russian historian Igor Kurukin.[11] Kurukin's primary purpose is not so much to describe the military endeavour itself, but rather to study the Russian occupation of the South Caspian provinces. Nevertheless, he dedicates a substantial part of his work to clarify the main problems and developments in the context of Peter's southern policy.

Apart from these main works, several other articles devote some attention to Russia's Caspian expansion. In his article on the Ottoman Empire, Russia, and the Caspian Sea, Benningsen takes a pro-Ottoman position, strongly criticizing Russia's inability to maintain its expansion in the Caspian area.[12] He also tries to prove that the Ottoman Empire was not as weak as preserved by Western historians and that during the first quarter of the eighteenth century it was the leading power in the Near East. Some additional information could be found in Lemercier-Quelquejay's preface to the letter from the grand vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa to Daud Beg of the Lezgins.[13] Quelquejay gives a brief overview of the events, which took place in the context of the above-mentioned letter. However, he outlines that without giving any evaluation of the relations between Russia, the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia.

### 4.3. Preparations for the Campaign

The Persian Campaign of Peter the Great was anything but spontaneous. After 1715 when the outcome of the Northern War seemed predetermined, Peter began to follow more closely the events that took place in the Caspian Sea area.[14] At first, his attention was drawn to the possibility of establishing Russian control in Central Asia by subjecting the khanates of Khiva and Bukhara. Further information on gold deposits in the lands along the Amu Darya River strengthened the determination of the Tsar. However, as the course of events between 1714 and 1716 proved, Central Asia was still far from Russia's reach. Expeditions sent to establish forts on the eastern coast of the Caspian failed. They were met by a firm resistance from the local tribes, as well as by the inability of the state to supply these bases with provisions and ammunitions. Furthermore, the Tsar underestimated the local forces. Russia's expeditions numbered no more than 3,000. Against them local rulers and tribal chiefs could

[11] I.V. Kurukin, *Persidkiy pokhod Petra Velikogo. Nizovoy korpus na beregakh Kaspiya, 1722-1735* (Moscow: Kvadriga, 2010).
[12] A. Benningsen, "Peter the Great, the Ottoman Empire and the Caucasus", *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 8, 2 (1974), 311-8.
[13] Lemercier-Quelquejay, "An Unpublished Document", 174-8.
[14] P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 107.

assemble hosts of between 10,000 and 50,000.[15] With such numerical superiority, guns and firepower had little impact and Russian forts were swept away by the Asian hords. After the disastrous mission of Knyaz Aleksandr Bekovich-Cherkasskiy in 1716, Peter decided to transfer his attention to the disintegrating Safavid state.[16] The first embassies to the Safavids were sent as early as 1714, hoping to obtain better possibilities for the Russian traders. However, their efforts were countered not only by the Persian authorities but also by the Armenian merchant community. A new embassy under Artemiy Volynskiy was sent in 1717. His official mission was to negotiate the right of Russian merchants to trade in all Persian markets. However, he was also instructed to gather information about the main trading routes, the income of the provinces, and the military potential of Persia. Volynskiy spent two years (1717-1719) in Persia and upon his return to Russia he reported to Peter that the Safavid Empire was ready to be conquered and that it would take only a small unit of regular soldiers to subject a major part of it with ease. As time would prove, he was correct, as the main enemy of Russia would not be men but nature itself.[17]

However, until the end of the Northern War, any plan for a campaign in Persia remained only on paper. When in 1721 the Treaty of Nystad was finally signed, Peter found his hands free to redirect his effort southward. Nevertheless, Peter's desire for war must not be overestimated. As late as June 1722 (one month before the expedition began), the emperor was still hesitating because the hasty preparations had to be carried out in a matter of months, instead of spanning over a year.[18] The main reasons for his concerns were the Afghan invasion of Persia (1721), and the fear that the Ottomans could intervene and take control of the Caspian coast.[19]

The army was hastily assembled and included veteran infantry regiments from the war with Sweden, seven dragoon regiments as well as a body of irregular horsemen, comprised of Cossacks and Kalmyks. While the exact number of troops is still debatable, the realities of logistics as well as the short period for preparation did not allow for a great number of men to be mustered. Probably the Russian army did not exceed 50,000 men, including officers, artillerymen, and servants.[20] However, concerning Persia's diminished power, as

[15] Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 27; S.M. Solovyev, *Istoriya Rossii s drevneyshikh vremen* 17-18, IX (Moscow, 1963), 349; Bruce, *Memoirs*, 149.

[16] The whole expedition was decimated by the local nomadic tribes, united under the khan of Bukhara. Only few Russians managed to survive the slaughter. The only account of the massacre, which reached Peter, was told by a Russian officer, who was enslaved and bought by some Kalmyks, who later exchanged him for ransom in Astrakhan, see Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 27-8 ; Solovyev, *Istorya Rossii*, 352.

[17] As Kurukin notes, the major Russian successes in this campaign were achieved by small, mobile forces; see Kurukin, *Persidskii pokhod*, 97.

[18] Peter was proclaimed "*emperor*" on 22nd October 1721, following the end of the Northern War.

[19] The Ghilzai leader Mahmud Hotaki had launched his forces against Persia in 1721. After defeating the Persian forces twice in 1721 and 1722, his army besieged the capital Isfahan.

[20] The exact army strength of the Russian force is still a matter of debate. Older works (Beskrovnyy, Lockhart, Solovyev) estimate figures of around 100,000 soldiers. Solovyev estimates, that Peter brought 86,000 men, of

well as the limited objectives of the campaign, Peter's forces were quite sufficient.[21] Furthermore, local leaders were suspicious of each other, and it was unlikely for an anti-Russian coalition of Dagestan tribes could be formed.[22]

## 4.4. The Persian Campaign

Boarded on the only significant fleet in the entire Caspian Sea, the Russian army left Astrakhan on 18th July 1722 and set sail to the fortress of Terki – Russia's sothernmost possession. However, problems did arise as soon as the fleet entered the Caspian Sea.[23] The fleet lacked compasses, and only a few experienced navigators were available.[24] Thus, confusion occurred, and the entire fleet reached Tarki as late as 27th August 1722. After the provisions were replenished and further instructions were sent by Peter, the fleet continued its way south. [25]

On 27th July 1722 the army reached Agrakhan bay and on the next day, the emperor ordered a landing to be carried out. Again, the misleading information which had stated that Agrakhan was the most suitable landing spot led to confusion. Due to the shallow waters of the bay, the ships were unable to reach the coast and the soldiers had to carry their supplies, armament and other baggage on their backs, walking in waist-deep water.[26] The landing operation took the entire day, and the Russians were fortunate that there was no enemy force to face them. As soon as the army was on dry land, Peter ordered a fortified camp to be erected for the protection of the landing area and of the fleet, which was anchored in the Agrakhan bay. The fortifications were built

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which 22,000 were infantry, 9,000 were dragoons, 20,000 - Cossacks, 30,000 – Kalmyks and 5,000 – sailors. Lockhart repeats the same figures, but instead of 30,000 Kalmyks, he estimates that there were 20,000 Kalmyks and 35,000 Tatars, bringing the total of Russian force at 111,000. Peter Bruce in his Memoirs notes that there were 33,000 infantry, 7,000 dragoons, 20,000 Cossacks and 40,000 Kalmyks, estimating a total of 100,000 men. However, Lystsov, who is supported by Kurukin calculates that the Russian army did not exceed 50,000. Lystsov states the following numbers: 21,495 infantry, 8,757 dragoons, 16,300 Cossacks and 4,000 Kalmyks or a total of 50,552. Acccording to Kurukin, there were 18,602 infantrymen, 8,786 dragoons, 16,300 Cossacks and 4,000 Kalmyks or 48,057 in overall. The later figures seem far more plausible as Kurukin and Lystsov had better evaluated the sources. Furthermore the logistics support of a hundred thousand men seems impossible, taking into consideration the local specifics of Dagestan. For a comparison of the given army figures, see Table in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[21] To this day there is no evidence that Peter made any plans to go beyond Baku, when he sailed from Astrakhan on 29th July 1722; see Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 58.

[22] As early as 1720, the most prominent Dagestan ruler – Adil Girei the shamkhal of Tarki swore his allegiance to Peter. The rulers of Aksay, Ultamysh and the Qaitaq still hesitated, but did not express hostilities toward the Russians.

[23] The dates of the campaign are given in Old Style in order to avoid errors in transferring them to the New Style dates. The text uses the dates, listed in the *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722 and 1723* (St. Petersberg, 1855).

[24] P. Bruce, *Memoirs*, 310; Except for the crew of the Soymonov-Verden expedition (1721), there were no other sailors, familiar with the Caspian Sea. Thus, the fleet scattered and it took two days before all ships managed to reach Tarki on 5th August.

[25] The most important note was sent to the shamkhal, with an order to prepare carts for the army as well as to dig wells along the expected army route through his territory, see *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 51.

[26] Bruce, *Memoirs*, 316.

considerably fast and by 4th August, the army was ready for departure.[27] A garrison was left to protect the camp, and the main bulk of the army marched toward the Sulak River.[28] There, on 6th, August Peter met with shamkhal Adil Girei and the Sultan of Aksay. Both confirmed their allegiance to Peter and supplied the army with additional carts, oxen, and food.[29] After the meeting, the shamkhal returned to Tarki, and the sultan of Aksay rode back to his lands. On 7th August the Russian army began crossing the Sulak River, but a great storm, which lasted four days, raised the water level. The army had to rebuild their camp far from the river. Furthermore, the two bridges which were built for the crossing had to be supplemented by other two. To construct the additional bridges, a band of Cossacks was sent upstream the Sulak in search for boats. It was not until 11th August that the army crossed the river and continued its march to Tarki.

After crossing the Sulak River, the Russians entered in the lands, governed by the shamkhal. Here they did not meet any armed resistance and the only troubles on their way were the hot weather and the insufficient water supplies. The march to Tarki took only two days and in the early afternoon of 12th August, the army entered the city and formed a camp near one of its suburbs.[30] Peter stayed in Tarki for three days, giving his army some rest, during which he enjoyed the hospitality of Adil Girei. On 16th August the army broke camp and continued its way toward Derbent, which already acknowledged Peter as its overlord and was ready to open its gates to the advancing Russian force.[31]

Two days after leaving Tarki, the Russians entered the lands of Mahmud of Utamysh. Peter sent three Cossacks and an envoy to negotiate his army's passing and to ask for supplies and help with the transportation. However, Mahmud was not as hospitable as Adil Girei. The envoy was sent back with his nose and ears cut and the three Cossacks were killed and dismembered. Hours after Peter received this news, Mahmud appeared ahead of a 10,000 strong army and confronted the Russian vanguard.[32] Peter's troops were already prepared and began a skirmish with the enemy. Thus, began the only major engagement during the campaign. While the Russian infantry drew the enemy's attention, the Cossacks and the dragoons launched a flanking attack and appeared behind the enemy position. Surprised by the cavalry attack, the army of Utamysh retreated,

[27] For a map of the campaign routes for 1722-23; see Map 2 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[28] The garrison consisted of 200-300 regular troops and 1,500-1,600 Cossacks; see Table 6 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[29] See Table 8 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[30] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 59.
[31] Already in Tarki, Peter received a letter from his emissary to Derbent – Naumov, that the local deputy-governor had accepted Peter's offer and was ready to hand the city to the Russians; see Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī*, 183.
[32] The exact number of the Utamysh forces varies between 6,000 and 12,000 men. In the journal, Peter states that the enemy forces engaged in the battle were firstly preserved to be 5-6,000, but when the Cossacks and the dragoons returned after chasing the enemy off the field, the total strength of the Utamysh forces was estimated at 10,000. Peter Henry Bruce claims that the sultan of Utamysh had a 12,000 strong army; see *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 11; see Bruce, *Memoirs*, 326.

closely pursued by the Russian cavalry and by part of the infantry. Finally, late in the same day, the Cossacks and the dragoons reached the capital of Utamysh, took it and destroyed 600 houses, taking between 30 and 40 prisoners.[33] The army of Mahmud lost between 600 and 700 men while there are no mentioned casualties among the Russians.[34] Peter's evaluation of the local soldiers was that if they had the discipline of a regular force, no army would have been able to subdue them.[35]

Having scattered the forces of Utamysh and destroyed Mahmud's capital, Peter marched his troops south, toward Derbent. A day before he reached the city, a messenger came from Baku, stating that this town also accepted Peter's manifest and was ready to surrender itself to Russia.[36] The emperor entered Derbent in the afternoon of 23rd August 1722. He received the silver keys from the deputy-governor and stationed his army in the city's fortress, as well as in a camp, south of the main settlement. While in Derbent, Peter ordered the strengthening of the fortifications and made arrangements for a garrison to be established. Two days later, an event that greatly influenced the future of the campaign occurred. A great storm arose on the evening of 24th August and continued in the early hours of 25th. As a result, twelve of the supply-ships, coming from Astrakhan, were sunk. Though there were no casualties, part of the supplies was lost, and the flour for the soldiers' bread was damaged and had to be baked into sukhari.[37] The news of Peter's army marching back had a substantial impact on local leader's policy. Sensing the Russian weakness, Mahmud of Utamysh allied himself with the Usmi of the Qaitaq and with Daud Beg, the chief of the Lezgins. Together they mustered a 20,000 strong force that began to follow Peter's retreating army. Russia's allies also changed sides. The sultan of Aksay refused to sell supplies to the Russians while the shamkhal slew Russian envoys in his capital. Later he submitted to Peter's will only after the Russians reached Tarki. Peter's retreat also left his main Christian ally in the area – Vakhtang of Georgia, without any support. Faced with internal struggle and the advance of a powerful Ottoman army, Vakhtang had to leave Tiflis (Tbilisi) and to seek shelter in Russia. Russia lost its only ally in the Caucasus and had to rely only on its forces and the variable loyalty of its Muslim allies.[38]

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[33] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 119.

[34] P.H. Bruce states that a dragoon platoon was killed by a Utamysh ambush, but this information is not confirmed by official Russian documents; see Bruce, *Memoirs*, 330.

[35] Bruce, *Memoirs*, 333; Peter further remarked that local fighters were very weak when fighting as a coherent force and were fast to scatter. When, however, they fought in a single combat, they struggled desperately and if captured committed suicide by cutting themselves with daggers and swords; see *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 11.

[36] The manifest was written in three languages – Tatar, Turkish and Persian by the former prince of Moldavia Dimitrie Cantemir, while the Russian army was in Tarki. Cantemir accompanied Peter in his march south.

[37] The sukhari are a type of dried bred, separated in rations. They were baked by the soldiers themselves in field ovens, dug in the ground. Russian troops used sukhari long before Peter came to power. During the Northern War they were an essential part of the soldier's diet.

[38] The story of Vakhtang's downfall is told by Abraham of Yerevan in his "*History of the Wars 1721-1738"*. Vakhtang was proclaimed traitor by Tahmasp II of Persia for allying with Russia and was attacked by his cousin Constantine II of Kakheti (r. 1722-1732). Betrayed by his nobles, Vakhtang left Tiflis and went to Peter in the

As soon as Peter returned to Astrakhan on 5th October 1722, he immediately began issuing orders for the following year. A considerable amount of boats had to be constructed along the Volga ports from Tver to Nizhny Novgorod.[39] In addition, the army had to be resupplied with horses, due to the great number of animals, which perished during the summer offensive.[40] Fresh recruitment had to be carried out, and Peter planned to concentrate additional 20,000 men in St. Cross fort in order to launch an early campaign in 1723.[41] However, the diplomatic development, which will be analyzed later in the dissertation, made some changes to Peter's initial plans. The concentration of Ottoman forces in Erzurum and the Ottoman ultimatum that the entire Shirvan had to be incorporated into the Sultan's Empire called for quick action. More importantly, in October 1722 Isfahan was conquered by the Afghans and rumors whispered that Mahmud Hotaki was on his way to Tabriz and the Caspian shore. On 4th November 1722 a new expedition, the preparations for which were swiftly carried out in October, was sent to Resht under Colonel Mikhail Shipov.[42] His task was to capture Gilan's principal port and counter any Afghan incursion in the area for as long as possible. This time, Peter decided to rely on a small task-force. Shipov was placed in command of two battalions, boarded on 14 vessels.[43] His forces had to establish a landing base near Resht, in a place, where supplies could be easily sent from Astrakhan or St. Cross fort. The next step was to take control of the city of Resht and its fortress.[44] The fleet reached the Gulf of Anzali on 5th December 1722. Shipov's forces established a fortified position – Fort Peribazar at the mouth of the gulf and began to negotiate with the governor of Resht – Mehmed Ali Beg. While Shipov did not achieve much, the effort was saved by Russia's ambassador in Persia – Semen Avramov.[45] He managed to talk Mehmed Ali Beg into allowing the Russian force to enter Resht in order to protect it from the Afghans and keep it in the name of Tahmasp II.

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late autumn of 1722. Constantine conquered Tiflis on behalf of Tahmasp II, but several months later he was deposed by the advancing Ottoman forces, which conquered Tiflis in 1723. Vakhtang was to follow the fate of Dimitrie Cantemir of Moldavia; see Abraham of Yerevan, *History of the Wars, 1721 – 1738,* trans. by G.A. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1999), 14-7.

[39] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 90: 30 transport-ships (*Heckboo*t), 6 large boats, 30 smaller boats, 30 smaller vessels (boats). The first thirty vessels were named *botov* which can be translated as "boats"; the other 30 were named *shlyupki* which means a smaller type of boat.

[40] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 193.

[41] Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 92.

[42] On the 24th October 1722 Peter received message from Resht that the local governor and the people had agreed to accept Russian protection. However, as soon as news of Peter's retreat reached the city of Resht, the situation changed, as Shipov was to find out; see *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 19.

[43] Between 24th October and 4th November 1722 Peter stayed in the home of Admiral Apraksin and held constant military councils. During these meetings the plans for the following months were laid down, as it is evident from Peter's actions on the 4th November when he sent several dispatches, regulating the preparations for the winter and spring activities; see *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 91-3, 180-94.

[44] Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 85-6.

[45] Negotiations were not going well and Mehmed Ali Beg even began mustering a force in order to expel the Russians from Anzali; see Ibid., 86.

The conquest of Resht was celebrated with great joy by Peter, who organized a feast in St. Petersburg.[46]

The situation in Dagestan and Gilan remained calm throughout the winter.[47] In March Tahmasp II's envoy to Petersburg – Ismail Beg, came to Resht. He was sent to negotiate a treaty with Peter, according to which the Shah would recognize Russia's conquests in exchange for Russian support against the Afghans. However, by the time Ismail Beg reached Resht, Tahmasp had made up his mind and sent a special messenger with new instructions. Fortunately for the Russians, Avramov was vigilant and able to slow down the messenger until Ismail Beg was already on his way to Peter. Nevertheless, the local population in Resht did not want Russian presence in the city and by April 1723 Governor Mehmed Ali Beg armed the citizens and decided to attack the Russians. Colonel Shipov monitored carefully Mehmed Ali's actions and managed to fortify his garrison in the old Russian caravansary. On 4th April 1723, the citizens of Resht laid siege on the caravansary. During the night, Shipov, personally leading three of his units, made a sally and dispersed the crowd. However, the news of the accident was alarming, and Peter dispatched reinforcement under brigadier Vasiliy Levashov, who was to take command of the Resht garrison.[48] Levashov reached Resht on 9th June 1723 and quickly asserted full control over the city.

The next step of the plan, designed in October 1722 by Peter and Admiral Apraxin, was the capture of Baku. Satisfied with the success of Shipov's strike-force, Peter decided to send another considerably small unit to accomplish the task. Brigadier Matyushkin was placed in charge of four regiments.[49] Matyushkin's expedition was, however, significantly delayed, because he had to wait in St. Cross fort for additional vessels from Astrakhan to arrive. The operation, which was scheduled for the spring, finally took place in July. Matyushkin tried to negotiate the surrender of Baku, but its governor refused. Urged by the emperor's orders, as well as by the need to land the troops, Matyushkin began bombarding the city. After four days of cannonade and a successful landing manoeuvre of the Russian forces, Baku capitulated and Matyushkin positioned a strong garrison in the city. Although frustrated by the offense's delay, Peter was very pleased with the news of Baku's fall. He elevated Matyushkin from brigadier to lieutenant-general and placed him in charge of the entire Caspian theater.

While the army was marching, the Russian diplomacy was fighting its own war. The young ambassador in Istanbul – Neplyuev did his best to calm the Ottoman government. He claimed that Peter's actions were not set against the

[46] It was referred as *Schastlivoy prikhod* (The Fortunate Arrival). Peter celebrated by issuing fireworks and special prayers in several monasteries in the capital. *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1723*, 11.

[47] Strengthening positions and transferring troops according to the emperor's will were the only active developments. The Muslim forces in Dagestan ended their raids and the population of Resht still feared of the Afghans.

[48] 2,000 troops and 24 cannons – Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I*, 129; Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 90.

[49] Solovyev, *Istorya Rossii*, 384.

Ottomans, but were designed as a punishment for the brigands in Dagestan, who robbed the Russian merchants in Shamakhi.[50] The grand vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa was no fool and was well aware that Russia desired to establish a firm hold on the Caspian coast. This contrasted the Ottoman interests in the area. The vizier was able to play his cards well and accepted Daud Beg of the Lesgins as a vassal of the Ottoman Empire.[51] Daud Beg was proclaimed governor of Shirvan and the Porte gave an ultimatum - Russia must retreat to the Terek River and remove any fortifications and garrisons, established by Peter. The complicated diplomatic struggle, which also involved the ambassadors of England and France, continued until 1724. However, these negotiations are not a subject of the current dissertation.[52] Instead, only several crucial moments will be pointed out, which have been part of a debate, regarding the entire development of the 1722-1724 conflict.

Firstly, according to Benningsen's article, Peter was intimidated by the Ottoman demands, and it the ultimatum given by the Porte that made him retreat from Derbent and return to Astrakhan.[53] However, as all other works on the issue point out, it was logistics, rather than diplomatic pressure, which compelled Peter to sail back to Russia in October 1722. As the Russian position in the negotiations clearly proves, Peter was more willing to fight a war against the Ottomans, instead of withdrawing from Dagestan. As Lockhart and Lystsov point out, Russia was adamant in its position that no Ottoman presence will be established on the Caspian coast. If the Ottomans gain access to the Caspian, this would enable them to contact the Muslim tribes in Central Asia and use them against Russia. Peter was indeed worried by such a perspective, and he demanded from the governor of Astrakhan that no Ottoman or Crimean envoys should reach the Kalmyks or any other nomads. Furthermore, Russia's preparedness for war must not be underestimated. In the spring of 1723 over 22,000 Cossacks and regular troops were already concentrated in St. Cross fort.[54] Further forces were sent to strengthen the garrisons at Derbent and Resht.[55] In addition, Peter sent a call to arms to the Cossacks of Ukraine and Don and was ready to redirect the entire army to the border with the Crimean

[50] In 1721 the combined forces of Daud Beg and Ahmad Khan (leaders of the Lesgins and the Qaitaq) pillaged Shamakhi and took goods, worth 500,000 rubles from the local Russian merchants. This accident was used as a pretext by Peter to launch his campaign; see Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī*, 177-8).

[51] In the spring of 1723 Daud Beg, Mahmud of Utamysh, Mehmed of Aksay and the Usmi of the Qaitaq made a secret agreement with Aadil Girei of Tarki to send an embassy to Istanbul in order to place their lands under Ottoman suzerainty; see Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I*, 131. The letter from Damat Ibrahim Paşa, accepting Daud Beg as a vassal and urging him to act against the Russians, is given in Lemercier-Quelquejay, "An Unpublished Document", 174 – 8.

[52] For an exhaustive description of the Ottoman-Russian negotiations; see Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī*, 212-37.

[53] Benningsen, "Peter The Great", 311-8.

[54] Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I*, 140.

[55]Derbent was reinforced with 1,200 Cossacks, two infantry battalions and 20 guns and Resht was supported by Levashov's 2,000 troops and 24 cannons. In total, by July, 1723, Russia had some 38-40,000 troops concentrated in Dagestan and Gilan; see Ibid., 141; Table 6 in the Appendix of the current chapter.

Khanate. It is safe to say that by August 1723 the total Russian potential could have been mustered and ready to defend the borders. Furthermore, there was a considerable amount of frontier troops, permanently concentrated on the southern frontier.[56] Thus, Russia was ready to risk a war. What could have been the outcome of such a conflict or how Peter could finance a conflict with such proportions is a whole different story.

The second issue which is a subject of debate is the Ottoman preparedness for a large-scale conflict. Accordin to Lockhart, Damat Ibrahim Paşa was a peace-loving man, who wanted to reform his state and avoid further conflict. Also, his master Ahmed III – a very avaricious man, did not wish to spend funds on effortless conflicts. As Lockhart concludes, this duo was reluctant to risk war with Russia and doubted whether to intervene in Persia at all.[57] However, this cheerful story of an art-loving vizier and a cautious sultan though pleasant is to some extent naïve. As Ibrahim Paşa's actions during the negotiations with Russia and with the Dagestani tribal leaders demonstrate, he was not willing to allow any Russian incursion in the Caspian and was ready to pursue his goals. As already outlined in a previous chapter, the Ottoman Empire still had the potential to defend its interests. Ottoman forces, mustered for the advance in Persia, numbered no less than 50,000 and were well supported by artillery.[58] More troops could be sent by ships to the Azov Sea in order to threaten Russia's southern borders. Apart from that, the Ottomans could count on the support of the Crimean Khan, who could still muster some 70-100,000 horsemen and also on the Muslim faction in the Caucasus, with its 20,000 force. Ottoman diplomacy was also firm in its position and was ready to fight Russia for the control of Dagestan. In the end, it was the mediation of the French ambassador in Istanbul – Jean-Louis d'Usson, Marquis de Bonnac that helped to avoid the conflict.[59] Or at least that is Lockhart's point of view.

Paralles of the situation could be found in modern history. There is a remarkable resemblance between the Russo-Ottoman tension and the several crises that marked the Cold War between the USSR and the USA. Both states were "superpowers" in the Caucasus region, and both states had the potential of gathering some of the largest wartime armies in Europe. They had overlapping strategic and economic interests, and supported local factions, using them as

[56] There were some 70,000 garrison troops, most of which were concentrated on the southern frontier; see the Appendix of Chapter I.

[57] Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavīd*, 213.

[58] The Ottoman forces were concentrated in Erzurum in the spring of 1723 and marched east, conquering by the spring of 1724 the two most important fortresses in the Caucasus – Yerevan and Tiflis. Soon after, Tabriz, the gate to Inner Persia, was also taken. Another army entered Hamadan from Iraq under the Paşa of Bagdad. By the end of 1724, Western Persia was already occupied by the Ottomans. Though, as it was outlined in part I, chapter 2, Abraham of Yerevan overestimates the Ottoman numbers, it is doubtless that the Porte was able to sent at least 80,000 men in Persia. Compared to the approximately 40-50,000 Russians, the Ottoman presence in the region was considerably larger; see Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī*, 255-73; Abraham of Yerevan, *History of the Wars*, 17-37.

[59] Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī*, 231.

tools in their grand strategies. In 1722 there was no European power that could serve as a mediator between these two states, not to mention a single ambassador, who was deprived of his government's support.[60] Thus, the influence of the British resident in Istanbul – Abraham Stanyan over the policy of Damat Ibrahim Paşa must not be overestimated. In general, Lockhart tries to prove that European powers exercised almost the same influence in the Near East as they did during the early nineteenth century. This, however, was far from the truth. Neither Russia nor the Ottoman Empire were as dependent on Western Europe as Lockhart supposes. It can be argued that the war between the Ottomans and the Russians was not fought solely because these states decided not to fight. It was not so much the actions of de Bonnac and Stanyan but the complicated economic and military state of the two empires, which predetermined the outcome of the conflict. Both Peter and Damat Ibrahaim knew that a direct conflict between Russia and the Ottomans would lead to an economic crisis.

It is true that the two eastern colossi could raise vital forces, but the question was - for how long. The money and the resources, needed for a full-scale war were hardly present in Istanbul and St. Petersburg. The Ottoman Empire had just ended a 35 year-long period of wars and for Russia, it was jumping from one major conflict into another.[61] Thus, it was not so much the real war, but the possibility of one, that was the playground of the Russian and the Ottoman diplomacy. In reality, both states were unwilling to fight, just as were the USSR and the USA, but their leading policy-makers were very good at playing their cards. The game of bidding with military preparations finally ended in the summer of 1724, after both states had conquered their primary objectives and an effective repartition of Persia took place.[62] The final treaty resembled very much the outcome of the first partition of Poland-Lithuania by Russia, Prussia, and Austria in 1773.[63] And if the Russo-Ottoman "Cold War" was slow to develop in the winter of 1723/24, the Russo-Safavid relations took a more rapid progression. As noted above, Avramov, Russia's ambassador to Persia, was able to trick Ismail Beg, the Persian envoy to St. Petersburg, and deprive him of his master's final instructions not to conclude piece with Peter. Ismail Beg continued his way to Russia and reached Astrakhan in March 1723. Peter ordered Artemiy Volynskiy to delay Ismail Beg and to bring him to

[60] As. L.Lockhart notes in his narrative, de Bonnac acted on his behalf, since Paris was not willing to intervene in the Russo-Ottoman conflict. It was in October 1723 that Louis XV finally decided to support his ambassador by giving him a carte blanche; see Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī*, 220, Note 1.

[61] I am referring to the War of the Holy League (1683-1701), the Russo-Ottoman War (1711-3), the Ottoman-Venetian War (1714-8) and the Austro-Ottoman War (1716-8); The Great Northern War. It was preceded by the Russo-Ottoman War (1686-1700) in the context of the War of the Holy League and the two campaigns against Crimea (1687; 1689).

[62] For the Russians – Derbent, Baku and Resht; For the Ottomans – Tiflis, Yerevan and Tabriz.

[63] One might argue that Russian diplomacy had a good background of partitioning other states, based on the Persian and Crimean experience.

Petersburg later in the summer.[64] Following the fall of Baku, Peter finally met with Ismail Beg. After a series of lavish feasts and celebrations, a treaty was concluded between Russia and Persia.[65] According to the treaty, Persia had to give up all Caspian provinces to Russia, including Astrabad, where no Russian soldier had ever set foot. In exchange, Russia was to provide military aid to Tahmasp II and help him in case of war against a third party.[66] In reality, Tahmasp II never ratified this document, and the occupation of the Caspian provinces was carried out without the approval of Persia. However, until Nadir Shah expelled the Afghans in 1729, none of the factions, struggling for the Persian succession, had the strength to remove Russia from its newly acquired territories.

The Struggle for Persia was brought to an end in 1724 or at least, so it seemed. The Ottomans and the Russians were able to partition their neighbor's lands and to conclude an agreement. The "Cold War" between the two empires ended and both states were satisfied with the outcome. It is hard to measure who won the most. Both Peter and Damat Ibrahim managed to fullfil their primary goals. Russia had to abandon the Orthodox population of the Caucasus to the Ottomans and exchange their allegiance for the volatile loyalty of the population of Gilan and Dagestan. It was also uncertain whether the newly-conquered lands would pay off for the vast resources, invested in their acquisition. Howeverfor the time being, Russia received what she came for, and Peter managed to transform the Caspian into a *mare noster*. Any full-scale evaluation of the Russian effort in Persia would require a further, in-depth research of the Russian occupation and the developments, which led to the treaties of Resht (1729) and Ganja (1735), which ended Russia's presence in the Southern Caspian region and returned the borders between Persia and Russia to the status quo from 1722. However, such a study is not the subject of the current dissertation. Here it is sufficient to note that Russia managed to establish successfully its presence in the Near East.

[64] A. Volynskiy reported to the emperor, that Ismail Beg was ready to sign a treaty according to which Persia would secede all Caspian provinces to Russia; see Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 97. Peter, however, decided to postpone the signing of the treaty, since Russia's position in the Caspian was still unstable (Almost 1/3 of the troops in Resht were sick and Matyushkin was nowhere near sailing to Baku). Thus, when in the end of July 1723 Baku finally fell in Russian hands, Peter was ready to negotiate with Ismail Beg.

[65] Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 97-8.

[66] The signing of the Treaty of St. Petersburg was a critical point in the Russo-Ottoman negotiations. Peter did not notify his ambassador in Istanbul Neplyuev about the clauses of the treaty. Neplyuev became familiar with the text through its translation in one Venetian newspaper. The subsequent scandal was overcome only by the mediation of de Bonnac, who was able to convince Damat Ibrahim Paşa that the pact was not aimed against the Ottoman Empire. It was perhaps the only situation, in which the personality of de Bonnac proved essential for avoiding a conflict. Yet, it is still doubtful whether the grand vizier was ready to start a war against Russia. Instead, the scandal gave him the chance to deny any Russian claim made so far and to demand better terms from Neplyuev. As it turned out, Peter had to mend his mistake by agreeing to some of the Ottoman terms, most importantly by avoiding any open support to the Georgians and the Armenians.

## 4.5. The Performance of the Russian Army

The Persian Campaign is the only one of the conflicts, reviewed in the current dissertation, which takes place outside the well-known battlegrounds of early modern Europe. Thus, it will be presented with a more detailed description of the actual performance of the Russian army, and with an analysis of the non-military factors, influencing the development of the campaign. This will be a deviation from the pattern of evaluation followed so far, but it is necessary in the context of the overall contribution, pursued by this dissertation.

*The terrain factor – The Caucasus and the Caspian as a battleground*

The Caucasus chain is the highest mountain system in Western Asia, with its tallest peak - Elbrus reaching 5642 meters. If the Caucasus Mountains have to be compared to any similar part of Europe, it would be the Alps. Both mountains could be traversed only through a small number of passes and both separate two regions, distinctive by social structure and environment. However, the size of the mountains and the character of the local population mark the main differences between the two cases. The Caucasus Mountains stretch in northwest – southeast direction, dividing the river system into three general zones.[67] The first area includes the rivers, which flow north and enter the Caspian Sea. These rivers serve as the natural southern border of the Eurasian Steppe and can be used as a divide between the nomadic Mongolian tribes of the grasslands and the mountain tribes of Circassia (Cherkassiya). The second river zone includes the streams that flow south-eastward into the Caspian Sea and mark the southern border betweeb the mountainous population and the peoples inhabiting the Persian mainland. Finally, the third zone includes all the rivers, which flow into the Black Sea. These territories are dominated by the settled Georgian societies and since ancient times have been the most well-known part of the Caucasus.[68] The region, which is the primary concern of our study, is the second, the south-eastern zone and more specifically - its northern periphery. These territories are dominated by the densely wooded eastern slopes of the Caucasus and the small valleys, which are locked between the mountains and the Caspian Sea. It is precisely these interrelated coastal valleys, which are one of the three most

[67] See Map 3 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[68] Unlike the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea was connected with Europe and Asia through the Straights of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, as well as the Danube, Dnieper and Don rivers. Ever since the Greeks established their colonies along the Black Sea coasts (ninth-seventh centuries BC), Georgia (then known as Kolkhis or Iberia), was integrated in the trading system of Europe and Western Asia. During the Medieval period, due to its links with Byzantium, Georgia participated in the trade routes, which linked the Baltic with the Black and Caspians seas and even further - to what is present day Iraq.

important routes for passing through the Caucasus.[69] The valleys alongside the Caspian coastal road are crossed by small rivers and dry gullies, which break the terrain and make it hard for any army to maintain high marching speed. Woods and little dales in the mountains are perfect spots for ambushes and standoffs. During the eighteenth century the best way to move in this area, was on horseback and the best way to transport a baggage-train - was by using pack animals.

The terrain had a high impact on the movement and on the manoeuvres of the Russian army. To begin with, Peter had to carefully choose his way south. Concerning his goals – the capture of Baku and the establishment of a foothold on the western Caspian coast, the Black Sea coastal route was quite unsuitable. Firstly, it could transfer the line of operations far from the primary objective. Secondly, it could lead the Russians through a territory, which was under Ottoman suzerainty.[70] Thirdly, the route was far from any Russian supply center, and no naval assistance could be expected in the Black Sea. Finally, using this road could expose the lines of communication to the attacks of the Crimean and Kuban Tatars. The only benefit for Peter could be the support of the Orthodox Georgian princes of Imereti, Abkhazia and Mingrelia. However, Peter never put too much trust in the Caucasian Christians and thus, there was no reason for the emperor to march his army through this route.[71]

Peter's second option was the Georgian Military road. Unlike the Black Sea route, the passage through the central Caucasus had its positive sides. It was the shortest way to cross the mountains and to enter the valley of the Kura River. Once in the valley, the Russians could conquer Tiflis and thus block any possible Ottoman advance from the west. Once Tiflis was secured, the army could march or even sail along the Kura, to reach the Caspian Sea near Baku. Peter wanted to control the mouth of Kura.[72] Furthermore, the rich trade center of Shamakhi was also situated in this area. Russian goods in this town had been pillaged and this incident served as a pretext for the Tsar's military effort. If Peter had wanted to avenge the mistreating of the Russian merchants by the Lesgins, he would have taken this route. Although this option seemed tempting, the Georgian Military road held several risks. Firstly, there was no Russian base on the northern slopes of the Caucasus.[73] The nearest Russian position was Terki, on the Terek River, approximately 400 kilometers to the north-east. The

[69] The other two were the Black Sea coastal road (*Beregovoe Shosse*) and the so-called Georgian Military Road (*Voenno-Gruzinskaya doroga*), which ran from Vladikavkaz (Ordzhonikidze) to Tiflis (Tbilisi); see Map 4 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[70] Provoking the Ottomans to strike was never part of Peter's plan.

[71] Solovyev, *Istoriya Rossii*, 374.

[72] As proven by the expedition toward Resht. During the expedition the fleet, under Soymonov first had to map the mouth of the Kura River and only then to leave Shipov's corps near Resht.

[73] Vladikavkaz was established in 1784 for the purpose of controlling the so-called "Caucasus Gates". This is a system of gorges, which traverses the mountain from north to south, following Terek River upstream and then the Aragvi River, until its influx with the Kura River, twenty miles north of Tiflis; see W.E.D. Allen and P.Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields –A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border, 1828-1921* (Nashville, 1999 – reprinted from the Cambridge, 1953 edition), 4.

territories between Terki and the "Caucasian Gates" were under the control of the Circassian princes, who, at least nominally, were subjected to Russia. However, these princes often fought each other, separated in parties, either supporting the Russians or the Ottomans and their Tatar allies. One such conflict took place between 1718 and 1720 and although it was won by the pro-Russian faction, the region remained unstable. Even if this obstacle could have been overcome, there was a second problem. The so-called "Caucasian Gates"were in fact a series of narrow gorges, cut by the upstream of the Terek and Aragvi rivers. The passes were often blockaded by snow and landfalls and any army, traveling through them could be easily cut off from its supply lines not only by nature, but also by the mountain tribes, which inhabited the region, and were allies of the Lesgins.[74] Apart from all that, the road also hindered the setting of communication and supply lines. Until the Kura was reached, there were no navigable rivers or established roads, which could ease the traversing of the Caucasus. Thus, it could probably take weeks, if not months to transport supplies and messages along the route.

Finally, there was the Caspian coastal road. It followed the Caspian Sea in northwest – southeast direction: begining from the Terek river system, traversing the narrow valleys around Tarki and Derbent and finally ending at the northern periphery of the Kura river system, near Baku. There were several main advantages of this route. Firstly, Russia was practically the master of the Caspian Sea, being the only state to possess a real fleet in the region. By using its fleet, based in Astrakhan, the Russians could deliver supplies along the entire route, if there were suitable locations to harbor the ships. Secondly, the fortress of Terki – Russia's southernmost base, controlled the northern end of the route and could be used as a logistics center, as well as an operational base for any campaign in the region. The Caspian route also had the advantage of not crossing the Caucasus at all. It was the only direct way to Baku, without traversing highlands. Regarding the population, Russia could count on the support of the Terki and Greben Cossacks, who inhabited the region since the sixteenth century and were always loyal to the tsar. These Cossacks were quite familiar with the terrain and with the nature of the area, as well as the peoples, who inhabited Dagestan. The main disadvantage of the Caspian route was that it left the western flank of the army opened to attacks from the mountain tribes and separated the Russians from their potential allies in Georgia and Armenia.

After taking these possibilities into consideration, Peter decided to choose the Caspian coast. After the operation against Finland in 1713, Peter had a preference for amphibious warfare. He believed that only through combining land advance with adequate naval support the victory was going to be certain. Furthermore, Peter pursued the total control of the Caspian Sea in order to affirm Russia as an indispensable part of the trade route between India and

[74] For the composition of the tribes and states, see Map 5 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

Europe. By establishing strongholds on the western Caspian coast, Peter could eliminate any possibility of Ottoman incursion in the area. The relations with the local leaders also influenced his decision. The shamkhal of Tarki, the most prominent local leader, swore allegiance to Russia in 1718 and promised his support if Peter was to march in Dagestan. Furthermore, the city of Derbent gave an affirmative reply to Peter's manifesto even before the campaign had started. Regarding his allies in Georgia and Armenia, Peter urged Vakhtang VI to take control of Tiflis and unite his forces with the Armenians. According to the plan this army had to march south-eastward, capture Shamakhi and merge with the Russians near Baku. The Caucasian allies had to avoid any possible provocation of the Ottomans. Their main objective had to be to rout the Lesgins. After the path had been chosen, it was time to think about the possible ways of transporting the army and the supplies, given the existing infrastructure in Dagestan.

*Infrastructure*

When Peter decided to expand his realm southward, he planned to use the established system of canals and rivers to transport and concentrate his troops in Astrakhan. However, once the army went on its way, the possibilities to use local infrastructure for the benefit of the army's advance faded. When the fleet sailed from Terki on 26th July 1722, Peter left behind the last safe harbor and supply center, available to his forces. Any further operations had to be exercised relying on the army's capacity and the doubtful assistance of the local rulers.

One thing is certain – there was no road system in Dagestan, or, at least, no roads in terms of a network of paved ways, supervised by local authorities. The only two significant settlements, which stood on Peter's way to Baku, were Tarki and Derbent. Between these, however, no real road existed, except probably, some dirt road, well-trodden by carts and horses. In order to understand why local authorities did not construct roads, two reasons must be outlined – the frequent conflicts between the rulers, and on larger scale - struggle between the empires and the local leaders, who were trying to preserve their autonomy.

With regard to regional conflicts, ever since the Middle Ages warfare in Dagestan concentrated on the usage of mounted troops. Bands of horsemen served as the main striking forces of the Dagestani warlords in their struggle against each other. To better understand the way war was fought in the Caucasus, a parallel with similar development in Asia Minor could be made. There the predominant forces, prior to the Ottoman conquests, were the gazi bands. In a similar fashion, a gazi ethos developed among the Dagestani tribes and since there was no major power to conquer or centralize the region, the state of play remained unchanged up until the Russian conquests during the nineteenth century. Except for the weak central authority, fortifications also

played part in the preservation of the gazi ethos. Unlike Asia Minor, where a lot of forts and fortresses existed, especially in the western parts, in the Caucasus, there were no significant settlements, nor any significant fortifications. The population lived in a semi-nomadic fashion and could abandon its settlement until the enemy had been defeated or had left the occupied territory.[75] Therefore, "forts" were simple ramparts, consisting of wooden palisades and shallow moats. Such fortifications were able to hold a cavalry for some time but were still vulnerable to the dismounted charge of the gazi.

Apart from the local conflicts and the specific art of war, a second reason for the lack of adequate road network was the constant struggle of the empires to impose their rule over the Caucasian peoples. A well-known fact is that good roads are the veins of any imperial power. By using a road system, Persia, Russia or the Ottoman Empire would be able to launch punitive expeditions and to maintain strong garrisons. Furthermore, roads would make the supply of these imperial forces much easier and would thus threaten the autonomy of the local warlords. The imperial administration could also use the road network in order to collect tolls and taxes and to establish a better functioning bureaucratic system. With such a system empire's official documents would travel faster throughout the realm. As for the trade, the population of Dagestan's main trading product was animals – oxen, sheep, and horses, which were sold at the big trade centers, situated in the valleys around the Caucasus. Animals, unlike goods, did not need a road system to be transported, and thus, there was no economic necessity for the local population to maintain a road network for trade's sake.

How did Peter deal with the situation? When his army landed on Agrakhan Bay, Peter's first task was to establish a fortified camp, which would serve as starting point for the new line of communications. His next task was to secure the loyalty of Tarki and Derbent, the only sizable settlements in the area and to control their vicinities. After these main fortified positions were secured, the army had to establish a chain of harbors along the western Caspian coast, so that the fleet from Astrakhan could support the troops with supplies and munitions. Still there was the question why did Peter prefered the marine transportation. There were two main reasons. Firstly, because only Russia possessed a fleet in the Caspian, and no enemy force could attack and capture the supply ships.[76] Secondly, the construction of a road network would require

[75] This is exactly what happened during the Russian march south. The population of both Endirey and Utamysh managed to leave their homes and retreated deeper into the mountains. When the Russians were gone, the people returned and rebuilt their settlements. During the return of the Utamysh population, a surprise attack by a 5,000 force of Cossacks and Kalmyks caught the local completely off guard and resulted in hundreds of captives and the loss of 7,000 heads of cattle.

[76] In the course of the campaign and following the Russian march north, the attacks of the Dagestani horsemen proved that the land-based line of communications was quite vulnerable and in order to maintain it, a very strong chain of garrisons had to be established. Instead, Peter opted for a small number of garrisons on key locations and a maritime system for supplying the army and the troops, stationed in the Dagestan fortifications.

time and funds, which Russia could not currently afford.[77] Peter came to the logical solution by preferring the naval transport as safer and cheaper. However, it turned out, that there was an enemyin the sea against which no eighteenth-century army or navy was protected – the weather.

*Climate*

The next factor, which played a crucial role in the development of the Persian Campaign, was the weather. When it comes to the climate of Western Asia, people often picture vast deserts and rocky wastelands, heated by the merciless sun and swept by sandstorms. However, the reality of the Persian Campaign was quite different. Thanks to the accurate day to day account of the campaign journal of the Persian expedition, the dissertation summarizes the weather conditions for most of the Persian Campaign of 1722.[78] It turns out that rain and storms were as troublesome for the army as was the heat.

Unfortunately, it cannot be estimated if the climate of the Caspian and the Caucasus was the same as it is today, thus, no general assumptions about the nature of the weather could be made. However, it is possible to trace what the weather conditions were in Dagestan and the Astrakhan province during the months of July, August and September. When Peter started his expedition on 18th July 1722, it was midsummer in the Caspian region. The weather was warm and sunny, and for the first three days the army sailed under clear skies. Upon entering the Caspian Sea, two storms from the north-east hampered the army advance. In the following days the fleet sailed in good weather conditions, reaching Terki on 24th July.[79]

During the next two weeks, the weather remained hot and sunny, with almost no rain. At the beginning of August, when the army left its camp in Agrakhan Bay, the weather was extremely hot, and the soldiers suffered during their march to the Sulak River. If the heat only harassed the troops on their way south, it was storms that stopped the army's advance. Between 7th and 11th August, there was a great storm that raised the level of the Sulak River. The water damaged the two bridges, built by the Russians and Peter had to seek materials for the construction of two new pontoons. It took four days for the entire army to cross the river. After the storm ended, the weather became very hot again and tookthe lives of many soldiers and horses. After the army finally reached Derbent, a new powerful northern storm destroyed the supply fleet off the coast, near the city, and made any further advance to Baku impossible. The

[77] Peter was determined to advance as fast as possible, in order to place the Ottomans in *a fait accompli* and deny them the ability to interfere in Dagestan. As for the cost, in 1722 Russia had to spend more than 1,600,000 rubles on military costs. The cost for transporting materials, workers and also for protecting their work from local tribes' incursions was immense. The only land-based constructions, apart from forts, were the bridges, build for the crossing of several small rivers, which flowed into the Caspian Sea. Except for an ancient stone bridge near Buynaksk River, all other crossings required from the army to erect its own pontoon bridges.

[78] See Table 2 and Table 3 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[79] Peter entered Tarki on the 24th July. Some of the ships were delayed and the entire fleet gathered on 25th.July.

army remained in Derbent until early September. When on the 8th September the Russians began their return march, the weather suddenly changed. The breezy summer evenings were replaced by cold autumn nights, and on 10th September, the hills were covered in frost. The weather during daytime also changed, becoming cold and cloudy. If the army marched in blistering heat on its way south, the troops moved north in cold, harsh weather, swept by wind and storms. Finally, the Russians reached the Sulak River at the end of September, but unfortunately, there is no account of the climate after 18th September.

There is no information, regarding the weather during the expeditions against Resht and Baku. The Resht expedition was carried out in the winter, and it could be guessed that the weather in the Caspian Sea was cold and windy.[80] As for Matyushkin's capture of Baku, it took place during the second half of July 1723 and considering the weather in Dagestan the previous year, it could be supposed that it was hot during the four days of the siege. There were probably no major storms during the two later expeditions since no reports for sunken ships appear in the sources.

While the cold, harsh weather in September was nothing new for the Russian troops, it was the summer heats and storms, which had a greater impact on the army. Before the march south began, measures were taken to avoid the heat.[81] The army stopped several times a day so that the soldiers and the horses could rest. Also, the army always camped near rivers or wells, so that the troops could slake their thirst. However, the sun was taking its toll. On several occasions Peter Bruce notes that the soldiers were exhausted from the heat and dropped out. Furthermore, the soldier's diet also had something to do with the heat resistance of the army. Food comprised of bread and meat, water and probably wine. However, fruits, which contained the required vitamins were absent for the most part of the campaign. During the stay at the Sulak River, the army received an abundant supply of fresh fruit, which were devoured with such haste that many of the soldiers got sick.[82] The uncontrollable hunger could be explained not so much with the lack of food supplies but with the exhaustion and dehydration of the troops due to the heat. Water was also problematic since the rivers flowed through soils with high limestone content. The limestone entered the water and made it salty, which increased the soldiers' thirst and made them vulnerable to the heat.

The sudden change of the weather in the early September also had its impact on the soldiers. The veterans from the Northern War were used to the cold, but after two months of heat, even they found it hard to adjust. Furthermore, according to Bruce's memoirs, the Russians lacked winter

[80] It took almost a month for the fleet to reach Resht. However, the delay was partially due to the exploration of the mouth of Kura River, carried out by Soymonov, according to Peter's orders.
[81] The soldiers were prohibited from staying outside without hats between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.; the troops were forbidden to sleep on the bare ground or use grass and reed as their bedding. In addition, drinking alcohol and the frequent usage of salty meat were also restricted; see Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 58.
[82] Bruce, *Memoirs*, 317.

uniforms during their return march.[83] Taking into account the cold nights, the exhausting marches and the several evenings in which the army was in full alert, it could be supposed that the cool weather also influenced the general extortion of the army during its march north.

In general, the weather was one of the "new" factors, with which the Russian army had to adjust to. Considering the specific circumstances, it can be concluded that Peter's army did very well. Similar problems were often among the main issues, faced by western armies as late as the Napoleonic Wars. There was no eighteenth-century army anywhere in the world that could manage to overcome nature's power. Even during the 20th and 21st centuries, modern armies, fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan, have problems with the weather conditions, including heat and storms.

*Food and water*

As already mentioned, food and water had a lot to do with the impact of the heat on the troops. There are no exact numbers of how much food the army carried with itself. When in late August the supply fleet sunk near Derbent, the Staff reported to the Emperor that the army had food supplies for only one month. Taking into consideration that so far half of the campaign was spent in camps and in settlements, a conclusion can be drawn that the army did not have sufficient provisions which could last until Baku without the support of the navy. Before putting the "failure" label to the expedition's supply system, several important things must be considered. First and foremost, in the summer heat goods tend to spoil quite fast, especially the meat. Therefore, it seems, Peter preferred to carry a small baggage of supplies with the army and count on the regular resupply from the fleet, bringing fresh provisions from Astrakhan or Terki. In addition, Peter also hoped to acquire a certain amount of goods from his allies in the region and to conquer easily the settlements along his way, which would have cost him a lot if he had been fighting in the fortress-abundant European lands. Secondly, as already noted in the section about infrastructure, Peter considered naval transport to be safer and faster. If the army had to carry too heavy baggage train, it would become quite vulnerable to the mobile forces of the local warlords. Apart from the vulnerability, low speed meant that the Ottomans would have more time to react and to send an army in Shirvan.

In the course of the campaign, the Russians were able to acquire food from the locals on several occasions.[84] The first time was during the crossing of the Sulak River, when the shamkhal delivered a large number of fruits and oxen for the army, apart from the pack animals, which were assigned to the baggage train. Following the arrival at Tarki, the Russians resupplied their provisions by

[83] Ibid., 345.

[84] For a summary regarding the supply acquisitions and problems during the 1722 campaign, see Table 8 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

using the local markets. The population of Derbent was initially unwilling to share their supplies with the Russians, but eventually, with the establishment of a garrison in the city, the army was able to purchase some food and fruits from the locals. Nevertheless, Peter never put too much trust in local supplies and counted on the naval support from his fleet under van Verden.[85] However, the weather played its part and the destruction of 12 supply ships, along with part of the flour and some other goods predetermined the early end of the campaign.

Regarding the water supplies, Peter counted on the several small rivers in the area as a source of fresh water. Furthermore, while still in Tarki, Peter instructed shamkhal Adil Girei to arrange the digging of wells along the future route of the Russian army. As it turned out, the shamkhal did not put too much effort into the task. The first days following the crossing of the Sulak turned out to be critical for the Russians, who exhausted by the heat, had access only to the badly-dug, muddy wells, left by Girei's men.[86] The slipshod work of the men from Tarki taught the Russians a lesson and until the end of the campaign, they used only well-built old wells or upstream rivers in order to supply with fresh water. The quality of the water itself was also problematic, due to the large quantity of limestone in the soil. It made the water salty and thus instead of quenching the thirst of the troops, it made the situation somewhat worse. The only possible solution was to boil the water, but the Russians did not know they should or did not have the time to do it.[87] It can be only speculated whether the water had any impact on the number of sick soldiers during the expedition. However, it certainly increased the burden of the march.

While Europe was blessed with an abundance of drinkable water from many rivers, springs and streams, the situation in Western Asia was different. The rocky soil, filled with different minerals, easily penetrating the streams, made the water salty and often unsuitable for drinking. Only local people knew from which wells and springs to drink, and which streams had a clear water debit. Therefore, a foreign army, unaccustomed to the local lore would suffer greatly from the lack of fresh water. Given the doubtful allegiance of the local population, the Russians were lucky enough to survive the campaign without any critical lack of water supplies.

The same refers to food. The army ate a lot of fruits, which were uncommon in Russia and this had its effect on the troop's health. But the greater impact was on the horses. As Peter Bruce notes in his Memoirs, hundreds and even thousands of animals died from poisonous grass. Since the animals of the cavalry were brought mainly by the Kalmyks and the Cossacs in Ukraine, they were unaccustomed to the types of grass and herbs, which grew in Dagestan.[88]

[85] Van Verden was a Dutch sailor, who served in the Russian army. Together with Soymonov, he was sent to chart the Caspian Sea and later to command the supply fleet, which escorted Peter's southern march.
[86] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 8.
[87] Neither the *Zhurnal* nor Bruce's *Memoirs* give any note on processing the water in some manner.
[88] See below the subchapter about the Animal factor.

Unlike the camels and the oxen, which were bought or received from the local tribes, the horses came with the army and were unaware of the local pasture.[89]

In general, given the circumstances and the general lack of information on the quality of local food and water supplies, the Russian army performed well. It is a well-known fact that Western European contingents in Asia, the West Indies and Africa often suffered from the same problems, until eventually they became accustomed to the local environment. Peter's reliance on the naval support was justified by the logic of the campaign specifics and failed only because of the weather factor, which was beyond any human control during the eighteenth century.

*Animal factor*

One of the central issues of modern military history is to trace the origins of the horses for the cavalry and the animals, pulling the baggage train. While cavalries, as structure, armament and performance have been adequately studied, the mounts and the pack animals somewhat remain a mystery. Regarding the Persian Campaign, there are only a few secondary notes, which give information about the acquisition of horses. On the last pages of the Pokhodnyy zhurnal for 1722, a brief note mentions that due to the high mortality rate of the animals during the summer campaign, Peter ordered colonel Tarakanov to purchase additional horses from the Kalmyks, the Cossacks, and the "Lower Cities".[90] Tarakanov was to receive full support from local authorities, and his mission was considered of crucial importance for the campaign, which was planned for the next year.[91] Using this scarce material, as well as several other sources, the dissertation maps the main horse breeding areas in the region, as well as the primary horse markets, available to the Russians.[92]

The main regions, which bred horses, were located in Southwestern Asia in the territories of the Safavid and the Ottoman empires. Regarding Russia, its main "horse supply" areas were concentrated in Ukraine and around the Lower Volga. Other horse-breeding areas were the pastures of Central Asia. From these areas, the Russians had direct access to only three – Ukraine, the Lower Volga, and the lands of the Kalmyks. The Ottomans and their Tatar allies would certainly not provide the Russians with mounts and neither would the Persians or the khanates of Central Asia, with whom Peter already entered into a conflict. Therefore, the only possible solutions were the areas, already mentioned and this is where Peter concentrated the activities of his agents. Additional animals could have been acquired from Poland—Lithuania, but their transfer to the Caspian

[89] As Bruce notes the camels and the oxen never ate from the herbs, since they were "familiar" with them; see Bruce, *Memoirs*, 320.
[90] The cities on the Lower Volga – Saratov, Tsaritsyn and Astrakhan.
[91] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 193.
[92] See Map 6 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

theater of war would require too much time and funds.[93] The Western Eurasian Steppe remained Russia's horse-breeding territory at the time. The other possible source could have been the peoples of the Caucasus, given that they agreed to assist the Russian advance. After the sacking of Enderi by the cavalry under Veterani, the Dagestani leaders united against Peter and denied him any chance to acquire a lot of horses or pack animals from their herds.[94]

Regarding the pack animals, Peter had to arrange their acquisition from the local warlords, since their transportation from Russia would require too much time and would also deprive the peasants of their primary labor force, which, given the nature of the Russian economy, would be fatal for the Treasury's income.[95] Thus, Peter arranged with the shamkhal the acquisition of 7,000 oxen and 600 carts for the baggage train.[96] In addition, the army purchased a number of camels, which were also used to carry the equipment and the provisions of the troops and were quite useful in the hot summer days of late July and August. Even if these numbers seem to some extent high, as it turned out, the army was still in shortage of pack animals and on its way back tried to acquire more oxen from the population of Buynaksk.[97] Finally, after the expedition was over, Peter issued a decree on the further acquisition of pack animals and carts for the next campaign season.[98]

These problems, however, did not slow the Russian advance and the army continued with superb speed. Again, given the conditions, the Russians performed well. They had to depend on local support for their baggage train. Horse supply for the cavalry was also problematic. Nevertheless, at the cost of additional human labor, the day–to–day problems of the campaign were overcome, and the army managed to reach Derbent in good order. The return march to Agrakhan also went without serious problems, except, of course, for the death of several hundred horses, caused by the above-mentioned poisonous herbs. In general, the Russians were able to provide enough animal power to support their effort and to achieve part of the campaign objectives. The inability

[93] Augustus II the Strong (1697-1706; 1709-1733) was an ally of Peter and probably would have agreed to sell horses to the Russians.

[94] Kurukin and Lockhart argue that the destruction of the Endirey capital united local rulers against Russia. This issue will be analyzed later on.

[95] Like the horses, which had to be marched on land in order to reach Agrakhan, the pack animals also needed land route. However, moving a large herd of oxen through northern Circassia would only tempt the local tribes to attack the convoy and steal as much animals as possible. Such an outcome would have jeopardized the entire campaign and Peter was probably well aware of this fact. The animals could not have been transported via ships, since the Russians did not posses vessels, big enough for the purpose, or at least not in the Caspian Sea.

[96] See Table 8 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[97] During the march toward Derbent, Peter tried to negotiate additional cattle for his army, but locals responded that they only had cattle enough to meet their own needs. As soon as the locals realized that the Russians were marching back, they refused to sell them oxen and even allied with Mahmud of Utamysh.

[98] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 192; The order was for the governor of Astrakhan – Volynskiy and contained the following arrangements: [To be purchased] 2,000 cattle, 500 bulls and 500 charts from Greben and Terki. The money was to be extracted from the annual income of the Astrakhan guberniya; In addition, the Senate was to raise 65,000 rubles for the acquisition of bulls and charts.

to continue the march after Derbent had nothing to do with the lack of pack animals or horses.

*Guns and munitions*

The transformation of Russia into a self-sufficient military power was one of Peter's main goals. This task was accomplished only to a certain level, and there were still things to be done. Regarding the production of gunpowder, guns, and munitions, it was already outlined that Russia was able to satisfy most of its needs, but still a sizable amount of weapons had to be imported. Furthermore, no standardization of the weaponry was achieved, and the army continued to use dozens of different calibers.

It would be rather hard to estimate the exact number of guns, employed by the Russians in the course of the Persian Campaign. Only I. Kurukin has given an accurate figure of the artillery train. He estimates a total of 196 guns, operated by 369 artillerymen under the command of Major Ivan Gerber.[99] According to the campaign journal some 96 guns were left in the garrisons, including Resht and Baku. Peter Bruce claims that the Derbent garrison was left with 150 guns. Though this number seems exaggerated, it suggests that the Russians captured a number of local guns when they occupied the city, and then deployed them as part of the new defenses, constructed at Peter's command.[100] Regardless of the exact figures, it is quite certain that the Russians had a great advantage over their local enemies, who hardly had anything resembling an artillery train. Neither Bruce nor the campaign journal gives any note on the usage of guns by the Dagestani forces.

Regarding the munitions and gunpowder supply for the campaign, of the available information is very little. The only concise summary up to this day is provided again by I. Kurukin. He estimates that only for the artillery there were 102,246 pieces of different munitions along with some 206 tons of gunpowder.[101] The campaign journal and P. Bruce do not mention weapon supplies and there is no complaint from the army for lack of munitions or powder. Therefore, it could be concluded that as far as the provisioning of ammunition and gunpowder was concerned, the Russians did their job very well and managed to supply enough ammunition for the entire march south. In addition, it was a common practice for Peter to issue gun salutes on any holiday, which the Russians celebrated during the campaign, as well as when the army entered Tarki and Derbent. Taking also into consideration that there were no

[99] Kurukin, *Persidskiy Pokhod*, 55-6; The artillery was as follows: 2 *1* pud howitzers, 1 *5* pud howitzer, 4 *2* pud mortars, 12 six pounder mortars and 177 other guns from different calibers. (1 *pud* = 16.38 kilograms).

[100] Usually Russian garrisons were supported by 20-30 cannons; see Table 6 in the Appendix for the current chapter. It was also supported by Abraham of Yerevan's narrative, that gunpowder weapons were not as scarce in Persia, as previously supposed.

[101] Ibid., 56; The munitions were as follows: 59,472 cannon balls, 2,874 bombs, 29,820 grenades, 10,080 grape shots, and 12,579 pud (206,044 kilograms) of gunpowder.

sieges and only one major engagement, the Russians did not need a lot of war materials during their march. Nevertheless, the effort to transport the guns and munitions through the Caspian Sea and then on land through Dagestan must not be underestimated.

*Ships and naval transportation*

So far on several occasions it became evident that Peter had a preference for shipping both supplies and troops in the course of the Persian Campaign. As already concluded, maritime transport was cheaper, faster and safer than its land equivalent. Ships could also deliver the required goods in a precise location, following the maps, which several expeditions in the Caspian provided.

The vessels, used by the Russians were constructed in the dockyards along the Volga River. Since there was too little time for preparation, most of the vessels were built by soldiers, rather than by professional carpenters and later on, after a series of problems, this became evident. The vessels were relatively small, and most of them were just large boats, rather than real ships or galleys. As it is evident from Table 1 for the current chapter, there is no unanimous estimate on the exact size of the Russian Caspian fleet.[102] While Bruce refers to all vessels as galleys, scholars try to distinguish between sailing and oar-powered ships. The only certain thing is that only a small portion of the vessels was with sails while most of the fleet was powered by oar-power.[103]

Following the arrival at Agrakhan bay, the fleet was left on anchor and, later on, was used to transport supplies as well as news and dispatches to and from Astrakhan. However, at the beginning of August, the first problems with the ships appeared. Verden reported as early as 4th August that the ships were leaking and sustained substantial damage. The next stroke came with the storm near Derbent, which sunk 12 vessels and destroyed part of the army's provisions. During the return sail from Agrakhan to Astrakhan, P. Bruce notes that they had a very serious breach in the hull of the galley on which he was sailing.[104] Finally, a storm on 3rd of October sunk several ships, before the fleet managed to enter the mouth of the Volga River. Due to the sustained losses in both vessels and provisions, Peter issued an order on 4th November 1722, according to which additional ships had to be built and concentrated in Astrakhan for the next campaign season.[105] It was the delay of their building that

[102] See Table 1 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

[103] Kurukin estimates a total of 47 sailing and 400 oar-powered vessels; see Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 56. Lystsov gives the following: 3 snaw ships (Nederl. *Snauw)*, 2 hegbots (Nederl. *Hekboot* ), 1 *guker* (a type of sailing ship), 9 schuits, 17 *tyalok* (transport ships), 1 yaht, 7 *evers*, 12 galiots, 1 strugi, 34 transportation ships and many boats; see Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I*, 116) L. Lockhart estimates a total of 274 vessels, without specifying their types, or the place, from which he took the figure; see Lockhart,*The Fall of the Ṣafavī*, 179.

[104] Bruce, *Memoirs*, 352-3.

[105] In Kazan, Astrakhan and Nizhny Novgorod 30 hekbots, 6 big boats (*botov*) and 30 smaller had to be built. In addition, each of these 66 vessels had to have a life-boat on it; see (*Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 174.

prolonged the time, needed by Matyushkin to organize his expedition against Baku in 1723.

Apart from the troubles with the ships, Peter also had to take care of the establishment of safe harbors if he was to use the maritime transportation as his main tool for supply. Following the return of Artemiy Volynskiy from Persia in 1719, Peter sent an expedition under Captains Soymonov and Verden to explore the western and southern shores of the Caspian and to look for appropriate places for the building of harbors.[106] In addition, two additional expeditions were carried out. The first, again under Soymonov, had to map the mouth of the Kura River in late November 1722.[107] The second, under Peter Henry Bruce, had to circumvent the Caspian shores in eastern and then – in southern direction.[108] The results of these expeditions, combined with the land observations, made by Peter during his march south, led to the establishment of several desired positions, in which ports were to be built in order to a massive naval line of communications to be created - spanning from Astrakhan, all the way to Resht.[109] According to Peter's project for future ports, it could clearly be seen that he was not only planning to establish a good logistics system to support his garrisons, but he also wanted to lay the foundations of a maritime trading network, crossing the Caspian Sea on its way south. The 1723 campaign's last expedition – the conquest of the Kura River mouth and the submission of the governor of Salyan secured Russia's dominance in the coastal regions. The next step was undertaken by the piece-time administration in order to establish the required ports for strengthening Russia's commercial and military position in the region.

The hasty preparations, as well as the considerable distance for satisfying the transportation needs, made the Russian naval effort a labor-consuming task. Nevertheless, Russia was blessed to be the only naval power in the Caspian Sea. Even though ships were slow to be built and provisions were hard to allocate, there was no maritime competition, and the only obstacle before the Russian naval projects was the climate.[110] Unfortunately for Peter, the summer storms of 1722 sank a substantial part of his supply ships and prevent him from reaching the final destination of the campaign – the conquest of Baku. Nevertheless, during the following year, Russia was able to launch a successful expedition against Baku with which the Empire sealed its dominance in the Caspian Sea. By the time the treaty with the Ottomans was signed in 1724, the position of Russia in the region was cemented and secured. We must not be too judgmental toward the Russians as in 1724 the Russian Navy had existed for just 26 years. In comparison, Western European states had centuries of trans-oceanic

[106] Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 40.
[107] The other purpose of the expedition was the landing of Colonel Shipov's troops near Resht.
[108] The entire expedition is well-documented in chapter IX of Bruce's *Memoirs.*
[109] See Map 7 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[110] As late as July 1723, the authorities in St.Cross fort had not yet completed the fortifications, due to lack of timber supplies from Astrakhan; see Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 94.

navigation experience. Therefore, although setbacks were evident, the young Russian Navy was finally able to achieve its purpose, even though it never met any actual resistance from its enemies.

*The human factor*

While logistics and armament are essential for the success of an army, it is the troops in it which are the heart of the entire system. Similar to all other nations in Europe, the Russians developed a generation of veteran soldiers, forged in the fires of the Great Northern War. It was exactly these experienced, battle-hardened veterans that marched southward with their Emperor into the ill-known lands of Dagestan. General accounts about the quality of the Russian soldiers differ. Some are quite critical of their lack of discipline and narrow-mindedness while others claim that the Russians were the best soldier stock in Europe. Probably the truth lies somewhere in the middle, and the comparative analysis between the qualities of the Russian soldier in comparasion to his Western European counterparts is not a subject of the current dissertation. It is very important to note, is that the army, which followed Peter in Asia, was an experienced force, accustomed to marches, pitched battles, and swift manoeuvres. It had been formed under the fire of the Swedish artillery and in the face to face fight with one of the most formidable forces in seventeenth century Europe. The Russians won. When it comes to the quality of the personnel, Russia had a great advantage over the local gazi forces of the Dagestan warlords. It is precisely this professionalism that made it possible for Colonel Shipov to disperse a 15,000 strong mob in Resht with only a thousand troops.[111] It was this quality that allowed the garrison of 300 men in Milyukent to repel the attacks of a 12,000 strong force of local warriors and later - to retreat intact to Derbent.[112] One thing is certain - there is nothing miraculous about these successes. In fact, the Russian combat experience was no different than similar developments, which took place prior or after the Persian Campaign in other parts of Asia.[113] Dutch, English, Portuguese, Spanish and French soldiers had already proven that it was not so much gunpowder, but determination, discipline and combat experience, which brought Europe's final success over its Asian rivals. Here is is useless to describe the physical shape of the Russian troops as Dagestani and Persian men were probably as well-built as any European.[114] It

[111] Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 87.
[112] *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 16-7.
[113] Well-known examples are: the building of the *Estado da Índia*, the Dutch experience in the Far East, as well as Britain's latter success in India.
[114] Throughout his description of Dagestan, P. Bruce constantly repeats the fine appearance of both men and women in the region. Peter also held a high esteem of the individual qualities of local fighters as it was previously noted. Thus, it would be erroneous to suspect any traces of "racial superiority" idea amongst the Russians. It is true that they referred to the Persians as barbarians, butso did they toward Europeans, especially before the Westernization trend unraveled in the course of the eighteenth century. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to place too much emphasize on concepts of "barbarity", commonly present in the primary sources.

was certainly not a matter of "racial superiority", which spelled the preponderance of the Russian forces over their opponents.

The main body of the Russian army could be divided into two general categories – regular and irregular soldiers. Unlike most European armies, Russia continued to maintain a large contingent of irregular troops in order to combat its Asian enemies and pacify the vast eastern reaches of the Empire. The irregular cavalry comprised of either Cossacks, who inhabited the territories between the Dnieper and Volga rivers, or of Kalmyks, who had settled in the Lower Volga and around what would later become the province of Orenburg. Both societies belonged to the larger Frontier ethos, which was the dominant element in the struggle between the empires and states in Western Asia and Eastern Europe since Antiquity. Both Cossacks and Kalmyks were well-experienced soldiers, who participated in different expeditions and assignments on behalf of the Russian Empire. Fighting against Tatars and other eastern enemies made the irregular cavalry an indispensable part of any Russian project, focused on Asia. Peter was well-aware that his irregulars were the best tool for fighting against the gazi soldiers of Dagestan, and that is the main reason why these troops comprised one-half of his entire force. Except for their combat experience, Peter valued them for their ability to swiftly adapt to the frontier environment and for being able to use its elements for the benefit of their mission. This is why, for example, Peter used Cossacks and Kalmyks as vanguard and reconnoiter force, since they could find the best places for camping, and could also swiftly erect field fortifications to protect the camp and the baggage train from enemy depredations.[115] In addition, the irregulars served as a perfect punitive force, when local warlords had to be subordinated by force. Peter was quite careful not to pillage enemy settlements by regular soldiers. The dirty work would always be carried out by the irregulars, thus removing any possible "dishonor" from the main army. In addition, pillaging was the only way the emperor could compensate the Cossacks and the Kalmyks since otherwise the upkeep of their numbers would be quite costly for the Treasury.[116]

The regular body of the army was comprised of three major components – the infantry, the dragoon cavalry and the artillery. Since no protracted sieges were expected, Peter did not include an engineer corps in his forces. The infantry consisted of standard infantry regiments and several grenadier regiments. In general, it was conscripted among the peasantry for a 25 years term. In the current campaign, however, most of the troops were drafted from different regiments, situated throughout the entire empire, rather than taken as

[115] In addition, the Cossacks along with the dragoons were used as engineer forces, when the land in front of the army had to be leveled or when bridges had to be built; see *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 63.

[116] The 7,000 heads of cattle and the war prisoners, captured by the Cossacks and the Kalmyks in September 1722 were given as booty to them and their leaders; see *Pokhodnoy Zhurnal 1722*, 89; P. H. Bruce, *Memoirs*, 350.

fresh recruits. [117] The dragoons were also experienced soldiers and due to their close cooperation with the Cossacks and the Kalmyks, were somewhat different than their western counterparts and fit better in a comparison to the Polish or Hungarian hussars. During the Caspian expedition, the dragoons were expected to be the main striking force of the army. They were as fast as the local gazi horsemen and were well armed with both muskets and sabers.[118] After the Battle near Buynaksk, the dragoons along with the Cossacks and the Kalmyks followed the enemy retreat and played part in the conquest of the Utamysh settlement. Nevertheless, Peter did not hesitate to use his regular soldiers when it came to building forts. Dragoons were employed in the construction of all garrison posts, which the army erected during the campaign. A substantial number of them were left in St. Cross fort to assist the Cossacks in the construction works.

In the course of the Persian Campaign, the Russian army proved to be an effective force, capable of routing local resistance with ease. The main problems of the army were not related to the enemy, but rather derived from logistics and weather conditions. The heat, followed by rapid cold and the frequency of the storms certainly had their impact on the army. In addition diseases, uncommon in Russia struck a severe blow at the state of the army. In general, the men performed well, and there were no reports of mutinies according to the available sources. Kurukin notes a certain number of deserters, but it would be hard to estimate any exact figures.[119] The realities of the campaign were also part of the reasons for the considerably lower level of desertion. First and foremost, any Russian deserters in Dagestan would have found it impossible to return to Russia on their own, since the only two options were the Navy at Agrakhan or the land route to Tarki, both of which were under strict state control. In addition, the locals had no sympathy for the Russians, and any captured deserter would probably end in slavery or worse.[120] Therefore, only extreme desperation would urge a man to abandon the relatively safety of the column in exchange for the dangers of the local lands.

Since the campaign itself lasted for a relatively short time, it would be hard to reconstruct the daily routine of the soldiers. Based on the scarce materials it could be presumed that the army often began its march early in the morning, somewhere between 5 and 6 a.m. During the day several rests were allowed, the longest at noon, lasting for one or two hours. In the afternoon, the

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[117] The Campaign Journal notes that on 10th July, 1722certain number of regiments was brought to Astrakhan by Brigadier Matyushkin. The total number of soldiers, listed in the source is as follows: "…[From all regimental ranks], *20 soldiers form the Preobrazhenskiy, Semyonovskiy - 10, Astrakhanskiy – 328, Moskovskiy – 440, Koporskiy – 568, Galitskiy – 489, Nizhegorodskiy – 62, Vyborskiy – 86, Troitskiy – 15, Sibirskiy - 512, Pskovskiy – 64, Voronezhskiy – 517, Velikolutskiy – 572, Arkhangelogorodskiy – 561, all 4,304* [The actual sum is 4,244] *including 140 sick*…"; see *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 48; Recruitments were, however, carried out, and I. Kurukin estimates that a total of 22,500 men were drafted on the basis of two recruits in 1722; see Kurukin, *Persidskiy Pokhod*, 84.

[118] Muskets and sabers were only used when the troops were dismounted.

[119] See Table 10 in the Appendix for the current chapter. Kurukin, however, estimates a much higher rate of desertions than Lystsov.

[120] As obvious in the fate of Peter's emissaries to Mahmud of Utamysh..

march continued until 5 or 6 p.m., but if the column did not reach a suitable location, the movement could last until such was found. Soldiers were sleeping in tents, although, Kurukin mentions that the number of tents was insufficient for the entire army.[121] As already mentioned, bread, sukhari and meat were the main parts of the soldier's diet. Water was the main drink allowed, since alcohol was prohibited, due to the heat. It is for certain that the best days for the soldiers were when the army was encamped in the vicinity of Derbent and Tarki. Drinks and additional food could be purchased in local markets. Regarding the non-combat camp followers, it is hard to determine their numbers and their designation. It is certain that Peter did not take any civilians on his ships, but local camp-followers probably formed as early as the end of July, when P. Bruce notes that local merchants came to sell oxen, camels, and horses to the army. He again mentions that after the departure from Tarki (16th August) he was able to purchase two camels to carry his baggage.[122] Neither the Journal nor Bruce gives any additional detail on the camp-followers. But it could be assumed that there were also women and probably boys, offering their services as servants.[123] A further investigation of the daily life of the Russian garrisons in the newly occupied lands is well developed in I. Kurukin's work, but is not a concern of the current research.

*Marching*

Marching was an essential part of soldiers' lives during the Persian Campaign. Nevertheless, the time, which the army spent moving, must not be overestimated. From a total of 43 days spent in Dagestan, only 23 were spent in moving. Taking this into consideration, the distance, covered by the army in each march between two camping points, as well as the total length of the army's route is estimated in the current dissertation. [124] In total, the Russians covered a distance of 490 kilometers with an average of 21 kilometers per day. The medium marching speed of a late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century army was approximately 22 kilometers. This shows that the Russians did a fine job in advancing through a land with a broken terrain, where no roads existed, and the landscape had to be leveled now and then so that the army could enhanced its speed if the situation required it. For example, Peter sent his dragoons and irregulars to chase the retreating Dagestani. The pursuit lasted for several hours, in which time the cavalry covered a distance of 21 kilometers and managed to besiege and take the capital of Utamysh and to return to the camp on

[121] Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 51.
[122] Bruce, *Memoirs*, 316 and 327.
[123] It could be argued that the locals, being Muslims did not allow their women to accompany the Russians. However, early modern Christians were as conservative as Muslims in that matter and still, Europe was full of female camp-followers. Therefore, probably similar groups existed in Western Asia as well.
[124] For a full summary of the marches, see Table 4 in the Appendix for the current chapter.

the following day.[125] Taking into consideration that the Russians did not have a good preliminary knowledge of the terrain and that the weather conditions, along with the problems of supply with food and water, were all acting against them, Peter's men did very well. The army's march was rapid on its own, although a lot of time was spent in camps near Derbent, Tarki, and Buynaksk. It is debatable whether the army could have marched the remaining distance between Derbent and Baku by the end of the campaign season. The distance between these two settlements is 231 kilometers.[126] If the Russians had kept their medium marching speed for the southern march (21.2 kilometers), it would have taken them approximately 11 days of marching to reach Baku. If we add additional 11 days in which the army would not march, Peter could have reached Baku sometime in the end of September 1722. We know, from the Staff meeting, which took place on 29th August, that the Russians had provisions for one more month. This means that, in theory, Peter could have marched his troops to Baku and captured it by the end of September. However, if he had done that, he would have risked the starvation of his army, since the supply ships were badly damaged and the ships in Agrakhan Bay already displayed problems. Thus, carelessness of the Russian leader toward human life must not be overestimated.

To conclude, the Russians were able to maintain a steady speed of 21 kilometers per day during the entire campaign and covered a total of 490 kilometers within only 23 days of actual marching. In comparison, Marlborough's famous rapid march to the Danube took him five weeks, in which the army covered 400 kilometers.[127] To put it in other words, Marlborough's "exceptional" movement took 35 days to march to distance, 100 kilometers shorter than the Russian movement, and only a week faster.[128] Thus, the marching speed of the Russians is quite impressive and shows Peter's ability to mobilize the potential of his troops in the pursuit of the campaign objectives.

*Keeping the conquest*

Marching an army and defeating enemies was not sufficient to seal a true victory. The only way for Peter to prove the success of his plan was to manage to maintain his conquest after his main army left Dagestan in September 1722.

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[125] Sometime between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. The army returned in 5 p.m. on the following day; see *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722*, 117-9.

[126] For the distance between Derbent and Baku in kilometers; see hhttp://www.distancefromto.net/distance-from-baku-az-to-derbent-ru.

[127] See D.G. Chandler, "The art of war on land" in J.S. Bromley (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History: The rise of Great Britain and Russia, 1688-1715/25, vol. 6* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 741-762.

[128] If we compare a medium marching speed, taking all days of both movements, we get an average of 11.42 kilometers per day for Marlborough's army and 11.39 kilometers per day for Peter's forces. Unlike Marlborough, Peter was not marching in well-developed rural area with roads and available points of communication. This makes the Russian achievement even more impressive.

He was well aware of this fact and made all possible arrangements to erect a chain of fortified positions to protect his lines of communications and to secure the conquests, achieved so far. As soon as the army reached Agrakhan on 28th July, Peter ordered a fortified camp to be erected to protect the landing and the fleet. After the army embarked, the garrison of the fort comprised of a total of 1600 soldiers, including the ones who were sick. Peter's next step was to reach Tarki. It is interesting that he did not place a Russian garrison there, but only left a regiment of troops to protect the shamkhal.[129] The next garrison to be established was on the Milyukent River to protect the future harbor there. After it became apparent that the army had to march back, Peter also strengthened the garrison of Derbent. North of Derbent Peter established a small fortified post on the Inchi River to protect the road between Tarki and Derbent from the Sultan of Utamysh. Finally, the largest newly–built fort was placed on the influx of the Agrakhan and Sulak rivers, namely the St. Cross fort. It was designed by Peter Bruce.The plan consisted of five bastions, and two demi-bastions next to the river on the south side, with ravelins and a covered way with a palisade; on the north-side were six bastions, also with ravelins and a covered way; the two sides were to communicate by a bridge in the middle, over the river. It is evident that the emperor decided to use a western-style fortification, even though it was mainly constructed of wood, brought from Astrakhan or the woods, upstream the Sulak River.[130]

As soon as the army left Dagestan, the instability of the Russian position was revealed. Peter was still marching between Buynaksk and the Sulak, when Mahmud of Utamysh managed to destroy the Inchi garrison and to force the Milyukent garrison into abandoning their position. Peter responded to the new threat by strengthening the St. Cross fort and dispatching a flying corps of 5,000 Cossacks and Kalmyks, who once again destroyed the capital of Utamysh and plundered a big portion of its riches. In early 1723 Peter sent additional 12,000 Cossacks to strengthen Russia's hold of Dagestan and to counter the alliance of the mountain warlords against Russia.

With regard to the two southern positions - Baku and Resht, Peter acted in a similar manner. Resht was initially held with a small force, which was later strengthened while Baku was conquered with a substantial number of soldiers and garrisoned by the chief of the Caspian Theater – lieutenant-general Matyushkin. Artillery pieces were also provided and by the autumn of 1723,

[129] The shamkhal Adil Girei was a vassal of Peter. Placing a garrison probably means that the Emperor did not trust his vassal, which undermines the position of the shamkhal. Peter could not afford to have a disturbed situation in his back, while marching toward Derbent. It could be presumed that he preferred to leave Tarki to the shamkhal.

[130] The fashion of the fort resembles the trace italienne. However, the need to place such a fortress is somewhat uncertain in a region, where no substantial artillery existed. Nevertheless, Peter always demonstrated a strong desire to apply western ways in his own dealings and the approval of Bruce's sophisticated entrenchments may serve as an example. On the other hand, the importance of the enterprise for Peter's plans must not be underestimated. In addition, if there was an Ottoman intervention, the Russians would indeed need better forts to withstand the Ottoman incursions and the raids of their Tatar vassals.

Russia possessed a system of well-fortified positions, which were to guarantee its strong presence in the region and to convince the Ottomans to abandon any hope of repelling the Russians north of the Terek River.

*Paying the Price*

Like any other military effort, the Persian Campaign had its price. While it was not as costly and life-consuming as the Northern War, the Persian Campaign was indeed a laborious effort for Russia, mainly because of the speed with which Peter urged the preparations. Like any military "cost", the toll of the Caspian expeditions could be measured in two different aspects – the price in money and materials and the human casualties.

It would be impossible to calculate exactly how much resources were used to build the Caspian fleet, to erect the Dagestan garrisons or to feed and supply the army. The cost of human labor is also impossible to calculate since most of the work was done by both regular and irregular soldiers, rather than professional engineers and specialists. Also, there is no certainty on the exact proportions of the food, timber, and other materials, extracted from Russia to support the southern effort. What we know are some basic numbers, collected by I. Kurukin, during his work in the Russian archives. These numbers are summarized in Table 11 in the Appendix for the current chapter. What is evident from these numbers is that more than half of the 1722 state expenditure for military purposes was spent on the provisioning of ships and munitions for the army. The 320,000 rubles listed as supplies, might also include part of the ammunition for the army, but it could be assumed that the larger portion was spent on food supplies, uniforms and other goods, concerning the life of the soldiers. What is also surprising is that the money, spent to bribe foreign officers and warlords were almost four times as much as the money spent on medicines.[131] In total, the 1722 expeditions cost the state around 1,000,000 rubles, which was a substantial part of the state's revenue at that time.[132]

The human cost is also hard to estimate. Lystsov calculates a total loss of 11,545 men due to desertion, death and dismissal from service.[133] In his recent work, I. Kurukin estimates a higher loss due to diseases and desertion.[134] He does not manage to provide a summary in the manner of Lystsov, but rather notes certain cases, available in the documents of the Russian archives. Until 16th October 1722, Kurukin estimates some 2,700 dead, 3,936 sick and more than 200 deserters or a total of 6,836 casualties, almost all of them non-

[131] It seems that the state put additional effort in the following two years, since in 1724 a total of 7,000 beds for sick and injured were established in the five main points of Russian power in the Caspian; see Table 9 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[132] Russia's state revenue in 1723 was 6,042,000 rubles. An educated guess for 1722 would be to estimate the state revenue to 6,000,000, which means that the total expense of the campaign would amount to 1/6 of the state revenue or 16.6 per cent; see Table 5 in the Appendix for Chapter II.
[133] See Table 10 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[134] It must be noted that Lystsov does not put the sick in his estimates.

combat.[135] Out of an infantry of 18,602, these losses count for more than 33 per cent of the total force. Regarding the combat casualties, according to the campaign journal, between 212 and 241 soldiers were killed, 20 or 121 were wounded and two were captured by the enemy. The combat casualties were only around 275 out of more than 6,800 in total, which is a quite insignificant number.[136] In comparison, the enemy lost either 1,926 or 2,126 killed and between 357 and 367 captured.[137] The situation was even more problematic in the cavalry. On 16th October, a total of 6,925 dragoons returned to Astrakhan, accompanied by only 956 horses. Another 588 dragoons were left in Dagestan as garrisons.[138] According to Kurukin, the dragoons in the beginning of the campaign numbered 8,786, which mean that 1,273 dragoons died during the expedition, along with at least 7,800 horses.[139] The total casualties for the entire campaign, according to Kurukin's estimates, would be 8,109 or approximately 33 per cent of the total regular forces in the army.[140] The problem with the high level of sickness continued in the following year, when Colonel Shipov reported from Resht that of 1110 soldiers, 315 were sick.[141] The actual numbers are hard to determine. What is certain from the numbers, given above, is that the Russian regular forces suffered 33 per cent casualties, of which almost all were non-combat. It is clear that the climate and the new variety of diseases took a heavier toll than any enemy force was able to inflict. However, these were soldiers, quite unaccustomed to the climate and to the general conditions of the Caspian region. In a similar situation, other European expeditions in the New World and in Asia suffered a very high degree of mortality, due to sickness, food poisoning and the differences in the climate.

*The locals*

The final element regarding the performance of the Russian troopsis not directly related to the army itself. Nevertheless it was essential for the development of the Persian Campaign. The local population has always been an important part of any military operation, especially in modern times. As the combat experience of the USSR and the USA has shown in the past forty years, no matter how powerful a country is, if it does not win the allegiance of the natives, its campaigns would remain victorious only in the field.

[135] Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 78.
[136] Taking the highest possible figures; see Table 5 in the Appendix for the current chapter.
[137] See ibid.
[138] Kurukin, *Persidskiy pokhod*, 79.
[139] If it is presumed that for each dragoon there was at least one horse this would mean that out of 8,786 horses, only 956 survived while 7,830 perished.
[140] Unfortunately there is no information about how many Kalmyks and Cossacks were killed or got sick in the course of the campaign.
[141] This would mean some 35 per cent of the total force. The report came only a month after the capture of Resht; see Kurukin, *Persidskii pokhod*, 87.

The pursuit of Peter's ambition placed the Russian Empire in the same situation. While Peter was confident in his power on the southern march, none of the local leaders confronted him openly and even, the sultan of Utamysh did not actually risk a pitched battle, but retreated as soon as the Russians advanced on his position. On the other hand, when it became apparent that Peter was returning north, an army of 20,000 Dagestani horsemen was swiftly assembled by Mahmud of Utamysh, the Usmi of the Quitaq, Mohammad of Aksay and Daud Beg of the Lesgins. Althoughe this force was too weak to overcome the power of Peter's veteran army, it was sufficient to harass the Russian movement and to destroy two of the main outposts, established by the Emperor. Later on, Adil Girai of Tarki secretly joined the anti-Russian coalition and tried to avoid the entering of the Russian army on its return march.[142] However, Tarki was far too vulnerable to oppose Russia and Girei had to reconsider his position and maintain his allegiance to Peter. The Dagestani were not ready to accept the Ottoman suzerainty either. As soon as Daud Beg was proclaimed governor of Shirvan, the Utamysh, Aksay and the Qaitaq withdrew from his alliance and opposed his pretense to be their overlord. In general, the Caucasian warlords were not very happy with the possibility to be incorporated by either Russia or the Ottomans. The long established tradition of local autonomy was the status quo for which these chieftains strived. In this sense, the disintegration of the Safavid Empire was on the one hand favorable, since they achieved their independence, but on the other - the interference of the Russians and the Ottomans made the situation complicated and uncertain. Therefore, the warlords tried to balance between the powers in order to secure their own position. As it turned out, neither Russia nor the Ottoman Empire were able to impose their direct control on the mountainous tribes. The control of the garrisons and the major settlements reduced the tribes' possibilities for plunder, but could not deny them the advantage of mobility. The guerilla-style war, waged by the Dagestani was impossible for the Russians to cope with and only partial control could be achieved. It would take more than a century before Russia was finally able to subdue most of the Caucasus and rein in the various tribes, which inhabited the region.

## 4.6. Conclusion

To give a concise evaluation of the Russian military efforts during the Persian Campaign would be rather hard. It is certain that Peter possessed an army, which surpassed all local bands of gazi soldiers, or anything that the Persians or the Afghans could place on the field. Peter's main opponents were the Ottomans, but they were as reluctant as he was to risk any major conflict given the

[142] Three Russian envoys were killed a day before the army reached Tarki. Adil Girei was able to accuse his cousins and handed them to Peter as hostages. Thus, Girei managed not only to escape the revenge of the Russians, but also to remove some of the opposition in his own realm.

uncertain gains in a region, which had been so troublesome to control. Thus, there was no real military threat to the advance of the Russian forces. The army was well-trained and achieved an amazing speed of marching in a territory, deprived of infrastructure and favorable conditions. Combat was scarce and could be categorized as skirmishes, rather than actual battles. In this sense, Russia had a total military superiority over her enemies in the Caspian region.

Yet, the question about what were the problems remains. The first and foremost obstacle before the Russian advance was the climate of the region. Powerful summer storms, combined with the sharp temperature variations had a lot to do with the high level of sickness, which took its toll of the Russian army and garrisons. The second problem was the supplying of the army with fresh food and water. While food had to be imported or collected from the reluctant natives, water had to be taken from the wells and rivers of Dagestan. Water was rather salty and instead of slaking the thirst of the soldiers, it became a supplement to the heat in harassing the marching troops. Finally, Peter urged his state and army too much. Preparations for the campaign were carried out hastily, and many things remained unfinished or unsupplied. Uniforms, tents, water-carriers, carts, oxen and other goods were not sufficient, and their lack had to be compensate by acquisitions or additional purchases. There was no real reconnaissance of the terrain, and no measures were taken to protect the horses from the poisonous plants, which took as many animal lives as the heat and the lack of provisions.

Although as a military achievement the campaign was fully successful in terms of securing the Caspian Sea for Russia, the logistics failed to demonstrate the ability of the northern Empire to march adequately its armies outside Europe. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the same issues were experienced by other European armies on the Continent. Over 20,000 Austrians and Prussians perished from hunger and disease during the War of the Bavarian Succession (1778-1779), and many more died during the Seven Years War. What the Russian experience confirmed, however, was that small, well-equipped contingents achieved far greater success in Caucasian conditions than large armies. The major acquisitions of the Persian Campaign – Baku and Resht were conquered by a combined force of some 5-6,000 troops and 40-50 cannons. Similar patterns were present during the British expansion in India and the earlier operations of the Portuguese and the Dutch. Even today, the armies, used by the USA to conquer territories in Asia are relatively small, given the scale of the enemy resistance and the size of the states. Nevertheless, a pattern that was evident in Russia in 1722 is still visible in the actions of US army some 290 years later – the battles themselves take fewer lives in comparison to the non-combat or post-combat casualties.

# CHAPTER 5
# THE RUSSO-OTTOMAN WAR OF 1736-1739

Following the death of Peter I, Russia went through a rough decade, filled with internal political strife and cautious foreign policy, dominated by the frequent shift of monarchs and their surrounding clique. With the advent of Anna Romanova in 1730, Russia's internal political climate stabilized and the new monarch was able to indulge into more active foreign policy. It was closely related to the fate of Poland-Lithuania, whose ruler Augustus II was eager to secure the throne for his son Friedrich Augustus (the future Augustus III). Russia could count on the support from its ally Austria, as well as from Prussia while the main political opposition, headed by Stanisław Leszczyński and some of the Polish and Lithuanian magnates was supported by France. The struggle for Augustus II's succession remains in history as the War of the Polish Succession (1733-1738) and resulted in a win-win situation for both France and Russia while Austria and Poland-Lithuania were most affected. In short, France was able to break the Habsburg grip on Italy, while Russia, following a swift and successful invasion of Poland, was fast to acquire the Duchy of Courland and to impose its claimant – Augustus III (r. 1734-1763) on the throne in Warsaw. The unprecedented speed with which the military struggle was resolved gave the Russians an opportunity to intensify their eastern policy.[1]

During the war in Poland-Lithuania, the Ottoman Empire had demonstrated great reluctance to interfere in the conflict. The Porte was preoccupied with the struggle against the rising Nadir Shah in Persia, and most of its military resources were dedicated to the defense of Iraq and the Caucasus. This, combined with the information, received by the Russian agents, about the crumbling economic situation of the Ottoman Empire in its European provinces, made Empress Anna believe that the realm of the sultans was ready to be taken. Already Russia had significantly reduced its presence in the Caspian, following the Treaty of Resht (1732), and the new pact with Nadir Shah, signed in March 1735, which sealed the anti-Ottoman alliance between Anna and Nadir Shah.[2]
In 1735, Anna felt that the time was right, although some of her chief advisers, notably Count Osterman, were adamant in their position that at this point a war

[1] The active campaigns ended in 1734 in the east and 1735 in the west. The war formally continued until the Treaty of Vienna was signed in 1738, but neither France nor Russia considered fighting each other. An excellent narrative of the conflict is given by J L. Sutton, *The King's honor and the King's Cardinal: The War of the Polish Succession* (University Press of Kentucky, 2014).

[2] According to the Treaty of Resht, Russia returned Resht, Mazandaran and Astrabad to Persia, and the second treaty, signed in Ganja brought Derbent and Baku back to Nadir Shah's realm, while the shah agreed to proclaim the exiled Vakhtang VI as the rightful king of Kartli. The two treaties ended the ten year-long Russian presence in the Southern Caspian, which cost the Northern Empire great number of troops and a substantial portion of its annual revenue. For an exhaustive and up-to-date evaluation of the Russian occupation of the Caspian shores; see I.V. Kurukin, *Persidkiy Pokhod Petra Velikogo. Nizovoy korpus na beregakh Kaspiya, 1722-1735* (Moscow: Kvadriga, 2010).

with the Ottoman Empire could bring no fortunes for the Russians. Nevertheless, the Empress decided to recall her agent from Istanbul – Neplyuev. His report only strengthened her resolve to strike at the Turks and to reclaim what her uncle had lost following the disaster at Pruth.

## 5.1. Historiography

The War of 1736-1739 has been studied through two major viewpoints – the Austrian failure against the Ottomans (1737-1739) and Russia's series of campaigns against the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman holdings on the Dnieper and Don. The first perspective has been the primary concern of Western literature, and only recently did the focus move eastward with Brian Davies' work on the Russo-Ottoman Wars in the eighteenth century.[3] His narrative is largely a summary and retelling of the exhaustive work of staff Colonel A. Bayov, who in 1906 published a two-volume "A History of the Russian army during the reign of Empress Anna Ioanovna – Russia's War with Turkey in 1736-1739".[4] This work remains the leading Russian-language study of the conflict for over a century and due to its tremendous source base and the detailed research of the topic, it is likely to maintain its status. Another valuable source of information is General Bobrovskiy's History of the Leibguard Yerevan Regiment, regarding its participation in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739.[5] It contains additional valuable data and provides further details on particular engagements in the course of the war. A recent article by Yuriy and Anna Manoylenko studies the performance of Minikh's artillery during the last significant engagement of the war – the Battle of Stavuchani (1739).[6] Without a doubt, the most valuable primary source of the war is the Memoirs of Christof von Manstein, a Prussian nobleman, born in St. Petersburg, who served in the Russian army during the War of 1736-1739.[7] Manstein participated actively in the entire war and provides first-hand information on Peter von Lacy's campaigns in Crimea. Another invaluable set of primary sources can be found in Maslovskiy's corps original documents, published in 1889.[8] It includes dispatches and reports from leading Russian officers and also the most important notes of B. von Minikh's personal journal.

[3] B.L. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe: Russia's Turkish Wars in the Eighteenth Century* (New York & London: Continuum, 2011).
[4] A. Bayov, *Russkaya armiya v tsarstvovanie imperatritsy Anna Ioannovny – Voina Rossii s Turtsiey v 1736-39, vol. 1-2* (St. Petersburg, 1906).
[5] P.O. Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya 13 Leyb-grenaderskagoYerevanskogo Ego Velichestva polka za 250 let, vol. 2* (St. Petersburg, 1892-8).
[6] Yu.Ye. Manoylenko, A.S. Manoylenko, "A bomb after a bomb were lodged into the midst of the hostile army…' The artillery of B.Kh. Minikh in the Stavuchan battle", *Voenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal* 8 (2014), 61-3.
[7] C.H. von Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs of Russia from the year 1727 to 1744* (London, 1856).
[8] D.F. Maslovskiy, *Materialy k istorii voennogo iskusstva v Rossii* (Moscow, 1889).

## 5.2. Preparations for the Initial Stages of the War

Unlike Peter's march against the Ottomans in 1711 and the campaign in Persia in 1722, Anna's war was fought only after a meticulous preparation, which used the basis, set by Peter in 1722. The emperor had envisioned a possible war with the Porte during his campaign in the Caucasus and thus decided to resupply his supply depots along Ukraine and also to prepare substantial amounts of materials for the construction of a new fleet in Voronezh which had to attack and take Azov in coordination with a land force, as was done in 1696. These preparations were not realized during Peter's lifetime but were used by Anna and her general during the early stages of the war.[9] As early as 1732, Anna had ordered the military administration of Ukraine to revisit the depots and to resupply and repair them, in order they are up-to-date, in case the Ottomans decided to support France's policy toward Poland-Lithuania.[10] These measures were followed by a new Decree of Inventorisation, issued in September 1733, following a report, made by Minikh, regarding the condition of the supply bases, garrisons and fortresses along the southern borders.[11] All preparations had to be carried out and completed by 1734.

The firm Osterman, however, keen on pursuing an active policy in Poland-Lithuania and doubtful of the benefits of any southern aggression, re-directed the Ukrainian supplies in support for the armies in Poland, which were successful in taking Danzig and affirmed Russia's dominance in the Commonwealth. Thus, when in 1735 Minikh was placed in charge of the southern theater with the plan of conducting a surprise raid over the Crimeans and the Ottomans, the field-marshal was deprived of most of the supplies, he had relied to use. Nevertheless, due to Anna's personal resolve, a substantial part of Russia's western forces was allocated to Lvov, from where, it had to march east and besiege Azov, according to the plan, drawn by Osterman in the spring of 1735. The command of a 40,000 strong army was invested upon Ukraine's military governor Weissbach. His death, however, significantly changed the situation and Anna summoned Minikh from Poland and gave him the overall command of the Ukrainian forces with the chance to choose whether he would strike Azov in the autumn of 1735 or he would wait for the spring of 1736, gathering additional troops and supplies. Minikh was well aware that his logistics and the lack of heavy artillery would prevent him from taking Azov in 1735.[12] By the time the Russians were able to muster their forces, it was already August and instead of risking a troublesome march from Ukraine to the Don, Minikh decided to launch a surprise attack on the Crimean Tatars, by sending

[9] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 90; Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 181; see also the previous chapter on the Persian campaign for the possibility of a Russo-Ottoman war in 1722-1724.
[10] During the War of the Polish Succession, on several occasions the French diplomacy would,try to persuade the Porte to engage itself in a war against Austria and Russia, but to no avail.
[11] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 181-2.
[12] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 190.

Lieutenant general Leontyev against Perekop – the narrow isthmus which links Crimea to Europe's mainland. Minikh was convinced that while Qalpan II Girei (r. 1769-1770) was away with the bulk of his forces, the Russians would be able to capture Perekop and invade Tatar heartlands.[13] However, the preparations for this invasion took a month and a half, and it was not until 1st October that Leontyev could march his men south.[14] The army numbered some 28,000 of whom 8,000 were Cossacks irregulars.[15]

### 5.3. Leontyev's Campaign of 1735

The march of Leontyev's troops began on the first day of October and it took five days for the army to reach the steppe south of the Orel River. According to Manstein, Leontyev was ordered to ravage the Crimean lands, put them to the sword and release any Russian captives he could find, as well as to "exterminate the Nogai-Tatars, who inhabit the deserts and steps, between Ukraine and Crimea".[16]

On 6th October, the Russians began crossing the dry, waterless grasslands, which were burnt by the Tatars during the summer. Lack of water and fodder for the horses began to take its toll on the army. Although Leontyev's men were able to capture several Nogai ulusy in the vicinity of Crimea, the progress south was impossible due to the pouring October rains, which began on 13th and brought the rasputitsa to the Pontic region. Three days later, Leontyev called a meeting of the staff on which was decided to cancel the campaign and return to the Ukrainian line, although the army had almost reached Perekop.[17]

The results of the campaign were far from satisfying – the Russians had lost over 9,000 men due to starvation, thirst, and diseases, as well as 4,000 horses - for the same reasons. In return, over 3,900 Nogai-Tatars have been massacred and their cattle – taken by Leontyev's army.[18] When the Russians

[13] Most of the Tatar hosts had been stuck in the Caucasus, foraging in Circassia and Kabarda after an unsuccessful attempt to reach Armenia and to join the Ottomans in their fight against Persia. Local Russian garrisons were instructed to hamper Tatar progress in any possible situation, and prevent the khan from joining the Turks in Iraq.

[14] This was due to the fact, that Leontyev was he third consecutive commander, bestowed with the position. It took six weeks until the government was able to finally issue Leontyev's credentials following the death of Weissbach and the grave illness, which denied General Douglass the ability to take command of the field army; see Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 91.

[15] B. Davies states that the Russian army numbered 39,795 men and 46 guns; see Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 190. However, he does not cite the source of these figures. According to Manstein, Leontyev's army numbered 28,000 of which 8,000 were Cossacks, but he does not mention of any artillery; see Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 92. Manstein's figures are taken into account in the current dissertation, given the fact that he is the main primary source on the topic.

[16] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 92.

[17] According to Davies, the Russians were ten days away from the isthmus; see Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 191. Manstein notes that the Russians were ten marches away from Perekop; see Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 92.

[18] Davies (Ibid., 191) quotes Manstein's numbers, but estimates Nogai casualties at 1,000, instead of almost 4,000, of whom only few were spared, noted by Manstein (Ibid., 92). On the other hand, Davies gives note of

finally returned to their winter quarters in November, the army was severely mauled by diseases and by the demoralization after the unsuccessful march. Leontyev was court-martialed for the failure but was able to justify himself entirely and to receive a pardon. The blame was thrown on the dead Weissbach for not planning the campaign better.

## 5.4. The Campaign of 1736

*Preparations*

Following Leontyev's disastrous campaign in the fall of 1735 Minikh set forth to prepare meticulously for the next year's season. He was going to receive support from the forces of Hessen-Homburg, situated in Poland, as well as from the regiments, which were pulled out of Dagestan in the wake of the Treaty of Ganja.[19] Although the regiments from Poland moved quite slowly and reached their quarters in Ukraine in the first days of March, Minikh used their slow march to cover the southern border against any Tatar retribution raids in the first months of 1736. As Bayov notes, the purchase of horses was among Minikh's primary concerns.[20] In November and December 1735 over 16,000 mounts were needed the Field-marshal complained that the process of their purchase was too slow. Furthermore, the prices of the animals, both regimental and pack had risen and a single war horse cost approximately 18 rubles, while pack animals worth eight rubles. This task was specifically assigned to the officers. In the dragoon regiments each officer had to purchase 80 war horses and 60 draft animals.[21] The staggering numbers could not be met by local merchants. Thus, the sale of horses outside the borders of the empire, including the animals, bred by the Cossacks and the Kalmyks, was put under ban.

Regarding weaponry, Minikh issued a new model of cavalry swords, which had new design and replaced the old rapiers. According to the Field-marshal the new swords were going to be more useful against the enemies the Russians were about to face. The army was also armed with 15,000 new muskets, some of which were produced in Tula while others were bought from Saxony. This resulted in weapons with different calibers, even among members

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4,000 horses, which died by 17th October, while Manstein only mentions that 1,000 died from the snow and frost on the morning of 17th.

[19] The regiments were as follows: From Poland-Lithuania – Dragoon regiments – Olonetskiy, Novotroitsky, Kievskiy, Lutskiy, Troitskiy, Ingermanlandskiy, Permskiy, Narvskiy; Infantry regiments – Pervyy Moskovskiy, Yaroslavskiy, Vladimirskiy, Schlisselyburgskiy, Vologodskiy, Keksgolymskiy, Sibirskiy, Nevskiy, Permskiy, Sankty-Peterburgskiy, Vyatskiy. Additional regiments from Poland – Dragoon - Kargopolyskiy, Tverskoy, Vladimirskiy, Sankty-Peterburgskiy, Tobolskiy; Infantry – Tobolskiy, Narvskiy, Byalozerskiy, Velikolutskiy, Smolenskiy, Butyrskiy, Uglitskiy, Astrakhanskiy, Ladozhkiy; Regiments from Persia – Dragoon – Nizhegorodskiy, Kazanskiy, Pskovskiy; Infantry – Dagestanskiy, Kabardinskiy, Tenginskiy, Derbentskiy, Apsheronskiy, Nasheburgskiy; In total 16 Dragoon regiments and 26 Infantry regiments; see Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, Note 4 for part I of Chapter III, 77 of the Appendix.

[20] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 188-9.

[21] Ibid.

of one and the same regiment.[22] All older weapons – both guns and swords, were donated to the Land Militia of Ukraine. To avoid the troubles of the Pruth Campaign, related to the numerical superiority of enemy cavalry, Minikh issued an order, according to which each regiment had to carry 288 pikes, and over 1,000 other spears and wooden stakes, which were going to be used by the infantry in case of cavalry attacks.[23] The Russians were also going to use the old tactic of gulyay gorod-s, often applied by Peter in the course of the Great Northern War. Further, specific orders were issued concerning the baggage train, which was to be supplemented by special carriages, transporting water supplies, as well as additional carts for the pikes and steaks of the infantry. Officers were to limit the volume of belongings and supplies they could carry.

By the time the army was set in motion, the army was not yet fully equipted and the Russians lacked 5,808 guns, 2,130 pistols, 1,578 swords and sabers, 1,206 saddles and 351 tents.[24] New uniforms and clothing were also not sufficient since some of the regiments had to be supplied with uniforms, coming from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Riga and Smolensk.

Before the launching of the actual campaign, Minikh had made some sophisticated calculations and sent a report to the capital, listing the amount of troops that, according to him, would be sufficient for the campaign in 1736. For the Crimea's march, Minikh envisioned a Dnieper army, comprising of 19 dragoon regiments, each consisting of 1,035 men and officers (19,665 men), 18 infantry regiments, each comprising of 1,354 soldiers and officers (24,372 men), 8 Land Militia horse regiments and 2 Land Militia foot regiments (10,000 troops in total), a hussar regiment of 500 soldiers, as well as free companies of the regular regiments, also numbering 500. Apart from these 55,037 regular troops, Minikh also included a strong irregular corps, namely 4,000 Don Cossacks, 16,000 Malorossiyskiy Cossacks, 8,700 Slobodskie Cossacks, 150 Chyornyy Dol Kalmyks, 180 men of the Pavlovsk Companion regiment and 6,000 Zaporozhians, all in all, 35,030 men. Thus, the combined number of regular and irregular troops was 90,067 of which almost 50,000 were cavalry. Also, the army was supposed to have an artillery train of 48 regimental and 18 field guns (66 in total), serviced by 200 men.

The second army, which had to descend on Azov and take it, had to have the following composition: 5 dragoon regiments of 1,035 soldiers each (5,175 men in total), 18 infantry regiments of 1,354 men each (24,372 men), one garrison dragoon regiment (1,035 men) and 5 garrison infantry regiments of 1,354 troops each (6,770 men). These 37,352 regulars were to be supported by 8,000 Don Cossacks and 284 guns, of which only 36 belonged to the regiments

[22] Ibid., 189.

[23] Ibid. Manstein only mentions that each regiment was supposed to carry 350 pikes as well as 20 *chevaux de frises*, which were also used to protect the camp, during rests. What Manstein has in mind is probably the gulyay-gorod, which was already discussed in Chapter I. Davies quotes Manstein's figures; see Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 192.

[24] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 191.

while the rest were siege artillery. The total amount of men, who were to be sent against Azov, was supposedly 45,352 strong.[25]

As it is clearly seen, the core strength on the Crimean Theater had to be the massive horse contingent, while on the Azov front the Russians were going to count on the siege guns and the strong garrison corps, which had to protect the besieging army from enemy raids, which were constant during Peter's campaigns in 1695-1697. Although Minikh is often criticized by Soviet historiography, for trying to impose foreign military manners on the native development of combat practices, according to these figures it is evident that the Field-marshal went through a lot of trouble to correct the errors, made by his predecessors during the previous campaigns in the south.

*The campaign*

Minikh departed from his winter quarters in Izyum at the beginning of March 1736 and arrived at St. Anna's fort. There he was surprised to find that out of the expected 10,000 troops (seven regiments) there were only 3,000 fit for combat. The others were either sick or sent to retrieve supplies from the local areas, since the garrison had been feeding on sukhari for the past two months.[26] Minikh did not waste time and decided to gather whatever force he could muster and marched against Azov immediately while the main force under Peter von Lacy was to arrive later on. The Field-marshal had received intelligence that the Ottoman garrison of Azov was just 3,000 men strong, 1,000 of which were irregulars and Tatars.[27] Furthermore, the bad weather in the Black Sea would prevent the arrival sea of reinforcements via sea. On the other hand, with the advent of spring, the grass had begun to grow in the Don Steppe, and Minikh calculated that it would suffice for the fodder of the cavalry. Furthermore, the ground was already softening after the winter frosts and was suitable for the digging of earthworks and trenches. With these factors in mind, Minikh assembled six regiments of infantry and a cavalry contingent of some 2,200 Cossacks and set forth toward Azov.[28] A detachment of 1,000 Cossacks was sent on the left bank of the Don to counter any attempts from the Kuban Tatars to relieve the siege. By the beginning of May, these men were to be further supplemented by 3,000 Cossacks and 20,000 Kalmyks. At the same time, Minikh sent a vanguard of 600 infantry and 1,200 Cossacks under G.M. von Spereiter to observe Azov and to cease any enemy attempt for scouting.[29]

[25] Ibid., 203-5.
[26] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 207-8.
[27] This proved to be false. The Ottoman forces numbered well over 5,000, with a substantial share of yeniçeri.
[28] Minikh was able to gather 9,250 men, of whom 5,800 were regular infantry and 2,200 were Cossacks; He expected that these forces would be supplemented by another 9,250 men - 4,925 infantry and dragoons and 5,000 Don Cossacks. These were expected to arrive at Azov by the end of March, raising the total force to 18 500 men; see Bayov, *Russkaya armiya, 210*.
[29] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 99. Exact numbers are given in *Khronologicheskiy ukazately voennykh deystviy russkoy armii i flota, part I 1695-1800*, (St. Petersburg, 1908), 50. There is a mismatching of dates –

Spereiter's troops advanced to the town and after meeting no enemy resistance, stormed and on 19th March took two enemy watchtowers (*kalancha*), followed by the capture of Fort Tulip (*Lyutik*) on the 23rd, after a successful night attack. The fall of the Lyutik fort gave Minikh the opportunity to begin the full circumvallation of Azov and also added 20 more guns to the Russian siege train.[30] Spereiter proved quite successful – he was able to capture the watchtowers without the loss of a single man, and Fort Lyutik was subdued with only a lieutenant and three troops killed.[31] The Ottomans lost between 50 and 100 killed and over 50 captured, along with substantial amounts of provisions and munitions.[32]

Minikh left Azov and returned to Ukraine at the end of March, being replaced by General Vasiliy Levashov, who was to command the blockade until the arrival of Lacy with the main bulk of the siege artillery. Before he set forth, Minikh made meticulous preparations, regarding the erection of defensive positions for his camp and buttressing the protection of his lines of communication with the St. Anna fort. The Field-marshal also strengthened the Azov corps with 60 guns, brought from St. Anna and sent a detachment of 1,000 well-armed Cossacks on a flotilla of riverboats to blockade the mouth of Don and of Myortvyy Donets, preventing the shipment of any supplies from the Azov Sea. Furthermore, Minikh issued a complete set of instructions regarding: army disposition, digging of trenches and lines of circumvallation, distribution of the batteries, as well as allocation of garrisons and amount of cannons, necessary for strengthening the watchtowers and the Lyutik fort. These instructions were to serve Levashov until the arrival of Lacy, who was to take full command of the siege. Minikh was determined not to leave anything to chance. He was prepared in advance for all possible issues that could occur, including response to enemy sorties and the establishment of a regular postal service.[33]

The month of April was spent in finishing the trenches and lines, projected by Minikh and in deflecting enemy sorties, which took place on 3rd, 5th, and 25th. The first sortie was carried out by 600 Turks – half of whom were infantry and the rest – cavalry. They attacked a Russian supply train, protected by a company of footmen. The Russians were able to create a wagenburg out of the supply wagons and to repel enemy attacks, which continued for two hours and ended with the arrival of a Cossack detachment. The next sortie from 5th

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Manstein states that Minikh has crossed Don on 27th March and that Lyutik was captured on 3rd April. According to the *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel* and A. Bayov, Lyutik was captured on 23rd, while the watchtowers fell on the night of 19th and 20th of March. It is possible, that the English translation of Manstein's memoirs was corrected accordin to the Georgian Calendar.

[30] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 213.

[31] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 100.

[32] Russia's official declaration of war was issued in the middle of March, 1736 and so the paşa of Azov did not have any idea of what the Russians were planning. Military drills of the border regiments were annual near the Russo-Ottoman border and the Turks were not very suspicious of Minikh's maneuvers. (Ibid., 99).

[33] For a detailed description of Minikh's instructions, see Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 214-6.

April was carried out by a force of 1,000 yeniçeri and 600 horsemen, who attacked the Russian trenches, which the troops were still digging on the right flank of the army. The garrison units were quick to respond and despite the fearsome charges of the kapukulu ocakları, the Turks were beaten back, after sustaining over 100 casualties, with the Russians losing only 17 men.[34] The final sortie was carried out by several hundred Tatars, who were ambushed and soundly defeated by a corps of 400 Cossacks, sent by Levashov.

When General P. von Lacy reached Azov on 4th May, following a troubled ride across Ukraine, he set forth to inspect the siege and review the state of the army.[35] What Lacy concluded after the revision was that the army was lacking personnel. Of the expected 18,500 men, only 11,874 were present. Of them, 8,493 were regulars and 3,381 - Kalmyks and Cossacks, of whom only 1,044 were horsemen. Out of the overall regular troops, 700 were sick after month and a half of military action, which demonstrates the low level of medical support and sanitation among the rank and file, allocated in the trenches and camps around Azov.[36]

The sieges continued throughout May with no substantial success, the trench work proceeding slowly. The army had to struggle with the constant lack of bread, uniforms and the significant delay in payment.[37] Lacy was forced to mobilize any available source of provisions and to redistribute the weapons among the troops, due to lack of muskets and rapiers. When guns were not available, soldiers were armed with pikes. On the other hand, as Lacy was to discover, from 5th May the Ottoman garrison was in a good position, with enough supplies and stationed in fortifications, which were in a superb state. [38] It turned out that Minikh, although right in his decision to exploit the unpreparedness of the Ottomans, failed in his calculation of the available provisions and of the capacity of Russian logistics to resupply the troops once Azov was blockaded.

On 8th May the Turks renewed their struggle with a new sortie, in which 500 footmen and 300 horsemen attacked a detachment of 150 grenadiers on the Russian left flank. The grenadiers were able to repel the enemy, inflicting heavy losses, while losing only 5 killed and 64 wounded. Following this sortie, Lacy issued an order according to which even workers in the trenches must wear arms and in case of a new sortie the entire army must be ready to respond. On the next day, the river fleet from Voronezh arrived, comprised of six galleys and nine gun-rafts, along with smaller vessels, all under the command of Rear admiral Bredal. Lacy sent Bredal to blockade the Don with his fleet, armed with additional guns. These vessels were allocated at the mouth of the Don to prevent

[34] Ibid., 218.
[35] Lacy was ambushed in the steppe, south of the Ukrain Line and was almost captured by the Tatars, loosing 20 of his 40 men escort, 10,000 rubles and most of his personal belongings. Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 219.
[37] Some of the engineers had not received money since January 1736.
[38] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 220-1.

any relief coming from the Azov Sea. The decision turned out to be most fortunate for the Russians, since the main Ottoman fleet, under the Kapudan Paşa Canım Hoca Mehmed Paşa arrived a day later. His ships, however, could not enter the shallow waters of Don's mouth, and the heavy fire from the Russian fleet prevented a landfall from the Ottoman marines. Canım Hoca, unable to take further action had to sail back to Istanbul, leaving Azov to its fate.[39]

On the 16th, the Ottomans carried out another major sortie, which included 2,000 footmen and cavalry, which attacked the Russian left flank. Following a hard-fought combat, the Russians prevailed after Lacy personally led 500 grenadiers in a flanking manoeuvre. The Ottomans were beaten back with heavy losses while the Russians lost 212 men, of who 21 were killed and the rest – wounded.[40] This was followed by a new surprise attack on behalf of the Turks, which took place on 3rd June. In the course of the assault the Turks inflicted a severe blow on the Russians by killing 33 men and wounding 823. The incursion was finally driven back, with some 100 Ottoman troops killed.[41]

The siege continued until the last weeks of June. The Russians were able to progress further with their earthworks and batteries, and on 8th June, a shell from a siege gun detonated Azov's gunpowder supply depots. The Turks held for ten more days. Then during one night attack, after a breach in the outer defenses, the Russians were able to capture a position on one of Azov's bastions. Two days later the commanding officer of the Ottoman garrison surrendered the town's keys.After that his troops were allowed to leave the fortress and the Russians finally occupied Azov on 21st June 1736. During the siege, between 8th May and 20th June, the Russians lost 301 killed, died of their wounds or missing and 1,238 wounded. The strength of the army had increased from an initial force of 11,874 at the beginning of May to 28,000 at the end of June, with a total of 135 guns taking part in the sieges.[42] Compared to the preliminary numbers, calculated by Minikh, the actual strength of the Don Army never reached even 50 per cent of the estimated figures. Nevertheless, the Russians achieved their goal even with such a minimal force, against a garrison, which was bigger than the one encountered by Peter four decades ago.[43]

After the quartering of the garrison troops (four regiments), Lacy, mustering the bulk of the Don Army, set forth to join Minikh's main army on

[39] This action was probably the reason for his dismissal from office, after serving three times as Kapudan Paşa (supreme commander of the Ottoman fleet); K. M. Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century*. (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991), 428.

[40] *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel*, 50; Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 222.

[41] Ibid., 50-1; Bayov, *Ruskaya armiya*, 224; The total number of casualties is the same – 856, what differs is that according to the *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel*, the killed were 41, while Bayov gives 33.

[42] Davies (*Empire and Military Revolution*, 193) incorrectly quotes Bayov, stating that the total of the Don Army numbered 25,000, in fact the number is 28,000 (Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 226). Davies also incorrectly cites Manstein's memoirs, were no mention of a total Russian force under Azov is presented (Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 126-7 as cited by Davies).

[43] The initial garrison comprised of 5,890 troops, of whom 1,528 were killed and 899 died from disease, along with 1,200 of the civilians. Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 226-8.

the Dnieper to strengthen the Field-marshal's force in its invasion of Crimea. As it turned out, this was not destined to happen and in August, P. von Lacy retreated with his limited forces, heading back to Izyum for winter quarters.

While Levashov and later Lacy were busy taking Azov, Minikh returned to Ukraine to direct and lead the main army personally against the Crimean Khanate. He reached Tsarichanka on the Dnieper River on 7th April and was unpleasantly surprised to find out that from the anticipated army, which had to descend on Crimea in full strength, only nine infantry, and nine dragoon regiments were present.[44] They were ill-equipped and their baggage trains was still being suppliedaccording to Minikh's orders. The soldiers also lacked uniforms and Prince Trubetskoy was still struggling to provide all the necessary supplies.[45] Given the circumstances, Minikh decided to rush whatever forces he could muster and replace strength with surprise as his main advantage. By the time the army set forth, in was comprised of 10 dragoon and 15 infantry regiments available, 28,238 men in total, along with 10,000 troops from the Land Militia, 300 hussars and Wallachians, 3,200 Zaporozhian Cossacks, 12,730 Malorossiyskiy (Ukrainian) Cossacks, 2,360 Slobodskiy Cossacks, 250 Chuguevskiy Cossacks and 1,000 artillerymen and pontoon company, altogether 58,078 soldiers and officers.[46] As Bayov notes, only half of this force was consisted of regular troops, since the quality of the Land Militia was far from that of the regular field regiments, although Manstein held the militia in high esteem. At least 55 per cent of the army was comprised of irregular and regular cavalry which number was more or less according to Minikh's preliminary calculations. The force, gathered for the capture of Crimea, was over one-third smaller, than the one, anticipated by the field-marshal in his initial plans.

Minikh again issued extensive instructions for his subordinates, regarding the size of the officers' baggage, the way the supply train had to be prepared, the usage of water-barrels, which were to be used as pontoons, once they were emptied. At the beginning of May, the weather was as fine as a general could desire, and the army was well supplied and in an excellent mood for a campaign as Minikh concluded.[47] Manstein was more realistic in his assessment. According to the Prussian officer, the army still lacked supplies in the long term, and Minikh counted on Prince Trubetskoy to send regular caravans with munitions and food as soon as these commodities were assembled on the

[44] 18th according to the Gregorian version, used in the 1856's edition of Manstein's memoirs. I will use the Russian version of the dates, as was in the previous chapter. Manstein's dates differ exactly 11 days.
[45] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 231.
[46] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 239; According to Manstein, there were 12 dragoon regiments, 15 infantry regiments, 10 Land Militia regiments, 10 squadrons of hussars, 12,000 Cossacks (5,000 from Don, 3,000 Zaporozhians and the rest from Ukraine), or an overall of 54,000 troops and officers; see Manstein, *Contemporar Memoirs*, 100-1; Bobrovskiy (*Istoriya*, part II, 132) also gives 58,078 in total, listing them as 17 infantry and 17 dragoon regiments and noting that the Butyrskiy Regiment, although it should have had 1,537 soldiers and staff, was undermanned and had just 1429 men in its ranks. The situation was probably he same in the other regiments; The *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel* (p.52) gives the same numbers as Bayov. Davies (*Empire and Military Revolution*, 195), uses Bayov's figures as well.
[47] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 239.

Ukraine line. Since transportation was rather limited, due to Minikh's desire to bring as few carts as possible, and also due to the constant lack of vehicles, Trubetskoy had to organize transportation for the move, which he failed to do. As Manstein notes, the arrangement of the supply train was not yet completed, when the army returned from Crimea.[48] In addition, Minikh, who had never fought on the Pontic Steppe, was convinced that there would be enough fodder for the animals in the early months of summer and that the abundant harvest, gathered in 1735 by the Crimeans would suffice for the upkeep of the Russian army.[49]

The army departed Tsarichanka between 11th and 19th April and reached the edges of the steppe on 5th May. Three days later, the vanguard force, comprised mostly of Cossacks met large Tatar force (15-20,000 men), which was defeated by the arrival of cavalry reinforcements from the main army. The Tatars drew back and retreated in Perekop. The Tatar attack was launched from Qaplan II Girei's main force came after the vanguard squadrons had discovered the location of the Crimeans at Chyornyy Dol (Black Valley). The Khan decided to avoid confrontation with the advancing Russian forces and withdrew his army. Fearing another attack from the Tatar cavalry, Minikh formed his army in close order into a giant, hollow square, with the supply train in the middle and with the dragoons at the corners.[50] The Field-marshal would often use this formation during the campaign. Its composition, although limiting the dangers of enemy raids significantly hampered the movement of the troops.

The Russians finally reached Perekop on 17th May and stormed the fortification line two days later, using 30,000 men, divided into six columns.[51] The rapid success strengthened Minikh's resolve to march forward and to try to occupy all of Crimea before the Ottomans could redirect their military support from Azov toward Kaffa. He left a small garrison to occupy Perekop and dispatched General Leontyev with 10,000 troops and 3,000 Cossacks to hold Kinburn and prevent the Budjak Tatars from coming to their khan's aid. Leontyev took the fortress without a single shot, allowing its small garrison to retreat to Ochakov on the opposite bank of the Dnieper. Leontyev took possession of 49 guns, 3,000 horses, 500 cattle and 30,000 sheep.[52]

On 22nd May, Minikh summoned a war council, which had to decide the army's next moves. The generals, headed by the prince of Hessen-Homburg, demanded that the Russians should maintain their position on the Perekop line until more supplies were sent from Ukraine by Trubetskoy, given the fact that the army had provisions for less than two weeks.[53] The generals proposed some raiding parties to be sent to gather supplies and ravage Tatar territory.

[48] Manstein, *Contemporay Memoirs*, 101.
[49] Minikh drew his information from Cossack intelligence gathered in the previous months.
[50] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya, vol. 2*, 133; Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 196.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 197.
[53] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 256.

Minikh, on the other hand, stated that the Russians had built a good momentum with their swift taking of Perekop and that no time should be wasted in order for the campaign to be brought to a successful end. Minikh believed that the army should capture the coastal settlements and occupy the capital Bakhchisaray before the Ottomans could reinforce the Tatars with a substantial number of yeniçeri and other infantry units, which would supplement the predominantly cavalry-based Crimean army. The Field-marshal was still convinced that the troops could be fed from the food storages of the local population and that the grass, still growing in mid spring, could support the horses without the constant flow of food and fodder from Ukraine. Minikh overrode his generals and marched his men forward, after leaving garrisons in Perekop, Kinburn, and Kazikerman. The Field-marshal was sure that Lacy had already taken Azov and that he would arrive soon with a substantial part of the Don Army.

The army continued its campaign and on 7th June, after repelling several harassing raids by small Tatar units, the Russians took the position in the coastal town of Evpatoriya.[54] They arrived in a "ghost town" as most of the town's residents and the entire garrison had fled days in advance. Here, Minikh captured grain and rice stores, which would suffice his army for additional twenty-four days and thus he felt vindicated by his earlier perception. Still, Hessen-Homburg and some of the generals felt substantial doubt about the future success of the expedition, noting that dysentery had begun to take its toll on the soldiers.[55] Water was also hard to find as there were just three small streams with drinkable waterand most of the wells along the route had been poisoned by the Tatars.

The last significant success on Russians' behalf came on 16th June when their main force held off a Tatar advance near Bakhchisaray while a small detachment of infantry and dragoons captured the city. Following the Tatar retreat, Bakhchisaray was partialy burnt, with the khan's palace being destroyed, along with most of the supplies, gathered in the city. Following the capture of the enemy capital, Minikh decided to continue his movement toward Kaffa, and on 21st June dispatched a 10,000-strong force of Cossacks and infantry under generals Gustav von Biron and Ismailov to capture Aqmescit (Simferopol). The town was also emptied of its population, and the Russians burned it to the ground, after which they returned to the main army.

At that point, Minikh had to acknowledge the impossibility of further advance. One-third of the army was already sick, with dysentery spreading rapidly amongst the troops.[56] Since no supplies were found in Bakhchisaray or Aqmescit, the Russians were dangerously short of food, and the provision of

[54] During this march, the army was again using a square formation, as noted above; see Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 111.
[55] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 198.
[56] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, vol. 2, 134.

fresh water turned into a problem of monstrous proportions. Both animals and men were dying from thirst and heat, and the morale of the entire army was dwindling day by day. Given the circumstances and the fact that no decisive victory could be won against the Tatars, Minikh decided to abort the campaign and evacuate his troops before a strong Ottoman army could be formed in Kaffa. On 26th June, the Russians began their march back to Ukraine, while Lacy was just marching his regiments out of Azov to join the campaign against the Tatars. The army reached Perekop on 6th July, constantly harassed by Tatar raiding parties. Minikh's retreat was perceived as a failure in St. Petersburg, and the Field-marshal was urged to start a new offensive in August or September, but he was well aware that his troops were worn out, and no adequate actions could be carried out before 1737. During the months of July and August, Minikh decided that his forces were insufficient for the upholding of Kinburn and Perekop, and he ordered the two fortifications to be destroyed, after which the main army retreated further north into Ukraine where it took winter quarters. After reviewing his shattered units, Minikh found out that he had lost 30,000 men, most of them due to dysentery, hunger, and thirst.[57] Without receiving a single blow on the battlefield, the Russians had sustained over 50 per cent casualties of their entire force, which easily could count as a military disaster. In return, Minikh was unable to extend Russian holdings, nor defeat the Tatars or their Ottoman allies. In the end, the Russians had to rebuild their forces completely if they wanted to take on the initiative in the following campaign, as the Tatars would just follow their habit of returning and rebuilding their settlements. The fall of Azov was also not as grave on Ottoman positions in the Black Sea as before since no major program for the construction of the Black Sea Fleet was issued by St. Petersburg. Thus, the situation at the end of 1736 differed little from the one in the spring of 1735.

## 5.5. The Campaign of 1737

### *Preparations*

The establishment of the army for the next year's campaign began while Minikh's troops were still on the field. Osterman, the energetic Russian Chancellor, set forth to bring Austria into the war with the Turks, stressing on the fact that according to the Treaty of 1726 between the two states the Habsburgs had to send an auxilliary contingent to Russia's war efforts in case of a conflict with the Ottomans. In 1736 the Austrians had managed to avoid participation, using the war exhaustion from the conflict with France as a pretext. Russian historiography has developed a rather critical perspective toward Austrian actions. A. Bayov accuses the Habsburgs of being sagacious

[57] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs* 133.

and having second thoughts against a possible Russian expansion in the Black Sea region. He even states that the Austrians also sought to claim an access on the Black Sea, a thesis that hardly has any real dimensions. The Austrians were, however, keen on acquiring the right to serve as the protector of all Christians in the Ottoman Empire – a position desired also by Russia. Therefore, Vienna would try to use its military card only as a possible threat and would prefer to win the war on the diplomatic front. The rapid change in the situation in Persia would bring immediate shifts in the policy of Southesastern Europe. Following a series of victories over the Ottomans and his own internal opponents, Nadir Shah decided to overthrow the last legitimate Safavid ruler – the infant Abbas III (r. 1732-1736) and to affirm himself as the new overlord of Persia. This led to a series of revolts in Persia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Afghanistan, with which the new shah had to deal. This, in turn, initiated peace talks between Nadir Shah and the Sublime Porte, which would eventually lead to the Treaty of Constantinople, which restored the borders of 1722 and allowed the Ottomans to concentrate all of their resources toward the western fronts. Given the circumstances, Osterman was able to convince the Austrians that the time for talks was over, and more direct actions were required. The Chancellor reminded Vienna that until this moment Russia had fulfilled all of the arrangements of the 1726 Treaty. Finally, the Habsburgs had to give in and agreed to join the war in 1737. A military convention was signed on 29th December 1736, stating that the two sides would mutually support one another and that neither would be left to face the enemy by itself. In addition, it stated that neither Austria, nor Russia would sign a separate peace.[58]

After diplomatic arrangements had been carried out, the military personnel began to prepare for its field tasks. In order to fill in the depleted regiments, an order was issued according to which 14,800 garrison troops from Moscow, Smolensk, Voronezh, and Archangelsk were going to be mobilized. There was a particular note that these men had to be the finest, most battle-ready and well-suited for marching among these garrisons.[59] Since this figures were insufficient to fill in the losses, sustained in Crimea, and also to bring men from the garrisons in Ukraine, in the autumn of 1736 a draft was held, and it resulted in 45,167 fresh recruits.[60] The cavalry also had to be equipped with horses, which were gathered from the population of the Sibir governorate, the "Lower cities" (along the Volga), as well as from the people of southern Russia which were attached to the upkeep of the Land Militia. According to A. Bayov, every

[58] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 300; B. Davies gives the date 9th January 1737, which is according to the New Style; see Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 201. While Bayov notes that in case of an Ottoman attack on Hungary Austria would require from Russia to invade Moldavia, Davies states that the Moldavian clause was linked to a possible Ottoman invasion of Transylvania. Given the fact that the Ottomans had never before invaded Transylvania and had always marched into Hungary when fighting the Habsburgs, Bayov's analysis of the text seems more accurate.

[59] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 313.

[60] See Table 2 in the Appendix for Chapter I.

235 people had to provide one horse for the army. Belgorod was chosen as the central gathering point, from where animals were to be assigned to the separate regiments. Since the collection of horses went slowly and not quite adequately, in 1737, it was ordered that the governors and voevodi, as well as the regimental commanders should purchase additional horses, mainly from the Kalmyk settlements in the Eastern Pontic Steppe.[61] An interesting issue came from the fact that *pomeshtik-s* in Ukraine preferred to pay the value of a horse in rubles instead of providing actual mounts. Minikh had to instruct repeatedly his men not to take the money but to recruit real animals. Moreover, he allowed the usage of military escort for the officers, sent to provide the mounts. By the beginning of May, there were 16,000 horses provided, but still both dragoon and infantry regiments lacked mounts and pack animals.[62] It was in June when the infantry was finally supplied with the requisite number of horses, but the Land Militia regiments were still in need. In order to provide the necessary mounts, special measures were applied, mobilizing horses from the clergy, as well as placing a ban on horse trade until the army numbers were amassed. Officers were also expected to send some of their own animals. Oxen for the supply train were also in dire need. In April, it was calculated that the army required 29,466 pairs, while in the first week of June, there were only 26,817 available.[63]

In 1737, weapons were redistributed again. New muskets were brought, chiefly from Tula, but also, from the armories in Moscow, and a certain amount were purchased from Saxony. Minikh decided to take the rapiers away from the infantry and hand them to the dragoons, most of who were still armed with old swords and sabers. The Field-marshal claimed that the infantry would seldom use rapiers since they were accustomed to using bayonets in hand-to-hand combat and that the swords only served as additional burden during marching. All old handguns which could be spared were given to the Land Militia units, who were, again, in need of more arms. Minikh strengthened his determination to equip the infantry with pikes with which to protect the troops from the predominantly cavalry armies of the Tatars. He doubled the issued pikes per regiment, from 144 in 1736 to 288 in 1737. Given the bad experience with dysentery, Minikh placed great emphasis on the medical support of the army and the field physicians began to supply their stores as early as September 1736. Apart from the standard medicines, each regiment had a separate supply of wine, vinegar, and pepper used to fix problems with the stomach and to treat dehydrationand high temperature during the summer.[64]

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[61] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 315-16.

[62] From 15th May, the following regiments needed horses: Dragoons – Moscow Reg. – 81, Kiev Reg. – 77, Troitskiy Reg. – 182, Narva Reg. – 86, Peterburg Reg - 135, Ingermanland Reg. – 20, Ryazan Reg. - 239, Tobolsk Reg. – 31, Kargopolsk Reg. – 25 (876 in total); Infantry – Petersburg inf. Reg. - 278, Vladimir Reg. – 50, Yaroslav Reg. - 244, Sibir Reg. – 30, Tobolsk reg. – 57, Keksgolm Reg. – 203, Narva inf. Reg. – 32 (894 in total) or an overall of 1,770 horses were further needed; see Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, Appendix, Note 96, 119.

[63] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 317.

[64] Ibid., 320-21.

In the second half of May, the armies of Russia were more or less ready to depart. Following a successful Kalmyk raid on the Kuban Steppe in the spring of 1736, the local Tatars pledged their allegiance to the Russians and thus the Azov front was significantly relieved from pressure. Then it was then decided that the Russians would attack in two directions – the main army under Minikh would strike the Ottoman fortress of Ochakov, while a smaller force under Lacy would depart from the Don region and, supported by a fleet of 500 small vessels, would invade Crimea through the demolished fortification of Perekop. It was expected that the enemy resistence would not be very significant, and Minikh believed that the Ottomans, preoccupied with the war against Russia and Austria, would not support the Tatars with any units. In the winter of 1736/7 the military intelligence stated that the Turks possessed a force of 20,000 men in Babadag in the Danube Delta and some 14-20,000 troops in garrisons in Jedisan, which were to be supplemented by 35,000 soldiers from Egypt in the summer of 1737, as well as 6,000 Bosnians and a large number of Balkan and Anatolian troops, which could bring the overall strength of the Ottoman army in Bessarabiato 80,000-90,000 men .[65] At the same time, the Crimean Tatars were expected to mobilize around 85,000 men, which had to support the Ottoman struggle with Russia, to protect Crimea and also to attack the Kuban Steppe, reclaiming it from the Kalmyks.

When on 21st May the army finally departed, Minikh was supposed to command a force of 30 infantry regiments, comprised of 1,686 men each (50,580 troops), along with 3 guard battalions (2,757 soldiers) for the infantry. In addition he was going to have also 21 dragoon regiments of 1,231 each (25,851 men), 401 guard cavalrymen and 9 regiments of mounted Land Militia with 1,077 men per regiment (9,693 men in total) or a total of 35,945 for the cavalry. Apart from these regular units, there were also over 13,000 Cossacks, as well as hussars and Wallachians, Kalmyks.The artillery corps comprised of 2,842 men, who serviced 389 field and siege guns as well as grenade mortars. Thus, the total amount of troops under the Field-marshal was supposed to be 92,124 regulars and over 13,000 irregulars, not counting the Kalmyks.[66] In fact, it did not exceed 70,000, since some of the regiments were still not in full strength, many of the Cossacks had not arrived and a substantial part of the army was sick, so the ill troops had to be left behind.[67] Once again Minikh was going to fight with an incomplete army.

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[65] Ibid., 345.

[66] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 357-85; His numbers, however, do not sum up since the actual number of regulars and artillery men calculated is 92,124 instead of the 89,282 as he notes. He also calculates 6-7,000 Don Cossacks, who were to join Lacy's army.

[67] 20 dragoon regiments, 29 infantry regiments, 2 guards and 1 cuirassier squadrons, 9 Land Militia regiments, 1,600 hussars and 13,000 Cossacks; see A. Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 371. Manstein proposes different figures - 63 battalions of foot, two squadrons of horse-guards, 1 squadron of Minikh's cuirassiers, 29 regiments of dragoons (145 squadrons), 3,000 artillery men, 1,500 hussars and over 13,000 Cossacks, or an overall of 60-70,000 men (which matches Bayov's estimate) and 646 guns and mortars of different sizes; see Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*,149). The *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel* lists 3 battalions of the guard's regiments and 2

At the same time, Lacy's smaller army was supposed to have the following numbers – 20 infantry regiments of 1,686 men each (33,720 men), 13 regiments of dragoons and mounted Land Militia, 1,231 men each (16,003 troops), as well as 15-16,000 Cossacks, not counting the Kalmyks and the footmen Cossacks in the fleet. Of the total 49,723 regulars, 9,000 were to be left at Azov as a garrison, and Lacy would only use the other 40,723 as a field force. The artillery train of Lacy's army consisted of over 32 guns and mortars with a different caliber.[68] As in the case of Minikh, Lacy was also going to rely on quite fewer men. Out of the planed 55,000, he set off with just 25,000 regulars and irregulars, and another 10,630 were boarded on the ships, which were to sail through the Azov Sea. In total, 449 vessels were provided, 320 of which would carry the naval contingent across the Azov Sea.[69]

*The campaign*

Minikh's forces departed on the 22nd of May, following the merger of all columns, which set off from Ukraine earlier the same month. The forces had to march to the Bug River and cross it in order to descend on the Ochakov fortress. Following twenty-three days of marching, the Russians finally arrived at the Bug River, which they began crossing on 14th June. Due to the large baggage train and the abundance of guns, the army lost a week in transferring on the other side of the Bug. Since the guns could hardly cross the river, Minikh decided to ship them down the Bug in a prepared flotilla of boats and rafts. Unlike Peter in 1711, the Field-marshal decided to put an extra effort and constructedc a river fleet, which was to supplement the movement of the army.[70] Even at this rate of river and wagon supply, Minikh's army was proceeding slowly, and he decided to leave the heavy guns and part of the baggage train behind, guarded by a quarter of his army under Leontyev. The rest of the army was able to proceed at a greater speed and reached the outskirts of Ochakov on 29th June.

Minikh, having neither actual intelligence about the size of the Ottoman garrison nor knowledge about the actual disposition of its fortifications, decided to opt for immediate assault and not to wait until the heavy siege artillery is shipped to the site. His decision was influenced by the fact that the Ottomans had burned the vicinities of their fortress and the Russians were denied forage

guard squadrons of cavalry, 20 dragoon regiments, 9 Land Militia regiments and 28 infantry regiments, accompanied by 1,600 hussars, 3,000 engineers and artillery men, 13,000 Cossacks, all in all – 60-70,000 troops; see *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel* 55-6. Bobrovskiy mixes the planned number of infantry regiments and the number of dragoon units (30 infantry regiments, 29 cavalry regiments, and three guard battalions) with the actual total of the army, estimating that it did not exceed 70,000; see Bobrovskiy *Istoriya, vol 2*, 135.

[68] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 358-9.

[69] Ibid., 424-5. Manstein notes that Lacy had 13 dragoon regiments, 20 infantry regiments, and 10-12,000 Cossacks and Kalmyks, or up to 40,000 in total; see Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 173.

[70] In total, there were 500 vessels built, which required the labour of over 26,000 workers. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 205.

and wood for the construction of field works. With a substantial part of his supply train still on the road, the Field-marshal considered that a protracted siege would have a devastating effect on his army. What he could not perceive, was that the Ochakov garrison had been reinforced by 20,000 troops and supplied with provisions for months ahead.[71] On the next day, 30th June, the Ottoman garrison committed a sortie, consisted of 15,000 troops, split into two columns, which attacked both Russian's flanks. After two hours of hard fighting, both sides lost around 200 men, and the Turks retreated back to the fortress.[72] On the next day, the Russians found two deserted Ottoman redoubts near the front of Ochakov and used them to install field batteries and began bombarding the town. On the following morning, a fire broke out in the center of Ochakov and Minikh decided that this was his chance to strike at the enemy, while they were struggling to put out the flames. Minikh sent a vanguard of infantry under James Keith to draw enemy fire from the ramparts and to prevent the garrison from fighting the fires in the settlement. Keith's troops advanced, following the field-marshal's command. They climbed the glacis but encountered a ditch, which was a surprise for both Keith and Minikh. The blame goes entirely to the commander-in-chief, who never actually ordered a reconnaissance of the enemy positions. Keith's forces stood exposed to enemy fire but were nevertheless able to inflict severe damage to the Ottoman troops, stationed on the ramparts. After two hours of fighting the Russians began losing heart and some of the troops ran back to the redoubts. At that point the Ottomans started organizing a sortie to finish off Keith's retreating men, but by a stroke of luck, the fires detonated the fortress' powder supply depot, which resulted in up to 6,000 killed and wounded among the Ottomans.[73] The commander of the Turks, *serasker* Muhsinzade Abdullah Paşa waved the white flag and requested for negotiations for the surrender of Ochakov to be opened.

The Russian troops demonstrated great resilience and courage, as well as strict subordination to the orders they had received. Although Minikh's decision to storm the fortress at the wake of the fire was correct, his conduct was nevertheless far from flawless, since the lack of proper reconnaissance of the enemy defenses cost the Russian the lives of many able and valuable troops. Furthermore, if the fire had not destroyed a substantial part of the Ottoman manpower, the sortie, already in the making, could have had devastating results on the Russian army. Minikh, himself, threw his sword to the ground, crying out: "All is lost".[74] The Ottomans lost between 10,000 and 17,000 people due to the fires, the fighting and the explosion of the powder magazines. The Russian

[71] Ibid., 208.
[72] *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel*, 56; Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 208.
[73] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, *vol. 2*, 136.
[74] Ibid; Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 209.

casualties were nearly 3,900 men killed and wounded, of whom 200 were officers of medium and high rank as well as generals. [75]

After the gamble of Minikh paid off to some extent and Ochakov was captured, the Field-marshal decided to continue against Bender, but upon receiving the statistics, the government sent urgent orders that no further march should be undertaken. Then Minikh decided to pulll back to Ukraine, living a garrison unit of some 8,000 men in Ochakov under General Stoffeln. He was to receive further reinforcements in August along with materials and workers for the rebuilding of the devastated town. The living conditions for these unfortunate souls were wretched and at the end of August, Stoffeln commanded less than 5,000 men, of who one-fifth were sick.[76] When Minikh returned to Poltava in September, a revision of the army was carried out, the losses were again staggering – 11,000 regulars and 5,000 Cossacks had died, along with at least 10,000 serfs, taken as caravan workers and laborers. Over 60 per cent of the casualties were again due to diseases.[77]

However, the struggle for Ochakov was not yet done. In October, the Ottomans began their own counteroffensive to retake the stronghold. The Ottomans had brought an army of 20,000 troops, along with 30,000 Tatars to assist them. The expedition was headed by Genç Ali Paşa while the Crimean contingent was commanded by Begli Girei. The first main assault of the fortress was between 16th and 20th October when the Ottomans organized a series of attacks, which were deflected by the garrison. Stoffeln did not stand idle and sent several successful sorties, which caused substantial damage to the besieging army. A second grand assault was carried out on 25th October but was again beaten back by the Russians, who were even able to launch a small counterattack with a unit of 1,000 men under Brigadier Brake.[78] Although Brake lost 150 men, he was able to inflict 2-3,000 casualties on the enemy before falling back to his position. During the next several days the Turks tried to breach the defenses with concentrated bombardment, but to no avail. Thus, on

[75] The casualties (killed, wounded and missing) were actually 3,859 or 3,863. Here is how they are listed by regiments: The guard's battalions: Preobrazhenskiy – 69, Semyonovskiy – 60, Izmailovskiy – 72, Cavalry squadrons – 5; The Dragoon regiments: Moskovskiy – 77; St. Peterburgskiy – 48, Vladimirskiy – 42, Sibirskiy – 24, Kievskiy – 69, Ingermanlandskiy – 28, Kargopolskiy – 66, Tverskiy – 106, Narvskiy – 85, Tobolskiy – 113, Vyatskiy – 44, Ryazanskiy – 67, Ravelskiy – 49, Rizhskiy – 58, Permskiy – 44, Novgorodskiy – 36, Troitskiy – 43, Arkhangelogorodskiy – 39, Lutskiy – 77; The Infantry regiments: Astrakhanskiy – 62, Butyrskiy – 80, Narvskiy – 77, Ladozhskiy – 51, Sibirskiy – 26, Byalozerskiy – 103, St.Peterburgskiy – 23, Vladimirskiy – 22, Ryazanskiy – 59, Keksgolmskiy -36, Vyatskiy -73, Schlisselyburgskiy – 123, Rostovskiy – 107, 1st Moskovskiy - 84, Yaroslavskiy – 135, Voronezhskiy – 143, Kievskiy – 130, Smolenskiy -70, Velikolutskiy -80, Troitskiy – 141, Novgorodskiy – 125, Chernigovskiy -108, 2nd Moskovskiy -34, Koporskiy – 80, Tobolskiy – 85, Arkhangelogorodskiy – 44, Vyborgskiy - 172, Pskovskiy – 67, Suzdalskiy – 86; Land Millitia regiments : Belevskiy – 5, Orlovskiy – 1, Novooskolyskiy – 3, Borisoglebskiy – 2, Putivlyskiy - 4, Kurskiy – 14, Bryanskiy – 10, Sevskiy – 15; Hussars – 5 regiments; see *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel*, 56.

[76] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 210.

[77] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 406; Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya, vol.2*, 137; Manstein, *Contemporary, Memoirs*, 170; Manstein, quoted by Bobrovskiy, estimates that the loss of serf and laborers might account for twice the number of killed troops and Cossacks – that is over 30,000 people.

[78] The "e" in the end of the name should be pronounced as the "e" in "pen".

the 30th, in the wake of an advancing winter, Genç Ali Paşa decided to abort the siege and to disengage his army. His army had suffered substantial losses, and the Ottomans also needed troops in the Balkans in order to face the advancing Austrians.[79]

While the Dniester Army was struggling to sustain its positions in Jedisan, Marshal P. von Lacy's forces were making good progress against Crimea. Given the fact that his army was smaller, hampered by fewer guns and supply carts, Lacy was able to march his army with good speed and reach the coastline north of Crimea on 23rd May, while Minikh was still departing to the steppe. The Tatars, under their Khan Fatih Girei were awaiting Lacy just after Perekop, with 60,000 men, ready to engage in an open battle with the Russians. Lacy surprised everyone by choosing an out-of-the-box approach toward the peninsula. Instead of using the usual Perekop road, Lacy marched his army across the narrow Strait of Genichesk, which separates the Azov Sea from the so-called Rotten Sea. After just a dozen meters of water, the Strait ends at the so-called Arabat Spit – a "tongue" of sand and shells that stretches for tens of kilometers out of the Crimean peninsula, separating the Azov Sea from the series of lagoons and salty lakes to the east. Lacy was probably the first one to use this land bridge into Crimea and his gambit paid off entirely. In the words of Davies, Lacy shamed his generals, who had urged him to fall back on Azov, offering each of them passports and a dragoon escort.[80]

His further march made a shift to the right, crossing the Rotten Sea to deliver a new surprise on the Tatars, who, caught unprepared decided to retreat further south. Lacy's forces continued their advance in Crimea until 13th July when they arrived at the town of Qarasuvbazar. Here the Russians again found a deserted settlement as had happened with Minikh's troops the previous year. On 14th, after observing the area, the Russians discovered a military camp, with up to 15,000 Ottoman troops stationed there. Lacy sent Douglas with 6,000 men and two dragoon regiments to attack them, drive them off and take the town. After an hour of hard-fought offensive, the Russians were able to defeat the Ottomans, expel them and capture Qarasuvbazar. Then Lacy after looting "one of best towns of Crimea" put it on fire.[81]

The following day, Lacy began to move his forces out of Qarasuvbazar, when suddenly a great Tatar force appeared on the opposite bank of the Karas River. Lacy quickly evaluated the situation and decided to strike at the enemy before the Tatars could cross the river and use the plains around Qarasuvbazar as their force was predominantly cavalry. A vanguard of Cossacks and dragoons was sent under Douglas, who attacked the Crimeans, trying to capture their artillery. Although the Cossack attack was repelled, they occupied the enemy

[79] According to B. Davies, the Ottomans lost up to 20,000 killed, wounded and sick; see Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 210.
[80] Ibid., 212.
[81] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 176-8.

long enough for Lacy to advance with the main force and drive the Tatars away by sending the Kalmyks into a flanking manoeuvre. The Crimeans broke their lines and began to retreat, closely pursued by the Kalmyks, who followed them for two days right to the outskirts of Bakhchisaray. Finally, the Kalmyks returned to the main army, bringing over 1,000 captives with them.[82]

While the Kalmyks were chasing the retreating Tatars, on 16th Lacy held a military council. He and his generals were unanimous that the army had to be pulled out of Crimea before the peak of the summer heat in August. Diseases were already spreading among the troops, and water supplies were running low. It was decided that the army should follow the same route it used for advancing into Crimea. As for the main objectives of the campaign – the capture of Kaffa and Yenikale, both fortresses were outside the current reach of the army, and Lacy decided not to risk his.

With the return of the Kalmyks on 17th, Lacy began his march back. To supply his forces, he sent raiding parties, comprised of light units and irregulars, who scorched the area for dozens of kilometers around the main force. In the end, they were able to gather 630,000 oxen and over 100,000 sheep, which provided enough meat for the army until the end of the campaign.[83] The only significant enemy reaction to the movement of the Russian army came on 23rd. While Lacy's men were crossing the Salgur River, the vanguard, comprised of light troops and irregulars, came under attack from a massive Tatar force, supplemented by a strong Ottoman contingent, sent from Kaffa. The irregulars were able to hold their ground until the artillery was placed along the river shores and began bombarding the enemy, inflicting considerable damage, which made the Turks and the Tatars fall back. The Russians went back across the Genichesk Strait and established a camp on the Molochnaya River, where Lacy maintained favorable position, keeping under observation all roads, leading in and out of Crimea. In the beginning of September, one of his scout units was able to capture several Tatars, who claimed that Fatih Girei was unable to march his forces in support of Ochakov due to the presence of Lacy's army. Thus, the Tatars spent August and most of September awaiting for possible new Russian incursion south. Lacy's strategic goals were, therefore, accomplished, for he had provided the main operations along the Dnieper with a secured flank. Lacy finally left his position at the end of September, marching toward Ukraine. In the meantime, he had dispatched half of his Don Cossacks back to the River Don valley, due to a series of Kuban Tatar raids, whose allegiance to Russia turned out to be short-lived. To punish them, a combined Cossack-Kalmyk force, under hetman Frolov and Donduk-Ombo, the leader of the Kalmyks, once again defeated the Kuban Tatars and ravaged their lands.

[82] Ibid., 178; There were several high-ranking Tatar nobles (mizras) among the captives.
[83] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 433.

## 5.6. The Campaign of 1738

*Preparations*

Following the return of the two armies from their military endeavours, Minikh rearranged his regiments along the Ukrainian line to strenghten the defenses of the southern frontier and to prevent Crimean winter raids, which had devastated part of Ukraine in the previous two years. Generals were given greater autonomy of decision, and the Ukrainian Line was divided into several sections to increase the speed of response during enemy attacks. In addition, light cavalry patrols were sent deeper into the steppe to bring early warnings for the approach of enemy forces. The system turned out to work fine and in February the Russians were able to repulse a significant Tatar force, some 40,000 men. Land Militia units were used to defend the fortifications, while after field units served as a strike force.[84] This was the first winter of the war, in which the Tatars could not replenish their losses of cattle and provisions by ravaging the Russian lands. Given the winter operations and the movement of Austrian troops, a new plan was designed for 1738. Again it included actions on two fronts –Lacy was to march in Crimea, while Minikh would lead the main army into Jedisan. The aim of the Field-marshal was to opena corridor for a further march against Moldavia in case of anAustrian spring offensive.

The Russians used the winter to resupply their fleets on the Dnieper and on the Don which had to blockade possible Ottoman incursions, and also to support the lines of communication for the advancing armies during the new campaigning season. Vice-admiral Peter Bredal's fleet was refurnished to support Lacy's new endeavour in Crimea while a Dnieper fleet was arranged by Minikh to protect Ochakov and Kazikerman from a possible Ottoman incursion.

Similar to the previous year, the massive losses during the campaigns, as well as the calculations of the necessary army strength required a new draft to be carried out. In total, for 1738, 51,960 men were taken into service, which was the largest number of recruits taken in a single year ever since Peter began his reforms.[85] According to Davies, a recruit was taken for every 98 households (while this ratio had been 1 per 125 in the previous year).[86] The practice of taking too many people in consecutive years took its toll on the quality of the gathered men, as well as on the speed, with which the draft was carried out. A month after the proclamation of recruitment, Minikh still complained about the lack of eligible troops. Many of the men, taken from the draft were shorter than required and were only fit for garrison duty. In addition, a significant part of all new troops were underage, mostly seventeen-year-old.[87] These recruits had to be

[84] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 198.
[85] The recruitment for 1738 was carried out in 1737; see Table 2 in the Appendix for Chapter I.
[86] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 221.
[87] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 476.

mustered and reassigned to their new regiments or garrison units which in most cases took months. Even when Minikh's army was preparing to march into Jedisan in mid-May, recruits were still arriving on the spot. As in the previous campaign, horses and oxen were hard to find and by May, the army had a shortage of 4,000 horses.[88] For this expedition, weapons were handed in time, with a distribution of 20,000 new muskets. They were given to the regular units, but the Land Militia scarcely received any and, in the end, many of the regiments lacked equipment.

To increase army speed, Minikh would try once more to limit his baggage train and established two medical stations for the sick. People, who were ill before the campaign, were left at Perevolochnya where the sick from the first part of the march were also to be sent. Those, who got ill during the second half of the expedition, were to be shipped via the Bug River to Ochakov. In addition, medical stores were abundantly stocked, and more physicians were mustered. Regarding food, the army had to carry its rations of flour, cereals, and salt which had to suffice for four months and a half. Additional stores had to be set in prepared supply depots which had to provide food for eight months and a half. The army was to be accompanied by nine markets and over 2,000 traders, who would provide meat and drinks. Minikh also hoped that, if needed, meat and other supplies could be provided from the Zaporozhian Cossacks or brought from Poland. In the meantime, the Don army was provided with food supplies for five months in advance, as well as with 17,440 carts and the same number of oxen pairs for the supply train, which was to be navigated by 8,720 wagoners. [89]

Minikh's Dnieper Army was supposed to have the following composition – 3 guard battalions (3,158 men), a cuirassier squadron (600 men), 21 dragoon regiments (25,850 troops), 9 regiments of Land Militia (9,693 men), 2 hussar regiments (900 men), 30 infantry regiments (50,580 soldiers), 3,000 artillerymen and engineers, 1,000 Regular Cossack horsemen – 94,781 regulars in total. Also, there had to be 13,500 Cossacks, including a Wallachian and Moldavian contingent under Constantine Cantemir, the son of the exiled Moldavian prince. The artillery train was to consist of 262 guns of different caliber, 11 mortars, 16 howitzers, as well as 444 smaller mortars. The total paper strength of this army – 108,281 men meant that this was the largest army Minikh was to command in the war.[90] In reality, the regiments were mostly undermanned, and the army's actual strength was less than 80,000, though it was still larger than the armies, used in the previous two years.[91]

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[88] Ibid., 479.

[89] Ibid., 482-3.

[90] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 486-488; Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 221; Davies, however, mistakenly calculates the entire force to be 135,000 men.

[91] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya, vol.2*, 138-9; Bayov does not give a precise number, but states that there were only 18 Dragoon and 22 infantry regiments available on 4th May, as well as cuirassiers, hussars and 3 regiments of Ukrainian Cossacks, 200 Chuguevskiy Cossacks.; see Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 495. On the other hand, according to Manstein, the force under Minikh never exceeded 50,000, including the Cossacks; see Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 200.

The situation with Lacy's forces was not better. According to the preliminary plan, the Don Army had to comprise of – 6 dragoon regiments (7,386 men), 1 garrison dragoon regiment (1,183 soldiers), 6 Land Militia regiments (6,462 troops), 15 regiments of foot (25,290 men), as well as 15,000 Cossacks and 10,000 Kalmyks. In total, P. von Lacy's army should have numbered 65,321 soldiers and officers, supported by 86 regimental guns, 16 siege guns, four mortars, four howitzers and 60 smaller mortars.[92] In reality, when he adavanced into the Crimea, Lacy commanded an army of 6 field dragoon regiments, one garrison dragoon regiment, and 7 foot regiments. His field artillery consisted of six 18-funt guns, six 12-funt ones, three 8-funt cannons, and three 3-funt pieces, as well as four 5-pud mortars, two 1-pud howitzers and two of half a pud. Instead of the 10,000 Kalmyks he had hoped for, only 1,385 were able to arrive, since Donduk-Ombo needed the rest to fight the Kuban Tatars. Nevertheless, following several days of marching, the army was joined by another 8 dragoon regiments and the 6 regiments of Land Militia. The army was further joined by approximately 12,000 Cossacks, which came into several columns during Lacy's march forward.[93] So instead of marching with a bit over 65,000 (as calculated on paper), Lacy invaded Crimea with around 53,000 troops over 2/3 of which were regulars. According to Manstein, Lacy actually commanded between 30 and 35,000 troops, including the Cossacks.[94] Taking Christof von Manstein's estimates into consideration, it turns out that most of Lacy's regiments also had insufficient manpower as they were unable to receive additional men from the recruits that were so sluggishly transferred. Whether his estimates are too low remains uncertain, but the truth lies somewhere in the middle, and Lacy's actual army probably did not exceed 45,000 men.

*The campaign*

The Don army began its progress on 19th May 1738 by following the same route it had traversed the previous year up to the vicinities of Crimea. Upon reaching the Berdiya River, P. von Lacy sent a scouting party of 2,000 Cossacks under Colonel Mashlykin, who were to go forth and observe the positions of the Tatars and also to search for a suitable place, through which the army could invade Crimea. Lacy, satisfied with his decision last year, decided to repeat his unorthodox approach towards the peninsula. He was, however, unable to use last year's route, since a strong Ottoman fleet penetrated the Azov Sea and attacked Vice-admiral Bredal's fleet, which prevented him from using his vessels in support of Lacy's march. Bredal was able to dismount some of the naval guns and set batteries along the shore and beat back several Ottoman attacks,

[92] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 489-90.
[93] Ibid., 543-4.
[94] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 215.

preventing the Turks from landing their force in support of the Tatars. In the meantime, Mashlykin's force intercepted a strong Tatar unit and defeated it soundly on 25th May, after which he returned to Lacy with reports. The Field-marshal, upon learning about the presence of the Ottoman fleet, decided to cross the Rotten Sea, by using a shallow part of the Sivash, near Odipy tract.[95]

Using a low tide and wind, blowing with such strength that the flows were further diverted, Lacy marched his men into a thin column and crossed the small portion of sea bottom before setting foot in Crimea. The Russians lost a handful of carts due to the return of the tide, but the army itself remained intact.[96] At the same time, the main Tatar Force under the new Khan – Mengli II Girei (r. 1724-1730; 1737-1740), was stationed near the Perekop Line, waiting for the Russians to appear from this direction. The Tatars had rebuilt the line and planned on using it to hold off the Russian incursion. Lacy again surprised his enemies. On the 26th June, the same day they crossed the Rotten Sea, the Russians were able to capture Chivaskul – a small fortification at the end of the Perekop line. Two days later, following a severe bombardment and a coordinated attack from both sides of the Perekop Line, the strong fortress of Or-kapı surrendered to the Russians, who left ten companies of grenadiers to protect it and continued their march southward. Soon after that Lacy discovered the condition of the Crimean countryside. It was devastated by the last two campaigns and no fodder, food or animals could be taken to supplement the resources of the invading army. Troubled by the possibility of logistical disaster, Lacy called up a council of war on 6th July, on which was decided that the army had to retreat to Perekop and from there – to march towards Azov. As in the previous years, the main Tatar force was still nowhere to be seen. But after only three days on the march, a 20,000 strong Tatar force attacked the rear of the Russian army. The Cossacks and the Azov dragoons were almost driven into retreat and scattered, but a counterattack conducted by General Shpigely, who commanded four dragoon regiments, managed to repel the Tatar attacks and to repel them. According to Manstein, Russian losses were between 600 and 700, while the Tatars lost 2,000 men.[97] According to Bayov, the Russians lost 1,045 killed and wounded, while the Tatars left over 1,000 dead on the battlefield.[98] With no further confrontations, Lacy returned to the Perekop line and held it throughout August. In September he marched back to Azov, blowing up the fortifications on the Perekop.

Lacy's forces were performing remarkably well, not taking any great risks and obtaining most of their strategic goals. In the meantime, Minikh's army once again marched to the southwest with the intention of entering Wallachia, and defeating all Ottoman forces on its way. The Field-marshal marched with an

[95] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 213.
[96] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 215.
[97] Ibid., 216.
[98] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 551.

army which was at least a quarter smaller than planned, and also, once again, not sufficiently supplied with ammunitions, weapons, food and carts for the baggage train. Horses were also insufficient, as were oxen, but this did not prevent Russian progress in previous years, so Minikh once again hoped to compensate logistics issues with speed, decisiveness, and resilience.

The Dnieper army began its movement on 18th May after the Land Militia regiments and the guard units finally managed to arrive at the rendezvous point on the Omelynik River. Omelynik was reached on 23rd, and Minikh constantly halted different sections of his army to wait for fresh recruits, still coming from Ukraine to catch up with the army. Minikh used the time in waiting to perform military drills in order to raise the overall level of military training among his men. The cost for this training manoeuvre was the low speed with which the Dnieper Army proceeded.[99] The Bug River was finally crossed on 25th June after the army had progressed with an average speed of 17-20 kilometers per day, and after every second day was ordered as a rest in order to built bridgesor to carry out exercises.

The first notices of enemy concentration came at the beginning of June when Minikh received intelligence that the Budjak Tatars had gathered a force of 20,000 men, concentrated on the Dniester. This force was led by the Belgorod sultan, and was later supplemented by 30,000 Ottomans troops, stationed at Bender.[100] A scouting force of 1,500 Tatars was sent forward to monitor Minikh's movement. The Russian army was set into three divisions. They were to march in a column of consecutive squares, in the middle of which stood the supply train of each division. The divisions were headed by generals Rumyantsev, Magnus von Biron and Loewendahl and the guard battalions were set under the command of Gustav von Biron. This manner of movement, although offering substantial protection against enemy incursions, brought the army speed even lower of the level sustained before the crossing of the Bug River and raisedthe level of attrition among the soldiers.[101] Following the transition of the Bug, Minikh decided to set his army on a route, which surpassed as many sources of water and fodder as possible. The army was supposed to travel 190 kilometers between the Bug and the Dniester, having only two major streams to cross – rivers Molokish and Savranka.[102]

The first actual encounter with the enemy happened on 29th June, during the army's crossing of the small river Kodyma. The Tatars tried to launch a surprise attack on the Russian rear, while the artillery and the baggage were still moving through the river. The Cossacks under Frolov, supported by dragoon

[99] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, *vol. 2*, 138.
[100] Ibid.; Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 501-2. The garrison of Bender had been 15,000 strong (8,000 yeniçeri and 7,000 sipahi and *arnaut*-s (Albanians) in the end of May but in mid June was supplemented by another 15,000 men, led by the serasker of Bender. The entire Tatar force under the Belgorod sultan was 30,000, and it crossed the Dniester at the same time Minikh traversed the Bug River.
[101] Bobrovskiy, *Istoriya*, *vol. 2*, 139.
[102] Baiov, *Russkaya armiya*, 506.

regiments under Rumyantsev, were fast to respond, and the enemy chose to retreat. On the morning of 30th June, the Tatars reappeared, 10,000-strong and launched three consecutive assaults on the Russian forces, which were still stationed in their encampments. The first two charges of the Tatars were repulsed with ease by the Ukrainian Cossacks and the vanguard division under Rumyantsev, supported by dragoons from Gustav von Biron's division. The third charge came upon a small vanguard under Colonel Shipov, who decided to attack the Tatars following their second failed attempt. Shipov's men were surrounded but were able to hold their ground until reinforcements arrived, repulsing the enemy. Minikh, who received intelligence that the Tatars were receiving reinforcements, including Ottoman units, decided to develop his momentum and ordered the entire army to break camp and form for battle. The Tatar-Ottoman force, however, fled the battlefield as soon as the Russian army began to advance, supported by heavy artillery fire. By 2:30 p.m., the Russians reached the previous enemy positions and stood firm until the last Tatars were out of sight.[103]

The same situation repeated a week later, when on 8th July, while camping on the Savranka River, the Russian encampments came under attack from a combined Ottoman-Tatar force. Consecutive enemy charges were repelled and by 5 p.m. the Russians had beaten back Tatar and Ottoman advances, killing over 1,000 enemies in the process.[104] Few days later, Minikh received an intelligence report from Russia's agent in Istanbul – Neplyuev. It stated that the Ottomans had concentrated 138,000 men at the Dnieper, of which 60,000 were Ottoman units, 48,000 were Belgorod and Budjak Tatars and 30,000 were Nogais. The army was commanded by Sherif Efendi and several high-ranking officers (nine three-tail paşas, twelve two-tail paşas, five Tatar sultans). The army's task was to intercept the Russians and enter into a decisive engagement with them, regardless of the location. A military council held by the paşas decided to monitor enemy movement and try to inflict defeat on Minikh's troops while crossing the Savranka. This left Minikh with the impression that he had managed to defeat the entire enemy force, driving them into a retreat. He believed that if another victory against the Ottoman-Tatar force could be achieved, he would fulfill the Empress' desire to capture Wallachia.[105]

Continuing their further advance, the Russians finally reached the Molokish River on 21st July and again came under enemy attack. Gustav von Biron's division, which came under assault, was able to form and beat the advancing enemy forces, driving them into full retreat by the afternoon. Minikh's further advance was delayed due to notices of enemy forces concentrating in front of the Russians. The Ottoman army of 60,000 men and 76 guns took a position on the opposite bank of the Dniester while the Tatar and

[103] Ibid., 509.
[104] *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel*, 61.
[105] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 517-8.

Nogai forces locked Minikh's left flank on the Biloch River.[106] On 23rd, Minikh sent a vanguard under William Fermor, consisting of seven infantry regiments, the predominantly Bulgarian hussar regiment under Colonel Stoyanov and 2,000 Cossacks. Minikh also joined the vanguard commanding a squadron of cuirassiers, and a Leib Guard mounted squadron. Near the Gura Bilotsk tract, the vanguard engaged an enemy force of 12,000 men. Minikh quickly sent dispatches, urging Gustav von Biron to move his division in support of Fermor's vanguard and also to dispatch as quickly as possible the Prince of Brunswick with a force of three regiments. Soon after Brunswick arrived the enemy launched their attack concentrating on the Russian's right flank, while simultaneously carrying out a diversion, by sending several units to engage with the rest of Minikh's troops. The Tatar-Ottoman advance was halted and repeled by the Russian artillery, followed by an advance of Fermor's troops, who chased the retreating enemy until nightfall.

On 25th Minikh held a military council. Due to the forthcoming summer heats as well as to the problems with fresh water supplies, it was decided that on 26th a decisive advance would take place, its purpose being the destruction of the enemy fortified position and the winning of a bridgehead for the crossing of the Dniester. On 26th, the army formed in three columns of infantry and dragoons, each with a body of cavalry in its vanguard, comprising of the cuirassier squadron on the left flank, the Bulgarian hussars under Stoyanov in the center and the second hussar regiment under Kumingov covering the right flank.

The battle began with an attack of the Budjak sultan and the Ottoman units on the Russian left, at that moment occupied by the Cossacks. The initial Tatar advance pushed back the Cossacks, who were able to reform and to use their pikes to charge and break the enemy momentum, even though they were lesser number than the Tatar-Ottoman force.[107] Following their failure, the enemy redirected their momentum at part of the baggage train, protected by the troops of General Mikhail Filosofov, who was advancing slower than the rest of the army. Filosofov's men were able to hold their ground until reinforcements arrived under Rumyantsev. The enemy charges continued until 4 p.m. when the last of their units left the battlefield. Minikh lost 200 men while Tatar casualties were quite higher.[108] The Russians camped at a cannon-shot distance from the Dniester. After a month of marching from the Bug to the Dniester, the army of Minikh moved at the staggering speed of 5.8 kilometers per day, more or less repeating Sheremetev's slow progress before the conquest of Iași in 1711.

During the following two days, Minikh made several unsuccessful attempts to establish a bridgehead over the Dniester. His efforts were prevented by concentrated fire from the Ottoman batteries on the opposite bank. On 29th the Russians, unable to continue further, were ordered to begin a return march

[106] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 223.
[107] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 208.
[108] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 523.

north. Minikh was worried about the possibility of a new encirclement, similar to that suffered by Peter, the deteriorating situation with the water and food supplies, and the advent of blistering summer temperatures in August. The first major engagement during the retreat north came on the 30th of July when the Russian rearguard came under attack by enemy units of yeniçeri and Tatar horsemen. The infantry regiment guarding the last elements of the baggage train was able to repel initial Ottoman attacks. A counterattack of the Bulgarian hussars, the Chuguevskiy Cossacks and several dragoon companies, were able to scatter the enemy forces and drive them into full retreat. This day the Russians lost 300 men while the Ottoman-Tatars units had 1,000 of them killed.[109] The next big enemy raid came two days later, when a Russian foraging party rode 9 kilometers away from left the main force. They were ambushed by the Tatars and the Ottomans and over 700 men were lost, along with 2,000 heads of cattle.[110] The next 11 days passed without any general engagements. When on 20th August the Russians were crossing the Bug River, their rearguard was once again attacked by a force of 17,000 Tatars, whose assault was repelled by the Astrakhan infantry regiment and the lead guard squadrons.[111]

Simultaneously to Minikh's retreat into Ukraine, General Stoffeln decided to abandon the fortress of Ochakov, raze its defenses and fall back, with whatever troops he still commanded toward the Ukrainian line. The spread of dysentery, scurvy, as well as plague (which also appeared in Poland, Moldavia, and Wallachia at the time), strengthened Stoffeln's resolve. He had not received adequate supplies since 1737, most of his men were sick and the garrison was undermanned. At the same time, news came that an army 40,000 Ottomans and siege guns was assembling in Moldavia and planned to take Ochakov and the smaller fortress of Kinburn in October.[112] Given the circumstances, Minikh approved Stoffeln's decision and allowed him to move back north and to destroy all fortifications left behind. By mid-September, the Russians had evacuated Jedisan, losing whatever gains they had made in the previous months. In the words of Manstein, for the Russians the campaign was as costly as the previous one. Although they did not lose so many men on the field, a great number of them were sick upon returning to Ukraine and most of them died. This was also the costliest expedition so far, in relation to oxen and horses lost. Minikh had to abandon a substantial part of his carts and artillery in Poland because there were no pack animals available.[113] Tactically speaking, the Russians were, in general, able to outperform their enemies on the battlefield. Strategically speaking, the Ottomans were able to outperform the Russians and to bring back the front lines where they stood in December 1736, rendering in vain year and a half of preparations, marches and thousands of human lives lost.

[109] *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel*, 61.
[110] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, 532.
[111] *Khronologicheskiy ukazatel*, 61.
[112] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 225.
[113] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 211.

## 5.7. The Campaign of 1739

In 1739, the Russo-Austro-Ottoman War came into its final stage. There were many factors, which predetermined the abrupt end of the conflict, but the most important one was Austria's ultimate failure on the Balkan Front. The Austrians entered the war in 1737 and sustained a series of humiliating defeats, resulting in the loss of Serbia (except Belgrade) as well as Western Wallachia (Oltenia), occupied by the Austrians since the treaty of Passarowitz (1718). Several Austrian armies had been beaten back in Bosnia. Habsburg logistics and manpower mobilization also failed. The ongoing economic crisis, combined with the damage sustained by the military establishment during the War of the Polish Succession hampered the Austrians from displaying their full potential. The military leadership was rather mediocre as most of the generals were too inexperienced or incompetent. Court-martial among the high ranking officers of Vienna's forces was an often repeated event during the war.

Nevertheless, by the early months of 1739, Emperor Karl VI has still resolved in his commitment to his Russian allies and Empress Anna was willing to satisfy all Austrian strategic demands to keep the Habsburgs in the war. In the pursue of this goal, the Cabinet in St. Petersburg approved a strategic plan for the upcoming campaign season, which focused on sending the main force from Dnieper toward Transylvania, while a smaller force had to attack Crimea once again, aiming to prevent the Tatars from joining the Turks. Additional intelligence suggested that a dispute between the Belgorod and Budjak Hordes would eliminate them as possible allies of the Sublime Porte during 1739. In general, the situation was in no way dire, and if the allies were finally to achieve a decisive advance against the Ottoman Empire or its Wallachian and Moldavian vassals, the war effort could be reinvigorated, leading to further actions in the upcoming years.

### *Preparations*

Following the plan, approved by the Cabinet and the Empress, the main force had to be under the command of Minikh. According to initial estimates, the army should number 76,311 regular troops and 14,800 irregulars, bringing the total strength to 91,111 men, supported by 606 pieces of artillery.[114] The baggage and artillery trains required over 15,000 carts as well as 22,000 pairs of

[114] Regular units: Three Guard battalions and 3 squadrons (3,124 men), two cuirassier regiments under Minikh and Brunswick (965 men), 16 dragoon regiments of 1,235 troops each (19,760), 22 infantry regiments of 1,583 soldiers each (34,826 men), 5,430 artillerymen and engineers, a Cossack regular regiment of 1,000 men, two hussar regiments of 500 men each and Land Militia regiments of 1,134 men each (10,206) The irregulars comprised of 6,000 Ukrainian Cossacks, 3 companion Cossack regiments (700 men), 4,000 Don Cossacks, 800 Wallachians, 3,000 Zaporozhian Cossacks and 300 Chuguevskiy Cossacks and Kalmyks; see Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, vol. 2, 130-2. In Bayov the total is misleadingly calculated as 90,358.

oxen and horses to pull them. Food provisions would suffice for three months ahead while supply depots would have to provide the additional supplies.

Lacy would again lead the second army, the task of which was seen as supportive and its numbers were lesser in comparison to the Dnieper army. Lacy was supposed to command 39,147 regular troops, accompanied by 15,000 irregulars and 146 artillery pieces for regimental, field and siege purposes.[115] Not counting regimental horses, the Don army would require 18,000 pairs of horses and oxen. The food supplies issued for Lacy's Crimean march were calculated to suffice for five months. Lacy would also receive support from the Azov fleet, which would transport additional 5,000 Cossack footmen. To divert the enemy attention of the main strike against Crimea, part of the Ukrainian garrison troops, along with the river fleet on the Dnieper would strike at Ochakov and Kinburn while Donduk-Ombo would lead 10,000 Kalmyks against the Kuban Horde.[116]

In reality, numbers again differed. Not counting the irregulars, Minikh's army actually numbered 58,000 men, instead of the 76,311 planned. This was due to granting leaves, as well as to the inadequate allocation of new recruits, taken from the levy for the 1739 campaign. Thus, the situation of the previous years repeated itself. Regarding the Cossacks, there were only 5,300 Ukrainian available, as well as another 500 Zaporozhians. The total troops under Minikh were up to 65,000 men instead of the 91,111 anticipated in the preliminary calculations, which meant that 28.5 per cent of the planned army personnel were unavailable for the campaign.[117] The situation in Lacy's force was no better and in mid-May he only had six dragoon regiments, eight infantry regiments, three Land Militia regiments and four Slobodskiy regiments, all of which were incomplete regarding personnel. Also there was a tremendous shortage of pack animals, and the provisions, which Lacy could take with him, could only suffice for two months instead of the previously planned five. In addition, the supporting troops from Azov and Ukraine never made it to the field.[118] Stoffeln would even fail to step in the vicinity of Ochakov, marching only 1,200 instead of the planned 7,800 troops along the Dnieper, while an epidemic on the Lower Don would prevent Levashov from sending five infantry regiments in Lacy's

[115] The Regulars comprised of 6 dragoon regiments of 1,235 troops each (7,410 men), 1 garrison dragoon regiment (1,183 men), 15 infantry regiments of 1,583 soldiers each (23,745 men) and 6 regiments of Land Militia of 1,134 troops each (6,804 men). The irregulars were 6,000 Don Cossacks, 5,300 Ukrainian Cossacks and 3,700 Slobodskiy Cossacks; see Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, *vol. 2* 134-135. There is again a miscalculation, since the irregulars are listed as 15,800 in total, while the numbers account only for 15,000.

[116] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, *vol. 2*, 136.

[117] Ibid., 158; In detail, the regular forces comprised of 7,500 infantry and 14,500 cavalry Manstein states that Minikh's army did not exceed 65,000 and was probably between 60 and 65,000, comprising of 49 infantry battalions, 3 of which were guard units, 3 squadrons of horse guards, 100 dragoon squadrons, 6 hussar squadrons, 6 Wallachian squadrons, 4 Georgian squadrons and 13,000 Cossacks. The artillery comprised of 262 pieces, operated by 3,000 artillery men; see Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 219.

[118] Bayov, *Russkaya armiya*, *vol. 2*, 270-271.

aid. Due to a shortage of vessels and the above-mentioned disease, Bredal's naval contingent also stayed put.[119]

Lacy's army moved first, departing on 10th May 1739 from Izyum. The Field-marshal was well aware that if he waited for the Dnieper flotilla to act or hope that the Don forces would rid themselves of the plague, his force would miss the strategic initiative and allow the Crimeans to move out of their base and intercept Minikh's forces. Therefore, Lacy decided to march whatever troops he had available and try to deter any Tatar movement. After receiving intelligence that the Ottomans had buttressed Crimea's defenses, by sending garrisons to Perekop, Kaffa, and Evpatoria and dispatched a strong fleet in the Azov Sea to block the Genichesk Straight and the Rotten Sea, the Field-marshal correctly decided to avoid risking an incursion into the peninsula. Instead, he placed his regiments along the Crimean border to blockade and intercept enemy movement out of Perekop toward the Dnieper and the Dniester. On 15th August, P. von Lacy approached Perekop with a small force of 12,000 regulars and 5,850 Cossacks, but learning that there was no fodder for his horses, and already losing animals, due to heat and starvation, he decided to fall back on the St. Andrey fort of the Ukrainian line, ending his last campaign into Crimea.[120] Although the Russians were unable to penetrate the peninsula, Lacy achieved his strategic goal of holding Tatar forces at bay and also distracting the attention of a substantial Ottoman force, which could have been sent towards Moldavia.

*The campaign*

The main army under Minikh began marching on 23rd April, but it took over a month before the Russians were able to move from Kiev, through Dnieper and reach the Russo-Polish border at the Stubla River, near Vasilykov. It was not until 22nd May during a military council that Minikh finally revealed the campaign plan to his subordinate generals. During his initial movement, Minikh had experimented with several formations and finally in mid-May the Field-marshal established the permanent setting of his troops during the marches – four divisions under Rumyantsev, Biron, Loewendahl and Fermor, each comprised of different portions of infantry, cavalry and Militia units. When the Russians enter Polish territory on 28th May, Minikh would disperse the divisions into separate columns, with substantial space for foraging. The idea was to move through Poland-Lithuania as fast as possible and to avoid any confrontation with the forces of hetman Potocki, who had vigorously opposed any transgression of the southern Polish border.

[119] The disease was probably the plague, which scourged Wallachia and Moldavia in 1738. Manstein gives note of its spreading into Ukraine, although Minikh had taken all possible measures to limit its progress in the Russian lands; see Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 217-8.
[120] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 233.

The Russians continued their march, covering stages of up to 25 kilometers each and resting for a day after each phase. Keeping that movement speed intact, the army was able to reach the Bug River a month later and cross it on 22-24th June.[121] After the Bug had been traversed, Minikh continued toward Moldavia, always vigilant of possible Tatar incursions. Upon reaching the Dniester, he split his troops in two major divisions. The first under Rumyantsev was sent ahead to Khotyn, while Minikh with 20,000 handpicked soldiers and most of the heavy artillery, went to Nichlava, crossing the Dniester upstream from Khotyn and using his engineers to hasten the transition of the guns. The Russian position at Senkovitsy was entrenched and fortified with redoubts and batteries. On 20th July, Minikh had finally reached his first objective, standing less than 60 kilometers from the Moldavian border fortress. Minikh's gamble proved successful. Carrying only rations, sufficient for six days and a small volume of baggage, his troops had outmaneuvered the Ottomans and their vassals, denying the enemy the chance to block Minikh's crossing, as had happened the previous year. In the meantime, Rumyantsev's army was delayed due to heavy rains and Minikh had to wait for his arrival before hoping to lure the Turks into a decisive battle or begin a siege of Khotyn.

On 22nd July, while a dragoon regiment under Colonel Rode was foraging in the vicinity of the Senkovitsy camp, it came under attack from a combined Ottoman-Tatar force, numbering 18 to 21,000 troops under Islam Girei and Iliaş Colceag Paşa.[122] Rode was able to form a wagenburg and to hold off enemy attacks until reinforcements came.[123] Minikh, still remembering the loss of over 700 troops in a similar ambush last year, sent forth the hussar regiments, followed by dragoons and mounted grenadiers. One by one, the Russian units added their fire to the effort, and the enemy troops fell back leaving over 600 killed while the Russians lost only 198 killed, wounded or missing.[124] The following week passed with no further incident and by 26th July, all of Rumyantsev's units finally reached Senkovitsy and the army under Minikh was once again in full strength. In the meantime, Minikh had sent raiding parties into Moldavia, which returned on 28th, bringing a great number of cattle for the army.

The Russians resumed their march on 29th of July and on 1st August defeated another enemy raid, carried out by a predominantly Tatar force. Russian losses were insignificant, and Minikh continued his march forward. The army was now formed in a new battle order of four divisions. Rumyantsev

[121] Ibid. ,234.

[122] 18,000 according to Manstein; see *Contemporary Memoirs*, 223. 20-21,000 according to Minikh's report ; see D.F. Maslovskiy, *Materialy k istorii voennogo iskusstva v Rossii* (Moscow, 1889), 64.

[123] Davies gives the date as 21st (*Empire and Military Revolution*, 235), Bobrovskiy notes that the engagement took place on 23rd of July (*Istoriya*, part II, 142), while *Khronologicheskiy ukazately* states that it was 22nd of July (p. 63). The dissertation relies on *Khronologicheskiy ukazately,* since the date 22nd is also confirmed in Minikh's campaign journal, published in Maslovskiy, *Materialy k istorii*, 64.

[124] *Khronologicheskiy ukazately*, 63; Most of the casualties were hussars (34) and Don Cossacks (58) who were the first to arrive.

commanded the center, Biron – the right flank, Loewendahl – the left and Fermor – the rearguard. The army reached the fortified Ottoman position of Okop on 7th August. Instead of assaulting it, Minikh left a force of 20,000 men to guard the largest part of the baggage train at the camp near the Gukov River, while he led the rest of the army (some 48,000) into a flanking manoeuvre south, which could allow the Russians to descend directly on Khotyn. The Field-marshal decided to take limited food supplies and an adequate number of heavy guns. The army suceeded in making a rapid progress and by 14th the Russians surpassed the entrenched Ottomans at Okop and continued their advance towards Khotyn. In the meantime, the Ottomans were assembling a large force, divided into several units. According to Davies, the total Ottoman-Tatar force, concentrating in Khotyn, was between 80 and 90,000, most of whom were horsemen.[125] Minikh knew that he could easily be encircled in the same fashion as Peter had been at Stănileşi in 1711. The only possible solution was to strike first. Furthermore, the enemy forces were not gathered in a single location, and the Field-marshal had a good chance in defeating them one at a time. Having such a tactical arrangement in his mind, Minikh marched his men against Veli Paşa's position at Stavuchany, which the Russians reached at dusk on 16th August.

The Ottoman forces were only 20,000 strong, stretched on a series of hills in front of the Stavuchany settlement and supported only by 66 guns.[126] On the morning of 17th August, Minikh decided to use the gaps in Veli Paşa's position and sent General G.Biron with a division to strike at the enemy's right, so the the Turks would weaken their center and left flank by sending reinforcements. Biron commanded a force of arround 9,000 troops (dragoons, infantry and guards' squadrons), as well as 34 guns and mortars. The thirty 30-funt guns were placed in front of the big square, arranged by Biron, while the mortars were allocated in the formation's core.[127] Biron's guns began a bombardment on enemy lines, forcing Veli Paşa to concentrate his troops in the center and on the right flank to respond to the artillery fire. Ottoman batteries were not so accurate and effective, and new guns allocated against Biron were soon silenced by the Russian cannonade. With the forces of Veli Paşa advancing, Biron began to retreat slowly, while the rest of the army under Minikh began to cross the Shulanets stream which separated the battlefield in two sections. Minikh's main target was the weakened Ottoman left flank. A battery of 14 field guns and eight howitzers was covering the crossing and was able to repulse several attacks, carried out by Ottoman and Tatar horsemen.[128] It was not until 5 p.m. that the Russians were finally able to traverse Shulanets and to form a huge square with

[125] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 238. *Khronologicheskiy ukazately* states that there were a total of 70,000 Tatar and Ottoman troops; see *Khronologicheskiy ukazately*, 63.
[126] Yu.Ye. Manoylenko, A.S. Manoylenko, "'A bomb after a bomb", 61-3.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

the siege artillery placed in the center. In such a formation, Minikh marched his men uphill against the main enemy positions. Veli Paşa tried one last desperate attack to break Minikh's formation, but the superb Russian artillery once again forged victory. The Ottomans burned their encampments and fleed toward Bender while the Tatars returned to Budjak. Khotyn, guarded by several hundred men, was left on Minikh's mercy. The Russians had lost less than 67 dead and wounded.[129]

Khotyn was reached on the next day (18th August), and capitulated on 19th, without the firing of a single shot. Five days later, Minikh resumed his march. Instead of striking at Bender as previously planned, the Field-marshal decided to follow the Pruth and to capture Iași, while using raiding parties to wreak havoc and to intimidate the Ottomans to "sit on the conference table" at Nemirov. Constantine Cantemir was sent ahead with a flying corps of 3,000 Wallachians, hussars and mounted grenadiers along with twelve light guns to pillage and reconnoiter.[130] Cantemir was able to advance south and entered Iași with no opposition on 1st September, followed two days later by Minikh. On 12th September Minikh held a military parade to celebrate his conquest of Moldavia. A day later he received official dispatch that the Austrians had capitulated to Ottoman demands and had left the war, signing a peace treaty at Belgrade on 7th September, after a secret one was negotiated on 21st August. Russia was left alone with diminishing resources and had only one choice – to end the war as well. Iași and Khotyn were returned to Moldavia and Azov was kept, but the Russians were forbidden to build and maintain a fleet in the Azov Sea, and all fortifications in Azov had to be demolished. The war had ended in a strategic stalemate, which predominantly favored the Ottomans, who continued to hold the Black Sea in a tight grip. The Russians acquired nothing with regard to land or strategic points, but gained valuable experience, as they took very important notes on the disposition and vulnerabilities of Istanbul's northern defenses. Although Minikh has usually been labeled a failure in the eyes of Russian historiography, it is a fact that Catherine the Great's successful wars against the Turks were possible due to the immense volume of data and knowledge, accumulated by Minikh's forces on their four-year venture.

### 5.8. The performance of the Russian army

Unlike previous sub-chapters, where each campaign was evaluated separately, the Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739 will be analized in its entirety. The patterns, demonstrated by the Russians regarding mobilization, logistics, choice of routes and targeted objectives demonstrate a trend which can be clearly followed throughout the five years of campaigning. Separate elements of

[129] Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution*, 239.
[130] Ibid.

performance will be outlined in subsections, but the overall evaluation will be given for the entire period.

*The troops*

The backbone of each military effort was, is and probably would always be - the troops. Russia's army of the 1736-1739 War comprised essentially of two general elements – the regular regiments of footmen and dragoons and the irregular cavalry units of Cossacks and Kalmyks. They were supplemented by a small number of other regular and irregular units, among which the Land Militia regiments, the guards' squadrons, and the hussar regiments could be noted, who had continued their existence after the Petrine era. What can be clearly seen by studying the army numbers is the pursuit of balance among the main components of the army. Field-marshal Minikh, who was the mastermind of the War of 1736-1739, picked specific numbers for cavalry, infantry and artillery according to each army's primary objective – a raid, a siege or a prolonged campaign with multiple tasks. Thus, armies, marching against the Ottoman fortress chain in Jedisan and Budjak, would have a greater proportion of infantry compared to cavalry, as well as a substantial amount of guns while an expedition in Crimea would require a force in which the cavalry comprised an essential part of the total strength.[131] This was a fundamental step forward from the early Petrine campaigns, in which the tsar would muster as many men as possible, without specifically arranging the proportion of the army branches. Another important element of soldier disposition was the level of mobilization, achieved among the Cossacks. While in 1695 Gordon noted that only the tsar's presence could assemble a substantial number of steppe hosts, during Minikh's campaigns, Cossacks contributed up to 20,000 or sometimes even more men in a single season. The level of mobilization among the several hosts remained considerably high throughout the war. This meant that the state had achieved a greater degree of control over its frontiersmen and had developed the necessary administrative measures required to use Cossack manpower efficiently.

Regarding men's performance on the battlefield, the army could be divided into three main sections. The most efficient body of troops in the Minikhian army was the cavalry. The combination of effective regular mounted troops (the dragoons) and the irregular, experienced and adaptive Cossacks proved essential for the successful progress of the Russian armies in the steppe. Their effort was supplemented by the Kalmyk units, who proved to be formidable force and their raiders usually gained the upper hand against superior Tatar forces. The Kalmyks were also excellent scouts and pursued enemy units with vigor since captives provided a substantial part of their war booty. In the campaigns of 1738 and 1739, the two hussar regiments also proved their bravery

[131] See Table 1 in the Appendix for the current chapter for a comparison of unit numbers and per centage distribution in the course of the war.

and value by intercepting enemy raids and by delivering decisive blows on the flanks of the Tatar units, acting in the Russian rear. The cavalry demonstrated an overall level that surpassed the performance of the Tatar cavalry, as well as the Ottoman semi-regular units of sipahi and the irregular cavalry units, assembled in the Balkans and Anatolia.

The second most decisive element of the armies of Minikh was the artillery. While the cavalry deflected enemy raids and scouted the areas ahead of the army, the artillery was the branch which usually won the battles and was crucial for breaking both enemy fortifications and field formations. Taking Azov, Ochakov and Perekop, holding enemies at bay during the raids (such as that near the Savranka River), and destroying Ottoman units at Stavuchany were all artillery's achievements. The artillery, both diverse and numerous, provided an adamant predominance of firepower which could not be outmatched by the enemies of St. Petersburg. Although lacking standardization in caliber and even in material, the sheer number and size of the cannons were sufficient to surpass the enemy artillers.

Finally, the most enduring element of the Russian army was, by all means, the infantry. Marching for hundreds of kilometers, usually in shortage of supplies, munitions, and even uniforms, the rank and file was a stalwart military machine, capable of facing numerous challenges, coming from enemies, nature, or their commanders' miscalculations. The Russians maintained an exceptionally high level of field performance when facing enemy forces. The Russian infantry units almost never retreated when they were under attack by Tatar or Ottoman cavalry. They were usually able to reposition and meet enemy charges, reversing their momentum and eventually breaking them. As they seldomly met enemy footmen, their hand to hand abilities against other infantry were not sufficiently tested. Nevertheless, on some occasions, the Minikh's infantry met the Ottoman yeniçeri in open combat and gained the upper hand - unlike during the first sieges of Azov, when the soldaty and streltsy regiments were badly mauled by yeniçeri charges. Unlike the resistance to enemy attacks, the Russian footmen turned out to be quite more vulnerable to the shortages of food, water and rest, as well as to diseases and worsening weather conditions. In fact, probably over 60 per cent of the Russian casualties during a campaign were due to non-combat circumstances. This, however, had nothing to do with the soldiers themselves, but was rather a problem of the next major point of evaluation.

To conclude, the quality, which the Russian rank and file of all military branches demonstrated, was superb and essential for all of Minikh's achievements in the course of the 1736-1739 War. The Russians showed an upward trend of evolution with regard to training, discipline and battlefield resilience. The rather insignificant number of field casualties is an evidence for the good battle order, the capable leadership of the regimental staff and the level

of the soldiers' personal combat skills, as demonstrated during the storming of Perekop in 1736.

*Logistics*

Unlike the superb performance of the men in the ranks, the achievements of those, standing in the rear were not so impressive.[132] Year after year, campaign after campaign, the logistics proved to be the main issue of Russia's military organization. Armies would fight well and march well, as long as there were enough food and munitions. These, however, proved to be scarce once the Russians left their lands and marched into the open steppe. The magazine system used by Minikh proved to be somewhat successful, but after a month or so in the field, the army started to show signs of shortages of food, water and also of diseases. This was due to the low hygiene level, lack of uniforms, tents and other factors, such as the marshy countryside and the different climate.

Minikh would divert a substantial part of his preparations for the systematic organization of logistics, supply trains, and chains of magazines and stores. On paper, it all looked good with rations usually calculated to last for four to six months in advance and sometimes even longer. New weapons were issued yearly, and the purchase of horses, pack animals and medical supplies started in the autumn of the previous year. Uniforms were ordered in advance from several locations, in order to avoid overburdening of local cloth production. Carts, oxen and horses were bought from a vast territory, spreading from Poltava to the Ural and from Kazan to Astrakhan, sometimes even acquiring animals from outside these limits. Minikh also ordered a type of water barrels which could be used in the construction of pontoon bridges once the water was over in order to limit the cargo and spare wagons for other essential provisions such as food and munitions.

So what went wrong? First and foremost, the logistics and the supply system were significantly hampered by the road infrastructure, which was barely existent outside the major settlement regions around Moscow. The situation had improved since Gordon made his way through the steppe in 1695, but still, only a handful of actual roads existed, and most of them were just a bunch of wagon tracks and dirt, left by passing caravans, traders or military units. Water transportation remained essential and Minikh used rivers as often as he could to supply and resupply his armies. This, however, was problematic once the Ukraine line was traversed. The steppe of Jedisan and Budjak had no river ports and often no settlements at all which could be used as havens for the fleet. The mouths of major rivers were dominated by Ottoman forts, which had to be captured before any naval contingents could be used to resupply and strengthen field armies. When the spring and autumn rasputitsa is added to the picture, it

[132] In Russian language, the term for all logistics units and structures is *til* ("rear").

turns into a logistical nightmare which would haunt Russian supply system up until World War II.

The second problem was the coordination of different authorities, responsible for the furnishing of provisions and supplies, and sending them to the army. Apart from the military quartermasters, who were sent to collect animals, men, and resources for the military establishments, local governors and voevodi had their own, autonomous power, which either assisted or hampered the work of the logistics officers. Also, local pomeshchiki had to be tamed or persuaded to fulfill their obligations regarding laborers and animals, as well as food supplies. Organizing a system of interdependent administrative units, which would transfer supplies on distances, usually on the verge of 1,000 kilometers, was not an easy task and it is a small miracle that it actually worked. It is no wonder that in 1737 Minikh doubled the number of logistics officers in his army, after noticing the slow pace with which the provisioning of his troops was carried out.

Corruption and personal incompetence are also factors, which should be taken into consideration. The divertion of funds, which had to cover military expenses, was no novelty, as was the drastic icrease in the cost of supplies and animals whenever a war began. Often price spaculations wereused as a trick by local merchants, and several occasions in which Minikh had to provide additional funding for the purchase of horses and oxen were already mentioned in the current chapter. Regarding personal mismanagement, Russian bureaucracy was far from perfect, and this was demonstrated in the inability of Knyaz Turbetskoy (who oversaw the logistics preparation for each campaign) to handle the organization of army supply, as well as the inadequate distribution of new recruits for the field regiments. Surprisingly, he would maintain his position, even though it was evident that the Knyaz was far from achieving his objectives. His close connections with the Empress kept him intact.

Another problem for the logistics was the population density in Ukraine and the Pontic Steppe. Unlike the rest of Europe, these lands were scarcely populated, and resources were very limited. Large amount of horses and oxen were mobilized and most of them died during the first two years of the war. This depleted the countryside of draft animals and made further levies of mounts impossible, or in any case - hard to achieve. By 1739 shortages of animal power were staggering as was the inability of military services to redistribute recruits among regiments, which had a lot to do with the condition of roads.

The lack of long-term supplies, the unfavorable conditions in the steppe as well as the inability to resupply from enemy lands were all factors which contributed to the limited time throughout which the Russian armies could carry out their field endeavors. Logistical problems were both internal and external, and no other contemporary army could have performed better given the circumstances. On the other hand, the organization of supplies could have been better, which would have resulted in more prolonged and successful campaigns.

*Marching and speed*

The third major element of army performance is the speed with which the military units progressed into enemy territory. Speed is one of the essential factors of success in any war effort since Ancient times and is directly related to the ability of an army to deliver decisive blows or to outmanoeuvre enemy contingents.

Statistically it is impossible to determine a medium marching speed for the Russian army with respect to the entire war or even to a single campaign. The main reason is that the movement of the army depended on the terrain and whether the troops traveled through their own territory or through enemy lands. Minikh's campaigns reveal that while in Ukraine the Russians were able to maintain a good average speed of movement, but once the army entered the steppes, the Field-marshal prefered to protection instead of haste. Tatar raids were constant and a moment of inattention could result in the death of hundreds as well as in the destruction of the invaluable food and water supplies. Minikh marched his men in a different fashion, adapting to the hostile territory, and paying less attention to the terrain. While in the Russian lands, the army marched in columns, stretched into a long line. Once in Tatar lands, the Russians repositioned into giant squares, placing the baggage train in the center and supporting the flanks with cavalry. This formation, although critically reducing the speed of the army, proved successful in preventing enemy incursions. A measure of average speed could be calculated. It seems that the Russians marched between 5 to 25 kilometers per day on the average but usually their speed did not exceed 20 kilometers per day. Another option for rapid movement were the marches performed in stages, used by Minikh in 1738 and 1739, when the army covered 15-20 versti per day (16-21.5 kilometers), and then took the next day as a rest. Although it kept soldier constitution considerably high, this decreased movement speed. In this case actual daily marching did not exceed 11 kilometers per day, which, compared to the 21 kilometers, usually covered by Peter's Army in Dagestan, looks unimpressive and even sluggish. The slow pace protected the army from enemy raids, but it also limited the time in which the army could campaign before the advent of summer heats, which was the real bane of Russian troops. The question remains whetherMinikh's decision to save hundred lives on the march did not cost him thousands more in the later stages of the expeditions.

Another element, which had a considerable impact on the movement, was the size of the baggage train. Even if the army did not proceed with over 40,000 carts, as mentioned in Manstein, it most certainly advanced with around 20-30,000 as demonstrated by the number of pack animals, recruited for the

campaigns.[133] Minikh has received a substantial amount of criticism from both modern and nineteenth-century historians regarding the enormous supply train, which he used during the expeditions. The Field-marshal's desire to calculate and bring every possible necessity with him resulted in the overall overburdening of the army, which Manstein underlines on several occasions. In 1739 Minikh finally decided to act more aggressively and to leave his main supplies behind. Thenthe army was able to reveal its actual potential for rapid progress. The marches prior to Stavuchany were executed superbly and demonstrated the maneuverability of the Russian army in comparison to its enemies, who were not expecting Minikh to change suddenly his manner of conduct.

The situation with speed was rather different on the Crimean/Don front, where Lacy operated. He was a practical man, who made the best he could with whatever he had at hand. His armies were always smaller than Minikh's, and his operations were perceived as supporting and secondary. This allowed Lacy to bring a limited number of men and supplies with him and thus to conduct faster marches and to be able to manoeuvre more freely. His ingenious incursions into Crimea in 1737 and 1738 demonstrate the advantages of smaller baggage trains and limited troop numbers. On the Dnieper and the Dniester front, Minikh left the initiative to the raiding Tatars while slowly proceeding toward his objective. In the meantime, in Crimea Lacy was able to outmanoeuvre the enemy and dictate the pace of conflict.

*Command and control*

The final significant aspect of military performance is the conduct of the commanding generals and the officers. In an age, when the ratio of NCO-s and higher ranking men was kept high in comparison to the overall regimental personnel, the role of officers was decisive for the discipline, effectiveness and morale of the troops. Like their western contemporaries, Russian officers were trying to live up to the standards of being a role model for their troops, demonstrating bravery and courage, as well as resilience and composure.

NCO-s and middle-rank officers (from lieutenant to colonel), were an essential part of the military efforts. They personally led their units into combat and inspired the esprit de corps of the rank and file. It was a common feature of military life that sergeants, captains, and even colonels received wounds or even die in the front line during a battle. In general, the lower officer ranks of the Russian army performed well, fulfilling their tasks and demonstrating good commanding abilities. This was most evident during ambushes, when the conduct of a captain or a colonel could save his unit from the enemy. In fact, the occassions, when Tatar raids were able to break the defenses of surrounded

[133] Manstein, *Contemporary Memoirs*, 137-8.

units, were scarce. Usually, under their commander's directions, Russian troops were able to hold out for several hours, until the cavalry and infantry reinforcements arrived. The additional demonstration, of both native and foreign officer abilities, was revealed during assaults on enemy positions, such as the capture of Perekop, where Christof von Manstein personally led a detachment of 60 men and captured several fortified towers, full of yeniçeri. Another example is the conduct of the Bulgarian hussar regiment, when Colonel Stoyanov and his son *poruchik* (first lieutenant) Stoyanov were commemorated for their bravery during the deflection of the massive Ottoman-Tatar raid during the battle which took place on 30th July 1738.[134]

The bravery and leadership of generals also must not be underestimated. Minikh often led the vanguard with his cuirassiers, as did Lacy, while division generals usually rushed forward along with their men when enemy units had to be engaged. Biron, Rumyantsev and other commanders of field units were among the names that demonstrated their combat skills in the front ranks. During the siege of Ochakov, in which several high-ranking officers were killed or wounded, the generals stood firm in the ranks, leading their men against enemy fire. Later in the same year, during the Ottoman siege of Ochakov, Brigadier Brake demonstrated bravery by charging yeniçeri units in hand to hand combat and drove them off the field.

While combat skills were essential for winning the hearts of the soldiers, tactical and strategic skills were essential for winning battles. During the age of Anna Romanova, Russia did not have great strategists who would appear later on. There were no commander like de Saxe, Eugene or Marlborough, but still, the generals demonstrated if not military genius, at least capability in terms of main tactical and strategic knowledge. Minikh was a meticulous planner, who, if possible, would have written instructions regarding any possible element of army life – from marching, through everyday life to conducting combat. If it was possible, he would have tried to plan the entire campaign day by day. On the one hand, this was good, as he seldomly left anything on the chance. On the other hand, his pedantic manner sometimes hampered his ability to respond accordingly to the emerging problems. Paradoxically, he was also a gambler type, who would risk a lot when convinced of his superiority over the enemy, no matter if it actually existed. The siege of Ochakov demonstrates his hazardous manner of rushing forward against all odds, even though preparations were not yet carried out and reconnaissance was not made. While this could prove troublesome in some cases, it turned out to be helpful in others. If he had not been willing to rush forward with half-prepared units, his army would have never made it out of Ukraine on any of the campaigns between 1736 and 1739. In general, the "planner" in Minikh's character disappeared when the "action man" appeared. The fact that Minikh was a foreigner must not be

[134] Maslovskiy, *Materialy*, 86.

underestimade. Each failure could provoke the reaction of Russian nobility, jealous and mistrustful towards the nemts.

The second leading figure of the 1736-1739 War was Count Peter von Lacy. An experienced, stalwart soldier, who knew his way around military tasks and strategic decisions, Lacy was probably one of the best military leaders of Russia before Rumyantsev and Suvorov. Unlike Minikh, Lacy was more inclined to react to the changes of the campaign instead of planning the entire endeavour in advance. He was brave and provident, but he was no gambler and would rather halt an offensive rather than risk the lives of his men on the possibility of victory. Lacy was certainly an innovative soldier, contributing to the development of Russian strategic thought and serving as a tutor of a future generation of commanders, who would lead Russia throughout the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and during Catherine's wars against the Ottomans.

A common feature of both Minikh and Lacy was their determination to comprehend situations according to their perception, rather than relying on their subordinates' advice. Furthermore, they were good field tacticians and were able to find the right formula to conduct the war against the irregular and predominantly mounted armies of the Tatars and Ottomans.

## 5.9. Conclusion

The Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739 brought no actual political or strategic gains for Russia. It only strengthened further the Ottoman grip on Wallachia and Moldavia and enabled the Turks, after their victories over Austria, to regenerate part of their lost positions in the Balkans. What the Russians gained from the conflict was invaluable experience. The Pontic Steppe would no longer be *terra incognita* for the Russian generals. All major fortresses in this region had either been studied or taken, the routes were well documented and observed, and tactics were adequately adjusted to outmatch the Turks and Tatars during any following conflict. The Russian army demonstrated an upward trend in its development regarding discipline, battle preparedness, and maneuverability. The logistics remained the main issue of the eighteenth century, but due to the imperfect condition of roads and the slow development of transportation, this was to be the case up to the World War II, when rasputitsa dominated the planning of both Stavka and OKW, even though tanks, trucks, and planes were already available.

In general, the Russians performed well, outmatching their enemies in every element of combat except for logistics. Russian troops were better in terms of firepower and precision, as well as in hand-to-hand combat. Colonels and captains were brave and motivated, as well as tactically efficient, winning small-scale confrontations and defending positions with substantial ease and skill. Generals, although no military prodigies were capable and after several of them were replaced in the initial stages of the war, Minikh was able to build a

good team of subordinates with which he could achieve most of his objectives. In the meantime, Lacy's ability to work with the Cossack atamans and the Kalmyk war chief Donduk-Ombo allowed him to use the soldiers of the steppe with high effectiveness and to coordinate easily his progress with their leaders. In short, the War of 1736-1739 was not lost on the battlefield but rather - on the diplomatic stage.

# CONCLUSION

The history of Russia's military way to the West has been a tale, told and retold both by national scholars and by western historians. The Cold War's obsession in understanding Russia and its military development throughout the ages was perceived as a crucial element in the ideology of "get to know one's enemy" but was also accepted as essential for the understanding of early modern Europe and its warfare. It is beyond doubt that the history of European conflicts since the eighteenth century inevitably includes Russia as a crucial factor in both the political and military struggle for mastery.

Changing notions and trends within western historiography and the reopening of Russia's intellectual elite toward the non-socialist world triggered a new wave of researchers, who are looking from a new perspective on the military history of Imperial Russia. The proliferation of ideas has reached an unprecedented level in the last decade as a great number of articles and books dealing with variety of topics emerged. Among the large number of themes are the analysis of the connections between state building and military development, as well as the incorporation of a wide variety of ethnic groups within the boundaries of the empire. A lesser number of studies have paid attention to "conflict" as a main theme of their narratives and even fewer have opted to evaluate the military effectiveness. In general, it is hard to assess both political and combat efficiency and to add the social value of state-inspired violence in a single work.

The present dissertation detaches itself from the general political and social paradigms of Russian warfare. Instead, this work mainly concentrates on the practical side of war in the period 1695-1739: combat effectiveness, application and upkeep of adequate logistics, conduct of military leaders and balance between gains and costs. The historians that have studied the period rarely paid significant attention to this side of the conflicts and many scholars choose to build their analysis on paper strength and on the general outcome of the war efforts. As demonstrated during the course of the Pruth Campaign, there was a striking discrepancy between the devastating political results and the actual military effectiveness of Peter's men. It is essential to draw a distinctive line between evaluating the military potential of an early modern state, and judging the overall political and diplomatic effectiveness of the country in question. To put it in other words, losing wars was not necessary a sign of inferiority in terms of the quality of deployed forces. This applies not only in the case of Russia, but is also evident in the outcome of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) and the Nine Years' War (1688-1697), which France was unable to win, but nevertheless Louis' armies were as qualitative as those of his opponents.

The Cold War military studies also evaluated the period 1695-1739 in close relation to the level of "westerness" the army could demonstrate. Combat proficiency was proportional to the level of resemblance between a certain army and the standards of the age – the forces fighting along the Rhine during the wars of Louis XIV. This notion has been swept aside by the critical approach of late twentieth century scholars, who have correctly noted that adoption of contemporary tactics rather than mimicking them was the true measure-stick according to which a military establishment could be evaluated. Instead of solely studying the rise of the West, it became apparent that understanding the rest of the world was far more effective in depicting and assessing the nature of early modern warfare. Once more Russia is a fundamental element in tracing the trends of evolution and adoption of certain Western European tactics into the relatively different environment of Eastern Europe and Asia. By focusing on the southern theater of Russia's expansion, the current dissertation demonstrates the elaborate interrelationship between military reforms, geographic factors and the army's adaptability. Through reviewing the main restraints, which the different environment imposed on the conduct of war, the text argues that Russia faced a voluminous amount of problems, which were more or less unknown for contemporary armies in Western and Central Europe. Distance, climate, distribution of drinkable water, availability of pastures, wood and other natural resources was essential for the conduct of any campaign. The fact that Russia constantly struggled with nomadic societies, against which standard practice of conquest and decisive actions was more or less inadequate, meant that wars in the Pontic and Caucasus regions could neither be fought nor won in the same manner as those in Lorraine or Flanders.

Apart from the socio-geographic side of conflict, the understanding of local forces is also essential for the evaluation of Russian effectiveness during the Southern Campaigns. Only recently historiography has acknowledged the military potential of steppe societies to meet and counterweight imperial military power. Furthermore, until recent years the notion of military backwardness, applied toward the Ottoman Empire, has prevented the adequate evaluation of the Porte's ability to respond to Russian expansionism and counter it with great efficiency up until 1768. By adressing the subject of Ottoman, Safavid and steppe military potential, the current work argues that Russia's victories were not against some ill-efficient enemies, waiting idly to be vanquished by superior "western-style" forces, but to the contrary – these hostile forces were quite vital and able to hold their ground against Muscovite offensives. The proper depiction of St. Petersburg's foes is crucial for the adequate assessment of Russia's development, its army's adaptability and the overall trends in military evolution.

Last but not least, in order to gasp the full proportions of the military development in Petrine and post-Petrine Russia, the thesis closely examines the battlefield performance of the army, its ability to advance or retreat and its potential to defend the empire's frontiers and to conquer enemy fortifications.

The current dissertation provides considerable data and number of practical examples, which have been carefully studied and assessed in terms of preparations, movement, battlefield conduct and tactical and strategic ability of the commanding elite. While logistics would remain an essential issue of Russia's military machine as late as World War II, the trends in the performance of its field units demonstrate a constant upgrade. Following the rather indecisive conduct during the Azov sieges, in terms of field performance the tsarist armies became better and better after each campaign . It is important to note that these improvements were not merely a product of the developments on the Pontic and Caucasian battlegrounds, but instead were a symbiosis between experience gained in the steppes and during the bitter fighting against the Swedes in the Baltic region. Hence, Russian commanders were able to draw conclusions from two distinctive fronts, accumulating considerable amount of experience, which was later applied in both the Seven Years' War (1754-1763) and the wars against the Ottoman Empire under Catherine the Great.

This continuity in Russian military tradition can easily be used to prove the fact that early modern developments in warfare should be seen not so much as a military revolution, as outlined by over half a century of historical works, but rather as an evolution, spanning over a considerable time period. The dissertation presents a case study of Muscovite military transformation and soundly establishes, that the "punctuated evolution" model, suggested by C. Rogers and extended by other scholars as well, is far more suitable to describe Russia's military change. What this work adds to the debate, is the notion that geographical and social factors should be taken into consideration in the assessment of the evolutionary development of early modern Muscovite warfare. While falling under the same general influence that changed the face of war throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the *modus* of war in Russia followed it's own, internal logic and was subjected to different principles, influenced by the diverse geographical and social factors, most of which were nonexistent in Western Europe.

*Soldiers of the tsar*

The main theme of the present dissertation is the story of the Russian soldier and his ability to survive, adapt and win in the span of four and a half decades of almost constant warfare. Originally designed by Peter as "*bessmertnyy*" (immortal) recruits, the consecutive levies, drawn from the general population on a constantly shifting basis of households per soldier, consumed a substantial part of the male population. In general, over ¾ of a million men were drafted into military service between 1700 and 1740. Out of a population of 11-15 million, this was a staggering percentage. Even more troublesome was the level of casualties, both combat and non-combat, sustained by the army for the same period. It is impossible to assess an exact figure, but it could be approximately

estimated that almost one-third of all drafted men died, mainly due to sickness, malnutrition, dehydration, and exposure to freezing cold or overwhelming heat. Combat casualties were rather low during the Southern Campaigns. 3-4,000 men were considered a tremendous loss of life in a single engagement and were rare in general. Therefore, it is important to make a distinction between the combat performance of the army against different enemies and the effect of ill-organized logistics during marching and quartering. Fatigue of all sorts rather than enemy bullets or swords turned out to be greater nemesis to the Russian rank and file. In this context, it is important to note that an evaluation of the military capability of the tsarist army cannot be measured solely in terms of casualty numbers, which are, generally, misleading for the actual quality of the troops.

Initially, the Russian troops were ill-prepared for engaging into open battles and conducting sieges in the Pontic region. This was demonstrated during the first Azov Campaign. In the subsequent years, due to the reform of the army following the disaster at Narva, a higher level of proficiency among the soldiers became apparent. While logistics and political actions ultimately failed during the Pruth Campaign, the battlefield performance of the Petrine army was the main factor standing between defeat and total disaster. The firm resistance at Stănileşi not only bought time for Peter to negotiate more favorable terms for extracting his surrounded army, but also proved that by that time the Muscovite soldier clearly matched and even outmatched the yeniçeri, a trend, not so visible during the two sieges of Azov fifteen years earlier. The parallel action on the Kuban proved that indecisiveness demonstrated by Shein in 1697 was replaced by aggressive offensive approach toward nomadic horsemen, which, in general, proved to be the right manner of fighting these opponents.

The Persian Campaign reveals the continuing upward trend in the development of Russian field armies and their ability to counter and overcome enemies. They adjusted their fighting techniques in order to match the unusual tactics, applied by enemy troops in the Caucasus region. Winning large-scale, pitched battles was simply not an option in Dagestan and the Petrine army was quick to adapt to the way local tribal forces operated. Even though offensives conducted deep into enemy territory were to some extentineffective, the combination of economic desolation of tribal settlements and the upkeep of well-constructed and well-equipped garrisons along vital routes was more or less successful. During his reign, Peter introduced the use of mobile, light cavalry in combating nomadic raiders as well as the large-scale establishment of auxiliary forces, drawn from local allies (Kalmyks, Circassians, Kabardians etc.). This combination proved to be the most successfuland effective way of dealing with both the protection of the frontier and the necessity of launching preemptive campaigns against Tatars, Nogais, renegade Cossacks and Caucasian warlords.

Using the experience, accumulated in the previous conflicts, Minikh and his generals tried to subdue the Crimean Khanate and to defeat the Ottoman Empire on an unprecedented level. In reality, the course of the Russo-Ottoman

war of 1736-1739 only confirmed the lessons learned during previous conflicts. Large-scale, slow-moving armies were doomed to fail when confrontedthe mobile, evasive forces of the Tatars and the well-supplied Ottoman units. The later enjoyed the luxury of operating in proximity to their well-established supply lines. While P. von Lacy was quick to understand the necessity of acting with rather limited and mobile forces, able to rapidly penetrate enemy territory and defeat opponents by denying them the chance to concentrate, Minikh would struggle in the old-fashioned way. It was not until 1739 during the final stages of the war that Minikh finally gasped the correct approach and was able to soundly defeat the Ottomans at Stavuchany and almost to conquer Moldavia. Even so, the actual battlefield capability of the Minikh's army stood higher than anything the Ottomans could place on the field. Even though campaigns failed in Jedisan and Moldavia, battles and lesser engagements were always won by the Russians and even cavalry confrontations ended with Minikh and Lacy's troops gaining the upper hand. By 1737, it was obvious that dragoons, hussars and Cossacks were more successful and, generally, better in almost every aspect, than their Ottoman and Tatar opponents.

In general, the size of the Russia's forces differed little from that during the age of Aleksey. Troop numbers alone can be misleading when asserting the actual effects of the reforms. Instead, as already outlined, it was the practical side of war and combat that should be used as a measure stick for success. The overall result of the campaigns in the south was the establishment of well-organized, disciplined units, who were able to adapt quickly to the changing climate and geographic context. Apart from nurturing several generations of veteran troops, essential for the building of a professional and highly effective force, the campaigns in the Pontic region and the Caucasus also represent a field school for Russian generals and officers. The valuable lessons, learned with blood, hardship and resilience would become essential for the upbringing of the next-generation military leaders, such as Rumyantsev, Suvorov and even the generals of the nineteenth century. Patterns of invasion and campaign organization, applied and defined in the first decades of the eighteenth century, were repeatedly used up until World War I. The series of Russo-Ottoman wars after 1768 were all developed on the basis of Minikh's experience and the inheritance of the Petrine era.

The conduct of war in the south played a substantial role in the upbringing of Russia's native officer corps, as well as in the rather smooth merging between native and foreign experience used for the transformation of the nature of the Muscovite military elite. The ability to attract foreign specialists and to transfer their experience into practice in the construction of the army was among the main strong points of Peter's military reforms. The broad but systematic use of "outsiders" both as middle and high-level officers became an essential element of Petrine heritage, which remained a trend in Russia's military history as late as World War I. Balancing between Russian and foreign commanders remained a

crucial feature of the Tsardom's political ethos throughout the eighteenth century and the nemtsy were frequently used by monarchs to counterweight political opposition in court but also as scapegoats in times of trouble and internal instability.

*Feeding war*

For most of the seventeenth century the principle of *bellum se ipsum alet* remained the predominant notion in the organization of logistics and military financing. Brought to life in the sixteenth century from a concept, the seizure of resources from enemy's or allied lands became a *conditio sine qua non* for the armies of Wallenstein, Gustavus and their followers. After 1648, and especially in the context of the Sun King's wars, early modern warfare experienced a constant evolution in terms of organization in both tactical and logistical aspect. As David Parrott notes in his recent study on mercenary warfare, the state would follow a constant trend of monopolizing the organization and levying of field units, the appointment of their commanding structure and the subordination of the separate corpses to the overall strategy of war.[1] This process was closely related to the development of military enterprise as well as to the strengthening of royal authority accomplished through tightening the relations between the crown and the nobility. To put it in other words, the ruler struggled to enhance his ability to mobilize resources with the help of the central administration, but also by involving the aristocracy as coinvestors in the business of war in exchange for political power, patronage and leading positions in the army. As noted in the first chapter of the current dissertation, this process is clearly visible in Romanov Russia, where Mikhail and Aleksey relied heavily on the dvoryani's support during their continuous struggle with Poland-Lithuania and to lesser extend – with Sweden. The trend remained unchanged during Peter's reign. The buttressing of serfdom and the expansion of the administrative areas, in which it was applied were a constant feature of Russia's domestic policy during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. While early Romanovs needed support from the boyars in terms of political justification, following the election of Mikhail in 1611 and Aleksey's reforms, Peter and his successors were in state of debt to certain parties among the higher nobility with whose help the throne was secured for the Great Tsar and his successors. With the rise of Catherine II, the notion of satisfying the nobility in exchange for political credit grew even stronger because she was a foreigner and she was not related by blood to the ruling dynasty. Later on, Aleksandr I (r. 1801-1825) would balance his reform policy in order to please his father's murderers, who brought him to the throne in 1801. In return for cementing its social and political privileges, the aristocracy was ready to support the crown with funds both loaned and invested for the

[1] D.A. Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 309.

upkeep and upgrade of Tsardom's forces. As in the course of the Second Azov Campaign, it was the companies of aristocratic houses, which provided the necessary funds for the construction of the Voronezh navy. In 1737 and 1738 it was the dvoryani from the southern Russian lands who contributed, though with reluctance, for the provision of the depleted army with horsepower for the repetitive invasions in Jedisan and Crimea. The native aristocracy also made up the bulk of the Russian military elite, with a number of prominent army figures rising in ranks from the close entourage of Peter.

Apart from the considerable role of the nobility in the development and the upbringing of the tsarist army, Peter’s era sought the application of the entrepreneur-based supply system. While the army organization became more and more a matter of state participation, the provision of food, clothes, munitions and guns remained an element of private arrangement between the state and particular merchants. Some of them were closely related to the higher and middle-rank nobility, benefiting from patronage in receiving state-funded deals. Although Peter tried to establish a form of military autarcky for his forces, gunpowder, guns, ship parts and even cloth for the uniforms, these materials still had to be imported from abroad, not to count the large number supplies, which were delivered by private entrepreneurs. Owners of gunpowder mills and gun-casting facilities, uniform producing textile manufactures, food suppliers, carpenters and even shipbuilders were contracted to support the army with their professional skills and the goods they provided. This, however, does not indicate any form of state weakness in providing the necessary means of waging war. On the contrary, this demonstrates a form of flexibility, which allowed Russia to provide supplies and armament, which it otherwise would be impossible to secure if the Tsardom relied strictly on its bureaucratic capacities. In this sense, Russia was standing on the same ground as contemporary states throughout Europe. Furthermore, the ability to provide such substantial quantities of supplies and materials along lines of communication, spanning sometimes tens of hundreds of kilometers, was rather impressive.

On the other hand, it is evident that constant shortages of logistics support for the operating armies occurred in each campaign. Horses were a rarity, especially during the later stages the conflicts. Food and water supplies were also problematic. Usually the rations lasted for half the expected time as demonstrated by Minikh's incursions in Jedisan in 1736, 1737 and 1738, but also during the Pruth Campaign and the First Azov Campaign. Problems with adequate water and land transportation were evident and never fully overcome. There was a certain struggle between the need of providing a substantial baggage train for the operating armies and the necessity of maintaining a higher movement speed in order to cover the spacious distances between the operational bases and the campaign objectives. Minikh experimented with barrels, which could be reassembled as rafts and other practical means of lightening the burden of the supply train, while maintaining enough food and

water to keep the army going. To the shortcomings contributed: the cumbersome frontier administration, the lack of clear perception of available resources, the open or hidden arguments between the operating commanders and the civil and military administration, responsible for the logistical upkeep of the advancing forces. Rulers were also not immune to such problems, as Peter found out on several occasions, being forced to repeat orders and even threaten with reprimands in case of further insubordination.

In reality, the actual effectiveness of the Russian army was like a mathematics equation of the "a-b=c" type, in which "a" stands for the battlefield efficiency of the troops and "b" represents the logistics constrains, which the army faced. Other modifiers, such as the capability of commanders, effectiveness of the enemy forces, as well as the "unknown" factors – such as climate change, all contributed to the outcome of each conflict. As demonstrated during the course of the Persian Campaign, the shift in the weather was far more dangerous for the army than the incursions of Caucasian war-bands. The ability of the logistical services to rapidly respond to changes in weather, unexpected deaths of great number of animals and unpredicted shortages of food supplies did not occur in the Russian case. Similar problems were experienced as late as the winter of 1877 and even later. They were closely related to the limitations of transportation as well as the bad quality of the existing road infrastructure. Although there were evident discrepancies in the logistics system of Imperial Russia, it would be inaccurate to denounce it as inefficient, without taking into account the social, geographical and technical limitations, within which Russian authorities operated. While it is true that certain figures in the civic and military structures of the state demonstrated apparant lack of abilities, the big picture reveals a general desire for achieving the goals, laid down by the ruler and his advisers. The overall notion that Russia was lagging behind other major states in making the transition from a military-fiscal to a fiscal-military state does not rest on any solid historical data. Evaluating the experience of the Southern Campaigns proves that although Russia faced considerable financial, administrative and logistical problems, it was able to maintain its war efforts for substantial periods of time, while simultaneously fighting on other fronts.

*The southern frontier*

So far, the dissertation has outlined the general trends of Russian military development over the course of half a century between the first siege of Azov in 1695 and the last shots of the 1736-1739 war. In the period in question these were not the only conflicts, in which the Empire was entangled. The Great Northern War (1700-1721) and the War of the Polish Succession (1733-1738) were as essential to the political and military development of the Tsars' realm as were the confrontations with the Ottoman and Safavid states and their vassals. Then why was the southern front so important and why considerable attention

should be paid to the ongoing wars in these territories? First and foremost, because it represented a unique environment, in which the Russian army had the chance to test and readjust its tactics and overall strategy and to fix (or at least try to) existing problems in relation to the supplying of the field armies. A puzzle of grasslands, half-deserts, waterless steppes, marshes, small and large rivers, valleys, hills and mountains, spanning on an area twice as large as France or Spain, the southern frontier on the Pontic Steppe and the Caucasus was unlike anything seen or conquered by Western and Central European armies. Habsburg forces faced somewhat similar conditions during their operations in Hungary and Transylvania, but distances were insignificant in comparison to the territories stretching in front of the marching Russian forces. For an early modern army, the Black Sea region was not a place for conquest, but rather an arena on which the ability to adapt, evolve and survive was put to the test. It was not the only harsh environment in Europe. The Baltic and Finland placed considerable constraint in front of Russia's military endeavour. The difference came from the size of the operational area, the proximity of the main Russian supply bases and the fact that most Russian soldiers were native to the climate of the Baltic-Finland region. Thus, during the Great Northern War it was the Swedes rather than nature that were the main problem in front of the Russian army. In the Pontic-Caucasus region nature was the predominant enemy. While Tatars, Nogais and Dagestani did possess substantial military skills, which buttressed the existing imperial forces of the Ottoman Empire and the Safavids, the battlefield quality of the Russian army remained unmatched. This, however, was insufficient, in relation to greater odds, such as encirclement, depletion of supplies or the overwhelming military potential of the reinvigorated Persian forces under Nadir Shah. Therefore, it was important for the imperial military establishment to develop certain features of organization on logistical and tactical level in order to face and deal with problems, most of which were non-existent during the war against Karl XII.

Apart from the military-geographic importance of the south for the evolution of Russia's military machine, the Pontic-Caucasus region has one other important feature. Following the Seven Years War, it was to become the main theater of operation of the imperial forces in the next two centuries. While the struggle with Napoleon presented a tremendous distraction, Russia's main political focus remained the destruction or at least the overpowering of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of firm control over the Straights. The roots of Russia's involvement in the region, as well as the basic approaches both diplomatic and military were all formulated during the wars of 1695-1739. Understanding the routes and the conduct of later campaigns or the existence of certain trends in diplomatic preparations after 1768 is not possible without knowing and appreciating the military and diplomatic process of Russia's southern expansion during the Petrine and Post-Petrine era. It is during this period that Russia began to exercise its influence not only over the Pontic-

Caucasus region, but also further south, laying the foundations of present-day policies, pursued by Moscow and its political leadership. The struggle to include Iran in a political sphere of influence, as well as the desire to enter the lucrative trade in the Indian Ocean, have remained essential to Russia's pursuit of mastery in Asia.

Dealing with local power-brokers became an integral part of Russia's diplomatic school, but also means of influence over a broader geo-political perimeter by pushing adjacent countries into following certain policies, which buttressed Russia's grand strategy in Europe and Asia. The diplomatic and military developments today demonstrate that problems inherited by imperial direct and indirect domination have, generally, remained intact through the last three centuries. Russia still faces a stiff opposition from the Bosporus in its sothern drive in the Caucasus and the Levant, while Iran is sometimes an ally and sometimes an enemy for the affirmation of Moscow's interest in the region. Lesser states, such as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan still try to balance their existence by allying with one local power against another or by seeking help outside their direct geo-political zone. Ukraine is again as troublesome for Russian policy-makers as it was in the age of Mazepa and the radical approach towards Kiev has produced inconclusive results, opening more questions than finding any solution to existing problems. From this point of view, Petrine Russia had demonstrated a more flexible policy of winning Ukraine in comparison to Putin's twenty-first century domain.

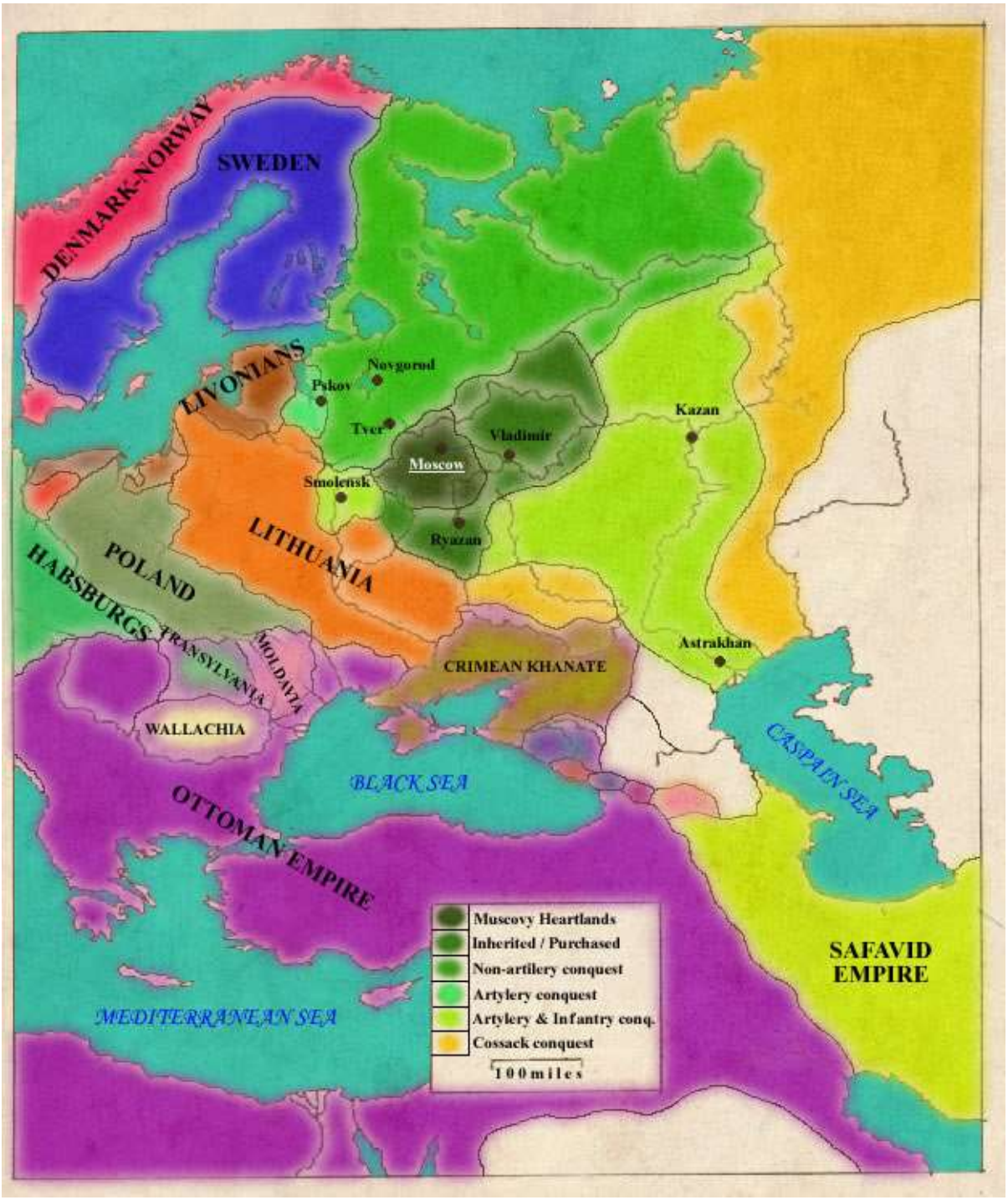
The necessity of determining and assessing military effectiveness in early modern Europe is essential for the evolution of the historiography. While in theory most aspects of state-building, policy-making and general conduct of war have been dealt with, the evaluation of battlefield performance and the clear distinction between waging successful wars and organizing particular campaigns still needs to be addressed by modern scholars. While an army can perform exceptionally in the course of a certain conflict, a war might still turn out to be a disaster, given the fact that the outcome of warfare is dependent on a number of factors, with tactical success being just one among them. On the other hand, losing a war is not the same as possessing an inadequate military establishment. What this dissertation attempts to prove is that despite the overall negative outcome, a field army might perform in an impressive manner, overcoming substantial impediments such as: logistical restrains, administration and command incompetence, and superior enemy numbers. In order to build and present a full-blooded depiction of what warfare looked like during the eighteenth century, its specifics must be carefully assessed and the various limitations which influenced the performance of the army (natural, administrative and technological), must be taken under consideration. It is also important not to compare contemporary establishments only in terms of temporal coexistence, but to bear in mind the peculiarities of the geo-political

context in which the states in question and their forces thrived and developed. While certain historiographical models could be generally applied to specific periods of time, only a thorough study, which compares and outlines the particular cases, can assist the understanding of early modern warfare. The tale of Russia's Southern Campaigns, their development, evolution and unique features is an important segment of the sophisticated puzzle of eighteen-century military conduct. Along with other specific theaters of operation, for a long time the Pontic-Caucasian frontier has remained a rather understudied element of early modern war. Understanding its specifics and relation to events during the Petrine and post-Petrine era is essential for the perception of Russia’s present-day policy in the region and the various impediments standing in front Moscow’s path.

# APPENDIXES

## PART I, CHAPTER I

### Map 1 - Russia's Expansion 1478 – 1578



## Table 1

## Army growth in Russia 1631 – 1722

| **Year** | **J. Keep** ***Soldiers of the Tsar*** | **W. Fuller** ***Strategy and Power (1)*** | **R. Hellie** ***The Petrine Army*** | **C. Duffy** ***Russia's Military Way*** | **B. Davies** ***Empire and Military*** | **Russian data** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ~ 1590 | ~ 110,000 | | ~ 110,000 | | | 110,000 *(3.1)* 150,000 *(3.2)* 300,000 *(4)* |
| 1631 | ~ 35,000 *(2)* | 29,000 | | | 90,000 (20) | 34 558 *(17)* |
| 1650s | | | | 138 755 *(12)* | | 160,000 *(21)* |
| 1681 | 190,938 | | 215,000 | 200-300 000 *(13)* | 245,000 (20) | 214,600 *(18)* |
| 1687 | | | | | | 112,902 *(19)* |
| 1689 | | 112,000 (6) | ~110,000 *(6)* | Up to 300,000 *(14)* | | 117,446 *(19)* |
| 1695/6 | | | ~ 90,000 *(7)* | 150,000 | | |
| 1700 | | 40,000 | 34-45,000 *(8)* | 34,000 *(8)* | 280-300,000 *(20)* | |
| 1705 | | 60,000 | | | | |
| 1709 | | | 42,000 *(9)* | 200,000 *(15)* | | |
| 1711/1712 | 174,757 | 100,000 | 44,000 *(10)* | 144,464 *(16)* | | |
| 1713 | | | 13-16,000 *(11)* | | | |
| 1720 | 177,029 | | | | | |
| 1724 | | 130,000 | 210-265,000 *(5)* | | | 253,000 *(22)* |
| 1725 | 304,000 *(5)* | | | | 289,000 *(23)* | |
| 1730 | | | | | 226,000 | |
| 1732 | | | | | 230,354 | |
| 1736 | | | | | 240,405 | |

## Notes:

(1) Fuller regards only field army and does not include garrison and supporting troops.
(2) 17,400 strong new model regiments, which comprised half of the total active army. This figure applies only for the forces that participated in the Smolensk Campaign; see J. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar,* 81.
(3.1) S.M. Seredonin
(3.2) A.A. Zimin
(4) I.A. Korotkov
(5) Including the navy personnel. Otherwise ~ 289,000.
(6) This was a field army under Golytsin for the Crimean Campaign. Fuller estimates the Russian forces at 100,000 for the Crimean Campaign of 1687.
(7) This was a field army under Peter I for the Azov Campaign
(8) Only the army at Narva
(9) Only the army at Poltava
(10) Only the army at Pruth
(11) Only the army in Finland
(12) War-time army; see C. Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 6-7.
(13) In the 1670s
(14) Duffy quotes Pososhkov (1951, 262)
(15) This figure is for 1707. Duffy gives 45,000 for the Battle of Poltava.
(16) This is the number of regular forces, including 58,000 garrison troops.
(17) The field army of M. Shein in the 1631 campaign. A.V. Chernov,*Vooruzhennye sily Russkogo gosudarstva v XV-XVII v.v.*
(18) The total paper strength of Aleksey's army, Ibid.
(19) These are the field armies' paper strength for the two Crimean Campaigns. Ibid.
(20) Brian Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe*, 62-3. For 1625-1631, he gives a total of 90,000 for the entire Muscovite army; For 1681 he estimates a total of 245,000, not including the Ukrainian Cossacks. The figure for 1700 is for the entire army prior to the Narva Campaign.
(21) A.V. Volkov, *Voyny i Voyska Moskovskogo Gosudarstva*, 356
(22) According to L.G. Beskrovnyy.
(23) Not including naval personnel. Davies uses Keep's estimates.

## Table 2

## Number of Recruits for the Russian Army 1700 – 1740

| Year | Number of recruits according to Beskrovnyy | Other estimates | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1700 | 33,234 | - | 32,130 |
| 1701 | - | - | No recruitments were carried out. Conscription of serfs and free men was used. |
| 1702 | - | - | |
| 1703 | - | - | |
| 1704 | - | - | |
| 1705 | 44,539 | | |
| 1706 | 19,579 | 12,572 (not including the fleet and the supply train) | 12,579 for the army, 6,000 for the supply train, 1,000 for the navy |
| 1707 | 12,450 | 13,135 | |
| 1708 | 11,289 | 12,739 | Anisimov gives a higher number of recruits, including 550 from the War department. The 11,289 soldiers, given by Beskrovnyy were enlisted by the Pomesnchiye department as noted in Anisimov. |
| 1709 | 15,072 | 15,000 | |
| 1710 | 17,172 | 9,600 | Anisimov states, that state expectations were for 14,200 recruits, but only 9,600 were actually enlisted. Beskrovnyy presents a completely different picture. |
| 1711 | 51,912 | 50,000 | There were three recruitments in this year. |
| 1712 | - | - | |
| 1713 | 37,958 | - | There were two recruitments for the army (20,416 men and then 16,342 in the second) and 1,200 men for the fleet. |
| 1714 | 500 | - | All for the fleet. They were recruited from the sea areas. |
| 1715 | 12,395 | - | From them 1,500 were for |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | the fleet. |
| 1716 | 250 | - | They were sent to the Prussians as grenadiers. |
| 1717 | 2,500 | - | They were all sent to the fleet. |
| 1718 | 15,389 | - | For the fleet and the army. |
| 1719 | 14,112 | - | |
| 1720 | 4,000 | - | They were recruited from the children of soldiers and NCOs |
| 1721 | 19,755 | - | |
| 1722 | - | | |
| 1723 | 10,118 | - | |
| 1724 | 20,550 | - | |
| 1725 | - | - | |
| 1726 | 22,795 | - | |
| 1727 | 34,425 | - | There were two recruitments – 16,640 and 17,785 men. |
| 1728 | 15,016 | - | |
| 1729 | 23,698 | - | |
| 1730 | 16,000 | - | |
| 1731 | - | - | There was recruitment for the fleet, but no actual numbers are given. |
| 1732 | 18,654 | - | |
| 1733 | 50,569 | | |
| 1734 | 35,000 | | A new rule was introduced, regarding the minimum height of the recruits. |
| 1735 | - | | |
| 1736 | 45,167 | ~40,000 (A. Bayov) | For the war against the Ottoman Empire. |
| 1737 | 51,960 | | 4,000 of them were Bashkir cavalrymen |
| 1738 | 34,071 | | |
| 1739 | 31,450 | | These were taken in a single recruitment. However, several other local recruitments were carried out, but no numbers are given for them. |
| 1740 | 41,131 | | They were enlisted in 2 recruitments – 21,131 and 20,000 men. |
| **TOTAL** | **762,710** | | |

Source: L.G. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot v XVIII veke* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1958)

## Table 3
## Russian and European Army Growth (1590-1715)

| Year | Russia | France | England | Sweden | Netherlands | Spain | Austria |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1590s | 110,000 *(1)* | 80,000 | 30,000 | 15,000 | 20,000 | 200,000 | - |
| 1630s | 35,000 | 150,000 *(5)* | - | 45,000 | 50,000 | 300,000 | - |
| 1650s | 138,755 *(2)* | 100,000 | 70,000 | 70,000 | - | 100,000 | - |
| 1670s | 130,000 | 120,000 | - | 63,000 | 110,000 | 70,000 | 25,000 |
| 1700s | 170,000 *(3)* | 400,000 *(6)* | 87,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 50,000 | 50,000 *(8)* |
| 1710s | 253,000 *(4)* | 350,000 *(7)* | 75,000 | 110,000 | 130,000 | 30,000 | 100,000 *(9)* |

Source: G. Parker, "The Military Revolution 1550 – 1660 A Myth?", in C.J. Rogers (ed.) *The Military Revolution Debate* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 44; P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 99 (For the 1710s numbers only); For Russian figures, see Table 1 above

**Notes:**

(1) Taken from Table 1; Both Keep and Hellie accept this figure; see Table 1 above
(2) According to C. Duffy; see Table 1 above.
(3) Keep gives 174,757 for 1711-12; Duffy estimates the active army at 144,464 soldiers; see Table 1 above.
(4) Beskrovnyy places the entire Russian army following the regulations of 1711 and 1720 at 253,000. L.G. Beskrovnyy, *Ruskaya armiya i flot*, 39-50.
(5) John Lynn gives 125,000 as the actual number of the French army for 1635 – 1642; see J. Lynn, *Recalculating French Army Growth* in TMRD, 133.
(6) Lynn estimates 340,000 during the Nine Years War; Ibid., 132.
(7) Lynn estimates 255,000 during the War of the Spanish Succession, Ibid., 132.
(8) Tim Blanning estimates 100,000 for Audtria in 1700; see T. Blanning, The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648 – 1815 (London: Penguin UK, 2007), 603
(9) Tim Blanning estimates 110,000 for Austria in 1710; Ibid.

## Table 4
## The Russian Military Expenditure Tables

| | 1711 | | 1720 | | 1724 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Army type** | **Size** | **Cost** | **Size** | **Cost** | **Size** | **Cost** |
| General Staff | 184 | 91,000 | 360 | 163,000 | 360 | 163,000 |
| Cavalry | 43,824 | 765,000 | 39,501 | 1,389,000 | 41,674 | |
| Guards | 62,454 | 882,000 | 5,817 | 156,000 | 5,817 | 245,000 |
| Infantry | | | 57,956 | 1 427 000 | 58,754 | 3,840,000 (2) |
| Garrison | 64,769 | 452,000 | 69,896 | 961,000 | 69,313 | |
| Artillery | 3,526 | 195,000 | 3,526 | 195,000 | 4,526 | 300,000 |
| Other | - | - | - | - | 124,150 (1) | 2,144,000 |
| **Total** | **174,757** | **2,385,000** | **177,029** | **4,291,000** | **304,000** | **6,692,000** |

Source: J. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462–1874* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 136-8; Prices are in *rubles*.

**Notes:**
(1) Includes "Lower Corps" (*Nizovoy korpus* – the army occupying Persian provinces in the south Caspian Sea); Ukrainian frontier force; irregular troops; naval forces.
(2) This figure is the total expenditure for the cavalry, infantry and garrison troops.

## Table 5
## Annual Military Expenditure and State Revenue in Russia in rubles

| Year | State Revenue | Expenditure | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total State Expenditure | Military | % of the Revenue |
| 1680 | 1,500,000* | | 750,000* | 50% |
| 1701 | 3,546,000**** | | 1,839,000* | 52% |
| 1704 | - | 3,032,082 | 1,439,832*** | 40.9% (3)*** |
| 1710 | 3,133,879*** | 3,077,110***** | 3,000 ,000(1)****** | 95% |
| 1711 | 3,200,000** | 4,268,000 (2) | 4,000,000 (2) ** | 125% |
| 1712 | - | - | 3,356,900 | |
| 1720 | 6,499,000**** | 5,556,000**** | 4,291,000** (5) | 66% |
| 1723 | 6,042,000**** | 4,725,000**** | - | - |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1724 | 8,556,000****** | 6,243,000**** | 5,403,348 | 63% |
| 1725 | 10,186,000****** | 10,141,000 * | 6,541,000 * | 66% (4) |
| 1729 | - | - | 5,412,263***** | - |
| 1734 | - | 9,424 000 * | 6,731,000 * | |
| 1736 | - | - | 5,466,932***** | - |

Sources: J. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 136-8; L. Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press 1998), 136-8; C. Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 36; S.G. Strumilin , "K voprosu ob ekonomike Petrovsko epokhi" in L.G. Beskrovnyy (ed.), *Poltava: K 250-letiyu Poltavskogo srazheniya; sbornik statey*, (Moscow : Akademia nauk, 1959); L.G. Beskrovnyy, *Russkaya armiya i flot v XVIII veke*, 118.

**Notes:**

* C. Duffy estimate
** J. Keep estimate
*** L. Hughes estimate
**** S. Strumilin estimate
***** B. Davies estimate
****** Beskrovnyy's estimate
* Troitsky's estimates

(1) C. Duffy estimates the war expenditure for 1710 at 3,000,290 or around 93 per cent of the State Revenue. Lindsey Huges estimates a total military expenditure of 3,834,418 rubles. Davies claims that the war expenditure for 1710 was 2,544,000 or 83% of the total state expenditure for that year. In the dissertation are used Beskrovnyy's estimates, which include naval personnel as well.
(2) Includes 1,260,000 rubles cost for supplies and forage. Without these, the total war expenditure is 2,740,000. This is 90% of the total state expenditure for 1711, which is 3,008,000 rubles.
(3) This is the percentage from the total state expenditure for 1704 which was 3,032,082 rubles.
(4) According to Beskrovnyy, the total war expenditure was 5,970,000 rubles or 66 per cent of the total revenue.
(5) Beskrovnyy estimates the expenditure at 4,000,000 rubles.

# PART I, CHAPTER 2

## Table 1

## Growth of the Kapukulu Ocakları Forces (1514-1769)

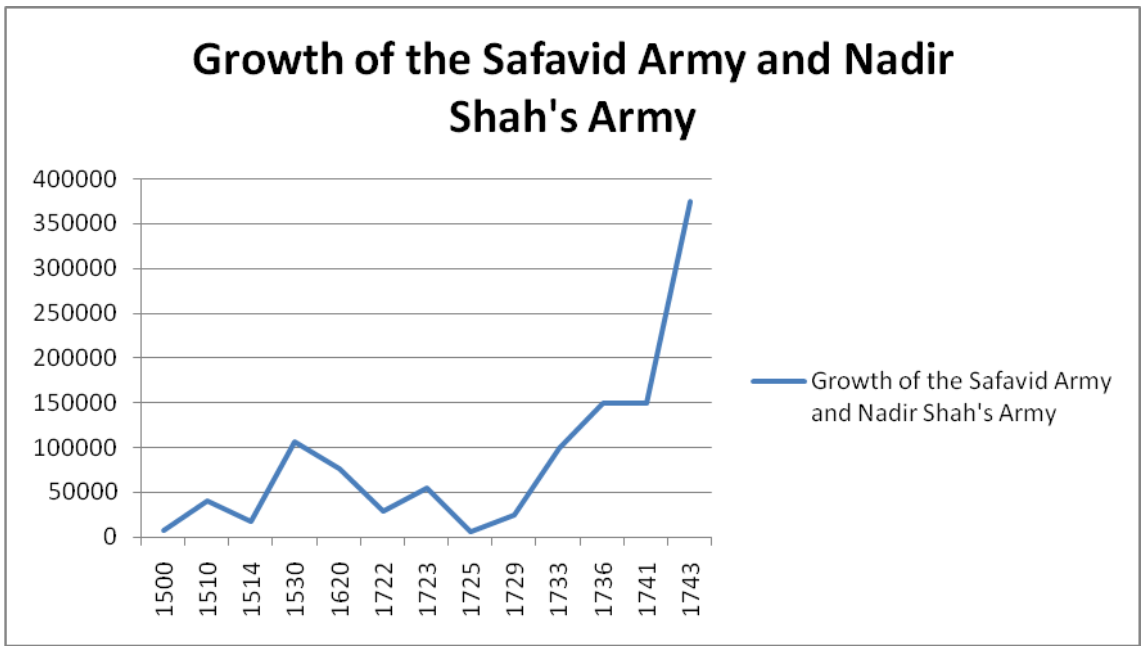
| | Ágoston | | Murphey | | Inalcık |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **Yeniçeri** | **Artillery** | **Yeniçeri** | **Total Kapukulu Ocakları** | **Total Kapukulu Ocakları** |
| **1514** | **10,156** | **1,171** | **-** | **-** | **16-30,000** |
| **1526** | **7,886** | **2,162** | **7,886** | **18,689** | |
| **1567-68** | **12,798** | **2,671** | **-** | **-** | |
| **1574** | **-** | **-** | **13,599** | **29,175** | |
| **1597** | **-** | **-** | **35,000** | **62,000 (1)** | **30-70,000 (2)** |
| **1609** | **37,627** | **7,966** | **37,627** | **75,868** | |
| **1660-61** | **54,222** | **6,488** | **53,849** | **98,342** | **50–60,000** |
| **1665** | **49,556** | **-** | **-** | **-** | |
| **1669** | **51,437** | **8,014** | **-** | **-** | |
| **1670** | **49,868** | **-** | **39,470** | **70,296** | |
| **1680** | **54,222** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** |
| **1687** | **-** | **9,122** | **-** | **-** | **-** |
| **1698-99** | **-** | **15,307** | **-** | **-** | **-** |
| **1702** | **-** | **4,201** | **-** | **-** | **70,000 (3)** |
| **1738-39** | **-** | **19,430** | **-** | **-** | |
| **1769** | **-** | **5,222** | **-** | **-** | |

**Sources:** G. Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan – Military power and Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); R. Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700* (London: University College London Press, 1999); Inalcık, H., "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700", *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (Mouton, 1980), 283-339

**Notes:**

(1) This figure does not include the artillery corps
(2) For the 1590-1630 period
(3) For 1704

## Table 2




**Sources:** M. Axworthy, "The Army of Nader Shah", *Iranian Studies* 40, 5 (2007), 639; ; Abraham of Yerevan, *History of the Wars, 1721 – 1738*, trans. by G.A. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1999); *Encyclopedia Iranica* – Army – Safavid Period (http://www.iranica.com/articles/army-iii ); L. Lockhart , "The Persian Army in the Safavid Period", *Der Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East* 34, 1 (1959), 89-98

**Notes:**

For 1530 - Including non-combatants. Of these, 84,000 were part of the qizilbash tribesmen.
For 1722-25 - These figures are given by Abraham of Yerevan for the army of Tahmasp II. In addition, he gives different numbers for the garrisons, loyal to Tahmasp and conquered by the Ottomans. However, some of these figures (for example the 85,000 garrison of Tabriz) are a clear exaggeration, and are therefore not included.
For 1736 – Axworthy gives the number between 120,000 and 180,000. For the purposes of the chart, 150,000 are given as a middle ground.
For 1743 - This number represents the total field forces of Nadir Shah for his campaign against the Ottoman Empire. This number does not include the garrison troops, left to protect Persia proper. Another suggested figure is 200,000 troops, not counting the detachments, send to occupy other (apart from Mosul and Kirkuk) Ottoman strongholds in Iraq.

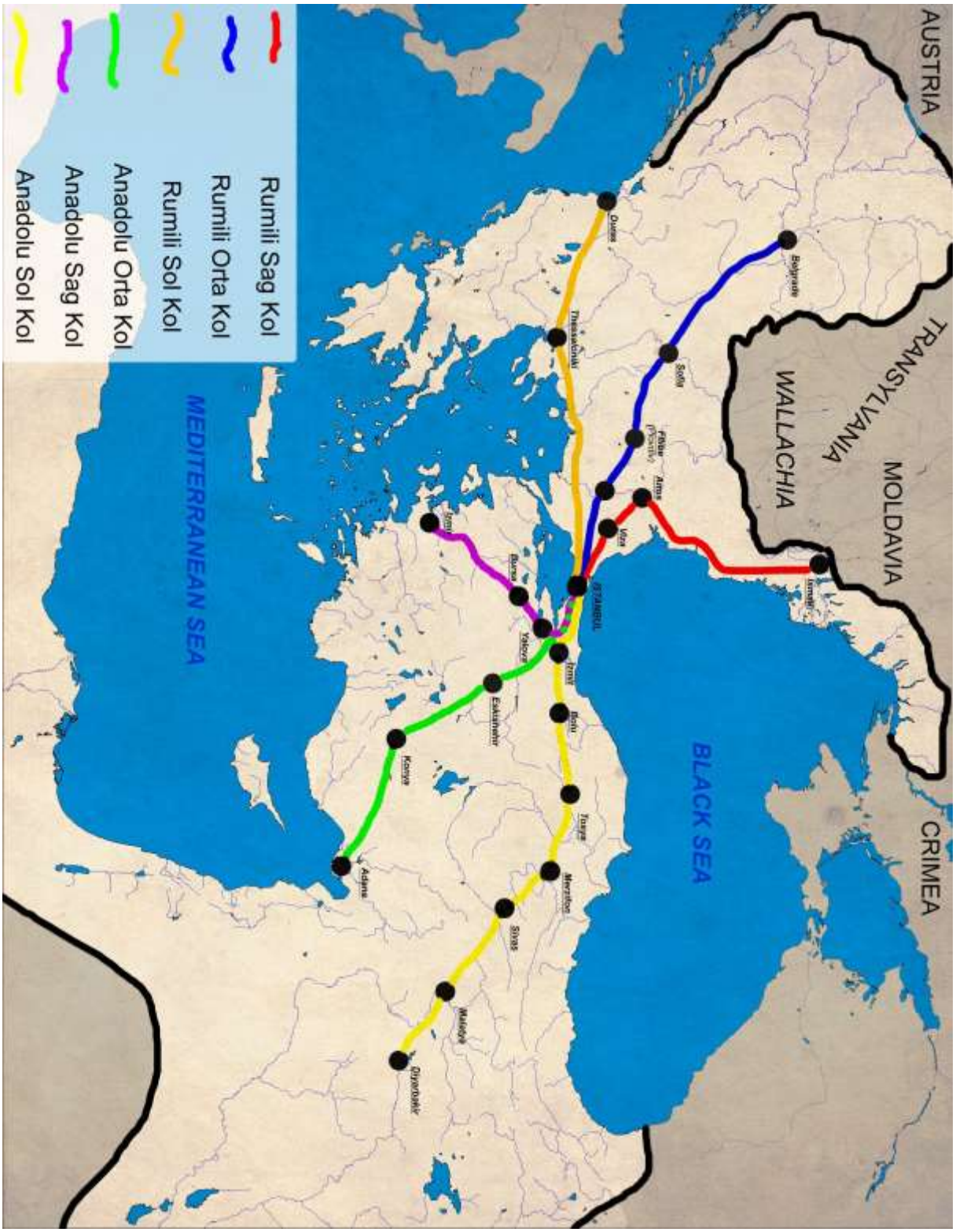
**Table 3**

**Source:** M. Haneda, "The Evolution of the Safavid Royal Guard", *Iranian Studies*, 22, 2-3 (1989), 57-85.

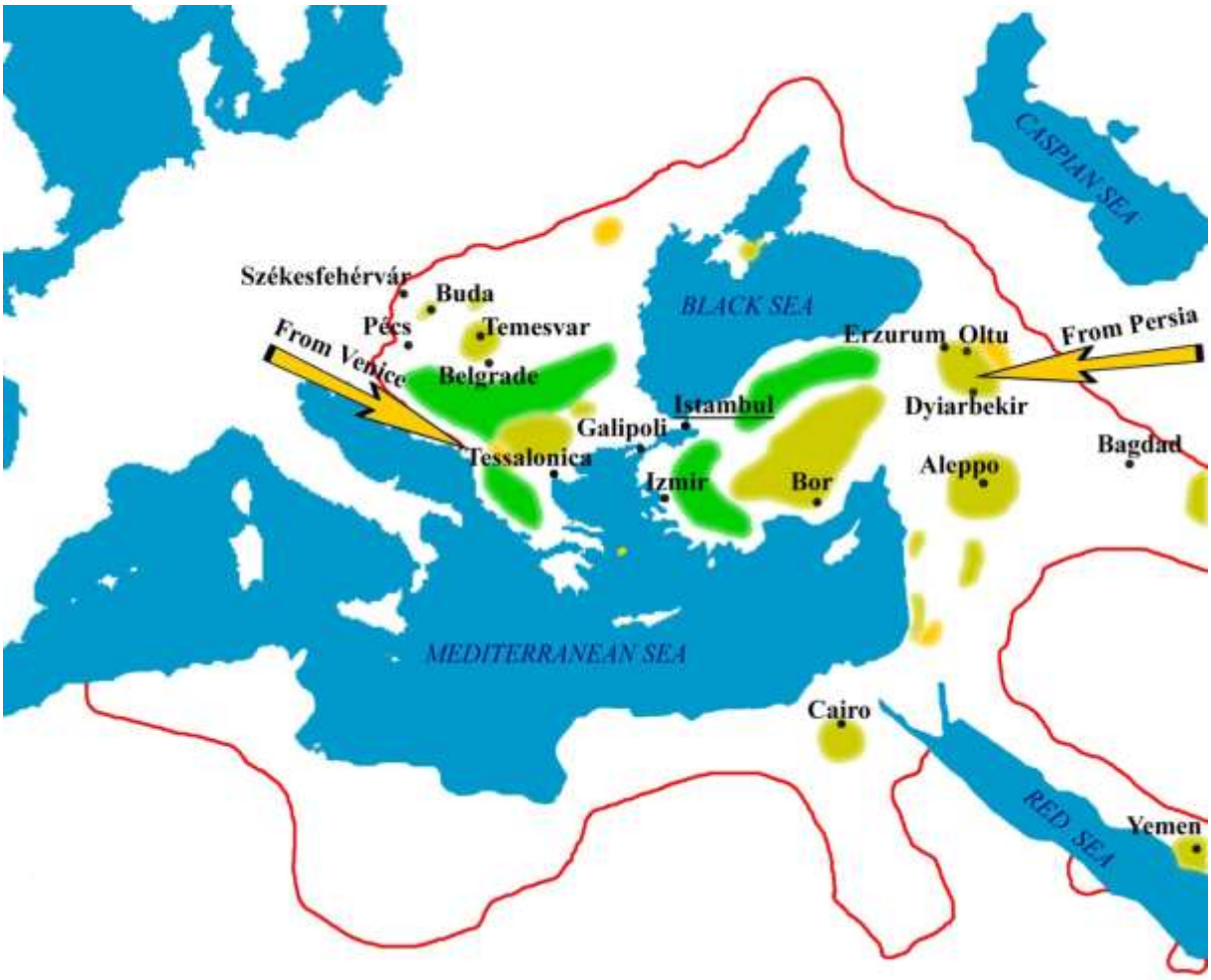
**Notes:**

For 1620 – Haneda notes that the qurchis under Abbas were between 10,000 and 15,000. For the purposes of the chart a middle ground of 12,000 is used.

## Map 1 – Military Roads in the Ottoman Empire



## Map 2 - Gunpowder Production in the Ottoman Empire




**The map shows the disposition of the main sources and the production centers for the Ottoman gunpowder industry. The cities indicate the places where there were one or more gunpowder mills (*baruthane*). The regions producing saltpeter are in light brown. The regions producing sulfur are in dark yellow. The wood deposits are in green. The boundaries refer to the Ottoman Empire and its vassals in 1680.**

**Sources:** G. Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*; G. Ágoston,"Gunpowder for the Sultan's Army: New Sources on the Supply of Gunpowder to the Ottoman Army in the Hungarian campaigns of the 16th and 17th Centuries", *Turcica*, 25 (1993), 75-96.

## PART II, CHAPTER 3

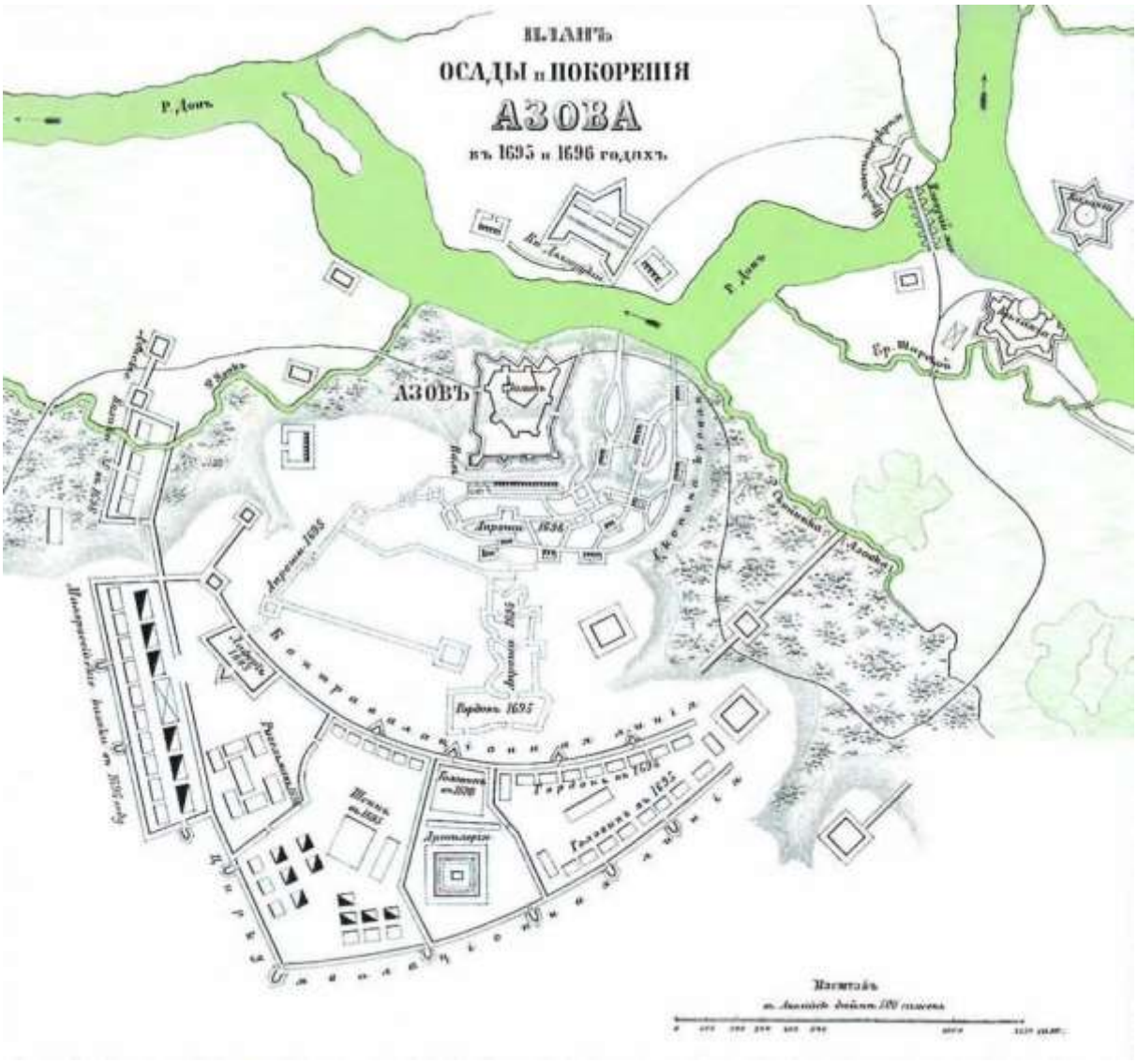
## Map 1 – The First Azov Campaign (1695)

## Map 2 – The Second Azov Campaign (1696)

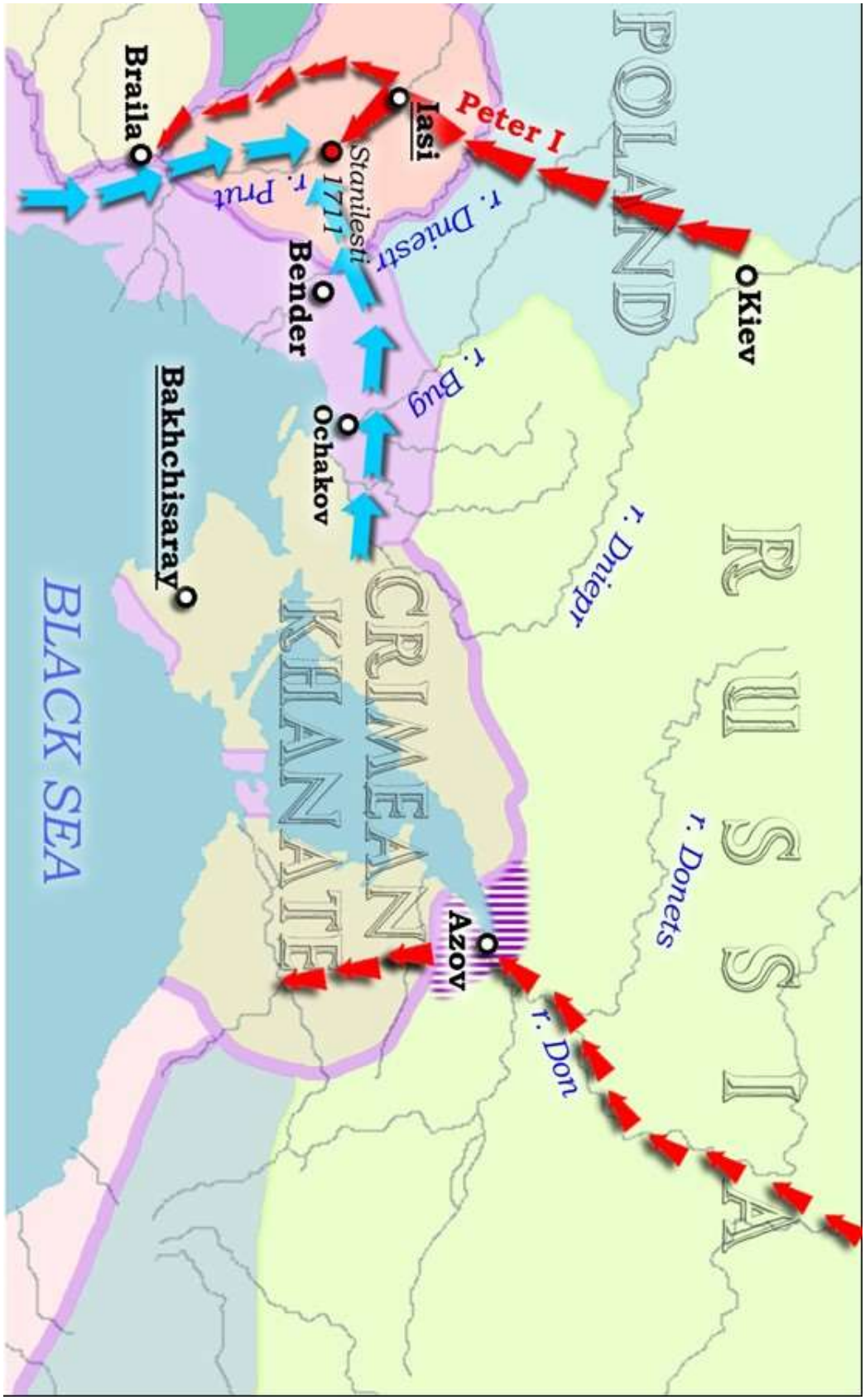
## Map 3 - The Third Azov Campaign (1697)

## Scheme – The Two sieges of Azov (1695, 1696)

Source: Bobrovskiy, P.O., *Istoriya 13 Leyb-grenaderskagoYerevanskogo Ego Velichestva polka za 250 let, vol. 1* (St. Petersburg, 1892)



**Map 4 – the Pruth Campaign and the Kuban Campaign (1711)**



**Scheme – The encirclement at Stănileşi (1711)**Source: Porfiryev, E.I., *Petr I osnovopolozhnik voennogo iskusstva russkoy regulyarnoy Armii i flota* (Moscow: Voennoe izdatelstvo, 1952)

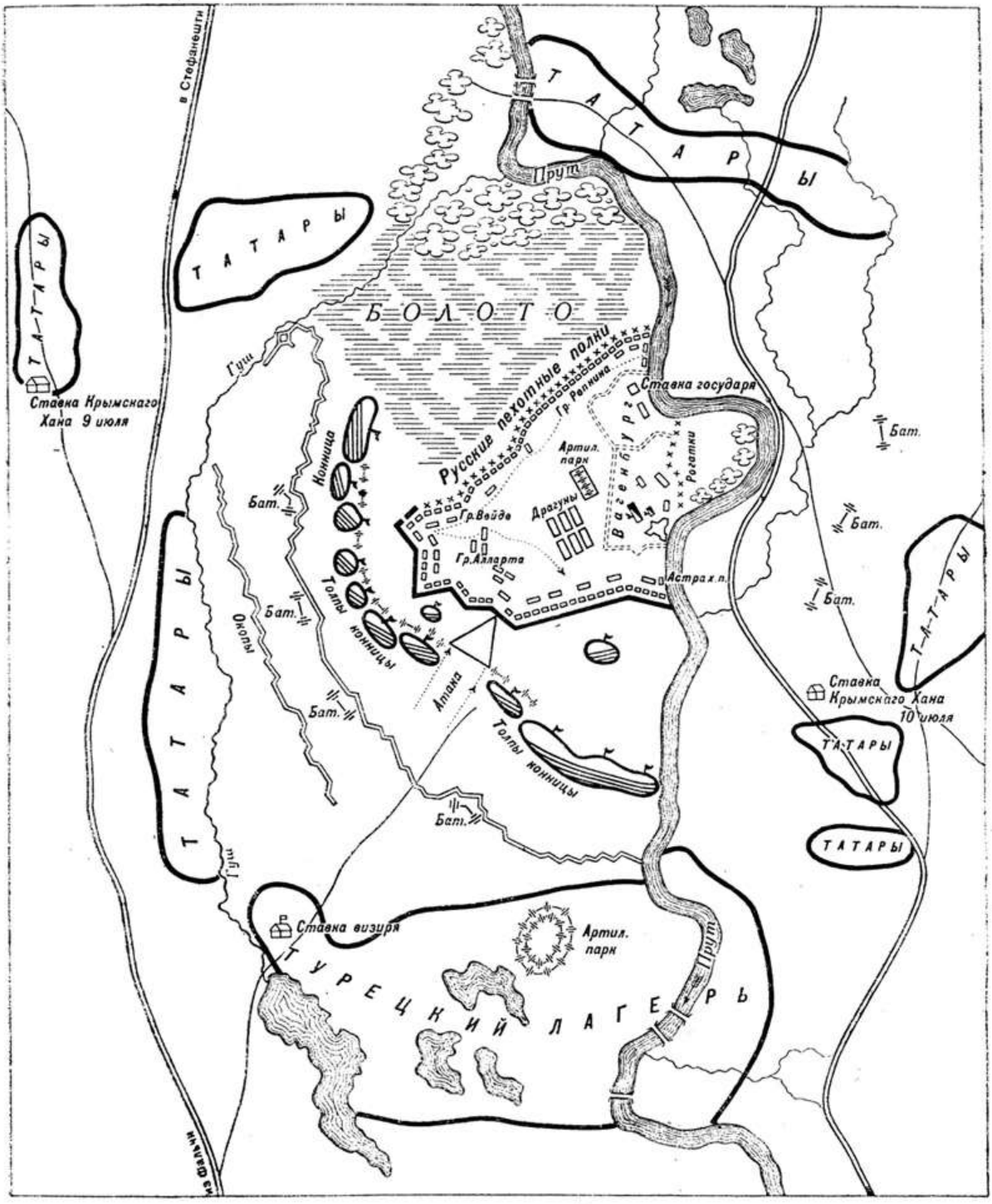


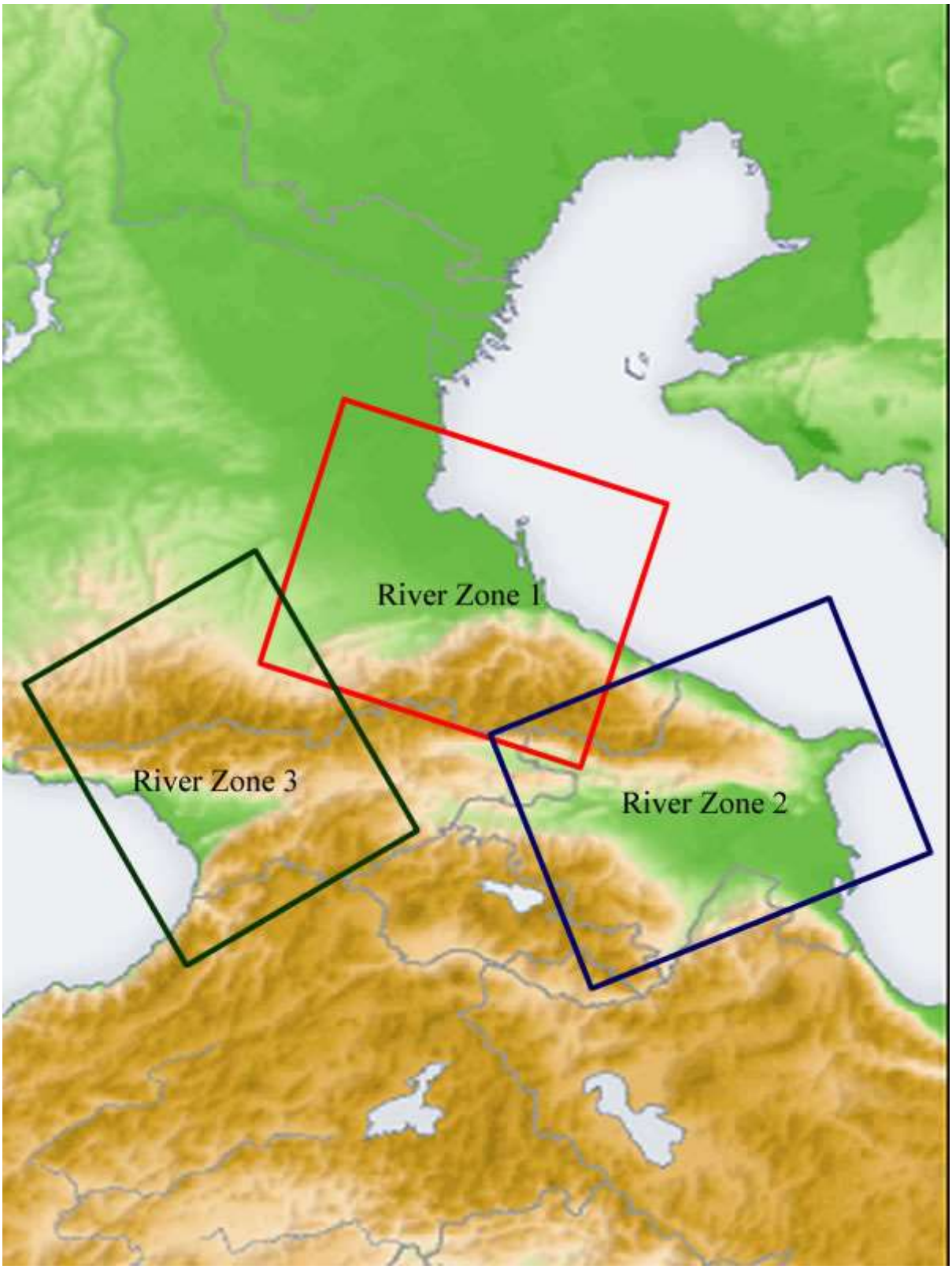

*Схема 7.* Операция на р. Пруте.

# PART II, CHAPTER 4

## Map 1 – Europe and the East in 1721

## Map 2 – The Persian Campaign(1722-1723)

**Map 3 – The Caucasus and the Caspian – Topography and Rivers**

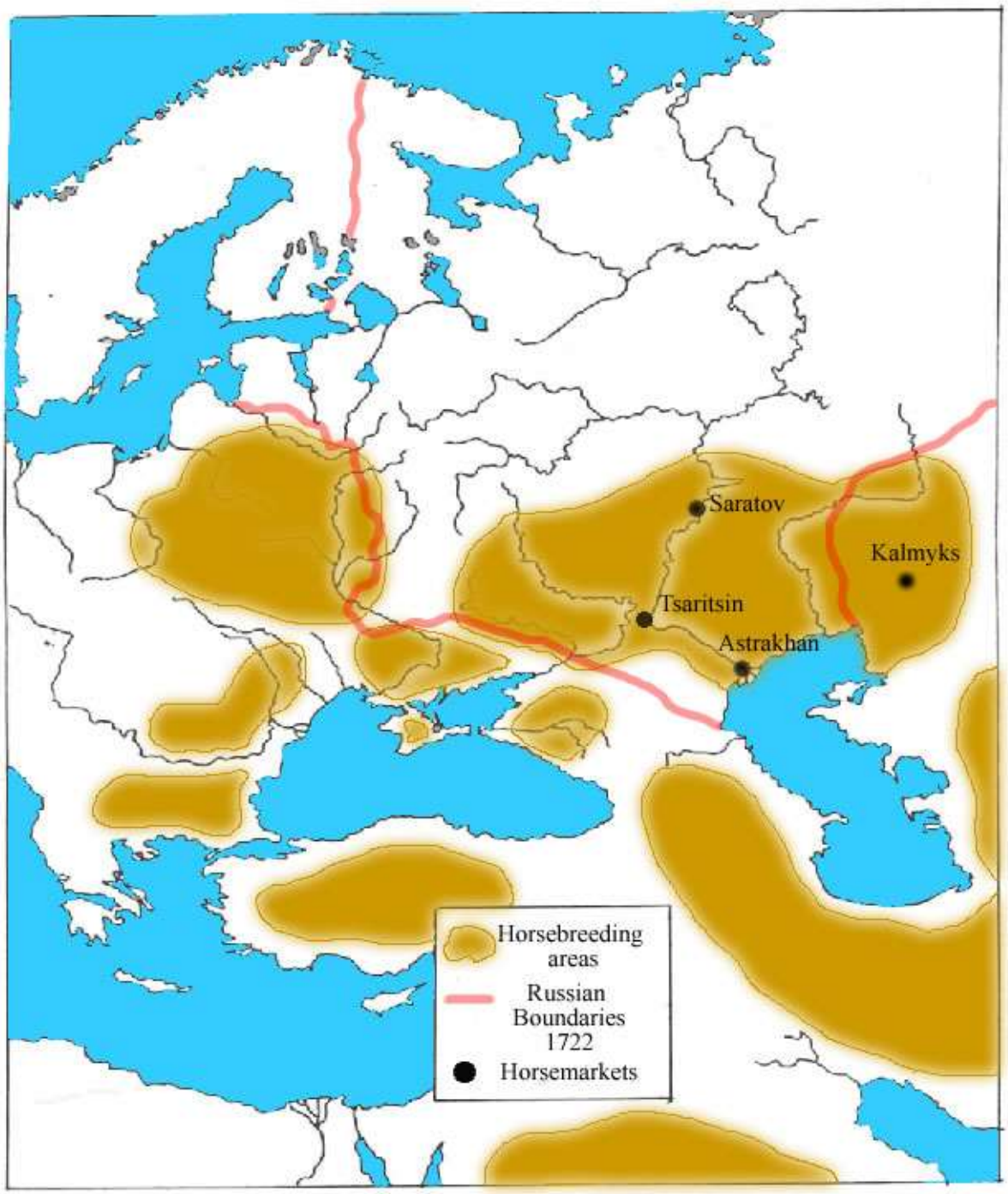


**Map 4 – Main Roads, traversing the Caucasus region**

**Map 5 – Political map of the Caucasus in 1722, prior to the Persian Campaign**

The map is based on the overall literature, used in this paper

## Map 6 – Horsemarkets and Horsebreeding areas




**Sources:** *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722* (St. Petersburg, 1855); G. Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*; R. Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare*; R. Matthee, "Unwalled Cities and Restless Nomads: Firearms and Artillery in Safavid Iran" in C. Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 389-417.

**Map 7 – Harbor Locations, targeted by Peter during the 1722-23 campaign**

**Sources:** V.P. Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I: 1722 – 1723* (Moscow, 1951); I.V. Kurukin, *Persidkiy pokhod Petra Velikogo. Nizovoy korpus na beregakh Kaspiya, 1722-1735* (Moscow: Kvadriga, 2010).

**Map 8 – Maximum extent of Russian control in the Caspian region (1724)**

The thick black line represents the main state borders, while the thiner lines represent the borders of the vassal states.

## Table 1 – Russian army strenght at the beginning of the Persian Campaign

| Army | S. Solovyev | P. Bruce | L. Lockhart | V. Lystsov | I. Kurukin |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Infantry** | 22,000 | 33,000 | 22,000 | 21,495 | 18,602 |
| **Dragoons** | 9,000 | 7,000 | 9,000 | 8,757(2) | 8,786 |
| **Cossacks** | 20,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 16,300 | 16,300 |
| **Kalmyks** | 30,000 | 40,000 | 55,000 (1) | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| **Sailors** | 5,000 | - | 5,000 | - | - |
| **Total personnel** | **86,000** | **100,000** | **111,000** | **50,552** | **48,057**(3) |
| **Vessels** | - | 250 | 274 | +87 | 447(4) |
| **Guns** | - | - | - | - | +196 |

**Notes:**

(1) – 20,000 Kalmyks and 35,000 Tatars

(2) - Lystsov does not give an exact number but states that there were 7 dragoon regiments. Taking a regular regimental strenght of 1,251 troops, officers and servants, the "paper" strenght of the supposed 7 regiments is calculated.

(3) - Including 369 artilerymen

(4) – This figure includes all boats and ships used during the campaign. Many of the vessels were quite small and were used to transport bagage and supplies.

## Table 2 - Weather Conditions during the 1722 Campaign

**Notes:**

**Bold Text –** The text given in bold is drafted from Peter's personal entries in the 1722 campaign journal

(Text) – The text in normal brackets is drafted from the First Addition to the 1722 campaign journal

{Text} – The text in curly brackets is drafted from the Second Addition to the 1722 campaign journal

' – ' indicates that there is no information on the climate in any of the Journal entries

*Text [P.Bruce]* – The text in italics, followed by [P.Bruce] is drafted from the Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce

| Date | Weather | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 18.07.1722 | **North – northwestern Wind**; (Clear weather) | Sailing Volga |
| 19.07.1722 | **Southern Wind; Later - Thunders**; (The weather was calm. west-south wind. Sunshine with some light rain.) | Sailing Volga |
| 20.07.1722 | **Weak south-southwestern wind;** (Dead-wind, clear skies) | Sailing Volga |
| 21.07.1722 | **Dead-wind until 7 p.m., then the wind turns into east-north-east; Thunders, strong wind and heavy rainfall in the evening and during the night**; (Strong wind until 2 p.m.; Small rainfall in the evening. Had to stay on anchor during the night, because of the weather. The wind was southeastern) | Entering the Caspian Sea |
| 22.07.1722 | **North-western wind in the mornig. After 6 a.m. the wind turns south-south-east**; (The weather was clear; The wind was south-eastern) | Sailing Caspian Sea |
| 23.07.1722 | **Eastern wind that turns east-north-east; During the day the wind made following the course of the ships very hard. Storm and hevay rain**; (southeastern wind in the morning. Storm between 10 and 12 a.m.; at noon the wind turned northern and made sailing possible) | Reached Terki and stayed in the gulf of Terki until 26.07; Part of the fleet got lost at sea, due to lack of experienced navigators and compasses (P.Bruce) |
| 24.07.1722 | **Northern wind**; (Waited for the rest of the fleet to join before sailing south) | In the bay of Terki |
| 26.07.1722 | **Weak east-north-east wind;** (Tail-wind during the day. Storm in the evening) | Sailing from Terki to Agrakhan bay |
| 27.07.1722 | **North-north-western wind;** (…); *Favorable breeze [P.Bruce]* | Reached Agrakhan bay |
| 28.07.1722 | **Eastern wind** (…) | Landed the troops |
| 29.07.1722 | **Eastern wind;** (Eastern wind) | Fortifying the landing until 04.08 |
| 30.07.1722 | **1 p.m. – west-south-west wind** (eastern wind) | In Agrakhan bay |
| 31.07.1722 | **North-north-eastern wind**; (north-western wind) | In Agrakhan bay |
| 01.08.1722 | **Strong western wind after midnight. After 8 a.m. north-western wind; after noon – north-north-western wind; After 1 p.m. – Temperate north-eastern wind; 8 p.m. – western wind**; (…) | In Agrakhan bay |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 02.08.1722 | **Strong western wind and light rainfall after 1 a.m.;** (…) | |
| 04.08.1722 | - ; *The heat was so intolerable that numbers of our men dropped down by the way[P.Bruce]* | Fortifications built |
| 05.08.1722 | - | The army marches from the fortified camp |
| 06.08.1722 | … (Great heat during the day, the army had to stop for rest in the afternoon) | Reached the Sulak River |
| 07.08.1722 | **Great storm from north-west that raised the level of the Sulak River. The storm continued until 11.08** (…) | Preparing to pass the river |
| 08.08.1722 | … (Strong eastern wind during the entire day. Made crosing the river very slow – it took the entire day and part of the night for most of the army to cross) | The army stops |
| 09.08.1722 | … (A great strorm with very strong wind that made crossing the river very burdensome) | Trying to cross the river |
| 10.08.1722 | - | Still crossing the river |
| 11.08.1722 | - ; *(We marched thirty wrests, notwithstanding the infinite heat, which made many of our men drop on the way [P. Bruce]* | Marching toward Tarki |
| 12.08.1722 | - | Reached Tarki |
| 13.08.1722 | - | Stayed in Tarki |
| 14.08.1722 | - | Stayed in Tarki |
| 15.08.1722 | - | Stayed in Tarki |
| 16.08.1722 | - ; *We marched … in a scorching heat [P.Bruce]* | Marched from Tarki to the Manas River |
| 17.08.1722 | - ; *I was reduced to walk on foot, which was extremely fatiguing in this hot climate [P. Bruce]* | Marched from the Manas to Old Buinaksk |
| 18.08.1722 | - ; *We lost, this day, a number of horses, by heat…[P.Bruce]* | Entered the domains of Utamysh. Reached the Inchi River. |
| 19.08.1722 | **Had to give the horses some rest at noon [**persumably because of the heat].(…) | Battle with the sultan of Utamysh (3 p.m.) |
| 20.08.1722 | - | The Cossack-dragoon forces return to camp |
| 21.08.1722 | - | Reached the Bushbugam River |
| 22.08.1722 | - | Reached the Darbakh River |
| 23.08.1722 | - | Entered Derbent |
| 24.08.1722 | **Great north-eastern storm that sunked 12 vessels and destroyed part of the provisions for the army** (…) | In Derbent |
| 25.08.1722 | … ; (…) ; {*Storm from the North in the evening, that sunked some of the boats* – this probably refers to the storm from the previous day. The storm probaly lasted throughout the entire 24/5 night} | P. Bruce dates the storm on 25.08. |
| 26.08.1722 | - | In Derbent |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 27.08.1722 | - | In Derbent |
| 28.08.1722 | **2 a.m. – very strong and hot western wind** - ***It was so hot that it seemed as we were in a bath***; (…) ; {Strong and hot western wind, that soon abated} | In Derbent |
| 29.08.1722 | … ; (…); {Substantial rainfall} | Held council for the future of the campaign |
| 30.08.1722 | … ; (…) ; {The day was cloudy and gloomy; there was substantial rainfall during the night) | The infantry passes the Milyukent River |
| 31.08.1722 | … ; (…) ; {Gloomy and Rainy} | The Usmiy refuses to provide supply for the army |
| 01.09.1722 | … ; (…) ; {Cloudy in the morning, clear skies in the afternoon} | |
| 03.09.1722 | - | A fort was errected on the Darbakh River |
| 04.09.1722 | - | Problems with some of the vessels |
| 06.09.1722 | - | The army begins its march back |
| 07.09.1722 | - | Leaving Derbent |
| 08.09.1722 | **9 p.m. – storm**; (…); {Fine weather with weak wind during the day; Strong wind and a storm in the evening and during the night} ; *The heavy dews now began to fall in the night-time, which rendered it very cold [P.Bruce]* | Sending envoys to Astrakhan and the fortified camp at Agrakhan |
| 09.09.1722 | **The wind calmed in the evening but during the night there was again a very strong northern wind**; (…); {The storm from the previous night continued during the morning; The storm stopped at noon, and it continued raining; At 3 p.m. a new storm began with a very strong and very cold northern wind. The storm continued during the evening and throughout the night.} | Reached the Bushbugam River |
| 10.09.1722 | - ; *We rested on the 10th, in the night of which, the hills were very tick covered with snow, which made it exceedingly cold.. [P.Bruce]* | Reached the Inchi River |
| 11.09.1722 | … ; (…) ; {The skies were clear but it was cold during the entire day); *The night…was bitter cold [P.Bruce]* | Reached the place, where they fought the Utamysh army on 19.08 |
| 12.09.1722 | - ; *The wind blew so hard this day, that we were almost blinded by the sand and dust.. [P.Bruce]* | A Cossack detachment defeated a Dagestan band. A 10,000 Dagestani force which followed the march of the Russians; The army reached Old Buynaksk and camped there. |
| 13.09.1722 | - | The army stayed at |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Buynaksk to acquire food for the horses since there were no natural pastures in the area. |
| 14.09.1722 | - ; *We were reduced so low by the continuous marching, the watching and the cold… [P.Bruce]* | Reached the Manas River. The population of Buynaksk refused to supply the Russians and allied with the Utamysh; The army was exhausted from the march, the cold and the constant state of alert because of the enemy forces that followed the Russian march. |
| 15.09.1722 | - | Reached Tarki and bought forage for the horses. |
| 16.09.1722 | - | Left Tarki |
| 18.09.1722 | … (The morning was cloudy; In the afternoon the weather was warm) | Reached the Sulak River |
| 19.09.1722 | - | Began building the St. Cross fort |
| 20.09.1722 | - | Finished building bridge over the Sulak |
| 24.09.1722 | - | Enemy raid destroyed a position near the Derbakh River |
| 25.09.1722 | - | The St.Cross fort was completed |
| 26.09.1722 | - | Began marching toward the seaside camp |
| 27.09.1722 | - | Boarding the fleet |
| 28.09.1722 | - | Sending envoys to Georgia |
| 29.09.1722 | … ; (…); {The Wind was south-south-east} | Peter sailed to Terki |
| 30.09.1722 | … ; (…); {South-western wind until noon; Dead-wind from north-north-west in the afternoon. In the evening there was mist} | Peter left Terki for Astrakhan |
| 01.10.1722 | … ; (…); {Weak wind from south-south-east} | Sailing the Caspian Sea; Bruce describes the weather as “fine”; |
| 02.10.1722 | … ; (…) ; {The wind changed from northwestern to northeastern} | Sailing the Caspian Sea; Bruce describes |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | the weather as “fine” |
| 03.10.1722 | **Great Storm from north-west. The storm ended before 7 p.m. At 7 p.m. “*the sky in the South became light, as if a great fire was burning. The shining went to the West of the horizon and then to the north. The Night became bright, as if the coast arround the fleet was lightened by fires”*. The phenomenon lasted for 2 hours. Peter contributes this occurance to a meteor, passing trough the sky**; (…); {There was a East-North-East wind in the morning; The wind became Southern at noon and again East-South-Eastern in the afternoon; Sometime after 3 p.m. a storm began, that sunk some of the boats and lasted until the evening; After the storm, there was a great brightness in the sky for some time, and when it disappeared, the night became very dark} | Reached the mouth of the Volga;<br>The storm sunk at least 7 galleys from the main fleet and many of the men on board drowned (P.Bruce) |
| 04.10.1722 | **The day was windy. The wind shifted its direction from north to west**; (…) ; {The weather was windy during the morning and the early afternoon, the wind shifting from north to east and then from north to west; At 1 p.m. a powerful wind came out from the north-west and the fleet had to anchor. The storm lasted until 5 p.m.; At 8 p.m. a new storm began, which continued until midnight} | Peter entered Astrakhan; Most of the fleet remained at sea because of the storms; |
| 15.10.1722 | - | The entire army reached Astrakhan |

## Table 3 – Weather Summary for the 1722 campaign

| Total days of campaign | Total days at sea | Total days in march | Total days in “rest” | Total number of storms | Storms at sea | Storms during marching | Total days of heat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 87 | 27 | 23 | 30 | 13 | 5 | 8 | 8 |

| Total days with calm weather | Total days of bad weather (rain, cold, storms) | Storm per days at sea | Storm per marching days | Heat per days marching |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 20 | 1 per 5.4 days at sea | 1 storm per 2.87 days | 1 per 2.87 days in march |

**Notes:**

The Journal and the Memoirs of P. Bruce do not give information on the weather during the days, in which the army was not marching (i.e. the days spent in Tarki and Derbent). Therefore the storm/day ratio is calculated taking only the days in which the army was moving.

After 08.09.1722 the temperatures at night fell drastically and the night became extremely cold.

**Sources**: *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722* (St. Petersburg, 1855); P.H. Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq. - a military officer in the services of Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain, containing an account of his travels in Germany, Russia, Tartary, Turkey, and the West Indies, &c, as also several very interesting private anecdotes of the Czar, Peter 1 of Russia*, (Dublin, 1783).

## Table 4 – Distances and march speed (1722)

| Day | From - To | Distance | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18-19.07.1722 | Astrakhan – Troytskiy dyke | 25 verst (26.5 km) | The army is sailing from Astrakhan to the Caspian Sea |
| 19.07.1722 | Troitski dyke – Dvortsoviy dyke | 30 verst (31.8 km) | Sailing the mouth of Volga |
| 26.07.1722 | Terki-Agrakhan | 50 verst (53 km) (not the entire distance but only for the day) | Sailing the Caspian Sea |
| 27.07.1722 | Terki-Agrakhan | - | Reached Agrakhan bay |
| 05-06.08.1722 | Agrakhan-Sulak | 31 verst (32.86 km) (entire distance) | Marching from Agrakhan to the Sulak River (Bruce states that the army marched 25 verst on 04.08 and additional 5 verst on 05.08 |
| 06.08.1722 | Agrakhan-Sulak | 15 verst (15.9 km) (only that day) | Peter reached the Sulak River |
| 11.08.1722 | Sulak-wells before Tarki | 26 verst (27.56 km) | Marched the entire day from 5 a.m.; P.Bruce claims that the army marched 30 verst this day. This is to great extent impossible, since the Journal claims that the wells were 8 verst from Tarki and not 11. However, after estimating a march of 26 verst the first day, the Journal claims a total of 37 verst for the entire route from the Sulak to Tarki. In this particular case it is better to relly on the |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Journal since the distance is confirmed in two separate sections. |
| 12.08.1722 | Night camp - Tarki | 11 verst (11.66 km) (for four hours) | Reached Tarki |
| 11-12.08.1722 | Sulak River - Tarki | 37 verst (39.22 km) | Total Distance |
| 16.08.1722 | Tarki – the Manas River | 25 verst (26.5 km) | Marched the entire day from 5 a.m. Distance is also confirmed by P.Bruce |
| 17.08.1722 | the Manas River – Old Buynaksk. | 14 verst (14.84 km) (only in the morning); 30 verst (31.8 km) the entire distance (P.Bruce) | Marched to Old Buynaksk until 9 p.m.; Reached Old Buynaksk, where there was a well. Peter went further 5 verst to explore the mountain |
| 18.08.1722 | Old Buynaksk – the Inchi River | 25 verst (26.5) km | This distance is included only in P. Bruce. However, it fits the general daily pattern of the Russian march both in distance and in time. |
| 19.08.1722 | The Ichi River-Utamysh | +20 verst (+21.2 km) (This distance was covered by the dragoons and the Cossacks, following the retreating forces of the Sultan of Utemish. This was the distance between the battlefield near Buynaksk and the “capital” of Utamysh. | Battle against the army of Utamysh. |
| 21.08.1722 | The Inchi River – the Bushbugam River | 27 verst (28.62 km) | Marched the entire day from before 6a.m. to 6 p.m. with a brief rest at noon. |
| 22.08.1722 | The Bushbugam River – the Derbakh river | 15 verst (15.9 km) | Marched with several rests. |
| 23.08.1722 | The Derbakh River - Derbent | 15 verst (15.9 km) | Only appears in P.Bruce’s Memoirs |
| 24.08.1722 | Derbent camp – the Milyukent River | 13 verst (13.78 km) | Peter send a detachment further south from Derbent to cross the Milyukent River and to look for a suitable place to |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | build a port, since Derbent was considered inappropriate |
| 30.08.1722 | Derbent camp – the Milyukent River | 13 verst (13.78 km) | Peter sent his infantry toward the position, previously established by the detachment. There, the army was better supported by the navy. The infantry covered the distance in **3 hours.** |
| 06.09.1722 | The Milyukent River - Derbent | 13 verst (13.78 km) | The army returned to Derbent, beginning its march in the morning and reaching the city at noon. |
| 06.09-13.09.1722 | Derbent – Old Buynaksk | 82 verst<br>(15 verst/15.9 km on 07.09;<br>15 verst/15.9 km on 09.09;<br>24 verst/ km on 11.09) | The army followed its old route; Rested on 08.09 and on 10.09; Reached the Inchi River on 11.09 (P. Bruce) |
| 14.09.1722 | Old Buynaksk – the Manas River | 30 verst (31.8 km) | The army marched the entire day. The speed was the same as during the march south. |
| 15.09.1722 | The Manas River – Tarki | 25 verst (26.5 km) | Marched the entire day from “early morning”. Probably maintained the same speed as on the way south. |
| 16.09.1722 | Tarki – Wells on the road to the Sulak River | 10 verst (10.6 km) | Began march at 3 p.m.; Distance confirmed by P.Bruce |
| 17-18.09.1722 | Wells – the Sulak River (St.Cross Fort) | 52 verst ( km) – 27 verst on 17.09; 25 verst on 18.09 | Had to extend their route to overcome a swamp, being misled by a local guide. Stopped several times because of lack of water and to give rest to the troops. |
| 01.10.1722 | St. Cross - Agrakhan fortified camp | 30 verst (31.8 km) | Noted only by P. Bruce |
| **South March distance** | | 221 verst ( 234.26 km) | 11 days of marching; |
| **Medium marching speed per day** | | 20 verst (21.2 km) | - |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Northern March** | 242 verst (256.52 km) | 12 days of marching |
| **Medium Marching speed per day** | 20.1 verst (21.3 km) | - |
| **The entire campaign (From the departure of the Agrakhan fortified camp until the return to Agrakhan fortified camp)** | **Total distance covered**: | **Days of Campaign** |
| | 463 verst (490.78 km) | 43 |
| | **Overall MMS** | **Days Marching** |
| | 20.1 verst (21. 3 km) | 23 |

**Notes:** 1 verst = 500 sazhens = 1.06 km; MMS – Medium Marching Speed per day
**Sources**: *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722* (St. Petersburg, 1855); P.H. Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq.*

## Table 5 - Engagements during the 1722 campaign

| Date | Place | Casualties | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 23.07.1722 | Endirey, Circassia | 70, a dozen wounded/ 89 killed, 115 wounded | Russian cavalry destroyed the main settlement of the Endirey, killing 300 enemy fighters and burning 3,000 houses. (Bruce estimates the number of killed Endireys at 5 000); Kurukin estimates the Russian casualties at 89 killed and 115 wounded. |
| 19.08.1722 | Near the Inchi River, Dagestan | | The Russian army was attacked by the forces of Utamysh (6-12,000). 500-700 enemies were killed and 30-40 were captured (and later 26 were executed). The Cossacks and dragoons managed to capture the capital of Utamysh and to plunder it. |
| 12.09.1722 | Near Buynaksk, Dagestan | 2 captured | Cossack vanguard was attacked by enemy skirmishers during the entire night. The Cossacks captured 3 Tatars (P.Bruce) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14.09.1722 | Fort on the Derbakh River, Dagestan | 130 (entire garrison) | Attacked for four days by 10,000 troops of Usmi, Utamysh and Surkhai; The defenders managed to kill 400 from the Dagestani army. |
| 19.09.1722 | Fort on the Milyukent River, south of Derbent, Shirvan | 5 killed, 8 wounded | Managed to repulse a four-day siege of Dagestani forces. |
| 20.09.1722 | Near Buynaksk, Dagestan | ??? | A detachment of 1,000 Cossacks and 4,000 Kalmyks killed 500 enemy troops and captured 350; Also captured 7,000 cows and 4,000 sheep. |
| 21-22.09.1722 | Fort on the Milyukent River, near Derbent, Shirvan | 7 killed | The Russians managed to repulse the enemy assaults and killed 80-100 enemies, among which 3 "paşas"; Part of the fort was damaged due to the heavy rains and the enemy fire. The commander of the fort decided to abandon the position and retreat with all his men and supplies to Derbent. The retreat took place on the 27.09.1722 |
| **Total Russian Combat Casualties** | **212- 241 killed, 20-123 wounded, 2 captured** | **Total Enemy Combat Casualties** | **1,926 – 2,126 killed, 357-367 captured** |
| **Sources**: *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722* (St. Petersburg, 1855); P.H. Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq.*; I.V. Kurukin, *Persidkiy pokhod Petra Velikogo. Nizovoy korpus na beregakh Kaspiya, 1722-1735* (Moscow: Kvadriga, 2010). | | | |

## Table 6 - Fortifications, built or strengthened during the 1722 campaign in Dagestan and 1723 campaign in Persia

| Fortress | Garrison | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Tarki | 2,000 regular, 1,000 Cossacks, 31 cannons | *Well fortified, with ramparts and bastions in the modern style* (Bruce) |
| Agrakhan landing base | 200 /300 regular troops and 1,500/1,600 Cossacks | Left to protect the landing base and the fleet. |
| the Derbakh River | 110 regulars and 20 Cossacks | The garrison was destroyed by the Dagestani forces on 14.09.1722 |
| the Milyukent River | 200 regulars and 300 Cossacks (P.Bruce) | Built between 25.08-05.09. Consisted of "*four battalions, surrounded by a moat, into whitch water from the river* [Milyukent] *was led*"(P.Bruce, who commanded the building of the fort );<br>Abandoned after enemy raid on 21-22.09.1722 |
| St. Cross | 1,384 soldiers (729 regular, 655 irregular), 21 cannons, sufficient gunpowder and ammunitions | P.Bruce, who drew the plans for the fort describes it as follows: "*the plan consisted of five bastions, and two demi-bastions next the river on the south-side, with ravelins and a palisaded covered way; on the north-side were six bastions, also with ravelins and a palisaded covered way; the two sided to communicate by a bridge in the middle, over the river"*<br>Bruce states that Peter left brigadier veterani with 18,000 (7,000 dragoons, 5,000 regular infantry and 6,000 Cossacks) troops to finish the fort and protect the works. |
| Derbent | 1,321 soldiers + 300 Cossacks/ 3,000 troops, 150 cannons;<br>These forces were strengthened by 1,200 Cossacks, two infantry battalions and 20 cannons in | Additional 300 Cossacks were sent to two field fortifications near Derbent;<br>P. Bruce estimates a total of 3,000 garrison troops, 100 iron and 50 brass cannons of 12 and 9 pounds, along with |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | the spring of 1723 | an abundant supply of ammunitions and gunpowder. However, the numbers given by Bruce might be exaggerated. Otherwise, they might include a number of cannons that were already in Derbent (this is evident in the Journal). |
| the Inchi River | 100 regulars and 200 Cossacks | Noted only in P.Bruce |
| Resht | 3,110 troops, +24 guns | By June 1723 |
| Baku | 4 regiments (5,000 troops) | By July 1723; According to Lockhart, the army that marched against Baku numbered 3,000. |
| **Total garrison troops** | **16,715 /18,094 soldiers, +96/+246 cannons (**14,715/16,094 according to Lockhart's account) | In addition, there was a field force of some 22,000 Cossacks and dragoons near St. Cross fort. |
| **Sources**: *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722* (St. Petersburg, 1855); P.H. Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq*; V. Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I*; I.V. Kurukin, *Persidkiy Pokhod Petra Velikogo.* | | |

## Table 7 – Russian Garrisons as of 01.10.1724

| Place | Infantry and dragoons | Place | Infantry and dragoons |
|---|---|---|---|
| Astrakhan | 2,483 | Rest | 3,974 |
| Agrakhan fortified camp | 421 | Catherinople Fort | 182 |
| St. Cross fort | 6,147 | Kesker | 1,396 |
| Derbent | 2,686 | New fort | 440 |
| Baku | 3,017 | Peribazar | 178 |
| Near Anzali | 51 | | |
| **Total number of troops** | | **20 975** | |

*Source:* V.P. Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I: 1722 – 1723* (Moscow, 1951), 149.

## Table 8 - Supplies and provision problems during the Persian Campaign

| Date | Type | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 21.07.1722 | Brigadier Veterani reports that the horses are dying out in the steppe, because of the weather; The supplies of the cavalry were depleted; | Noted by I. Kurukin (p.61) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 28.07-04.08.1722 | *Circassian and Dagestan Tatars* came to sell oxen, camels, horses and wagons to the army | The Journal does not mention this, but P. Bruce reports that the army purchased the goods on the prices, set by the "Tatars". He, himself, bought a wagon and two horses. |
| 05.08.1722 | "*The Tartars brought such quantities of grapes, melons, oranges, pomegranates, apples, pears etc. and our people devoured them so voraciously, that many were seized with fevers and fluxes*" (P.Bruce) | Having marched for three days in the heat, the soldiers were surely starving for the refreshment which fruits offered. At this early stage of the campaign it is unlikely that the army lacked food supplies, thus it was not hunger but heat and exhaustion that made the troops so "verocious". |
| 06.08.1722 | Over 7,000 oxen (*Additional note to the Journal III*) and 600 carriages brought by the shamkhal Adil Girei and sultan Mahmut of Aksay; Peter was given 6 horses as a personal gift;<br>"*The governor of Gorski and the governor of Axay rought his majesty nine Persian horses with rich furniture, six hundred wagons, drawn by two oxen each and 150 oxen to be killed for the army*" (P.Bruce) | These provisions were arranged before the departure from Astrakhan;<br>The gift of oxen for the army's feast is also confirmed by an *Additional note to the campaign journal IV* (100 oxen are mentioned there, together with 7 horses for Peter). |
| 11.08.1722 | The army remains without water the entire day, because the wells (in reality only 10), which the shamkhal had to arrange were badly dug and the water inside was muddy;<br>Several horses died from eating poisonous herbs. The camels and oxen did not suffer from it. (P.Bruce) | As with the oxen and the carriages, the shamkhal was supposed to provide water supplies for the Russian army on its way to Tarku. |
| 12-23.08.1722 | The water supply was provided from old wells, which were well-dug | Peter did not rely on Girei's support any more during his march south. |
| 16.08.1722 | The army replenishes with water from Manes rivers, but since there was no forage for the horses, they were sent upstream to the mountain for pasture. There, part of the | This event is noted only in P.Bruce's memoirs. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | animals was stolen by the Tatar forces, which were following the Russian movement since the departure from Sulak river. | |
| 18.08.1722 | The citizens of Derbent refused to sell their cattle to the Russians;<br>Some of the horses died from fatigue, lack of forage and water. | Locals said that they cattle only enoughto meet their own needs. It seems that the Russians needed additional cattle for food and to pull the supply train and the carriages; The death of the horses was again noted only in Bruce. |
| 24.08.1722 | 1,500 horses died from eating poisonous grass; The oxen and the camels were not affected, since they did not eat from it. | This is noted only in P.Bruce's Memoirs. |
| 26.07.1722 | The flour, rescued from the destroyed ships was distributed to the soldiers and backed into sukhari. | Noted in P.Bruce's Memoirs. |
| 27.08.1722 | The army was transferred to the Milyukent River in order to receive provisions from the fleet – bread and sukhari and also to gather fruits form the local orchards. | A storm destroyed part of the supply fleet off Derbent. Peter noted that the army had provisions for only one month. The Russians tried to use local fruits to compensate the lack of other food. |
| 10.09.1722 | Extreme cold and snow in the evening. The army lacked winter uniforms and suffered greatly. | Noted only in P.Bruce's Memoirs |
| 13.09.1722 | Several hundred horses died by eating poisonous grass. | Noted only in P. Bruce |
| 01-15.10.1722 | Insufficient food supplies on the ships, returning from Agrakhan. | Noted only in P.Bruce's Memoirs. |
| **Sources**: *Pokhodnyy Zhurnal 1722* (St. Petersburg, 1855); P.H. Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq.*; I.V. Kurukin, *Persidkiy pokhod Petra Velikogo.* | | |

## Table 9 – Medicine support for the campaign (1724)

| Place | Number of beds |
|---|---|
| Astrakhan | 3,000 |
| St. Cross fort | 1,000 |
| Derbent | 1,000 |
| Baku | 2,000 |

*Source:* V. Lystsov, *Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I: 1722 – 1723* (Moscow, 1951), 211.

## Table 10 – Casualties during the Persian Campaign (1722 – 1724)

| Year | Died | Drowned | Killed | Removed from service | Deserted | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1722 | 2,779 | 17 | 193 | 382 | 93 | 3,464 |
| 1723 | 3,752 | 5 | 33 | 6 | 75 | 3,871 |
| 1724 | 3,652 | 24 | 41 | 441 | 52 | 4,210 |
| Total | 10,183 | 46 | 267 | 829 | 220 | 11,545 |

*Source:* V. Lystsov,*Persidskiy Pokhod Petra I: 1722 – 1723* (Moscow, 1951), 241.

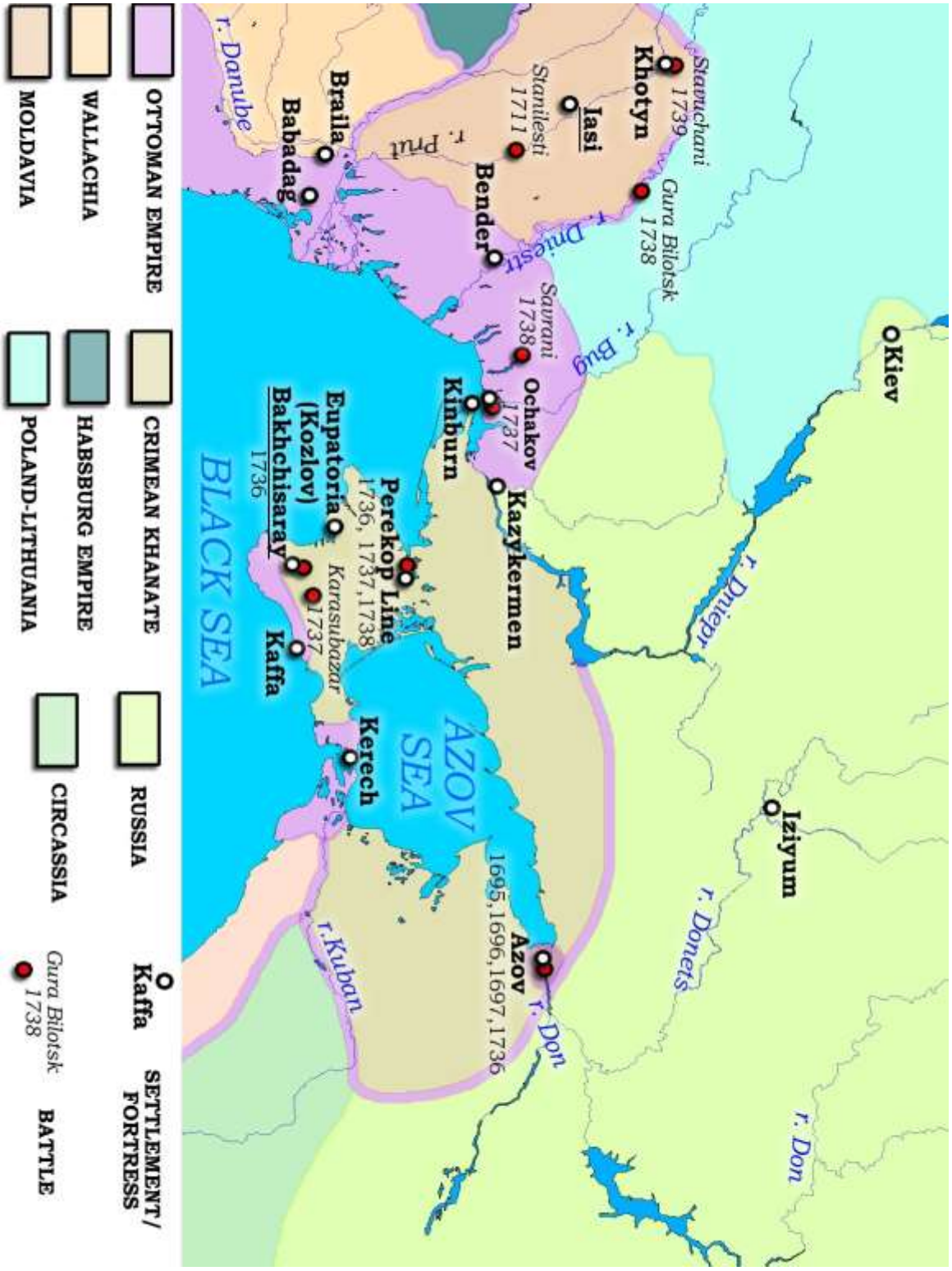
## Table 11 – Additional Military Expenditure for the Persian Campaign of 1722

| **For** | **Money (in rubles)** |
|---|---|
| Provisions | 320,048 |
| Admiralty | 323,057(1) |
| **Total for ships, guns and munitions** | **681,574** |
| Gifts for the Kalmyk khan | 6,000 |
| Gifts for the Kalmyk horsemen | 25,000 |
| The embassy in Istanbul | 17,500 |
| Resin for Astrakhan | 1,413 |
| Medications | 13,512 |
| **Total military expenditure 1722** | **1,045,000** |

**Notes:** (1) Not all of this money was spent on the Persian Campaign
**Source:** I.V Kurukin, *Persidkiy pokhod Petra Velikogo*, 84.

## PART II, CHAPTER 5

## Map 1 – The Russo-Ottoman War of 1736-1739



**Map 2 – the campaign of 1736**

**Map 3 – The campaign of 1737**

**Map 4 – The campaign of 1738**

**Map 5 – the campaign of 1739**

## Table 1 -1 – Dnieper Army
## Supposed and actual army strength during the 1736-1739 campaigns

| Year | 1736 | | 1737 | | 1738 | | 1739 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unit** | **SS** | **AS** | **SS** | **AS** | **SS** | **AS** | **SS** | **AS** |
| **Reg. infantry** | **24,372** | **28,238** | **50,580** | **28 reg.** | **50,580** | **22 reg.** | **34,826** | **58,000** |
| **Dragoons** | **19,665** | | **25,851** | **20 reg.** | **25,850** | **18 reg.** | **19,760** | |
| **Land Militia** | **10,000** | **10,000** | **9,693** | **9 reg.** | **9,693** | | | |
| **Guard infantry** | | | **2,757** | | **3,158** | | | |
| **Guard cavalry** | | | **401** | **2 sq.** | | | **3,124** | |
| **cuirassiers** | | | | **1 sq.** | **600** | **600** | **965** | |
| **hussars** | **500** | **300** | | **1,600** | **900** | **900** | **1,000** | |
| **Cossacks & Kalmyks** | **30,030** | **18,540** | **13,000 (1)** | **13,000** | **13,500** | **3 reg. (5)** | **14,800** | **5,800** |
| **Other** | | | **2,842 (2)** | **3,000** | **4,000 (3)** | | **6,430** | |
| **Artillery** | **66** | | **389** | | **733 (4)** | | **606** | **262** |
| **TOTAL** | **85,067** | **58,078** | **105,124** | **60-70, 000** | **108,281** | **50 – 80, 000** | **91,111** | **63,800 / 60-65,000** |

SS – Supposed strength
AS – Actual strength

Source: Bayov, A.K., *Russkaya armiya v tsarstvovanie imperatritsy Anny Ioannovny – Voina Rossii s Turtsiey v 1736-39, vol. 1-2* (St. Petersburg, 1906)

Notes:
(1) including hussars and Wallachians
(2) Artillery men
(3) 3,000 artillery men and 1,000 regular Cossacks
(4) 262 guns of different caliber, 11 mortars, 16 howitzers, as well as 444 smaller mortars
(5) Several thousand joined later

## Table 1 - 2 – Don Army
## Supposed and actual army strength during the 1736-1739 campaigns

| Year | 1736 | | 1737 | | 1738 | | 1739 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unit** | **SS** | **AS** | **SS** | **AS** | **SS** | **AS** | **SS** | **AS** |
| **Reg. infantry** | **24,372** | **5,800** | **33,720** | **20 reg.** | **25,290** | **15 reg.** | **23,745** | **7 reg.** |
| **Dragoons** | **5,175** | **1,250** | **16,003** | **13 reg.** | **8,569** | **7 reg.** | **8,593** | **6 reg.** |
| **L. Militia** | | | | | **6,462** | **6 reg.** | **6,804** | **3 reg.** |
| **Cossacks & Kalmyks** | **8,000** | **2,200** | **15-16,000** | **10-12,000** | **25,000** | **13,385** | **15,000** | **4 reg.** |
| **Other** | **6,770 (1)** | | | | | | | |
| **Artillery** | **284** | **135** | **32** | | **170 (4)** | **25** | **146** | |
| **TOTAL** | **45,352** | **9,250 (2)** | **63,723 (3)** | **35,630** | **65,321** | **53,706 (5) 30-35,000 (6)** | **54,147** | **>25,000 (7)** |

SS – Supposed strength
AS – Actual strength

Source: Bayov, A.K., *Russkaya armiya v tsarstvovanie imperatritsy Anny Ioannovny – Voina Rossii s Turtsiey v 1736-39, vol. 1-2* (St. Petersburg, 1906)

Notes:
(1) Garrison foot and dragoon regiments
(2) This number would eventually rise to 11,874 in May 1736 and to 28,000 by the end of June
(3) 9 000 were to be left as a garrison of Azov
(4) 86 regimental guns, 16 siege guns, 4 mortars, 4 howitzers and 60 smaller mortars
(5) If the regular regiments were with the supposed strenght
(6) In Manstein's account. This would presume undermanned regiments. Given the lack of troops in the Dnieper army, Manstein’s estimate seems more plausible.
(7) Less than 25,000, probably no more than 20,000, due to the fact that regiments were incomplete. In August he commanded 17,850 troops at Perekop.

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# SAMENVATTING

Tussen 1695 en 1739 ondernam Rusland een reeks van militaire expedities die tot doel had om zijn invloedsfeer over de Pontische Steppe, de Kaukasus en de Donauvorstendommen te versterken en uit te breiden. Deze militaire inspanningen gericht tegen de rijken van de Osmanen en de Safavieden worden meestal als afzonderlijke conflicten beschouwd. Deze dissertatie probeert ze echter voor het eerst als "Zuidelijke Campagnes" in onderlinge samenhang onder de loep te nemen. Terwijl de meer algemene politieke en militaire aspecten van het Russisch-Osmaanse conflict al eerder goed zijn bestudeerd, zijn de praktische prestaties in het veld van de betrokken legers onderbelicht gebleven. Deze studie wil deze leemte wegnemen door aan de Russische kant te onderzoeken op welke manier de vroeg achttiende-eeuwse hervormingen van de overheid hun weerslag hebben gehad op de prestaties op het slagveld en in hoeverre de opgedane krijgservaringen tijdens deze campagnes hebben geleid tot verbetering van die prestaties.

Met behulp van een groot aantal primaire en secundaire bronnen wordt vooral de praktische kant van de oorlogvoering geanalyseerd: de dagelijkse logistiek en het verloop van veldslagen, belegeringen en troepenverplaatsingen. Ook het leiderschap in de veld, alsmede de gehanteerde strategieën en tactieken van het Russische commando worden kritisch tegen het licht gehouden, steeds in de context van de uiterst lastige geografische en klimatologische omstandigheden. Bovendien worden de Russische prestaties afgezet tegen die van hun Osmaanse en Perzische tegenstanders.

De dissertatie bestaat uit twee delen. Het eerste deel analyseert de militaire evolutie van de Russische legers in het algemeen en de hervormingen van Peter de Grote in het bijzonder. De sterkte/zwakte analyse van het Russische leger krijgt een comparatief kader door een gelijksoortige ontleding van de Osmaanse en Perzische legers en van de lokale troepenmachten in de grensgebieden van de Krim en de Kaukasus. Het tweede deel van de dissertatie volgt de tien opeenvolgende zuidelijke campagnes in chronologische volgorde. Iedere campagne wordt systematisch bestudeerd aan de hand van (a) de historische achtergrond, (b) de belangrijkste bronnen, (c) het verloop van de campagne, en (d) een beoordeling van de prestaties in het veld, steeds in het licht van de reeds genoemde logistieke omstandigheden van geografie en klimaat.

Het onderzoek biedt een nieuw overzicht en deels ook nieuwe informatie op het gebied van de rekrutering, de omvang, de kosten en bedrijfsvoering van het Russische leger. Door naar opeenvolgende campagnes te kijken krijgen we een

beter inzicht in de ontwikkelingsgang van het zuidelijke Russische leger. Zo paste men net als in het Westen steeds meer veldartillerie in, maar bleef men ook veel langer dan daar vertrouwen op lichte cavalerie, hield de infanterie veel langer vast aan het gebruik van lansen, en perfectioneerde men de al bestaande traditie van oorlogvoering vanuit mobiele veldforten. Kortom, de specifieke aandacht voor de verwaarloosde zuidelijke campagnes van het Russische leger relativeert het dominante Westerse paradigma van de militaire revolutie en laat zien hoe ook de ervaringen aan het zuidelijke front de ontwikkeling van het Russische leger tot diep in de negentiende eeuw hebben bepaald.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Aleksandar Stoyanov was born on 13th November 1987 in Sofia, Bulgaria. He graduated from the National Highschool for Ancient Languages and Culture St. Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher and attained his BA in History from the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. In 2011 he graduated (MA) *cum laude* in the History of European Expansion and Globalization programme at Leiden University. Aleksandar has been a PhD candidate at the Leiden University since 2012. He has published four monographs in Bulgarian (*The Thirty Years' War 1618-1648*, Sofia: Millennium, 2015; *The Great Northern War: Peter I's Triumph*, Sofia: Millennium, 2015; *The Balkan Wars of the Bulgarian Army*, Sofia: Millennium, 2015; *The Ottoman Expansion 1453-1683*, Sofia: Ciela, 2016) and over twenty articles in various academic journals. Alexander is currently working as a scriptwriter in a leading television programme. He is also founder and editor of the electronic journal *Military History* (in Bulgarian) and co-founder and editor of the electronic weekly journal *De Re Militari* (In Bulgarian).