

## The Russo-Ottoman War of 1686-1700

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A. G. Gus'kov, K. A. Kochegarov, S. M. Shamin, *Russko-turetskaia voina 1686-1700 godov* (Moscow: Russkoe slovo, 2022). 528 p., 17 plates. ISBN: 978-5-533-02732-8.

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The Treaty of Eternal Peace signed between Muscovy and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1686 had committed Muscovy to enter the Holy League and to contribute to its struggle against the Ottoman Empire by undertaking military operations against the Crimean Khanate. The League (the Commonwealth, the Habsburg monarchy, Venice) expected this would divert Crimean Tatar forces from reinforcing the Turks in Moldavia and Hungary. Moscow hoped it could secure a lasting alliance with the Commonwealth, end the Crimean khans' tribute demands and raids upon Muscovite and Hetmanate territory, and perhaps even bring the Khanate under Muscovite suzerainty. *Russko-turetskaia voina 1686-1700 godov* argues for viewing as stages in one protracted struggle—a Russo-Ottoman War unfolding from the 1686 commitments to the Holy League—Vasilii Golitsyn's attempted invasions of the Khanate in 1687-1689, the operations against Kazy-Kermen and the other Ottoman fortresses on the Dnieper in 1690-1694, smaller-scale efforts in the Northern Caucasus and Caspian region in those same years, and Peter I's sieges of the Ottoman fortress of Azov in 1695-1696. For Muscovy, this long war culminated in the 1700 Treaty of Constantinople, which did not end the strategic challenges presented by the Khanate and Ottoman Empire, but did at least partly stabilize and contain them, allowing Peter I to turn his attention to other projects.

The advantage of treating these campaigns as stages in one long strategic project is that it allows the authors to reveal the full scope of the Russo-Ottoman struggle and explain how setbacks as well as gains reshaped its course and redefined its objectives. For example, while Golitsyn's campaigns failed to break through the Perekop Line, they did provide cover for the establishment of important new forward bases (Novobogoroditsk, Novosergeevsk) that advanced the defense perimeter closer towards the Khanate and tightened Moscow's political hegemony over the Hetmanate and the Zaporozhian Sich'. In 1690-1694 attention turned to taking some action against Kazy-Kermen and the other Ottoman fortresses on the Dnieper and to securing the Terek frontier by supporting resistance to the Crimean Tatars among the peoples of the North Caucasus. Major direct efforts against Ottoman hard points (Azov, Kazy-Kermen) were finally made in 1695-1696, but the capture of Azov wound down the struggle: in 1697-1698 the Ottomans allowed Khan Selim Girei to concentrate his forces to defend the Khanate and Peter I turned his attention to other projects: his Grand Tour of Europe, dealing with the *strel'tsy* mutiny, and efforts to consolidate his hold upon Azov.

The most valuable feature of this study is its solid grounding in archival sources, particularly in F. 210 (*Razriadnyi prikaz*) in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RGADA) and the RGADA *fondy* on Russo-Crimean, Russo-Turkish, Russo-Polish, Kalmyk, and Kabardan relations. That enables the authors to explore more deeply the diplomatic and grand strategic context of the campaigns of 1686-1700 and, above all, to examine in detail how the late Muscovite state mobilized manpower, grain, and materiel for these campaigns. Most previous historiography had relied upon contemporary memoir sources on the course of the campaigns and, because these were often written by figures critical of the regency government of Tsarevna Sofiia and Lord Protector Vasilii Golitsyn, they tended to highlight Golitsyn's blunders in the attempted invasions of Crimea in 1687 and 1689 and contrast them sharply with Peter I's victory at Azov in 1696. But in presenting so much detail about logistics and command-and-control over the entire period, the authors show that Peter I's victory at Azov in 1696 had much to do with a learning curve followed since 1686, the drawing of lessons from previous deficiencies, and the correction of past problems. (Even Golitsyn had addressed such problems in his second campaign against the Khanate, in 1689, by mobilizing troops faster, gathering better intelligence, planning sounder march routes, and taking more precautions against the Tatars firing the steppe grass).

There were great logistical and diplomatic difficulties presented on all of these campaigns: the difficulty of moving large armies across hundreds of kilometers of largely empty steppe, the desire to concentrate forces against the Crimean Khanate while avoiding riskier operations against the powerful Ottoman fortresses on the Dnieper, the problem of preventing the Turks from reinforcing Azov by sea, and the difficulty of assembling a coalition against the Khanate among the various peoples of the Kuban and Northern Caucasus. What is most striking about the account presented by Gus'kov, Kochegarov, and Shamin is the truly impressive scale of the Muscovite war effort sustained over so many years: the enormous size of the campaign armies, far larger than in previous wars; their speedy mobilization from across Muscovy (the Belgorod and Sevsk army groups, central districts, Smolensk and western districts, Trans-Okan districts, lower Volga districts, Novgorod region, Riazan') and Sloboda Ukraine and the Hetmanate; the surprisingly high rate of troop readiness (*iavka*) for deployment; the movement of munitions and grain across great distances; the rapid construction of important forward bases like Novobogoroditsk and Novosergeevsk; and, ultimately, the construction of a fleet at the Voronezh wharves.

This supports the conclusion that the reforms of Tsar Fedor Alekseevich had significantly enhanced Muscovite military power since the 1670s. The creation of the nine regional military-administrative commands had made resource mobilization and command-and-control more efficient. The amalgamation of many old taxes into the *streletskii khleb* tax, paid in cash, put the armed forces on a stronger fiscal footing, and the introduction of a household census and the first attempt at a unified state budget further strengthened finances as the sinews of war. The abolition of *mestnichestvo* reduced the number of precedence suits disrupting command appointments. The 1678 decree on service obligations had reserved service in the traditional cavalry *sotny* and the *reitar* regiments for those with larger *pomest'ia* and serfs while shunting the smallholders and the yeomen

*odnodvortsy* into the infantry, which had the consequence of raising the relative weight of the infantry, especially the new formation *soldat* infantry, in proportion to the cavalry.

The Crimean Khanate was not brought under Russian suzerainty until 1774 and was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1783. The Ottomans continued to maintain important fortresses on the Dnieper until 1792. For years Ottoman control over the Kerch Straits bottled up the Russian fleet in the Sea of Azov. However, Russia did make some strategic gains from the 1686-1700 war. The armies of the khans no longer undertook major official *sefer* invasions of Russia; Crimean domination of the Kuban steppe and Circassia was weakened; the Treaties of Karlowitz and Constantinople set diplomatically recognized frontiers for the Ottoman Empire; the shipbuilding and navigation experience developed for the Azov campaign would be transferred to the new Baltic Fleet; Russian political and military prestige was strengthened in the eyes of Europeans. But the authors acknowledge that answering the question of whether Russian operations fulfilled the pledge to make a decisive contribution to the victory of the Holy League falls outside the purview of their book: that would require much deeper study of the role of Crimean Tatar and Ottoman forces on other fronts, in Moldavia and Hungary. Because it is such an impressively detailed and comprehensive study, however, *Russko-turetskaia voina 1686-1700 godov* lays very useful foundations for such an undertaking.