

Paweł Krokosz

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9555-3801>

Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie

The power of the Russian Empire – the military aspect in the work of selected Russian painters from the 18th until the early 20th century*

Zarys treści: Artykuł poświęcony jest tematyce militarnej przedstawionej na obrazach malarzy rosyjskich żyjących w XVIII – na początku XX w. Batalistyczne dzieła artystów podkreślały bohaterstwo carskich żołnierzy biorących udział w licznych zmaganiach wojennych prowadzonych w owym czasie przez Rosję na lądzie i morzach, a także słały samych panujących rozszerzających granice państwa. Jednakże zasadnicze przesłanie płócien, zamawianych najczęściej przez władców rosyjskich, posiadało wymiar na wskroś propagandowy, gdyż miało w pełni ukazać potęgę Imperium Rosyjskiego.

Outline of contents: The article focuses on the military themes presented in the paintings of Russian artists living in the period from the 18th until the early 20th century. Battle scenes painted by the artists highlighted the heroism of the Tsar's soldiers participating in numerous wars and conflicts pursued by Russia at that time both on land and at sea; these paintings also celebrated the rulers, who expanded the borders of their country. However, the key message of these paintings, which were ordered most frequently by Russian rulers, focused on the aspect of propaganda, because these works were supposed to demonstrate in full the power of the Russian Empire.

Słowa kluczowe: Imperium Rosyjskie, wojny Rosji w XVIII–XIX w., rosyjskie malarstwo batalistyczne, malarze rosyjscy XVIII – pocz. XX w., armia i flota rosyjska w XVIII–XIX w.

Keywords: The Russian Empire, Russia's wars in the 18th and 19th centuries, Russian battle paintings, Russian battle artists in the 18th and at the beginning of 19th century, Russian Army and Fleet in the 18th and 19th centuries

* The article uses the dating system based on the Julian calendar, which was adopted in Russia since 1 January 1700.

The political power and international position of an individual country is a product of numerous factors, among which the key element is the potential of its armed forces. It is not only the number of soldiers, ample provisions and modern equipment of each land army and navy that matters, but also a proper construction of its image – how it is presented to the outside world and perpetuated in various forms of iconography. Apart from their artistic value, monuments, sculptures, reliefs, graphic works, wall paintings and pictures were a perfect historical source (as regards the type of armaments and soldiers' uniforms, the battle strategy and fortification systems of fortresses), but most of all they were an instrument of propaganda. A skilful presentation of commanders – sometimes the rulers themselves – and their soldiers in the open battlefield, during a siege or at sea, contributed to creating a specific image of a powerful and invincible army and navy. The spectator, who often had hardly any specialist knowledge on the military, when faced with a specific work of art, received a very clear message – an army celebrating spectacular military successes was an absolute guarantee of the power of its ruler and his country. In the discussed aspect, a special place is given to the work of the Russian painters, active in the period from the 18th to the early 20th century, who often focused on military themes presenting the most important and spectacular victories of the Russian army.¹

As G. Axyonova noted, “considerations of the history of military art in Russia traditionally start with a discussion of icons of St Dmitriy Solunskiy and St George the Victorious”.² The first saints of the “Ruthenian land” were presented

¹ *Военная Энциклопедия* (hereinafter: ВЭ), eds. В.О. Новицкий, А.В. фон-Шварц, В.А. Апушкин, Г.К. фон-Шульц, vol. 10, Петербург, 1912, pp. 388–396. Because of the broad scope of the discussed subject matter, the author of this paper decided to present the work of selected Russian artists who lived and created in the period from the 18th until the early 20th century. It should be mentioned that the group of Russian painters also includes foreign masters whose work was mostly commissioned by Russian rulers or aristocrats.

² Г.В. Аксенова, “Предыстория Студии военных художников имени М.Б. Грекова: рассказ о тех кто воевал карандашом, красками кистью”, *Вестник ЛГПУ*, series: Гуманитарные науки, vol. 2 (2015), p. 20. The author referred to St Dmitriy Solunskiy, who lived at the turn of the 3rd and 4th century AD (St Demetrius of Thessaloniki) and St George the Victorious, who lived in the second half of the 3rd century. Both saints – soldiers and warriors – enjoyed special veneration in Rus'. The image of St George on horseback became the coat of arms of the Princes of Muscovy and subsequently part of the coat of arms of the Russian Empire. To learn more about the presentations of both saints in Ruthenian and Russian icons, see: N. Majorowa, G. Skokow, *Ikony rosyjskie. Tematy. Arcydzieła*, trans. Ł. Leonkiewicz, Warszawa, 2016, pp. 381–400. For more on the presentation of Saint George in the coats of arms of the Princes of Muscovy and of the Russian Empire, see: *Гербы флаг России X–XX века*, В.А. Арамонов et al., Москва, 1997, pp. 16–343. The importance of the veneration of holy warriors in Ruthenia and later on in Russia should be emphasised. This group of saints also included venerated Ruthenian rulers and other heroes – often martyred – who died for their country and for the Christian faith. When the rulers set out to fight their enemies, they placed themselves under their care and prayed to them, asking them to plead for them with God during a military campaign or when defending their country (i.a. they prayed to Saint George the Victorious), see: Н. Горбачева, *Святые русские*

as knight-warriors: Vladimir the Great and his sons, Princes Boris and Gleb. Both the “Baptizer of Ruthenia”, and more importantly so his two sons, martyred for their Christian faith (in Russian: *strastoterptsy*), were presented on the icons with weapons: swords (most often sheathed, which symbolised abstaining from violence and a readiness to help and sacrifice) or spears. The “military” events related to them were also presented in the *kleima* (small icons placed on both sides and at the bottom of the central icon) of holy images presenting the saints.³

The subject related to a specific military event was included in an exceptional icon (according to some researchers, it is not an icon, but a representation)⁴ with a complex composition, titled *The Church militant*, also known under a more adequate title, matching the presented theme: *Blessed is the Host of the Heavenly Tsar*, painted under the rule of Tsar Ivan the Terrible.⁵ This icon “[...] presents a complex, multifaceted symbolic composition with multiple threads and levels of meaning. It presents three columns of soldiers on foot and on horseback, marching from a city in flames towards a citadel in the upper left corner, in which the Mother of God with Child Jesus is sitting. In the front we have the “heavenly commander” and the “knight of light” leading the heavenly host fighting with the Satan – Archangel Michael on a winged horse.⁶ The host are met by angels holding crowns received from Christ and the Mother of God. The greatest controversy is the identification of the warriors, because there are no inscriptions in the icon. It may be significant that only the warriors in the middle row are not haloed, except for the rider holding a cross and three princes. All figures in the upper column have halos, while in the lower row only the rider in the front does not have one. The figures with halos may represent heavenly intermediaries, i.e. fallen warriors, whereas those without halos may represent the living [...]. The figure at the head of the column may be Ivan IV, while the prince with a cross towering over the infantry is probably Vladimir Monomakh, and the three riders at the back are Vladimir the Great, Boris and Gleb. The identification of the

воины, Москва, 2003, passim; Majorowa, Skokow, *Ikony rosyjskie*, p. 401 et seq.; *Святые воины* http://www.verappravoslavnaaya.ru/?Svyatye_voiny (access: 1.10.2017).

³ G. Kobrzeniecka-Sikorska, *Wizerunki carów rosyjskich. Między ikoną a portretem*, Olsztyn, 2007, pp. 68–72, fig. 26, 28, 30–32; Majorowa, Skokow, *Ikony rosyjskie*, pp. 471–479; Н. Яковлева, *Историческая картина в русской живописи*, Москва, 2005, pp. 22–24.

⁴ В. Dąb-Kalinowska, “‘Wojująca cerkiew’. Ikona czy wyobrażenie”, *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 1–2 (1993), pp. 7–22.

⁵ В.В. Морозов, *Икона “Благословенное воинство” как памятник публицистики XVI века*, in: *Государственные музеи Московского Кремля. Материалы исследования*, vol. IV: *Произведения русского зарубежного искусства XVI-начала XVIII века*, Москва, 1984, pp. 17–31; И.А. Кочетков, “К истолкованию иконы ‘Церковь воинствующая’ (Благословенно воинство небесного царя)”, *Труды Отдела древнерусской литературы*, vol. 38: *Взаимодействие древнерусской литературы и изобразительного искусства*, Ленинград, 1985, pp. 185–209; G. Kobrzeniecka-Sikorska, *Wizerunki carów rosyjskich*, p. 118; Г.В. Аксенова, *Предыстория Студии*, p. 20.

⁶ Majorowa, Skokow, *Ikony rosyjskie*, pp. 300–308.

figures in the upper and lower column is only tentative. These figures need to be treated as *mnogo ludyey*.⁷ This work refers to a specific historical event: the outward imperial expansion of Moscow in the mid-16th century. As Kobrzeniecka-Sikorska noted, the literary source for the icon was probably the sermon delivered on 13 July 1552 by the Macarius, the Metropolitan of Moscow, and addressed to the Tsar's army going on an expedition against the Khanate of Kazan. All those who were to shed their blood during the war and return alive were supposed to expect a reward: the remission of sins as well as the reward in this world (long life in good health) and in the afterlife. The deceased could also expect a reward, because the blood they shed would purify their souls and guarantee a place in "the eternal, Heavenly Jerusalem." The warriors presented in the icon with halos "should therefore be seen as those who died during the military expedition to Kazan. The powerful message of this work made that historical event acquire an eschatological aspect – the Tsar, who leads his army to war, in fact leads his people to the eternal Jerusalem, at the same time transgressing the border of the worldly existence."⁸ As we know, the campaign ended in a great success: the capital city of Kazan was conquered and afterwards, within a few years, the whole territory of the Khanate was surrendered as well.⁹

Military themes were also present in Ruthenian (Russian) Marian icons created in the 17th century. An example of this is the icon of the Theotokos of Tikhvin, whose history was written down back in the mid-16th century. However, it was only the events from 1613–1617, when the famous defence of the Tikhvin Monastery against the Swedish army contributed to the widespread history of the miraculous quality of the icon.¹⁰ The icons of the Theotokos of Tikhvin also abound in motifs related to the defence of the monastery. With time, the siege scene was separated from among the scenes of the miraculous history presented in the main part of the icon of the Theotokos of Tikhvin and started to be painted on separate icons; the battle scene against the background of the landscape with the small Tikhvin monastery in the centre was included in the icon created c. 1700 and placed in the

⁷ G. Kobrzeniecka-Sikorska, *Wizerunki carów rosyjskich*, p. 117. See also: Majorowa, Skokow, *Ikony rosyjskie*, pp. 522–523.

⁸ G. Kobrzeniecka-Sikorska, *Wizerunki carów rosyjskich*, p. 118; "Летописец начала царства царяи великого князя Ивана Василевича", in: *Полное собрание русских летописей* (hereinafter: ПСРЛ), vol. 29, Москва, 1965, pp. 89–90.

⁹ *К 350-летию покорения Казани 1552 – 2 X – 1902. Подлинная о казанском походе запись Царственной книги 1552 годаи сказание Князя Курбского о покорении Казани*, ed. В. Афанасьев, Москва, 1902. In the introduction to this publication, there is a reference to the works of Nikolay Karamzin, a Russian historian and a man of letters, who juxtaposed the event in question with the victorious battle of Ruthenian princes with the Tatars in Kulikovo in 1380 in his famous work titled *History of the Russian State*. The historian regarded both successes as "the most famous military feats of the old Ruthenian [i.e. Russian – P.K.] history."

¹⁰ "Прибавление к Новгородской третьей Летописи: Извлечение из рукописи об осаде Тихвинского монастыря шведами в 1613 году", in: ПСРЛ, vol. 3: *IV Новгородская Летописи*, Санкт-Петербург (hereinafter: СПб.), 1841, pp. 283–305.

plinth panel of the iconostas in the Orthodox cathedral of the Tikhvin Assumption Monastery.¹¹ Battle scenes – the fights of Ruthenian warriors with the Tatars – were also included in the *kleima* of the Feodorovska Icon of the Mother of God, venerated in the Ruthenian lands (especially in Gorodec, Kostroma and Yaroslavl), but also on the Holy Mount of Athos.¹² An important work is also the Azovskaya icon of the Mother of God. In 1696, the Russian army conquered Azov, a Turkish stronghold at the mouth of the Don. This is how Moscow made the first step towards the Black Sea coast. The conquest of Azov was a success and an opportunity to “manifest the power of the Tsar’s rule”. It was a victory on two levels, both military and religious: the enemy’s army was defeated and the Orthodox faith celebrated its triumph over Islam. The actions of the Russian army were regarded as divinely supported with the care and intercession of the Mother of God. For this reason, many Marian icons were created at that time under the name of “the Theotokos of Azov”. In one of these, set within a very complex composition and dating back to the early 18th century, its bottom part (below the representation of Mary in the orans posture and two saints standing on either side) includes an allegoric scene of the battle of Azov in 1696.¹³

The figure of the Mother of God was also represented in icons referring to her icons (icons including a representation of an icon of the Mother of God) and in this context one very important icon must be mentioned, namely *The Battle of Novgorod and Suzdal*, also known as the *The Miracle of the Icon of the Holy Sign* or *The Icon with the Miracle of the Virgin Orans*, where the dominant scenes are those of the battle. The subject matter of this icon, which was rather popular in Ruthenia in the 15th–17th centuries, was the events from 1169, when the Prince of Suzdal, Mstislav Andreyevich, led the army from other Ruthenian principalities towards Novgorod the Great, where his forces were held back.¹⁴ Two of the three

¹¹ G. Kobrzeniecka-Sikorska, *Ikona, kult, polityka. Rosyjskie ikony maryjne od drugiej połowy XVII wieku*, Olsztyn, 2000, pp. 83–85, fig. 22. In 1658, another work was created, titled *Miracle stories of the Theotokos of Tikhvin*, including miniatures by a Tikhvin icon painter, Irodion Sergeev, which became a model for Ruthenian and Russian icon-writers.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 83–85, fig. 19–20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 55–56, 81, fig. 5. It is worth noting that the conquest of Azov by the Russian army was almost immediately commemorated by Tsar Peter I. It was already in the following year, when he made his first grand tour of Europe. When the ruler was in the Netherlands in 1697, a famous medallist from Amsterdam, Jan Boskam, made medals commemorating the conquest of the fortress. The same was done after the first Russian victories over the Swedish army in the Great Northern War in 1700–1721. These victories were commemorated on medals made by a Russian medal master, Fyodor Alexeyev, and by numerous other foreign masters, whose names could not be determined, see: *Medal and coins of the Age of Peter the Great*, eds. I. Spassky, E. Shchukina, Leningrad, 1974, pp. 28–30; E.C. Щукина, “О создании медали в память взятия Азова работы Я. Боскама”, in: *Культураи искусство Петровского времени. Публикации исследования*, ed. Г.Н. Комелова, Ленинград, 1977, pp. 159–162.

¹⁴ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, Москва, 1955, pp. 10–11; Г.В. Аксенова, *Предыстория Студии*, p. 20; Majorowa, Skokow, *Ikony rosyjskie*, pp. 69–70,

parts of the icon have a “military” tone to them – the central part depicting negotiations at the city walls, while the Novgorod army is under fire and hiding behind the icon of the Mother of God, and the lower part showing the clash of both armies. In this scene of “the battle between Novgorod and Suzdal”, it is worth noting four haloed figures leading the hosts riding from Novgorod the Great – these are the Ruthenian saints: Boris and Gleb, Alexander Nevsky (who lived later than these historical events) and George the Victorious. It should be underlined that this icon was created in 1470–1478 and it can be read as symbolising the freedom and independence of Novgorod, because it was at that time that there was a strong pressure from Moscow, which wanted to rule its widespread and affluent territory. The ultimate and total elimination of their independence, or in fact, the remnants thereof, was completed a hundred years later, under the rule of Tsar Ivan IV the Terrible.¹⁵

Along with the state reforms commenced by Tsar Peter I at the turn of the 17th and 18th century, there was a significant development in Russian genre and portrait painting. Military painting did not stay behind and developed dynamically over the 17th and 18th century.¹⁶ Artists – Russians or foreigners commissioned by the rulers of the Russian Empire and thus included in the group of people creating Russian art – willingly drew on important historical events when looking for inspiration. The most renowned domestic artist in the first decades of the 18th century was Ivan Nikitin, whose career was enabled by the reformer-Tsar himself, who sent the painter to “learn art” in Venice and Florence in 1716. I. Nikitin was famous mainly as the author of a series of portraits of the Tsar and his second wife, Empress Catherine I as well as of the people who were close to the Tsar,¹⁷ but he also willingly addressed “military” themes. The painting

519–521. Sources related to these events differ both as regards their volume and the description of the support that the Novgorodians received from the miraculous icon of Our Lady of the Sign (in Russian: *Znamenie*). The *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle* includes a long description of the battle – the attackers were blinded with the help of the Icon of the Mother of God, which made it possible for the Novgorod army to defeat the enemy under the city walls, see: *Новгородская первая Летопись*, in: ПСРЛ, vol. 3: *IV Новгородския Летописи*, СПб. 1841, pp. 14–15; *Новгородская вторая Летопись*, in: *ibid.*, p. 125; *Новгородская третья Летопись*, in: *ibid.*, p. 215; *Новгородская четвертая Летопись*, in: *ibid.*, vol. 4: *IV.V Новгородскияи Псковския Летописи*, СПб. 1848, p. 12.

¹⁵ Е.А. Авдюшева, “‘Чудо иконы ‘Знамение’ (Битва новгородцев с суздальцами)’ как исторический памятник XV в.”, *Исторические, философские, политические и юридические науки, культурология и искусствоведение. Вопросы теории и практики*, no. 9, vol. 1, Тамбов, 2014, pp. 13–16, http://scjournal.ru/articles/issn_1997-292X_2014_9-1_01.pdf (access: 27.06.2017).

¹⁶ Н.Е. Третьякова, “‘За други своя...’. Из истории развития батального жанра в России”, in: *Летопись ратной славы. Студия военных художников имени М.Б. Грекова*, eds. Д.А. Белюкин, Т.П. Скоробогатова, Москва, 2005, pp. 7–21, <http://belygorod.ru/preface/N00103020013.php?idSer1=924> (access: 27.06.2017).

¹⁷ W.A. Serczyk, *Kultura rosyjska XVIII wieku*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź, 1984, p. 83.

representing the battle of Poltava from 1709 has not survived – it depicted the greatest triumph of the army led by Peter I over the Swedish troops during the Great Northern War in 1700–1721 (the information about the painting comes from the records of the Chancellery on buildings from 1727). Another painting by this artist has survived and it was no less important from the historical (and propaganda-related) point of view – *The Battle of Kulikovo (The Battle against Mamai or Mamai Defeated)*. The subject matter of the painting is related to the famous victorious battle of the Ruthenian army with the Tatars on 8 September 1380 in Kulikovo Field. The clash depicted by the author “infringes upon the chronological order” of the actual events. Nor are the weapons and clothes of the warriors consistent with the reality of the epoch. However, all evidence indicates that the purpose of the painting was other than a faithful representation of the clash between Ruthenians and Tatars. That fact that the painting praises the Ruthenian (Russian) military power is indisputable. The presented battle with the enemy directly corresponds to the state reforms commenced by Peter I, in which he intended to involve all social strata, most of all magnates and nobility. This is attested to by the inscription on the shield of one of the Ruthenian princes – “This prince, this nobleman, who stands alone for many” – which may well refer to Peter I himself, who was personally involved in implementing the reforms and, most of all, participated in battles with the enemy (including the battle of Poltava).¹⁸ Also other, later Russian painters referred to the battle of Kulikovo, i.a. Orest Kiprensky – *Dmitry Donskoi after the Battle of Kulikovo* (1805), Vasily Sazonov – *Dmitry Donskoi at the Battle of Kulikovo* (1824). In both works, the leading theme is the victorious leader of the Ruthenian army, Prince Dmitry Donskoi, immediately after the finished battle, or Viktor Vasnetsov in his classical military painting titled *The Duel of Peresvet and Chelubei* (1914).¹⁹ As regards

¹⁸ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, p. 21–23.

¹⁹ V. Vasnetsov is also the author of another painting with direct reference to the history of Ruthenia. The subject matter of the monumental work titled *After Prince Igor's Battle with the Polovtsy* (1880) has been drawn from the Ruthenian epic poem (a historical and military account) titled *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, describing the failed raid of the prince of Novgorod-Seversk and other Ruthenian princes against the Polovtsy in 1185. On his canvas, the artist did not present the battle scene itself, but the result of the clash between the Ruthenians and their enemy. The battlefield was strewn with bodies of the warriors, and most of them had fought for prince Igor. The general tone of the painting is rather calm, despite the birds circling above the dead warriors' bodies. The bodies of the Ruthenians killed in the battle do not have any visible bleeding wounds, and the spectator can inspect the perfectly captured details of the armaments, notably the plating of the armours. It is also worth mentioning the reasons of the defeat. As two Polish philologists and Russian literature and culture historians, W. Jakubowski and R. Luzhny, noted, the events described in *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* “were treated as a link in the history of Ruthenia, connected to its past and future. The fates of individual heroes seem to express the fate of the nation and the country”. As the researchers further noted, the author of the epic poem indicated that the reason behind the Ruthenians' defeat was “a destructive role of the princes from the Olgovich family, whose ancestor started his egoistic policy and this commenced the disintegration

the references to earlier historical events, we can find them in the painting by Grigory Ugryumov titled *Alexander Nevsky in Pskov after his victory over the Germans* (1793[4?]). The painting presents a triumphant return of the Grand Prince after the famous battle on 15 April 1242 on Lake Peipus (hist. Ice Lake, or Chudskoe Lake) with the Teutonic knights, the Livonian Brothers of the Sword and the Danish knights, and was specially ordered by Empress Catherine II. In 1794, the Empress donated this large painting (dimensions: 197.5 × 313.5 cm) to the Holy Trinity Cathedral at the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Saint Petersburg.²⁰ The theme addressed by Ugryumov and the place where the painting was finally placed were no coincidence. In showing the return of the victorious commander

of Ruthenia"; quoted from: *Literatura staroruska. Wiek XI–XVII. Antologia*, eds. W. Jakubowski, R. Luzhny, Warszawa, 1971, pp. 44–45. In this perspective, which was undoubtedly known to V. Vasnetsov, the reason behind the failure in the battle with an external enemy was the political disintegration of Ruthenia and particular interests of individual princes. The conclusion was obvious – only a strong, undivided authority could have prevented the defeat and guaranteed victory. This conclusion was equally relevant with reference to later events in Russian history, as the country believed itself to be the direct successor of all the Ruthenian lands. V. Vasnetsov is also the author of paintings which only indirectly referred to historical events in the Ruthenian territory, but thanks to their message they earned an important place among military works of art. *Knight at the Crossroads* (1882) and *Bogatyr*s (1898) are two major works referring to the content of the Ruthenian *byliny*. The artist commenced working on these paintings in the early 1870s (1870–1871), but searching for an appropriate presentation of Ruthenian heroes proved to be a great challenge and took time. The first painting presents a horseman in front of a rock with an inscription indicating directions. It seems that the other painting is more emotional: in it, V. Vasnetsov presented three legendary Ruthenian warriors – Dobrynya Nikitich, Ilya Muromets and Alyosha Popovich. In the artist's vision, the three imposing, powerful heroes of Ruthenian tales stood ready for battle and looked for the enemy to arrive. The message of the painting is exceptionally clear – Ruthenian territories (and, in the broader meaning, Russia) are guarded by invincible warrior-heroes, who are a symbol of the Ruthenian (and Russian) nation's readiness to fight. This unity of generations when faced with external threats was shown in the difference in the heroes' age – Dobrynya and Ilya are experienced, middle-aged warriors, whereas Alyosha is still a young man, but in every respect equal to his companions. V. Vasnetsov emphasised in his memoirs that *Bogatyr*s "were my artistic debt, my obligation towards my nation", quoted after: Виктор Михайлович Васнецов. *Мир художника. Письма. Дневники. Воспоминания. Документы. Суждения современников*, ed. Н.А. Ярославцевой, Москва, 1987, p. 153. For more information see: Виктор Михайлович Васнецов 1848–1926, ed. Н.Ф. Шанина, Москва, 1975, pp. 14–15, 24–29, illustrations 10, 39; Э. Пастон, "Обязательство перед родным народом", *Третьяковская Галерея*, 3 (2006), pp. 56–65. It is worth noting that the subject matter of *Bogatyr*s, and also of the two other works by V. Vasnetsov (*After Prince Igor's Battle with the Polovtsy* and *Knight at the Crossroads*) was used by the Soviet authorities for propaganda purposes during World War II. In 1943, a small booklet was published (16 pages) with a description of this work, where the heroic attitude of the warriors ready to defend the Ruthenian land was strongly emphasised. For more information see: Н.М. Щекотов, *Богатыри. Картина Виктора Васнецова*, Москва–Ленинград, 1943.

²⁰ Угрюмов Г.И., 1764, Москва – 1823, Санкт-Петербург. *Торжественный въезд Александра Невского в город Псков после одержанной им победы над немцами*, http://rusmuseumvrm.ru/data/collections/painting/18_19/ugrumov_nevsky_enter_pskov/index.php (access: 25.06.2017).

(leading two prisoners) and his subjects who greet him, the artist wished to present the connection between the ruler and his people. The clothes of Alexander Nevsky, who is leading his army on horseback, in no way resemble the attire of a typical Ruthenian prince from the 13th century: it is more reminiscent of those of saints as depicted in icons.²¹ It can therefore be concluded that the image proposed by G. Ugryumov was intentional, because in 1547 Alexander Nevsky was canonised, thus becoming an official patron of Ruthenian princes, and above all of the Russian rulers going to war. He was especially worshipped by Tsar Peter I, who established a monastery in 1710 in the expanding Saint Petersburg, dedicated to his “wartime patron”.²² Its location was no coincidence either – the monastery was built at the spot where Alexander Nevsky defeated the Swedish army in 1240. The monastery (which was soon renamed as the Alexander Nevsky Lavra), to which the saint’s remains were transferred during a ceremony in 1724, was designed by Peter I as a necropolis for the commanders of the Russian army.²³

The history of the pre-Peter Russia (the Grand Duchy of Moscow) was also the theme of the works by Karl Bryullov. When the artist was in Constantinople in 1834, looking for artistic inspiration, he decided to become familiar with *The History of the Russian State* by the Russian writer and historian N. Karamzin. As a result, in 1835–1843 he painted a military work titled *The Siege of Pskov by King Stephen Báthory of Poland in 1581*. Captivated by Karamzin’s description of the defence of Pskov, the artist tried to highlight the heroism of the inhabitants of the city as they were fighting against the army led by the Polish king. Karamzin underlined the role of the Tsar himself, Ivan the Terrible, who gathered a great army, “an army that neither Russia nor Europe had ever seen since the Mongol attack”, and he compared the Tsar to Dmitry Donskoi himself: “and he charged with his army, just like the hero of the Don, to face the new Mamai”.²⁴ As the historian wrote further on, once “they learnt Stephen was marching straight towards Pskov, the local voivodes and soldiers, the clergy and the citizens with crosses,

²¹ З.Т. Зонова, *Исторические картины Григория Ивановича Угрюмова*, <http://art19.info/articles/ugryumov.html> (access: 25.06.2017).

²² Saint Alexander Nevsky was the “military patron saint” of the Ruthenian princes and Russian Tsars, especially Tsar Peter I, who fought with the Swedish army, just like the saint. For more information about the veneration of saint Alexander Nevsky under the reign of Peter I see: P. Krokosz, “Aspekt religijny w strukturach rosyjskich sił zbrojnych za panowania Piotra I”, *Україна в Центрально Східній Європі*, vol. 15, Київ, 2015, pp. 210–236.

²³ Ю.К. Бегунов, *Древнерусские традиции в произведениях первой четверти XVIII века об Александре Невском*, “Труды Отдела древнерусской литературы”, vol. 26, Москва–Ленинград, 1971, p. 75; *Святой благоверный князь Александр Невский*, <http://days.pravoslavie.ru/Life/life4548.htm> (access: 27.07.2015); *Святой благоверный великий князь Александр Невский — в схиме Алексий*, <http://days.pravoslavie.ru/Life/life6392.htm> (access: 27.07.2015); А. Веретельников, *К истории почитания святого благоверного князя Александра Невского*, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/put/48583.htm> (access: 27.06.2015).

²⁴ [M. Karamzin], *Historia Państwa Rosyjskiego M. Karamzina*, trans. into Polish by G. Buczyński, vol. 9, Warszawa, 1827, p. 296.

paintings and the body itself of the holy prince Vsevolod Gabriel [i.e. Saint Vsevolod I Gabriel, the prince of Novgorod and Pskov, canonised in 1549 – P.K.] walked round all the strongholds, mothers carrying children in their arms. They prayed to God, so that the ancient city of Olga could be an invincible fortress for enemies, so that it might survive and save the whole of Russia”.²⁵ Despite the fierce attack of the king’s army, Pskov was not conquered. What determined the strength and the ultimate success of the Russian garrison when faced with Báthory’s army was, apart from its valour, the faith and God’s assistance, which was also duly represented by K. Bryullov, who placed a procession of clergymen with crosses, banners and holy icons, walking behind the fighting soldiers.²⁶

The events happening concurrently with the defence of Pskov, but outside the eastern border of Russia, were immortalised by another great Russian painter, Vasily Surikov. It is assumed that in 1581 the ataman of the Don Cossacks, Yermak Timofeyevich, led a few hundred armed warriors to conquer Siberia.²⁷ The Siberian theme was cherished by V. Surikov for personal reasons – he was born in Krasnoyarsk (1848), and his family descended from the Don Cossacks, who started the “Siberian epic” along with Yermak Timofeyevich. In 1895, the four years’ work was completed – the spectators could now admire the great painting titled *Conquest of Siberia by Yermak*.²⁸ When preparing his work, the painter took great care to present the events in a realistic manner and paid attention to the details of the warriors’ appearance, their attire and weapons. The battle scene covers the whole canvas and presents the clash between Yermak’s troops and the Siberian Tatars led by Khan Kuchum. The battle took place at a river bank: the Don Cossacks and the armed warriors from the Stroganov family launch their attack from boats (the basic means of transport all across the endless expanses of Siberia). It is worth noting the figure of Yermak, who was leading the attack – the commander is standing under the banners with traditional religious images. In this context, the author consciously resorted to an artifice which underlined the “Divine support” of the Tsar’s people and referred to the previous Muscovite conquests – the banner with the image of Christ was based on an authentic banner held by Ivan the Terrible as he marched against Kazan in 1552 (the banner was kept in the Armoury Chamber at the Moscow Kremlin).²⁹

Once we have mentioned Ivan the Terrible, it is impossible to disregard the abovementioned southward expansion of Muscovy in the 16th century. The war

²⁵ Ibid., p. 299.

²⁶ В.В. Садовень, *Русские художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, pp. 57–60.

²⁷ А. Дмитриев, *Пермская старина. Сборник исторических статей материалов преимущественно о Пермском крае*, vol. 5: *Покорение Угорских земель Сибири*, Пермь, 1891, pp. 139–188.

²⁸ *Государственный Русский Музей Ленинград. Живопись XII – начала XX века*, eds. В.А. Пушкин-Карев et al., Москва, 1979, pp. 87–88.

²⁹ В.В. Садовень, *Русские художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, pp. 309–315.

campaign against the Khanate of Kazan became the subject matter of the painting by G. Ugryumov titled *The Capture of Kazan by Ivan the Terrible on 2 October 1552*, painted before the year 1800; the work was commissioned by Tsar Paul I, who intended to keep it in his Mikhailovsky Castle in Saint Petersburg. G. Ugryumov also avoided presenting a classical battle scene (the battle of Kazan is a background for the main scene) in order to emphasise the triumph of the victorious commander. In front of Ivan the Terrible on horseback is the Kazan khan Yadigar and his family on their knees pleading for mercy. There are also kneeling Tatar leaders and dignitaries; one of them is carrying the Khan's insignia on a tray and presenting them to the Tsar: these include the dagger (*kindjal*) and the so-called Kazan cap, i.e. the crown of the Kazan rulers. The success of the Tsar's army is also a triumph of the Orthodox religion over Islam, which is symbolised by a green banner taken from the Tatars and lying on the ground in front of the Tsar's horse.³⁰

The wars waged by Russia in the 17th century are equally interesting. In the Moscow Kremlin Museum we can see the painting purchased by Tsar Alexander II and kept in his private apartments, presenting the theme of Russian and Polish conflicts under the reign of Tsar Alexey Romanov. It is not a typical battle scene, but nevertheless deserves attention because of its historical context. In 1663, King John Casimir ventured a war expedition in order to conquer Left-bank Ukraine. Then, he was planning to march forward, into the Russian territory, to crush the Tsar's army and capture Moscow, where he intended to impose a peace treaty on Russia. The Polish offensive extended over the first four months of the next year, but it finally collapsed due to the deteriorating weather conditions (thaw), problems with obtaining provisions, as well as the resistance and subsequent attack of the Russian and Cossack troops. The last attempt at capturing Moscow was thus wasted by the Polish army. The winner of the war, which lasted many years, but soon came to an end, was Tsar Alexei. As J. Gierowski noted, the Treaty of Andrusovo signed in 1667 "consolidated the withdrawal of Poland in the east with Khmelnytsky's uprising and the Treaty of Pereyaslav. Poland's foreign policy seemed to lack foresight in this regard. If it was too difficult and strenuous an effort to retain the whole territory that had been previously in Polish hands, at least an attempt should have been made to prevent Russia – the country that was the most dangerous for the future of Poland – from taking advantage of the resignation [...]. However, the division of Ukraine that was approved by Poland formed the basis for the growth of the Russian power, thus pushing Poland to the defensive".³¹ In that conflict it was the Russian army that ultimately proved better. The image of the Tsar's troops marching to fight with the Polish-Lithuanian army was

³⁰ *Взятие Казани Иваном Грозным 2 октября 1552 года*, http://rusmuseumvrm.ru/data/collections/painting/18_19/ugryumov_capture_kazan/index.php (access: 25.06.2017).

³¹ J.A. Gierowski, *Rzeczpospolita w dobie złotej wolności (1648–1763): Wielka historia Polski*, vol. 5, Kraków, 2001, pp. 102–103.

presented by Nikolai Sverchkov in his painting titled *The Departure of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich to inspect his troops in 1664* (1864).³²

The abovementioned I. Nikitin was one of the first 18th-century Russian painters who made an attempt to immortalise the battle of Poltava. As we know, the canvas has not survived, but paintings by other artists are extant which deal more broadly with the theme of the Great Northern War; these artists lived during the reign of Peter I or in the following decades. The reformer-Tsar himself also realised the need to immortalise the successes of the Russian field army and navy during the fight with Sweden for the access to the Baltic Sea. As a monarch, he made direct attempts in this respect. Military paintings whose main purpose was to underline the valour of the soldiers and to display the power of the Russian Empire were commissioned also by the successors of Peter I, by aristocrats and by military museums, i.a. the Museum of the Leib Guard Sapper Battalion (after 1917 the museum, just like other regimental museums, was closed and the collection was transferred to the Central Military Engineering Museum, which, in 1963, was in its turn incorporated in the Military Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineering and Signal Corps), or the famous “Military gallery” in the Winter Palace.³³

A shortage of Russian artists who could come up with works praising the Tsar’s army from the period of the Great Northern War (I. Nikitin was abroad until 1720) made Peter I search for painters among western European artists. On 23 December 1715 the Tsar wrote to his agent in Paris, Lieutenant-Captain Konon Zotov: “Look for a historical painter, consider especially someone who used to work as an assistant to the famous master [Charles – P.K.] Le Brun, who stayed with the French king.”³⁴ One of the first painters to put Russian military victories on canvas was the French painter Louis Caravaque, who came to Russia in 1716 and was the author of a series of portraits of the Tsar and his family.³⁵ From among his military works one that deserves special attention is *The Portrait of Peter I* from 1716, which presents the Tsar in his navy uniform against the

³² *Масляная живопись*, <http://www.kreml.ru/about-museums/museum-collection/maslyanaya-zhivopis/> (access: 25.06.2017).

³³ О.П. Бауськова, *Эпизоды военно-инженерной истории XIX–XX веков в художественной летописи ВИМАИВиВС*, in: *Военное прошлое государства Российского: утраченного сохраненное. Материалы Всероссийской Научно-практической конференции, посвященной 250-летию Достояния дела, 13–17 сентября 2006 года. Секция „Коллекции собрания военно-исторических музеев России”*, introduction С.В. Ефимов, pt. 1, СПб., 2006, p. 8.

³⁴ С. Мезин, *Петр I во Франции*, СПб., 2015, pp. 167–168. It should be mentioned that Peter I was quite interested in western European painting and whenever he had the opportunity, he purchased relevant works of art through his emissaries. At the beginning of 1716, K. Zotov was sent to Paris in order to see how the French navy operated and on this occasion he bought paintings and tapestries for a total amount of 147,000 livres.

³⁵ Н.Е. Третьякова, *‘За други своя...’*, pp. 7–21, <http://belygorod.ru/preface/N00103020013.php?id-Ser1=924> (access: 23.06.2017).

background of a sea scattered with ships from the combined navy forces: Russian, Dutch, Danish and English. The content of the work refers to the event when the Tsar was given the honorary command over the navy vessels of the countries which formed the anti-Swedish alliance at the time.³⁶ The successes of the Russian field army were immortalised in two of his most renowned works – *The Battle of Poltava* (1717–1718) and *The Capture of Nöteborg* (1721).³⁷ Another foreigner invited by the ruler to come to Russia was the German master Johann Gottfried Tannauer, who remained in his new homeland until his death in 1737. While he worked at the Tsar’s court in 1711–1737, he painted a series of portraits of Peter I, members of his family and aristocrats. It is also worth mentioning his military works, praising Russia’s military prowess, all the more so as he met with the Tsar immediately after he came to Russia in 1711 and together with the Tsar’s troops participated in the war against Turkey (the Danube expedition).³⁸ Among the soldiers, the artist had an opportunity to observe their weapons, uniforms and actions in the battlefield. Among J. Tannauer’s works one deserves special attention, namely the portrait of an outstanding commander of the Tsar’s army at the time of the Great Northern War, General-Admiral Fyodor Apraksin.³⁹ A seasoned soldier and, more importantly, the General Commander of the Russian navy in the victorious sea battle of Hangö Udd with the Swedes on 27 June 1714 (dubbed as “a second battle of Poltava”), he was presented as the “perfect commander”, wearing a plate armour and a red cloak draped on it, he is standing against the background of the sea battle. The dynamics of the painting, apart from the billowing clouds, is visible also in the wind-blown wig and the flapping coat of the commander. Another painting by J. Tannauer has a particular, allegorical and propaganda-related tone to it. It presents the Tsar during the battle of Poltava: *Tsar Peter I at the Battle of Poltava* (1724). The work departs from realistic presentation, the battle is only the background for the central figure, that of Peter I on horseback. Directly above the Tsar is an allegorical representation of the winged Glory, blowing the trumpet and putting a laurel wreath on the head of the victorious monarch.⁴⁰

³⁶ В. Овчинников, *18 мая – День Балтийского флота*, <http://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/history/more.htm?id=11746880@cmsArticle> (access: 17 July 2017); Н.Н. Молчанов, *Дипломатия Петра Первого*, Москва, 1984, p. 328. A grand allied squadron of 69 ships, accompanied by about 400 merchant ships, all commanded by the Tsar acting in the rank of Admiral, reached Bornholm and returned to Copenhagen. Not a single shot was fired at the Swedes as they hid their ships. However, no powder was spared for salutes.

³⁷ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, p. 15; *Полтавская баталия. Луи Каравак (1684–1754). Франция, 1718 г.*, https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/what-s-on/temp_exh/2017/versailles/?lng=ru (access: 17.07.2017).

³⁸ Н.Е. Третьякова, ‘За други своя...’, pp. 7–21.

³⁹ ВЭ, vol. II, Петербург 1911, pp. 613–614.

⁴⁰ *Петр I в Полтавской битве. Таннауер И.-Г. 1724*, <http://rusmuseum.ru/editions/multimedia/petr-i-v-poltavskoy-bitve-tannauer-i-g-1724/> (access: 17.07.2017).

One artist who refused to come to Russia was the French portrait painter Jean-Marc Nattier, whom Peter I met on his trip to Paris in 1717.⁴¹ The foreigner did not refuse, however, when the Tsar asked him to prepare certain paintings, including some military works. Choosing this particular artist was not a shot in the dark, as the monarch knew the characteristics of the contemporary European painters, prepared for him by his agent, Jean (Ivan) Lefort, who was sent to Paris for this purpose. In Amsterdam J.-M. Nattier painted the military work titled *The Battle of Lesnaya* (1717), which illustrated the battle of the Russian and the Swedish army, which took place on 28 September 1708.⁴² This battle was decisive for the further progress of the campaign led by Charles XII against Russia. After the initial successes when marching towards Moscow, the Swedish king was met with firm resistance of the Russian troops and moved to Ukraine in order to let his soldiers rest and join their forces with those of Ivan Mazepa, the Hetman of the Zaporizhian Host, who decided to take action against the Tsar. This is also where the Swedish General Adam Löwenhaupt was supposed to arrive on his way from Livonia, with a few thousand fresh troops and food supplies for the royal army suffering from malnutrition. Peter I decided to prevent the two armies from joining and marched to meet General Löwenhaupt, leading the troops separated from his own main army. Both armies met near Lesnaya, where Russians proved their superiority, crushing the troops intended as the long-awaited relief force for Charles XII.⁴³ Another painting by J.-M. Natter is also devoted to a military subject matter, although not strictly related to the battlefield: the painting titled *Tsar Peter I* (1717). This is a dignified portrait of the ruler and the commander – Peter I personally posed for this painting – presented against the background of the battle (of Poltava).⁴⁴ Peter I is wearing a knight's plate armour and his right hand holding a hetman's mace is resting on a red-plumed helmet. The left hand

⁴¹ While in Paris in 1717, Peter I admired the collections of art in the Louvre and in palaces owned by French aristocrats. He also visited the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, the Académie Française and the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. In the first of the three, which housed a variety of texts in the form of inscriptions, mottos, legends and historical works and was established to “preserve the genuine idea of the grandeur of France for future generations,” the Tsar was shown a series of medals illustrating the history of King Louis XIV, see: С.А. Мезин, *Парижские встречи Петра I*, “Труды Государственного Эрмитажа”, vol. 70: *Петровское время в лицах – 2013. К 400летию Дома Романовых (1613–2013). Материалы научной конференции*, СПб., 2013, p. 248.

⁴² И.С. Немилова, *Загадки старых картин*, Москва, 1989, pp. 184–206; С. Мезин, *Петр I во Франции...*, pp. 168–171, 175.

⁴³ For more information, see: В.А. Артамонов, *1708–2008. Мать Полтавской победы. Битва при Лесной*, СПб., 2008.

⁴⁴ С.А. Мезин, *Парижские встречи Петра I...*, pp. 248–249. In 1717, the Tsar was portrayed by as many as four most renowned French portrait artists of the time: J.-M. Nattier, Hyacinthe Rigaud, Nicolas de Largillière and Jean Baptiste Oudry. However, it was only for the first two of these that Peter I sat in person; others had to paint him “from their memory”, see: *Походный журнал 1717 года*, СПб., 1855, p. 17.

is hanging along the Tsar's body and resting on the hilt of the sword at the side. Across from his right shoulder runs the blue ribbon of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle the First-Called – the first Russian military distinction established by the Tsar; the star of the order is presented on the armour.⁴⁵

It was still during his stay in Paris that the Tsar noted the military works of the Flemish painter Adam François van der Meulen, who took part – under Le Brun's supervision – in preparing paintings for Louis XIV, which were used as drafts for the tapestry cycle titled *The History of the King*. The Flemish artist also painted a series of 47 paintings which commemorated the King's military victories. *Les conquêtes du Roi*, as the series was titled, was placed on the walls of the royal pavilion in Marly. The paintings of the court painter of Louis XIV impressed Peter I so much (while in France, the ruler also received an album with sketches and paintings by van der Meulen) that they became an inspiration for him to commission a series of works documenting his own military successes. With regard to the above, a relevant order was submitted to a French painter of battle scenes, Pierre-Denis Martin the Younger.⁴⁶ In 1717, the monarch ordered four paintings related to the key episodes of the Great Northern War: the battle of Lesnaya, the sea battle of Hangö Udd (Gangut) and two representations of the battle of Poltava. These paintings were supposed to be used by the Gobelins' Tapestry Factory in Paris to create tapestries for the Tsar; for numerous reasons, the tapestries were completed only after the death of Peter I.⁴⁷ It was also after the Tsar's death that the paintings ordered from P.-D. Martin the Younger made it to Russia – *The battle of Poltava* and *The battle of Lesnaya*.⁴⁸ In both paintings – which are now

⁴⁵ Натье, Жан-Марк (?). 1685–1766. Портрет Петра I. Франция, 1717 г., <https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.+Paintings/68093/?lng=ru> (access: 01.07.2017). The author of the article decided to use the name of the first military distinction as indicated in the work by W. Jakubowski, see: W. Jakubowski, *Ordery i medale Rosji*, Toruń, 1993, pp. 15–16. Another name of this distinction, which has become popular in Polish historiography following the findings made by W. Serczyk, is the Order of St. Andrew the First-Called (*Order Św. Andrzeja Pierwozwannego*), see: W.A. Serczyk, *Piotr I Wielki*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kra-ków–Gdańsk, 1973, p. 102.

⁴⁶ С. Мезин, *Петр I во Франции...*, p. 175.

⁴⁷ Т.Т. Коршунова, “Новые материалы о создании шпалер *Полтавская баталия*”, in: *Культураи искусство Петровского времени...*, p. 163.

⁴⁸ *Екатерининский дворец. Картинный зал*, <http://Tsarselo.ru/yenciklopedija-carskogo-sela/adresa/ekaterininskii-dvorec-kartinni-zal.html#.WVka3WdGQng> (access: 27 June 2017). In 1722–1724, Peter I ordered the French engraver Nicolas IV de Larmessin to prepare faithful engravings of these paintings, which were afterwards transported to Russia. They were titled: *The Battle of Poltava between the Russian and Swedish Forces on 27 June 1709* and *The Battle of Lesnaya on 28 September 1708*, see: Лармессен, Николая де IV. 1684–1753/1755, *Сражение между русскими и шведскими войсками у Полтавы 27 июня 1709 г.*, <http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/04.+Engraving/1267681/?lng=ru> (access: 27.06.2017); Лармессен, Николая де IV. 1684–1753/1755, *Сражение при деревни Лесной 28 сентября 1708 г.*, <http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/04.+engraving/1267680> (access: 27.07.2017).

displayed in the palace in Tsarskoye Selo – the Tsar is, traditionally, in the foreground along with the generals of the Russian army who directly participated in the clash with the enemy.⁴⁹ Apart from serving pure propaganda-related purposes and extolling the ruler's heroic virtue, the paintings are rich in extremely important historical and military detail – the artist provided a perfect representation of the types of weaponry, uniforms, and combat and march formations customary to both armies at the time. While painting the battle of Poltava, the artist also considered the location of the Russian army camp – fortifications and the positioning of the tents. This painting is thus an important iconographic source, presenting the regulations included in the *Military Code of Peter I of the year 1716*, which was the key military legal act promulgated during the reign of Peter I, many of its points remaining valid until the first half of the 19th century.⁵⁰

The theme of the most important battles of the Russian army from the times of the Great Northern War recurred in many works by Russian painters in the subsequent years. Already in the mid-18th century, a work of art was created: even though it is not a painting, but certainly, on account of its message and artistic value, it is nevertheless one of the most important iconographic sources related to the battle of Poltava, the famous mosaic by Mikhail Lomonosov titled *The Battle of Poltava* (size: 640 cm × 480 cm, area 310 m²), prepared on the basis of various written and above all iconographic sources – portraits of Peter I, paintings documenting military actions, as well as soldiers' uniforms and banners of the Tsar's army. The theme of the work, which was completed in 1764, is the battle of Poltava, but contrary to the previous works which depicted this battle, the painter consciously introduced two equivalent heroes – the first is, as usually, the charging Tsar followed by the commanders of the army (i.a. Field Marshal Boris Sheremetev and Prince Alexander Menshikov), whereas the other is an ordinary soldier holding a rifle in both hands and standing in the ruler's way to the battlefield. The figure of the Tsar symbolises the heroic ruler, while the ordinary soldier personifies the Russian nation participating in the war. The soldier's gesture to stop Peter I expresses care and concern, interpreted as the concern of the whole nation with the life of their monarch. This mosaic is one of several parts of the cycle of mosaics which was planned to praise the reformer-Tsar and supposed to decorate the interior of the burial shrine of the Russian Tsars, the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Paul in Saint Petersburg.⁵¹

⁴⁹ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталлисты XVIII–XIX веков*, p. 18.

⁵⁰ *Kodeks wojskowy Piotra I z 1716 roku*, eds. P. Krokosz, K. Łopatecki, Kraków–Oświęcim, 2016, pp. 114–118, 124, 132–135, 145–171; О.П. Бауськова, “Эпизоды военно-инженерной истории XIX–XX веков...”, p. 10.

⁵¹ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталлисты XVIII–XIX веков*, pp. 23–29; Л.Н. Антипин, А.В. Буторина, В.М. Макаренко, “Роль М.В. Ломоносова в создании мозаичного искусства”, *Научная мысль*, 3 (2016), pp. 85–88; Л.Э. Сутягина, “Шлиссельбург – Полтава – Петербург: исторические параллели судьбы”, in: *Ломоносовские чтения в Кунсткамере: к 300-летию*

The theme of the most important events from the Great Northern War (1700–1721) was reflected also in the works by Alexander von Kotzebue, an outstanding 19th-century Russian painter of battle scenes and a member of a German family in Russia's service. He was no stranger to military business, because his two brothers served in the Russian armed forces – in the land army and in the navy. The artist himself also completed military education – he graduated from the Second Cadet Corps in Saint Petersburg and he served in the Lithuanian Leib-Guard Regiment.⁵² However, it was painting that turned out to be his greatest passion, to which he devoted himself completely. In 1837–1844, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in the capital city and was supervised by another painter of battle scenes, Professor Alexander Sauerweid.⁵³ In the 1830s and 1840s, he painted his first military works, for which he received public distinctions.⁵⁴ Thanks to his works, particularly the painting titled *The Capture of Warsaw* (1844), which commemorated the suppression of the November Uprising by the Russian army in 1830–1831, the talented painter of battle scenes was noticed by Tsar Nicholas I and soon went on to become the Emperor's favourite painter.⁵⁵ In 1847, A. Kotzebue went on a journey to western Europe, to see the places of the grand victories of the Russian army during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) and during the military actions led by the General-Field Marshal Alexander Suvorov towards the end on the 18th century.⁵⁶ Before this journey, however, he created paintings that presented the most important battles of the Great Northern War in 1700–1721. In 1846, the artist presented the first painting of the cycle, titled *The Battle of Narva on 19 November 1700*, depicting the first clash of the Russian and Swedish forces in this conflict. That battle, which took place under the walls of the Narva fortress besieged by the Russians, ended in a major defeat suffered by the Tsar's army. Immediately before the decisive stage of the battle, Peter I left the army camp for reasons that remain unknown and assigned the command of the army to a for-

со дня рождения М.В. Ломоносова [сборник статей по материалам юбилейной конференции], vol. 1, eds. М.Ф. Хартанович, Ю.К. Чистов, СПб., 2011, pp. 143–147. See also: Л.Н. Антипин, М.В. Ломоносов – художник. Мозаики. Идеи живописных картин из русской истории, Москва, 2016, passim; Н.Е. Третьякова, 'За други своя...', pp. 7–21.

⁵² В. Артемов, *Войны, сражения, полководцы в произведениях классической живописи*, Москва, 2002, p. 60.

⁵³ For more information, see: П. Столпянский, *Зауервейд, Александр Иванович*, in: *Русский биографический словарь* (hereinafter: РИБ), vol. 7: *Жабокритский-Зяловский*, Петроград, 1916, p. 279–282.

⁵⁴ В. Федорченко, *Дворянские роды, прославившие Отечество. Энциклопедия дворянских родов*, Москва, 2003, p. 216–217.

⁵⁵ For this painting A. Kotzebue was rewarded with a "grand gold medal" and was granted the right to go on a foreign trip at the expense of the state; for more information see: И. Лазаревский, *Коцебу, Александр Евстафьевич*, in: РИБ, vol. 9: *Кнаппе-Кюхельбер*, СПб., 1903, pp. 354–355.

⁵⁶ В. Артемов, *Войны, сражения, полководцы в произведениях классической живописи*, p. 60; В. Коган, *Семья Коцебу в России*, vol. 4, <http://www.rubezh.eu/Zeitung/2005/06/07.htm> (access: 1.07.2017).

eign field marshal he hired, Charles Eugène de Croÿ.⁵⁷ This decision, along with a series of other oversights on the Russian part, contributed to the success of King Charles XII, who arrived commanding in person the relief force to support his army.⁵⁸ When commencing the work on this painting, A. Kotzebue faced a genuine challenge. The humiliating defeat of the Russian army cannot have been presented by any means, but the heroic attitude of its individual regiments and soldiers could be highlighted instead. On closer inspection, the painting shows only Russian soldiers in the foreground warding off the attackers, whereas the victorious Swedish troops are in the background, remaining virtually invisible to the spectator. The trick used by the artist made it possible for him to emphasise the role of the Russians, who were in the defensive, and to create an impression that they were in fact gaining the upper hand in the battle.⁵⁹ In 1847, the artist finished his work and organised a public display of two other paintings on the same theme – *The Siege of Nöteborg on 11 October 1702* and *The Capture of Narva in 1704*. The theme of the former painting was related to the capture of the first Baltic stronghold of the enemy. This success was important both from the military and propaganda perspective, in that Nöteborg was a former Ruthenian fortress, known as *Oreshek*, lost by the Grand Duchy of Muscovy (Russia) in 1612. The description of the fortress is known i.a. from a very interesting account by a participant of the Great Northern War, Archbishop Athanasius of Kholmogory: “at the beginning of the great Neva River is the Oreshek fortress. It was built by the Grand Princes of Moscow, it is now under the Swedish rule. It is all made of stone; small, yet strongly fortified”.⁶⁰ The importance of retrieving this fortress was underlined by Peter I in the letters he wrote to his closest collaborators: “after a fierce and incredibly difficult attack, which started at four in the morning and ended after four in the afternoon, the fortress was finally captured”.⁶¹ The other painting referred to another momentous event of the war, the capture of Narva. The well planned and efficiently conducted siege produced the expected result – the fortress, where the Russian army suffered a major defeat four years before, finally

⁵⁷ W.A. Serczyk, *Piotr I Wielki...*, p. 99.

⁵⁸ P. Krokosz, “Mała wojna’. Działania wojsk rosyjskich w Inflantach, Estonii oraz Ingermanlandii w latach 1700–1704”, in: *Stan badań nad wielokulturowym dziedzictwem dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, vol. III: *Inflanty Polskie*, eds. W. Walczak, K. Łopatecki, Białystok, 2012, pp. 146–167.

⁵⁹ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталлисты XVIII–XIX веков*, p. 91; *Битва при Нарве, А. Е. Коцебу*, <http://all-russia-history.ru/battle-of-narva-foto-1> (access: 18.07.2017); *Слава русского оружия. Художественные коллекции Военно-исторического музея артиллерии, инженерных войск и войск связи*, авт. ст.: О.П. Бауськова, Т.Н. Ильина, А.А. Мартынов, Москва, 2003, illustration 4, <http://belygorod.ru/preface/15505.php?idSer1=924> (access: 20.06.2017).

⁶⁰ Т.В. Панич, “Описание трех путей из России в Швецию’ Афанасия Холмогорского (к истории текста памятника)”, in: *Публицистические и исторические сочинения периода феодализма. Сборник научных трудов*, Новосибирск, 1989, p. 106.

⁶¹ И.И. Голиков, *Деяния Петра Первого, мудрого преобразователя России, собранные из достоверных источников и расположенные по годам*, vol. 14, Москва, 1842, no. 80, pp. 50–51.

surrendered.⁶² There are two other important works by A. Kotzebue that relate to the decisive events of the war with Sweden – *The Battle Between the Russians and the Swedes at Lesnaya on 28 October 1708* (1870) and *The Victory at Poltava* (1862?). Both battles had been presented before in paintings, but the way they were addressed this time perfectly matched the policy of highlighting the heroism of the Tsar’s soldiers. While the painting presenting the battle of Lesnaya is a typical battle scene, the other, devoted to the battle of Poltava, was designed as presenting the grandeur of Russia’s armed forces. Against the background of the battle, which is still taking place, we can see the triumph of the Russian forces – the enemy’s banners are being thrown at the feet of the Tsar, who has just arrived from the battlefield. The scene is accompanied by music played by soldier-musicians. One of the most significant episodes included by the painter is the reference to the issue of “treason” of Ivan Mazepa, the Hetman of the Zaporizhian Host, who joined the forces of Charles XII in 1708 and attempted to establish an Ukrainian state independent of Russia (but under a Swedish protectorate). The defeat of the Swedish forces was at the same time the defeat of Mazepa and the Cossacks who supported him. Those who survived and did not manage to escape with their hetman had only one option – to appeal to the Tsar’s mercy. This is indeed how they are presented by the author: three Cossacks, who visibly suffered in the battle, are in the foreground (one of them is prostrated before Peter I) next to the banners being surrendered to the Tsar.⁶³

It will be no exaggeration to say that the paintings by A. Kotzebue devoted to the Great Northern War in 1700–1721 became the most important artistic message related to this period of Russian history – and such they remained for a long time. Also other Russian artists had their own perception of the Russian–Swedish conflict from the first quarter of the 18th century; on this occasion, it is also worth mentioning the artists living at the turn of the 20th century. At the end of 1701, the first major clash occurred between the Russian and the Swedish forces since the battle of Narva in 1700 – the battle of Erestfer. The commander of the Tsar’s troops, General Boris Sheremetev, defeated the Swedish troops led by General Wolmar Anton von Schlippenbach. This clash was extremely important for the Russians with regard to its military and psychological aspect: crushing the enemy who was recently victorious made Russian soldiers believe that they were capable of success. For defeating the Swedes, B. Sheremetev was promoted to the position of General-Field Marshal.⁶⁴ This battle was commemorated in the painting by a Russian and Soviet painter of battle scenes, Mitrofan Grekov, a student of the famous representative of this genre, Franz Roubaud. *The Yaroslav Dragoons*

⁶² В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, p. 96.

⁶³ P. Krokosz, “Iwan Mazepa i Piotr I. Wojna na uniwersały (październik – grudzień 1708 r.)”, *Nowa Ukraina. Нова Україна. Zeszyty historyczno-polityczne*, 1–2 (2010), pp. 7–29.

⁶⁴ Id., “*Mała wojna*”..., pp. 172–174.

Attacking the Swedes at the Village of Eresteron on 29 December 1701 (1914), as this painting by Grekov is titled, shows a daring charge by the Russian cavalry on the surprised enemy. The broadswords of the Tsar's dragoons land on the Swedish horsemen, killing them one by one. The Swedes run towards their own infantry. The infantry attempt to support the fleeing cavalry, but the dynamics of the action depicted by the artist reveals another scene, where the Swedish cavalry are also crushed by the Russians.⁶⁵ A certain dynamism can also be observed in the painting by Nikolay Sauerweid – a son of A. Sauerweid – *Peter I stops his marauding soldiers after taking Narva in 1704* (1859). The artist realistically depicted the actual events that took place during the siege of the Swedish fortress of Narva in 1704. The attack lasted only three quarters of an hour; afterwards, the Russian soldiers, who still remembered the defeat they had suffered there four years before, forced their way both to the fortress and to the town itself. The fury of the assaulting troops, as attested to in historical sources, was so great that even the Tsar's commanders could not contain their people who looted the town and often resorted to wanton killing of the soldiers from the local garrison and the inhabitants of Narva. This behaviour horrified the Tsar himself, who set out to stop his soldiers. The carnage must have been terrible, because having killed one Russian soldier, Peter I addressed the frightened members of the town council: "Do not be afraid! It's not Swedish, it's Russian blood."⁶⁶ This is also how the ruler was portrayed by N. Sauerweid. The charging Tsar, sword in hand, pushes his own people aside and resembles a defender of the scared inhabitants of Narva who beg for help, rather than a proud commander of the victorious army. The painter did not shy away from presenting the brutal behaviour of Russian soldiers.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ M. Grekov took part in World War I and then fought as a volunteer with the Red Army during the Civil War in Russia in 1917–1922. In his paintings, he documented the actions of the First Cavalry Army of Semyon Budyonny. As the founder of the Soviet genre of military art, he was famous for the following paintings: *The Trumpet Players of the First Cavalry* (1923) and *Tachanka* (1920), see: Греков М. 'Трубачи Первой Конной', http://nearyou.ru/100kartin/100karrt_92.html (access: 18.07.2017).

⁶⁶ J. Staehlin von Storcksburg, *Original Anecdotes of Peter the Great*, London, 1787, p. 49.

⁶⁷ Зауервейд, Николай Александрович (1782–1844). *Петр I усмиряет жесточенных солдат своих при взятии Нарвы в 1704 году*, <http://www.runivers.ru/today4.php?ID=63175> (access: 19.07.2017). An inhabitant of Narva presented in the central part of the painting, his shirt torn on the chest, trying to shield his family from the Russian soldiers, is assisted by Peter I (the author designed these two figures as corresponding to one another). This townsman is not an invented figure. Scenes such as the one presented in the painting were common both in the captured fortress and in the town. It can be illustrated by the memoirs left by one of the defenders: "On the day of the siege, although I was suffering from a fever, I went to the house of the city mayor Schwarz to join my troops; then, on the way there, I met fleeing townspeople who told me that the New Town [i.e. the New Narva – P.K.] had been captured by the Russians [...]. I quickly ran to the mayor's house and together with his wife [...] and lieutenant colonel Schlippenbach, the former commander of Nöteborg and a few others we barricaded ourselves downstairs. Hardly had we done it, when the Russians started banging at the door. Fortunately, they were led by a German major called Weid, who promised us a honorary surrender. We opened the door

A topic willingly explored by Russian marine painters was the successes of the “young” Russian navy operating on the Baltic Sea. It was still during the reign of Peter I that the first engravings were produced depicting the great victorious naval battle with the Swedish navy at the Hangö Udd peninsula (the author of this engraving and one presenting another sea battle in 1720 at Granhamn – the painting *The Battle of Granhamn* (1721) – was the Russian artist Alexei Zubov;⁶⁸ another special order was assigned to the French engraver Maurice Baquoi, whose engravings were created in 1724–1727). “The naval Poltava” – this is how this battle was dubbed, as it took place on the fifth anniversary of the defeat of the land army of Charles XII – became the subject matter for works by such painters as Lev Kamenev – *The Battle of Hangö Udd* (1857), Alexei Bogolyubov – *The Battle of Hangö Udd on 27 June 1714* (1877) or Peter Wagner – *The Battle of Hangö Udd* (1912). Although all these artists tried to be faithful to historical sources in depicting the clash of the Swedish ships with the numerous Russian galleys, it is the painting by A. Bogolyubov that seems to be the closest to the actual dynamics of the battle. The battle, apart from the central scene with a large Swedish ship fighting with smaller, yet more numerous Russian rowing boats, is emphasised by more Russian galleys coming from the right and the intense missiles crashing against the waves.⁶⁹ Exactly on the sixth anniversary of the battle of Hangö Udd and on the eleventh anniversary of the battle of Poltava, the Russian navy once again defeated the Swedish ships at Granhamn. This victory was the theme of the painting created by the French–Russian painter Ferdinand-Victor Perrot – *The Battle of Granhamn on 27 June 1720* (1841). The artist decided to present the main battle in the background, and what is more, he covered the scene with a perfectly painted Russian galley with soldiers ready to board the enemy’s ship. This trick made the galley in the foreground look like a ship of the line and its size is equal to the Swedish ships of this kind visible in the background. A fair number of such galleys took part in the battle, which is proved by the numerous masts with fluttering Russian navy ensigns looming in the distance. By making this type of the Russian vessels central to his painting, F.-A. Perrot conveyed a clear and important message to the viewers, just like other artists who painted the battle of Hangö Udd, that it was the galleys – agile and swiftly moving among the skerries – that was the key to the Russian success on the Baltic Sea.⁷⁰

and once we saw the Russians, we were terrified, but the major kept his promise and thank [God – P.K.] the Almighty, we were saved. I survived, having lost all of my possessions, which were seized by the Russians; all I was left with was my old shirt”. Quoted from: H.J. Hansen, *Geschichte der Stadt Narva*, Dorpat, 1858, pp. 219–220.

⁶⁸ Н.И. Глинка, *Беседы о русском искусстве. XVIII век*, СПб., 2001, pp. 21–23.

⁶⁹ Ф. Перро. *Сражение при Гренгаме 27 июля 1720 года. 1841 год*, <http://www.runivers.ru/Runivers/calendar2.php?ID=61623&month=&year=> (access: 18.07.2017).

⁷⁰ Фердинанд-Виктор Перро. *Сражение при Гренгаме 27 июля 1720. 1841*, <https://regnum.ru/pictures/2177574/11.html> (access: 21.06.2017).

It is worth mentioning that in 1710, during the war with Sweden, Peter I also commenced military action against Turkey. The military expedition started in 1717 and ended at the Pruth river. The army led by the Tsar was surrounded by Turkish and Tatar forces, which outnumbered them and forced them to retreat. Peter I avoided being seized as a prisoner once he gave up the previously gained territories. Azov, conquered in 1696, and other strongholds in the south were now going back to Turkey.⁷¹ This is how the Russian expansion towards the Black Sea was stalled until the second half of the 18th century.⁷² An attempt to address this undoubtedly “difficult” military episode, namely the so-called Danube expedition (also known as the Pruth expedition) of Peter I, which ended in a defeat, was made by the Russian painter Mikhail Ivanov. His relatively small painting (49.4 × 70.6 cm) *Peter I at the Pruth River*, which is part of the collection at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, presents the Russian military camp surrounded by enemy. Among the tents one can see bustling and negotiating soldiers, but the viewer will immediately notice the enthroned Tsar, who is handing over a letter to one of his collaborators, Vice-Chancellor Peter Shafiroff, to authorise him to commence peace talks with the Turks.⁷³ The painter intentionally decided not to present the battle scene by concentrating on the heroic attitude of the soldiers defending their camp, which is incidentally attested to in the sources; instead, he preferred to give a more moderate account of the events that took place at the Pruth River. In agreeing to the negotiations, Peter I comes across as a ruler who values peace, yet decides to remain together with his soldiers in the military camp surrounded by enemy. The fight with the attacking Turkish army is evidenced by billows of smoke visible in the distance.

The Russian and Swedish war in the years 1700–1721 is doubtless one of the most important periods in the history of 18th-century Russia. However, another major European conflict with the involvement of the Tsar’s armed forces, mainly the land forces, proved to be equally important. It took place in the mid-18th century. During the conflict known as the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763), the Tsar’s

⁷¹ The Princes Czartoryski Library in Kraków, *Relacya o bataliey [...] [Piotra Wielkiego] cara [...] z woyskiem tureckiem [...] pod Falczq [...]*, 30 VI 1711, manuscript 1687, IV, pp. 471–474; *Relacya attackowania Braiła*, 12 VIII 1711, manuscript 1687, IV, pp. 475–476; *Relacya o powodzeniu, które było w armji [...] cara [...] Piotra W. [...] z Turkami y postanowionym wiecznym pokoju*, 30 V 1711, manuscript 1684, V, pp. 653–656; A. Quennerstedt, “Vid Prut”, *Karolinska Förbundets Årsbok 1710 (1711)*, pp. 166–204; *Полное собрание законов Российской Империи* (hereinafter: ПСЗРИ), vol. 4, no. 2398. According to W. Artamonov, the Russian army that took part in the expedition was not defeated in the battle with the enemy, and the heroic attitude of its soldiers guaranteed its safe return to their homeland, see: В.А. Артамонов, *Дунайский поход Петра I: Русская армия в 1711 г. не была побеждена*, Москва, 2015, passim.

⁷² P. Krokosz, “Morze Czarne w strategicznych planach Piotra I”, in: *REGIONES EUXINUM SPEC-TANTES. Stosunki kulturowe, etniczne i religijne na przestrzeni dziejów*, eds. Ł. Głędek, T. Krzyżowski, M. Michalski, Kraków, 2012, pp. 289–305.

⁷³ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, p. 34.

army managed to defeat, although not without considerable difficulty, the army of the Prussian King Frederic II, which was at the time regarded as an unmatched military power. Despite its spectacular military successes, the Russian Empire gained no territories in this conflict. What remained, though, was the glory of the Russian military power, immortalised by none other than A. Kotzebue. The valour and success of the Tsar's army were the main theme of the series of six large paintings created in 1849–1852: *The Battle of Gross-Jägersdorf*, *The Battle of Zorndorf*, *The Battle of Züllichau*, *The Battle of Kunersdorf*, *The Capture of Berlin by the Russian Army on 28 September 1760*, *The Fall of the Kolberg Fortress on 5 December 1761*.⁷⁴ The first four paintings focused on the key battles: three of them – Gross-Jägersdorf in East Prussia (1757); Züllichau (1759) and Kunersdorf (1759) – ended in Russian victory (the last one was fought together with the allied Austrian forces), while the battle of Zorndorf (1758) was indecisive. The latter two paintings do not present the classic theme of clanging armour and roaring cannons; the Tsar's soldiers have already done their duty and their objective has been achieved. On 5 December 1761 the last of the great Russian victories in this war took place – after an incredibly difficult siege, supported by the Russian navy, the city of Kolberg finally surrendered. The credit for capturing this strongly fortified stronghold was given to General Peter Rumyantsev, but most of all to the heroic attitude of rank and file soldiers, who patiently suffered the inconveniences of war (such as a dramatic shortage of food).⁷⁵ A. Kotzebue in no way tried to avoid presenting the hardships of soldiers' life – exhaustion, wounds and expectation for the long-awaited success. All this was shown in the foreground and juxtaposed with the joy of the general commanders on receiving the news about the surrender. A similar tone can be observed in the painting titled *The Capture of Berlin by the Russian Army on 28 September 1760*. It shows the meeting of the Russian army with the authorities and inhabitants of Berlin on the day when the Prussian capital surrendered without a fight. The theme addressed by the author departs from the classic military representations; instead, it presents the peaceful march of the allied Russian and Austrian forces led into the town by General-Field Marshal Zakharii Chernyshev, General Gottlob Totleben and Field Marshal Count Franz Moritz von Lacy.⁷⁶ In the foreground the viewer will see the people of Berlin, running in various directions, and individual Russian and Austrian soldiers. This crowd of civilians and soldiers pushes the commanders of the allied forces to the background, as they march in the central part of the painting, accepting the surrender of Berlin. This tone of the meeting between the triumphant army and the

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 100.

⁷⁵ М.Ю. Анисимов, “Россияне против прусских крепостей в Семилетнюю войну 1756–1763 гг. По документами мемуарам”, in: *Twierdze osiemnastowiecznej Europy. Studia z dziejów nowożytnej sztuki wojskowej*, ed. M. Trąbski, Oświęcim, 2016, pp. 223–241.

⁷⁶ The last of these – F. Moritz von Lacy – was the son of a Russian General-Field Marshal Peter Lacy, but started his military career in Austria.

defeated nation is only seemingly peaceful. On the left, in front of a high building, A. Kotzebue painted the Russian cavalry clad in formal dress and formed in close order: the scene may resemble a military parade, but it is evident that the soldiers can be seen as a force which may be deployed at any time to suppress any signs of disobedience.⁷⁷

After the end of the exhausting Seven Years' War, the Tsar's soldiers had only a few years of respite from the fighting. In 1768, another war with Turkey started (1768–1774), whereby the Russian armed forces were involved both on land and in the Mediterranean Sea. The important victories of the Russian navy were presented in 1848 by the most renowned Russian marine painter Ivan Aivazovsky. In March 1770, the naval squadron led by Admiral Grigory Spiridov separated from the main body of Russian naval forces operating in the Mediterranean Sea and with a landing force on board sailed towards the Turkish fortress of Navarino, which was ultimately captured in the following month. These operations were illustrated by the artist in the painting titled *The Battle of Navarino* (1848). A great triumph of the Russian navy was the naval battle that took place in the same year and was fought with the Turkish ships in Chesma Bay. This clash was described by the Russian historian Fyodor Veselago: "During the military council that took place at the General Commander's headquarters with the participation of the ship commanders and captains, a decision was made to assault the enemy's navy and burn it down. Four fire-ships were immediately armed to prepare them for the attack under the command of [Samuel – P.K.] Greig, to which four war ships were allocated together with two frigates and a bombardier ship. The order issued by the General Commander on this occasion was as follows: "Our action must be firm with a view to defeating and destroying that fleet without undue delay."⁷⁸ The Russian attack on the Turkish ships in Chesma Bay started as planned, at midnight on 25/26 June 1770. The "first one was Captain Klokachev with his ship, *Europe*, and for the next half an hour all the enemy's cannons were firing at them [...]. At two, two Turkish ships caught fire and they burnt one after the other. On our ships we could hear victorious cheering"⁷⁹ The commanders of the Russian fire-ships did their duty and got near the enemy ships with an impressive pluck, joined their vessels to them and set the enemy's ships on fire (afterwards, the crew left the burning fire-ships in lifeboats). Soon nearly all the Turkish navy was on fire. The fire spread from one ship to another. The burning vessels were exploding one by one and there were bodies of enemies strewn on the shores and in the bay itself. The Turks who managed to escape from the burning ships held on to the floating parts of their vessels and drifted on the waves in the bay.

⁷⁷ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, р. 99.

⁷⁸ Ф. Веселаго, *Краткая история русского флота (с начала развития мореплавания до 1825 года)*, Москва–Ленинград, 1939, р. 98.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

The victory of the Russians was overwhelming – the Sultan’s navy was destroyed: 15 war ships, 6 frigates and nearly 50 smaller vessels burnt down. The Russians suffered only minimum losses – it was only *Europa* that was hit fourteen times: nine soldiers were wounded and killed.⁸⁰ That night attack by the Russian navy was perfectly depicted by I. Aivazovsky on the painting titled *The Battle of Chesma on the night from 25 to 26 June 1770* (1848). The artist presented the key moment of those events – in the distance one can see the Turkish ships as they burn and sink, while in the foreground is the Russian ship of the line *Three Hierarchs*, and a nearing lifeboat with the soldiers from the fire-ship of Captain Dmitry Ilyin.⁸¹ It is worth noting that I. Aivazovsky was the first painter to tackle the theme of the battle of Chesma Bay. Long before that, almost immediately after the battle, Empress Catherine II ordered two paintings from the German artist Jakob Philipp Hackert – *The destruction of the Turkish fleet in the Battle of Chesma* – which illustrated the heroic attitude of the marines and soldiers of the imperial navy. In 1771, the two works painted by Hackert were ready, based on the accounts of those who took part in the battle, i.a. Count Alexei Orlov, Admirals G. Spiridov, S. Greig and other officers. When the German painter said, before commencing his work, that he had never seen a burning or exploding ship, a special “theatrum” was organised for him in the Italian harbour of Livorno – Catherine II allowed for one of her ships – *Saint Barbara* – to be blown up. Although there are certain simplifications in the paintings, they are fairly realistic in their presentation of the battle (they are kept at the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg). Both paintings by J. Hackert may be treated as works of art and great historical sources as regards naval battles.⁸²

The 1768–1774 war with Turkey was not the last conflict between the two countries in the 18th century. The Ottoman Empire could never accept the loss of its land, mainly the loss of the Crimean Khanate, which was seized by Russia in 1783. Another Russian–Turkish war started in 1787 (1787–1791): it was shorter than the previous conflict, but it was also won by Russia. During this conflict, the commander of the land forces A. Suvorov had an opportunity to demonstrate his commanding skills. His first major success was the crushing of the enemy forces

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 99. See also: “О сожжении турецкого флота при Чесме. (Из историографа Оттоманской империи Ахмеда Вассафа Эфенди)”, in: *Труды летописи Общества истории древностей российских*, vol. 7, Москва, 1837, pp. 114–119.

⁸¹ *Чесменский бой, Айвазовский – описание картины*, https://muzei-mira.com/kartini_russkikh_hudojnikov/2005-chesmenskiy-boy-ayvazovskiy-opisanie-kartiny.html (access: 19.07.2017); *Гармония сражений: морские бои Айвазовского. Чесменский бой в ночь с 25 на 26 июня 1770 года. 1848. Феодосийская картинная галерея им. Айвазовского*, <https://www.culture.ru/materials/127248/garmoniya-srazheniy-morskies-boi-ayvazovskogo> (access: 19.07.2017).

⁸² Н.Н. Семенович, “Картина Якоба Филиппа Хаккерта ‘Гибель турецкого флота в Чесменском бою’ (‘Сожженный флот’)”, *Сообщения Государственного Эрмитажа*, 49 (1984), pp. 18–20; В.Н. Филас, “И.К. Айвазовский против Я.Ф. Хаккерта, Подходы к интерпретации Чесменского сражения”, *Военно-исторический журнал* (hereinafter: ВИЖ), 7 (2015), pp. 62–66.

on 1 October 1787 at Kinburn. The military campaign in the following year ended with a spectacular success, namely the capture of Ochakiv. The nearly half-year siege of this strongly fortified fortress near the mouth of the Dnieper at the Black Sea, ended on 6 December 1788.⁸³ The General Commander, Prince Grigory Potemkin, having considered the unfavourable position of his army, which made no progress over the past few months, finally decided to attack. Before the operation, he spoke to his soldiers: “We cannot leave; there is no wood, no bread, we can either conquer Ochakiv or die. Tomorrow is the day of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, the defender of Russia, which is why we will attack tomorrow”.⁸⁴ The Russians attacked with a great fury and after a fierce fight they conquered Ochakiv, although it was not easy, because “the Turks fought desperately in this clash and they would not surrender to be taken as prisoners; our soldiers did not spare them, therefore there were 283 Turkish officers and 8,370 soldiers killed; furthermore, 1,140 people died of injuries and no more than 4,000 prisoners were taken”. Russian losses involved nearly 1,000 dead and more than 1,800 injured. In the fortress itself, a considerable stock of firearms was seized (including 310 cannons) as well as numerous treasures: gold, pearls, silverware and precious fabric.⁸⁵ In 1789, the Russian army and the allied Austrian forces won several other important fights with the Turks. S. Suvorov showed his valour i.a. on 21 July 1789 at Focşan and on 11 September at the Rymnik river. The Russian forces captured the Turkish strongholds one by one: Khadjibey, Akkerman, and Bender. Other important victories followed in 1790 as more and more strongholds surrendered on land: Kiliya, Tulcea, Isaccea and Izmail, while on the Black Sea, Counter Admiral Fyodor Ushakow was victorious in the battle of Kerch Strait (8 July), Cape Kaliakra (31 July) and Tendra (28–29 August). Military operations ended when a peace treaty was signed on 29 December 1791 in Jassy, which confirmed that the territory of the Crimean Khanate now belonged to the Russian Empire and the border between the two countries was now on the Dniester river. The position of Russia in the Caucasus, where the border with Turkey ran along the Kuban River, was also strengthened at the time. Furthermore, the Ottoman Empire withdrew its claims to the Georgian lands (which were soon incorporated into Russia).⁸⁶

The Russian–Turkish war in 1787–1791 considerably strengthened the presence of Russia at the Black Sea. Catherine II did realise the importance of that success. It was probably in the early 1790s that she commissioned paintings from the French

⁸³ *Семь собственноручных писем записок Князя Г.А. Потемкина-Таврического к Графу П.А. Румянцову-Задунайскому (1769–1788)*, introd. by А. Барсуков, СПб., 1902, no. 7, pp. 6–7.

⁸⁴ Ф. Смитт, *Суворови падение Польши. Сочинение Фридриха фон-Смитта. Переведено с немецкого и издано при совещательном Комитете Главного Штаба, под редакцією Генерального Штаба Генерала-Лейтенанта князя Голицына*, vol. 1, СПб., 1866, p. 217.

⁸⁵ Р.И. Правиков, *Краткая история 10-го Гренадерского Малороссийского полка*, Моршанск, 1889, p. 44.

⁸⁶ ПСЗРИ, vol. 23, СПб., 1830, no. 17008.

artist of Italian origin Francesco Casanova related to the conflict and highlighting the victories of the Tsar's navy.⁸⁷ The works he created – *The Siege of the Ochakiv Fortress in 1788* and *The Capture of Izmail in 1790* – were subsequently a direct inspiration for other artists who praised the Russian military power. In 1792, the German painter Adam von Bartsch prepared an engraving illustrating the siege of Ochakiv based on F. Casanova's work.⁸⁸ In the mid-19th century, another painting was created, equally expressive as the previous ones, presenting the siege of the fortress. The author of this work was January Suchodolski, a famous Polish painter of battle scenes and officer involved in the November Uprising. The monumental work by the Polish artist (size: 235 × 345 cm), which is now part of the permanent exhibition at the Military Historical Museum of Artillery, Engineers and Signal Corps in Saint Petersburg, draws the viewer's attention because of the way in which the culmination of the siege of Ochakiv is presented. In the foreground one can see the fight for one of the fortress's bastions. The Turks who are inside resist the Russian troops as they try to make their way into the bastion from all sides. The resistance is futile, though, as we can see from the explosion in the neighbouring bastion and the fact that the Russians do find the way into the fortress in the end, as presented in the background. The painting by J. Suchodolski titled *The siege of Ochakiv on 6 December 1788* differs from the previous works illustrating this event in that the author did not try to present the whole scope of the siege, but focused on one specific place of resistance. The fight for the bastion – showing the impetus of the attackers and the attitude of the soldiers defending themselves – is supposed to symbolise the fierce battle for the fortress as a whole.⁸⁹

An event just as spectacular as the siege of Ochakiv was the capture of the Izmail fortress in December 1790. This strategically significant stronghold was defended by 42,000 soldiers of the Sultan.⁹⁰ This success, which was possible also thanks to A. Suvorov, who was in charge of the operation, also became a theme of military

⁸⁷ А. Булгакова, “Франческо Джузеппе Казанова”, *Мир искусств*, 3 (2013), p. 176. Working studies for these paintings are kept in the Albertina art gallery in Vienna.

⁸⁸ ВЭ, vol. 10, p. 393; Великая Екатерина. Каталог выставки ‘Великая Екатерина’ в выставочном центре ‘Эрмитаж – Выборг’ 16 июня 2010 года – 7 февраля 2011 года, ed. (catalogue) Е.В. Дианова, СПб., 2010, pp. 21, 56; Казанова, Франческо Джузеппе. 1727–1802, *Взятие Измаила*, <https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.+Paintings/32627/?lng=ru> (access: 10.07.2017); Барч, Адам фон. 1757–1821, *Штурм русскими войсками крепости Очаков*, <http://testmain.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/04.+Engraving/1512671/?lng=ru/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/25.%20Archaeological%20Artifacts/1026129/?lng=ru> (access: 10.07.2017); *Штурм Очакова 6 декабря 1788 года*, http://www.runivers.ru/gal/gallery-all.php?SECTION_ID=7093&ELEMENT_ID=476441 (access: 10.07.2017).

⁸⁹ *Штурм Очакова 6 декабря 1788 года*, http://www.runivers.ru/gal/gallery-all.php?SECTION_ID=7072&ELEMENT_ID=585012 (access: 10.07.2017).

⁹⁰ А.В. Суворов, *Жизнь Суворова им самим описанная, или собрание писем и сочинений его, изданных с примечаниями Сергеем Глинкою*, vol. 1, СПб., 1819, pp. 117–138; Ф. Смитт, *Суворови падение Польши.*, Приложение, pp. 355–358 [*Диспозиции к штурму Измаила*].

paintings. In this case, F. Casanova was only one of the subsequent authors, and what is more, he had not witnessed this event.⁹¹ The moment of attack from land and sea was witnessed by the Russian painter Mikhail Ivanov, who was at that time a member of the staff of the General Commander G. Potemkin.⁹² The efforts of the Russian forces were shown in two of his paintings (one of them, previously described as *The Siege of the Ochakiv Fortress*, has been identified as the siege of Izmail following a careful analysis of the landscape and the construction of the fortress presented in the painting) titled *The Storming of Izmail on 11 December 1790*. Both paintings are kept in the classic battle-painting style; they are panoramic – in one of them, the author focused on the storming launched on land, while in the other one he showed the attack from the Danube river.⁹³

Both wars, the one in 1768–1774 and the subsequent conflict in 1787–1791, fought by Russia with the Ottoman Empire, ended in great success of the former. Military paintings created during these wars or immediately afterwards underlined the range of the victories of the land army and the navy. For Catherine II, however, the artistic expression of paintings documenting individual clashes with the enemy was not sufficient to capture the real power of the Russian Empire. The Empress commissioned paintings which praised the triumphs of the Russian military power in an allegorical manner as well as the grandeur of the state and its rulers. One of such works is a painting by a German portrait artist working in Russia, Heinrich Buchholtz, titled *Allegory of the Victory of the Russian Fleet over the Turks in the Turkish War of 1768–1774* (1777). This relatively small painting (size: 75 × 127.2 cm), presenting a scene set in the centre of Saint Petersburg, abounds in the symbols of the grandeur of Russia. On the left, in the clouds, one can see Peter I (the founder of the Russian navy) in the uniform of the Preobrazhensky Regiment with the ribbon of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle the First-Called. Additionally, above the ruler's head is a halo of stars, his shoulders covered by

⁹¹ In the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg is one of the most famous paintings by an artist whose identity has not been determined as yet, devoted to this event and titled *The Storming of Izmail on 11 December 1790* (end of the 18th century). The painting presents the attack of the Russian troops, who assault the fortress from land and sea. See: *Великая Екатерина...*, pp. 23, 56.

⁹² Э.Г. Швеиц, Е.А. Солодова, “Виды местностей’ как изобразительный документ военных и научных экспедиций. Михаил Матвеевич Иванов”, *Таврический научный обозреватель* 2 (2016), p. 143; Т. Шорохова, “Родоначальник крымского пейзажа. Михаил Матвеевич Иванов – художник-баталист при генеральном штабе”, *Берега Тавриды* 1 (2016), pp. 202–203.

⁹³ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, pp. 31–35; Э.Г. Швеиц, Е.А. Солодова, “Виды местностей’...”, p. 144; Т. Шорохова, *Родоначальник крымского пейзажа...*, pp. 202–203; *Штурм на все времена*, http://историк.рф/week_picture/%D1%88%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%BC-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0/ (access: 21.06.2017). Coordinated operations of the Russian troops (the land troops and the navy) at Izmail were presented in a markedly realistic manner in an engraving by the military artist Samuel Chiffart. The work was created on the basis of a drawing by M. Ivanov.

an ermine cloak with a pattern composed of black two-headed eagles. Above the Tsar is the figure of Chronos emerging from among the clouds. The mythological god of time is facing Peter I; in one hand he is holding an hourglass, while his other hand is pointing towards a representation of Glory, hovering nearby in the clouds. Glory is holding a portrait of Catherine II and a map of the Crimean Peninsula and the Black Sea. Among the clouds one can also see a temple of Glory, while below is the centre of the Russian capital: the bank of the Neva and the Admiralty building, which had the function of a shipyard and was one of the fortresses of Petersburg,⁹⁴ and the navy ships in construction placed in its yard. Next to the Admiralty building, the artist painted the famous monument of Peter I on horseback, funded by Catherine II and made by the French sculptor Étienne-Maurice Falconet (*The Bronze Horseman*).⁹⁵ The most prominent military accent of this painting, apart from the ship of the line on the Neva River, is the parade of the Russian troops along a pontoon bridge. The soldiers heading for the bridge are carrying trophies and Turkish prisoners of war captured during the battle of Chesma; they walk past the monument of Peter I and as they do so, they salute the statue by lowering the surrendered banners to the ground.⁹⁶ All these elements have a specific meaning and the work as a whole has one clear message to convey – Peter I is the creator of the mighty Russian navy (as well as of the army and Petersburg itself), and Catherine II continues his “imperial testament”.

In 1791, the Empress commissioned a series of paintings related to the recently finished war with Turkey from Andreas Kaspar Hüne (Hühne), another German painter, who came to live in Russia in 1785. The paintings were supposed to illustrate military operations and the annexation of Crimea. A. Hüne completed his

⁹⁴ The Admiralty building established in 1704 – the shipyard of the Russian navy – should be treated as one of the Saint Petersburg fortresses due to the type of fortifications: ramparts with bastions, palisades, a drawbridge, and a moat filled with water, secured by *chevaux de frise*. In 1703–1705, a German architect working for the Tsar, Wilhelm Adam Kristenstein, developed a design of bastion fortifications for the Admiralty building. It should be underlined that the facility surrounded by strong fortifications retained its defensive character for the whole of the 18th century (bastion fortifications are clearly visible on the city plans from that century); see: С.П. Лупшов, *История строительства Петербурга в первой четверти XVIII века*, Москва–Ленинград, 1957, pp. 18–19; А.М. Шарымов, *Предыстория Санкт-Петербурга. 1703 год. Книга исследований*, СПб., 2009, p. 572; *Акт по результатам государственной историко-культурной экспертизы проектной документации на проведение работ по сохранению объекта культурного наследия федерального значения «Главное Адмиралтейство» (Санкт-Петербург, Адмиралтейский пр.1, литера А)...*, pp. 36–39, <http://kgiop.gov.spb.ru/media/uploads/userfiles/2016/03/21/1796.pdf> (access: 1.10.2017).

⁹⁵ The monument of Peter I was unveiled only in 1782, i.e. five years after the painting was created. However, before this date, a cast of the monument made by É.-M. Falconet was known, which was probably used by H. Buchholtz as a model while painting this work.

⁹⁶ *Великая Екатерина...*, pp. 30–31. H. Buchholtz was also involved in the work on the mosaics by M. Lomonosov – *The Battle of Poltava* and *The Taking of Azov in 1696* (the latter work was never completed).

task and produced i.a. the following paintings: *Catherine II Placing the Trophies from the Battle of Chesma on the Tomb of Peter the Great* (1791), *The Wealth of Russia* (1791), *Tauris Accepts the Law of the Russian Empire* (1789).⁹⁷ The first of these paintings has a peculiar quality to it: the artist painted Catherine II standing in front of the tomb of Peter I, which in fact does not exist, and presenting the enemy's banners taken at Chesma. The Empress is accompanied by the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church and court dignitaries, among whom one can see the conqueror of the Turkish navy, Alexander Orlov. The main message of this entirely allegorical work is clear – just like it was in the case of the painting by H. Buchholtz, Catherine II is a continuator of the policy initiated by her great predecessor of strengthening the state and expanding its borders.⁹⁸

Sweden wished to take advantage of the involvement of Russia in the south in order to regain its lost territories and in 1788 the Swedes started military operations on land and at sea. The conflict took place in 1788–1790 and ended with the Russian victory. The most famous historical events include the naval battles as a result of which Sweden suffered enormous losses. These successes were immortalised by Russian marine painters, i.a. A. Bogolyubov and I. Aivazovsky. The former painted the same episode twice, in 1845 and 1851: the operations of the Russian sail and oar ship *Mercury* – *The Russian cutter Mercury captures the Swedish frigate Venus on 21 May 1789*.⁹⁹ A. Bogolyubov is also the author of paintings

⁹⁷ The paintings – just like other works of art created in that period – were closely related to the foreign policy of Catherine II as regards the territories of southern Europe. Extensive imperial plans of the Empress were devised in the second half of the 1770s and were later known as “The Greek Plan”. According to the Plan, Turkey was supposed to be driven out of Europe and the regained eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula and the land surrounding the Aegean Sea was supposed to become an “empire” for Constantine – the second grandson of Catherine II born in 1779, who received a name that was unconventional for the Tsar’s family, yet famous in the history of Byzantium. Moldova and Wallachia were supposed to form a buffer country referred to as “Dacia”. The western part of the Balkan Peninsula was to fall into the Austrian sphere of influence. For more about the implications of the imperial policy on Russian art during the reign of Catherine II, see: Т.А. Литвин, “Греческий проект’ Екатерины Пи стиль gout грес в русском декоративно-прикладном искусстве последней четверти XVIII в., *Вестник Ленинградского государственного университета и.м. А.С. Пушкина. Научный журнал*, series: История, no. 4, vol. 4, СПб., 2013, p. 117.

⁹⁸ ‘Эрмитаж – Выборг’ 16 июня 2010 года – 7 февраля 2011 года, p. 32–33; Гюне, Андреас Каспар. 1749–1813. Екатерина II возлагает Чесменские трофеи на гробницу Петра Великого, <https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.+Paintings/173088/?lng=ru> (access: 15.06.2017). Paintings related to the battle of Chesma were also created immediately after the end of the Russian–Turkish war by the English painter Richard Paton. The works ordered by the Tsar’s diplomat in London, Alexei Musin-Pushkin, were delivered to the Winter Palace in October 1772. In 1777, they were used as the basis for engravings representing these battles, prepared by James Mason, Pierre-Charles Canot and William Watts, see: ‘Эрмитаж – Выборг’..., pp. 50–53.

⁹⁹ Г.А. Гребенщикова, “Славный Венус в легкости хода не имел себе равного”, ВИЖ 7 (2015), pp. 34–37; *Захват катером Меркурий шведского фрегата Венус 21 мая 1789 года. 1845,*

representing the decisive naval battles of that war – *The Battle of Revel on 2 May 1790* (1860) and *The Battle of Krasnogorsk on 23–24 May 1790* (1866). In the first of these battles, the Swedish flotilla, composed of 22 ships of line, four frigates and four smaller vessels, attacked the squadron of Vice-Admiral Vasily Chichagov, composed of ten ships of line, five frigates and many smaller vessels, all of which were moored near Revel. After two hours of cross-fire, the Swedes retreated into the sea, having lost two ships of line – they had to burn one of these themselves, while the other one was severely damaged and was seized by the Russians along with the crew of 520 people.¹⁰⁰ The other battle (also known as the Kronstadt battle) took place near Kronstadt (the name was taken from the village of Krasnaya Gorka), when at the end of May more than thirty Swedish ships made an attempt to launch a direct attack at Saint Petersburg. The raid was stopped by Vice-Admiral Alexander Kruse who started a brave assault with his own ships.¹⁰¹ One of the greatest naval battles in the history of Russian sea battles on the Baltic Sea took place a month later in the Bay of Vyborg. Admiral V. Chichagov blocked the enormous fleet of the enemy, composed of more than 400 large and small vessels commanded by King Gustav III, which appeared at Vyborg in order to regain it from the Russians. The situation seemed to have reached a stalemate – the Swedes blocked the Vyborg garrison, yet at the same time they were blocked by the Tsar’s navy. The prolonged stalemate placed the Swedes at a disadvantage, so Gustav III made a decision to break through the enemy lines formed by V. Chichagov’s ships. These actions led to a clash with the Russians. As a result of the battle of Vyborg, the Swedes lost as many as 64 ships, of which seven ships of line and two frigates; there were 200 killed soldiers and between 5,000 and 7,000 were taken captive.¹⁰² The latter clash was presented by I. Aivazovsky in the painting titled *The Naval Battle of Vyborg on 29 June 1790* (1846).¹⁰³ The artist captured the culmination point, or the final phase of the battle, when the Russian ships attacked the Swedish

Боголюбов Алексей Петрович, http://www.artcyclopedia.ru/zahvat_katerom_merkurij_shvedskogo_fregata_venus_21_maya_1789_goda_1845-bogolyubov_aleksej_petrovich.htm (access: 21.06.2017); *Захват катером Меркурий шведского фрегата Венус 21 мая 1789 года. 1851*, Боголюбов Алексей Петрович, http://www.artcyclopedia.ru/zahvat_katerom_merkurij_shvedskogo_fregata_venus_21_maya_1789_goda_1851-bogolyubov_aleksej_petrovich.htm (access: 21.06.2017).

¹⁰⁰ *Боевая летопись русского флота. Хроника важнейших событий военной истории русского флота с IX в. по 1917 г.*, ed. Н.В. Новиков, Москва, 1948, pp. 136–137.

¹⁰¹ А.Г. Брикнер, *Война России с Швецией в 1788–1790*, СПб., 1869, pp. 235–247; Ф. Веселаго, *Краткая история русского флота*, pp. 141–143.

¹⁰² А.Г. Брикнер, *Война России с Швецией в 1788–1790*, pp. 248–256; *Боевая летопись...*, pp. 141–142; А.А. Лебедев, “Выборгское сражение 1790 г. в свете известного, но ‘неудобного’ источника”, in: *Санкт-Петербург страны Северной Европы: Материалы Пятнадцатой ежегодной международной научной конференции (16–17 апреля 2013 г.)*, eds. В.Н. Барышников, П.А. Крогов, СПб., 2014, pp. 106–116.

¹⁰³ И.К. Айвазовский. ‘Морское сражение при Выборге 29 июня 1790 года’, <http://nearyou.ru/aivazovsk/46viborg.html> (access: 19.06.2017).

galleys as they were following their own ships of line sailing in an avant-garde formation. In the same year, the artists also painted a work devoted to the earlier battle of Revel – *The Naval Battle of Revel on 2 May 1790* (1846).¹⁰⁴

Still in the late 18th century, the Russian army had to engage in military operations far from the borders of their country. In 1799, Tsar Paul I sent his troops to western European countries in order to support those that opposed the Revolution in France. A. Suvorov once again played an important role – his resounding fame was praised not only at Europe's royal courts, but also in Europe at large. These successes were possible thanks to the great talent of the greatest Russian commander, which was also underlined by the Polish historian Szymon Askenazy: "He was loved by his soldiers; there was none other who could incite and take full advantage of the blind, obedient and irrational heroism of Russian soldiers. He was merciless, valiant, alert, quick; under the pretence of foolery he was hiding his cunning nature. He was full of inexhaustible energy, although at the same time old and tormented by a nasty disease. He was continuously looking for fame, both for himself and for the Russian state. He was the first one to carry the Russian military power so far, to the cradle of Western culture".¹⁰⁵ In this context special attention should be paid to the cycle of paintings devoted to Suvorov's campaigns created by a previously mentioned artist, A. Kotzebue. In order to present the clashes with the involvement of the Russian army in a realistic manner, the painter journeyed to Italy and Switzerland in 1852–1853. Once he had walked the "Suvorov's trail", he returned to his workshop in Munich and created an important series of paintings praising the Russian military power. In 1858, he brought three of his works to Russia. In these paintings Suvorov is not present at all – *The Battle of the Muotathal Valley* (1855), or is shown in the background – *The Battle of Novi* (1858) and *General Suvorov traversing the Saint Gotthard Pass* (1857–1858).¹⁰⁶ Over the next three years (1858–1860), another three paintings were created: *The Battle on the Trebia River*, *The Army of Alexander Suvorov crossing St Gotthard Pass on 13 September 1799* and *Suvorov Crossing Panix Pass in the Alps on 25 September 1799*. From that cycle of six paintings, two were devoted to the Italian campaign – *The Battle of Novi* and *The Battle on the Trebia River* – while the other four referred to the famous Swiss campaign when A. Suvorov's troops bravely broke through the passes in the Alps guarded by French soldiers. The most vivid painting of the cycle is *General Suvorov traversing Saint Gotthard Pass*. The commander is sitting on a white horse and is visible only in the background of the mountain battle. A. Kotzebue presented the Russian soldiers as the main heroes of this painting. The work is also a perfect iconographic source. In the foreground

¹⁰⁴ Айвазовский Иван Константинович. 'Морское сражение при Ревеле 2 мая 1790', http://www.runivers.ru/gal/gallery-all.php?SECTION_ID=7072&ELEMENT_ID=206874 (access: 19.07.2017).

¹⁰⁵ S. Askenazy, *Napoleon a Polska*, vol. 3, Warszawa–Kraków, 1919, p. 91.

¹⁰⁶ The last painting, shown in the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, is also known under a different title: *The Battle in St Gotthard Pass on 14 September 1799*.

(on the left) the author presented the fighting style of Russian *Jägers* (light riflemen); individual soldiers are involved in the subsequent stages of preparations for firing their rifles: they help one another in taking a convenient shooting position, bite open a shot of gunpowder and load their gun, and ultimately fire.¹⁰⁷ Direct clashes with the enemy were only minor episodes of the complicated operation of crossing the Alps. The march along the precipitous slopes was no less dangerous and cumbersome. It should be underlined that before commencing this task A. Suvorov developed a special scheme to facilitate the army's passage through the high mountains.¹⁰⁸ The marching order, exhaustion and aid offered to wounded soldiers became the theme of the painting titled *The Army of Alexander Suvorov crossing St Gotthard Pass on 13 September 1799* (1859).¹⁰⁹

A. Kotzebue was not the only Russian painter who addressed the theme of A. Suvorov's Swiss campaign. Also V. Surikov painted the commander as he led his troops through dangerous passages in the Alps. In the painting titled *Suvorov Crossing the Alps* (1899) the artist presented the Russian troops walking firmly down a mountain crest with General-Field Marshal showing the way. The road downwards is dangerous in itself (one of the soldiers is raising his hand to make the sign of the cross), but the proximity of the elderly commander, who shares the hardships of the campaign with his people, inspires joy and trust, which can be seen in the radiant and smiling faces of the two soldiers in the middle of the group.¹¹⁰ In the early 20th century, the theme was also addressed by the Russian military painter Alexei Popov, who presented an episode from the Swiss campaign in his painting titled *The Army of Suvorov crossing Rosstock Pass (Swiss Alps) on 17 September 1799* (1904). It was not an easy task, because the author had to rise to the challenge posed by the scenes immortalised by A. Kotzebue and V. Surikov. The preparations for the painting were related to a special occasion: establishing a special museum devoted to A. Suvorov in Saint Petersburg. The façade of the building was supposed to be adorned with two large mosaics related to Suvorov's accomplishments – one of them, by A. Popov, was to present the passage of the Russian army through the Alps. First of all, however, a painting had to be prepared, which was to be used as a model for the mosaic. To this end, the artist made a special trip to Switzerland, to see the topography of the Alps himself. In 1904, the military mosaic was already on the wall of the Suvorov Memorial Museum, which means that the painting was probably ready a year earlier, although it was officially presented only in 1907 (in the meantime, it may have been reworked

¹⁰⁷ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, pp. 103–104.

¹⁰⁸ “9 [20] сентября 1799. Правила А.В. Суворова для горной войны”, in: *Генералиссимус Суворов. Сборник документов и материалов*, ed. Н.М. Коробков, Ленинград, 1949, no. 143, pp. 295–297.

¹⁰⁹ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталисты XVIII–XIX веков*, pp. 105–106.

¹¹⁰ Суриков Василий Иванович. *Переход Суворова через Альпы*, http://www.runivers.ru/gal/gallery-all.php?SECTION_ID=7072&ELEMENT_ID=578615 (access: 19.07.2017).

by the artist). The painting is rather austere and simple. A. Popov presented the Russians in a very important moment for them – they have crossed St Gotthard Pass and occupied the town of Altdorf, behind which, as their Austrian allies claimed, they were to find the road leading towards the Lake of the Four Cantons (Lake Lucerne). The mountain passage was indeed there, but it proved to be very dangerous, accessible only to the most daring soldiers. In addition, the march was made impossible by a snowstorm. Only the general commander could decide on the subsequent actions and this particular aspect was perfectly captured by the artist.¹¹¹

Also the Tsar's navy took part in military operations against France; it was commanded by Admiral F. Ushakov. On 24 August 1798, the Russian ships sailing from Sevastopol arrived at Constantinople and the combined Russian and Turkish fleets commanded by the Russian admiral moved on to the Mediterranean Sea to pursue a joint operation as part of the anti-French coalition. The appearance of Russians in Constantinople was a momentous event for the allies, because so far Russia had been one of the main enemies of Turkey. The free passage of F. Ushakov's armada to the Mediterranean Sea under the very walls of the capital of the Ottoman Empire was a sort of demonstration of the power of the Tsar's navy, which had successfully crushed their current ally during the recent wars. That proud parade of the Russian ships was depicted by M. Ivanov in his painting titled *The Russian Squadron led by Vice-Admiral F.F. Ushakov Passes the Bosphorus Strait at Constantinople to be Joined with the Turkish Navy on 8 September 1798* (1799).¹¹²

A. Suvorov's campaigns and the operations of F. Ushakov's fleet were not the last military clashes between Russia and France. It was already at the beginning of the following century that the Russians had an opportunity to experience the military power and merit of Napoleon's army, especially during the military operations in 1812–1815. In the 19th century, the Tsar's land army and navy were also involved in military operations on numerous other fronts, and their victories – just like previously – became an inspiration for the Russian painters who tried to show the power of the Russian Empire in their works.

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¹¹¹ В.В. Садовень, *Русское художники баталлисты XVIII–XIX веков*, pp. 346, 349–351.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 33; Т. Шорохова, *Родоначальник крымского пейзажа...*, pp. 201–202; А.А. Федоров-Давыдов, *Русский пейзажист баталлист Михаил Матвеевич Иванов*, <http://art19.info/articles/ivanov-mikhail.html> (access: 15.07.2017).

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Paweł Krokosz, PhD in History, assistant professor in the Institute of History of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow. Specialization: history of the Eastern Europe of the 16th–18th centuries (krokosz.pawel@poczta.fm).

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