

Секция «История»

Pierre Lefort, Christoph Gassmann, Johann Kaspar Fäsi: Three Swiss in Russian military campaigns 1700-1850. Their background, their lives and their personal written accounts in comparison.

Брюггер Сильван Мартинович

Студент

Universität Bern, Historisch-philosophische Fakultät, Brugg, Швейцария

E-mail: silvan.bruegger@mail.ru

In my presentation, I should give an account of the letters and written sources [1,17,18,19] of three Swiss soldiers, who participated in Russian military campaigns between 1700 and 1850, Pierre Lefort [17], Christoph Gassmann [1] and Johann Kaspar Fäsi [18].

Their background could not be more different: In the case of Pierre Lefort, there was already his uncle, well-known François Lefort, in services of the Tsar, Peter the Great [13]. As the latter, Pierre Lefort came from Geneva [11], and though his career [15] was not nearly as brilliant as that of his uncle, Pierre's letter to his father in Geneva and other family members, which – with the exception of some early letters cited by André Babkine [5, 9] – have not been edited yet, are an excellent source in what regards the expectations of a future emigrant to Russia around 1700, the conditions he met when arriving, his struggles in daily life as well.

Another Swiss who made an excellent career in Tsarist Russia was Johann Kaspar Fäsi (1795-1848), also known as Fezi, or Feze (Фези, Фезе) in Russian. Committing himself by his own free will, he pursued an excellent career, becoming one of the main protagonists in the fight against Shamil around 1840, was conferred many decorations and died, already retired to his property in Poland, being 53 years old, eventually only some days before the creation of today's Swiss Confederation. I'll consider Fäsi's letters to his friend Susanna Vischer of Basle, which he wrote between 1815-1832, as well as other sources with account to him, in order to understand what were the reasons for his will to serve to Russia, and to know more about his understanding of the Caucasian War [4, 6, 12, 16].

A third, less important but not at all less interesting person which served (but forced to) in Russia is mason Christoph Gassmann. His tale "A Swiss Robinson. 1725" is the name of a book printed in 1725 by the publisher Lindinner (Zurich, Switzerland) [1], existing only twice (one exemplar stored in Swiss national library, one in the Archives of Canton of Zurich), and thus being quite unique. In 1966 the book was published anew with comments by Michael Jeremijev [2]; a Russian translation of it was published in Paris in 1971 [3]. "A Swiss Robinson. 1725" is the "true" report of the adventures of Christoph Gassmann, a mason from Albisrieden near Zurich. He participated at the battle of 'Pultawa', fell into prison and consequently was several years in Russia as a prisoner. He lived seven years among the Kalmyks in southern Russia; freed, however, occurred to be in Astrakhan. In Astrakhan Gassmann again - for this time unforced - served the Tsar and participated at an expedition to Persia. In 1722, at least, he could leave Russia, following a journey from Astrakhan over Moscow and Saint Petersburg back to Zurich [1]. Gassmann's pastor, Beat Werdmüller, was interested in Gassmann's adventures and figured as a "ghostwriter" for his stories. However, Werdmüller was interested in Gassmann's report rather from a religious point of view, depicting his return as salvation by god. Werdmüller used several printed

sources as additional material, since he wanted to add historical and ethnographical facts to the report, and didn't believe Gassmann in all points. So it remains unclear, which percentage of the "Swiss Robinson" is really the report of Gassmann, and which part belongs to other sources added by Werdmüller.

Thus, the main questions of the presentation will be, whether it is useful to compare the three described personalities in what concerns their background, their career, their written accounts on their time in Russia. Can we speak of something typically Swiss in it? Or are they too different to each other in order to be compared? What were the reactions of their environment to their accounts on Russia? And, most important - which value do the letters and descriptions of each of them provide as a historical source concerning questions of ethnography, military history, and the aspect of perception of Russia by foreigners in 18th-19th century [7,10,14]?

Литература

1. Schweizerischer Robinson. 1725. Curiose Nachricht von den Reisen Christoph Gassmanns / des Stein-Metzen von Albis=Rieden. Der in Sächsischen und Schwedischen Kriegsdiensten gestanden / bey Pultawa gefangen / nach Moscau, Casan, Astrachan / unter die Kalmucken und andere Tartaren geführet worden. ferner eine Reise über die Caspische See und in Persien gethan und endlich A. 1724 nach 22jährigem Abwesen naher Hause gekommen. [...] Zusammengetragen von Beat Werdmüller / Pfr. Zürich, 1725.
2. Die Reisen Christoph Gassmans: 1702-1724. Zusammengetragen von Beat Werdmüller, neu hrsg. und erläutert von Michael Jeremijev. Bern, 1966.
3. Странствования Христофора Гассмана. Военно-историческая библиотека "Военной быти Н.16. Париж, 1971.
4. Акты, собранные Кавказской археографической комиссией, том 8 и 9, Тифлис 1881/1884
5. Бабкин А., Письма Франца и Петра Лефортов о «Великом посольстве» // Вопросы истории, 1976. № 4. С. 120-132.
6. Жилинский В.К. Быт и нравы русской армии после 1812 года. По письмам генерала Фези из Польши и с Кавказа. — СПб., 1912.
7. Исторические путешествия. Извлечения из мемуаров и записок иностранных и русских путешественников по Волге в XV-XVIII веках. Сост. В. Алексеев. Сталинград, 1936.
8. Курукин И.В., Персидский поход Петра Великого. Низовой корпус на берегах Каспия (1722-1735) — М., 2010.
9. Babkine, André: Les premières lettres de Russie du Général Lefort. In: Canadian Slavonic Papers Vol. 16, No. 3, 1974, p. 380-401.

10. Fakten und Fabeln: Schweizerisch-slavisches Reisebegegnung vom 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert. Hrsg. Monika Bankowski. Basel, 1991.
11. Galiffe J.A., Notices généalogiques sur les familles genevoises, Genève 1829.
12. Michel, G.W., Illustriertes Zürcherisches Zeughausbüchlein: ein Führer durch die Sammlung alter Waffen, Zürich 1881.
13. Posselt M., Der General und Admiral Franz Lefort. Sein Leben und seine Zeit. 2 Bd. Frankfurt am Main, 1866.
14. Scheidegger G., Perveres Abendland - barbarisches Russland: Kulturelle Missverständnisse in der russisch-abendländischen Begegnung im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. Zürich, 1993.
15. Soom, Jost, „avancement et fortune“: Schweizer und ihre Nachkommen als Offiziere, Diplomaten und Hofbeamte im Dienst des Zarenreiches, Zürich 1996.
16. Usteri, Emil, Aus der Korrespondenz des Generallieutenants Fäsi, in: Zürcher Taschenbuch auf das Jahr 1936, Zürich 1935.
17. Archives des Etats de Geneve, Archives Lefort, Letters from Pierre Lefort 1715-1727.
18. Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, PA 511 606-02, 17 Briefe von Johann Kaspar Fäsi an Susanna Vischer 1815-1832.
19. Swiss National Museum Zurich, Collection Centre in Affoltern a.A., Ten Oil Paintings from the Caucasus Campaign by Johann Kaspar Fäsi, 1837-1841

Слова благодарности

I'd like to express my gratitude to the Faculty of History at the Astrakhan State University (AGU) and the Astrakhan Oblast' Scientific Library Im. N.K.Krupskoj.

Иллюстрации



Рис. 1: Faesi, Caucasus Campaign (Oil painting) - 1



Рис. 2: Faesi, Caucasus Campaign (Oil painting) - 2