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DANUBE COSSACKS IN THE 1775-1828 OTTOMAN-TURKISH DOCUMENTS

In the historical literature of the 19th-20th centuries there are many studies of the presence of the Cossacks within the Ottoman Empire at the end of the XVIIth and XIXth centuries. Most of them are based on Russian documents of this period, information and memoirs recorded from the Danube Cossacks in Russia. At the same time, there are Ottoman documents stored in the Ottoman Government Archives of Istanbul (Turkey) (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*).

These documents cover various components of the presence of the Danube Cossacks in the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Most materials in the funds "HAT" and "S.AS" (today were found about 200). These are documents related to the manning, maintenance, financing, transfer, reform, service, etc. of military units.

Let us briefly describe an circumstances that influenced the formation of a significant contingent of the Cossacks in the Ottoman Empire. The destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich on June 3-5, 1775 led to the migration of a large part of the Zaporozhian Cossacks to the boundaries of the Ochakiv district, the Dniester and the lower Danube. The territory belonged to the Ottoman Empire at that time. The number of Zaporozhians who went to Turkish territory, researchers determine in different ways: from seven to ten thousand, noting that the compactly organized settlements of the Cossacks did not organized. The exit of the Cossacks beyond the boundaries of the Russian

Empire required consolidation in a certain territory, the determination of its place in the new conditions of life, and finally the restoration of its own organization. This happened not at one-time, but a long-term process. In the first years after the destruction of the Sich the Zaporozhians did not have their own organization, they were scattered over the fishing places of Ochakiv, Dniester, the lower Danube regions. The Russian administration tried to take all measures to prohibit the further emigration of Cossacks.

Russian administration was particularly concerned because of the reaction of the Ottoman Empire to the settlement of the Cossacks in its territory. According to the Border Administration, the Turkish sultan was inclined to consider the Cossacks as their subjects. In addition, from 1777 to 1778, delegations were sent to the Turkish sultan and Patriarch of Constantinople to receive citizenship and provide land for the establishment of the Sich. In August 1778, the question of the political situation of the Cossacks was resolved: the Sultan's government, despite Russia's protests, officially accepted the Cossacks under their jurisdiction. The withdrawal of Cossacks abroad caused a considerable concern for the Russian government, especially with the further escalation of relations with the Ottoman Empire. It determined the attitude of the Russian authorities towards them and was reflected in the naming of Cossacks - in Russian documents such Cossacks were called "incorrect" Turkish or Danube Cossacks. The existence of the Danube Cossacks in the Ottoman Empire actually declared the non-recognition of the territorial gains of Russia and was considered to be a hostile act.

During the stay on the lands of the Ottoman Empire, the Cossacks had several centers that could be described as Sich - Katyrlez, Seymeny, Great Dunavets (now all this settlements are in Romania). They kept the features of the Zaporozhian Sich in social and military life. Sich's with lands were significantly autonomous, were exempted from taxes. The Cossacks were engaged in agriculture, cattle breeding, fishing, trade, did not pay taxes and did

not perform any duties except military. The latter was quite burdensome: Zadunaytsy (*Trans-Danubian Cossacks*) were obliged to participate in the campaigns of the Turkish troops, including punitive expeditions against the Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbs, who fought for their independence; fought on the side of Turkey against the Russian Empire in the Russian-Turkish wars of the late XVIII - early nineteenth century. The Ottoman government provided the Zadunaytsy with the so-called "fodder money", which consisted of payment and food.

The Ottoman documents expanded our understanding of the Cossacks' organization in the Ottoman Empire, complemented by gaps in materials of Russian origin and memories of the Cossacks. The documents themselves are written in Ottoman language, but a significant number of them have very detailed annotations in contemporary Turkish language (the author is grateful to Olexander Sereda for translation of these annotations). The annotations analyzed by us and some documents adapted to the modern Turkish language can be divided into several thematic groups.

The first group reveals to us the name of the Danube, which was used in the official documents of the Ottoman Empire. The Trans-Danubian people were called "Butkaly" or "Potkaly Cossacks" (*Potkalı / Butkalı Kazakları*). So called in the XVIII century. Cossacks who were under the patronage of the Zaporizhzhya Sich. "Potkalı" or "butkalı" comes from the Tatar "potka" or "butka" - cooked wheat or porridge from wheat groats. Subsequently, the term "potkalı" or "butkalı" was borrowed from Ottoman official records¹. The unclear name for the Ottoman bureaucracy is often distorted especially in financial documents: "pankalı", "pontalı"² etc. Note that the Nekrasov Don Cossacks who lived and served alongside the Trans-Danubians in Turkey are

¹ Sereda O., *Perevirka kozats'koho viys'ka v hirnychi Dnipra (za osvith'o-turets'kyy dokument 1711 roku)* Vyp. 8. - K. : In-t istoriyi Ukrayiny NAN Ukrayiny, 2008. - P.172-194.

² *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi* (далі - BOA). - Fon adı: C.AS. - Dosya № 20. - Gömlek № 896 [1201. Ra. 29]; BOA. - Fon adı: C.AS. - Dosya № 172. - Gömlek № 7501 [1242.N.29].

referred to in documents differently - "Ağnat", "Anad", "İğnad" Kazakları³ - on behalf of their leader Ignat Nekrasov.

The second group of documents reflects the nature of the service in peace time and war time, the combat operations in which the Trans-Danubians was to take part. In addition, some documents have information about the salary of individual units. Thus, it is generally known that the Zaporozhian Cossacks fought in the Turkish government units with feudal lords who did not accept the reforms of Selim III, more than eight years, along with the leaders of Dobrudja and Rumelia, who were supportive of the Sultan.

The collected parts of the Cossacks were subordinated to the Braila fortress. Braila Nazir used parts of them in the fight against the rebellion Pazvand-oglu and other feudal lords (*Ayans*). So, from the Ottoman documents, we learn that besides the already well-known centers of struggle with rebel feudal lords, Ruschuk, Vidin, one of the centers of tension was Kalarashi (now the town of Kelerashi in Romania). It is known that the Cossack detachments from Braila were sent here to resolve disputes between the forces of the Ruschuk Ayan Tersenikly-oglu and the Sylistrian Ayan Yilikoglu Suleiman-aga⁴. One of these units consisted of: Cossack Ataman, Secretar, 1 *baş-Çavuş* (Senior Officer), 2 translators, 4 Colonels, 4 Chaushes, 3 Gunners and 400 Cossacks⁵.

Some documents suggest that the area from which taxes were collected for the maintenance of the Cossacks during the period 1800 - 1804 was the territory of the "Valachia voda" (*Eflak voyvodası*⁶). It is also known from the documents that during one of the campaigns in 1803 the Cossacks were

³ BOA. - Fon adı: C.AS. - Dosya № 519. - Gömlek № 21684 [1243.Ş.29]; Fon adı: HAT. - Dosya № 233. - Gömlek № 12997C [1210.S.11].

⁴ *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri* (далі - BOA). - Fon adı: HAT. - Dosya № 50. - Gömlek № 2355A. - Sof.1.

⁵ BOA. - Fon adı: C.AS. - Dosya № 409. - Gömlek № 16908. - Sof.1.

⁶ *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri* (далі - BOA). - Fon adı: C.AS. - Dosya № 409. - Gömlek № 16908. - Sof.4; BOA. - Fon adı: C.AS. - Dosya № 505. - Gömlek № 21087. - Sof.4; BOA. - Fon adı: HAT. - Dosya № 50. - Gömlek № 2355A. - Sof.4.

supposed to receive: the Ataman - 131 Kurush, the Secretar and the Osavul - 26 Kurush each, the translator - 24, the Colonel - 32.5, the Gunner - 17.5, Cossack - 6⁷.

In one of the Ottoman-Turkish document, published in English, by researcher Avigdor Levy⁸, with supplementations from the annotations of other documents, gives an idea of the formation and payment of one of the irregular region, which was part of the Cossacks. Only Muslims served in the regular parts of the Ottoman army, non-Muslim subjects of the empire (Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, etc.) served ancillary military service. In connection with the reform of the army in the early nineteenth century first to the service in regular parts on a voluntary basis attracted the Cossack population of Dobrudja - Zaporizhia and Nekrasov Cossacks. It was created a certain registry of them. In particular, since the autumn and winter of 1826, the Zaporozhye Cossack regiments were part of a regular cavalry group, which was located in the Silistra province. The regiment consisted of three divisions (parts) - Turkish, Tatar and Zaporozhye-Cossack. Formation of the regiment was placed on the Silistrian viceroy Ahmet Pasha, he had to act on a specially designed for this connection provisions of November 16, 1826⁹ (although before this for most of the provincial pledge of the Ottoman Empire, for example, took positions for the Vidin fortress).

The divisions were formed from population of Babadag, Machin and Silistra districts, they were rotated every four months. From 1323 officers and ordinary cavalrymen of Regiment 329 persons were Zaporozhye-Cossack. The first leader of the entire Silistrian cavalry register was Mehmed Emin Aha. The Zaporozhye-Cossack part was necessarily headed by a Muslim, the first one Ali Koch Aga was named as *Kazak Başı Ağa* (Head of Cossacks). There were 3

⁷ *Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü. - C.AS. - D.409. - G.№ 16908. - Sof.1-4.*

⁸ *Translation of the founding regulation of the Silistra cavalry regiment of 16 November 1826. Text of Imperial Rescript [Avigdor L., The Contribution of Zaporozhian Cossacks to Ottoman Military Reform: Documents and Notes]//Harvard Ukrainian studies. - 1982. - V.VI, number 3, September.- Doc. № 1-2.*

⁹ *Ibid. - Doc. № 1-2.*

captains (*Yüzbaşı*), 6 lieutenants (*Yüzbaşı Mülâzımı*), 3 ensigns, 6 sergeants (*Çavuş*), 30 corporals (*Onbaşı*) and 270 cavalrymen, a priest, 3 furagirs, and 6 trumpeters.

The officers and ordinary cavalrymen received almost identical salary, as well as a uniform. The captain of the Zaporozhye-Cossack section wore the "Transylvanian" kalpak of "white sheepskin" with a sliver, and all the other "black sheepskin", blue jackets, a shirt (*gömlek*), a raincoat with a hood, and a boot. The captain's armament consisted of a bayonet and shamshur (*şimşir*), and ordinary cavalrymen also had a cavalry pistol. In the register, the Cossack captain (*Yüzbaşı*) was paid a month for 100 *kurush* (Turkish silver couch kurush / gurush (money)). The Cornet (*ensign, sancaktar*) and Sergeant (*Çavuş*) - was paid 50; corporal (*Onbaşı*) - 30; priest - 25. Such a salary was practically the same with similar divisions of the Turks or Tatars, the Cossacks received half of their supplies less than their colleagues¹⁰.

From the annotations of other documents it becomes known that one of the first Cossack parts of the regiment began service at the end of 1826 - early 1827. Since April 1827, Cossacks from the coastal Danube judicial constituencies - Kaza Babadag, Machin, Silistra, along with the Tatar and Turkish units had Continue securing order in Silistra for four months¹¹. Four months later, in July 1827, the organization of the registry from 1323 riders who had to serve in Silistra was again confirmed. They were trained according to the "Istanbul model"¹². In April 1828, the Sylistrian register comprised 1321 individuals and received a salary twice less than the cavalryman holder in the Istanbul regiment (1581 persons)¹³.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* - Doc. № 1-2.

¹¹ BOA. - Fon adı: C.AS. - Dosya № 409. - Gömlek № 16908 [1218. R. 19]

¹² BOA. - Fon adı: HAT. - Dosya № 309. - Gömlek № 18248 [1242. Z. 29]

¹³ *Translation of the founding regulation of the Silistra cavalry regiment of 16 November 1826. Text of Imperial Rescript* [Avigdor L., *The Contribution of Zaporozhian Cossacks to Ottoman Military Reform: Documents and Notes*]//Harvard Ukrainian studies. - 1982. - V.VI, number 3, September. - Doc. № 2.

The third group of documents reflects and allows you to take a slightly different look at the well-known events of the transition of the Cossack Ataman of the Dunavets Sich Joseph Gladky to the Russian Empire in May 1828. The difficult international situation of 1826-1827 weakened the Ottoman Empire and forced it to prepare for war with Russia. In February 1828, the Silistrian Vali Ahmed Pasha sent a message to the Great Vizier on the additional organization of 600 Cossacks and the provision of weapons to them¹⁴.

According to Russian documents, 10 (22 May), 1828 (that is, after the official launch of the Russian-Turkish War of 1828-1829), the Bazarchuk Bessarabian quarantine pledge reported that "about 12 hours after midnight arrived at the local port through the Kilia estuary on a small boat with ten Cossack people", who bring two bunchukes and three flags of Turkish Zaporozhian Sich; The Ataman Y. Gladky was in the boat, and he told that Zaporozhian Cossacks under his leadership will return back to the Russian Empire." The following day, another 61 boats arrived, with 500 to 700 men and women. Ataman reported that more than a thousand people should follow him¹⁵. Russian quarantines during May 14-26 (May 26th - June 7th) reported that more than 500 people left the territory of the former Sich¹⁶. May 25 (June 6) "at the Kosh with the atamans and Cossacks, only 218 people went to the Danube crossing at Satunovo settlement"¹⁷ and on May 27 (June 8) they helped the Russian troops to cross the Danube. Here they took the territory under the control of the former Sich.

At the same time, we have several reports from the Ottoman administration. According to the comendant of Tulcea Ibrahim Pasha to the Sylistrian governor on May 22, 1828, the Atamans, leaving Tulcea, came to Dunavets, gathering Cossacks in the Strait Katyrlez (St. George's mouth) and

¹⁴ BOA. - Fon adı: HAT. - Dosya № 1086. - Gömlek № 44189 [1243. B. 22].

¹⁵ State Archive of Odesa oblast (DAOO). - F. 1. - Op. 214. - Spr. 7. 1828. - L. 2-9 back.

¹⁶ Kayuk S. M., *Zadunays'ka Sich (1775-1828 rr.)*: Dys. ... kand. ist. nauk: 07.00.01 / Dnipropetrovs'kyi derzh. un-t. - Dnipropetrovs'k, 1999. - P.173.

¹⁷ DAOO. - F.1. - Op.214. - Spr.7. 1828. - Ark. 5-7 back.

the surrounding area announced the presence of a state firman, according to which the Cossacks on the left bank of the Danube had to go to the side of Rumelia (even if they said another!)¹⁸. On May 26, 1828, the Silistrian Governor Ahmed Pasha informed the Great Vizier that the Ataman had left Silistra in order to gather the Cossacks in the Tulcea district and send them to the Braila fortress, but in reality he, without sending the Cossacks to the fortress, directing them by himself to Russia¹⁹.

We can suggest, that Firstly, the ataman with the senior lieutenant who returned from Silistra had to begin the relocation of the Cossacks from the lower Danube to Rumelia, as this was stated by the Cossacks themselves²⁰. At the same time, this order (*Firman*) proclaimed the mobilization of Cossacks to the Turkish Army for protection of the Danube fortresses. This is indirectly evidenced by the announcement of Y. Gladky on the Bazarchuk quarantine that "from Constantinople there is a Pasha with 40,000 Corps of the Army"²¹. Secondly, the presence of the said company explains the speed with which Y. Gladky arrived at the Bazarchuk quarantine and was expecting a further active exit from the Cossacks with their families. The presence of the aforementioned message of the Silistra Governor Ahmed Pasha on May 26, 1828 shows that the Ottoman administration immediately informed about the actions of the Cossacks.

In our opinion, the spontaneity of the transition is determined by several other circumstances. The mobilization of the Cossacks and their planned resettlement from the lower Danube did not allow the option of using the transition to Russia if the Russian army crossed the Danube. Under such circumstances, it is not known how the Russian Generals and soldiers would take to the Cossack population. The fact that J. Gladky still understood the

¹⁸ BOA. - Fon adı: HAT. - Dosya № 1087. - Gömlek № 44249B [1243.Za.08]

¹⁹ BOA. - Fon adı: HAT. - Dosya № 1087. - Gömlek № 44249 [1243.Za.12]

²⁰ Kondratovych F., *Zadunays'ka Sech'* [po mistsevomu vospomynanyu i rasskazam].- P.65.

²¹ DAOO. - F. 1. - Op. 214. - Spr. 7. 1828. - Ark.7, 177.

responsibility of his deed, is evidenced by the fact that he was taking care of those Cossacks whom he himself brought to Silistra. He wrote to General Field Marshal I.I. Dibich in 1830, who personally took 600 people "of the Cossacks to the Silistra Governor with a 3 priests"²².

It can be assumed that this could have been mentioned above 600 Cossacks, which Ataman in the above-mentioned order of the Ottoman Comand mobilized in February 1828. Ataman complained about their release, which was due to the alleged actions of the Russian representative in Istanbul²³. Other Cossacks who served in the regiment were sent from the European front to Istanbul, and then to Anatolia²⁴.

According to the annotations of the Ottoman documents, it becomes known, more or less loyal attitude of the Ottoman administration to the Cossacks, and after the transition of the Ataman. Thus, in February 1829, with the direct participation of the Silistrian Governor Ahmed Pasha, a new regiment of 1300 riders was formed, which included the former Danube Cossacks²⁵. During 1829, it served about 150 Cossacks and 25 priests, but without their own leaders. They were united in the management of the Turkish part of the region. In July 1830, the Cossacks, along with other units, were sent to Istanbul for military training and re-uniforming²⁶. After 1830, the Cossack part of the regiment was not formed²⁷, and the Cossacks were only an escort and protection of the Ottoman administration²⁸.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Translation of the founding regulation or the Silistra cavalry regiment.* - P.387.

²⁵ *BOA.* - Fon adı: HAT. - Dosya № 296. - Gömlek № 17641 [1244.Z.29/07.02.1829].

²⁶ *BOA.* - Fon adı: HAT. - Dosya № 296. - Gömlek № 17595 [1245.Z.29/21.06.1830].

²⁷ *Translation of the founding regulation or the Silistra cavalry regiment.* - P.387. -388.

²⁸ *BOA.* - Fon adı: C.AS. - Dosya № 307. - Gömlek № 12665 [1255.S.25/05.10.1839].

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