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THE MILITARY ACTIVITY OF HETMAN PETRO KONASHEVICH-SAHAYDACHNY

Petro Konashevych-Sagaydachny appears in our history as one of the greatest military leaders in the 17th century in Europe, statesman, diplomat. Prominent historian O. Subtelny calls him “the most famous Cossack hetman before Bohdan Khmelnytsky” [1, c.107]. Thanks to his military talent, he managed to gain fame of the leader and was repeatedly elected hetman of the Cossacks.

Ever since childhood Petro had accustomed “to pull bow and keep hold of the horse” [2,c.211]. For these abilities he earned the nickname Sahaidachny (from the word “sahaidak” – weapon of the warrior archer who produced 10 arrows per minute with an average range of steps 200-500). Since young years he had participated in all naval campaigns led by Samiylo Kishka, acquired military experience, prestige and fame among the Cossacks. His contemporary Jakub Sobieski in his “History of Khotyn Campaign” wrote that Sahaidachny was “a man of great spirit, daring mind, looking for dangers, he was the first in the battle, and went out the last and always knew how to achieve his goal” [3,c.304]. In 1606 Petro Sahaidachny made a famous voyage as a Cossacks chieftain. Near the city of Varna troops attacked 10 Turkish galleys and captured them. Being aware of the tactic of Tatars, Sahaidachny used its weaknesses in battle near the town of Perekop.

It was for combat service, in 1614 Zaporizhya campaign elected Petro Konashevich as hetman. During the time of his hetman period, Sahaidachny always “cleared” Cossacks from people who violated military discipline. He cared about making everyone had his horse and gun. Konashevych introduced military drill (training, coaching) so the core of his army was disciplined, drilled military Cossack units. Military reform was very fruitful. In the autumn of 1614 Sahaidachny with his Cossacks crossed the Black Sea and attacked Trapezont. In this campaign Cossacks captured and plundered the richest Turkish city of Sinop, which due to its beauty and luxury was called the “the city of love”. Vizier, to right before the Sultan, sent galleys and sandals (small vessel) of janissaries to Ochakov to meet the Cossacks, who were returning from Sinop. Cossacks sank many galleys and nearly lossless got to the Dnipro. Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny didn't pay attention to threats from Poland that did not want to disrupt peace with the Turks. In spring 1615 he and his Cossacks went to sea on the 80 vessels. The purpose of this trip was, as Cossacks said, “to smoke Constantinople itself”. In 1616, 2000 Cossacks led by Hetman attacked a well-fortified Cafa, the largest slave market in the Crimea. With their help the Cossacks had captured the city for few days, beat 14 000 mussulmans and freed a large number of slaves. From Kafa Cossacks went to Sinop and Trapezontu. At times of Sagaydachny the last and truly spectacular was Hotyn battle in 1621. “The real winners and saviours of Poland were the Cossacks” as Jakub Sobieski said. But this battle was fatal for Cossack hetman who was wounded by poisoned arrow. In April 10, 1622 Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny died. He was buried on the territory of brotherly monastery in Kyiv.

So, Sahaidachny military activity had a pronounced pro-Ukrainian character by which military skill and success of Cossack troops reached its climax in the first half of the 17th century.

LITERATURE

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