ABSTRACT

Peter the Great and the Russian Military Campaign Against Sweden in 1719

This article examines the Russian military campaign against Sweden in the year 1719. It is based primarily on eighteenth-century Russian language sources, including: Журнал или Поденная Записка, Блаженныя и Вѣчнодостоянныя Памяти Государя Императора Петра Великаго съ 1698 года, Даже До Заключения Нейштатского Мира: Напечатаны съ Обрѣтавшися въ Кабинетной Архива Списковъ, Правленныхъ Собственною Руково Его Императорскаго Величества (1770-1772), части I и II, (The Journal or Daily Notes and Constant Instructions of State of the Sovereign Emperor Peter the Great From the Year 1698, Up to the Conclusion of the Peace of Nystad: Published From the Records in the Archives and the Hand Witten Government Reports of His Imperial Majesty, parts I and II.) Complete copies of Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великаго . . ., are difficult to locate and extremely limited in availability. This Journal is written in an archaic form of eighteenth-century Russian, contains no index, and is challenging to translate due, in part, to the idiosyncratic orthography of Peter the Great; however, it is rewarding because of the wealth of information that it contains, including extracts from the Campaign Journals of General-Admiral Count Feodor Matveevich Apraksin and General-Major Peter Petrovich Lacy. Apraksin and Lacy conducted the most significant Russian military campaigns against Sweden in 1719. Additional Russian language sources and correspondence pertinent to the major military and diplomatic figures involved in the relevant events related to the Russian military campaign of 1719 were also consulted. The campaign records and correspondence contained in Материалы для Исторії Русскаго Флота: Балтійскій Флотъ, 1702-1725 (1865), части I, II, III, IV, (Materials for the History of the Russian Fleet: The Baltic Fleet, 1702-1725, parts I, II, III, IV), serves as an example of and additional primary Russian language source.

The Russian military campaign that took place during 1719 has received minimal attention in the majority of western sources. Therefore, this article examines the vital impact that the Russian military campaign of 1719 had in hastening an ending to the Great Northern War (1700-1721) and Peter the Great’s crucial involvement in directing it. The diplomatic and financial role of Great Britain in assisting Sweden in exchange for the territories ceded to George I’s Electorate of Hanover also forms a crucial part of this study.

As a result of this research, certain conclusions were drawn. The traditional coverage of the campaign of 1719 and the final years of the Great Northern War in western sources has often been biased due to its dependency on British diplomatic sources. This is especially the case with respect to the impact that the Russian military campaign of 1719 exercised in eventually ending the war. In utilizing often neglected Russian language sources and examining the size, intensity and destruction of the Russian military campaign against Sweden in 1719, this article contributes toward presenting a more balanced historical interpretation of this pivotal campaign.