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Following the Footsteps of the Oldest Cossack Centre in Zaporizhzhia, Founded by Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi

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Abstract

The emergence of the Cossack community on the southern border was conditioned by its population growth and the necessity to protect Ukrainian lands from Tatar expansion. The long stay of the Cossacks far from the volosts (rural municipalities) raise the need for uniting into cohesive troops led by an experienced ataman. They built fortified towns and small settlements to defend against Horde attacks and securely store their booty. Russian officials wanted to use the Cossack potential and repeatedly offered the ruler of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to build a powerful fortress on the border with the Crimean Khanate in the 20s and 40s of the XVI c. However, due to a shortage of resources, Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi was only able to realize this idea later. There are different versions regarding the castle's location, purpose, and architectural style. However, the idea of identifying Vyshnevetskyi "town" with the so-called "Khortytska Sich" seems doubtful. No direct evidence of the Sich's functioning in the 50s of the XVI c. has been found in written sources. Only the presence of a "fortress" or "castle" in Zaporizhzhia is recorded. At the same time, a representative of an aristocratic family made great efforts to defend Ukrainian lands, thus contributing to the consolidation of the Cossack community. This marks the outstanding role of Prince-knight Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi in national history. The castle he built on the Kichkaskii cape of the Dnipro River, also documented in the sources as Mala Khortytsia, served as a prototype for fortifications of the Zaporozhian community. This community, established on the island of Tomakivka in the XVI c., came to be known as the Zaporozhian Sich.

Key Words: Zaporozhian Sich, castle, fortress, Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi, Cossacks, Zaporozhians.



Introduction

The Zaporozhian knights played a significant role in the history of Ukraine's past. Their military bravery was manifested not only in the homeland but also far beyond its borders. The Zaporozhian Sich was the center of Cossack freedom. In its evolution, it went through several stages, gradually changing its status and undergoing a noticeable adjustment in terms of the level of its influence on the political life of Ukraine, but it continued to remain an effective factor in the development of socio-political processes for three centuries. The history of the Sich beyond the Dnipro rapids has attracted the attention of more than one generation of scholars, producing a wide range of opinions. In particular, the legitimacy of identifying the First Sich with the "town" of Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi in Zaporizhzhia. Despite new scientific discoveries, this

dilemma remains debatable due to the lack of sufficient documentary evidence, which has led to preserving the version of the so-called “Khortytsia Sich.” At the same time, the approach to highlighting the genesis of the Zaporozhian Cossacks largely depends on its solution.

Historians have put a lot of efforts into the search for documentary materials about the organization of the Sich beyond the Dnipro rapids, but the results were finally inefficient, and the conclusions, accordingly, were versatile. Moreover, the chronological boundaries within which researchers determined the beginning of the Sich varied quite considerably: the polar opinions about this event differ by more than a century. Dmytro Bantysh-Kamenskyi, in his work “History of Mala Rus,” although not specifying the year of foundation, called the fortification, built by Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi on Khortytsia island, a fortress.¹ In the introduction to the book dedicated to Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, Mykola Kostomarov described the fortress on Khortytsia in the 50s of the XVI c. as the first Cossack’s base in Zaporizhzhia, relying on the letter from the Polish King and Grand Duke of Lithuania Sigismund II Augustus (1548–1572) to Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi.² Ivan Kamanin, denying the foundation of the Sich by Vyshnevetskyi, determined the origin of the center of the Zaporozhian community to be the end of the XV c., when the places of permanent residence of Cossacks were established on the southern border.³ His contemporary Lev Padalka held the opposite view, trying to prove in his dedicated article on the origins of the Sich that it appeared only in the middle of the XVII c.⁴ According to the researcher, all previous Cossack camps in Zaporizhzhia should be called “kishes”, which did not need special fortifications. According to Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, the Zaporozhian Sich became a recognized representative of lower ranged chivalry in the 80s of XVI c. At the same time, the scientist rightly observed, “This could not have happened all at once, and the development of the Sich should be framed within the previous decades – the sixties and seventies, following the foundation of the Khortytsia castle and the activities of Vyshnevetskyi.”⁵ Dmytro Yavornytskyi in the “History of the Zaporozhian Cossacks” did not go into the details of the issue, but only assumed that the beginning of the organization in Zaporizhzhia can be linked to the emergence of a common leader

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- 1 Dmitrii Bantysh-Kamenskyi. *Istoriia Maloi Rossii ot vodvoreniiia slavian v sei stranie do unichtozheniia getmanstva* [*The History of Little Russia from the settlement of the Slavs in this country to the destruction of the Hetmanate*] (Kiev, 1993), 75.
 - 2 Nikolai Kostomarov, “Bogdan Khmelnytskii” [“Bohdan Khmelnytskyi”], in *Istoricheskiie monografii i issledovaniia*, t. 4 (Saint Petersburg, 1904), 17.
 - 3 Ivan Kamanin, “K voprosu o kozachestve do Bogdana Khmelnitskogo” [“Towards the Issue of the Cossacks before Bohdan Khmelnytskyi”], in *Chteniia Imperatorskogo obshchestva Nestora Letopistsa*, kn. 8, 2 (Kiev, 1894), 72.
 - 4 Lev Padalka, “Po voprosu o sushchestvovanii Zaporozhskoi Sechi v pervye vremena zaporozhskogo kazachestva” [“On the Question of Existence of the Zaporozhian Sich in the Early Days of the Zaporozhian Cossacks”], *Kievskaiia starina* 6 (1894): 457–8.
 - 5 Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, *Istoriia Ukrayiny-Rusi* [*History of Ukraine-Rus*], t. 7 (Kyiv, 1995), 139–40.

among the Cossacks – Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi. He tried to unite them for a common goal – to fight against Muslims and lay the foundation for creating a place that became the prototype of the Sich.⁶ This thesis is confirmed by his description of the Zaporozhian volnytsa (“freemanship”) in the 60s of XVI c., in which the scientist noted that at that time at the Nyz (“Lower Part”), “there was neither Sich nor a special society.”⁷ In the Soviet era, when this topic was not tolerated in historiography, Volodymyr Holobutskyi placed the emergence of the Sich beyond the Dnipro rapids in the 30s-50s⁸ of XVI c., and Kost Huslysty and Olena Apanovych dated it 1554–1555 and pinpointed it on Mala Khortytsia Island⁹. On the other hand, after Ukraine regained its independence, Arnold Sokulskyi paid considerable attention to the creation of a Cossack center in Zaporizhzhia. He noted that alongside with the unification by Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi of the Cossacks-ukhodnyki (“Cossack freemen or venturers”), “the first proto-Sich appeared beyond the Dnipro rapids, which evolved in the following early Siches – Tomakivska, Bazavlutska, and Mykytynska Siches.”¹⁰ This idea was developed in the joint research works “A History of Ukrainian Cossacks”¹¹ and “A History of Zaporozhian Sich.”¹²

At the same time, the positions of previous researchers regarding the location and purpose of Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi’s castle require clarification, in particular, to disprove the historical stereotype about the existence of the so-called Khortytsia Sich. Its origins should be sought in positivist historiography, in the works of Dmytro Bantysh-Kamenskyi, Mykola Kostomarov, and Andrii Storozhenko, when the term “Khortytsia” was associated with the largest island in Zaporizhzhia, Velyka Khortytsia. However, the authors neither conducted a special search for documentary sources nor found out the location of the Cossack fortress. The same applies to the name “Khortytsia Castle” without an indication of the place of its construction. Only Levko Padalka identified Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi’s castle with the island of Mala Khortytsia, although he dated the foundation of the Zaporozhian Sich a century later. At the same time, the term “Khortytska Sich”, apparently in respect for reputable predecessors, continues to

6 Dmytro Yavornytskyi, *Istoriia zaporozkykh kozakiv [History of the Zaporozhian Cossacks]*, t. 2 (Kyiv, 1990), 19.

7 Ibid., 27.

8 Volodymyr Holobutskyi, *Zaporozke kozatstvo [Zaporozhian Cossacks]* (Kyiv, 1994), 124.

9 Kost Huslysty & Olena Apanovych, *Zaporozka Sich ta yii prohresyvana rol v istorii ukrayinskoho narodu [Zaporozhian Sich and its Progressive Role in the History of the Ukrainian People]* (Kyiv, 1954), 11.

10 Arnold Sokulskyi, *Kozatska Khortytsia. Istoryko-kulturne znachennia v protsesi vynyknennia i stanovlennia zaporozkoho kozatstva [Cossack Khortytsia. Historical and cultural significance in the process of emergence and formation of Zaporozhian Cossacks]* (Zaporizhzhia, 2008), 341.

11 Valerii Smolii, ed., *Istoriia ukrayinskoho kozatstva. Narysy u dvokh tomakh [History of the Ukrainian Cossacks. Essays in two volumes]*, t. 1 (Kyiv, 2003), 532–6.

12 Valerii Smolii, ed., *Istoriia Zaporozkoi Sichi [History of the Zaporozhian Sich]* (Kyiv, 2015), 8–18.

exist in historical literature without¹³ any references to sources and even today appears in school textbooks on the history of Ukraine. Instead, the criterion of the author's study of the issue was the analysis of newly published sources and recent research.

The purpose of this research is to disprove the stereotype about the "town" of Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi as the first Zaporozhian Sich.

Research body

Among the most important reasons for the emergence of the Zaporozhian Sich, the internal need of the Cossacks for their organization due to their increasing number in the middle of the XVI c. should be mentioned in the first turn. On the other hand, the founding of the Cossack volnytsa ("freemanship") center was motivated by the practical need to protect Ukrainian lands against growing Tatar aggression. The long stay of the Cossacks far from the volosts (rural municipalities) raise the need for uniting into cohesive troops led by an experienced ataman. They built fortified towns and small settlements, and while staying there, it was possible to defend from Tatar attacks. The formation of the Cossack community in the conditions of direct contact with nomads influenced its military organization, which was clearly visible even in the language and appearance of the Zaporozhians.¹⁴

The expansion of Cossack crafts was accompanied by emerging temporary guard posts or ambushes in the settlements for protection from Horde attacks and safe storage of their booty. Obviously, they already existed during the first half of the XVI c., because the 1552 description of Cherkasy Castle clearly indicated the borders of the ukhods. There were the ukhods along the Dnipro, Vorskla, Oryla, Tyasmin, both Inguly and Samara.¹⁵ As a rule, the Cossacks-Ukhodniki hunted in a certain area and were well acquainted with its features. On the other hand, a part of them, due to the strengthening of the control of the castle authorities and the increase of the starosta's taxes, did not return to the volost and remained in ukhods (territories) for permanent residence, which is clearly evidenced by the records of the state lustration officers. To ensure ongoing profits, the administration of the frontier starostas (elders) did not allow the construction of guard posts in the southern steppe land. In particular, the court

13 Dmitrii Bagalei, *Ocherki iz istorii kolonizatsii i byta stepnoi okrainy Moskovskogo gosudarstva* [Essays on the History of the Colonization and Life on the Steppe Border of the Moscow state] (Moscow, 1887), 147; Volodymyr Serhiichuk, *Imenem Viiska Zaporozkoho* [In the Name of the Zaporozhian Army] (Kyiv, 1991), 18–20; Yurii Mycyk & Serhii Plokyh, *Yak kozaky Ukrainu boronyly* [How the Cossacks Defended Ukraine] (Kyiv, 2018), 44.

14 Vitalii Shcherbak, *Ukrainske kozatstvo: formuvannia sotsialnoho stanu. Druha polovyna XV – seredyna XVII st.* [Ukrainian Cossacks: formation of the social state. The second half of the 15th – the middle of the 17th century] (Kyiv, 2006), 50.

15 Arkhiv Yugo-Zapadnoi Rossii [Archive of Southern and Western Russia], 7, 1 (Kiev, 1886), 84.

decision of King Sigismund I (1506–1548), dated May 6, 1546, regarding the claim of the burghers against starosta Onykii Hornostai,¹⁶ was about the ban on the construction of “horodky” (small towns) for Cherkasy residents along the Dnipro, Orel, and both Tiasmin rivers. However, as the number of Cossacks was increasing, new “horodky” appeared on the Dnipro and its tributaries up to the border with the Crimean Khanate, which created a whole network of fortified settlements.

The distance from the volost determined a peculiar sphere of life and activity of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. The need for bread and handicrafts led to the search for an adequate product for exchange. Therefore, the Cossacks often went to raids for booty to the Tatar *uluses* (settlements). Captured horses and sheep were later sold in the volost. The acquisition of the so-called “Cossack’s bread” was also accompanied by the release of compatriots from slavery. With their courageous actions, the Cossacks restrained the Turkish-Tatar expansion into Ukraine. At the same time, the southern Ukrainian starostas adopted the practice of the Cossacks, involving them in joint campaigns.¹⁷

The above considerations are directly related to the genesis of Zaporozhian Sich as a center of Cossack freedom.

The idea of creating a fortress on the southern border appeared, apparently, in the 20s–30s of XVI c. due to the Lithuanian government’s attempts to recruit Cossacks into the civil service. However, due to a lack of funds, it was later implemented by Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi, whose personal emblem with a silver cross, a golden crescent and a star on a crimson background was later transferred to the flag of the Dnipro volnytsia. The development of the Cossacks on the southern border and the organic need to unite efforts in the face of the Tatar threat became an important step in the implementation of his plan.

As a result, Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi’s fortress appeared in Zaporizhzhia in the 1550s. The oldest documentary evidence about it is mentioned in the contemporary chronicle of Fiodor Normatskyi. Particularly, the construction of a castle for the residence of “a considerable number” of Cossacks is noted.¹⁸ At the same time, the Kichkas cape on the right bank of the Dnipro river appears in the sources as its location, which made it possible to take a complete control over the Tatar river crossing ferry. It is a reliable fact that during large spring floods this cape turned into an island.¹⁹ Hence, a certain terminological confusion arose in individual statements of researchers, when Khortytsia is usually understood as Velyka Khortytsia Island, where especially many traces of the material culture of Cossacks remain. However, Lev Padalka already gave a

16 Ibid., 372.

17 Shcherbak, *Ukrainske kozatstvo*, 51–2.

18 “Letopisets Normatskogo” [“Chronicler of Normat”], in *Vremennik Moskovskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskih*, 5 (Moscow, 1850), 103.

19 Vasilii Liaskoronskii, *Gilom Levasser de Boplan i yego istoriko-geograficheskie trudy otnositelno yuzhnoi Rossii. Opisanie Ukrainy, II. Karty Ukrainy* [Guillaume Levasseur de Boplan and his historical and geographical works on southern Russia. Description of Ukraine, II] (Kiev, 1901), 14.

clear explanation of the existence of two islands with a similar name – Velyka and Mala Khortytsia – and established their geographical location.²⁰

Basing upon archival and cartographic materials, Viktor Fomenko conducted a comprehensive study of the possible location of the Vyshnevetskyi's fortress in the landscape of this Dnipro area based on. He refers to the diary of the ambassador from the German Emperor Rudolf II of Habsburg (1576–1612) to the Cossacks, in which Erich Lassota writes about Kichkas cape on his way to the Sich, and when he returns, he calls the same geographical object Mala Khortytsia Lake, saying that “there was a castle there, built by Vyshnevetskyi thirty years ago and later destroyed by Turks and Tatars).²¹ Accordingly, the researcher equates them, making a logical conclusion that “Vyshnevetskyi fortress could only be on the Kichkas Cape.”²² This statement seems quite acceptable, considering the future practice of creating similar fortifications in Zaporizhzhia.

Another issue is about the architectural style of the castle. It is possible to refer to European counterparts of that time and take as a basis the widespread Old Dutch system of fortification, namely the construction of a quadrangular castle with projecting bastions. According to this principle, in 1635, the Kodak fortress was built near the first Dnipro rapid.²³ At the same time, the implementation of such a project on the borderlands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania without adequate government support in the middle of the XVI c. seems doubtful. Obviously, the castle was not built by specialized urban planners, but constructed of wood by Vyshnevetskyi's servants and Cossacks and was fortified on the outside with high ramparts, which were later washed away by the Dnipro water during violent floods, so that even the remains of the foundations could never be found.

The charter of Sigismund II August to Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi (1557) provides reliable evidence of the purpose of the castle in Zaporizhzhia. In that charter, the king expressed gratitude for the construction of the fortress, for the steadfastness and courage demonstrated in the defence against the Perekop Tatars, and promised not to forget the deeds of the prince in the future: “As for the castle you built and the service you showed to us, such service is pleasant to us, because you built a castle for us, the owner, in the right place, and it is such a castle that could reliably restrain evil people, wreckers, and secure our dominions. But in order to strengthen that castle with men and military equipment, as you wrote to us about it, without your coming to us in person, we now have no solid grounds to fulfil it, although taking you out of the castle

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- 20 Lev Padalka, “Po voprosu o sushchestvovanii Zaporozhskoi Sechi v pervye vremena zaporozhskogo kazachestva” [“Towards the question of existence of the Zaporozhian Sich in the early days of the Zaporozhian Cossacks”], *Kiievskaia starina* 5 (1894), 260–3.
- 21 Erikh Liasota zi Stebleva, “Shchodennyk” [“Diary”], *Zhovten* 10 (1984): 103, 109.
- 22 Viktor Fomenko, “Kichkaska pereprava i horodok na Malii Khortytsi” [“Kichkas Crossing and Town on Mala Khortytsia”], in *Istorychni dzherela ta yikh vykorystannia*, 2 (Kyiv, 1966), 122.
- 23 Marian Dubiecki, *Kudak twierdza kresowa i jej okolice* [Kudak Borderland Fortress and its Neighborhood] (Warszawa, 1879), 139.

for this time is also not suitable in view of the news from you and from other countries about the intention of the great prince of Moscow to build castles beside the Dnipro river in the very place where you wanted to build cities, on our land, and also because of the quibbles that the Cossacks could use in your absence, exposing our state's lands to danger. Taking you out of the castle would also not be good for the fact that, by remaining in it, you could bring great benefit, preventing the Cossacks from harassing the shepherds and harming the uluses of the Turkish king, for many reasons, for our agreement and oath with the Turkish emperor and eternal peace with the king of Perekop.”²⁴ The monarch's desire to keep a permanent military garrison in the castle to prevent clashes between the Cossacks and the Tatars would be incomprehensible if it was intended only for the Zaporozhians. According to the royal decree, the construction of the fortress had a threefold purpose: to create an outpost of the fight against Tatar aggression, to prevent the appearance of Muscovite castles in Zaporizhzhia, and to exercise control over the actions of the Ukrainian Cossacks.

Different dates are offered in the domestic historiography to describe the beginning of construction of the Vyshnevetskyi castle within the period 1554–1555 with reference to indirect sources. The construction of the fortress certainly required significant material and human resources. Perhaps, their lack became an impetus for searching for other options in settling the border conflicts between the Crimean Tatars and the Zaporozhians, namely, relying on the support of the Ottoman Porte. According to Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, Vyshnevetskyi “had an idea of a two-front coalition: relying on the Lithuanian-Polish state and maintaining good relations with Turkey, to keep Crimea in his hands.”²⁵ Obviously, in order to implement this plan, Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi travelled to Tsargrad with a large retinue in the summer of 1553. The prince's six-month stay in the capital of the Ottoman Empire was marked by friendly receptions at the Sultan's court, which could be facilitated by Roksolana, the wife of Suleiman II Kanuni (1520–1566). After returning from Turkey at the beginning of 1554, Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi had an audience near Lublin with King Sigismund II Augustus, who granted the prince a letter of protection and ordered him to carefully guard the southern border. At the same time, Vyshnevetskyi used his alliance with the Muscovites in the anti-Tatar confrontation. In the spring of 1556, they carried out a joint campaign against the Crimean Tatars and the Turkish fortress of Ochakiv, capturing hundreds of cattle near it, as the sultan wrote in a letter to the Polish king.²⁶ At the same time, the prince was completing the fortification of the castle, preparing for a long fight against the Hordes.

Written sources do not reveal any direct evidence of the functioning of Sich in the 50s of XVI c., and only the existence of a “town” or “castle” in Zaporizhzhia is

24 Akty, odnosiaschiesia k istorii Yuzhnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii [Acts Related to the History of Southern and Western Russia], 2 (Saint Petersburg, 1865), 148–9.

25 Hrushevskyi, *Istoriia Ukrayiny-Rusi*, 116.

26 Dzherela do istorii Ukrainy-Rusi [Sources for the History of Ukraine-Rus], 8 (Lviv, 1908), 27.

recorded. Hypothetically, it can be assumed that this is where the Cossacks gathered before and after the military campaigns. As showed in the research by the French historian Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, based on Ottoman archives, “Cossacks” were hardly mentioned in Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi army, not to mention “Sich army.” Instead, “Dmytrashka” soldiers were often called simply “Russian.”²⁷ In addition, none of the currently known sources directly mention “Sich” or or give an opportunity to track either a *kish* or *kish otamans*, or the traditions of democratic elections of kish otamans. At the same time, Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi is described in the documents as the only owner, and not a leader elected by the Sich people. Thus, the identification of the “castle” of Vyshnevetskyi with the first Zaporozhian Sich seems doubtful.

At the same time, the interest in clarifying the issue has led to the research containing logical and reasoned conclusions. As Mykhailo Vladymyrskyi-Budanov rightly noted, “Khortytsia fortress became a nest of the Nyz volnytsia [freemanship], which served as the seed of the future Sich.”²⁸ The statement of Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, who called the prince “the spiritual father of the hearth of the new Ukrainian plebeian republic”²⁹ in an article devoted to the historical merits of Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi, is quite acceptable. Lubomyr Vynar, a well-known American researcher of Cossack history, considered Vyshnevetskyi’s castle on the island of Mala Khortytsia to be “the first prototype of the Cossack Sich, in which the military and economic life of the Zaporozhians developed.”³⁰

The “town” of Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi did not last long. In early 1557, the army of the Crimean khan Devlet Giray I (1551–1577) surrounded the castle and tried to capture it by assaults that continued for several weeks. However, due to heavy losses, the Crimeans were forced to retreat. In the fall, during the second campaign, Turkish and Wallachian troops joined the Hordes. Vyshnevetskyi was forced to retreat to Cherkasy due to its numerical superiority. The fortress on Mala Khortytsia was destroyed, but it had a significant impact on the evolution of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. The castle garrison apparently included, in addition to the Cossacks, representatives of the military population, namely *boyars*, servants, and drabs. And living as a single community in the specific conditions of the southern border contributed to the

27 Shantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, “Litovskii kondoter XVI v. – kniaz Dmitrii Vyshnevetskii i obrazovanie Zaporozhskoi Sechi po dannym ottomanskikh arkhivov” [“Lithuanian Condottiere of the XVI c. Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi and the Formation of the Zaporozhian Sich according to the Ottoman Archives”], in *Franko-russkiiie ekonomicheskiie sviazi* (Moscow-Paris, 1970), 64.

28 Mikhail Vladimirovich Budanov, “Naseleniie Yugo-Zapadnoi Rossii ot vtoroi poloviny XV v. do Liublinskoi unii (1569 g.)” [“Population of South-Western Russia from the second half of the XV century till the Union of Lublin (1569)”], in *Arkhiv Yugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 7, 2 (Kiev, 1890), 168.

29 Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, “Baida-Vyshnevetskyi v poezii i istorii” [“Baida-Vyshnevetskyi in Poetry and History”], *Zapysky ukrayinskoho naukovooho tovarystva v Kyievi* 3 (1909): 108–39.

30 Lubomyr Vynar, “Kniaz Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi” [“Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi”], in *Kozatska Ukraina. Vybrani tvory* (Kyiv-Lviv-New York-Paris, 2003), 109.

emergence of a peculiar military-political organization of the Zaporozhian society as its model. It is quite logical that, as the number of Cossacks in the region increased, it was later implemented in the form of the Kish system of the Zaporozhian Sich, which lasted until the second half of the XVIII c.

The destruction of the Vyshnevetskyi “town” did not stop the further development of the network of Cossack communities in this region. Therefore, it is symptomatic that in a letter to the Zaporozhian Cossacks, dated November 20, 1568, Sigismund II August addressed them for the first time as a separate group of Ukrainian people, who “move from our Ukrainian castles and places, in the field and in other ukhods: we have information that you, in border areas, in different ukhods, living independently, subjects of the Turkish king, Chabans, and Tatars of the Perekop king, coming to their uluses and nomads, you are doing great harm and cruelty to them, and thus you are bringing the threat made from the enemy to the borders of our dominions.”³¹ The monarch was worried about the permanent residence of Cossacks in Zaporizhzhia, accompanied by raids on Tatar lands, which significantly threatened peaceful relations between the Crimean Khanate and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On the other hand, the presence of a large Cossack contingent made it necessary to create a single center for coordinating efforts. Contemporaries of the events, Polish historians Marcin Bielski and Bartosz Paprocki, recorded its emergence at the turn of the 70s and 80s of XVI century on the Tomakivka Island³², as evidenced by current researchers.³³ Only from this time onward can we talk about the establishment of the kish in Tomakivka as a military-political form of unification for the Zaporozhians. The sources mention the Sich officers, headed by the Kish otaman, referred to as the hetman during campaigns. The Cossack leader’s regalia of power included a mace and tug, among other items.³⁴

Noting the differences in the organization of the Sich community and the Cossacks who lived in the volost during this period, Mykhailo Hrushevsky wrote: “In this way, Zaporizhzhia significantly surpassed the “town” Cossacks in its political evolution, using the traditional term – in its organization ‘in volosts.’ In the latter,

31 Arkhiv Yugo-Zapadnoi Rossii, 3, 1 (Kiev, 1863), 5; Dokumenty ukrainskoho kozatstva XVI – pershoi polovyny XVII st.: universaly, lystuvannia, uhody, uporiad. Viktor Brekhunenko ta in. [Documents of the Ukrainian Cossacks of the XVI - first half of the XVII c.: universals, correspondence, agreements, ed. Viktor Brekhunenko and others] (Kyiv, 2016), 40.

32 Herby rycerstwa polskiego przez Bartosza Paprockiego zebrane i wydane roku 1584 [Coats of arms of Polish knights by Bartosh Paprocki compiled and published in the year 1584] (Kraków, 1858), 158; Kronika Marcina Bielskiego [The Chronicle of Marcin Bielski], 3 (Sanok, 1856), 1358.

33 Andrii Hurbyk, “Vynyknennia Zaporozkoi Sichi (khronolohichni ta terytorialni aspekty problemy)” [“The emergence of the Zaporozhian Sich (chronological and territorial aspects of the problem)”]. *Ukrainskyj istorychnyj zhurnal* 6 (1999): 15; Myroslav Zhukovskyy, *Tomakivska Zaporozka Sich (do 450-richchia yii zasnuvannia)* [Tomakivska Zaporizhzhia Sich (for the 450th anniversary of its foundation)] (Nikopol, 2018), 19–20.

34 Herby rycerstwa polskiego przez Bartosza Paprockiego zebrane i wydane roku 1584, 158–63.

it remained entirely disenfranchised and unrecognized as an organization. As a social stratum, it lacked organization and faced complete oppression from the administration and nobility. Meanwhile, in the Nyz, it had become a strongly consolidated and increasingly organized force, driven by a sense of its distinctiveness and independence. The later tradition, which regarded Zaporizhzhia as the proper center and leader of the Cossacks, and deemed its decisions (rather than the decisions of the military councils of the town regiments) authoritative for the entire Cossack community, thus had its roots and justification in relationships from the middle of the XVI c. Zaporizhzhia was the heart of Cossack strength, solidarity, and organization.”³⁵ The consolidation of the Cossack population originated in the open spaces of the Zaporizhzhia region, well in advance of the so-called “town” Cossacks, associated with the registered Zaporozhian Cossack Army.

Conclusion

The emergence of the Cossack community on the southern border was conditioned by its population growth and the necessity to protect Ukrainian lands from Tatar expansion. The extended periods during which the Cossacks were away from the volosts stimulated the process of uniting into cohesive units led by an experienced ataman. They constructed fortified towns and small settlements to defend against Horde attacks and securely store their booty. Russian officials wanted to use the Cossack potential and repeatedly offered the ruler of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to build a powerful fortress on the border with the Crimean Khanate in the 20s and 40s of the XVI c. However, due to a shortage of resources, Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi was only able to realize this idea later. There are different versions regarding the castle's location, purpose, and architectural style. However, the idea of identifying Vyshnevetskyi “town” with the so-called “Khortytska Sich” seems doubtful. No direct evidence of the Sich's functioning in the 50s of the XVI c. has been found in written sources. Only the presence of a “fortress” or “castle” in Zaporizhzhia is recorded. At the same time, a representative of an aristocratic family made great efforts to defend Ukrainian lands, thus contributing to the consolidation of the Cossack community. This marks the outstanding role of Prince-knight Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi in national history. The castle he built on the Kichkaskii cape of the Dnipro River, also documented in the sources as Mala Khortytsia, served as a prototype for fortifications of the Zaporozhian community. This community, established on the island of Tomakivka in the XVI c., came to be known as the Zaporozhian Sich.

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35 Hrushevskyi, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusi*, 141.

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