

Flag of the Chernihiv regiment – middle of XVII century.

1651.

Canvas.

Needlework, painting

Height: 140 cm., width: 210 cm., flagstaff: 244 cm

Army Museum of Sweden (Armémuseum) - Swedish State Trophy Collection .

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This item is a Cossack flag from the period of National Liberation Revolution which took place in the middle of XVII century. It is one of the most unique and priceless artifacts surviving today. The flag's colors have faded with time. There are marks left by firearms in the lower right corner - an indication that the flag was carried through battles. Various watercolor paintings from XVII-XVIII centuries help us restore the flag's original appearance: it was light cherry color. The cross located in the center of the flag, which is barely visible now, was white. The top and the bottom parts of the banner are decorated with azure edging.

The flag was lost on June 26th, 1651 at Ripky. Cossack troops lead by Chernihiv Colonel Martyn Nebaba were defending against the army of the Lithuanian Hetman Janusz Radziwiłł that opened an attack on Kyiv. Drawings and descriptions of the Cossack flags taken during the Kyiv and Ripky battles were made by a witness of those events. Now they are kept among the papers of at the Janusz Radziwiłł department of manuscripts of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Russian National Library in Saint Petersburg. A total of 26 flags are depicted in the drawings. Twelve of these flags were kept in Stockholm (as evidenced by the watercolors by Goffman), and another $\#$ ten survived until today and belong to the State Trophy Collection of Sweden.

Traditionally the military flags obtained in battles were considered very valuable trophies and were presented as gifts to the royalty to express devotion and loyalty to one's ruler or ally. Evidently, Janusz Radziwiłł followed this custom, reporting with great pompousness on the military campaign of 1651 to the Polish Sejm. This action had a significant political subtext: the Field Hetman wanted to exalt the Polish King in the eyes of the Parliament as the main leader of Rzeczpospolita's military success and to dissipate suspicions about his own claims to the Hetman bulava (mace) that were ascribed to him by his many adversaries. Together with his cousin Bogus Radziwiłł who also carried out a successful campaign in 1651 and was stationed at Berestechko with his three regiments as a part of the royal army, the Lithuanian Hetman presented the King with 36 flags taken from Cossacks and Tatars. Here is how researcher Ya. Smirnov, describes these events citing sources in his fundamental work "Drawings of Kyiv in 1651 based on copies from the end of XVIII century": "The next year, 1652, began with a triumph for the Count Janusz at the Sejm in Warsaw; after arriving to the Sejm a month after its opening, on February 26th, in the absence of the Crown Hetman, Janusz delivered a report on the success of both armies all the way through to the Bila Tserkva treaty. Expressions of gratitude lasted for several hours. This report by Count Janusz about the war of 1651, as well as that of 1649, was evidently similar to the "Commentary" (essay by an anonymous author, published twice in the middle of XVII century (in 1653 and 1655), and dedicated to the Cossack revolution as reflected in its title: "Commentary on Lithuanian affairs during the Russian rebellion"; the first publication appeared in Kenigsberg, second one - in Elblong), at least in regards to content, if not in text itself. The King was presented with 36 flags and badges taken from the Cossacks and Tatars by Janusz and Boguslav Radziwiłł and the General of the Senate thanked them personally, while expressing his gratitude to all those fighting for their homeland". The significance of this event was noted in the foreign press. In particular, "Gazette de France" relayed this episode to its readers in a report from Warsaw on March 14th, 1652.

It was established that the Swedish obtained this flag "second hand": they captured it during the famous three-day battle for Warsaw in 1656. From that moment, the flag's fate was linked to

one of the biggest and richest collections of flags in the world, which became named the State Trophy Collection of Sweden in XX century.

The oldest inventory from 1685 attests to the fact that the flag was located in Sweden in the second half of XVII century. Between that time and the beginning of XIX century, flags were kept in various castles and palaces of the northern kingdom. In particular, starting in 1691 they were likely stored in the De la Gardie Palace called Makalös (Matchless), then from 1783 – in the Fredrikshov castle, from 1803 to 1817 – in Orangeri in Stockholm. In 1817 they were ceremoniously transferred to Riddarholmkyrkan – the mausoleum of Karl XII, where they were kept until the beginning of XX century. Northern Museum (Nordiska museet) became the next place to house the flags. Since 1960, the trophy collection has been located at the Military Museum (Armémuseum), founded in 1879 as an artillery museum (until 1932 it was called “ARTILLERIMUSEUM”). The State Trophy Collection of Sweden is one of the biggest collections in the world, containing flags from different historical periods and from many European nations. It accumulated military victory trophies of Gustav II Adolph, Karl X, XI, XII and their successors.

In 1946 the flag was restored.
Yu. S.

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