Ададуров Вадим, *Война цивилизаций. Социокультурная история русского похода Наполеона*, том 1: Религия – язык, Киев, 2017. 400 р. ISBN 978-617-7313-16-7

As one of the main historical events of the early 19th century, the Franco-Russian war of 1812 regularly attracts the attention of historians, which is why over 200 years later, the rich historiography on this topic is constantly being supplemented by new research. The publication of a new book on the 1812 war is a rather common phenomenon; however, the title, about a war between two civilisations, with its socio-cultural (religious and language) sub-theme on Napoleon's Russian campaign, prompts readers to become acquainted with a suggested new historical narrative. Besides, in his title Vadim Adadurov indicates that this is only the first volume, meaning the research will continue.

In the book's five chapters, the author analyses the concept of religion among the opponents, its significance in the political context, religious ritual practices, how the French imagined religion in Russia, the use of religious buildings by the Grande Armée, and relations with the clergy. He also discusses how the French, Polish, Latin and German languages were used. The research is based to a large extent on published sources: the journals, notes and memoirs of soldiers in the Grande Armée (150 entries), and Russian memoirs that reflect the wartime experience. So, taking this into account, the author specifies the direction of his research, by claiming that the object of research is 'not just the events of 1812, but also socio-cultural factors which determined the content of narratives by contemporaries' (p. 104). Thus, he seeks to examine memoirs as a highly subjective source for learning about history in a more multi-dimensional way, through the relationship between the narrative's author and the object being described. This method offers additional and important power when learning about the past.

The aim of the research is identified in a conceptual way: to answer the question whether Napoleon's military campaign can be viewed as the outcome of a conflict between civilisations, or as a regular war with specific objectives. When looking for the right approach to his research, the author chose the widely known concept of civilisations of

Samuel P. Huntington as his orientation marker and point of reference, or, more specifically, the part where it is claimed that the main elements in the two, different, Western and Russian civilisations are religion and language. In fact, the author appears to have practically forgotten this theoretical approach during the course of his research, and has chosen not to develop it, as from the very first sentences, he concentrates on the context of the religious practices of the opposing sides, while he only recalls the possible clash of civilisations in his summaries and intermediate conclusions, where he indicates that obvious religious differences existed that should be viewed not so much as a clash of civilisations, but as a conflict of values between France, representing the modern West, and Russia, a traditional Christian civilisation.

The long introduction shows thoroughly how, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, an unfriendly approach towards Russia formed in French society. Napoleon played an especially important role in the formation and development of this image (subjects would always coordinate themselves in line with the leader), as the defender of civilised Europe from 'barbarian Russia'. In this case, there is the question of ideology, and with the most obvious forms of propaganda, which is widely exploited in various ways as we approach the military conflict with Russia. When we speak about the prewar period, we should remember another key propaganda object of Napoleon's campaign against Russia, a composite part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL), for on 22 June, Napoleon made an announcement to his troops in Vilkaiviškis about the start of the 'second Polish war'.¹

Taking a socio-anthropological approach, the author first of all analyses the opponents' religious behaviour, i.e., as in the Grande Armée, the Russian army also conducted religious rituals to express (non) belief in God. Adadurov states that religious rituals were not practised in the Grande Armée, whereas they played an important role in the Russian army, in order to maintain discipline and uphold the fighting spirit (p. 71). The author notes correctly that Napoleon and his military units participated in Catholic services in Vilnius, but that this behaviour by the emperor was not a reflection of his religious beliefs, but of the goal to entice the traditionally religious local community over to his side (pp. 70–71). It could be added that similar examples can be found not just from the beginning of the war, but throughout the whole time the French were in Lithuania: both in Vilnius and in important cities

¹ B. Dundulis, *Napoléon et la Lituanie en 1812* (Paris, 1940), pp. 90–91.

in the districts, officials from the French administration in Lithuania and French government officials (such as the minister of foreign affairs Hugues-Bernard Maret)² attended Mass to mark important celebrations. This is evidence that the French consistently upheld this kind of policy. Adadurov explained that religiousness within the ranks of the Grande Armée (especially among the French) increased under the circumstances of the difficult retreat from Russia: suffering from food shortages and general deprivations, enduring the loss of their comrades-in-arms, and balancing between life and death (pp. 94–99).

In the next part of the study about the use of religion to serve the opponents' political interests, the author concentrates on Russia, and reveals thoroughly how Emperor Alexander I and the Russian Orthodox Church depicted Napoleon as a monster and an anti-Christ, and the French as godless 'devils escaped from hell', thereby trying to garner the people's support in the battle for the homeland and the faith (pp. 113, 120). In turn, having evaluated these kinds of Russian propagandist efforts, and understanding clearly the influence of religion on the masses, when Napoleon besieged Vitebsk, he made a proclamation in Russian announcing that the Grande Armée was carrying out missionary activities, while he considered that the best antidote to the propaganda coming from the altars of the Russian Orthodox Church was the triumph of the French artillery (p. 129).

When analysing the use of the *Te Deum* in the war, Adadurov highlights that the tradition had already been in place for a long time in continental Europe. In the former GDL, which was administered by the Lithuanian Provisional Government Commission,³ the victories of the Grande Armée were also marked by singing the *Te Deum* during Mass. In fact, in this case, it should also be said that the tradition of singing *The Deum* in thanksgiving to mark triumphs and coronations was alive in the times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and that the tradition should probably be attributed to the initiatives of local government officials.⁴ The author also shows that Russia's secular

²V. Pugačiauskas, *Lietuva ir Napoleonas* (Vilnius, 2012), pp. 193–201.

³By the decree of 1 July 1812, announced in Vilnius, Napoleon established the Lithuanian Provisional Government Commission, comprising representatives of famous local magnate families, which administered districts in Vilnius, Hrodno, Minsk and Białystok. *1812 metų Lietuvos laikinosios vyriausybės komisijos posėdžių protokolai*, ed. V. Pugačiauskas (Vilnius, 2012).

⁴W. Fijałowski, *Szlakiem Jana III Sobieskiego* (Warszawa, 1984), pp. 36, 49; V. Pugačiauskas, *Lietuva ir Napoleonas...*, pp. 193–202.

and religious authorities organised similar ceremonies, but as there were hardly any victories during the first stages of the war, it was defeats that were marked in Orthodox churches by singing religious hymns, for example, the alleged triumphs in Vitebsk and Smolensk, something which Napoleon especially hated (p. 133).

The author expands on religious themes further by explaining the circumstances behind the formation of images the French had about Russia, noting that information about the little-known country was collected from 'Statistical descriptions' prepared by the French Ministry of War, based on memoranda, notes and other kinds of publications. These are based on rather fragmentary information, in which Russia was portrayed as a country of many varied socio-cultures, nations and religions, with a prevailing Russian Orthodox character. In the author's opinion, this information, and the experiences gained during the campaign, formed an image of the Russian population as Christians, as well as stereotypical claims about the great numbers in the clerical estate, and mostly, about the fanatical piety of the Russian masses, which was alien to the more secularised resident of the French Empire (pp. 149–150, 160–161). Based on material in memoirs, Adadurov attributes one such experience to the numbers of Orthodox churches and bell towers that were seen, as an exceptional detail of the country's urban and rural landscape, and also the interest shown by officers in Napoleon's army in the never-before-seen architecture and interior decoration.

The next theme reflects another important point about Napoleon's campaign against Russia, related to the use of religious objects for military purposes. The historian gives a thorough account of the practice of using monastery buildings as temporary military barracks, hospitals, and warehouses for ammunition and food during the war, for the construction of these buildings was of the right quality, and, most importantly, they were large. As well as the monasteries, Catholic and Orthodox churches were also appropriated as temporary stables. In the author's view, this was another way the thin line between the religious and secular worlds was ultimately erased (p. 181). It should also be stressed that this kind of behaviour by the Grande Armée became the norm, not just in Russia but in Lithuania as well, which aroused a quiet dissatisfaction among the local clergy.⁵ As the researcher accurately notes, the practice had been accepted in the French army since the times of the French Revolution,

⁵ V. Pugačiauskas, *Napoleonas ir Vilnius: karinio gyvenimo kasdienybės bruožai* (Vilnius, 2004), pp. 77–79; idem, 'Prancūzmetis Kaune', *Kauno istorijos metraštis*, vol. 11 (2011), pp. 222–223.

while he sees its roots in the rationalist world-view of the Age of Enlightenment. In fact, the research would have been more comprehensive had the author shown the people's concepts of religion at this time, and the factors that determined them under the exceptional and extreme conditions of war.

When explaining the prospects of relations between Napoleon's army and the clergy, the author is absolutely correct in distinguishing the geographical space of the former GDL, which had its own specific features, from the other territory of the Russian Empire. First of all, the author's position regarding the statement that 'at first there were plans to see the country as an ally' (p. 225) should be corrected. Many authors' works do indeed mention that in Napoleon's plans, the territory and population of the GDL were viewed as allies, while the creation of the Lithuanian Provisional Government Commission and a regular army was testimony to the implementation of this idea, as well as reflecting the emperor's pragmatic aims to exploit the favourable view of the locals towards a war with Russia. The second statement about how Napoleon did not receive a good reception, based on one quote taken from the memoir of an officer in the Grande Armée ('All the most famous inhabitants and all the clergy withdrew from the city') is inaccurate (p. 225). We know that several of the more famous local people did leave the city, on the orders of the Russian government, such as Prince Michał Kleofas Ogiński, one of the leaders of the Kościuszko Uprising of 1794, Tomasz Wawrzecki, and Bishop Jeronim Strojnowski, who administered the Diocese of Vilnius from 1808.⁶ This shows that a more critical assessment should apply to memoirs.

The author does not make a deeper or broader analysis of the positions of the Catholic Church towards Napoleon, but he does talk about a 'careful relationship' (p. 227). This interpretation in historiography does not reveal much about the realities of the day, as the views of Lithuania's bishops and priests remain unclear, as do their reactions to the pro-Napoleonic government's decision to tax the clerical estate for the state's needs. Nor does it reflect their views on the use of churches and monasteries by the Grande Armée, and the rather significant damage sustained as a result. The most perceptive members of the clergy could predict the future of the Church if Napoleon won the war, not just based on the stories heard from the Duchy of Warsaw, but also by observing

⁶J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Litwa w 1812 roku* (Kraków, 1912), pp. 71–72; B. Dundulis, *Napoléon et la Lituanie...*, pp. 91, 102; D. Nawrot, *Litwa i Napoleon w roku 1812* (Katowice, 2008), pp. 198–199, 201.

what was happening in Lithuania. This was related to the activities of the Education and Religion Committee, led by Jan Sniadecki, the rector of Vilnius University (he was not a priest, as is indicated in the text on p. 226). On the other hand, the reasons for the clergy's moods and behaviour should be studied using documentation from the clergy themselves: sermons, reports, correspondence, journals and memoirs.⁷

The author distinguishes and discusses the motives for the political choices of the clergy of the Uniate Church, analysing their situation in the Russian Empire. However, he concentrates on the Orthodox Church. The author has made an important contribution in studying the case of the Mogilev Orthodox Archbishop Varlam (Grigorii Shisatskii, 1750–1820), whereby the cleric swore allegiance to Napoleon. This reveals the complicated *modus vivendi* circumstances behind the political choices of the senior Orthodox cleric (pp. 238–242). The author manages to reveal the fundamental principles and circumstances of Napoleon's relationships with the Catholic, Uniate and Orthodox clergy, discusses examples of religious tolerance from the 'arrivals from the West', and states three main conclusions. First, the Catholic Church recognised any political government as God-given. Second, the period of the war was too short to implement changes that could alter the usual daily routine of various social groups. Third, Napoleon and his close circle did not carry out the hostile policy against the Orthodox clergy it had planned in advance.

After discussing the theme of religion, Adadurov concentrates on a socio-linguistic course of research, which, we could say, richly and illustratively supplements our knowledge of everyday life under conditions of war. Stating that not just the Grande Armée, but also the Russian army, consisted of members of various nations, who spoke in various languages, the author discusses thoroughly the potential for using the main languages. French, the most widespread language in continental Europe, as the main language of communication in the Grande Armée, could be used to speak to the privileged classes both in the former GDL and in Russia (the aristocracy and some merchants). Even the military correspondence of some of the most senior commanders in the Russian army was on occasions conducted in French. This widespread use of the French language had an important communication function, making it

⁷The notes made by an anonymous monk from the Kaunas Bernardine monastery recorded in 1812 are one type of document where the manner in which the French conducted themselves in the city is described in precise detail, such as 'the behaviour of people that are completely non-religious' in sacred buildings, and in dealing with the clergy. V. Pugačiauskas, 'Prancūzmetis Kaune', pp. 229–239.

possible to make contact with members of the local population, in order to procure necessary information, and for the latter to work out the intentions of the new arrivals. Knowledge of the German language was useful in making contact with Jews, in order to obtain information about Russian military movements. In the war zone itself, Polish was frequently used as a language of communication, for there were a number of Polish soldiers in Napoleon's close circle and in the Grande Armée who could talk to Russian peasants and burghers 'who understood Polish as far as Mozhaysk' (p. 302). Officers in the Grande Armée who had a Classical education and knew Latin could use it to make contact with the clergy of various confessions. In this historian's opinion, Russian was only an auxiliary language in 'Russia proper', as most of Napoleon's officers did not know it, and only Polish officers could be of some assistance. In the most complicated situations, in communications between ordinary soldiers in the Grande Armée and the population of the Russian Empire, a handful of Russian words, gestures and miming would be employed. Adadurov draws the conclusion that it is practically impossible to point out a language conflict in the territories of the former GDL. However, a considerably more complex situation unfolded in the Russian interior, but only when trying to communicate with the ordinary population (p. 334).

By employing numerous facts, Adadurov has revealed the socio-cultural expression of religious and linguistic factors during the Franco-Russian war of 1812 in an interesting and multi-faceted way. The book gives readers an excellent chance to formulate relevant research perspectives and a new direction for general scientific discussion.

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