

# Russian Banners as Swedish Trophies from Narva 1700. A New Attempt at Identification

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The Russian order of battle. The analysis will be made by comparing the Swedish sources in Russian literature with the Swedish sources and literature dealing with the battle. The study will begin with a short presentation of the sources, and the strengths and weaknesses of the Russian army at Narva will be presented. We will then try to answer the question of identifying the Russian banners from Narva in the Swedish Trophy Collection.

## THE SOURCES

The primary Russian sources on the acquisition and presentation of the colours of the Russian army at Narva are the accounts available for this presentation. However, some information has been preserved by Vladimir Velichkov in his articles on the battle of Narva with a Russian perspective and he has very kindly supplied me with further information, for which I am very grateful.

There are four near-contemporary Swedish lists of the trophies taken at Narva. The first is that published in the diary of Lieutenant Spörings of the Swedish Foot Guards which lists the Russian trophies, two colours, 19 standards and one *zapovon*, delivered to the arsenal at Narva

in the summer of the first year of the Swedish war. The trophies, an dragon standard, five standards, seven *zapovons* and 14 prisoners, of which 10 of latter 7 captured and 3 of the last. The descriptions of the trophies have slightly different writings from the earlier lists but show all the items mentioned, which facilitates identification, and also the number of prisoners taken from the "captured" by the Russian army during the battle.

The contents of the four lists can, with some simplification, be arranged like this:

Item	Quantity	Trophy	Source
Standards	5	1	1
Standards	7	1	2
Standards	7	1	3
Standards	7	1	4
Standards	7	1	5
Standards	7	1	6
Standards	7	1	7
Standards	7	1	8
Standards	7	1	9
Standards	7	1	10
Standards	7	1	11
Standards	7	1	12
Standards	7	1	13
Standards	7	1	14
Standards	7	1	15
Standards	7	1	16
Standards	7	1	17
Standards	7	1	18
Standards	7	1	19
Standards	7	1	20
Standards	7	1	21
Standards	7	1	22
Standards	7	1	23
Standards	7	1	24
Standards	7	1	25
Standards	7	1	26
Standards	7	1	27
Standards	7	1	28
Standards	7	1	29
Standards	7	1	30
Standards	7	1	31
Standards	7	1	32
Standards	7	1	33
Standards	7	1	34
Standards	7	1	35
Standards	7	1	36
Standards	7	1	37
Standards	7	1	38
Standards	7	1	39
Standards	7	1	40
Standards	7	1	41
Standards	7	1	42
Standards	7	1	43
Standards	7	1	44
Standards	7	1	45
Standards	7	1	46
Standards	7	1	47
Standards	7	1	48
Standards	7	1	49
Standards	7	1	50
Standards	7	1	51
Standards	7	1	52
Standards	7	1	53
Standards	7	1	54
Standards	7	1	55
Standards	7	1	56
Standards	7	1	57
Standards	7	1	58
Standards	7	1	59
Standards	7	1	60

Several attempts have been made to analyse the banners of the Russian Army taken as Swedish trophies at the Battle of Narva in November 1700. Nobody has so far succeeded to finally attribute more than a few of the colours taken to individual regiments. Inspired by my study on the Swedish banners lost at the battle of Poltava, where, thanks to excellent Russian sources, a correlation could be done on the two sides' orders of battle, I wished to make another attempt on the trophies of the battle of Narva. Thus, I will here make an attempt to attribute at least a few trophies and to link them to the respective regiments' deployment in the Russian order of battle. The analysis will be made from second-hand Russian sources in Russian literature and from Swedish sources and literature dealing with the matter.

The study will begin with a short presentation of the available sources, and then the strength and composition of the Russian army at Narva will be recollected. We will then turn to the question of identifying the Russian banners from Narva in the Swedish Trophy Collection.

## THE SOURCES

No primary Russian sources on the acquisition and presentation of the colours of the Russian units at Narva have been available for this presentation. However, some information has been presented by Vladimir Velikanov in his articles on the battle of Narva with a Russian perspective and he has very kindly supplied me with further information, for which I am very grateful.<sup>1</sup>

There are four near-contemporary Swedish lists of the trophies taken at Narva. The first is that published in the diary of Lieutenant Sperling of the Swedish Foot Guards which lists the Russian trophies, 150 colours, 19 standards and 101 "kupyas", delivered to the arsenal at Narva

immediately after the battle. The next is the specification of trophies, 148 colours, 22 standards, 100 "kupyas" and 9 pennants, transported to Stockholm in the summer of 1701, and the third is the printed account of the triumph in Stockholm at the end of May in 1701 with an appendix with a "Correct list ..." of the trophies: 145 colours (of which 26 are described as torn and of various hues), 16 standards and 100 "dragoon pennants", taken and paraded through Stockholm in a new triumph in July 1701. These sources have been discussed by Petrelli and Lagrelius in their study of the Narva trophies.<sup>2</sup>

There is also a list of the Narva trophies in an inventory in the accounts of the Stockholm Great Arsenal from 1703: 150 colours, 20 dragoon standards, five standards, seven "colour pikes" and 114 pennants, of which 58 of taffeta, 1 of linen and 55 of damask.<sup>3</sup> The descriptions of the trophies have slightly different wordings from the earlier lists but above all they are more detailed, which facilitates identification, and also, the trophy collection has not yet been too "contaminated" by Russian trophies taken after Narva.

The contents of the four lists can, with some simplification, be summarized like this:

Type	Sperling	Transport	Triumph	1703 Account
Province colours	6	3	3	4
Tsar's colour		1	1	1
Colonel's colours	11	9	10	11
"New" (comp.) col.	111	120	105	118
"Old" (streltsy) col.	22	15	26	16
Sum of "colours"	150	148	145	150
Dragoon standards	19	22	16	20
Standards				5
Pikes				7
Pennants, taffeta	45	46	46	58
Pennants, damask	56	54	54	55
Pennants, other		9		1
Total	270	279	261	296

As is easily seen, there are ambiguities depending on how those recording the trophies have characterized them. There does not seem to have been any concrete coordination or mutual dependence when compiling the lists other than the inherent characteristics of the artefacts. It is, however, obvious that the Arsenal accounts of 1703 displays an influx of banners taken after Narva.

## TYPES OF BANNERS

The types of banners we are discussing here today basically fall into the following six categories:

- Colonel's Colours of the "New" Type or 1700 Pattern – which are all of similar design
- Company Colours of the "New" Type or 1700 Pattern were acquired for "soldier" regiments raised in 1700
- Streltsy Colours – are of the "Old" type, mostly with allegorical motifs and used by old regiments based on streltsy units
- Dragoon Standards of the "New" Type or 1700 Pattern
- Standards of the "Old" type, mostly with allegorical motifs for Russian cavalry units
- Lance pennants or "kupyas"

## PROBLEMS OF IDENTIFICATION

- The Russian sources known today only give the hues of the fields of the company colours acquired in 1700:
  - 2 red, 2 sand, 1 orange, 1 yellow, 1 green, 1 light green, 3 blue, 1 light violet, 1 grey-blue and 2 grey, the rest unknown.
- The hues of the fields are not known for individual regiments.
- Only a couple of Sperling's attributions are verified and some are definitely wrong, so his information is at best unreliable.
- It is necessary to discriminate the preserved Narva trophies from trophies from other encounters.

## FACTORS FACILITATING IDENTIFICATION

- Comparatively reliable near-contemporary Swedish records of the trophies taken are preserved.
- A large number of banners are preserved and are in reasonably good condition.
- The design can be analysed in general outline and in detail.
- The damask patterns can be analysed and compared.
- The craftsmanship can be analysed and compared.
- The Russian units taking part and their deployment in the order of battle are known with pretty good accuracy.

## SEVEN PLATES OF BANNERS



4.1 Inv no ST 22:135,1. Photo: Armémuseum

**COLONEL'S COLOUR OF 1700 PATTERN** The white colonel's colours preserved today in the trophy collection are as many as nineteen but according to the contemporary Swedish trophy lists only about ten with a black or "hair coloured" double eagle were taken at Narva. On ten of the preserved colours the double eagle holds the orb in the dexter claw or nearest the hoist side and the sceptre in the sinister and on nine it holds them the other way round.



4.2 Inv no ST 22:150. Photo: Armémuseum

**COMPANY COLOUR OF SEMYONOVSKY REGIMENT** The colour of the 4<sup>th</sup> company of the Semyonovsky Regiment here represents the type of colour issued to the Guards regiments. It has a number of design features that differ from the corresponding details of the line regiments. For instance the palm branches have *seven* leaves and are characterized by a certain plasticity in their design.



4.4 Inv no ST 22:220. Photo: Armémuseum

**COLONEL'S STANDARD OF SCHNEWENTS' DRAGOONS** The colonel's standard of the Schnewents' Dragoons can be identified by the identical scroll from the company standards and also displays the same design of the palm branches.



4.5 Inv no ST 22:160. Photo: Armémuseum

**COMPANY COLOUR OF 1700 PATTERN, TYPE I** This company colour of a so far unidentified unit has a St. Andrew's cross that Commander Belavenets in his notes on the Russian colours preserved in Stockholm characterized as "type I", that is inserted directly into the field. The palm branches on the type I colours display *four* leaves.



4.3 Inv no ST 22:121,4. Photo: Armémuseum

**COMPANY STANDARD OF SCHNEWENTS' DRAGOONS** The company standard of the Schnewents' Dragoons, who took part in the battle unmounted, has a design of the palm branches that features a design similar to those on the Semyonovsky colours. Is this an indication of production in the same workshop?

earlier campaigns. Lefort's regiment, at the Narva battle commanded by Colonel de Lima, seems to be the most probable candidate with its performance in the Azov campaign.

## RUSSIAN ORDER OF BATTLE AT NARVA

The Russian Order of Battle at Narva is relatively well known, but our knowledge of the deployment is primarily based on sources from the Swedish side. On the Russian units present at the battle the sources are basically in agreement. A number of engravings illustrating the battle exist.<sup>4</sup>

The battle order was the following according to the recent presentation of Vladimir Velikanov:

- **RIGHT WING** – GOLOVIN Preobrazhensky, Semyonovsky and Fleewark regiments, Schnevents' Dragoons (unmounted), Ivanitsky, Dewson, Mews, Bieltz, Pohlmann, Ivan and Matvey Treyden regiments – two Guards, one regiment of unmounted dragoons and eight "soldier" regiments.
- **TRUBETSKOY CENTRE** Bruce, Colomb, Zakhary Vestov, Fyodor Bayshev, Yury Vestov and Kozodavlev regiments – two "soldier" and four old regiments on the streltsy establishment.
- **LEFT WING** – WEIJDE Strekalov, Yelchaninov and Sukharov ?, de Lima/Lefort and Alexander Gordon regiments, Gultz Dragoons, von Werden, Fyodor Balk Jr., von Schweden, Junger, Nikolay Balk Sr., W. van Delden and I. van Delden regiments – nine "soldier" regiments and one regiment of unmounted dragoons. The deployment of the three old regiments of Strekalov, Yelchaninov and Sukharov on the streltsy establishment is uncertain. It seems more probable that these units were on the Ivangorod side, particularly as the two latter colonels were killed as a result of a Swedish sortie from Ivangorod. It is also strange that no Russian units in the contravallation lines west of Narva are mentioned.
- **RUSSIAN CAVALRY.** Unfortunately there has not been time to investigate the preserved trophies of older type used by the Russian cavalry. The same is valid for the large number, around 100, of the preserved lance pennants or kupyas.



4.6 Inv no ST 22:178. Photo: Armémuseum

**COMPANY COLOUR OF 1700 PATTERN, TYPE 2** Here comes a company colour of "type 2" with a St. Andrew's cross imposed on a medallion and featuring palm branches with *five* leaves.



ST 22:193,4

4.7 Inv no ST 22:193,4. Photo: Armémuseum

**COMPANY COLOUR OF 1700 PATTERN, OF MODIFIED TYPE 2, LEFORT'S/DE LIMA'S REGIMENT?** This colour, representing a suite of ten, differs from the "normal" 1700 pattern type 2 by having *an added dark green laurel wreath*. The added laurel wreath must reasonably indicate some form of distinction awarded to the regiment in question, presumably from achievements in

## HYPOTHESIS

I am afraid that I have not been able to give you the substantial information on the distribution of the Russian banners along the line of battle that I had hoped for. Instead I have to present a hypothesis. The prerequisites of this hypothesis are the following:

- There has been a discussion whether from the Swedish side there was a breach of the conditions of surrender of the Russian units and that they had to leave their banners before marching off. We have seen that a number of colours of the Russian Guards units had been taken as Swedish trophies – but not all. It seems most likely to me that the units of the right wing lost banners in the fighting but were then allowed to march off with those still in their possession.
- For the units of Trubetskoy's centre the fate of the banners is not known.
- The units of the left wing had to lay down their banners as they marched off.
- Therefore, it seems most probable that the preserved suites of banners of a limited number belonged to the right wing and those that are near complete for the normally twelve company regiments belonged to the left wing. I have here rather arbitrarily set the latter number to seven or more.

This would imply the following distribution of the preserved colours of Guards and the line infantry regiments of the new type (according to Sperling/"Correct list ..."):

- RIGHT WING 8/7 Colours of Preobrazhensky Regt 1st, 2nd & 4th Bns, 3 Colours of Semyonovsky Regt 1st Bn (2 dark blue ?), 6 ? Standards of Schnevents Dragoons, 3 light grey Colours, 3 light blue Colours, 4 ash coloured Colours, 6 dark ash-grey Colours
- LEFT WING 11/10 red Colours, 20/18 green Colours of 2 regiments, 21 light ash-grey Colours of 2 regiments, 10 orange Colours (of de Lima/Lefort Regiment ?), 6 ? Standards of the Gulitz Dragoons, 8 isabelline Colours, 7 hair-coloured Colours, 7 brown Colours

*I would like to have the reactions of our Russian guests.*  
And as regards further research I have a few questions:

- Can Russian sources help us further?
- Can different designers and workshops be identified?
- Are the different damask patterns of assistance?
- What other means are there to identify the preserved banners and their distribution on different units?
- How can we proceed with the lance pennants or kupyets? We certainly need more information on how they were used on the battlefield, but also on their production.