
Abstract

Belgorod Fortress (Akkerman) in Historical Portraits

Belgorod-on-the-Dniester Fortress (Odessa Oblast, Ukraine) is 600 years old. Its present design was formed in 1414–1450s. At its different stages, the Fortress was constructed with support from Moldovan rulers Alexander cel Bun, Stephan II, Alexandrel and Stephan III, and most likely, also the city community and Sultan Bayazid II. After the dramatic siege in 1484 and transition of the city under the Ottoman rule, the Fortress underwent comprehensive reconstruction which included almost the whole length of its external defense line. Belgorod-on-the-Dniester Fortress was exposed to frequent reconstruction in its long history, and thus gradually changed its appearance. The last 250 years reflected the character and development of these processes in hundreds of images — pictures, engravings and photos. This iconographic material thus turned into an important source for the history of this fortification complex.

This album contains the largest collection of historical images of Belgorod-on-the-Dniester Fortress, for most of them it is the first publication. Many illustrations are known only to a small group of specialists. All illustrations are supplied with the author's comments, have continuous numbering and are structured chronologically and thematically.

The volume contains all known watercolors of the Fortress performed by the Russian artist M. M. Ivanov. It is the first publication of their

high-quality full-color reproductions. Also exceptional are several maps of the Fortress and Akkerman's trading quarter dated by 1770–90s. Quite interesting is a series of drawings of the Fortress and Sultan Selim's hamam made by C. Bossoli in 1838, found in Odessa Museum of Local History and Odessa Oblast Archive. Quite important share of illustrations comes from photo collections made by Iasi University Professor P. Nicorescu and his colleague Gr. Avakian, who studied the Fortress in 1920–1930s. Illustrations found in the National Archive of Romania and Military Museum of Bucharest are also published for the first time. Postcards and photographs made in the period before the Russian revolution cover the chronological period from 1869 to 1915. Soviet-time pictures (1940–1980s) are of big importance, because they were made during large-scale repairs and restoration works in the Fortress. Very informative are the photos made during archaeological digs in the Citadel and the Civil Court in 1977–1982.

A special feature of this publication is a series of color shots of commemorative embedded plates of 15th century, removed from the Fortress's walls in 19th century; for a hundred years they were thought to have been lost, yet discovered by the author in 2013. This work is primarily a study into sources and aims to offer for scientific discussion a new, earlier little studied information on Akkerman Fortress and adjacent urban territory from the period preceding large-scale modernization or subsequent reconstructions of this site.