

Archaeological survey of wooden remains from 16th-19th century Sviyazhsk

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the results of an archaeological survey carried out in 2008 on the site of the former faubourg (suburb) of Sviyazhsk town. The survey obtained and analysed useful information about the nature and contents of the cultural layer being revealed by the eroding banks of the Kuibyshev reservoir. The survey represented the first archaeological research carried out in the Sviyazhsk faubourg, and yielded much information on its layout. The remains of approximately 40 wooden constructions (buildings, fences, pavements, etc.) from the second half of the 16th-beginning of the 20th century were uncovered during the excavation. The residential character of the excavated buildings was determined by the presence of furnace remains found on the excavation site. The unified orientation of the household buildings from various layers of the excavation site, dating from the mid-16th up to the 20th century, indicates the street plan of the faubourg, which was more or less maintained throughout its existence. More than half the studied constructions were damaged by fire which accordingly gave rise to the development of the Sviyazhsk faubourg. The finds - 5,374 items in total - included 2,863 ceramic fragments (of which 334 were of traditional Bulgar style); 2,391 leather items (shoes, mittens, quivers, etc.); textiles (wool, homespun linen, felt, willow fibre) and iron goods (knives, scissors, nails, etc.). The numerous finds that emerged from the excavation site reflect the life, craft, farming and trading activities of the population of this medieval town and concurred with other known sources illustrating the life of Sviyazhsk residents as the town waxed and waned in its political importance as a trading post and economic centre of the region.

Keywords

Damp layer, Faubourg, Middle Ages, Residential and household buildings, Suburb, Sviyazhsk