

The defensive capabilities of the Kazan Kremlin at the end of the 17th century

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Abstract

The article studies the condition of the fortifications, artillery and small arms in the Kazan Kremlin, at the end of the 17th century. The socio-political situation in the former Kazan Khanate after the fall of Kazan was difficult. Mass movements lasting for decades delayed the final pacification of the Middle Volga region. Within this context, it is of particular interest to find out how long Kazan city functioned as a significant military fortress. The source base of the study comprised: 1. narrative sources, reflecting military campaigns in the mid-16th century; 2. descriptions of the city of Kazan by G. Sokovninym and A. Nikonovym in 1675, and by N. A. Kudryavtsev in 1702; 3. works by foreign travellers; 4) official letters by A. Dmitriev-Mamonov, a special government agent for military preparations in Kazan during the "Bashkir rebellion." Analysis of the sources leads to the following conclusions. At the end of the 17th century Kazan still had two lines of defence: the citadel as such (the Kremlin) and the second, outer line of fortifications. The city lacked arms and ammunition. There was no permanent, experienced garrison. The government, absorbed by the problems of the Northern War and the uprising in Astrakhan and in Bashkiria, showed no special interest in maintaining Kazan. However, the militia forces derived from the regular army, commanded by Boyar Prince P. I. Khovanskii, and twelve infantry regiments that arrived with M. Schepotev were ready to put down unrest in the region. Further analysis of the Kazan fortifications requires identifying new period source material.

Keywords

City of Kazan, Defensive capabilities of the Kazan fortress, Fortifications, Fortress walls, The Kazan Kremlin