

Revisited the localization of fortifications of the 18th century on the surroundings of village of Braha in Khmelnytsky region

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Abstract: the results of the survey of the territories of the village Braha in the Khmelnytsky region, which is in close proximity to Khotyn Fortress, are highlighted in this article. A general description of the sources that has thrown a great deal of light on the fortifications of the left bank of the Dnister River opposite the Khotyn Fortress according to the modern landscape, is presented.

Keywords: monument, fortification, village of Braha, Khotyn fortress, Dnister River

Relevance of research

Today there is a lack of architectural and urban studies in the context of studying the history of the unique monument – the Khotyn Fortress. Only a few published works can be cited that cover issues of origin, existence of fortifications and it's preservation.

To take into comprehensive account of the specific conservation needs of the Khotyn Fortress, it was necessary to carry out appropriate research works (bibliographic, archival, cartographic, iconographic), including on-site surveys. During 2014–2015, the research works had been carried out by the Research Institute of Conservation Research in the context of the implementation of the Plan for the organization of the territory of the State.

During the elaboration of historical sources from the history of the city of Khotyn and the Khotyn Fortress it was put a spotlight on a great number of iconographic materials, concerning the recording of the fortifications of the New Fortress of the 18th-19th centuries. They are different in content, amount of information and execution techniques. Analyzing with them the degree of development of the fortification structure of Khotyn fortification, it was concluded that the defining element of the fortress complex construction was the Castle (Citadel), where was built a number of objects of various purpose. In addition, the natural factors, administrative boundaries and the diverse exploration of the individual components of the fortification complex are proving the existence of gaps in the understanding of the multiple areas of strategic thought about the Khotyn Fortification. This also proves the relevance of the study of the historical events and environment of the Khotyn Fortress.

The purpose of the survey

The purpose of current exploration is to cover the results of full-scale studies of the outskirts of the Khotyn Fortress and to review little-known source maps from the history of it, that display the information about

fortification objects located on the bank opposite the river Dnister in the 18th century, on the outskirts of the modern village of Braga.

Outline of the main content of the study

From historical and cartographic sources it is well known about the erection of powerful fortifications of the New Fortress around Khotyn Castle and formation of a new fortification system in the beginning of 18th century. However, very little information about the fortifications is found around the New Fortress. Only a few sources bring to us some information about the idea of a grandiose fortification complex and the Khotyn Fortress, that was being it's part.

In the 18th century the art of fortification was continuing to evolve following the traditions of earlier eras. The sources pointing to the fortifications around the New Khotyn Fortress in the second part of 18th c. on the right bank of the Dnister, when Khotyn had been go into the area of Rossian-Turkish warfare, quite well known to researchers of military campaigns of that time. Among them it should be remembered the "Battle Plan near Khotyn on April 19, 1769" published by Captain A. Petrov in 1866 [Petrov 1866], by Captain V. Sudravsky in 1906 [Sudravsky 1906: p. 140], by Colonel Y. Bayev in 1909 [Bayev 1909]. But the sources that would provide information about the fortifications on the left (opposite Khotyn Fortress) bank of the Dnister, are still very little known.

Our attention was also drawn to the events that had been taking place after August 1, 1769, when the Russian army left the camp near Khotyn and crossed to the left bank. Actually, this place is localized to the present-day territory of the village of Braga, Kamianets-Podilskyi district of Khmelnytsky region and its environs.

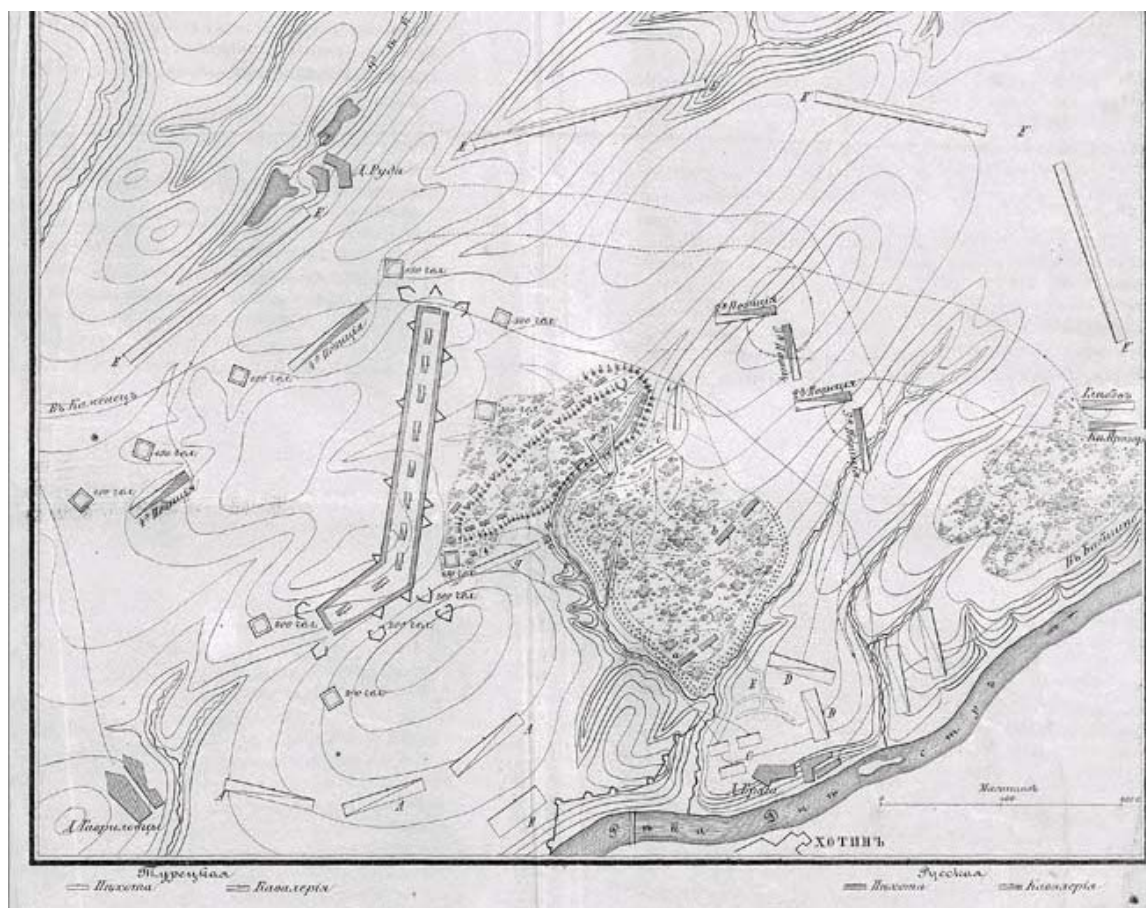


Fig. 1. Plan of the Battle of Khotyn on August 29, 1769" printed in 1866 by Captain A. Petrov

According to historical sources, after the retreat of the Russian army on the left bank by the Turks, separate units were sent to prepare the crossing means. On August 20, the Turks launched a bridge across the Dnister and sent a reinforce of 4,000 soldiers to the left bank and built a powerful "Tete-de-Pont" [Petrov 1866: p. 228, 236, 237; Sudravsky 1906: p. 144]. To cover the bridge was built a redoubt, it housed 12 thousand soldiers. There are also reports that on August 22, Russian troops detained a retransmission on the left bank.

The location of the fortifications' complex discussed above is given in the other two maps published in 1866 referred to as "Plan of battle near Khotyn August 29, 1769" (Fig. 1) [Petrov 1866: between p. 238 and 239] and "Attack on the enemy retransmission on September 6, 1769" (Fig. 2) [Petrov 1866: between p. 250 and 251], the last was also published in 1906 under the same name (Fig. 3) [Sudravsky 1906, p. 145]. It is clear that the earthen retransmission, that compared in size to the New Khotyn Fortress, was located on high strategic landmarks of a large hill formed at the interflowing of the Dnister River valley and the ancient draws (small flat-bottom valleys).

The base of military concentration around the perimeter was surrounded by a defensive man-made embankment with bastions of different configuration. A number of redoubts were scattered around it. An examination of the area where that fortification complex was graphically localized, did not achieve the desired results. The visible fortifications' remains were not found. Most of the survey plot study is a field plowed every year. Perhaps aerial survey of these sites will allow to fix the contours of the former fortifications.

The fortifications of the left-bank part of the Dnister in the outskirts of the Khotyn Fortress had existed before the events of 1769, as the cartographic sources of the 1st part of 18th century said and this makes total sense taking into account the strategic importance of the Khotyn Fortress. Cartography of the 1st part of 19th century also indicates the existence of redoubt on the left bank. However, such a range and scale as in 1769, the fortification works were never acquired again.

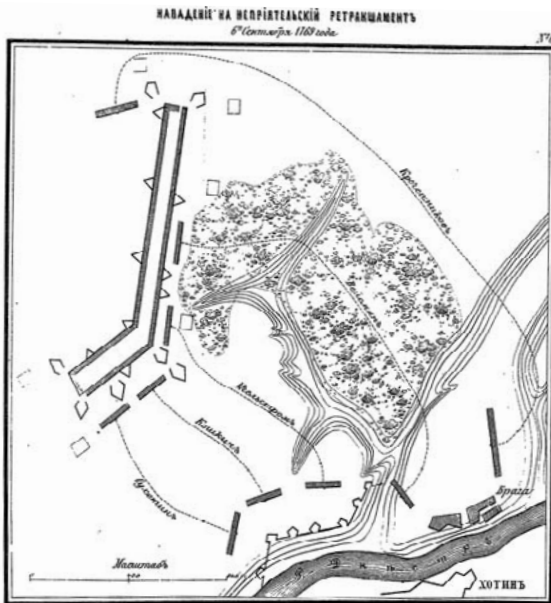


Fig. 2. Plan "Attack on the enemy retransmission on September 6, 1769" was published in 1866 by Captain A. Petrov

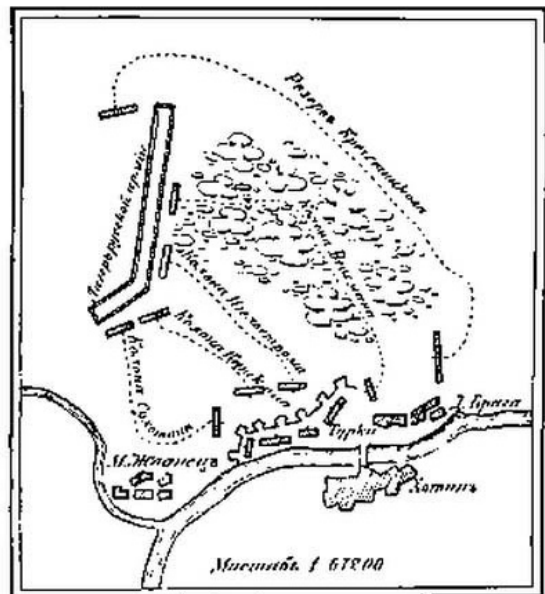


Fig. 3. The Plan "Attack On The Enemy Retransmission On September 6, 1769" was published in 1906 by Captain V. Sudravsky

Returning to the 2014 conservation studies, it would be desirable to focus on the left bank of the Dnister River, since Khotyn cannot be considered in isolation, only within its administrative boundaries, because in landscape, historical and urban boundaries, the city is one with the whole natural system, has been developed since ancient times along the both banks of the Dnister River.

The territory of the village of Braga, Kamianets-Podilskyi in the Khmelnytsky region is also part of the Dnister water area. The terrain of the village has a more gentle slope than the opposite bank and an extensive system

of draws and ravines. The territory has not been built until recently, but over the past 10 years a suburban settlement has appeared here. The planning of the newly built arrays is completely determined by the terrain and the main old roads that run along the river bed [Plan for the organization..., 2014: p. 75]. Strategically, there is also no regulation mechanism on the left bank, which has led to some loss of the traditional monument environment. The survey of the territory of the settlement and the adjacent territories confirmed only the existence of the redoubt remains (Fig. 4), while it was not possible to find other components of the majestic fortification complex on the left bank of the Dnister that mentioned above.

Using the mapping materials discussed above and computer technology, we managed to scale and collate historical sources and a contemporary satellite image of the village and its surroundings. The configuration of the retransmission and the nine redoubts around it are clearly visible (light color) in (Fig. 5), as well as the configuration of the old Dnister bed (disappeared after the dam had been built), where the fortifications now underwater are marked on the left bank.

The development of archival sources, aerial photography based on of the mentioned above scheme will allow to investigate archaeologically the sites of localization of the former fortifications, to refine the tracing of numerous fortifications of different times, that will also allow to have a new look at the specifics of the ancient fortifications of the Khotyn complex and understand the basic principles of its arrangement and landscape. At this stage, it is necessary to collect and accumulate all revealed information about the historical and cultural heritage of the settlement, about its historical sites (Fig. 6, 7), which will help to reproduce a more complete picture of the historical development of Braga village.

Conclusions

After the survey, it becomes clear that the complex of Khotyn Fortress is closely related to the environment. From the New Fortress, located below the main coastal terrace, opens a wide panorama of the Dnister and the vast expanses of the left bank. From the opposite bank, in turn, the panoramic views of the Khotyn fortress and the environment are greeted. These features of the landscape have been used in ancient times to arrange the fortifications.

As a whole, a very necessary task is a thorough study of the outlined areas, a study of the history of the settlement and some of the identified historical sites in the area and outskirts of the village of Braga. It is very important and necessary to preserve as much as possible the natural character of the Dnister floodplain and the floodplain terrace on both banks of the Dnister River in the vicinity of the Khotyn Fortress, since this territory is the most informative in the context of the visual perception of both banks of the Dnister River.



Fig. 4. Remnants of Redoubt in the Area of Braga On the North Side as of 2014. Photo by the author

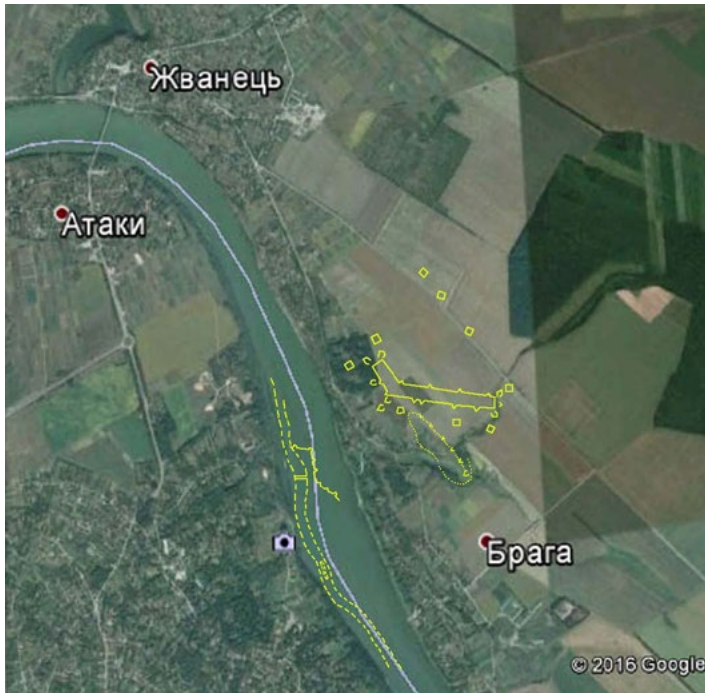


Fig. 5. The Layout of the Fortifications of the 18th century (1769) on the Outskirts of the Village. Made in 2016 by the author on the modern Google satellite photo



Fig. 6. Zebrowski's chapel and crypt in the Catholic cemetery. 2014 Google Photos



Fig. 7. Christian Temple of the 18th cent. on the territory of the village Grout. 2014. Photo by the author

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