

*View Over the Balkan Peninsula
Поглед над Балканите*

ICONOGRAPHY OF THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR OF 1877 – 1878 ON POSTCARDS OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract. The article analyzes the illustrated postcards of the early twentieth century as a source of the iconography of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 – 1878 and the objectives of the worldview of Bulgarian and Russian societies in the early 20th century. It is emphasized that during 1902 – 1912 the postal cards, dedicated to the events and participants of this military conflict, were repeatedly published in Russia and Bulgaria. It was found that the most popular were postcards with views of battle paintings by V. Vereshchagin, M. Dmitriev-Orenburg, O. Popov and others. It is determined that the theme of this war was relevant until 1912.

Keywords: the Russo-Turkish War; postcard; graphic source; battle painting; graphics

Introduction

The history of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 – 1878, caused by the rise of the national liberation movement on the Balkans and the intensification of the struggle of the great European states for the influence over the countries of the Danube basin and the Balkan Peninsula, is studied in detail in historiography. Modern authors, as a rule, try to elaborate on the certain events of the military conflict, involving historical sources, which for various reasons remained beyond the attention of researchers. Among the latter, an important place was occupied by illustrating postcards of the early 1900s with the reproductions of pictures of battle paintings, the authors of which were the participants or the witnesses of the events that have formed the idea of the reception of the Russo-Turkish War in the worldviews of people from Central and Eastern European Countries.

Postcards became widespread among the public in Europe and North America at the turn of the 19 – 20 centuries. The historical significance of a postcard is determined by the reliability of this source to characterize the objectives of worldview of society of previous epochs. The mass and democracy of this channel of interpersonal communication were due to its social focus and due to close connection of

a post card with life world of people from the given period of time. The postcards represent to researchers the everyday visual world of the people of the past, their personal testimonies, and enable researchers to explore the connections between them.

In recent decades, historians and collectors-deltiologists from European countries have initiated the publication of albums of illustrated postcards of the late nineteenth – early twentieth centuries, prepared dozens of monographs and dissertations, articles on the analysis of deltiology sources. In particular, the history of the postcard was studied by P. Weiss and K. Stehle (1988), M. Willoughby (1993), S. Hill (2007) and others. N. Yakusheva (Yakusheva, 2004) and A. Larina (Larina, 2010) defined the role of the species postcard in the social and cultural life of Moscow residents, M. Sambur (Sambur, 2014) studied the postcard as a cultural phenomenon. V. Tretyakov (Tretyakov, 2000) described the publishing activity in the issue of illustrated leaflets of the Society of St. Eugene. O. Medyakov (Medyakov, 2020) examined the German postcard of the First World War as a historical source, and I. Paur (Paur, 2015) analyzed the postcard as a source of research of the social-cultural environment and historical topography of Kamianets-Podilskyi.

Almost 90 postcards, devoted to the Russian-Turkish war of 1877 – 1878, from private collections in Kamianets-Podilskyi (Ukraine) and St. Petersburg (The Russian Federation), the collection of the information, regional-ethnography portal “Postcards Of the Russian Empire” and “The Bag” online auction, were analyzed in the given article.

Methods

Achieving a certain goal and objectives led us to the use mainly general historical and source-research methods. The Archeographic method allowed analyzing the documentary postcards on the nature of their publications, the use of appropriate photographic clichés by publishers, the study of inscriptions on the backs of postcards, and so on. Iconographic methods were used to determine the history of the origin of documentary post cards, to clarify the objects of the image, dating, authorship, the circumstances of creation, as well as to determine their authenticity. The Paleographic method is used to attribute an image object, determine its purpose, and so on.

Theory

In the last third of the 19 century, in most European countries, postal reforms had been carried out and correspondence cards/postcards had been widely circulated as the cheapest means of communication. Their spread was facilitated by the introduction of new printing equipment, the development of the railway and water transport networks, the development of domestic and international tourism, as well as the growth of the number of urban settlements and so on. All this required the

establishment of a postal system in the direction of reducing tariffs for delivery of items and their prompt delivery within a country and between countries.

The mass issue of illustrated postcards and their growing popularity led to the fact that in the early 1900s, they as a means of communication went beyond their functional purpose and became an integral part of the interior of homes, and sometimes as a collectable.

Results and discussion

1.1. In 1902, the public and state institutions of the Russian Empire and Bulgaria solemnly celebrated the 25th anniversary from the beginning of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 – 1878. The war was crucial for the national liberation of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula; it contributed to the restoration of their statehood, in particular the Bulgarian principality. To mark that anniversary, publishers I. Kushnerev and K. Fischer arranged and published “The album of paintings as a memento of the 25th anniversary of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 – 1878” with 35 reproductions of battle paintings by artists O. Bogolyubov, V. Vereshchagin, M. Dmitriev-Orenburgskiy, O. Kivshenko, A. Kotsebu, P. Kovalevskiy, L. Lagorio, G. Manizer, M. Sverchkov, P. Sukhodolskiy (Kushnerev, 1902). As envisioned by Alexander II, the artists were to paint pictures depicting the battle scenes of the war, having been chosen by him, which were to adorn the Military Gallery of the Winter Palace.

Almost at the same time in the city of Ruse, the Bulgarian publisher and photographer M. Kamerman published a jubilee series of postcards with reproductions of paintings from the Moscow album. Considering that the censor allowed the printing of the Moscow album on May 29, 1902, and the issued postcard had already been sent in September, we assume that this series was published by that date. It should be noted that the serial numbers of postcards in this lineup to № 28 “V. Vereshchagin. Shipka-Sheynovo, December 28, 1877.” corresponded to the numbers of paintings in the Moscow album.

The authors of the article attributed almost all the postcards of this anniversary series, most of which had passed the post offices of various Bulgarian cities. In September-November 1902, four of the sort postcards were sent by the sender Sofia from Ruse to Silistra. The content of the messages contained in them clearly demonstrates the sender's interest in the events of the Russo-Turkish war, the most important of which were depicted on the sent postcards. In particular, on November 16, 1902, on the postcard with the reproduction of P. Kovalevsky's painting “Cavalry attack near Trestenyk and Mechka. November 14, 1877” the sender noted: “*Dear Eugene [Galkina – author]! ... It seems to me that you have already arrived in Silistria, so I am sending you this card, which is very interesting*”. In another message dated October 15, 1902 with the image of the reproduction of the painting by the same author “Night battle at Kara-Agach. January 4, 1878” she recalled the recent “great celebrations” on the occasion of the anniversary in Ruse, which were

attended by the King of Romania¹). The presence of this monarch emphasized the important role of the Romanian army in the third assault on Plevna, to the commander of which Osman Pasha presented his sword on October 28, 1877.

The gratitude of the Bulgarian people to the “Tsar Liberator” was commemorated by the postcard “Jubilee Card” issued by P. Petrov in Sofia. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the crossing of the Danube by Russian troops (June 15, 1877 – 1902), which depicted Tsar Alexander II and generals of the Russian army J. Gurko, F. Radetskyi, M. Skobelev, and others. (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Anniversary card on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the beginning of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 – 1878. Sofia: Proprietaire P.A. Petroff, 1902

1.2. The paintings of a direct participant and witness to the war, the Russian artist V. Vereshchagin were an important pictorial source for the study of the history of the Russo-Turkish war. He travelled all the way in the Danube Army from the beginning to the end of the war, in particular, he was wounded during the attack of a Turkish steamer on the Danube, witnessed the third assault on Plevna, with General M. Skobelev's troops conquered the Balkan Mountains, participated in the battle for Sheynovo. He left his own impressions of these events in the paintings of the Balkan series, as well as in “Memoirs of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877” (1902) and epistolary. The researchers of V. Vereshchagin's oeuvre drew attention

to the realism, truthfulness and objectivity of his images and assessments. Only the compositions of two paintings in the given series (“Defeated” and “Everything is calm on Shipka”) were invented by the author, while others became the authoritative pictorial sources in studying the events of the history of the Russo-Turkish war (Muminova, 2016: 88).

Vereshchagin's Balkan series of paintings consisted of several thematic groups: the first – the events near Plevna (“Alexander II near Plevna on August 30, 1877”, “Before the attack. Near Plevna”, “Attack”, “After the attack. Field dressing-station under Plevna”), the second – the battle of Telesh (“Winners” and “Defeated”), the third – Shipkin's epic (“Dugouts shelters on Shipka”, “Snow trench on Shipka”, “Batteries on Shipka”, “Everything is calm on Shipka”, “Graves on Shipka”). The paintings “The Road of Prisoners of War” and “The Hault of Prisoners of War” deserve special attention, in which the author expressed his condolences to the captured Turks doomed to death (Muminova, 2016: 90 – 93).

During 1902 – 1917, illustrated postcards with reproductions of V. Vereshchagin's paintings were repeatedly published by various publishing houses, including: “Tretyakov Gallery” with the postmark “In favor of the school of imperial patriotic women's bevy”, “T.G.”, “Granberg's corporate association in Stockholm”, “The publication of Peterhof's association. In favor of Her Majesty the Empress Alexandra Fedorovna, who was under the auspices of the Peterhof's association for the poor and for the upbringing in the shelters of the association of the children of killed and wounded warriors”, “Publishing House of K. Fisher. Moscow”, “Edit. Dubrowitz, Moskau”, “E.A.Z.”, “A. Katyk and Co. Moscow” and others². Each of the publishers used an acceptable printing method, in particular, one-color photo type, three-color autotype, photo printing, etc.

One of the central places in V. Vereshchagin's Balkan series was occupied by the painting “Alexander II near Plevna on August 30, 1877”, which the author also entitled to the audience as “Tsar's Birthday”. Russian publishers of postcards had repeatedly used it for their illustrative postcards (Fig. 2). The subject of the painting reproduced the tragic page of the military campaign – an unsuccessful attempt to storm the fortress, which was held on August 30 (September 11), 1877 – on the day of the emperor's birthday (Petrenko, 2012: 307). The capture of the fortress, according to the plan of the Russian commander-in-chief, was to be a gift for Alexander II, although the weather conditions and the moral and physical conditions of the Russian soldiers were not favorable for the operation.

In the horizontally elongated picture we can see the Russian emperor, generals and officers of the army headquarters, looking through binoculars into the thickness of gunpowder. The plot depicted by the artist showed their complete misunderstanding of the military events. The result of the unprofessional command was the death of several hundred Russian soldiers, whose bodies remained on the battlefield, among whom was also the artists brother – Sergei Vereshchagin. On

the hill where the emperor, generals and officers of his army were located, there many bottles of champagne were left. The painting in the artist's idea was a kind of reproach to Alexander II for the incompetently organized and command-led offensive operation, during which the Russian army lost almost forty percent of its strength. Contemporaries ambiguously perceived V. Vereshchagin's painting, considering it as anti-patriotic, aimed at undermining the prestige of the Russian emperor (Muminova, 2016: 91).



Fig. 2. V. Vereshchagin “Under Plevna”. Tretyakov Gallery.
Stockholm: S.C. Granberg, 1904 – 1909. № 1685

An important place in V. Vereshchagin's Balkan series was occupied by the paintings “Winners” and “Defeated”, which featured the mockery of the Turks over the bodies of Russian soldiers killed near Telesh. In his memoirs, the artist wrote that Russian rangers had to demonstrate their readiness to storm Telesh every hour and, according to the command's plan, that should have harmed the Turkish garrison to help Mountain Dubnyak. Instead, the rangers launched an attack, lost half of their personnel and were forced to retreat (Vereshchagin, 1902: 147).

At the same time, the reproduction of the painting “Defeated” was placed on a postcard issued with the help of the method of color autotyping by the Granberg Society in Stockholm at the request of the Russian publisher (Fig. 3). In the painting depicted here, the artist conveyed the memory of the last rites held by a priest and a bell ringer soldier on a field covered with the bodies of Russian soldiers blast-scared by the Turks. Restive contemporaries accused V. Vereshchagin in the enormity and falseness of what was depicted in the painting, although he admitted that he “significantly softened the paint” (Muminova, 2016: 92). The realism of his paintings, in which he emphasized the careerism and incompetence of the military command, strategic mistakes and, as a consequence, the senseless and unjustified deaths of Russian soldiers, put V. Vereshchagin in disfavor with the emperor and his environment. In particular, in a

letter to the artist A. Bogolyubov dated December 21, 1879; Alexander II wrote that the catalog of Vereshchagin's paintings, especially the texts of his works, made a disgusting impression on him because of the obvious bias incompatible with national pride. The emperor regretted that these works would remain the only mention for posterity of the glorious war of 1877 – 1878, although he recognized the master's talent and authority in Russian and European art salons (Teslya, 2018: 243).



Fig. 3. V. Vereshchagin “Defeated”. Tretyakov Gallery.
Stockholm: Granberg, 1904 – 1909. № 1682

The publishers of illustrated postcards also used reproductions of battle paintings by other Russian artists who worked for the authorities. M. Dmitriev-Orenburgskiy stood out among them each of the paintings in his series dedicated to the Russian-Turkish war was characterized by jingoistic patriotic motives. During the war, he was in Paris and only after its completion offered several sketches depicting typical episodes of military operations of the Russian army. The concept proposed by this artist was liked by the emperor, who ordered him a series of works. Therefore, the battle theme became a key theme of his artwork, and soon the Academy of Arts awarded him the title of Art professor (1883) for his paintings “The Battle of the Sistovsky Heights of the Convoy of Alexander II” and “The Entry of Emperor Alexander II to the City of Ploiesti on June 15, 1877”.

Fulfilling the order of the emperor, M. Dmitriev-Orenburgskiy only later visited Bulgaria, where he painted a series of ten paintings in which he depicted victorious battles of the Russian army. By the order of Emperor Alexander III, all these paintings were placed in the Military Gallery of the Winter Palace, and their author became the officially recognized battle artist. However, after his death, art critics noted that, despite the realism and veracity of his paintings, due to the lack of talent and direct military impressions of their author, they did not have historical greatness and dramatic expressiveness (Buravtsova, 2018). The latter was a characteristic feature of V. Vereshchagin's paintings, but the authorities and the loyal part of society did not perceive them.

The distinctive painting by M. Dmitriev-Orenburgskiy “Presentation of the captured Osman Pasha to Alexander II in Plevna”, at one time appeared in all the illustrated Russian magazines and was repeatedly replicated by postcard publishers. So, in 1902, the reproduction of it was placed on a postcard published in a monochrome photo type by the Moscow entrepreneur A.A. Gorozhankin (No. 284)³⁾, at the same time another publishing house also issued in a print run of similar postcards, where its number was indicated as 1002 (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. M. Dmitriev-Orenburgskiy “Presentation of the captured Osman Pasha to Alexander II in Plevna”, 1904 – 1909. No. 1002

The publishers’ interest was repeatedly aroused by Popov’s painting “The Eagle’s Nest”, which reflects the events of August 1877 in the defense of the

Shipka Pass (Litavrin, 1987: 24). The painting was kept in the Art Department of the Russian Museum of Alexander III, and its reproduction had repeatedly served as an illustrative series of postcards issued by private printing houses in St. Petersburg, which had permission to photograph museum exhibits. Further, heliogravures were ordered from the Expedition of provisions of state papers, ensuring the high quality images. Their production cost in 2.5 times more than in the Berlin Company Bukenstein, but the Grand Duke George Mikhailovich was opposed to their publishing abroad (Shekhurina, 2012: 61). Postcard – heliogravure no. 65: “Eagle’s Nest – Schipka, attaque de lamontagne Sv. Nicolas 12 aout. 1877” with the image of a reproduction of A. Popov’s painting and the seal “In favor of the schools of the imperial women’s patriotic society”, according to the design of the address side, was published before 1904 (Fig. 5).

In 1903, as the deltiologists found out, the Russian Museum began publishing illustrated postcards (Shekhurina, 2012: 62), which soon became one of their biggest publishing houses in the empire, which contributed to the popularization of works of art. By 1915, 531 postcards had been issued here, most of which had been repeatedly republished using monochrome photo type, tricolor autotype, or photo printing. It was established that after 1910 the postcard with a reproduction of A. Popov’s painting “The Eagle’s Nest (Shipka. Mount St. Nicholas)” was reprinted only once in one-color photo typing (Tupimanov 2011: 46).

Despite the popularity among the public of the painting “Eagle’s Nest”, its reproduction was repeatedly replicated by various publishers on the eve of the First World War. So, under the name “Shipka, Mount of St. Nicholas. Protection of the Eagle’s Nest” (Series III, No. 7) was issued by the St. Petersburg firm “Edition Richard”, and the inscriptions on the address side of the postcard were duplicated in 15 different languages. Subsequently, this series of postcards was reprinted by an anonymous publisher, but called it “Petrov. Protection of the Eagle’s Nest”. A postcard with a color reproduction of this painting, called “A.N. Popov. Shipka. Mount of St. Nicholas – Protection of the Eagle’s Nest by Orlovtsy and Bryantsy. Museum of Emperor Alexander III” under number 154 (60422), was issued by the firm “E.G.S.i.S” (Ernst G. Svanstrom, Stockholm)⁴.

1.3. The events of the Russian-Turkish war were most informatively depicted on the postcards of the series published by Dresler’s phototype in St. Petersburg during 1904 – 1914. The authors of the article found and attributed from the last 29 postcards, in particular those that duplicated reproductions of paintings from the anniversary album of 1902: G. Manizer “Battle of Nikopol on July 3rd, 1877”, M. Dmitriev-Orenburgskiy “Surrender of Nikopol on July 4th 1877”, “The Battle of Plevna and the capture of the Turkish army on November 28, 1877”, L. Lagorio “Conquering Lovcha on August 22, 1877”, A. Kivshenko “Storming the fortification of Gargohotanski heights on January 1, 1878”, P. Kovalevsky “The case in the village of Ivan-Chaftlik on October 12, 1877”⁵.



Fig. 5. O. Popov “Eagle’s Nest”. St. Petersburg: RMEA III (Russian Museum of Emperor Alexander III), 1902 – 1904

In addition, for the pictorial number of postcards in this series, the publishers used engravings and paintings by anonymous authors “Crossing on the 15th of June, 1878 (7)”, “Conquering the 1st Plevnenskiy Redoubt (July 18, 1878 (7))”, “The cavalry makes its way through the Turkish battalions on October 2, 1877”, “The destruction of the Turkish battery with our two guns. November 16, 1877”, “Attack of the Tuldes-Gavia redoubt to Shandornik, November 17, 1877”, “Leib-rangers lower the Turkish gun from Shandornik”, “A company of Leib-rangers goes to the logements against the Turkish position. 1877”, “Transition to the Balkans of the Semenovits. 1877”, “2nd crossing through the Balkans (1878 (7))”, “Attack of the Ulan regiment in Telish. 1878 (7)”, “Hussars rescue the wounded in Telish (1878 (7))”, “General Gurko welcomes the rangers after Telish (1878 (7))”, “Descent from the Balkans of the detachment of gen. Dandeville. 1877”, “Crossing the Maritsa detachment of Gen. Kartsova. January 8, 1878”, “Crossing the town of Maritsa by riflemen (1878)”, “Lieutenant Nagel continues to command with a torn off leg (1878 (7))”, “Massacre of a spy. 1878”, “Interrogation of a deserter (from nature). 1878 (7)”; Caucasian theater “Meeting of Bayazetskiy’s garrison with Tergukasov’s detachment. 1877”, “The battle of the Dragoons with the Circassians. 1878”⁶).

During the 1870s, plot and portrait graphics, in particular woodcuts, etchings and lithographs, were made by artists for the visual accompaniment of war correspondence



Fig. 6. General Gurko greets the Raegers after Telish (1877). St. Petersburg: Dresler’s phototype, 1904 – 1909

from the Balkans in illustrated magazines published in St. Petersburg, London, Paris, Berlin, etc. That was how European and Russian readers became the direct spectators and participants in the Balkan triumph of the Russian army. These graphic works covered the events of the Balkan theater of war, first of all, its main events: the crossing of the Danube, the battles for Plevna, the defense of the Shipka Pass, the winter crossing over the Balkans. As a rule, these images were completely different from their vision by another participant in the military events – the artist V. Vereshchagin. In particular, the last battle of Telish became the tragic page of that campaign, but the engraving “General Gurko welcomes the rangers after Telish (1878)”, printed on one of the postcards (Fig. 6), was full of optimism and demonstrated the greatness of the Russian army. Its publisher mistakenly dated the event depicted in 1878 rather than in 1877, which was typical for most of the leaflets in this series.

It was found that the engravings “The 4th rifle brigade is going to storm the Shipka positions, December 26/27, 1877” (on the postcard – “The assault on the Shipka positions on December 26/27, 1877” (Fig. 7)) and “Platoon of the 19th Don Cossack batteries, leaving for a position according to the book. General Dandeville on Babia Gora on December 15, 1877. Battalion of the Velikolutskiy Regiment” (on the postcard – “General Dandeville on Babia Gora on December 15, 1877”) were authorized by the censorship on January 30 and April 6, 1879, respectively, and were published in the “Printing House of the Second Branch of Vlas [Noah] I.I.B. Office”. One of the lithographs indicates the likely authors of the engravings “Z. Kryukov” and “MS”⁷⁾.



Штурм Шипкинскихъ позицій 26/27 Декабря 1877 г.

Fig. 7. Assault on Shipka positions on December 26/27, 1877.
St. Petersburg: Dresler's phototype, 1904 – 1909

The publishers of the postcard “The Conquering of Plevna (1878)” used an engraving by P. Kaufman “The departure of Osman-Pasha is postponed to the 10th of December” from the French edition of “La guerre d’Orient. Russes et Turcs 1877 – 1878”. On it, the author marked the positions of the enemies with numbers: “1. Crossing and capturing the bridge; 2. The road to Plevna; 3. Russian grenadiers; 4. Batteries of Russians. 5. Turkish redoubts”⁸⁾. As in other postcards in the series, the date of the depicted event was erroneous, and therefore corrected in ink.

The events of the Russian-Turkish war were popularized in Riga by the Lenz and Rudolph publishing house, which issued a postcard with a reproduction of the painting by the Russian-German artist F. Rubo “Russians under Kars”⁹⁾. It depicted military operations in the Caucasus, where in April-May 1877 Russian troops captured the cities of Bayazet, Ardahan and blocked Kars. Only as a result of the offensive of the majority of the enemy forces, Russian troops retreated and went on the defensive, but in November, as a result of a successful assault, they captured Kars (Petrenko, 2012: 307).

1.4. Some Bulgarian postcard publishers considered that it would be appropriate to focus on the results of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877 – 1878. In particular, K. Marinoff’s company “Moderno iscustvo” in Filippopol (the modern name is Plovdiv – auth.) on a black-and-white postcard “Hand-to-hand combat for Tamro” (Fig. 8) printed an image of a battle near a mountain village in the Rhodope Mountains. In 1879, the inhabitants of several mountain villages supported the rebellion of the former British consul D. Senclair and the proclaimed Tamrish republic¹⁰⁾.



Fig. 8. Hand-to-hand combat for Tamrysh. Philippopolis: “Modern Art”, [(904 – 1914)

In 1912, the Russian and Bulgarian public solemnly celebrated the 35th anniversary of the beginning of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877 – 1878, which caused a wave of interest in the events of recent history. On June 24, 1912, on the occasion of the anniversary in Moscow, a monument to the war hero General M. Skobelev was unveiled in Tverskaya Square, and the square itself was renamed to Skobelevska. A wreath was placed at the monument by the Bulgarian delegation and was crowned with a ribbon with the inscription: “Lovech, Pleven, Sheinovo – to the unforgettable hero of the liberation war, the glorious General Skobelev. Grateful Bulgarian people” (Zemtsov, 1999). Photographs of the opening of the monument and other images of the general on horseback were repeatedly replicated by publishing houses on postcards. The largest number of sights of the monument was made by the Moscow firm of P. Khromov and M. Bakhrakh, and the most famous was the postcard “Opening of the monument to General M.D. Skobelev”, for which photographs by S. Manukhin were used (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. Opening of the monument to General M.D. Skobelev (June 24, 1912).
Moscow: “P.H. of D. Khromov and M. Bakhrakh”, 1912

A. Suvorin’s contractor and the phototype “Sherer, Nabgolts and Co.” during 1912 – 1916 several times issued postcards with a view of this monument. It should be noted that for the title of the postcard with the image of the M.D. Skobelev’s

phototype A. Wende used M. Skobelev's front-line nickname "White General". At the same time, the St. Petersburg society "R. Golike and A. Vilborg" issued a postcard "Monument to the immortal national hero Skobelev on June 24, 1912" "with a dedication" In favor of Mikhailovskiy in memory of the Skobelev Society, which was under the august patronage of I.I. Empress Alexandra Feodorovna"¹¹⁾.

Conclusion

So, paintings and graphic works, as well as a few photos were the only visual sources for fixing and reproducing the events of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 – 1878. Postcards of the early 1900s with the reproductions of these paintings reproduced the course of the most important episodes of the given war that emphasises their value as the iconographic source. The polished deltiological material gives grounds to claim that during 1902 – 1912 yrs., they were issued by almost 20 publishing houses in Russia and at least by 4 in Bulgaria, but their list can be supplemented.

Considering the importance of the results of the given war for the historical destiny of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula, the restoration of Bulgarian statehood, the strengthening of Russia's position in the region, the events of this military conflict were in the focus of the public interest. Interest in them became relevant with the celebration in 1902 and 1912 in Russia and Bulgaria the anniversaries of the war that evidenced by the publication of dozens of illustrated leaflets with reproductions of pictures of events and participants in the war, each of them has a considerable source potential to determine the worldviews guidelines of the Bulgarian and Russian societies.

NOTES

1. Private collection of postcards (St. Petersburg).
2. Private collection of postcards (Kamianets-Podilskiy).
3. Ibid.
4. Collection of postcards of the online auction "Bag".
5. Ibid.
6. Postcards of the Russian Empire: information and local lore portal. Access mode: <https://www.ruscarts.ru/catalog?cat=2697&page=1>.
7. Private collection of postcards (Kamianets-Podilskiy).
8. Private collection of postcards (St. Petersburg).
9. Postcards of the Russian Empire: information and local lore portal. Access mode: <https://www.ruscarts.ru/catalog?cat=2697&page=2>.
10. Tamrysh Republic. Access mode: <http://bratushka.ru/tamryshskaya-respublika/>.
11. Private collection of postcards (St. Petersburg).

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