

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SITES IN THE NORTH-EASTERN SOCIO-ECONOMIC REGION OF BULGARIA

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ABSTRACT

Bulgaria, regarded as the eastern end of the European Union, coexists with other member countries in the European family. Bulgaria has explicitly and repeatedly stated and defended their belonging to this, which makes the tourist map of Europe "extends" to the East, while providing opportunities to our country for its future development. In this presentation we put the focus on cultural - cognitive dimension of Northeast Bulgaria. Being apparently a periphery, this region has features that ensure both its presence in the Bulgarian cultural space, as in Europe, particularly in historical, cultural and social terms. The cultural sites in Northeast Bulgaria, which arouse some interest to the tourist level, demonstrate the importance of the region nationally. The Northeast Bulgaria is certainly an appealing area to develop tourism. Is indistinguishable from local to national level (strongly marked by patriotism), does not enjoy priority in the media space as loaded, but has, however, its own natural charm, originated both by the desire of a large capacity representation, and by specific Culture and the different vision. In this paper we outline the major tourist locations, places of interest of cultural tourism in the region. These determine the specificity of tourism development and are vital to the future relations within the cultural tourism / regional / story development.

KEYWORDS: Historical Sites, Tourism, Socio-economic region.

RESUMO

A Bulgária, considerada como a extremidade leste da União Europeia, coexiste com os outros países-membros no seio da família europeia. A Bulgária tem explícita e repetidamente declarado e defendido a sua pertença a esta, o que faz com que o mapa turístico do continente europeu “se estenda” ao Leste, proporcionando igualmente ao nosso país oportunidades para o seu desenvolvimento futuro. Nesta apresentação colocamos o

foco na dimensão cultural-cognitiva do Nordeste da Bulgária. Sendo, aparentemente uma periferia, esta região tem recursos que garantem tanto a sua presença no espaço cultural búlgaro, como no espaço europeu, nomeadamente em termos histórico-culturais e sociais. Os locais de interesse cultural no Nordeste da Bulgária, que despertam um certo interesse ao nível turístico, demonstram a importância da região no âmbito nacional. O Nordeste da Bulgária é, certamente, um território apelativo para desenvolver o turismo. Não se distingue por locais a nível nacional (marcados fortemente pelo patriotismo), não goza de prioridade no espaço mediático tão carregado, mas possui, no entanto, um charme natural próprio, originado tanto pelo anseio por uma ampla capacidade de representação, como pelas especificidades culturais e pela visão local diferente. Neste trabalho esboçamos as principais localidades turísticas, locais de interesse do turismo cultural na região. Estes determinam a especificidade do desenvolvimento turístico e constituem o ponto fulcral nas relações futuras no âmbito do turismo cultural / desenvolvimento regional / história.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: sítios históricos, turismo, regiões socio-económicas.

INTRODUCTION

The topic requires characteristic of the tourist sites in one of the Bulgarian socio-economic regions – the North-Eastern. It is peripheral for the country, but saturated with numerous cultural-historical and tourist sites, which makes it attractive for visiting and actual for researching.

The retrospective review of the socio-economic division of the Bulgarian territory takes us back to the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century, when foreign researchers – Konstantin Irechek (1882), Teobolt Fisher (1893), Oto Maus (1929), Herbert Vilhelmy (1932), made observations on the territory of the country and published the first scholarly works. In them predominate the division of the national territory in conformity with the natural and the historical-geographical regions. The approaches and methods that were used, were completely in the tradition of the German geography school.

The scholarly geographical division of Bulgaria dates back to 1934. Then Anastas Ishirkov, Anastas Beshkov and Ivan Batakliiev published original works, in which they suggested new approaches and substantiated the scholarly base of the zoning (economic and natural-landscape).

In 1934 A. Beshkov published the first monograph “Economic-geographical Division of Bulgaria”, in which he aims to prove that the division of the national territory should have

economic grounds, and the zoning is the scholarly groundwork of the administrative-territorial division. Or the algorithm, which A. Beshkov applies, directs to the revealing of the mutual commitment between the economic development, the economic division and the administrative-territorial zoning of the country.

The formed natural complexes in Bulgaria are geographically examined by Ivan Batakliiev (1934). Applying the methods and approaches of the German geographical school, he takes up objective and critical position on the results in the scientific works, discussing the landscape zoning of the country, made by foreign authors. Batakliiev makes the first landscape zoning of Bulgaria, uncovering 5 landscapes that were already formed – Macedonian, Middle Bulgarian, Balkan, Danubian and Black Sea shore landscape.

Analyzing their structure, he includes also the influence of the anthropogenic factor. Therefore the landscape zoning of Bulgaria made by Ivan Batakliiev is remarkable for its natural-social content.

The research activity on the zoning of the country is connected with the works of Ignat Penkov (after 1948), Todor Hristov (1978), Mitko Geneshki and Lyudmil Georgiev (1995), Doncho Konakchiev (2003), Veselin Boyadzhiev (2005) and others.

The studying of the ideas of economic zoning and the nature of regional paradigm are the reason the following definition for the category of socio-economic region to be proposed: "The natural-social region (including natural and socio-economic) is dynamic and probabilistic system with stable hierarchic structure and borders, with exact type of territorial organization, indications and functions, by which it differs from neighboring zones, and with high extent of resource concentration, in which competitive and effective activities and policies are planned, coordinated and managed".

The district (region) is a real and system geographical object, and zoning (regionalization) – a research method for uncovering, analysis, synthesis and explanation of real socio-natural structures. The region can be distinguished by the following indications – complexity, specialization, effectiveness, compatibility, extent of clusterization, and in single cases also quality of the management.

On the base of the above-mentioned, we objectively outline the following socio-economic regions on the territory of Bulgaria – Southwestern, South Central, Southeastern, Northeastern, North Central and Northwestern.

THE ECONOMIC REGIONS ON THE TERRITORY OF BULGARIA

The Northeastern region occupies the most Eastern parts of Northern Bulgaria. It is formed on the territory of 6 administrative districts – Varna, Dobrich, Shumen, Targovishte,

Razgrad and Silistra. It covers more than a half of the territory of the Danubian Plain. The economic situation is characterized by spatial differentiation – developed Eastern (the coastal area) and Southern (of low mountains) parts, and a falling behind inner and Northern parts (fig.1).



Fig.1 – Bulgaria and study region.

The development of tourism in Bulgaria is connected with the necessity of economic stabilization of the country, and of stressing on the advertising element. Examined as an economic branch, tourism is stuck into the existence of the Bulgarian. This is valid in full strength for the examined region. Peripheral at first sight, it has resources, which guarantee its presence in the Bulgarian cultural space, as well as the self-confidence of sufficient cultural-historical and social donor.

The cultural sites in Northwestern Bulgaria, provoking particular tourist interest, frame its nature in the range of the national one.

Northeastern Bulgaria is definitely provocative territory for development of tourism. It has its own natural charm, provoked by the adjustment for general representativeness, as well as by the specific character of thinking, behavior and resultativeness of “the other glance”.

In the following rows we are going to note some of the main tourist settlements – sites of the cultural tourism in the region. They predetermine the specificity of tourism development and are accent in the further relations along the direction cultural tourism – regional development – history.

Razgrad is situated along the Beli Lom River, in the Eastern part of the Danubian Plain, among the Ludogorian Plateau. It is considered to be the capital of the Ludogorie (Deliorman). Situated on 375 km to the North-East of Sofia, 66 km to the South-East of Ruse and 50 km to the South-West of Shumen.

It is successor of the Roman Abritus. Over the remains of the destroyed during the invasions already Byzantine town, emerged the Medieval Bulgarian settlement of Hrazgrad (Hrisgrad). According to the interpretations the name of the town came from “hras” (cross, fortress), from the name of the ruler Hras, or from Hrasate (Vladimir), son of tsar Boris I.

Razgrad is an educational and cultural centre. During the Bulgarian National Revival the first Bulgarian woman poet – Stanka Nikolitsa Spaso-Elenina, was a teacher in town. In 1904 the musical association “Zhelezni Struni” (“Iron Strings”), and in 1922 – the symphonic orchestra of the town were established.

A site of interest in Razgrad is the Clock Tower (fig.2), built in 1764. The Danish engineer Karsten Nibur wrote about it in 1867: “Since I had not seen any town clocks on tower in Egypt, India, Arabia, Persia, and all around Turkey from Basra to the Balkan, finally I found one here in Razgrad”.



Fig. 2 - The Clock Tower and the Mosque of Razgrad

Symbol of the town is the Maiden fountain (built after 1885). Its female figure – having ideal anatomy proportions, with unveiling bust and shy downcast eyes, directed to the spout,

holding on her right shoulder a hydria (an antique vessel for water) – is the only one in Bulgaria.

The Mosque (“Ibrahim Pasha”) is one of the biggest and most beautiful mosques in our country (fig.2). Its construction began around 1530-1535, by the grand vizir Ibrahim Pasha. In 1616 it was finished by the local feudal Mahmud Pasha. According to the Turkish traveler Evlia Chelebi, The Ibrahim Mosque is the most magnificent in all the Rumelia.

The building of the Language secondary school is an original monument of architecture with massive stone structure, with gothic top and a pediment, resembling staircase. The project was accomplished by the Austrian architect Friedrich Grunager.

The mausoleum of the Russian soldiers (The Russian Monument) is one of the first in our country, built with the help of the voluntary aid of the local population, in an Austro-Hungarian style.

In the Ethnographical Museum is represented the traditional spiritual culture of the local ethnographic group “kapantsi”. It is situated in restored houses from XIX century, with beautifully shaped yard.

The archeological reserve “Abritus” is one of the best studied, developed and displayed antique reserves in the country. More than 2000 years ago, 1 km away from the modern Razgrad, was a Thracian settlement with unknown name, which existed also in the middle of the I century after the establishment of the Roman authority in the province of Lower Moesia. The ruins of Abritus remind of a flourishing Thracian-Roman town, which existed until the end of the VI century, when it was plundered, destroyed, burned down and depopulated during the invasions of Avars and other tribes.

During the VII century, over the ruins of the antique town, an Old-Bulgarian settlement with unknown name was built, which existed up to the X century. One of the archeological sensations was the discovery of the largest in the country late antique monetary treasure of 835 coins (4 kg), minted by 10 emperors and empresses from the V century, who ruled over the Eastern Roman Empire. The archeological reserve “Abritus” is a cultural monument of national significance. There is a building next to it, accomodating the specialized ethnographical museum “Abritus”, with archeological exhibition, consisting of part of the objects, that were found during excavations, including the famous Golden Pegasus.

Isperih emerged in 1545 on the place of a medieval settlement, which long years had the name of the first settler Kemal and its family – Kemallar. The grave of Kemal baba was respected by the generations, and his tomb can be found in the old graveyard in the Western part of the town. In 1960 the settlement was declared a town, with the name Isperih – the founder of the Bulgarian state, and in his honor, there is a monumental sculpture composition in the centre of the town. It is situated 34 km to the Northeast of Razgrad.

The historical museum in town was established in 1978. It has a hall for permanent exhibitions, a hall for temporary exhibitions, an ethnographical house, a working wind mill; it takes care of the archeological monuments in the “Sboryanovo” historical-archeological reserve and the vault of Sveshtari.

“Sboryanovo” is situated between the villages of Malak Porovets and Sveshtari, in the canyon of the Krapinets River, and on the hills around it. The first signs of human life on these places are from the end of the stone and the beginning of the stone-copper age. With the location of the Thracian tribe of the Getae during the early iron age, the region of “Sboryanovo” turned into a political, cultural and religious centre, whose construction started in the beginning of the I millennium BC (IX-VIII century, and it reached its highest point of development during the Hellenic Age: IV-III century BC). During that period finished the formation of the centre, including a cult centre, two mound necropolises, stone vaults and ancient sanctuaries.

The most interesting site in the reserve is the Sveshtari Thracian Vault, from the first half of the III century BC. It represents a royal vault, in which probably the ruler of the Getae – Drumihed, was buried. Discovered in 1982, the tomb was included in the List of the cultural and natural heritage under the protection of UNESCO from 1985.

In the canyon of the Krapinets River is the alian (kazalbash) teke Demir baba (The Iron father). It is situated near a karst spring (healing holy spring). Not far away from it is the “Ahinora” tourist hostel.

Shumen is situated in the South-Eastern foot of the Shumen Plateau. It is 90 km to the West of Varna, 115 km to the South-East of Ruse, and 40 km to the East of Targovishte (fig.3).

During the centuries it was the cradle of a wealthy spiritual and material culture – Thracian, Roman, Byzantine and Bulgarian. Near the town of Shumen are the first two capitals of the Bulgarian state – Pliska and Preslav, and the cult centre Madara. Especially vivid cultural and educational activity took place during the Golden Age of Bulgaria, when the town probably had the name Simeonis. There are some hypotheses, concerning the name of Shumen. According to one of them it came from the name of tsar Simeon the Great: Simeonis – Shimeonis – Shumen. Another one says that it comes from the word “shuma”, meaning foliage leaves, or in other words – a place with a lot of forests.

During the time of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, as an impressive Bulgarian fortress Shumen (fig.3) entered the system of the Old-Bulgarian fortresses, defending the passes leading to the capitals Pliska and Preslav.



Fig. 3 – The city of Shumen and the fortress.

In the Second Bulgarian Kingdom (XII-XV century) Shumen turned into a real Medieval town. In the period XVII-XIX century it was a trade and craftsman centre with diverse cultural life. In 1828 the first small school for girls was established. Here opened the first class school for girls and one of the first community centers (1856). One of the first drama works - "Mihal", was written by Sava Dobroplodni (1853), and the short novel "Unhappy Family" (1860) by Vasil Drumev. After the Liberation (1882), with the help of Czech capital one of the first breweries in Bulgaria was built.

The Regional historical museum keeps more than 150 000 museum pieces in eight halls. The exhibition represents the rich history of the region from antiquity to the end of the XIX century. It has a rich collection of icons, coins, seals and metal plastics, displayed in the "Treasure House" hall. Here can be seen the Thracian tomb from IV century BC – the only one displayed in a museum on the Balkan Peninsula.

Sites of interest of the town are the museum-houses of "Dobri Voynikov", "Panayot Volov", "Layosh Kashut", the museum complex "Pancho Vladigerov", the Kurshum fountain (1744), The Clock Tower (1740), the Museum of buffalo- and horse-breeding, the Kazandzhiyska street, the church of the "Ascension" (1829), the Roofed market, built for the needs of the merchants from Dubrovnik in XVI century, and others.

3 km to the Northwest is situated the Shumen Fortress. It occupies the highest Eastern part of the Shumen Plateau. It originated in the period XII-XI century BC, and almost without interruption existed till 1444, when its inhabitants gradually went down in the lower slopes and in the lowland.

During excavations, the remains of a Thracian settlement, Roman and Byzantine fortress were found, with signs for the existence of basilicas, houses, towers and others.

"The Founders of the Bulgarian State" Monument is one of the National sites, built to honor the 1300 anniversary from the founding of the Bulgarian state. It was unveiled on

28.11.1981. It rises on a hill, at a height of 450 m above the sea-level. The monument represents the cultural and social development of the Bulgarian state between the VII and the X century.

The origin and rise of the Bulgarian country is represented by images and symbols, interpreted by three types of art – sculpture, architecture and mosaic.

The mosque of “Sherif Halil Pasha”, also known as the Tumbul mosque (or Tombul mosque), is the largest in Bulgaria and second on the Balkans by its size working Muslim temple. It was in the central part of Shumen, but later with the moving of that central part of the town, it remained in its Southwestern part. The construction began in 1740 and finished in 1744. Here were three schools: primary, secondary school for boys and madrasa. The name of the building “Tumbul” came from the paunchy form of its dome. The yard of the mosque is known as “arcade” because of the form of the vault arches in front of the twelve rooms, surrounding it. The minaret is 40 meters high.

Pliska is situated in the plain with the same name, 24 km Northeastern from Shumen. The earliest information about the name of this settlement was in an inscription from 821 on the Chatlarska column. In XVIII century on the place of the present town the settlement of Aboba was founded, which changed its name in 1925 to Pliskov. After 1947 it was called Pliska. In 1981 on the occasion of the 1300 anniversary of Bulgaria, the settlement was declared a town. In 2007 in the centre of Pliska, an 11 meters high monument of prince Boris I was unveiled, in connection with the 1100 anniversary from his death.

The first capital of Danubian Bulgaria was 2 km to the North of the present town. It was established by khan Asparuh in 681. The conversion to Christianity of the Bulgarian people took place in it. Despite the fact that in 893 King Simeon I moved the capital to Preslav, Pliska continued developing as a cultural, trade and craft centre.

In the Pliska Archeological Reserve were traced three concentric fortification belts – ground fortification, stone fortress wall and inner brick wall, which together form an external town (of the craftsmen, troops and peasants), inner town (of the secular and clerical nobility) and palace centre. The archeological excavations that last long years, discover the remains of the Throne room, the Small palace, a pagan temple, a palace church, a water-storage reservoir, baths, economic and housing buildings, and 1,5 km from the Eastern gate – the foundations of an impressive cathedral temple – The big basilica. The revealed remains are preserved and actually they represent a museum in the open. Findings from the reserve, that can be seen in the museum exhibition, present the conditions of life, the material and spiritual culture of the citizens of the old capital. There is a well organized museum as a part of the reserve. Here is the grave of Karel Shkorpil (1859-1944), who was the initiator of the excavations of Pliska.

In 886, on the initiative of prince Boris I, was established the Pliska-Preslav literary school.

Madara is a historical-archeological reserve, that can be found 16 km to the East of Shumen and about 2 km from the village of Madara. It includes some sites and has exceptional historical value. It earned the nickname "The Bulgarian Troy". On the almost vertical Madara rocks, on the Western slope of the Madara Plateau, the rocky bas-relief of the Madara horseman is craved. That is the most significant monument of art from the Early Middle Ages. The bas-relief, cut on 23 meters from the ground, represents a composition of a horseman with a crook, a dog running after the horseman, a snake under it and a lion. Widely spread is the opinion that it symbolizes the victory march of the rulers of the early Danubian Bulgaria. It is supposed that khan Tervel is represented as a victor. The sandstone is sensitive to the erosion processes and the relief is greatly damaged. It is included in the list of the world cultural and natural heritage of UNESCO.

On the plateau, to which lead 386 steps, raises the Madara fortress, which had an important role during the Bulgarian Middle ages. It was mentioned in the historical sources in relation with the events in 1388 and 1444.

In the reserve are the remains of a prehistoric settlement (III millennium BC), a temple-nymphium (IV-III century BC), a Roman villa (II-IV century), a medieval architectural complex, rock churches (the chapel of "St. Pantheleymon" is a part of a former large rocky monastery) and others.

Veliki Preslav is situated near a small tributary of the Golyama Kamchia (Ticha) river, to the North-East of the Preslavo-Dragoevska mountain, part of the Eastern Forebalkan. It is 16 km to the South-West of Shumen and 24 km South-Eastern of Targovishte. The name of the town is Bulgarian. It stems from "preslavan" (meaning most glorious, famous). In Turkish registers from XVI-XVII century the settlement was noted down as Eski Istanbuluk (Old Istanbul), containing the recollection of the old capital. From 1878 to 1993 the town had the name of Preslav, and after that – Veliki Preslav.

Sites of interest in the town are the church of "St. Peter and St. Paul" (a cultural monument), the sculpture composition "Tsar Simeon and the Bookmen" (1983), the monument of the citizens of Veliki Preslav that died in the wars between 1913 and 1918. The ethnographic house presents the way of living of local people, and one can taste the famous "darpana" cheese pastry, and the wines and brandies from Preslav.

The National historical-archeological reserve, together with the museum of "Veliki Preslav", is 2 km to the South of the present town. It lays on the ruins of the old Bulgarian capital of Veliki Preslav (893-972) and covers about 500 hectares of its area. The continuing already more than a century researches show that Preslav was planned and built by its

creators as a magnificent town, worthy to compete the Byzantine capital of Constantinople. The ancient Preslav emerged as a military camp with a fortified palace in IX century, during the times of khan Omurtag. It was declared a capital by Simeon I, who in 893 moved it here from Pliska. The second capital of the Bulgarian state (893-969) is connected with the uplift of culture and literature in that time, known as the Golden Age of the Bulgarian culture. Situated in an area, surrounded by hills, it was defended by a strong fortress system, consisting of two walls, forming the outer and the inner town. The second one includes a fortress wall, the Palace complex (Big and Small Palace, a Round (Golden) church and others).

The town is well known for its rich archeological museum. Especially interesting are some of its exponents, as the ceramic icon of St. Theodor Stratilat, the golden treasure of Preslav and the unique collection of seals of Bulgarian and Byzantine rulers and dignitaries.

The activity of the Preslav school was concentrated mainly in the monasteries of Preslav and in the monastery of "St. Panteleymon" in the Patleyna area, near the Ticha River. It is a famous cultural centre and one of the places where painted ceramic and glass articles were made in Preslav.

6 km to the South of Veliki Preslav, in the "Patleyna" reserve, is the only field of wild roshkov in Bulgaria, and in the "Dervisha" reserve (3 km South of town) – in the most Southeastern part of the Preslav Mountain, is the only field of horse-chestnut in Bulgaria.

Tutrakan is situated in tiers at the high bank of the Danube River. It is 62 km to the West of Silistra and 60 km to the North-East of Ruse. It is successor of the roman fortress Transmariska (a settlement behind the swamps). In III century emperor Diocletian visited the town and included it in a large construction program. The archeological excavations proved that the fortress existed also at the end of VII century, when the Bulgarian state was established. Its significance was strategical during the Bulgarian-Magyar-Byzantine wars, in the period 894-895. There are indisputable evidences for the existence of a fortress also during the Ottoman rule. The name of the town comes from the proto-Bulgarian military-administrative title "tarkan" and translated from Arabic it is explained as "the town of the tarkan, who protects and defends".

In the end of X century southern Russian colonials settled in the area and called the town Tmutarakan. That name was mentioned in "Slovo o polku Igoreve" and the Nestor Chronicle. The name Tutrakan was noted in written documents from XV century. During the Ottoman rule it was a fishing village.

Probably in the past there were windmills on the hill, and on the Danube - floating, some of which existed up to the middle of the XX century. From 1913 to 1940 it was within the borders of Romania and had the name Turtukay.

The only museum in the country called “Danubian fishing and boatbuilding” was established in 1976 in a special building near the river. In the seven halls and two interiors unique devices for fishing from ancient times to nowadays can be seen. Photos and printings present the way of fishing in the settlements along the Danube River. Impressive is the photo of an almost 400-kilogram hausen, caught in 1942. Some place is separated for the building of boats, which develops in this region since Roman times.

The fishing quarter of the town has a status of architectural reserve and it is a branch of the museum. Interesting sites are also the monument of Panayot Hitov, built on the bank of the Danube River, to the East of Tutrakan, and the church of “St. Nikola”.

The Srebarna Biosphere Reserve includes the lake with the same name and the territory around it, covering an area of 600 hectares. It is near the village of Srebarna, 188 km to the West of Silistra and 2 km to the South of the Danube (fig 4).

The depth of Srebarna varies between 1 and 3 meters. All the lake is reedy and has other water-loving plants. The vegetation is represented by 67 types of plants, part of which are rare in Europe. Some of the most typical representatives of the water vegetation are water-lilies, marsh snowdrops, marsh forget-me-nots, rush and reed.

Almost half of the bird species that can be met in Bulgaria nest in the reserve (fig. 4) – there are about 100 species, and together with the passing and the eating ones they become 221. The bird world is absolutely rich of rare and precious representatives of the national and the world genetic fund – Dalmatian Pelican, Greylag Goose, Ibises, Stag of fallow deers, Herons, Wild Geese, Wild Ducks and others. Here is the only one colony of the Dalmatian Pelican in Bulgaria. The uniqueness of the lake comes from the fact that it is the main “stop” along the so called Via Pontica, the most important migratory airway of the migratory birds between Northern Europe and Central Africa.



Fig.4 - The Srebarna Biosphere Reserve

Along the shores of Srebarna and on the smaller isles live 39 mammals – polecats, different mice and others. There are 21 species of amphibians and reptiles – turtles, otters, crayfish, muskrats, water-rats, water-snakes, tritons. Also the green frog can be met, which is one of the disappearing species all over the world. There are about ten fish species, among which pike, crucian, rudd and so on.

From 1948 the lake was declared a protected territory (reserve) and the mowing of reed and disturbing the birds is restricted. Because of the abundant various birds and the favorable conditions for their protection, in 1975 Srebarna was included in the Ramsar convention for protection of the wet zones of international significance, in 1977 it was declared a biosphere reserve, included in the UNESCO program – Man and the Biosphere.

In 1983, at a session of the Committee of the world cultural and natural heritage, which took place in the town of Florence, Italy, the “Srebarna” reserve was included in the List of the world natural and cultural heritage.

Near “Srebarna” was created a natural-scientific museum in which scientific experiments and symposiums are held. At the lake shore is an ecological station. Through special equipment the nests of the birds can be observed from distance.

Silistra is on the left bank of the Danube River, on the 375th km from the river mouth, where the big river enters Romanian territory and the land frontier between Bulgaria and Romania begins. It is situated 122 km to the North-East of Ruse and 143 km from Varna.

For the first time it was mentioned by the Roman historian Dion Kasius. Durostorum became self-governing town municipium in 169, under the rule of the emperor-philosopher Marcus Aurelius. Around the year 590 the Slavs (Severy) settled in it and gave it a new name – Drastar. It became an important Bulgarian fortress and during the conversion to Christianity it had significant role. As an old settlement of an archbishop it is recognized as the first among the Episcopal towns in Bulgaria.

From 1413 it was within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. During XVII century Hadzhy Kalfa called the town Dristra, from where its present name came. A busy port, the Silistra Fortress was an important part of the defensive quadrangle Ruse-Silistra-Varna-Shumen. In 1878 it became the Easternmost Danubian town of liberated Bulgaria.

Silistra and the region around the town are abundant in vineyards and other agricultural crops. Here are more than a half of the apricot gardens in Bulgaria.

On a hill near the town is the “Medzhidy Tabia” fortress. It is best preserved from all the six stations of the Turkish fortification system, which had an important role in the Russian-Turkish wars from 1853-1856 and 1877-1878. The idea for its construction was given by the German military engineer Helmut von Moltke, who visited the town in 1873. The fortress was constructed between the years 1841 and 1853. It was built with the forced labor of 300

Bulgarians. The main masters were from the town of Dryanovo and the region. During its construction they built the first monolithic temples from the Revival in the region of Silistra, in Alfatar (1846) and Kalipetrovo (1847). In 1847 it was visited by Sultan Abdul Medzhid, who was interested in the fortress and on that occasion it was called after him – Medzhidy Tabia. The fortress wall has the form of a hexagon and reaches up to 8 meters height. Next to it, there is a moat, which was used as an entanglement and also for camouflage. The fortress was finished during the time of the governor Said pasha, on the eve of the Crimean war. In the restored fortress is the Historical museum.

The archeological museum is one of the most modern museums in the country. Among its valuable exponents is the column from the time of khan Omurtag.

The ethnographical museum represents the material and spiritual culture of Southern Dobrudzha from XVIII and XIX century.

In the town park at the Danube, the remains of the “Durostorum-Dorostol-Drastar” fortress that existed during the centuries can be seen, including remains of antique and medieval defences and fortress walls. Also preserved is the early Christian roman vault, declared one of the most significant monuments of the art of painting from the period of the late antiquity.

Dobrich is situated among the Dobrudzha Plateau on the both banks of the small Dobrichka River. It is 50 km Northwestern from Varna and 34 km from Balchik.

Northern of the town centre and in its Eastern part were found the remains of a romen settlement (III-IV century). In VIII century here existed an ancient Bulgarian settlement. The contemporary town of Dobrich originated in XV century. It was known with its name Kuruskelya (dry port). In the end of XVIII and the beginning of XIX century many Bulgarians from the regions of Odrin, Kotel and Targivishte settled in it.

From 1882 because of the request of its people the town got the name of Dobrich (after the medieval Bulgarian leader Dobrotitsa, who ruled these lands). An impetus in its development gave the building of the railway Razdelna-Dobrich-Kardam in 1911, and its extension to the Romanian town of Medzhidia in 1916. From 1913 to 1940 the town was within the borders of Romania. From 1949 to 1991 it was called Tolbuhin, and after that it got its old name Dobrich. Now it is the centre of the largest grain-producing region in our country, called “The Granary of Bulgaria”. It is closely connected with the life and work of the great Bulgarian writer Yordan Yovkov. The house-monument of the writer is actually a peculiar museum of literature. Special interest provokes the painted ceramics of Stoimen Stoilov in “The world of the Characters of Yovkov”.

The Art gallery is a specialized museum of fine arts in town. It develops all the aspects of museum activity. It was built in the 30 years of the last century, and is one of the largest in

the country.

Next to the modern central square of the town is the ethnographical complex “The Old Dobrich” – an architectural-ethnographical museum in the open. Interesting sites are the Ethnographical House (1861), the monuments of Stefan Karadzha and Khan Asparuh, the memorial complex “War Cemetery”, the church of “St. George” (1843).

Southwestern from the town of Dobrich is the “Dabovete” natural park (“Kobaklaka”).

Balchik is situated on the seashore of Dobrudzha. It is situated 47 km to the North-East of Varna and 37 km Southeastern from Dobrich. In V century BC here originated a Hellenic polis (Kruni, Krunoy or Kronos) on the foundations of a Thracian settlement. Later it was called Dyonisopolis, in honor of the Thracian god Dyonisus. On its place emerged the Bulgarian medieval centre of Kravuna (meaning empathy, hospitability). During the XVI century it was known with the name Balchik. Since 1913 (according to the Bucharest treaty) to 1940 it was included in the borders of Romania. After 1940 it again became part of the Bulgarian country, according to the Craiova agreement.

Sites of interest of Balchik are the churches of “St. Nikola” (1866) and “The Virgin Mary” (1873), the Art gallery, the complex of the Bulgarian National Revival.

The architectural-park complex “The Palace” is the only place of this type in the world, where peacefully coexist the sacred buildings of Islam and Christianity. It is because of the Romanian queen, who professed the exotic Bahá'í religion. In 1924 Southern Dobrudzha was still under the rule of Romania. In that time the 47-year-old Maria decided to build her summer residence on the seashore near the white-stone Balchik. The construction continued 11 years, but in 1937 the palace called “The silent Nest” was already rising on the shore. It is 2 km to the South-West of Balchik.

The area in which “The palace” rises, is hidden between the white rocks of Balchik and the sea – a real piece of heaven. In this place in solitude and peace the queen spent her best times. The century-old trees, flowers, brooks, birds, even the fading away old mills and the dried up stone fountains enchanted the first lady of Romania and she wanted her heart to stay here forever after her death. In the botanical garden of the Palace are more than 3000 plant species, and over 300-year-old trees.

About 4 km away from Balchik, near the sea is Tuzlata – famous for the healing mud. A sea and medical resort was built here.

12 km to the South-East of Balchik is the cape of Kaliakra. Rocky, cut into the sea (2 km), resembling a peninsula. The cliff type of coast presumes the vertical rocky coasts, reaching up to 70 meters in height. There are a lot of caves, niches, cavities, underwater rocks, which are the result of the strong abrasion. On one part of the cape is situated the “Kaliakra” reserve. It was established in 1941 for the preservation of the specific vegetation,

of the varied bird population and the Monk Seal. On the carbonate soil of the cape of Kaliakra endemic vegetation species as the small iris, the narrowleaved peony, the hybrid poppy, esparto and others can be seen. On the cape were the Thracian town of Tirisys, and the fortress existed during the Byzantine period and in the times of the medieval Bulgarian state. The name Kaliakra emerged in written documents in XIII century, meaning “nice, good, hospitable for the navigators cape”. The fortress had an important role in the independent principality of the boyar Balik (XIV century) and under despot Ivanko, son of Dobrotitsa. The “Legend of Kaliakra” obelisk takes us back to the years of the Ottoman rule, when 40 Bulgarian girls interwove their hairs and jumped in the sea, in order to save their honor and faith.

Predecessor of the town of Devnya is the Roman and early Byzantine town of Martsianopolis, established in 106 by emperor Marcus Ulpius Trajan, on the occasion of his victories over the Dacians in the years 101-102 and 105-106, and the medieval town of Devin. Destroyed in VI century, later on it reoriginated already with the name Devnya. It is in the lowland of the same name near the Devnya River and the Devnya springs – one of the biggest karst springs in Bulgaria. The most interesting tourist site is the Mosaic museum – only one of this type in Bulgaria. It is built on a part of the foundations of an antique building with mosaics, which was constructed in the end of the III and the beginning of the IV century on the place of earlier buildings, destroyed by the Gothic invasions in 251. It represents roman and early Byzantine mosaics, which were used for covering of floors and walls of dwellings, social and culture buildings and vaults. These works of art are made of pebbles – marble cubes, limestone, clay and colored glass in different colors. They depict mainly characters and scenes of the Greek-Roman mythology, exotic birds and animals, plant and geometric subjects. In the museum halls also various stuff is represented, connected with the town architecture and the life of its inhabitants.

Remains of the ancient Martsianopolis (archeological reserve) can be seen near Devnya – the foundations of the main fortification walls are preserved, the town forum, the rampart and the towers.

Varna originated in tiers, as an ancient Greek colony with the name of Odesos (meaning “a place near the water”) in VI century BC near a wide bay. The name Varna was first mentioned in VIII century. The town is the biggest Bulgarian settlement at the Black sea (fig 5).

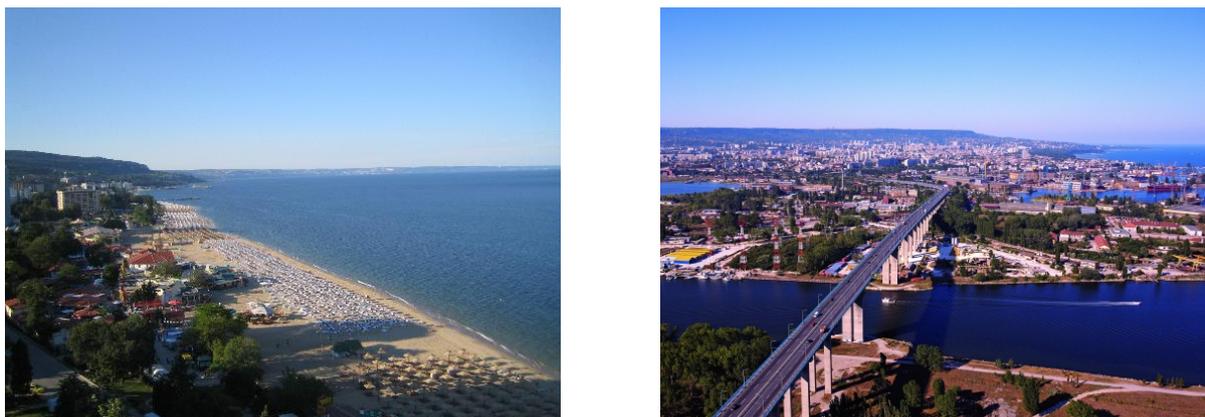


Fig. 5 – The Varna city, near the Black sea and the Asparuhov bridge.

It is 130 km to the North of Burgas and 470 km away from Sofia. To the West of the town is the Varna Lake, having important transport significance. Varna is a busy port, which developed trade with Venice and Genoa. After 1366 it was given by the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Alexander to the Dobruzha ruler Dobrotitsa, who turned it into his capital. In 1389 was conquered by the Turks and gradually declined. The name of the town is connected with the Polish king Vladislav Varnenchik, who died here in 1444.

The town didn't lose its former significance as a trade centre and port for the lands to the North of the Balkan. After the Liberation of Bulgaria it became one of the cultural centers of the country – the medical association and a museum collection were created here, a number of bookstores and publishing houses also opened.

More than 150 cultural-historical monuments from different historical ages are preserved in Varna. Here is the only museum on the Balkans, dedicated to the history of medicine. The longest bridge in Bulgaria – the Asparuhov bridge (fig.5), was built in Varna. It connects the town with the residential districts Asparuhovo and Galata. On the Vienna model was constructed the building of the Dramatic theatre (1856). Among the most interesting tourist sites in the Marine garden are the Planetarium (1966), after the name of Nicolaus Copernicus, the Dolphinarium, the Aquarium (1932), the Summer Theater. In front of the gates of the Marine Garden is situated the Festival complex, a modern multifunctional facility.

The town is a bishop's centre. The churches are built with the typical ceramic-plastic decoration. The remains of three of them are excavated – "St. Atanas", "St. George" and "St. Todor". Emblematic for Varna, however, is the cathedral church of "The Virgin Mary" (second by size in our country after the "St. Alexander Nevsky" Cathedral in Sofia), that was built to commemorate the Liberation of Bulgaria from the Turkish rule.

The beginning of the Archeological Museum was put by a group of teachers from the Varna secondary school for boys and public figures, on 11 June 1906, in the Secondary

school for girls. More than 100 000 exponents of the region from the past Ages are kept in the museum.

The Naval Museum, created by the great scholar Karel Shkorpil in 1923, presents object exponents and the history of the navy and the merchant fleet in Bulgaria from 1878. The exhibition in the open, in the park of the museum, covers 3000 square meters. Photos and documents of the naval fleet history of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian merchant shipping, shipbuilding, ports, the sea sports, as well as works of art on sea themes are kept in it.

Many visitors come to the Museum of Maritime Economy, The Museum of the Bulgarian National Revival, the Ethnographical Museum, the Museum of Tourism, the Park-museum of "Vladislav Varnenchik" and others. Next to the last one, a Thracian tomb from IV century BC was discovered.

In the vicinity of Varna are the Dzhanavar hill (hill of the spirits), where are the remains of a basilica from the early Christianity; the Petrich kale (Stone fortress), one of the most famous during the Middle centuries; the palace of Evksinograd. Pobitite Kamani (Dikilitash) are a rocky phenomenon, 17 km to the West of Varna. They represent rocky pillars, situated among a sandy terrain, strewn with remains of mussels, periwinkles and others. They are more than 50 million years old.

6 km to the South of Varna is situated the cape of Galata – the most Southern part of the Varna bay. It has steep shores with very suitable rocks for sea fishing.

All the coastal territory is embraced by a large resort zone, whose core are the resort complexes of "St. Konstantin" and "Golden Sands".

CONCLUSION

The discussed peculiarities of important for the nation sites of this region consolidate its contribution to the construction of "our ideal aspect". This is important from the position of the reprehensive historical scolding, as well as from the point of view of the geographical reality.

The Bulgarian cultural tourism is called to defend against interventions and to be a leading segment in the construction of the national prosperity.

The geographical aspects of cultural tourism are element in the general attitude to the social process. Because it presents, even intuitively, in the construction of curiosity.

Cultural tourism is current in the sphere of social expectation. Within the frame of the state attitude, it experiences mixed feelings because of the unfocused manner of state empathy, provoking definite lack of satisfaction, nostalgia and hope.

May be North-Eastern Bulgaria isn't the most beneficial example of expression of our nationalistic emotion.

But it is a part of it. And that is a resource, "crying" for exploitation.

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