

THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN BUILDING MODERN VELIKO TURNOVO



1. Veliko Turnovo a view with the ancient architectural ensemble Gurko street

Veliko Turnovo is an administrative and cultural centre of primary importance, the second university city after Sofia, and a centre of intensive industry and agriculture in the area in North Bulgaria. Thanks to its topography and cultural and historical heritage it is well known both in Bulgaria and abroad and is visited by many tourists. But for the Bulgarians Veliko Turnovo is not just a beautiful romantic city with narrow sloping streets between high bay-windowed houses perching one on top of the other over the meandering River Yantra. For the Bulgarian soul with its strong

feeling for history, Veliko Turnovo is a holy place.

From 1186 to 1393 it was the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom and that not only because of its strategic position before one of the passes in the Balkan Range leading from the Danube to Constantinople. The city witnessed stormy events in Bulgarian history — century-old political and military rivalry with Byzantium, the victorious clash with the Latin Empire — and was the stronghold of the Bulgarian mediaeval state and of the National Revival.



2. Gurko Street — a view

There are many remarkable monuments of culture in Veliko Turnovo, an evidence of thousands of years of existence. Because of their historic and artistic significance these have to be considered in present day town-planning so as to make the city a place suitable to live in. The future appearance of the old city district should give prominence to the role of cultural and historical heritage which will serve as a base for future town-planning solutions. It is necessary not just for new elements to be incorporated into the old organism but also to show what must not be done so as to prevent mistakes which will be impossible to correct afterwards.

The old city can be divided into different zones according to the situation and the significance of each monument thus achieving unity between town-planning and functionalism with some possible changes in the original destination of certain of these monuments.

If the idea is realised, a visitor or a group of visi-

tors would be able to see in one day, or in several days, the things appealing to his or their interests. The division will give us the following three groups of monuments:

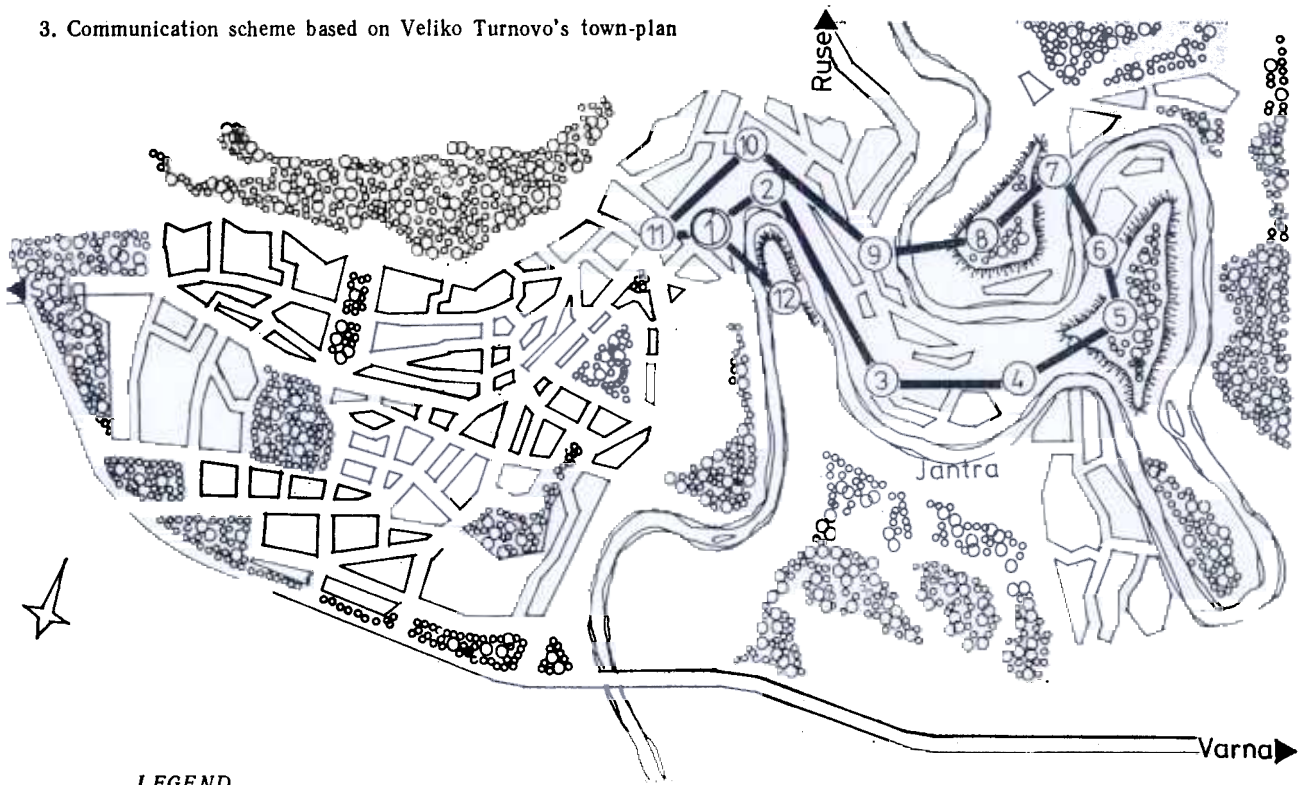
museum ensemble — Gurko Street, which looks exactly like what it was in the 19th century, and the new monuments of culture nearby that have acquired the function of museums.

reception-service zone — in front of the Tsarevets hill from where the tour to historic sites and architectural monuments will start.

tourist and shopping zone with rich cultural and historic heritage in Varosha, a picturesque neighbourhood built in the 19th century.

The museum ensemble may begin with the district historical museum where an exposition is arranged showing the historical development of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom (12th-14th century) whereby the frescoes in the building reinforce the impact of the exhibits as they recreate historical scenes. Both the former Turkish town-hall, a remarkable admin-

3. Communication scheme based on Veliko Turnovo's town-plan



LEGEND

1. Town centre 2. Gurko street 3. Museums 4. Public square 5. Tsarevets. Patriarch's Church 6. 40 Muchenitsi and Sveti Peter i Pavel Churches 7. Sveti Dimiter Church 8. Trapezitsa hill 9. Samovodska market place

4. Gurko Street-a view

strative building of the 19th century and the former Turkish prison, were built by Bulgarian architects during the 19th century. Both can be made into a continuation of the museum. An exposition about the Bulgarian Revival Period (late 18th century to late 19th century) may be arranged on the first and second storeys of the town-hall as a continuation of the mediaeval exposition (12th-14th century). The hall where the Constituent National Assembly of the Third Bulgarian Kingdom was held in 1879 may be arranged as a documentary and memorial exhibition after its interior reconstruction: portraits of the delegates to the Constituent Assembly, proceedings, the original copy of the constitution adopted there — hence named the Turnovo Constitution, which remained in force till December 4, 1944 will be on display. To realise this, it will be necessary to restore the town-hall to what it originally looked like. The former prison and the adjacent buildings turned into museums





6. Velika Turnovo — axonometric plan



6. The district historical museum



7. Sveti Gueorgui (St George) Church

8. The konak (The former Turkish town-hall)



will present exhibits and documents about past revolutionary events and men who were detained here before and during the April Uprising of 1876 and during the anti-fascist struggle (1923-1944).

This is how a museum ensemble will come into being to acquaint us with the most characteristic aspects of the cultural and revolutionary past of Veliko Turnovo which are related to the history of the entire Bulgarian people.

The museum ensemble will give a full idea of the cultural and historical achievements of the state and revolutionary traditions which are specifically to be seen in Veliko Turnovo. For instance, when king Ivan Assen II built the Church of Forty Martyrs (consecrated in 1230) he emphasized the continuity between the First and Second Bulgarian Kingdom by a marble column brought from the first Bulgarian capital Pliska and with an inscription of khan Omourtag (9th century). It is still there today. Sveti Dimiter Church (St. Demetrius) at the foot of Trapezitsa hill where the Second Bulgarian Kingdom was proclaimed has been totally preserved, restored and opened to visitors. The Constituent National Assembly of 1879 illustrates the feeling of continuity between the old Bulgarian kingdoms and the newly emerged Third Bulgarian Kingdom as experienced by the first Bulgarian Members of parliament. In 1908 Bulgaria was proclaimed a sovereign country and the proclamation ceremony also took place in Veliko Turnovo. All this is an eloquent proof of the town's special place in the history of the free country and of its extremely important nationwide significance.

For the time being the town-hall is planned as premises of the National Museum of Bulgarian Architecture. It is obvious from all said above that the building should not assume the functions of a museum of architecture, which should be established elsewhere in Veliko Turnovo.

Gurko Street has a typical Bulgarian architecture of the National Revival period (18th-19th century): houses of people of different social status, schools, churches and public buildings of the same period. This architectural and historical ensemble will be restored and adapted to suit its old buildings.

Free spaces in this ensemble will be filled with new architectural volumes in compliance with surrounding buildings and an exhibition of the architectural heritage will be on display:

Veliko Turnovo and Bulgarian architecture as seen by artists (Boris Denev, Ivan Hristov, Nikola Tanev, etc.);

buildings' interiors of the Bulgarian Revival period;



9. Samovodska market-place a view to the market street

city spaces of late 19th century;

models of buildings and building facilities, original architectural elements reflecting the development of architecture in Veliko Turnovo during the Bulgarian Revival period;

studios of architects, conservationists and designers.

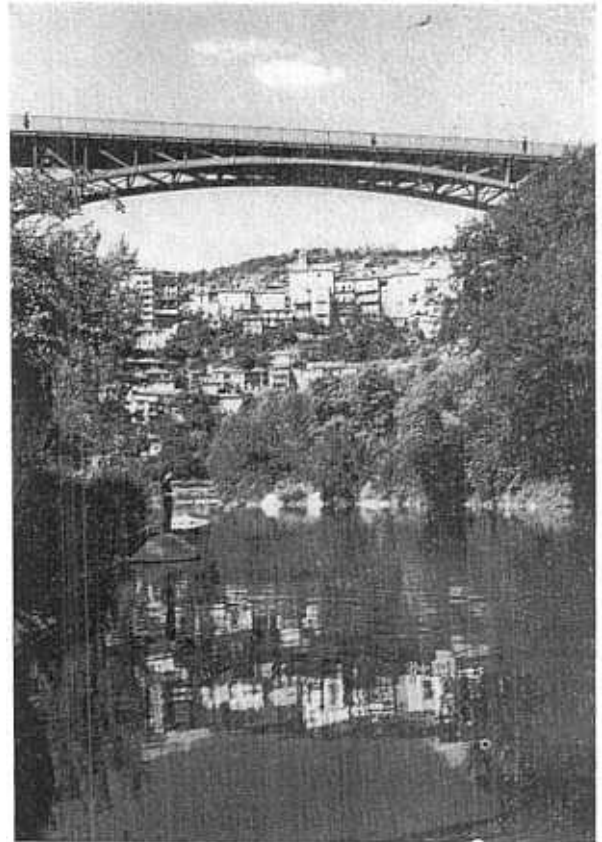
Other architectural monuments in Gurko Street may be arranged as temporary exhibition halls, shops for special literature and souvenirs connected with the history of Bulgarian architecture or offered to organise international meetings and exhibitions in it. Museum exhibitions could be arranged in the Nadezhda cultural club (1896) and in the former printing office where the first Bulgarian socialist newspaper *Rabotnik* (Worker) was printed in 1882. Free spaces in this ensemble will also be filled with architectural volumes complying with the surrounding buildings.

10. Tsarevets a view to the fortress wall after restoration



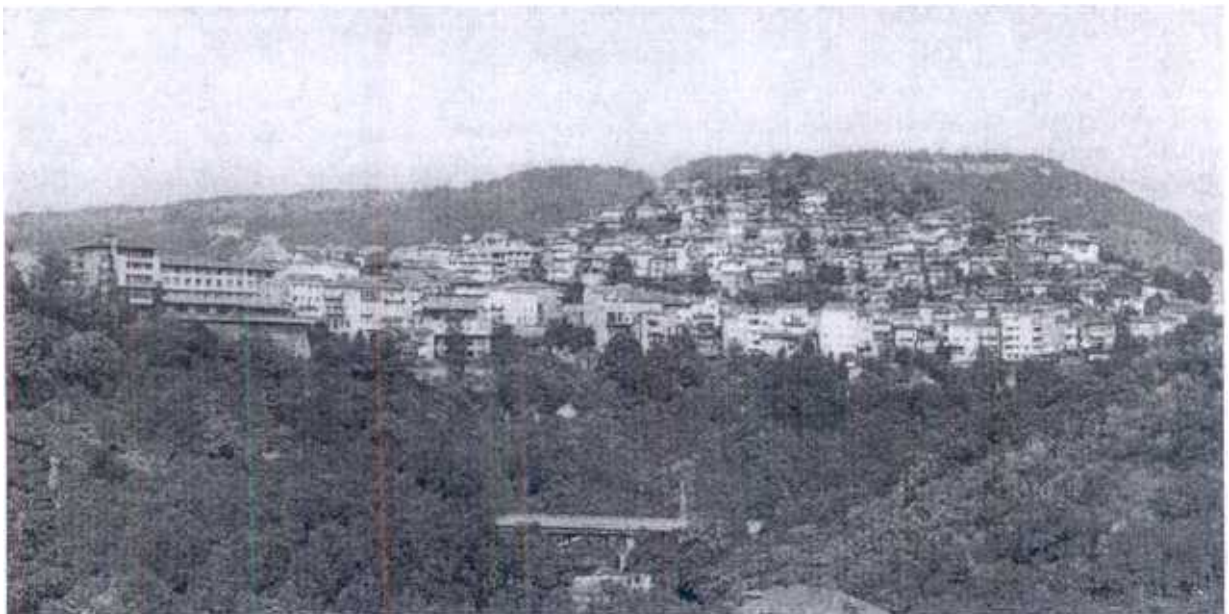
The most remarkable places of Veliko Turnovo — the historical fortress hills of Tsarevets and Trapezitsa are to be specially considered while building the old city. Remnants of the mediaeval fortress walls, of the royal palace and the Patriarch's Residence, of many churches, boyars' mansions, civil and public buildings, all of them witnesses of the greatness of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom today attract the attention of scholars and of Bulgarian and foreign tourists. Together with the historic churches outside the fortress walls and the modern public buildings in front of the main way to Tsarevets, they form an architectural and archaeological ensemble which might be organised as a second zone.

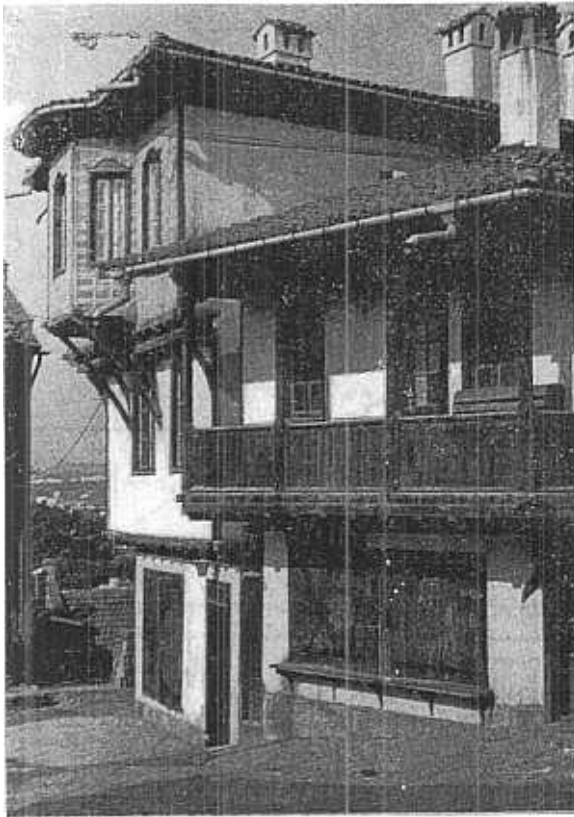
From a town-planning point of view it would be a good solution to turn the space in front of Tsarevets entrance into a reception square to the historical monuments, to set up some shops and short-time parking spaces but with due consideration to the square's visual connection with the remaining parts of the city. The district council building might be turned into a reception centre with information offices, reading rooms, lecture halls, cinemas, etc. A monument to the brothers Peter and Assen, the founders of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom will



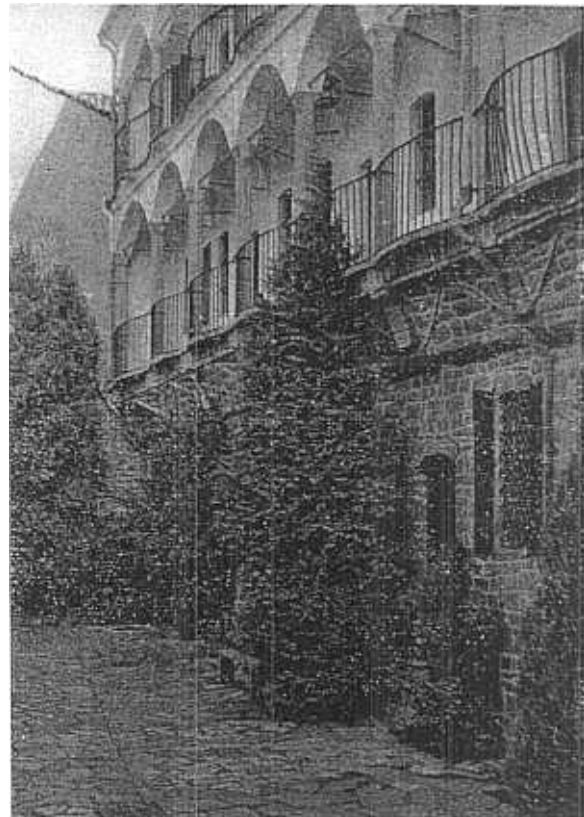
12. View of Veliko Turnovo

11. Varscha quarter: left — hotel Yantra





13. The Samovodska market-place restored houses



14. Nikoli Inn

appropriately fit into the same square. In this way we shall get a closed area in which the Patriarchal Church and the Patriarch's Residence stand paramount. As museums, they will relate the history of the Patriarchate, its role in literature and cultural heritage and the development of the Turnovo literary school in the 14th century, the leading figures being the patriarchs of the Bulgarian Church Theodosius of Turnovo and Euthymius, of mediaeval Bulgarian music in general and of Eastern Orthodox singing and Bulgarian songs composed in the 14th century by the legendary Ioan Koukouzel. At the present stage it is necessary to direct communication links from Tsarevets via the so-called Small Gate, the remnants of the Great Laura monastery ensemble and the Church of the Forty Martyrs. Conservation and restoration work in the church will, no doubt, lead to some changes in the urban communication and will link this part with pedestrian routes to the churches Sveti Peter i Pavel (Sts. Peter and Paul) and Sveti Dimiter (St. Demetrios) and will revive the pedestrian way via the so-called Bishop's Bridge. In this way the

Tsarevets system will be connected with Trapezitsa and will incorporate that area, least visited now, and will have the strongest impact on the perception of the historical past and of the monuments in an original semantic order: single monuments, architectural and historical monuments with museum exhibitions, archaeological relics conserved in situ. Because of its tradition, its dislocation and building, the third zone will be left for tourist services. It includes the area of hotel Yantra built some 20 years ago, goes via the old shopping street and the Samovodska market-place, besides other remarkable monuments of culture and reaches the modern shopping street and the square in front of the municipal council. These parts of the city are to be preserved with all their atmosphere and their shops and restaurants.

Nikoli Inn is a remarkable building of the Revival period but will be furnished as a modern hotel. The shopping zone will reinforce the impact of the conservation area and will make sightseeing more varied.

Such a treatment of town-planning problems to in-

corporate cultural heritage of the Middle Ages and of the Bulgarian Revival into the life of an up-to-date city will be in full compliance with the latest tendencies of Bulgarian architecture and conserva-

tional thought and practices that are evident by now in other architectural conservation areas in this country.

Emil DIMCHEV

RESUME

Après l'étude de l'ensemble des monuments, de leur fonctions, de leur importance, l'auteur propose un zonage complexe de la ville ancienne, permettant d'établir un circuit piétonnier pour la visite de tous les monuments historiques.

La première zone comprend la rue Gourko, typique du Réveil national, qui constituera une sorte de musée de plein air, présentant au visiteur dans les maisons restaurées des intérieurs de cette époque, des expositions d'artistes bulgares ou des ateliers d'artisans. Le „Konak“ turc — le plus important édifice administratif de la ville sous la domination ottomane — sera aménagé en musée du Réveil national bulgare. La alle où, en 1879, avait siégé l'Assemblée constituante du Troisième Etat bulgare, abritera une exposition illustrant ces événements, dans leur cadre authentique. L'édifice voisin, l'ancienne prison turque, sera consacré à l'histoire révolutionnaire de la ville et de ses environs, pendant les périodes héroïques de l'insurrection d'avril 1876 et jusqu'à la lutte antifasciste de 1944. Ainsi, les monuments et les musées de cet ensemble seront consacrés à un thème, principal, l'Etat bulgare. Deux églises se rattacheront à cet ensemble, Sveti-Dimitre, où fut proclamé le Deuxième Etat bulgare, et Sveti-40-mach-nitsi (les quarante martyrs).

La deuxième zone comprend les collines Fortifiée de Tsarevets et Trapezitsa. Toute cette zone, enclos de remparts, dominée par l'église primatiale et les vestiges du palais royal, est protégée. L'ensemble for-

mé par Tsarevets et Trapezitsa sera aménagé pour constituer un tout, permettant d'illustrer son passé prestigieux. On découvrira des monuments isolés, d'autres transformés en musée, des vestiges archéologiques, etc. . .

La troisième zone comprendra le versant (Varoucha) des collines descendant vers la rivière, l'ensemble hôtelier Yantra, le bazar Samovodska-tcharchia et l'auberge Nikoli-khan, le centre commercial de la ville ancienne et ira jusqu'au centre actuel de Veliko-Tarnovo. Cette zone pourra être équipée de divers établissements judicieusement aménagés dans un cadre pittoresque. De là, on pourra assister à un spectacle son et lumière, sur les ruines de la colline de Tsarevets qui lui fait face.

Ces projets contribueront à mettre en valeur tout le caractère et le charme de l'ancienne capitale de la Bulgarie.

1. Vue de Veliko-Tarnovo
2. Rue Gourko
3. Le réseau des communications, établi d'après le plan d'aménagement de la ville
4. Rue Gourko
5. Veliko-Tarnovo — plan axonometric
6. Le musée départemental d'Histoire
7. L'église Sveti Gueorgui (St Georges)
8. Le „konak“ (bâtiment administratif turc) — état actuel
9. Le bazar Samovodska-tcharchia — vue de la rue commerciale
10. Tsarevets — vue de l'enceinte après restauration
11. Le quartier de Varoucha: à gauche l'hôtel Yantra
12. Vue de Veliko-Tarnovo
13. Le bazar Samovodska-tcharchia — maisons restaurées
14. Une vue de l'auberge Nikoli-khan