

Short introduction

THE TEMPLE THE GREAT BASILICA OF PLISKA THE THREE PILLARS OF STATEHOOD – THE ROCK, THE BOOK AND THE MYTH

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The book offers an analysis from an urban-planning and architectural point of view of the real facts related to the capital Pliska and its spiritual and religious center from the ninth century - the Great Basilica with an Archbishopric and a monastery. Symbolically, this is the "STONE" of the Bulgarian statehood from this era. On the other hand, the question of the need for a "BOOK" and "MYTH" to support our people is also raised, arguing that they must be linked to unquestionable facts - they simply need to be extremely clear, with a long-term strategy and patiently suggested to Bulgarians from the cradle to the grave. Even the most cursory tour of the citadel of Pliska - the Inner City, the impressive straight alley to the Great Basilica and its huge size raises doubts about the traditional "mantras" for the old Bulgarians as a brave but simple horse people. In fact, Pliska is a sign of high civilization.

The tested comparative method is followed. This method involves the simultaneous assessment of social, religious, historical, geographical, climatic and even geological characteristics affecting the final architectural and urban result. In addition, source documents are discussed, which refute traditionally established those in Bulgarian history. For example, according to the chronicle of the Lombards, written by the Italian monk Paul Diaconi in the 10th century, the Bulgarians inhabited East Germany as early as the 1st century AD.

As a matter of fact, Bulgaria is the first country in Europe that did not come into existence as a result of the collapse of the Roman Empire, but was the product of the internal needs of the ruling elite who was in constant conflict with the still standing Eastern Roman Empire, later Byzantium, and invading steppe peoples.

We describe the old capital Pliska from the 7th – 9th century as an example of the advanced skills the Bulgarians had developed in urban planning, building and spatial complexes, representing political power. Accordingly, the Great Basilica was built as a spiritual, political and architectural symbol of the state and the age. We draw a comparison with a similar type of world-famous religious buildings and complexes built in Europe before, during and after the Early Middle Ages and more precisely in the 4th – 9th century. We also attempt to prove the use of already accepted proportions as established standards in culture and statehood, a testament to the highest degree of enlightenment and a mastery built over a span of centuries.

We emphasize that even the simplest comparison in urban planning scale of Pliska and other European cities, as well as of the Great Basilica and the largest Christian buildings in early medieval Europe, is enough to warrant a new reading of the facts. It is well-known that even a few centuries after the construction of the Great Basilica in Pliska, there were only a handful of cathedrals in Europe of its caliber.

We also broach the question of principle as to whether national myths should exist and why some nations defend their heroes and myths with far less reliable facts on their side, while many Bulgarian politicians and scientists support self-sabotaging theses or, as the saying goes, try to "out-pope the Pope". This cowardice and excessive shyness often go hand in hand with the destruction of monuments that are part of the fabric of Bulgarian history, statehood and culture.

We have divided the book into segments presenting the main theses and have attempted a reconstructed model of both the basilica itself and its connection with the central part of Pliska - the Inner City. The architects themselves treated the imposing and monumental buildings in the capital as an ensemble embodying might and unassailable power, and deliberately sought to impart an air of stateliness and formality to the urban spaces and edifices.

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