

Bulgarian Cultural Heritage: Interpretation and Presentation Problems and Prospects

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1. Introduction

Founded on the crossroads between the East and the West, the 1320-year-old Bulgarian state has always experienced their cultural influence. What is more, Bulgaria is the cradle of one of the most ancient civilizations, the Thracian one, monuments of which even nowadays reveal still new and new aspects of the initial stages in the development of the European culture. In the 9th century Bulgaria became home of the Old-Bulgarian and Slavonic script - work of the Cyril and Methodius brothers - which absolutely covered "the principle of complete correspondence between symbol and letter" and in which even to this day 10 per cent of the world population write (Micheva, 1998:8). Romans, Byzantines, Koumanians, Tatars, Ottoman Turks left their traces on the Bulgarian lands. Over the centuries the original Bulgarian culture with its unique archeological and architectural complexes and literary heritage, valuable pieces of fine art, applied arts and crafts, ethnography, music and dancing originated and won recognition.

For that reason we can talk of the presence of a rich, many-sided and significant Bulgarian cultural heritage, for the documentation and interpretation of which generations of Bulgarian scholars among whom academicians Ivan Duychev, Vassil Zlatarski, Dimitar Angelov, Dimitar Dimitrov, professors Christo Gandev, Petar Dinekov, Nikola Mavrodinov, Petar Tivchev, Velizar Velkov, Alexander Foll, Vassil Gyuzelev and others have contributed with their research efforts, talent and dedication.

2. Problems

Today, at the turn of the 21st century, due to the new information technologies humanity entered the age of information **globalization**. Bulgaria is taking a still more active part in the intensive process of European globalization occurring on our continent. At the same time we are witnessing a regional cultural revival. That is why the boundaries in which the Bulgarian cultural heritage can be interpreted and presented should become considerably wider, the possibilities more varied and the responsibilities more scaled.

"Globalization in the field of culture should be viewed as a triple process on its own. On the one hand universalization and cosmopolitization of the culture are being imposed. On the other, national and ethnic cultural traditions are being revived and on third a process of merging of the previous two tendencies to the level of cultural hybridization is being consolidated" (Petkova, 2000:83). The establishment of all-European spiritual values could be largely considered as the very hybridization of the cultural traditions of the European nations.

One of the key issues both to Bulgaria and all European countries is how to preserve the **national identity** participating at that in the overall process of exchange of cultural values which through the Internet is part of the global exchange in the spiritual sphere. (Featherstone, 1990). This problem should be solved in the conditions of a still stronger engrossment of the traditional social and cultural spaces by the Internet, of the more growing sense of cosmopolitanism by the web consumers, of a still more detailed fragmentation of

public communication through individualization and personalization and through segmentation of the audience into electronic societies of interests (Burkart, 1998:496).

An effective means for each nation to preserve its national identity in the present conditions is the ability of that nation to tap new sources of national self-confidence disconnected from the historical background, but which refer to the present and are directed to the future (Petkova, 2000:143).

The National Strategy for Accession of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Union includes the following main tasks in the sphere of cultural and audiovisual policy: "Adequate participation of our national culture in the all-European cultural space through activation of the bilateral and multilateral cultural and audiovisual cooperation between Bulgaria and the EC based on the principles of decentralization and transparency of the cultural policy, equality of the cultural subjects (state, municipal, private, non-government), market-oriented attitude of the cultural institutions and stimulation of the market competitiveness of the national cultural production, with priority orientation to:

- participation in the EC programs for cultural cooperation KALEIDOSCOPE, RAPHAEL and ARIADNE,
- assistance with the help of the PHARE program in reforming the Bulgarian cultural sector to establish a Euro-Bulgarian cultural centre and a Euro-Bulgarian fund for development of the arts." ("National strategy...", 1998:14).

A most pressing problem connected with the cultural heritage is the necessity of a **new legal regulation** of that vast special subject matter, which should arrange for the protection of archeological finds from unscrupulous treasure-hunters; claim responsibility from institutions or individuals that through their action or inaction were instrumental to destroying or plundering cultural monuments; delegate responsibilities to institutions that protect, preserve, restore and use objects of cultural heritage; provide tax relief for companies and organizations which invest in cultural heritage.

The cultural heritage is state-owned, but its preservation is entrusted with the municipalities. Since the municipalities by tradition dispose of very **limited financial resources**, it is their practice to allot minimum funds from their budgets for that important activity. The majority of the municipal councils have not yet become aware of the big economic and social advantages of the so-called **cultural tourism**. For the time being only 1% of Bulgaria's tourism is related to cultural objects. However, opening the tomb of Sveshtary with the help of ICOMOS has shown that it has been visited by 50 000 tourists for a short period of time.

If the share of cultural tourism in Bulgaria increases, for which there are large and various possibilities, this will provide not only revenues for the municipalities, but will open extra and many new jobs, contributing in this way to the regional and national prosperity.

3. Cultural heritage interpretation

As is known culture has two dimensions - material and spiritual. It is easy to explain why the care of the **material preservation** of our culture (architectural monuments and complexes, museum collections, etc.) is traditional in our country with well established for the purpose institutions. Organized work on discovery, study, preservation and popularization of the cultural monuments in Bulgaria started with the adopted Law of discovery of historical monuments and assistance to the scientific literary organizations of 1890, followed by the Law of historical monuments of the Kingdom of Bulgaria of 1911 as well as with the activity of the 1892-founded National Museum of Archeology in Sofia and became most effective and scaled in the 50s and 60s of the 20th century with the 1969-established National Institute of Cultural Monuments with its 4 departments and subsidiaries in Plovdiv and Veliko Tarnovo. It took on the conservation and restoration work as well. That institute is member of the International Council of Monuments of Culture and Sights (ICOMOS) and is actively engaged

in the international cooperation in this sphere. (Alexandrov, 1980: 228-231) Over 40 000 cultural monuments are made known, seven among them: the Thracian tumulus near Kazanlak, the Boyana Church, the Madara Horseman, the Churches cut in the Rock near the village of Ivanovo by Russe, the Rila Monastery and the Thracian tumulus near the village of Sveshtari (Fig. 1) feature in the world heritage list according to the UNESCO International Convention adopted in 1972.

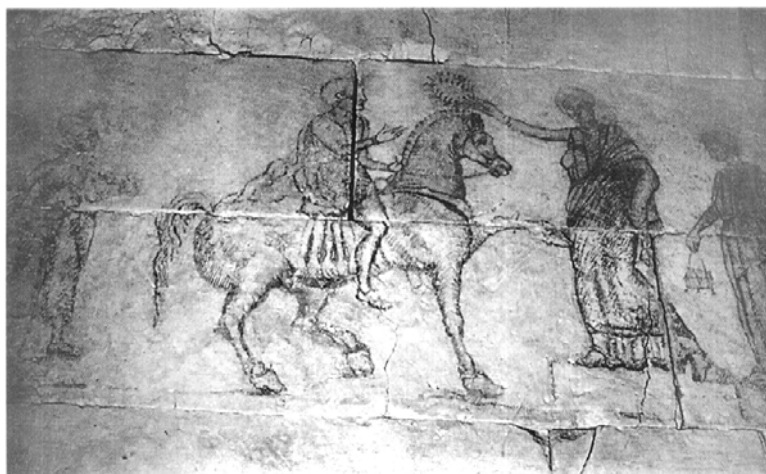


Fig. 1 Fragment of paintings in the tumulus of Sveshtary: A Thracian king was proclaimed hero, 3rd century BC

The care of **preservation of the spiritual monuments of culture**, which, for instance, are the monasteries and cultural community centres (chitalishta), is considerably more complex and this fact makes their documentation and presentation before a wider international audience difficult.

In 1999 Bulgaria joined the movement “European Heritage Days” - a joint initiative of the European Council and the European Union. Taking into consideration the specific conditions in the South-East European countries in their transition to democracy, the Bulgarian National Committee of ICOMOS offered within the framework of the European Heritage Days in 2000 the implementation of an international project “The Balkans - joint heritage/Cultural routes of South-eastern Europe”. The Council of Europe highly estimated the idea and presented the project in its website.

“The European Heritage Days” in 2001 in Bulgaria passed under the sign of the main theme “Children, Young People and Heritage”. A workshop with the participation of Bulgarian and foreign specialists in heritage pedagogy was organized in Sofia. The exhibitions “Children and Cultural Heritage”, which opened at the Euro-Bulgarian cultural centre in Sofia, presented three different forms of creative study of the heritage: through photographs, works of art and scientific research. School children became guides in the museums of Gabrovo for two days. On 29 and 30 September 2001 a great number of initiatives were organized which included competitions of children’s creative work; artistic, ethnographic and architectural exhibitions; talks; performances; discovery and restoration of cultural monuments; organizing an “European Class of Heritage” in the “Frederic Joliot Curie”23rd secondary school in Sofia; a radioplay “I know the past” in Montana; publications in the regional and national press; on-line meetings with young people from other European countries. Major organizers were the Ministry of Science and Education, the Ministry of Culture, the State Agency of Youth and Sport, the Bulgarian National Committee of ICOMOS and the National Institute of Cultural Monuments.

From the numerous monuments of the Bulgarian cultural heritage we will concentrate here on only three groups:

1. **the newest archeological discoveries from the Thracian Age** made in the last years because they turned out to be of national, European and world significance;

2. **the monasteries** in Bulgaria during the 500-year- Ottoman rule because at that time they played the role of not only national, regional and local religious centres but of significant centres of protecting, preserving and developing the Bulgarian material and spiritual culture, of moulding the Bulgarian nation, of initiating and establishing the cultural exchange and cooperation between the Slav and Bulgarian nations.
3. **the cultural community centres (chitalishta)** - a unique creation of the Bulgarian national spirit that set them up as original cultural centres on local level. Built during the Bulgarian Revival period (the latter half of the 19th century) with the means and efforts of the entire population in towns and villages, they comprise libraries, circles for regional studies and their own museum collections of objects from the lifestyle, culture and writing in a particular settlement. The cultural community centres encourage and promote the activities of different authentic folklore ensembles which preserve the songs, dances and festive rites of the particular region.

3.1 “The Valley of Kings” in Kazanlak and the newest archeological finds from Thracian times in the regions of Haskovo and Kardzhaly

Well preserved ancient paintings even in countries like Greece and Italy are discovered once in a hundred years. What is more, after the well-known Thracian tumulus by Kazanlak, some important archeological discoveries were made in recent years that entitled scholars to start to talk of “The Valley of Kings” (Fig. 2) located elsewhere from Egypt, namely in Europe - in the well-known valley of roses by Kazanlak.



Fig. 2 “The Valley of Kings” by Kazanlak (the hatched part on the map of Bulgaria)

In 1992 over 50 mounds were excavated containing 7 tumuli and over 1000 objects of museum value. The Shipka tomb-mausoleum was excavated near the village of Ostrousha in 1993. In 1995 for only a hundred days of excavations 4 monumental Thracian tumuli were discovered, among which two un plundered, with 30 human tombs and 450 objects of museum value. Ten more mounds were excavated with the assistance of Switzerland in 1996. Part of the newly discovered tumuli radically differ in construction and mural paintings from those so far familiar to the thracologists. The scholars paid particular attention to the magnificently coloured mural paintings in the Sarafova tumulus by the village of Kran, thus raising the issue of a Thracian school of ancient wall-painting of its own.

The newest discoveries in the Thracian tumulus by the village of Alexandrovo, Haskovo region (Fig. 3), in the late 2000 and early 2001 made the researchers concentrate their efforts on locating the centre of this school, which until recently was considered to be in “The Valley of Kings”. However the Thracian tumulus of 4th century BC in the village of

Alexandrovo calls for a reconsideration of the facts. The frescoes, dating from over 24 centuries ago, with a fine colour preservation in red, blue, yellow, black and prevailing brick, contain figures of people, animals, plants, geometrical ornaments.



Fig. 3 Thracian tumulus by the village of Alexandrovo, Haskovo region (the hatched part on the map of Bulgaria)

For the first time plots known so far only from the Thracian gold and silver objects are evident. Warriors in battle armament and hunting scenes can be seen. The centre of the vaulted tumulus is taken up by the figure of a horseman spearing a wild boar, which confirms again that hunting was a favourite occupation of Thracian kings. These frescoes are more primitive than those in the Kazanlak

tumulus; however, they are original in their kind and very unlike the Greek school of painting, which proves that they are the work of a Thracian artist.(Fig. 4)



Fig 4 Part of the mural paintings in the Thracian tumulus in the village of Alexandrovo, which are older and brighter than those in the famous Kazanlak tumulus

The preservation of these invaluable wall-paintings requires the erection of an impenetrable chamber, the systematic work of a group of restorers, the security of the site against inimical “connoisseurs” as well as the protection of the tumulus against accidents and

natural calamities (Delev, 2001). We truly hope that the EC with its “ARIADNE” program can make a tangible contribution to the preservation and restoration of this unique monument of the all-European cultural heritage.

In early September 2001 an archeological expedition headed by Professor Nikolai Ovcharov discovered one more ancient historical sight on the Bulgarian lands - the legendary temple of Dionysius in the Sacred Mountain (the Rhodopes) by the village of Gorna Krepost, Kardzhaly region (Fig. 5), the remains of which cover an area of 10 000 sq. metres.



Fig. 5 Location of the temple of Dionysius in the Kardzhaly region

Describing that temple, Herodotus claimed that in this very place the idea of conquering the world dawned on Alexander the Great. (Fig. 6) Scholars expect interesting and significant finds from that expedition as well.

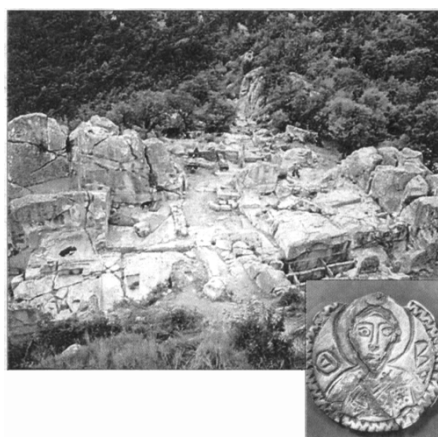


Fig. 6 The remains of the legendary temple of Dionysius in the Sacred Mountain (The Rhodopes); silver medallion of St. Vassilii

3.2 The Bulgarian monasteries - heart of the national spirit

The fall of Bulgaria under Ottoman rule in 1393 put an end to the Bulgarian state system, the national spiritual and cultural institutions, among which the monasteries took a leading place, were destroyed. During the 500-year yoke only the ecclesiastical culture and literature managed to survive “in the shadow”. Providing donations for the monasteries the Bulgarian population assisted the best artists to make woodcarved iconostases, murals and church plates. In this way the remarkable Tryavna, Samokov, Bansko, Debar, Athos and other schools of fine arts and crafts originated and were established. (Fig. 7)

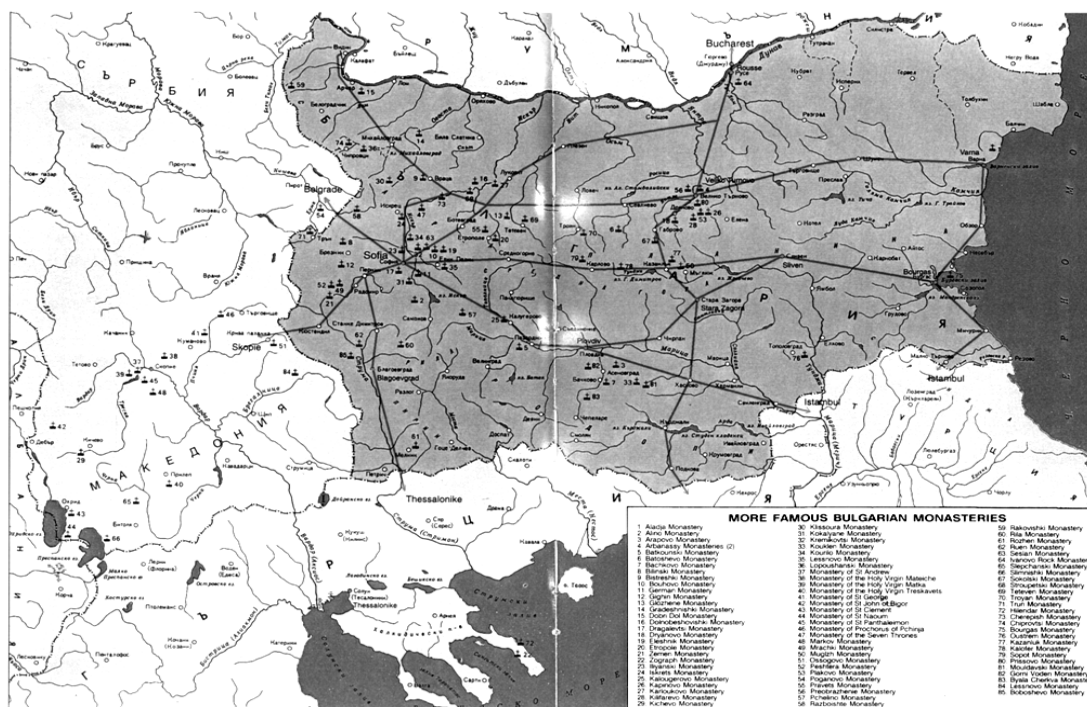


Fig. 7 Map of the most well-known monasteries on the Bulgarian lands (the deeper colour signifies Bulgaria's present territory)

Our monasteries performed various activities to preserve the Bulgarian national spirit. They functioned as museums, libraries and educational centres (there the first monastery schools and printing presses originated in our lands), they commemorated the fighters for national liberation of Bulgaria and the other Balkan nations.. Their monks were ambassadors of goodwill among the Slav and Balkan nations. As early as 1466 the monks of the Rila monastery concluded a contract for assistance and cooperation with the Russian monastery "St. Panteleimon" in Athos and through special envoys restored and managed to consolidate their ties with a lot of monasteries on the Slav and Balkan lands.

The Czech scholars Konstantin Irecek and Karel Skorpil, the Russian researchers N. Kondakov and An. Grobar, the Bulgarian scholars Yordan Ivanov, Petar Mutavchiev, Bogdan Filov, Alexander Protich, Nikola Mavrodinov, Krastyu Miyatev, Atanass Bozhkov, Georgi Chavrakov and others contributed to the study of the history and role of the Bulgarian monasteries.

After the end of World War II the Moscow-forced Stalin rule in the Central and East European countries had an impact on the attitude to and care of the preservation of the cultural monuments related to the church (Zlateva A., 1998:195). The subsidy granted by the Bulgarian socialist state was so scarce that the protection of the national wealth preserved in the monasteries was made impossible.

The site dir.bg. contains some brief information of our major monasteries. However, what has been done so far does not match the great possibilities of the new information technologies for their presentation and popularization.

We would like to draw the attention of the specialists to one of these monasteries - **the Cherepish Monastery**. (Fig. 8) It was built on a cult building of the early Byzantine period on the right bank of the River Iskar in the Iskar Gorge by the picturesque place Ritlite. (Fig. 9) In the Middle Ages the Cherepish Monastery was a cross-shaped one-dome structure which serviced the stronghold related to the name of the last Bulgarian king Ivan Shishman. After the fall of Bulgaria under Ottoman yoke, the temple was destroyed, plundered and burnt down.



Fig. 8 The Cherepish Monastery - general view

In the latter half of 17th century, with the efforts of St. Pimen Zograph, the Cherepish Monastery was renovated - a temple, a belfry, a school and cult- and residential buildings, were built. The murals in the monastery are not well preserved but it has a rich possession of literary monuments.



Fig.9 Map of Bulgaria with the marked location of the Cherepish Monastery on the Iskar River

One of the oldest extant Bulgarian manuscripts - a monastery statute (tipik), now kept in the Museum of Church History and Archeology in Sofia, two famous gospels - one of 16th century and the other from the time of the Bogomil movement were written in the monastery during the 1390-1396 period. A month ago the Bulgarian National Television showed a documentary about the tragic fate of the Cherepish Monastery which due to lack of means and constant plundering is doomed. We hope that its history and fate will arouse the interest of European scholars and specialists who can help to save and preserve the monastery for the future.

3.3 Chitalishta or Cultural community centres - a unique institution of the Bulgarian culture

During the Renaissance in the latter half of the 19th century a unique institution of our cultural life was established - the cultural community centre. The interpretation of the word in translation as a “cultural and education organization” does not in any case exhaust the rich content and specifics of this multi-aspect phenomenon. Cultural community centres originated as a result of the economic upsurge of some of the settlements but the main urge for their establishment was the Bulgarian inherent hunger for “opening a window” to the broad world - the Balkans, Russia, Europe. Initiators were Bulgarian teachers, the richer patriotic Bulgarians became donators to the cultural community centres and everybody volunteered with work and talent for their development.



Fig. 10 The first Bulgarian cultural community centre (chitalishte) was founded on the river Danube in the town of Svishtov in 1856. In 1971 Koprivshitsa was declared a museum town and national historical and cultural reserve. The cultural community centre (chitalishte) there was established in 1869

The first cultural community centre and public library were opened in the town of Svishtov on the River Danube on 30 January 1856. (Fig 10) Its website <http://www.pbc.hit.bg> provides a comprehensive idea of the rich spiritual life organized by the cultural community centre to present times. Following Svishtov, cultural community centres were established in the towns of Lom, Shumen, Koprivshitsa etc. Already before the Liberation in 1878 there were 131 cultural community centres on the Bulgarian lands. (Kondarev, Sirakov, Cholov, 1991) They carried out broad activities among young and old for the preservation of local and regional traditions in the field of culture. They supported thousands of regional researchers to build museum collections, to save samples of archeological finds, everyday life objects, woodcarving, plastic arts, embroideries, costumes, folk songs, fairy tales, myths and legends. Cultural community centres supported schools also by donations, providing scholarships and sending the most talented students to study abroad. The democratic principle of their trustees is expressed through “consent of the people” i.e. through direct election of the members of the boards of trustees. They comprised the most influential and patriotic persons irrespective of property status and nationality.

The artistic activity of the cultural community centres is a source of talents - singers, players, dancers - for state folk ensembles. One of them is Valja Balkanska whose folk song about Delyu Haydutin was included in the message of mankind sent into space through the Voyager. Dozens of Bulgarian cultural community centre teams hold prestigious awards from established international festivals.

Bulgarian cultural community centres have always been a place where all ethnical groups with their folklore traditions participate on an equal rights basis. There are groups for Turkish, Armenian, Jewish, Karakachan, Roma folklore.

Due to the social and economic changes during the transition period after 1989 the activity of these important cultural institutions has been in serious danger. The latest statistical data show a very alarming tendency which is clearly revealed by the following table:

Table 1

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Cultural community centres	4225	4223	3646	3125	3056	below 3000
A. in towns	544	544	536	514	510	below 480
B. in villages	3681	3679	3110	2611	2546	2500
Thousand members	217	203	219	191	180	168
A. in towns	100	93	96	86	81	70
B. in villages	117	110	123	105	99	70

The libraries at the cultural community centres, having an outstandingly rich variety of books and archives, are in the same position.

Table 2

Libraries	1995	1999	2000
Total number	8069	7483	7281
A. in towns	3341	2971	-
B. in villages	4728	4312	-

(The data in Tables 1 and 2 are from the Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Bulgaria, Sofia, 2000 and due to that the data for 2000 are current and subject to correction.)

For a short period the publication of one of the oldest specialized Bulgarian magazines "Chitalishte" (Cultural community centre in translation) was also stopped. Its publishing began in 1870 in Tzarigrad by M.D. Balabanov, S.S. Bobchev and P.R. Slaveykov, it had been published for a long time by Todor Samodumov and it is still published nowadays.

Due to lack of financial means the number of concert shows of musical companies of the cultural community centres is diminishing - from 1553 in 1998 to 1473 in 1999. The number of visitors to their performances fell drastically by one third mainly due to financial difficulties - from 927029 in 1998 to 690571 in 1999.

Analyzing in retrospect the complex and contradictory historical fate of the Balkan nations during the centuries and opening the studies of Bulgarian and European scholars who have often drawn data on the relations between Bulgaria and the world from the book and museum collections of cultural community centres, we can accept that the spiritual cultural monuments preserved in Bulgarian cultural community centres have not only regional but also all-European significance. For example the library of the Svishtov community centre keeps Slavonic manuscripts of the year 1568, early printed books of 1575, the "Svishtov 18 c. Bulgarian homilies" of 1753 and dozens of other cultural community centres possess similar valuable literary monuments.

Having an amateur character, skillfully and proportionally combining initiative, goodwill and ethnical tolerance, Bulgarian cultural community centres deserve respect and financial and moral support, which is provided by the UN Project for affiliation of the local community with cultural values.

4. Presentation of cultural heritage

Until now mainly traditional forms of presentation of our cultural heritage have been used.

4.1. Concerning archeological monuments, the greatest success is the inclusion of three monuments of the Thracian period under the auspices of UNESCO while the biggest reverberation on an international scale up to now had the Thracian Gold exhibition, which during the past 20 years has been presented in a number of most prestigious museums in the world, as well as a number of publications of Bulgarian Thracian scholars in Bulgarian and foreign scientific journals and books. Despite the unique character of the latest archeological finds, the Bulgarian state does not dispose of sufficient financial means necessary for the conservation and restoration according to modern standards of the monuments of the Thracian period.

4.2. Monasteries have featured in presentation mainly as places of interest in books, collections, albums, dedicated to historical and tourist sites, schools in fine arts - painting, mural painting, wood carving or as architectural ensembles. Documentaries have been created for them /educational and tourist/ for secondary and higher schools and for travel agencies.

4.3. Cultural community centres and their ensembles have for many years aroused continuous interest on part of the mass media in Bulgaria with different show events of their artistic groups in the country and abroad. However, their heavily worsened financial condition in the past decade brought about destruction of the building facilities, disbanding of the ensembles, while the magnetism of the Internet and the migration of the country's young population to the West led also to a reduction in the number of participants in their ensembles.

Despite all, thanks to the very tradition, deeply coalesced with popular customs and the donations of patriotic Bulgarians, Bulgarian cultural community centres continue to exist today.

5. Public relations of the cultural heritage

In the new public and socio-economic conditions it is essential to implement a specialized program of public relations of our cultural heritage as part of the National strategy for Accession of Bulgaria to the EC (Zlateva, M., 1999:84).

What are the likely new forms of presentation of the three types of cultural monuments presented so far?

5.1 Concerning the monuments of the Thracian period

- The activities of the bilateral and multilateral international research projects such as TEMP (with the Swiss Embassy in Bulgaria) (Kitov, 1996: 64-66) proceeding with their archeological studies in "The Valley of Kings" should be covered widely by a special program of the mass media in Bulgaria and Europe as well as by the Internet.
- The interface of different groups of Internet consumers should be widened by virtual forms to the project sites of the Thracian cultural heritage as is the case with the program of the National Museum of Military History in Sofia now under preparation.

- The multimedia forms are ideal for educational purposes and getting an overall idea and are applicable to the other cultural monuments because they allow individual details required by the consumer to be emphasized.
- The mass media should ensure a wider popularization of the work of the multinational teams and summer schools for specialists and restorers, where experience is exchanged on the newest methods and techniques of preservation of cultural monuments.

5.2 Concerning monasteries

- Since the Bulgarian monasteries keep relics of the Slavonic literature, the culture of Bulgaria and the Balkan nations, it would be useful to form joint research teams of scholars from Bulgaria, Russia, Rumania, Moldova, the Ukraine, Macedonia and Yugoslavia carrying out EC-funded research work of the riches of our monastery complexes.
- A series of CD-ROM documentaries and video films in several languages should be made to be included in the European TV exchange and shown in different European countries.
- The students of the National School of Classical Languages and Cultures together with their teachers carry out the project "Mount Athos in Sofia" studying the monasteries and churches within a range of 100 kilometres of the capital. Their aim is to prepare a guidebook for the Bulgarian and foreign tourists, which reveals the riches of these significant spiritual centres. A similar initiative should be taken by other regions in the country, the results of which are to be widely publicized through the mass media.

5.3 Concerning the cultural community centres

- The establishment of a WEB-server with original Slavonic manuscripts, monuments of the Bulgarian literature, including early printed books, aiming to give online access through the Internet to scholars of Slavic studies worldwide should be backed financially.
- The Bulgarian cultural community centres (selected through reliable criteria by an appointed commission) should be granted a target subsidy by the EC to preserve their housing stock of cultural, historical and architectural value. We suggest the cultural community centre in the museum town of Koprivshtitsa (Fig. 10), which is a unique architectural reserve, centre of our spiritual culture, native place of generations of Bulgarian writers, long-standing host to the National folklore meeting of all amateur groups from the country, to qualify first for such a subsidy.
- The establishment of a database of the Bulgarian cultural community centres and the updating of their libraries and youth Internet clubs should be assisted with computer technology.

Under a program approved by Bulgarian and international specialists unique performances of the most outstanding groups and individual performers of authentic folklore of the Bulgarian cultural community centres should be recorded on compact discs.

6. Conclusion

The cultural heritage of each nation is an invariable source of national self-confidence. It should be interpreted in the modern context through a permanent comparison with the cultural heritage of the other European nations. Finding common ground and unopposing differences in this respect will, in our opinion, assist the establishment of an all-European

cultural space based on the principles of equality, tolerance and respect for the originality and diversity of the cultures of all European nations being part of it.

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