

## PROGNOSIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VARBITSA

/RESEARCH ESSAY/

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**ABSTRACT:** ACCORDING TO THE SCOPE OF THE PLANNING REGIONS VURBITSA IS INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF BACKWARD RURAL AREAS. AND ON ITS LOCATION HAVE LEFT THEIR MARK THRACIANS, SLAVS AND BULGARS. THE CITY IS NOT ONLY PICTURESQUE, BUT RICH IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL MONUMENTS. THE MAIN INDUSTRIES THAT DEVELOP AROUND VURBITSA ARE AGRICULTURE AND CATTLE BREEDING. FURTHERMORE, THERE ARE SMALL AREAS OF CROP PLANTS, TOBACCO, SUGAR BEET, HEMP, COTTON AND OILSEED. FUTURE OF VURBITSA IS ASSOCIATED WITH TOURISM, WOOD PROCESSING ENTERPRISES AND REDUCE THE POPULATION.

**KEY WORDS:** PLANNING REGIONS, RURAL REGIONS, THRACIANS, SLAVS, AND PROTO-BULGARIANS, TOBACCO, SUGAR BEET, HEMP, COTTON, WOOD PROCESSING, TOURISM

**V**ARBITSA is a city situated in the Northeastern Bulgaria, in the region of Shumen, close to the Ticha dam. The city is the administrative center of the Municipality of Varbitsa. According to the scope of the planning regions, stated in the National Development Plan, the city is included in the list of the underdeveloped rural regions.

A number of tribes and nations have left their mark there: Thracians, Slavs, and Proto-Bulgarians. The city is not only picturesque, but rich with archeological and cultural monuments. South from Varbitsa is the Varbitsa passage, linking the Northern and the Southern parts of Bulgaria.

IN the year of 811, on 26<sup>th</sup> July, in the gorges of the wooded passage, a decisive battle is led between the Byzantine troops led by Nicephorus, the Emperor himself, and the Bulgarian ruler Khan Krum. The victory upon Byzantium had been one of the biggest defeats it had suffered in its long and victorious history.

DURING the first years of its liberation, Varbitsa had established itself as a natural center to the villages in the Gerlovo region in economic, socio-political and cultural way. Those who did not have enough resources to purchase a piece of land of their own had to provide one by chopping the bushy side parts of the forest and using that land. This fragmented farming did not allow the use of any kind of machinery for a long period of time. Over 85% of the inhabitants made a living through agriculture and a little stock-raising. The other 15% of the people living in Varbitsa worked as artisans and traders.

THE economic crisis in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a fatal effect on life in Varbitsa, and especially on the farmers and small artisans. Meanwhile, the poverty which had already overtaken almost every person of the city, had started to increase: one bushel of wheat cost 130 – 150 lv, while the wage was 3lv per day. The annual income of a sheep was 5 – 6lv. The

plight and unemployment in Varbitsa forced a lot of families to leave their hometown and seek help in other places.

**WITH** the *Ninth of September coup d'état* in 1944 a new era in the development of the country and Varbitsa ensued. The class structure of society changed. Along with the working class, the coarse and petty bourgeoisie, the class of cooperative peasants started to form in the first years. The major branches, which the economy decided to develop, were farming and stock-raising. Along with that there were small areas with cultural plants: tobacco, sugar beet, hemp, cotton, and from the oleaginous plants: sunflower and colza. It was not long before the TKZS (cooperative agricultural union) was established.

**AS** in the past in the period around 1989 Varbitsa was still the center of the overall life of the inhabitants of that region. The town continued to attract new inhabitants, which led to the fast growth of the population and the construction of new neighborhoods.

**THE** appearance of the city, as well as its industrial incline, had continued to change until 1989. The sewing production, represented by the factories "Mladost" and PP "Gerila", the workshop for the production of ram dumpers for the trucks from KTA "Madara" – Shumen, the Experimental Machine Building Plant of the central machine building institute – Sofia, RPK "Novo Vreme", State Forestry, and MTS had established themselves as the major branches in industry. Gradually, the agricultural region of Varbitsa turned into a small industrial center in the region of Gerlovo.

**UNFORTUNATELY**, after 1989 Varbitsa lost not only its industry and factories, but its workers as well.

**THE** unemployment rate, which had been the highest there, continued to be one of the biggest problems Varbitsa had. The main reasons were not only economical, but demographic as well. The economic ones were: low development of manufacture in the region, distance from the regional center, lack of natural resources as well as the relatively low category of the lands, leading to an obvious livelihood.

**WHAT** is my opinion about the development of Varbitsa in the next 30 years?

1. If the tendency of the decreasing population does not change, the population of Varbitsa will be no more than 5 000 people.
2. Unemployment rate will increase, which will lead to migration processes towards the bigger cities of the country.
3. Varbitsa has proper conditions for the development of tourism. One of the reasons for that is the resort "Vurbishki prohod" with its healing water, as well as Varbitsa's beautiful nature.
4. The economic activity will be related to logging, woodwork – a true wealth for Varbitsa.

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