

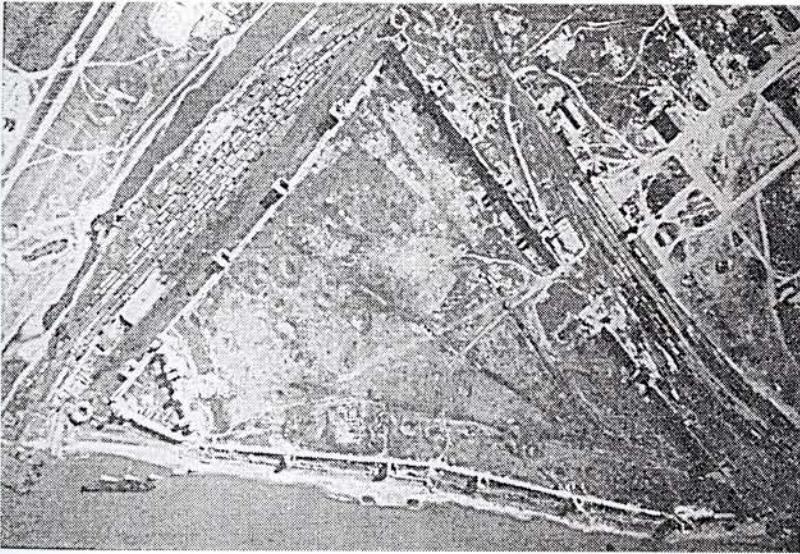
**СОЛУН КУЛТУРНА ПРЕСТОНИЦА ЕВРОПЕ
1997. ГОДИНЕ**

**SECULAR MEDIEVAL
ARCHITECTURE IN THE BALKANS
1300 - 1500
AND ITS PRESERVATION**

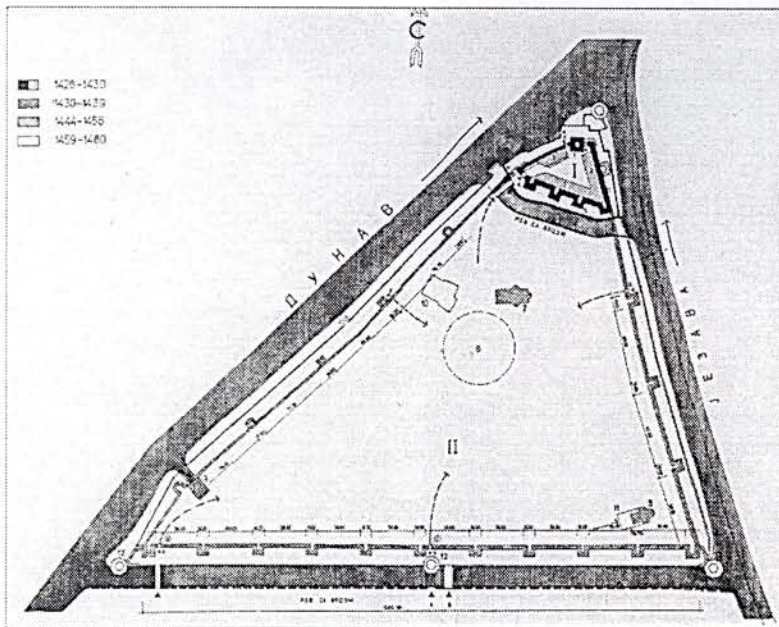
**ИЗВОД ИЗ КАТАЛОГА
СМЕДЕРЕВСКА ТВРЂАВА НА ИЗЛОЖБИ**

II. TOWN FORTIFICATIONS

11. FORTIFICATIONS OF SMEDEREVO, YUGOSLAVIA*



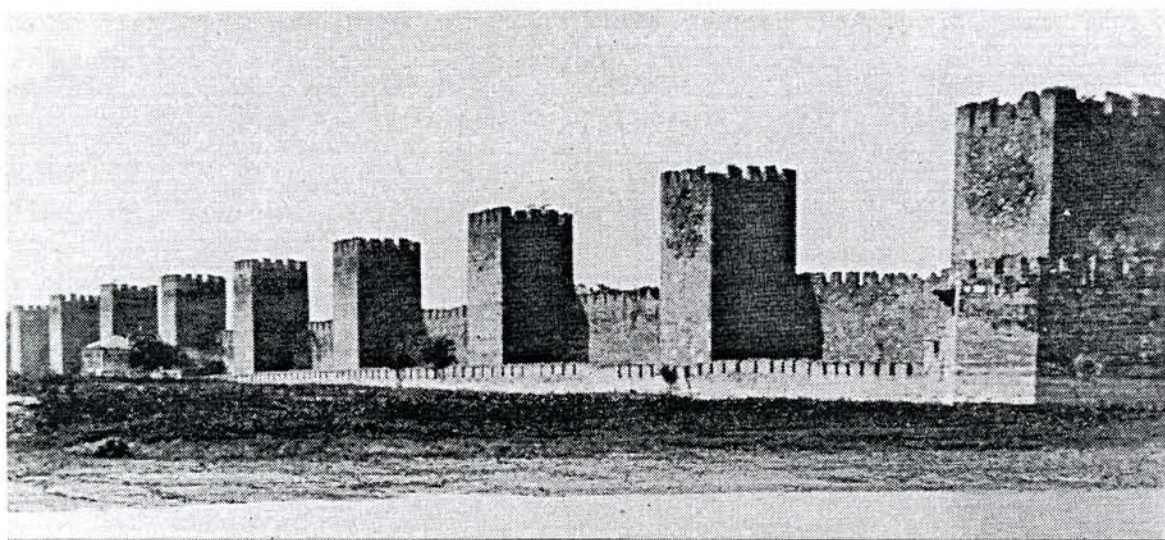
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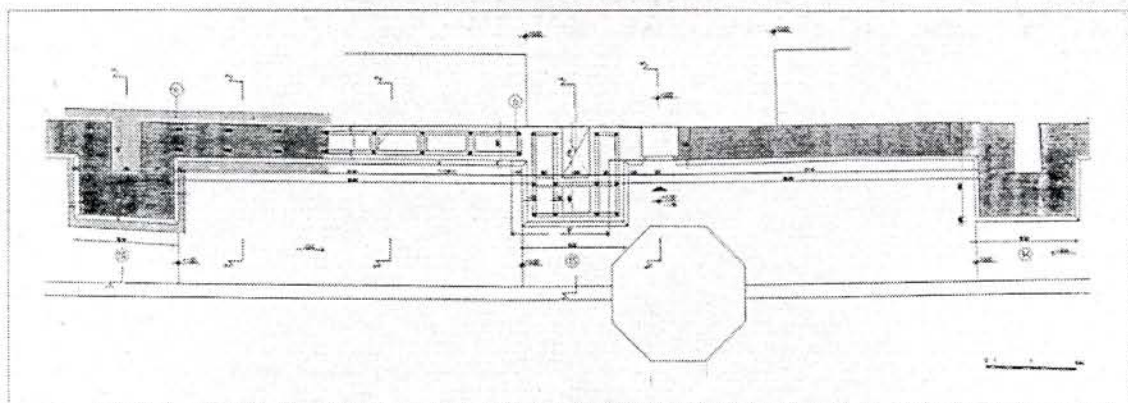
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History. Smederevo, the last capital of medieval Serbia, was built as a fortified town *ex-novo* under the auspices of Despot Đurađ (George) Branković (1427-56). Despot Đurađ, himself a descendant of a distinguished Serbian noble family, was married to one Jerina (Eirini) Kantakouzene, from a major Byzantine aristocratic family, of Kantakouzenoi. Eirene's brother *archistratigos* Georgios, was put in charge of the construction of the Smederevo fortifications. The location chosen for the new capital was at the confluence of the small Jezava River with the Danube, on the right bank of the latter. The site was also on a major road, initially built by the Romans, linking Belgrade (ancient Singidunum), with the fertile Morava valley, Niš (ancient Naisus), and ultimately Constantinople. The construction of Smederevo began in 1428. By 1430, the citadel with Despot Đurađ's palace was built, to be followed by the construction of a walled enclosure of an urban settlement covering an area of 10 ha. Its construction was essentially completed by 1439, though some modifications and additions continued even after that date. Smederevo became an important ecclesiastical center and a seat of an archbishopric. Its fame reached a high point in 1453, when the remains of Apostle Luke were solemnly translated from Rogoi in Epiros (cf. Entry II. 1), where they had been brought from Constantinople, just before its fall to the Ottomans. As an important military stronghold, Smederevo drew the attention of several Ottoman sultans. Murad II (1421-51) staged the first successful siege in 1439, capturing the town. Recaptured by the Serbs in 1444, it was besieged again, but unsuccessfully, by Mehmed II (1451-81) in 1454. Mehmed II returned again 1459, mounting a successful siege which ended in the final fall of Smederevo, and of medieval Serbia as an independent state. The Ottomans used the fortress, modernizing it by the addition of an outer wall with three corner polygonal cannon towers, in 1480. Smederevo remained in Turkish hands until the 19th c. First retaken by the Serbs in 1805, it passed permanently into their hands only in 1867. The

* See also Entry IV.6



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fortress suffered damage in World War I and, especially in World War II, when large portions of its well preserved walls were destroyed.

NOVAK JOCOVIĆ

Architecture. The fortified town of Smederevo is one of the largest Late Medieval towns on the Danube, and in South Eastern Europe in general. Though consisting of two spatially and functionally separate components, the fortifications of Smederevo may be said to have been conceived as an entity using the military engineering principles based on cold steel warfare. The

emergence of firearms technology, however, conditioned the introduction of certain features related to the use of cannon, as well as the increased thickness of some walls, such as those of the Citadel which, in places reach a thickness of 4 m. The town fortifications are also characterized by the use of a double line of walls. At the time the citadel was constructed a lower, outer wall equipped with cannon apertures was built on two of its sides; the third side, facing the town itself, was fronted by a waterfilled moat. Thus, the citadel was completely encircled by water. The construction of town fortifications after 1430 did not include a second line of walls, except

1. Air view
2. Site plan
3. South town wall seen from southeast, 19th-c. photo by D. Stanojević
4. Central section of south wall, reconstruction plan

II. TOWN FORTIFICATIONS

11. FORTIFICATIONS OF SMEDEREVO, YUGOSLAVIA* (contd)



on the south side, facing the countryside. Here, a system involving a low wall equipped with cannon apertures, and fronted by a water-filled moat was introduced, making the dry land fortifications the strongest in the entire fortification system. The Danube line of fortifications was the weakest, and had to be strengthened by a subsequent addition of several towers, characterized by their distinctive Byzantine building technique and a rich decorative brick repertoire.

Most of the towers were square in plan with the interior side completely open. Interiors of towers were subdivided by wooden floors, interconnected by wooden stairs, which also facilitated access to the curtain walls. Towers were topped with wooden roofs. In a later building campaign, almost all towers acquired vaulting on their topmost stories. The height of walls and towers varied. The tallest walls were those of the citadel, whose curtain wall walk with battlements had a height of over 10 m. The citadel towers were ca. 23 m high. The town walls had several gates. The main approaches were best protected with wooden bridges over the moat and double gates. The wall facing the Danube had several gates, of which the largest led to a small harbor within the walls. All gates had decorative semicircular (Byzantine) or pointed (Gothicizing) arched shallow niches above their openings. The walls built using all available types of stone. The volume of material required for the construction induced extensive secondary use of material pilfered from Roman ruins in the vicinity. Many Roman architectural fragments were employed in the actual construction.

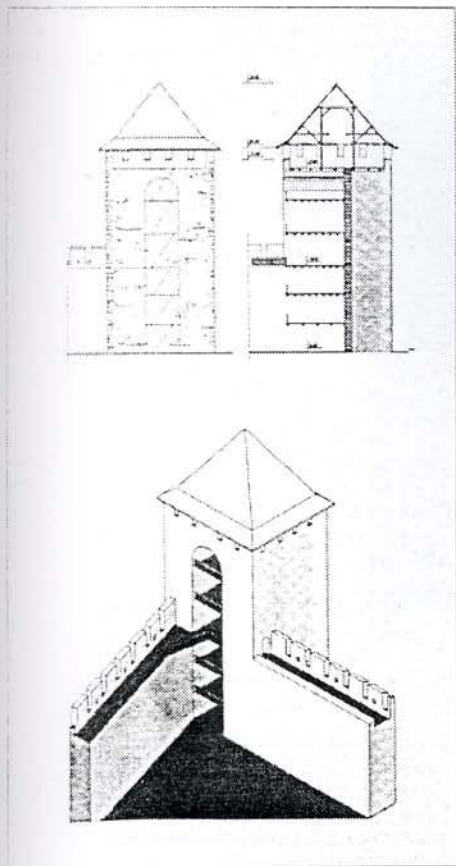
Under the Turkish rule the town underwent significant changes, having become a predominantly military outpost. The main changes involved the construction of an escarp on the Danube and Jezava sides, as well as the addition of low polygonal cannon towers in 1480. Changes also involved the demolition of medieval building, including the Church of the Annunciation, within the walled enclosure. The building material from the church

was used in the construction of the cannon tower at the confluence of the Jezava with the Danube. Following these interventions the town fortifications underwent no significant changes. At the time of the re-taking of Smederevo from the Turks, in 1867, the fortification walls and the towers were still in a reasonably good state of preservation. The situation was first dramatically altered with the construction of the railroad tracks in the immediate vicinity of the fortress. During WWI, the fortifications were damaged in the 1915 bombardments from the Danube. At that time, it was the Citadel that suffered the worst damage. During WWII, a major explosion of an ammunition-loaded train in June 1941, caused extensive damage, including the obliteration of the central section of the south enclosure wall. Finally, in 1944, the town suffered again from extensive aerial bombing.

The serious condition of the fortifications following the liberation in 1944, led to extensive rebuilding and conservation of the most important parts, such as the tower with the Despot Đurađ inscription, the leaning wall of the erstwhile ceremonial hall of the palace, and the closing of large cracks in the wall facing the Danube. Initial emergency undertakings were followed by a long-term systematic study of the monument and eventually led to the conservation and restoration of the citadel, and parts of the town fortifications, including the entire length of the wall facing the Danube, conditioned by the general rise of the Danube water level.

The interior of the fortified enclosure has been made into a park, with the intent to introduce various activities facilitating its incorporation into the life of the modern town of Smederevo. The adaptation of the citadel for the staging of various cultural events stands out as a particularly successful enterprise in this regard.

JOVAN NEŠKOVIĆ





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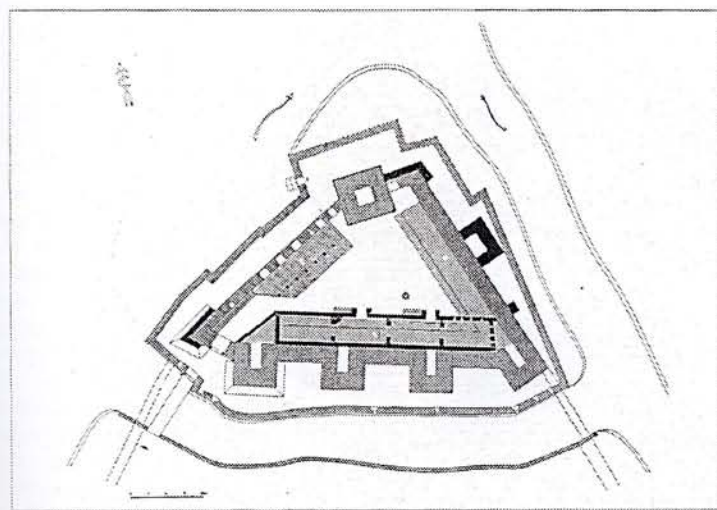
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5. Fortification tower
 6. Fortification tower, elevation, section
 and axonometric drawing
 7. View of Danube walls from west
 8. Aerial view from southwest

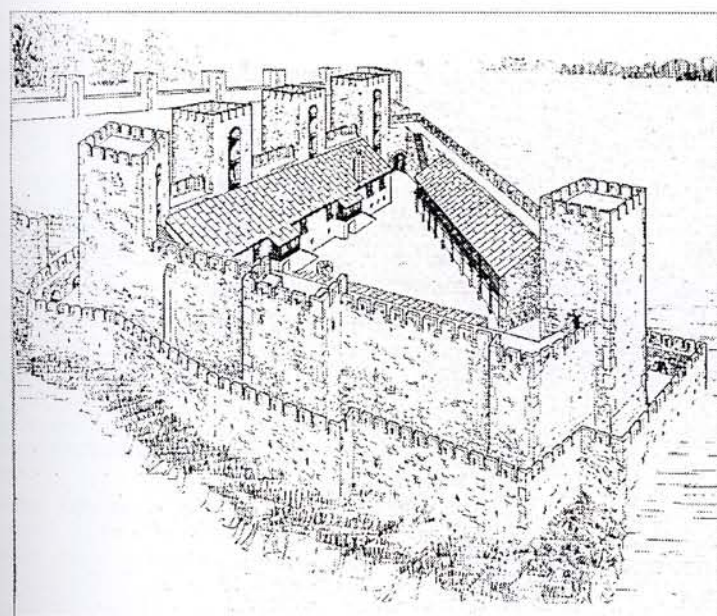
Credits. Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, Smederevo: 1, 2, (reconstruction by Nešković, J.) 4, 6, (photo Jocović, N.) 7, 8. Stanojević, D.: 3. Čurčić, S.: 5.

IV. CITADELS/FORTS

6. CITADEL. SMEDEREVO, YUGOSLAVIA *



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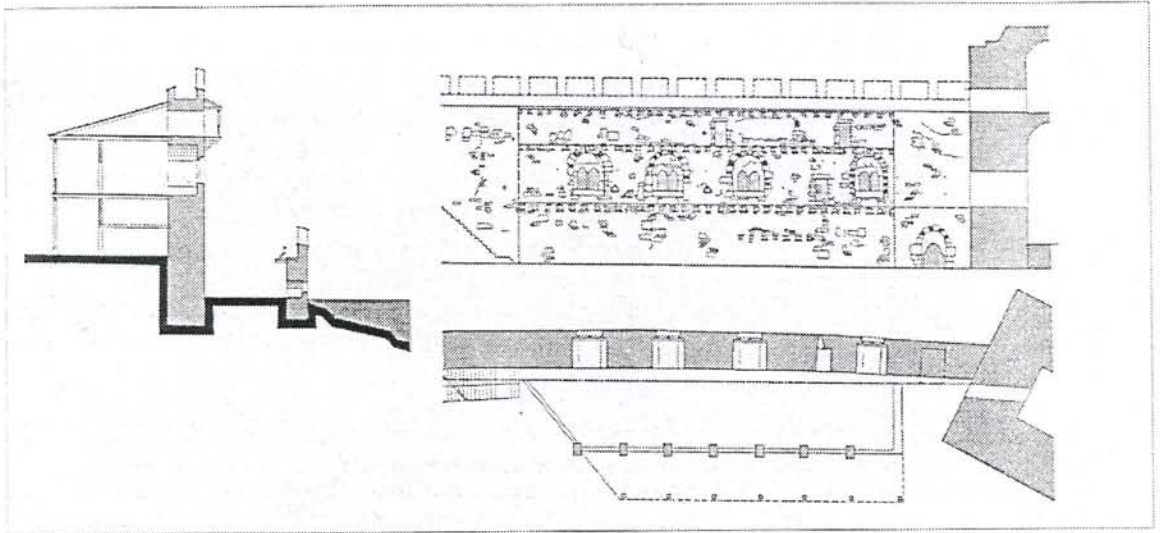


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The Citadel constitutes a separate entity, though integrated into the overall scheme of town fortifications. Built first, between 1428 and 1430, it included the palace of Despot Đurađ Branković. As such the palace belonged to a special category of fortified palaces in contrast to the older unfortified type, known essentially only from written records. Architecture of medieval Serbian palaces has received limited amount of attention in scholarly literature thus far.

Functional and security problems undoubtedly effected the emergence of a new palace type, adapted to the layout of fortified towns, and providing for the needs of a permanent seat of the ruler and his court. The citadel at Smederevo was built in accordance with up-to-date fortification schemes, outfitted as it was with a residence of the ruler and members of his court, including rooms for the servants, a military crew, and other spaces for various related functions. As was the case in other citadel-palaces, the Smederevo Citadel was dominated by a single tower-donjon, next to which were located two smaller gates. One of these yielded access to the harbor; the other one most probably facilitated access to the outer fortification wall. The main entrance had a double gate, and was situated on the side of the artificial moat, crossed by a wooden bridge. The inner gate was protected by a tower with a battered base (the so-called Jerina's [Eirene's] Tower). Above the gate was a balcony supported on wooden brackets. The gate was also protected by a masonry thickening of an exposed corner. A similarly projecting thickening was added to the Citadel corner near the donjon, whereby one of the two small gates was permanently blocked. The Citadel was evidently built in accordance with a coherent scheme, including also all of the interior buildings. This, along with other pieces of information, has facilitated a hypothetical reconstruction of these buildings which to a greater or lesser degree could be termed "palaces". From the functional point of view, as well on the bases of its size and architectural solution, the most important component of this complex

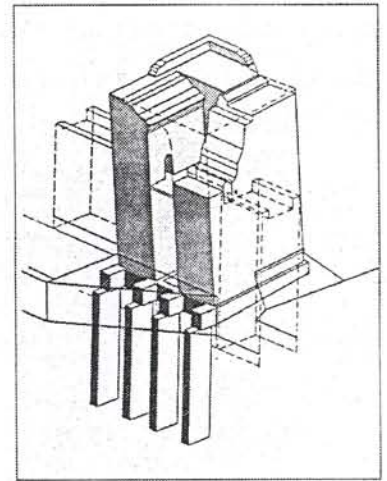
* See also Entry II.11



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1. Plan
2. Aerial reconstruction
3. Section, elevation, and plan of palace
4. South citadel wall before restoration
5. South citadel wall after restoration
6. Axonometric diagram showing Jerina's tower reinforcements

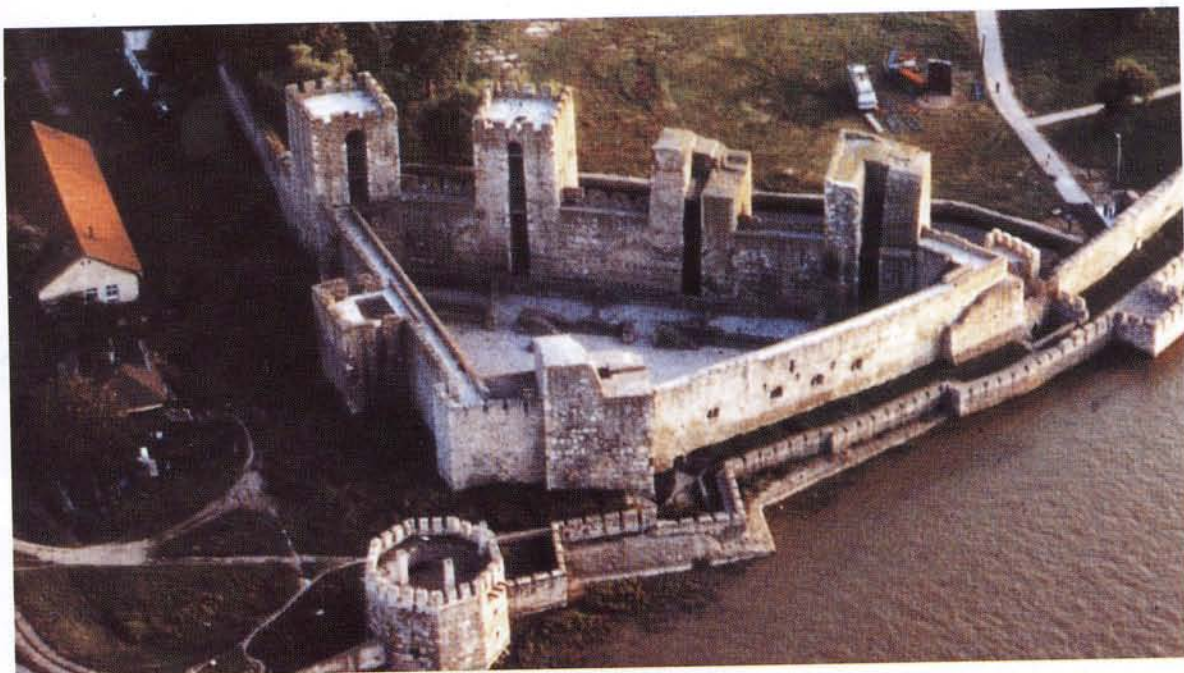
IV. CITADELS/FORTS

6. CITADEL. SMEDEREVO, YUGOSLAVIA (*contd*)

was the building situated against the outer wall facing the Danube. All of its characteristics fit the standard definition of a "palace". Its exterior wall, which also doubled as a defense wall, was outfitted with four two-light windows featuring Byzantine and Gothic stylistic characteristics. Deep window niches were lined on both sides with benches from where, those seated on them could have enjoyed a view over the Danube. Three of these windows belonged to a ceremonial hall, while the rest of the same floor was intended for the exclusive use of the ruler. The ground floor of this building must have contained utility rooms, as well as rooms for servants. Thus, the building would have been provided with all of the amenities associated with a royal palace. Adjacent to the donjon, judging by the preserved evidence, was a stair which would have been used by the palace guards. The stair must have led to an attic from where one could have gained access to a long balcony, situated directly above the large hall windows. This balcony had a defensive role and was supported on wooden brackets. The interior walls of the palace apparently had wooden skeletal frames with brick infill. The remains of several brick piers suggest the possibility of later adaptations, though they may also indicate the possibility of combined construction of the interior wall. The building was fronted by a continuous porch.

The other two buildings, likewise leaned against the exterior walls, were also two-storied and were built using wooden skeletal construction. Conditionally, they may also be referred to as "palaces", because of their size (referred to as a relevant criterion in Serbian medieval sources) and the functions which they may be assumed to have accommodated. The southern of the two buildings was subsequently replaced by a stone structure. Thus by virtue of its building technique alone it may be assumed to have functioned as a residential building. The remains of the ground floor of this building suggest the possibility of its spaces having been used for storage and, in part, as a stable for horses. The upper floor of this build-

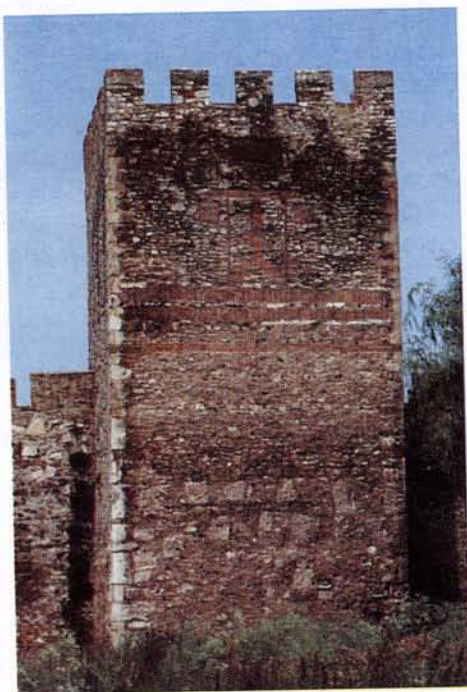




11

ing, as well as of the building which stood against the eastern wall, must have accommodated living quarters, though it is impossible to know where the ruler and his immediate family may have lived, as well as where other court officials, and military personnel may have been accommodated.

JOVAN
NEŠKOVIĆ



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13

7. Danube facade

8. Citadel court

9. Palace window interior

10. Palace window exterior

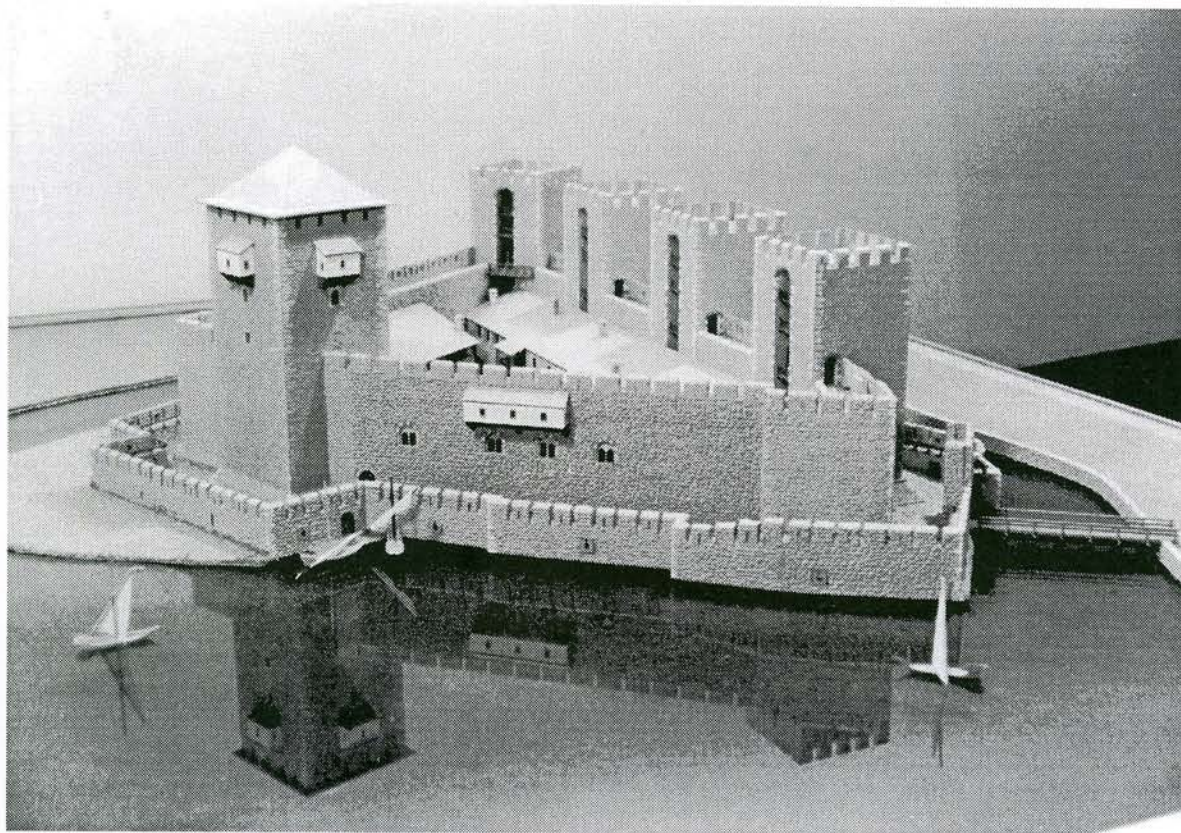
11. Aerial view

12. Citadel tower with inscription

13. Inscription and detail of date

Credits. Ćurčić, S.: 8-10, 12. Deroko, A.: 7. Nenadović, S.: 13. Nešković, J.: 2, 3. Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, Smederevo: 1, 4-6, 11.

За представљање Смедерског града тврђаве на изложби у Солуну Регионални завод за заштиту споменика културе Смедерево израдио је макету Малог града Смедеревске тврђаве.



Легенда: Смедеревски град, утврђени двор Деспота Ђурђа 1430. Г.
Реконструкција: проф. др Јован Нешковић
Консултант: Новак Јоцовић
Макета: Бошко Саламон
Слободан Јовановић