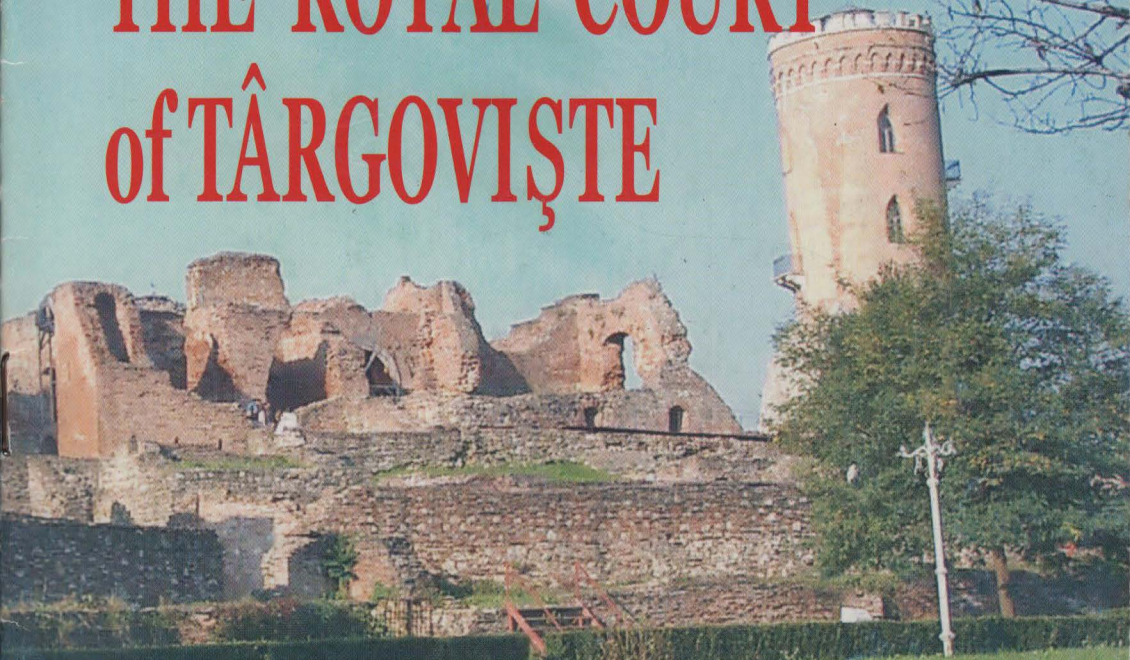


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THE ROYAL COURT of TÂRGOVIȘTE



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM COMPLEX
OF THE ROYAL COURT IN TARGOVISTE

Calea Domneasca

- ## FIȘA DE TERMENE DE RESTITUIRE

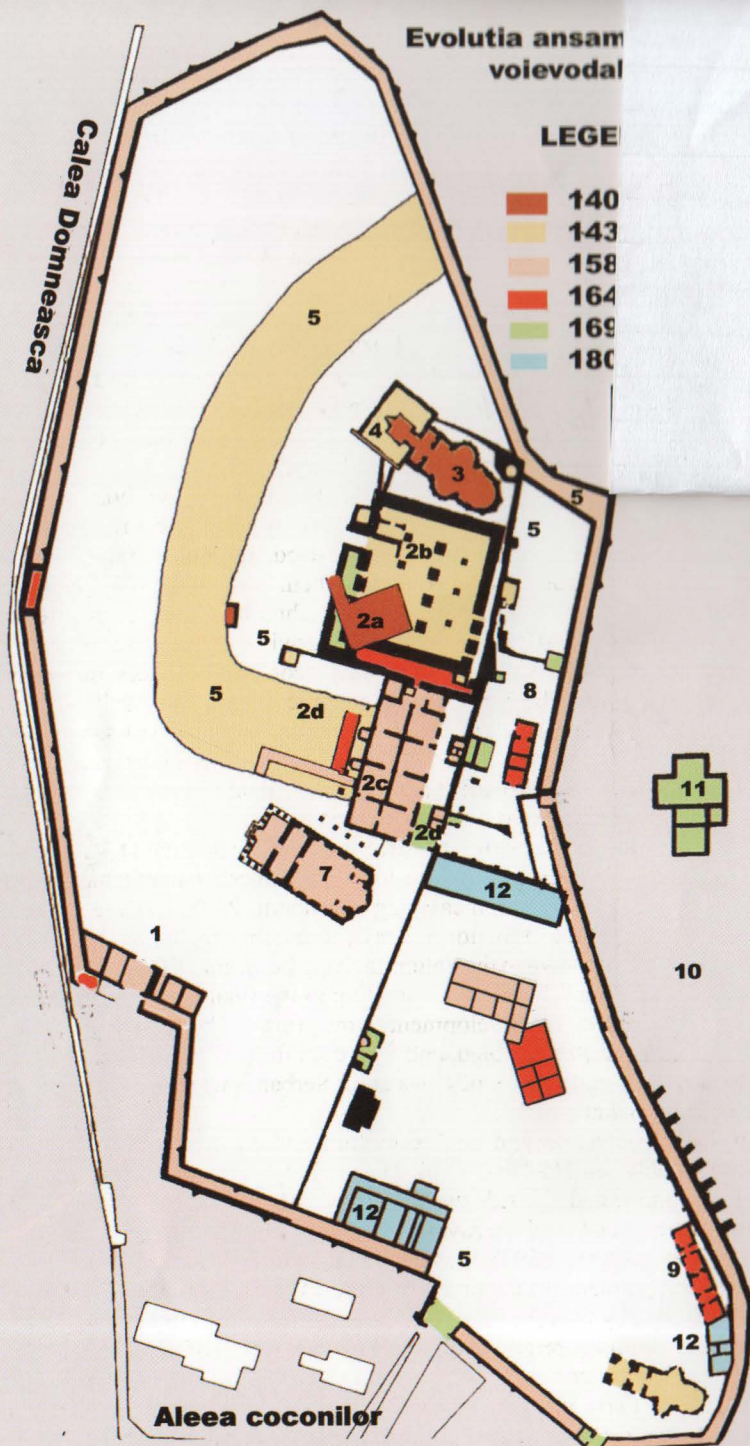
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Aleea coconilor

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Targoviste, fair or location of a fair, is mentioned by the Bavarian Johannes Schiltburger, who took part in the battle of Nicopole, in his travel memories, written after returning in Germany after 1427. In 1403, Targoviste is called "town"(varos) in the commercial treaty between Wallachia and Poland. After 1408, the town becomes, for sure, an important residence location for Michael the 1st, the son of Mircea The Old.

The first document regarding the Royal Court goes as far back as Michael the 1st, the son of Mircea the Old, who, in 1417-1418 was saying:

„...from my very royal home, from the very town of my princely court, Targoviste”.



Not very large, the princely residence was, during its first period, made up of a stone building with a basement, protected by a wooden defense layer, both of them built after 1400. Later on, around 1415, Mircea the Old was the same who added the first church, known as the „paraclic-church” or „the queen's church”. After 1431, when Targoviste remains the only capital of Wallachia, Vlad Dracul (1437-1448) begins a very ample construction work, turning the initial court into real residential complex: the great royal house, the surrounding wall, which includes the church, and at about 30 m south-west and north, the big defense wall. His son and heir, Vlad the Impaler (1456-1462) adds the well-known defense and watch tower, later called „Chindia”. The last building belonging to that development period of the Royal Court was the „Holy Friday Church”, raised on the south-eastern end of the Royal Court.

At the end of XVI-th century new constructions are initiated. The initiative belongs to the prince Petru Cercel (1583-1585), who builds a new palace, the Great Princely Church, the first aqueduct, the strengthening elements, the royal court measuring now about 29.000 square meters, an area which he maintained until the end of its function as a residence home, including the „Holy Friday” Church. Outwards and to the east, down to the Ialomita river, he arranged the „Royal Court”.

The period between 1639 and 1654, corresponding to the final period of Matei Basarab's reign, represents the age of the greatest development of the princely home. The royal houses are repaired and enlarged, the inside wall doubled, and on the south the „turkish bath” is built. The „asylum” we owe to lady Balasa, the wife of Constantin Serban, raised in 1656, near the Holy Friday Church, also belongs to that time.

The Royal Court undergoes a new and final restoration and enlargement under the reign of Constantin Brancoveanu, between 1694 and 1714. The princely homes are repaired, in part, the two existing wings being connected. Outside the court they make the „stone kiosk”, in the Royal Court and the administrator's house and the royal children's house, southwards. The great church was adorned with a new iconostasis (1693), the interior being fully repainted. Even though there were periods of time when the place is temporarily abandoned in exchange for Bucharest, in the same time with damages done by wars, as the one at the end the 16th century and the beginning of the next one or after 1660, until the reign of Brancoveanu, the return of the prince in Targoviste would automatically lead to the restoration of the princely court. But, after the tragic end of Constantin Brancoveanu, in 1714, the royal court, having been permanently abandoned for the new capital, decays continuously, most of the existing buildings going down in ruins.

In the 19 th century, the ruins of the Royal Court, national symbol of a glorious past, will play a great role in the country's spiritual and political rebirth. The restoration started early, between 1847 and 1852, at the initiative of prince Gheorghe Bibescu, with the Chindia Tower. Later on, the Historical Monuments Committee, between 1907 and 1910, restores the Great Princely Church, and 30 years later, the archaeologist Virgil Draghiceanu, from Targoviste, clears the north eastern ruins. The greatest restoration and research work was done between 1960-1977, covering the whole area of the court. Starting with 1967, the royal court was turned into a museum ensemble of the Dambovit county museum, and at the moment is part of the „Royal Court” National Museum Ensemble of Targoviste.

The south gate



THE MONUMENTS OF THE COURT

1. The southern gate. The entrance, still in use, is placed under the belfry tower built in 1584 in the same time with the new precincts. The original tower contained at least one floor used as belfry of the Great Princely Church.

2. The Royal Palace.

a. The first princely house. We owe it to Mircea the Old, who, after 1400 builds a new residence, most probably for his son Mihail, and later on the church. From the original building only the basement foundation, made of river stone, 15×6m large, is still preserved. The access was possible from the north and the house was originally protected by a double fence of wooden pillars (stockade).

b. The princely house in the middle of the 15th century

We owe, most probably, the largest aulic Romanian building of the 15th century, to the prince Vlad Dracul, the work ending around the year 1440. Following the model of the one in Arges, placed close to one of the sides of the inside wall, it is built on rectangular plane, with sides of 32×29 m, and about 2 m – thick walls. The still-preserved basement covers the whole surface, in a greek cross pattern, supporting the ground floor, made up of a large ceremony and council hall, placed on the east side and of rooms for the prince and his family.



The 15th century princely home

c. The princely house of the 16th century. In 1584, the prince Petru Cercel designs a renaissance inspired building. One can find western influences in the structure of the house and in the adornment on the building's facade. Nearby, but not attached to the first princely house, southward, he builds a „small but beautiful and impressive palace”. For the first time we find in the wallachian architecture a three storey building, respectively a basement, ground floor and upper floor. The basements, preserved with their genuine look, are placed on the axis of the building, having a square plane, a 12 meters side and four equal compartments, placed around a central pillar. On the west side of the building we can find the underground vaulted entrance, 25 meters long, this being the point of access. The ground floor, consisting of 10 rooms, the largest one, placed crosswise at the southern end, sheltered the royal offices. The upper floor, destined for the royal family only, completely separated from the ground floor, could be entered only through a staircase on the west side. Also on the outside, a corridor was leading to the Great Church. For the first time „glazed tiles are used for the roof including the church.



Petru Cercel's palace, 1584



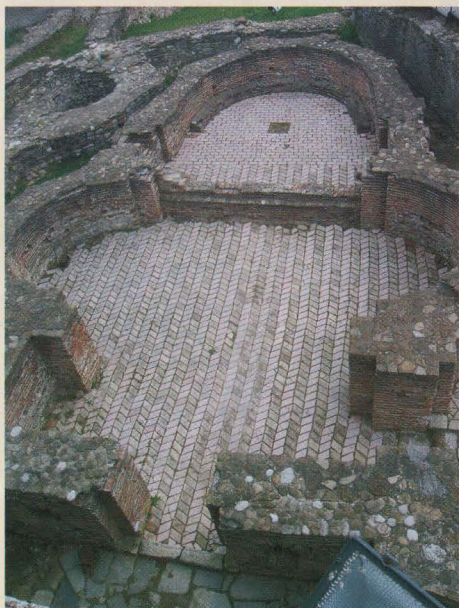
*The palace basement
(Lapidarium)*





The Princely Palace in the 17th century (the east side – reconstruction)

d. The 17th century palace. In 1640, Matei Basarab, finishes the restoration of the royal homes, connecting the two buldings by a corridor and a partial floor on the old wing. After the massive damage undergone by the royal court, between 1659-1660, Constantin Brancoveanu rebuilds the vaults, floors and roof, adorning the outside of the rooms with moulding and paintings. At the same time, Petru Cercel adds on the east face of the bulding a loggia, provided with an access stair to the garden, and another one on the west side, also changing the orientation of the basement entrance, from the great princely church.



3. The chapel-church. The oldest stone-and-brick religious edifice was built after the first royal home, on the northern proximity, at the initiative of Mircea the Old. Based on the triconc style, as can be seen at the Cozia monastery, the chapel-church adds a new feature, which is a belfry-tower on the west end, with three points of access on the lower side. Only about 2 meters high are still preserved, the place being completely demolished in 1847, after having previously been destroyed by the 1802 earthquake.

The chapel-church (around 1415)

The Chindia tower, around 1460



Vlad Țepeș (1456-1462)

4. The Chindia Tower. The whole monumental complex, as well as the old town, was dominated by the defence building raised by Vlad the Impaler, around 1460. Built over the tower of the chapel-church, it is now 27 meters high, consisting of brick pyramid shaped base, covered in stone, and 9 meters high cylinder, provided on the upper side with a surrounding embattled esplanade. Inside, the building has three floors, the upper ones marked by halfarch openings, with balconies supported by stone bases. The inside access is done by a winding staircase. The current look is due to the restoration in the 19 th century. The initial bulding was lower, with only two floors, and the entrance was possible by a wooden bridge linking the first level of the tower with the royal palace.



The chindia tower, inside view



***The defenses of the royal court
15th-17th century***

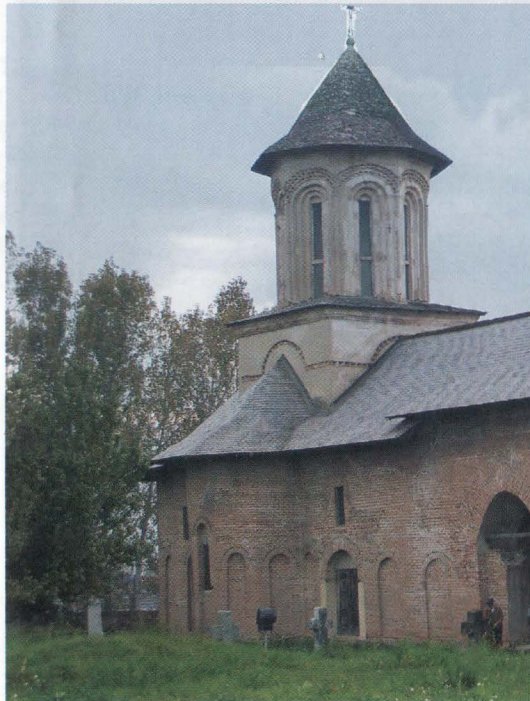


5. The defenses of the Royal Court.

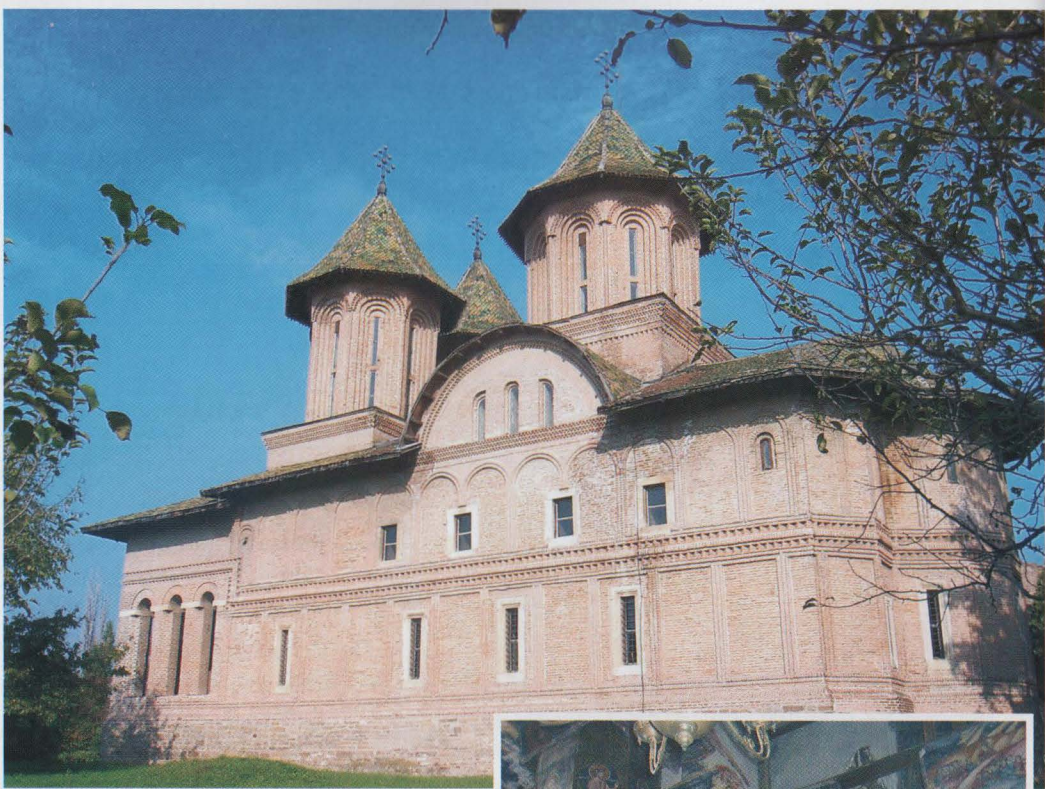
At the beginning, the whole ensemble was defended by a large wall, 20 meters wide, 250 meters long, towards the town, doubled inside by a stone wall.

In 1584, Petru Cercel raises the surrounding wall, still here today, in part only, provided outside with triangular abutments. After 1640, Matei Basarab doubles it up on the inside, raising five entrance towers, provided with guards' rooms.

6. The Holy Friday Church. Also known until the beginning of the 19th century as the Small Princely Church, it existed in 1517, according to the rotine on the southern side, being the only monument, built in the 15th century, known until now in the wallachian architecture, still preserved in its original form. It has long, three-cusped style, the belfry being supported by four arches in a semi cylinder shape. The pronaos is preceded on the west by an open tower, marked on the lower side, on the free sides, by three vaults ranged in tiers.



***The Holy Friday Church
the 15th century (the north side)***



*The Great Princely Church, 1584
(southern facade)*

7. The Great Princely Church. It was built by Petru Cercel (1583-1585) in the same time with the palace, close to it, southwards. It bears the Holy Mary festival and was designed after the pattern of the metropolitan church, that of a „greek cross”. It is different from contemporary churches by its size, never seen before, the rectangle, including the outside line, measuring 14×30 m. Inspired by the ottoman architecture, Petru Cercel adds above the naos entrance, a balcony for the royal family. The first painting, from the end of the 16th century, or the beginning of the next one is still preserved in part, in the diaconicum's apse and on the southern wall of the pronaos.



*The Great Princely Church
(the stair to the balcony)*



The great princely church (the founders' pictures – detailed)

The inside of the church was fully painted between 1696-1698, by Constantin Brancoveanu's painter, Constantinos. The diversity of the iconographic themes, the harmony of color, as well as the expressive faces make the paintings of this church one of the great achievements of that time. The richness of detail, the large number of small-size scenes, connected by color and proportion create a strong sense of unity, like all the painted interiors of the Brancoveanu age. The greatest gallery of wallachian princes was painted in the Great Princely Church. The pronaos' west wall is adorned with the portraits of the princes Matei Basarab, Neagoe Basarab, Constantin Brancoveanu, Petru Cercel (the last two as builders), followed, on the opposite side of the entrance, by Michael the Brave, Radu



The Great Princely Church-military saints-detailed

Serban, Constantin Serban, Serban Cantacuzino and Radu Mihnea. The frame of the iconostasis is also monumental, being adorned with expressive vegetal and zoomorphical motifs, golden ones, bearing the national emblem and the year 1697, when it was made. One should also notice the emperor icons, especially „Mother Mary with baby Jesus” signed by Constantinos.



The Great Princely Church (the Brancoveanu temple, 1697)

Of undoubted value is also the stone banister leading to the balcony. From the church's inventory only two tombstones, with rich adornments, from 1652 and 1653, belonging to lady Elina, respectively to her son Mateias, and regarding religious objects we mention :a pew, from Matei Basarab time, a tetrapode and a candlestick from Brancoveanu's time.



The Great Princely Church (inside)

<https://biblioteca-digitala.ro>



The princely bath, around 1640

8. The royal bath. Built during Matei Basarab's time, between the eastern wall and the palace, on a rectangular plane, with outside sides of $5,50 \times 14,7$ m, it includes three rooms in a row. The first one, on the north, also had a vestibule that could be entered from the outside; the second one was the bath itself, and, southward, with no connection to the two rooms mentioned above, the third room was arranged for the water boiler.



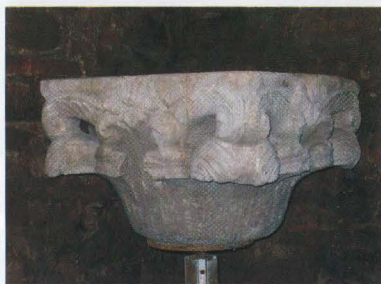
Lady Balasa's house, 1656 (the south side)

9. Lady Balasa's house. Built in 1656, near the Holy Friday Church, according to the rotive (the only one existing so far „in situ” on a civil building), by Balasa, Constantin Serban's wife. Consisting of four ground floor rooms, two on a central corridor were floored with bicks and covered by cross-shaped arches, with blunted sides. According to the existing rotive, the building was meant” to be a place of rest for the christians who may need it”.

10. The royal gardens. Where the town's park stretches now, between the east wall and the Ialomita river, Petru Cercel, in 1584, "made beautiful, italian-style gardens, in front of the palace".

The gardens stretched further to the opposite river bank, up to the foot of the monastery hill, being protected over 100 years by a wall of "brick stones". Constantin Brancoveanu enlarges them and keeps, for upkeep, a permanent staff of gardeners. He is the same who builds summer kiosk for „looking”, to „enjoy the splendid court gardens”.

11. The Brancoveanu kiosk. Built at first of wood by Matei Basarab, it was re-constructed, of brickwork, by Constantin Brancoveanu. Its ruins can still be seen, 60 m eastward from the court wall, in the lapidarium, the stone pillars and caps.

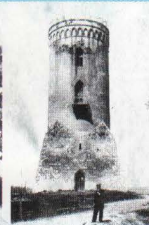


*The Brancoveanu kiosk
(stone adornments)*



The Brancoveanu kiosk (around 1700)





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Wintertime opening hours 9-17
Monday closed
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