

THE MEDIEVAL TOWN OF CHERVEN

The medieval town of Cherven is an impressive fortress from the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. It is located in the village of Cherven. Since 1965, the area has been declared a National Archaeological Reserve.

The earliest fortification was built during the reign of the Emperors Anastasius I and Justinian I in the 6th century in their attempt to stop the barbarian invasions from the North. The fortress was mentioned with the name "Red" for the first time during the rebellion of Tsar Peter II Delyan (1040-1041).

During the Second Bulgarian Kingdom (12th -15th centuries), the medieval city reached its largest size. It covers the entire territory of the rocky hill, as well as the foothills by the river. The fortress has a complex fortification system and solid construction. The citadel with the castle of the Cherven Boyar was built on the site of the early Byzantine fortification. The three-storey battle tower on the western inner wall is completely preserved. The city grew as a major trade and craft center, with developed ironworking, goldsmithing, building and artistic crafts. After 1235, it became the seat of the Cherven Metropolis. Numerous rock monasteries appeared in its vicinity. Strategically located in the valley of Cherni Lom, the city is directly connected to the nearby royal monastery of St. Michael the Archangel near Ivanovo and to the capital town of Tarnovgrad.

In 1388, the Ottoman Turks captured Cherven, and two centuries later it was burned down by the Wallachian Duke Mihai Vityazul. The population of the city moved to the foot of the rocks, and the Bishop of Cherven moved to Ruse. The first excavations of Cherven were carried out in 1910 and still continue nowadays. A castle, fortress walls, two underground water supply passages, 16 churches, administrative buildings, dwellings and significant archaeological finds have been discovered. Among them, several coin treasures, ornaments, epigraphic monuments, ceramics, weapons stand out.

The medieval town of Cherven can be reached by car or bicycle following the Ivanovo - Dve Mogili Road with a detour to the village of Cherven. It is also possible to hike or cycle there along the marked 8-kilometer-long tourist trail from the village of Koshov along the right bank of the Cherni Lom River, which passes by a small shelter and Chochana spring.