

VITALIE IAȚIUC, **Soroca Urban Development in the Interwar Period**

Abstract: From 1918 until 1944, the town of Soroca was a part of the Kingdom of Romania, except from July 1940 to July 1941, when it was part of the Soviet Union. The population of the city reached up to 22,450 people, and covered an area of 650 ha. Due to the difficult economic situation after the First World War, the Romanian state and society reacted with caution and wisdom to the problems existing in the Romanian state's new addition, Bessarabia. In the 1920s, many publications discussed the economic problems of Bessarabia. Analysis of the situation in Soroca was always present in these papers.

Changes to the landscaping of the city centre began on 10 October 1921, when the monument of General Poetaș, who fell in battle in January 1919, was built in the centre of the commercial market, between the “old” and “new” cities. The place was renamed Union Square. By 1930, all the shops had been relocated to a new commercial market, and Union Square was set up as a park and planted with trees. The construction of the new cathedral, St. Paraskeva Pious, in the neo-Romanian architectural style – designed possibly by architect Valentin A. Voițehovski – began in this park in 1936. Building dimensions were approximately 32.5 x 22.0 m. The spacious interior could accommodate from 700 to 900 parishioners. The construction was interrupted by the Second World War, when the walls were built up to the dome. The cathedral existed in this unfinished state, without a dome, for 20 years, and in 1962 it was blown up.

In the second half of the 1930s, special funds were allocated to create a modern urban infrastructure, including a new electricity network and water supply system. A dam was built on the Dniester River, with a boardwalk and a well-arranged public beach on one bank, with special funds allocated for its maintenance. A new two-storey building was constructed for “A. D. Xenopol” Lyceum in 1934-1936. New apartments buildings appeared in the form of two-storey residential buildings in the constructivist style. Several public buildings were built the city centre in the eclectic style with elements of Art Nouveau. The Romanian city administration actively began reconstructing the whole locality upon its return to power in July 1941. A detailed proposal regarding the reconstruction and development of the city over a period of 25-30 years, with a budget of 114.225 million lei, was sent to the governor of Bessarabia on 18 April 1942. The City Hall budget allocated for the reconstruction of Soroca for the period 1942-1943 was estimated at 11,803 million lei. Unfortunately, the Second World War, stopped the achievement of these plans.

Keywords: Bessarabia, Soroca, Poetaș, Voițehovski, St. Paraskeva Pious, A. D. Xenopol, interwar period.

List of Illustrations:

Fig. 1. Urban plan of Soroca with suburbs and public objectives, 1942. Fund 680, file 4308, inv. 1. Arhivele Naționale ale Republicii Moldova. Legend of the map by Vitalie Iațuic.

Fig. 2. General Stan Poetaș (5.12.1870-6.01.1919). “Stan Poetaș”, accessed 15 December 2018, https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stăn_Poetaș.

Fig. 3. General Stan Poetaș Monument, 30 October 1921, Soroca town. C. Negrea. “Moartea unui erou. Generalul Stăn Poetaș (1918-1919)” [The Death of a Hero. General Stăn Poetaș (1918-1919)]. Accessed 15 December 2018,

<https://www.timpul.md/articol/moartea-unui-erou--generalul-stan-poetas-%281918---1919%29-88705.html>.

Fig. 4. Union Square in Soroca in the 1920s. Cătălin Botoșineanu. “Orașul Soroca în colecția stampe și fotografii a arhivelor din Iași” [The City of Soroca in the Collection of Stamps and Photos of the Archives in Iași]. In *Cetatea Soroca – istorie, memorie și tradiții seculare* [Soroca Fortress – History, Memory and Secular Traditions]. Chișinău: Editura Arc, 2015, 260-265.

Fig. 5. Union Square with the monument to Stan Poetaș and the Cathedral of St Pious Paraskeva in the 1940s. “Catedrala Sfânta Cuvioasa Parascheva, Soroca” [St Parascheva Cathedral, Soroca]. Accessed 15 December 2018, http://neoromanesc.blogspot.com/2011/10/biserica-distrusa-din-or-soroca_28.html.

Fig. 6. Plan of the Cathedral of St Pious Paraskeva. Reconstruction by Vitalie Iațuc.

Fig. 7. Sketch project of the boulevard to the citadel and landscaping of adjacent territory, prepared by technical leader V. Costin, scale 1:500. Commission for Historical Monuments Fund. National Heritage Institute Archive.

Fig. 8. The boys’ Lyceum “A. D. Xenopol”. Photo from the 1940s. Accessed 15 December 2018, <https://www.okazii.ro/vedere-soroca-liceul-de-baieti-a-d-xenopol-cca-1930-a187387213>.

Fig. 9. Aqueduct network construction project in Soroca, 1939. Fund 1812, file 2, inv. 3. Arhivele Naționale ale Republicii Moldova.