

CHARACTERISTICS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORK OF RUSSIAN ARCHITECTS IN THE CITY OF NIKŠIĆ IN MONTENEGRO, THE END OF THE 19th AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

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Abstract

Introduction: During its long and dramatic history, Montenegro has had close political, economic, and cultural ties with Russia. However, in the context of architecture, the connections between these two countries are the least known and explored. **Purpose of the study:** The present study aims to present for the first time some of the most significant achievements made by Russian architects in the city of Nikšić in Montenegro in the period between the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century to a wider professional audience. We present two cases: the project of the Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog, which was designed by the architect Mikhail Timofeevich Preobrazhensky, and the project of the Upper Ostrog Monastery, the most significant achievement of the architect Vladimir N. Sukurenko. **Methods:** The methodological approach required classification and comparison of archival materials through the processes of synthesis, analysis, and deduction. Based on the guidelines of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Property of Montenegro, we formed criteria that were used to evaluate the work of the aforementioned architects. The criteria are sorted into three groups. The first group involves building characteristics, where we evaluate authenticity and integrity, degree of preservation, uniqueness, and rarity. In the second group, covering the significance of the building, we assess the historical and scientific significance, archaeological significance, architectural and artistic significance, and technical significance. Finally, in the third group of criteria, we study the age of the buildings, social and economic importance, environmental and landscape importance. **Results:** Based on our criteria, we find that the Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog is a symbol and the most important spatial element of the identity of the city of Nikšić, while the Upper Ostrog Monastery, one of the most important sanctuaries in orthodox Christianity, represents the pinnacle of the construction and architectural process.

Keywords: Mikhail Timofeevich Preobrazhensky, Vladimir N. Sukurenko, Nikšić, Montenegro.

Introduction

Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog

In 1883, the ruler of Montenegro Prince Nikola decided to start building a new, modern city in the place of Nikšić, after liberation from the Ottoman Empire. He entrusted the project of building the future city to the engineer and architect Josip Šilović Slade from Trogir (Croatia). In March of the same year, the architect Slade came to what was then Nikšić to record the existing situation and then create a regulatory plan (Fig. 1).

Although Slade's plan foresaw the development of the city up to around 10,000 inhabitants, according to his system of street development it was quite possible, with minor changes, to expand the city several times, and still keep it functional in terms of infrastructure (Maksimović, 1961).

Slade presumed that the core of the future city would be a large quadrangular square and four smaller ones in other areas connected by wide radially directed streets. One of these smaller squares would later become an ideal urban element to reach the future Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog (Fig. 2).

Already in 1885, Prince Nikola came to Nikšić to see how the implementation of the regulatory

plan was going. At the same time, this was also an opportunity to announce to the citizens of Nikšić a plan for the construction of a church dedicated to Saint Basil of Ostrog in honor of the Montenegrin and Herzegovinian warriors who died for liberation from the Turks in the wars of 1875–1880.

The following year, a commission was formed with a task to determine a suitable place for the church. With the expert consultation of Slade, it was decided

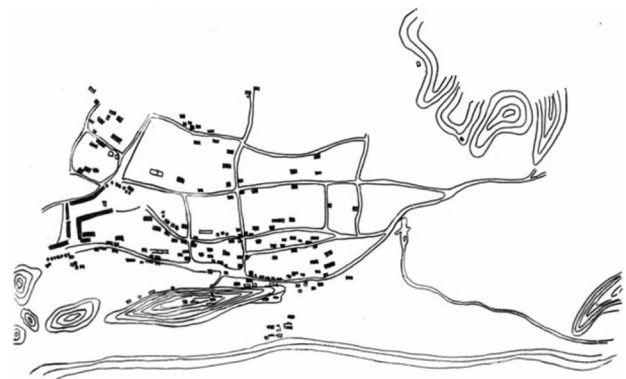


Fig. 1. Urban form of the city of Nikšić before the adoption of the regulatory plan, Vladimir Bojković

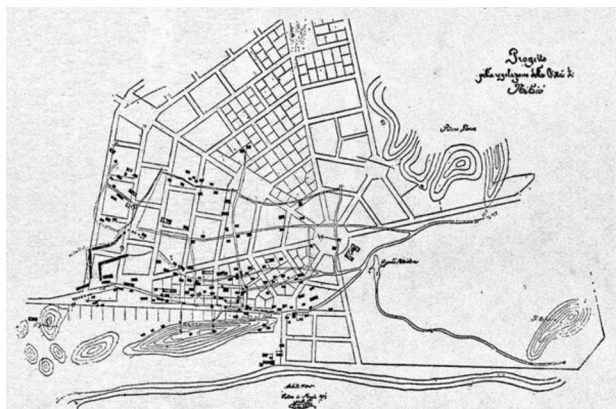


Fig. 2. First regulatory plan of the city of Nikšić, 1883, architect Josip Šilović Slade

that the small hill Petrova Glavica would be the most suitable location. At the foot of the hill, according to the regulatory plan, a smaller square was planned, so choosing this location was quite natural. The hill was 16 m high, and it was necessary to slightly level it in order to obtain the necessary space. The leveling took several years to complete, mostly due to the famine years, where all the necessary money was directed towards the food for the population and not towards the construction. At the end of this stage, the hill was 12 m high (Fig. 3).

The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church entrusted the task of designing the church to the famous architect of sacred buildings Mikhail Timofeevich Preobrazhensky (1854–1930). Preobrazhensky came to Nikšić in 1891 and after surveying the designated location, made sketches and drafts of ideas for how the temple could look

like. The following year, the final plan for the construction of the temple was presented to the prince. Certain changes were made regarding the bell tower because the prince insisted that it be done in the traditional form called *preslica*. In the period of 1892–1895, the necessary materials for the construction were collected, the stone blocks to be used were processed, and the works finally started on July 4, 1895.

The construction was completed on August 10, 1899, but the consecration of the church took place a year later, on August 15, 1900. It is worth noting that there were no incidents during the construction in that none of the workers were injured, although it was the first time that a project of that large scale occurred in Montenegro.

Exterior of the church

The entrance to the church can be reached from the north and south sides by a driveway. From the west side, directly from Duke Šako Petrović Square, the main entrance of the church can be reached by a monumental staircase with a total of 65 steps. The staircase is wide, spacious, and bordered by a fence made of large hewn stone blocks. The staircase is separated by three resting plateaus decorated with pine trees (Fig. 4).

On the main plateau, where the church is located, on the left and right sides, there are stone benches for resting and a fountain made of finely processed stone. On the eastern side of the plateau, on the left and right sides of the church, there are paved paths that lead from the foot of the hill Petrova Glavica, i.e., Duke Šako Petrović Square, to the plateau. Adjacent to the church, on its northern and southern sides, there are memorials to Stojan Kovačević and Novak

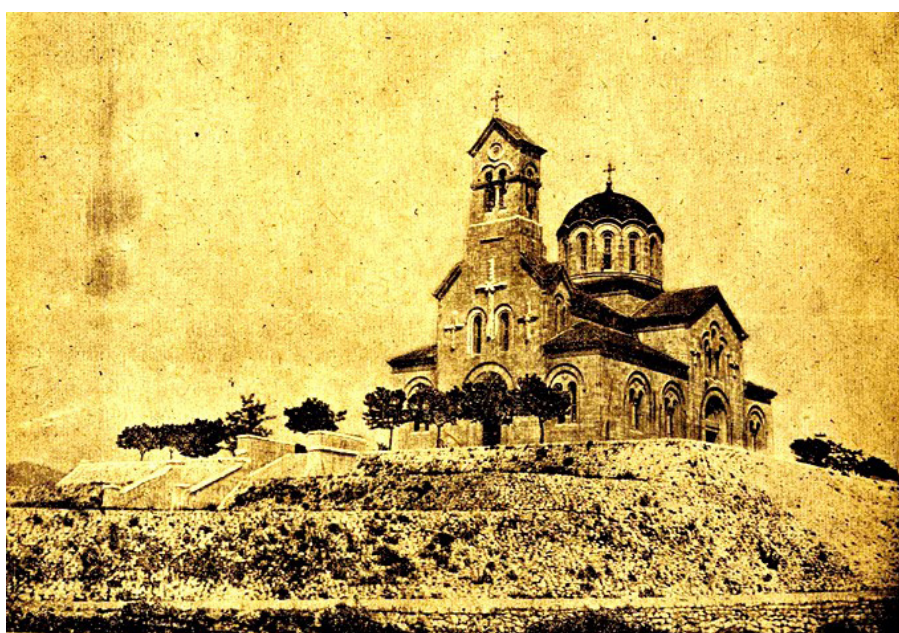


Fig. 3. One of the first photos of the church, private archive



Fig. 4. Aerial photo of the church, taken from the monography "Saborna crkva Svetog Vasilija Ostroškog u Nikšiću 1900–2010, publisher Saborna crkva Svetog Vasilija Ostroškog-Nikšić, 2010"

Ramov, erected in 1955. The plateau in front of the church is not paved but only filled with gravel. The gravel is also used on the resting plateaus between the approach stairs (Fig. 5).

The hill itself is paved with hewn stone on the sides. The impression is that the hill together with the church on its top represents a unique and harmonious whole. The church is 23 m wide, 33 m long and 34 m high (Fig. 6).

The width to length ratio corresponds to the golden ratio, which also supports the harmonious impression. The church has three doors, the main one on the west side, one side door on the north and south sides. The door can be reached by 10 steps. The main door has a height of 3.90 m and a width of 1.92 m. The side door has a height of 3.90 m and a width of 2.0 m. The doors are carved and decorated with rich ornamentation of vertical rectangles with crosses. Above the main entrance, the stonecutter Stanko Lepetić carved an inscription in old Slavic language, translated as follows:

"This holy temple, dedicated to the name of Saint Basil of Ostrog the Wonderworker, and in memory of the Orthodox Montenegrin and Herzegovinian warriors, who died for their faith and homeland, was built by the pious Lord Nikola Petrović Njegoš, Prince of Montenegro, in the summer of 1885" (Dašić, 1989).

The church is three-nave, built of white hewn stone blocks from local quarries by well-trained local craftsmen as well as craftsmen from Italy and Dalmatia.

The central part of the church, together with the dome is 11 m high and 8.60 m wide. On the top is a gilded apple, 60 cm in diameter, and on it is a 2 m high gilded cross. On the cube there are 12 side windows with a height of 3.9 m and a width of 80 cm. The dome is covered with a copper cover.

The bell tower is 14 m high and is also covered with a copper cover on the gable roof. On the top is a gilded apple with a diameter of 30 cm and 1.6 m high cross.

On the north and south sides there are lancets, and on the east and west there are double lancets. There is also a clock on the bell tower, which was donated in 1929 by the watchmaker Pavle Pantelić from Zemun (Serbia). In the belfry there are five bells, which were donated by Prince Petar Karađorđević and which were cast in the famous workshop of Pietro Colbachini in Bassano, Italy.

Not counting the openings on the dome, the church has ten windows, eight of which are double lancets with a height of 3.65 m and a width of 90 cm. The two triple lancets have openings, each 90 cm wide and 3.65 m high, except for the middle opening with a height of 4.70 m (Fig. 7).

The apse is three-sided and with one double lancet. The cordon cornice vertically divides the wall of the apse into two unequal parts.

Interior of the church

The interior of the church is harmonious. The white stone from which it was built has acquired



Fig. 5. Main facade of the church, photo by Duško Tasić, taken from <http://www.mojacrnagora.com/>

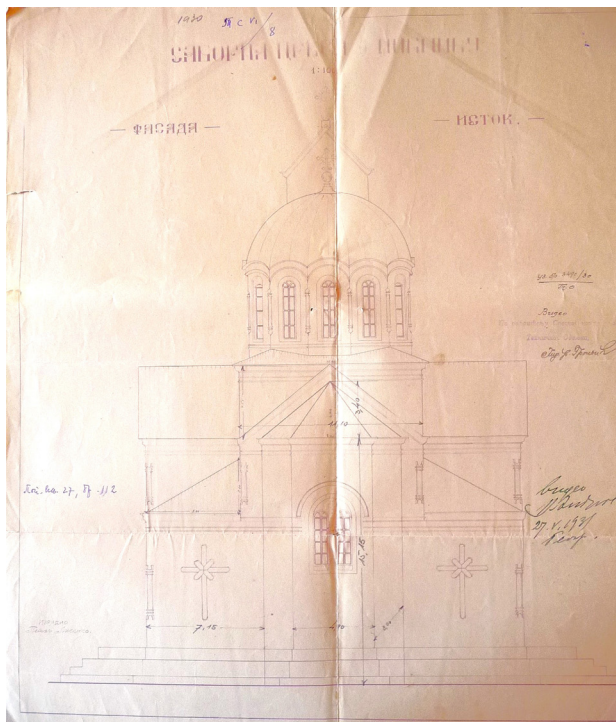


Fig. 6. East facade of the church, city archive of Nikšić

a special patina in the interior. The floor of the church is paved with white octagonal and pale red quadrangular stone slabs. The triple nave of the church is divided by four massive square columns connected by arcades that carry the central dome (Fig. 8). The columns are 1.30 m wide and over 5 m high. Like the church, they were made of finely carved and processed white granite from local quarries.

Originally, Prince Nikola had the idea to carve the names of all 3,098 Montenegrin and Herzegovinian fighters into the pillars, but finally the names were embroidered on silk in gilded frames displayed on the side walls (Glas Crnogorca, 1900).

Over time, the silk embroidered with the warriors' names will be replaced by 35 copper plates placed on the south and north interior walls of the church.

Upon entering the church, right above the main entrance, in the gallery space, there is a choir at a height of 7.65 m. It can be reached by a winding, steep staircase that also leads to the bellfry. The dome is raised on the vaults of four columns to the iconostasis, which at the same time closes the altar in the main nave. There are two rooms to the side of the altar.

The iconostasis is built of white and green marble. It is 8 m high in the middle and 8.5 m wide. The side doors have a height of 3.15 m and a width of 90 cm. The central doors have a height of 3.35 m and a width of 1.3 m. Above them, there are 12 icons 80 cm high and 34 cm wide, then three larger icons 1 m high and 41 cm wide, then an icon of the Last

Supper, and finally a cross. The icons were made in Russia and were a gift from the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. The doors were made by the famous craftsman Vasilije Đinovski. The iconostasis itself was a gift from the Greek Andreas Syggros.

The special beauty of the interior space is given by the chandeliers. The largest of them, which starts from the top of the dome, is particularly notable for its rich ornamentation. The four chandeliers were a gift from the Italian Queen Jelena of Savoy, daughter of Prince Nikola (Fig. 9).

The chandeliers came from the old royal court in Caserta. They were brought and installed by a special envoy, the court architect Artur Flores (Šakotić, 1996).

It is interesting that the interior of the church is not frescoed. In June 1899, Prince Nikola invited the famous Serbian painter Uroš Predić to paint the interior, however, due to the scope of the work, the artist did not agree to this job (Onogošt, 1899).



Fig. 7. Details of the windows and church bell tower, private archive

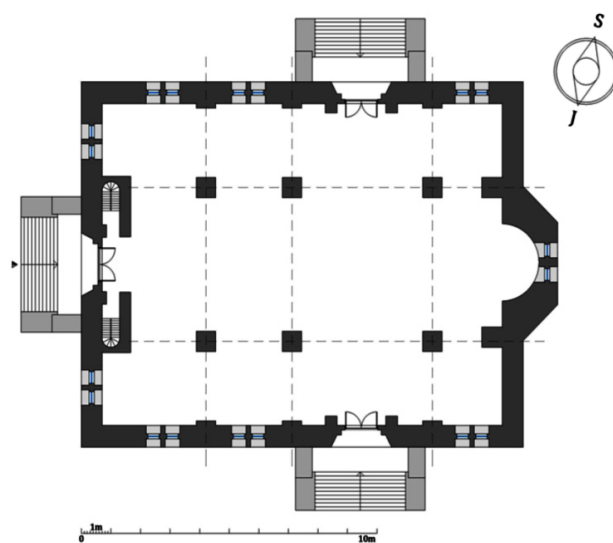


Fig. 8. Ground floor of the church, Vladimir Bojković



Fig. 9. Interior of the church, Vladimir Bojković

Spatial context in which the Cathedral of Saint Basil of Ostrog was built

Dr. Josip Šilović Slade was an expert consultant in the commission that was supposed to determine the location where the future temple would be built. The architect Slade, as the author of the first regulatory plan of the city of Nikšić, first proposed that the cathedral be built on the central city square. However, this proposal was not adopted. After this, the architect Slade proposed that the Petrova Glavica hill be the place of construction. This elevation proved to be ideal for several reasons. If we look at the regulatory plan of the city of 1883, it becomes evident that the elevation is located on the axis of the street that connects two planned squares, the main, larger square and the secondary,

smaller one. It was logical that some significant and representative building should appear on this highly baroque arrangement of urban elements. On the other hand, the elevation itself allows for an excellent position that further emphasizes the object on it, making it more noticeable. In this way, the temple will become the most important reference point of the city and, therefore, its symbol. The consequence of this dominant positioning of the temple is that it becomes one of the main elements of the spatial identity and recognition of the city of Nikšić.

The spatial identity of the city can be best seen in the example of the city silhouette. In the case of Nikšić, the temple is its most significant element. However, the negative consequences of the so-called transition period in the late 20th century when

the devastation of space occurred did not bypass the silhouette of the city, and what is more, they are most noticeable on it.

The city silhouette, at first glance, can hide everything that makes the city less beautiful. However, once it begins, the process of space devastation rarely takes place without showing itself in every visual representation of the city. The city silhouette is perhaps the most pronounced form of the city's physical structure, its most visible representation, and as such represents a particularly significant part of the city's urban image and identity.

"The silhouette of the physical structure of the city, first of all, is the expression of a series of individual and predominant units, which are combined with the morphology of the terrain in each given example of the city. Focal central units in a group or individually placed on the terrain of the agglomeration give the macro form of the urban fabric, the silhouette" (Radović, 2009).

The city silhouette, as a special visual sensation and experience, can be experienced anew every time depending on the aspect from which it is observed, at the place and on the time of the day when it is observed. In this regard, we can distinguish between the silhouette of the city observed by day and by night. In both cases, the temple of Saint Basil of Ostrog, regardless of the visible devastation, still remains a dominant element of the spatial identity of the city of Nikšić (Fig. 10).

Social context of the time in which the Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog was built

The Cathedral Church of Saint Basil was built in a specific time. After liberation from Turkish rule, a small town like Nikšić was at the time needed time to recover from the long-lasting wars. The city needed a symbol that would infuse new energy and encourage the development in a better and more beautiful direction. Hence, it is not surprising that



Fig. 10. Relationship between the city focal points, Vladimir Bojković

Prince Nikola decided, precisely at the request of the citizens of Nikšić, to build a new temple in this city after many years of occupation. Since both Montenegrin and Herzegovinian warriors gave their lives for the liberation of the city, the temple was built in their honor, thus preserving their sacrifice from oblivion.

As for the church construction, it should be taken into account that Nikšić was quite impoverished due to constant warfare. The famine years did not allow the continuous construction of the temple because the money used for the construction was used to procure food for the population. The Russian Orthodox Church played a significant role in this regard since the temple was mostly built from contributions collected by believers in Russia.

The cathedral church has almost always had a great importance in the life of the city. This importance was only marginalized in the period of socialist organization since the end of World War II until the mid-1980s.

The dominant position of the church in the urban structure of the city and its role as one of the most important city points, made it always present in the minds of the citizens of Nikšić. We should not forget that today all the most important religious holidays are celebrated in this temple, which continuously confirms its anthropo-sociological role. If we look at the temple exclusively as a monument to the fallen fighters in the liberation wars, it seems that in this respect their memory is somewhat lost, or rather relegated to the background compared to the role that the temple plays in the everyday life of the city. In the life of the city of Nikšić, the cathedral has always had a special place. During religious holidays, the building is the main place of gathering and celebration, which makes its social importance more than evident (Fig. 11).

In terms of the formation of the spatial, architectural and urban identity of the city of Nikšić, the Cathedral Church is the most important benchmark of the city. The significance of the building in the formation of the city silhouette is also great, given that it is a building that, due to its position, can be seen from all approaches to the city.

In the end, we can state that the Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog contributes to the recognizability and identity of Nikšić, both spiritually and spatially.

Architect Vladimir N. Sukurenko (?–1976) and the Upper Ostrog Monastery

In the first half of the 20th century, Montenegro experienced dramatic social, political, and economic changes. The Balkan wars and World War I left great consequences for the then undeveloped country. After World War I, according to the state statistics, Montenegro had 175,000 inhabitants, which is significantly less than 240,000 inhabitants in 1910 and indicates the loss of many of them (Politika, 1921).



Fig. 11. One of the Great Processions dedicated to Saint Basil of Ostrog, www.eparhija.me

By the decision of the Great National Assembly of Podgorica in 1918, Montenegro became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, thus losing its independence and eventually becoming part of the county of Zeta in 1922, and then part of the province of Zeta (Zeta banovina) from 1929 to 1941. The province of Zeta, in addition to the territory of Montenegro, also included parts of Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The seat of the banovina was in the Montenegrin city of Cetinje.

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1918–1941 was an underdeveloped, agrarian country with a very low level of industrialization. Agricultural production was primitive, trade and banking were undeveloped, and the industry began to develop significantly only in the mid-1930s (Bakić, 2004).

The degree of development of the banovinas that made up the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was different. One of the most underdeveloped banovinas was the Zeta banovina. About 80% of the total number of inhabitants were rural people who engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry in a primitive way using hand tools and wooden ploughs. The arable land occupied only 22% of the territory, so agricultural production was accompanied by poverty and hunger (Babović Raspopović, 2002).

The fact that in 1930 only Podgorica had slightly more than 10,000 inhabitants and only a few cities had more than 4,000 inhabitants shows that the process of deagrarization was very slow in the Zeta banovina (Rastoder, 2011).

An indicator of the underdevelopment of the Zeta banovina is the underdeveloped traffic network. Two-thirds of the territory of the banovina were roadless, the sections were not connected to each other, and the traffic connection with other banovinas was not satisfactory either (Babović Raspopović, 2002).

The social and economic conditions that existed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and also in its provinces were also reflected in the architecture and urban planning, which played a significant role in the formation of the Yugoslav state and national identity. The state did not have a clearly defined construction policy (Toševa, 2012).

In the complex social circumstances and pronounced differences between banovinas, it was very difficult to implement a unified construction policy that had to be adapted to real circumstances (Toševa, 2012).

The work of the Ministry of Construction of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as the highest state institution in the field of architecture and urban planning, was organized throughout the country through the activities of construction directorates that worked on projects for the areas under their jurisdiction (Toševa, 1999).

Based on this brief review of social, political, and economic circumstances, we conclude that the conditions for the work of an architect were quite difficult.

Work of the architect Vladimir N. Sukurenko in the city of Nikšić

After 1918, as part of the Russian emigration, a significant number of Russian architects and engineers came to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, where they found employment in various ministries, directorates, and administration. In the beginning, Russian engineers and architects, as foreigners, could not establish a permanent employment relationship but were engaged on a part-time basis. After the Union of Russian Engineers in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia intervened with the competent authorities, they were generally equal in terms of competence with their Yugoslav colleagues. The state law prohibiting the employment of foreign labor was not applied to Russian engineers and architects (Milenković, 1995).

The engineer and architect Vladimir N. Sukurenko was among the Russian emigrants that came to the Zeta province.

Presently, very little is known about the life of the architect Sukurenko, even his year of birth is still unknown. It is assumed that he left Montenegro in 1945, when he went to Tunisia, where he worked on the dome project of the Orthodox Church of the

Ascension of Christ. He lived in Tunisia until 1970 and spent the last years of his life in the St. Raphael nursing home in France, where he died in 1976 (Martinović, 2022).

Thanks to the pioneering work of the art historian Slađana M. Žunjić, who was the first to systematically and thoroughly research the architecture of Montenegro in the period of 1918–1941 in her PhD thesis, we can learn more about the work of the architect Vladimir N. Sukurenko (Žunjić, 2019).

For the first time, the architect Vladimir N. Sukurenko was mentioned as the head of the Construction Section in Nikšić by the decree of the Minister of Construction, which approved public practice in the field of construction engineering in the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (*Službeni glasnik Zetske oblasti*, 1926).

Several buildings in Nikšić were built according to the projects of the architect Vladimir N. Sukurenko, namely: Home of the Craftsmen's Association, Home of the First Nikšić Singing Society "Zahumlje", Home of the Women's Society "Kosovka Djevojka", and it is assumed that the architect Sukurenko is the author of the National Health Center in Nikšić (Fig. 12). The work of the architect Sukurenko on the restoration and reconstruction of the Upper Ostrog Monastery after the great fire of 1923, is particularly significant. The research presented in this paper deals with this building.

Upper Ostrog Monastery

The Upper Ostrog Monastery was built in the 17th century in a cave on the cliffs of Ostrog mountain (900 m altitude). The upper monastery had two small churches the church of the Holy Cross and the Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog. It is believed that the first Church of the Holy Cross was built by the hieromonk Isailo, and the second Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog was built around 1656. They were modest buildings, without a recognizable sacral

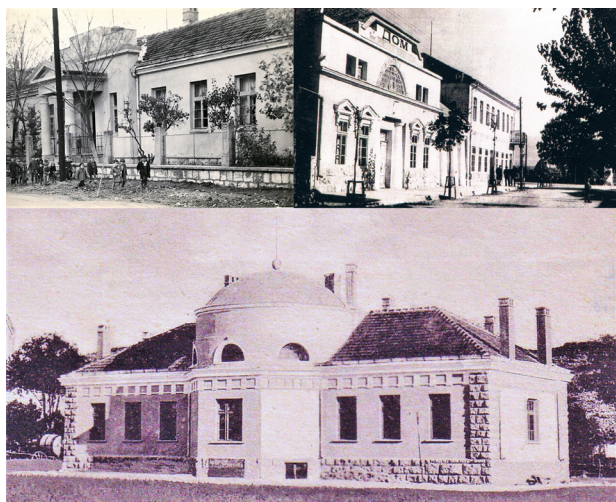


Fig. 12. Some works by the architect Vladimir N. Sukurenko in the city of Nikšić, private archive

form (Fig. 13). Only the cross on the west side of the roof indicated that it was a place of worship for a liturgical ceremony (Martinović, 2022).

After the fire in 1923, the architect Sukurenko designed and built a completely new upper monastery. The central element of the building is the powerful bell tower, which asymmetrically but harmoniously divides the facade composition into two parts. The bell tower is visually divided into three proportional clearly distinguished parts. The first part has an entrance, a tall door, which can be reached from the path that pilgrims use to reach the relics of Saint Basil of Ostrog located in the far-right part of the building. Above the entrance, there is an arched opening, two rectangular and one square windows arranged in an unusual rhythm. The second part of the bell tower has one narrower, arched window. The third part of the bell tower has large arched openings on three sides through which the bells of the monastery can be seen. The bell tower ends with a pyramidal roof with a cross on its top (Fig. 14).

To the left of the bell tower, there is a smaller facade area that ends with a cornice and a stone terrace fence at the height of the second part of the bell tower. In this part of the building, the architect Sukurenko again applied an unusual rhythmic distribution of rectangular windows. Above this part of the building there is a steep cliff, after which comes a terrace carved into the mountain cliff (Fig. 15).

To the right of the bell tower, the architect Sukurenko applied a calmer way of treating the facade by distributing arched openings. This part of the building is visually divided into three parts. The first part is located along the path leading to the relics of the saint, and on it there are three rectangular openings, above which there is a cornice half the height of the first part of the bell tower. The second part of this part of the facade is decorated with four arched windows for the monks' cells, above which there is a cornice with a stone fence of the terrace, which can be accessed from the three cells located in the third part of this side of the building. On the main facade above the entrance there is also an inscription about the renovation of the monastery (Fig. 16).

Diagonally from the entrance to the bell tower is the Church of the Holy Cross with two square openings.

This unique building is a real masterpiece of the construction of that time and overall of the architectural approach applied by the architect Vladimir N. Sukurenko.

Methods

Based on the guidelines of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Property of Montenegro, we formed criteria that were used to evaluate the buildings of the Russian architects Preobrazhensky and Sukurenko. The criteria are sorted into three



Fig. 13. Upper Ostrog Monastery, 1890, private archive

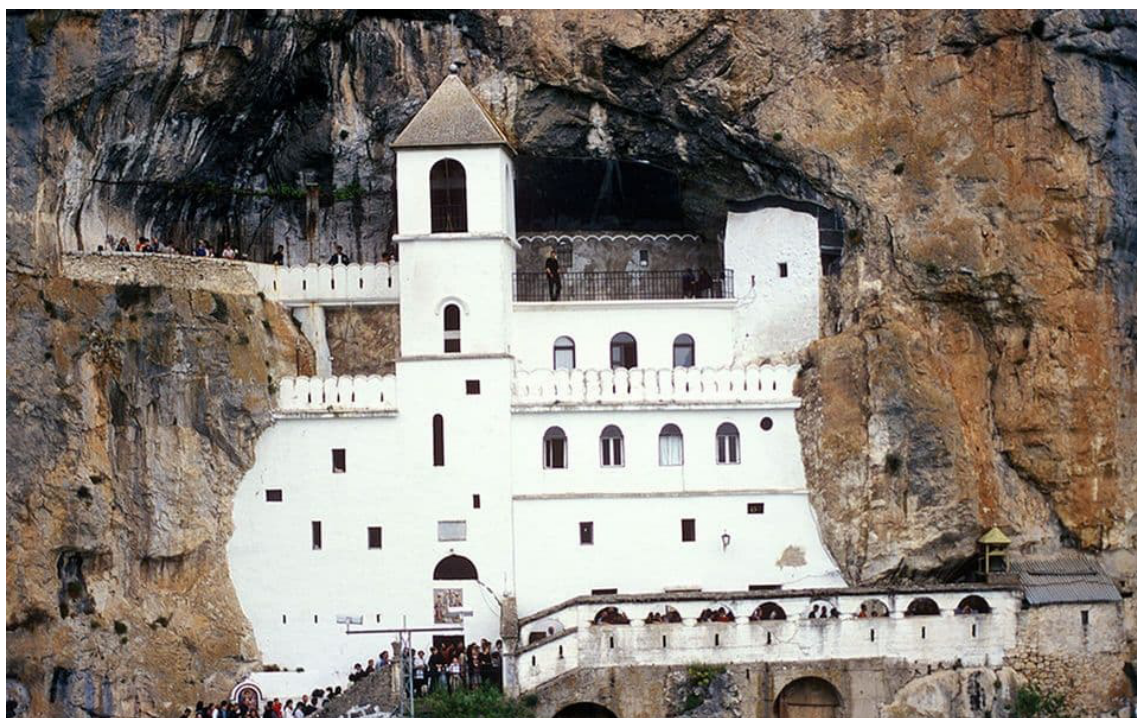


Fig. 14. Photo of the Upper Ostrog Monastery by Lazar Pejović



Fig. 15. Photo of the Ostrog Upper Monastery at night, private archive

groups. The first group involves such building characteristics as authenticity and integrity, degree of preservation, uniqueness, and rarity. In the second group, covering the significance of the building, we assess the historical and scientific significance, archaeological significance, architectural and artistic significance, and technical significance. The third group of criteria covers the age of the building, social and economic importance, environmental and landscape importance.

A. Building characteristics

In this group of criteria, the following building features were considered:

Authenticity and integrity: determined through the degree of presence of original and primary forms or phenomena determined from the point of view of the natural or cultural environment in which the object is located or in which it was created.

Degree of preservation: determined through its completeness, the level of preservation,

endangerment or degradation, in relation to the state of the object at the time of the establishment of the protection of the cultural property, taking into account the interventions, which were later legally carried out on the property.

Uniqueness and rarity: determined through the representativeness of the object in its kind, originality in relation to a certain area or time, typicality or specificity of the object or phenomenon, rarity, as well as through historical, geographical, architectural or other specificities, characteristics or peculiarities. The rarity of an object is determined through the quantity in relation to the type, occurrence, processes, natural or architectural form of the object in a certain space and time.

B. Building significance

The general significance of the building was evaluated through the following:

Historical and scientific significance: expressed through the possibility of documenting, among other



Fig. 16. Photo of the restoration plaque, private archive

things, the connection of the building with a historical figure or a significant event in history. Scientific significance is expressed through the possibility of applying fundamental scientific disciplines, as well as the degree of role and importance of a certain building in the interpretation and development of a certain scientific discipline.

Archaeological significance: expressed by the value and age of the building from the point of view of archaeology and its criteria.

Architectural and artistic significance: expressed through the value of the building, through belonging to a certain architectural style, to its original variety and original architectural expression from a certain period and method of construction. Artistic significance is expressed through the presence of exceptional artistic or aesthetic value, which is reflected in the quality of processing, quality of materials, proportions, composition, value of details, value of construction.

Technical significance: is the value expressed through the art of skill, the importance of tools and knowledge of production that has developed historically and which enables action on the environment for the purpose of acquiring material goods, as well as the uniqueness and peculiarity of the methods that were applied in some work, craft, art.

C. Other criteria

In addition to the aforementioned groups of criteria, the value of the buildings designed by the architects Preobrazhensky and Sukurenko was also examined through the following characteristics:

Age of the building: determined through its importance in relation to the time of creation and duration of the building.

Social and economic importance: is the value expressed through the possibility of using the property for cultural, health, recreational, touristic and other purposes, which do not contradict with the essential characteristics of the building.

Environmental and landscape importance: observed in the relationship of the form with other parts of the whole, the meaning in the structure and vision of the city, buildings or groups of buildings, which is part of the whole or the area. Landscape significance is the value expressed in the vision of the city or the area by the degree of attractiveness of the atmosphere and the visual unity of the whole.

Results

Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog

A. Building characteristics:

Authenticity and integrity: The Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog is the main and largest city church in Nikšić. It stands out for its architectural values; it is the dominant element of the city silhouette. Since it is dedicated to the Montenegrin and Herzegovinian freedom fighters who died during

the war with the Ottoman Empire, this building has a memorial role, so we can conclude that its authenticity and integrity are still present today.

Degree of preservation: The Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog has preserved all elements of physical recognition from the moment of construction completion until today. We conclude that the preservation criterion is also met.

Uniqueness and rarity: The Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog in Nikšić is the largest church building of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century built in Montenegro. At the same time, this is the largest memorial church dedicated to fighters for freedom against the Ottoman occupation. In addition to the indisputable architectural value given by the project of the architect Preobrazhensky, this building is unique in terms of its construction method and its contribution to the wider urban context of the city of Nikšić. We can conclude that the criterion of uniqueness and rarity is also met.

B. Building significance:

Historical and scientific significance: The Cathedral Church in Nikšić has a great historical significance not only because the names of the Montenegrin and Herzegovinian heroes fallen in the period of 1875–1880 are inscribed on its walls, which is very important to historians, essential for the study of the relationship between Montenegro and Russia, as well as for documenting the development of the city of Nikšić. Based on the above, we can state that the Cathedral Church fulfills the criteria of historical and scientific significance.

Archaeological significance: In the context of archaeology and its criteria, this building has no archaeological significance.

Architectural and artistic significance: At the time of its construction, the church was the largest building of its kind in the country. It is also a unique building that was built on an elevation that was additionally reinforced with subwalls. In addition to the exterior architecture, the Cathedral Church is also characterized by a valuable interior architecture. We can conclude that the criterion of architectural and artistic significance is also met.

Technical significance: The building was built from hewn stone from local quarries using simple tools. The stone has an exceptional finish, above all due to the skills of both local and international stonecutters, primarily those who came from Italy. Taking into account the possibilities of the time and the large construction undertaking that ultimately resulted in an object of exceptional construction quality, we can state that this object has technical significance.

C. Other criteria:

Age of the building: The Cathedral Church in Nikšić was built in 1900, and its construction lasted five years. For 123 years, this relatively well-preserved building has been a part of the collective memory

of the citizens of Nikšić, so we can state that this building fulfills the criterion of the age of the building.

Social and economic importance: Every year on May 12, the Great Procession is held in Nikšić, dedicated to Saint Basil of Ostrog. Several tens of thousands of visitors from all over Montenegro and neighboring countries visit Nikšić on that day. A few days before and after the procession, a large number of pilgrims affects the economic situation in the city. During all major Christian holidays, citizens visit the church, which becomes a place of spiritual gathering and socialization. We conclude that the building has social and economic importance too.

Environmental and landscape importance: In addition to its architectural and artistic significance, the Cathedral Church has environmental significance, which is reflected in the specific spatial solution for its location. The location is leveled on three plateaus and decorated with lush pine vegetation, which made it possible to achieve a specific environmental composition. The building is one of the most recognizable buildings and one of the main landmarks in the urban landscape of Nikšić. We conclude that the building has environmental and landscape importance.

Upper Ostrog Monastery

A. Building characteristics:

Authenticity and integrity: The Ostrog Monastery is the largest Orthodox shrine in Montenegro and one of the most important Orthodox shrines in the world. With its location, architecture, and spiritual significance, it has confirmed its authenticity and integrity for centuries.

Degree of preservation: Until today, the Ostrog Monastery has preserved almost all elements of recognition, therefore they meet the criterion of the degree of preservation.

Uniqueness and rarity: The uniqueness of the Ostrog Monastery stems from its spiritual dimension, given that it houses the relics of Saint Basil of Ostrog. The uniqueness and rarity of the building are also reflected in its location, the monastery complex consists of two units, the Lower Monastery and the Upper Monastery, which is built on an almost vertical cliff of Ostrog mountain. With the project of the Upper Monastery, the architect Sukurenko managed to successfully connect nature and the building into a unique and harmonious whole.

B. Building significance:

Historical and scientific significance: The Ostrog Monastery fulfills the criterion of historical significance both because of its role in the history of the people, not only in this region but also beyond, through the centuries of its existence, and because of the possibility of historical research related to the records in the archives that refer to this monastery. Archaeological research could be important considering the location, artefacts from the

Paleolithic period were found near the building. We can conclude that the Ostrog Monastery, especially the Upper Monastery, has great historical and scientific significance.

Archaeological significance: Findings of prehistoric artefacts from the Paleolithic era and traces of medieval buildings in the area of the Lower Monastery, along with the fact that no archaeological research has been carried out, indicate that the location and monastery itself have archaeological significance.

Architectural and artistic significance: The Ostrog Monastery has two parts: Upper and Lower Monastery. This paper dealt exclusively with the Upper Monastery whose main characteristic is its location. The Upper Monastery was built along a vertical picturesque rock at an altitude of 900 m. The interior of the Upper Monastery stands out with frescoes of artistic value, while the treasury contains valuable icons and objects. Based on the above, we conclude that the Upper Monastery has architectural and artistic significance.

Technical significance: In terms of technical significance, the Upper Monastery stands out since it was built against a rock on rather inaccessible terrain.

C. Other criteria:

Age of the building: The Upper Monastery was built in 1665, and the Lower Monastery was built in 1820. Considering the age and degree of preservation, we can conclude that this cultural asset fulfills the criterion of the age of the building.

Social and economic importance: The Ostrog Monastery has been of social and economic importance for many years, considering that it is one of the most visited Orthodox Christian shrines in the world. As a result, the monastery influences the development of the region, primarily by developing infrastructure connections with Nikšić and Danilovgrad. Religious and cultural tourism can be the backbone of the development of this region. It should be noted that the monastery is visited, in large numbers, by both Roman Catholic Christians and Muslims, which confirms the social importance of the monastery.

Environmental and landscape importance: In terms of environmental importance, it is clear that the complex consisting of the Lower and Upper monasteries with all the associated monastery land represents a harmonious whole with the special genius loci. The plateau on which the Lower Monastery is located, together with Ostrog Mountain in which the Upper Monastery is built, forms a unique visual entity that is easy to notice, especially from the main road connecting the country's two largest cities Podgorica and Nikšić. The monastery gives a unique visual experience of the landscape both during the day and at night due to specific lighting.

Conclusion

Numerous historical data speak of the century's old connections between Russia and Montenegro, which confirm the great familiarity of the two Slavic nations with each other. In the last few decades, it has only begun to be determined in detail, in the field of architecture and urban planning, to what extent Russian architects contributed to the formation of architectural heritage in Montenegro. The aim of this work was to present perhaps the two most significant achievements that Russian architects designed and built in Montenegro, the Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog in the very center of the city of Nikšić and the Upper Monastery of Ostrog near the city of Nikšić.

Considering the defined criteria of the building characteristics, on the basis of which we determine the building value, and which are fully fulfilled, we can conclude that the Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog in Nikšić represents an exceptional architectural achievement of the architect Preobrazhensky. With this building, the architect made a great contribution to the architectural heritage of the city as well as to its morphology and spatial identity. The value of this building is reflected

in the cultural and spiritual life of the citizens of not only Nikšić but also of Montenegro (Table 1).

The Ostrog Monastery has represented a unique, spiritual center and place of pilgrimage in a long historical period. In addition to records in literature and historiography, its importance has become part of the collective consciousness in an area that in many ways exceeds the state boundaries of Montenegro, making this unique building internationally recognized (Table 2).

It seems that the architects Preobrazhensky and Sukurenko understood the specifics and circumstances of the time in which they worked during their stay in Montenegro and with a personal touch designed recognizable objects that are essential elements of the spatial architectural identity not only of the city of Nikšić but also of Montenegro.

The fact that significant Russian artists are still present in the city of Nikšić with their works in the 21st century is evidenced by the sculpture of the Holy Mother, which was gifted to Montenegro in 2003 by the great Russian sculptor Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Klykov (1939–2006). The sculpture is located on Duke Šako Petrović Square, in front of the Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog (Fig. 17).

Table 1. Evaluation of the Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog

| Building | Authenticity and integrity: | Degree of preservation: | Uniqueness and rarity: | Historical and scientific | Archaeological | Architectural and artistic | Technical | Age of the building | Social and economic importance | Environmental and landscape importance |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Cathedral Church of Saint Basil of Ostrog | + | + | + | + | - | + | + | + | + | + |
| Eligibility criteria | A. Building characteristics | | | B. Building significance: | | | C. Other criteria: | | | |

Table 2. Evaluation of the Upper Ostrog Monastery

| Building | Authenticity and integrity: | Degree of preservation: | Uniqueness and rarity: | Historical and scientific | Archaeological | Architectural and artistic | Technical | Age of the building | Social and economic importance | Environmental and landscape importance |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Upper Ostrog Monastery | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| Eligibility criteria | A. Building characteristics | | | B. Building significance: | | | C. Other criteria: | | | |



Fig. 17. The sculpture of the Holy Mother by the sculptor Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Klikov, mitropolija.com

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ОСОБЕННОСТИ И ЗНАЧЕНИЕ ТВОРЧЕСТВА РУССКИХ АРХИТЕКТОРОВ В ГОРОДЕ НИКШИЧ В ЧЕРНОГОРИИ В КОНЦЕ XIX – ПЕРВОЙ ПОЛОВИНЕ XX ВЕКА

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Аннотация

Введение: на протяжении своей долгой и драматической истории Черногория имела тесные политические, экономические и культурные связи с Россией. Однако в контексте архитектуры связи между этими двумя странами наименее известны и изучены. **Цель исследования:** цель настоящей работы — впервые представить широкой профессиональной аудитории некоторые из наиболее значительных достижений, созданных русскими архитекторами в городе Никшич в Черногории в конце XIX – первой половине XX века. В качестве предмета анализа рассматриваются проект соборного храма Василия Острожского, выполненный архитектором Михаилом Тимофеевичем Преображенским, и проект Верхнего Острожского монастыря, наиболее значительного достижения архитектора Владимира Сукуренко. **Методы:** методологический подход предполагал классификацию и сравнение архивных материалов через процессы синтеза, анализа и дедукции. Основываясь на положениях Закона о защите культурных ценностей Черногории, мы сформировали критерии, которые использовались для оценки работ вышеупомянутых архитекторов. Критерии разделены на три группы. Первая группа включает в себя характеристик здания, где мы оцениваем аутентичность и целостность, степень сохранности, уникальность и редкость. Во второй группе, относящейся к значимости здания, мы оцениваем историческую и научную значимость, археологическую значимость, архитектурно-художественную значимость и техническую значимость. Наконец, в третьей группе критериев мы оцениваем возраст здания, социально-экономическую значимость, а также значимость с точки зрения окружающей среды и ландшафта. **Результаты:** с учетом предложенных критериев сделан вывод о том, что соборный храм Василия Острожского является символом и важнейшим пространственным элементом идентичности города Никшич, а Верхний Острожский монастырь, одна из важнейших святынь ортодоксального христианства, представляет собой вершину строительного и архитектурного процесса.

Ключевые слова: Михаил Тимофеевич Преображенский, Владимир Сукуренко, Никшич, Черногория.