

REMAINS OF OTTOMAN ARCHITECTURE IN THE CITY OF NIKŠIĆ IN MONTENEGRO

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Received: 24.09.2023; Final Text: 04.09.2024

Keywords: Montenegro; Nikšić; fortress; mosque; ramparts

1. Nikšić is located in the western part of Montenegro, in the Montenegrin-Herzegovinian belt of the Dinarides. The settlement developed in the central part of Nikšić Field, the largest karst field in Montenegro. Nikšić is the second largest city in Montenegro, with an exceptionally favourable geographical and topographical position (Ivanović, 1977).

2. Prince Nikola was the heir of the Petrović dynasty which had ruled Montenegro for centuries.

INTRODUCTION

During the late 14th century, the Ottoman Empire expanded into the Balkan Peninsula, gradually subduing South Slavic territories and imposing a system of social and state organization distinct from European feudal models. Following the conquest of Herzegovina in 1465, Nikšić, then called Onogošt, was among the cities that fell to Ottoman forces. Even though Nikšić (1) remained under Ottoman rule for nearly four centuries, the city faced periods of abandonment in the 16th and 17th centuries due to relentless wreckage.

In the battles with Ottomans, the tribes of Herzegovina, with significant support from Montenegro, persistently resisted the Ottoman rules and strove for unification. In 1877, after decisive battles against Suleiman Pasha's forces led by Prince Nikola (1841–1924) (2), Montenegrin troops captured Trebjesa Hill at the end of July and entered Nikšić on September 9. Following the Berlin Congress of 1878, Nikšić officially became a constituent part of Montenegro.

Although Nikšić suffered extensive damage its distinctive Ottoman architecture and urban structure remained intact. In 1878, English archaeologist, Arthur John Evans (1851–1941) provided a detailed account of Nikšić, focusing on its urban structure. He described the city as comprising of a fortress, a walled inner section, and an outer area with a market and main streets.

In the years following the Ottoman era, Nikšić retained much of its former appearance, but the arrival of settlers from Montenegro necessitated change. The growing need for new houses and urban expansion prompted the impoverished, newly arrived population to repurpose stone from the ruins of the Ottoman city for constructions.

The First Regulatory Plan of Nikšić, created by Josip Šilović Slade (1828–1911) in 1883, envisioned an “ideal” urban layout, requiring vast amounts

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3. The Ottomans began conquering the Balkans during the rule of Murad I (1362–1389), then the conquest of new territories continued during Murad II (1421–1444, 1445–1451), Mehmed II the Conqueror (1444–1445, 1451–1481) and Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566) (Yenişehirlioğlu, 1983, 155).

of building material. Stone from destroyed Ottoman houses that no longer fit into the urban matrix of the new city was repurposed. Similarly, stone from the Lower Town was utilised, ultimately resulting in the complete loss of Nikšić's original morphology. Over time, as new Nikšić emerged, the remaining Ottoman structures were destroyed, while the Bedem Fortress of Upper Town was left to the ravages of time.

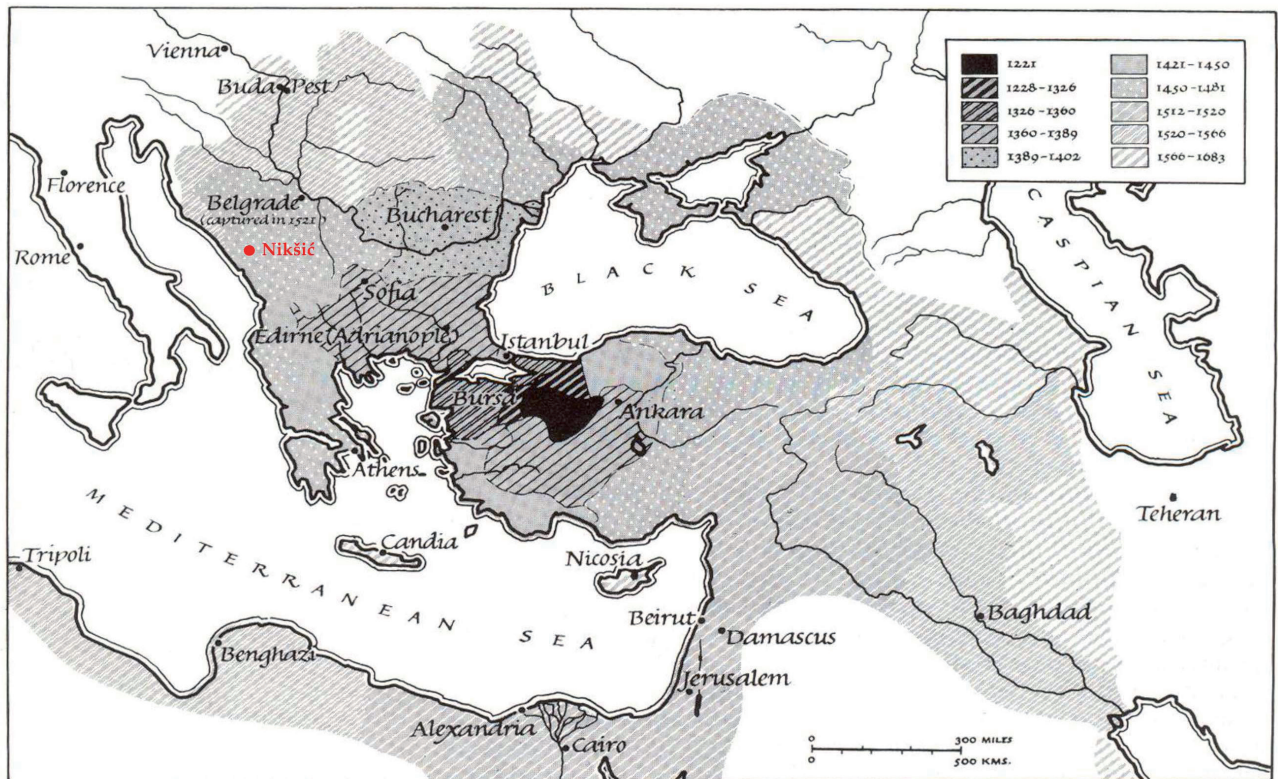
This paper provides the architectural legacy of Ottoman Nikšić, Montenegro's second-largest city, not merely to document its history but to emphasize the importance of preserving these culturally significant architectural monuments and raising awareness among experts and the public for the benefit of future generations.

OTTOMAN CONQUESTS IN THE BALKANS – THE FORMATION OF CITIES

The Balkans, marked by its rich cultural diversity and centuries of stratification, has been shaped by influences from both Western and Eastern civilization. Its favourable geographical and strategic position has historically made it a target for conquest by numerous powers (Lowry, 2003; Yenişehirlioğlu, 1983; Kiel, 1979).

Ottoman Empire expansion into European states began in the 14th century with their conquest of a major part of the Balkans (3). Under Suleiman the Magnificent, the empire achieved its greatest territorial and political dominance, becoming a major European power (**Figure 1**). Many Balkan cities, including Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, Banja Luka and Mostar in modern-day Herzegovina, as well as Tirana in Albania and various

Figure 1. Ottoman conquests. Position of Nikšić in Ottoman Empire. (Idrizbegović Zgonić, 2012; 62) (Edited by authors).



4. "Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi collected information on almost 20,000 buildings of all sizes, suited to the needs of the widely dispersed Muslim communities, and often, in spite of their relatively small size, of great monumentality and artistic value." (Kiel, 1990, XI)

5. The Ottomans very rarely (and in our region never) used the bastion type of fortification, even though from 1540 onwards they were in contact with such systems, along the borders on the Venetian and Habsburg sides. (Puljić and Karač, 2014: 55).

6. Herceg Novi is the youngest medieval city on the Adriatic, founded in 1382 by Bosnian King Tvrtko I. After the first 100 years since its founding, the city fell under Ottoman control (1482–1687) and received elements of Ottoman architecture and urbanism. The Ottomans paid great attention to the restoration and expansion of the existing ramparts and towers (the Kanli Tower, the Beg's Tower, Abaz Pasha's Tower, Karhan's Rampart) (Bajić Šestović, 2016)

Bulgarian cities, became key urban centers of the Ottoman Empire (Kiel, 1990).

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Ottoman Empire shaped much of the Balkans, building new cities on the existing foundations of ancient and medieval fortifications using Ottoman techniques and methods. In the 18th century, increasing Western influence introduced new architectural elements, leading to a transformation in the methods of construction (Yenişehirlioğlu, 1983). Furthermore, bolstered trade ties between the Ottoman Empire and European states prompted the transformation of existing fortifications into thriving trade and significant cultural centres.

In the new cities, Ottomans urbanism integrated with local Byzantine and Slavic styles, resulting in a unique architectural identity (Kiel, 1990). Domes (4) became prominent features, alongside mosques, baths, and khans, which were previously unknown to the Balkans (Kiel, 1990, IX). Public spaces such as piazzas (stone-built halls or *bedesten*), covered trading streets (*arasta*), bridges, and aqueducts played a central role, overshadowing religious structures (Kiel, 1990, IX). Following the conquest of the Balkans in the second half of the 14th century, Turkish-Muslim administrators, soldiers, and civilians were resettled in and around old walled towns (Kiel, 1990, IX), in order to ensure government control in those areas (Greene, 2000).

Ivkovska (2021) emphasized the rich stratification of Ottoman cities in the Balkans, shaped by their Mediterranean location and distinct historical, cultural, and geopolitical context compared to those in the Middle East, Asia or North Africa. She highlighted the multicultural and multiethnic character woven into the urban fabric of Balkan cities. Cerasi (2005) underscores the active cultural exchange that shaped Balkan Ottoman cities, resulting in a unique blend of styles across different localities. Multiculturalism, a defining feature of the Balkans (Cerasi, 1988), fostered the intertwining of different cultures, which produced complex urban forms and complicating the traits specific to the Ottoman period. The Ottoman legacy endures not only in urban design but also linguistic traces, as evident in Turkish words still found in the Serbian language (Table 1).

Montenegrin cities during the Ottoman period closely resembled other Balkan cities of that time. The Ottomans typically chose existing cities with fortified cores for military purposes and surrounding suburbs for civilian life (Živković, 1992), regardless of how well-preserved they were. In many cities across Old Herzegovina, the army was stationed in medieval fortresses on elevated areas (the Upper Town), separate from the rest of the settlement (Puljić and Karač, 2014). The fortifications did not significantly affect the urban structure, nor did they influence the placement of streets or public spaces (Puljić and Karač, 2014). After 1453, the Ottomans adopted the Byzantine system of fortifications, resulting in designs similar to European ones, with polygonal and circular towers and low half-towers for early artillery use (Puljić and Karač, 2014: 54). However, these structures did not evolve beyond the 16th century (5). Unlike Herceg Novi, (6) which underwent transformations in its fortifications influenced by modernisation from Western styles and military technologies, Nikšić's ramparts – modern at that time – did not experience similar innovations or incorporate new architectural elements (polygonal and circular towers).

The medieval cities of the South Slav territories conquered by the Ottomans experienced diverse outcomes. While significant mining and other

English	Serbian	Turkish	Explanation in English
Arasta	Arasta	Arasta	A row of shops, typically located near a mosque, forming part of an Ottoman market area. (Inalcik, 1973)
Bedesten	Bedesten	Bedesten	A covered market or bazaar, often for luxury goods like textiles and jewelry, commonly found in Ottoman cities. (Kuban, 2007)
Bey	Beg	Bey	A title for a local leader or noble in the Ottoman Empire, often used to refer to the head of a region or district. (Inalcik, 1973)
Caravanserai	Karavanseraj	Kervansaray	A roadside inn or rest stop built for caravan travelers, providing accommodation, food, and security. (Kuban, 2007)
Charshia	Čaršija	Çarşı	A marketplace or commercial district, typically featuring various shops and trade goods, common in Ottoman cities. (Inalcik, 1973)
Charshia-varosh	Čaršija-varoš	Çarşı ve mahalle	A term combining the marketplace (charshia) and the surrounding residential area (varosh), typical in Ottoman settlements. (Kafesoglu, 1992)
Dizdar	Dizdar	Dizdar	A fortress or military commander, responsible for guarding a fort or castle during the Ottoman period. (Inalcik, 1973)
Hammam	Haman	Hamam	A public bathhouse that was central to Ottoman social life, used for both hygiene and social gatherings. (Kuban, 2007)
Han	Han	Han	An inn or guesthouse along trade routes that offered lodging and services to travelers and merchants. (Inalcik, 1973)
Imam	Imam	İmam	A religious leader in Islam, particularly one who leads prayers in a mosque or provides spiritual guidance. (Kafesoglu, 1992)
Imaret	Imaret	İmaret	A charitable institution, usually attached to a mosque, that provided food to the poor and served as a community center. (Inalcik, 1973)
Izba	Izba	Oda	A small room, often used as a living space or storage area, particularly in rural or traditional houses. (Kuban, 2007)
Kadiluk	Kadiluk	Kadılık	Administrative district governed by a kadi, an Islamic judge responsible for legal and social matters. (Inalcik, 1973)
Kasaba	Kasaba	Kasaba	A small town or settlement, often under the control of a local Ottoman ruler, known as a "bey." (Kafesoglu, 1992)
Mahallah	Mahala	Mahalle	A neighborhood or residential area, often centered around a mosque, typical in Ottoman towns. (Inalcik, 1973)
Mahfili	Mahfili	Mahfil	A raised platform or gallery in a mosque, often used for special prayer services or recitations. (Kafesoglu, 1992)
Maktab	Maktab	Mektep	An elementary school, often associated with a mosque, where children would receive religious and basic education. (Kuban, 2007)
Masjid	Džamija	Mescid	A small mosque used for regular prayers, distinct from larger central mosques, often found in smaller communities. (Kafesoglu, 1992)
Mihrab	Mihrab	Mihrab	A niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of Mecca, towards which Muslims face during prayer. (Kuban, 2007)
Minaret	Minaret	Minare	A tall tower attached to a mosque, used for the call to prayer, one of the defining features of mosque architecture. (Kuban, 2007)
Minbar	Mimbar	Minber	A pulpit in a mosque used by the imam to deliver sermons, often located to the right of the mihrab. (Kuban, 2007)
Mutvaka	Mutvaka	Mutavallı	The administrator or caretaker of a mosque or religious endowment, responsible for the maintenance of the waqf (charitable property). (Kuban, 2007)
Sherefe	Šerefe	Şerefe	A balcony or platform at the top of a minaret used by the muezzin to make the call to prayer. (Inalcik, 1973)
Takya	Takija	Tekke	A Sufi lodge or dervish house where Sufi orders would meet for prayer and spiritual practices. (Kuban, 2007)
Tarikh	Tarih	Tarikh	A chronogram or historical inscription that records the date of an event or the construction of a building. (Inalcik, 1973)

Table 1. A list of terms related to key elements and structures in Ottoman architecture - English, Serbian and Turkish equivalents with explanations in English

7. Luburić relies on the reconstruction of a popular account given in the form of an epic poem.

8. The Kosorić family are the ancestral leaders of the Drobñjak tribe.

9. Klajić published his book "Bosnia" in 1878, only a year after the end of Ottoman era, which means that Klajić had collected data on Nikšić earlier.

settlements faded, cities that became military and administrative centres of the Ottoman authorities experienced substantial growth (Drobñjak and Šabotić, 2017). Ottoman urbanisation brought fortresses, military infrastructure, commercial-administrative districts, religious buildings (*çarşu*), and residential neighbourhoods (*mahalle*) (Alihodžić, 2019, 3).

OTTOMAN PERIOD OF THE CITY OF NIKŠIĆ

In 1456, the Ottomans conquered most of Herzegovina, including the town of Onogošt (known during the medieval time as Nikšić), and established the vilayet called Herceak. The city was under Ottoman control for over four centuries, until 1877. As in other cities in the Balkans (Lowry, 2003; Yenişehirliođlu, 1983; Kiel, 1979), the Ottomans first destroyed the cities they conquered, then built them based on their own urban and architectural methods. It is clear that the Ottomans built Nikšić on the remnants of medieval Onogošt, making the construction process complex and deeply influenced by local culture, builders, and the city's identity (Cerasi, 1988; Kiel, 1979).

The exact period of construction of the Ottoman city remains unclear. According to Andrija Luburić (1988), the process began around 1696, (7) following the execution of Duke Ilija Kosorić, (8) and the expulsion of the Drobñjak tribe. In 1702, Recep Pasha returned with an army to expand and the city's fortifications. Jovan Ivović (1961) believes construction began after the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699), but faced significant challenges, including repeated destruction of walls, which were initially built with single layer of stones.

The exact configuration of the expanded city is still uncertain. Namely, Vjekoslav Klajić (1878) in his book *Bosnia* describes Nikšić as a provincial town (city), located on a hill Zeta and Gračanica Rivers (**Figure 2**), with a population of 3,000 to 4,000, mostly Muslims. The city or fortress, surrounded by walls and bastions, was shaped like a hexagon, with Onogošt as the central fortress. Important surrounding towers included Čadjelica, Ozrinić, Rudopolje, and Rastovac. Klajić's book also includes an engraving of "Onogošt – Upper Town," which might correspond to the 1708 city plan, but this remains uncertain. Evans (1878), in his city plan, did not depict the hexagonal form described by Klajić, (9) but

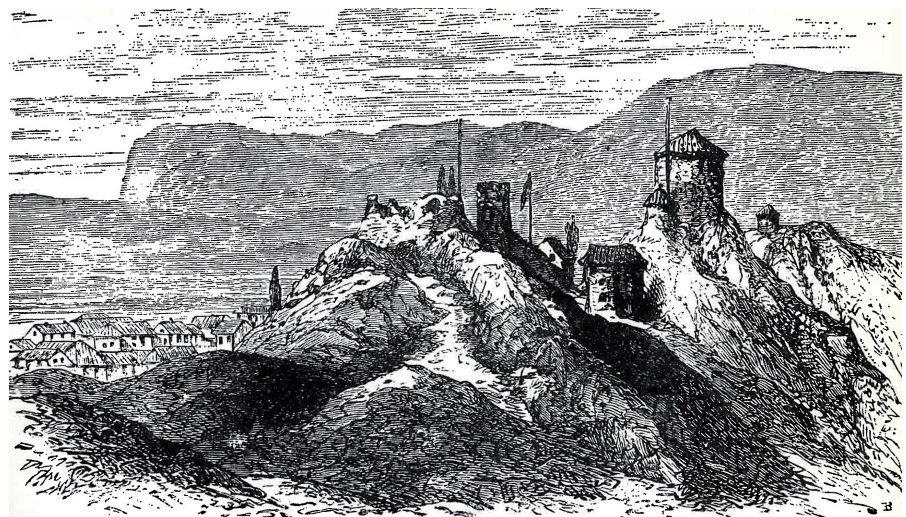


Figure 2. Town and fortress in the middle of the 19th century (Klajić, 1878)

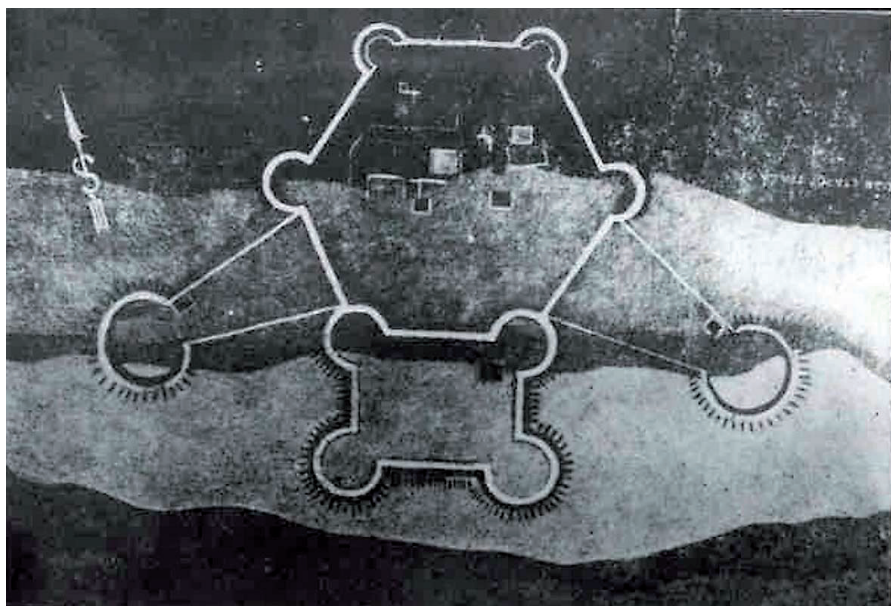


Figure 3. Plan of Nikšić, 1708 (Bojković, 2018).

instead presented a quadrangular shape with lateral towers, as seen in his engravings. (Figure 3)

Once completed, Onogošt became the largest and most significant Ottoman fortification and military stronghold in Herzegovina, largely due to its strategic location along vital routes and the blend of various cultural influences (History of Montenegro, 1975). With the onset of the Morean War (1683–1699) and the loss of fortifications such as Herceg Novi and Risan, Onogošt assumed a central role in the Ottomans' defence strategy. By 1707, the city housed 560 houses and a military presence of 360 soldiers, (10) with many Muslim families from Risan and Herceg Novi settling there, (Drobnjak and Šabotić, 2017, 322–330).

The development of Ottoman Nikšić transformed from its initial position as a fortification, which, from a strategic standpoint, had little value in the western Balkans, to a highly fortified military stronghold. Over time, it evolved into a more complex settlement, featuring typical Ottoman urban elements such as central mosque, bazaar, and fortified walls.

URBANISTIC ORGANISATION OF OTTOMAN NIKŠIĆ

Once rebuilt by the Ottomans, Nikšić was named a *kadiluk* (please see Table 1) and designated a *kasaba* (11) (provincial town). This status required the city to include vital urban components, such as a mosque, a *maktab* (Islamic school), possibly a *hammam* (Turkish bath), an *imaret* (public kitchen), a *takya* (gathering place), a *han* or *caravanserai* (roadside inn), a *charshia* market (series of shops), and more (Čelebija, 1973) (Figure 4).

Ottoman tradition influenced the arrangement of cities and settlements according to clear rules. According to this, the urban design adhered to a structured division: the *charshia-varosh* (market-town) for workshops, trade shops and administrative activities, and the *mahallah* (neighbourhood) for residential areas. Ottoman Nikšić followed this model while preserving its medieval organization, maintain the distinction between the Upper and Lower Towns. (Figure 5)

10. In 1688, Onogošt had a crew of 120 soldiers under the command of a captain and an insignificant number of buildings.

11. "According to their sizes and importance, cities were divided in two categories: *kasaba* and *şehir*. None of the cities in Montenegro had ever reached the status of a *şehir*." (Alihodžić, 2019, 3)

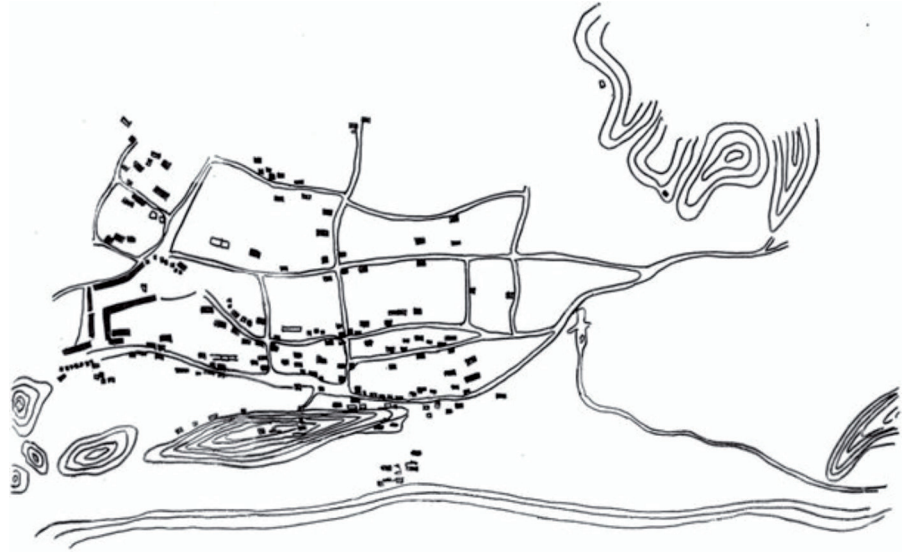


Figure 4. Plan of Nikšić, situation after the end of Ottoman era in 1878 (Bojković, 2018).

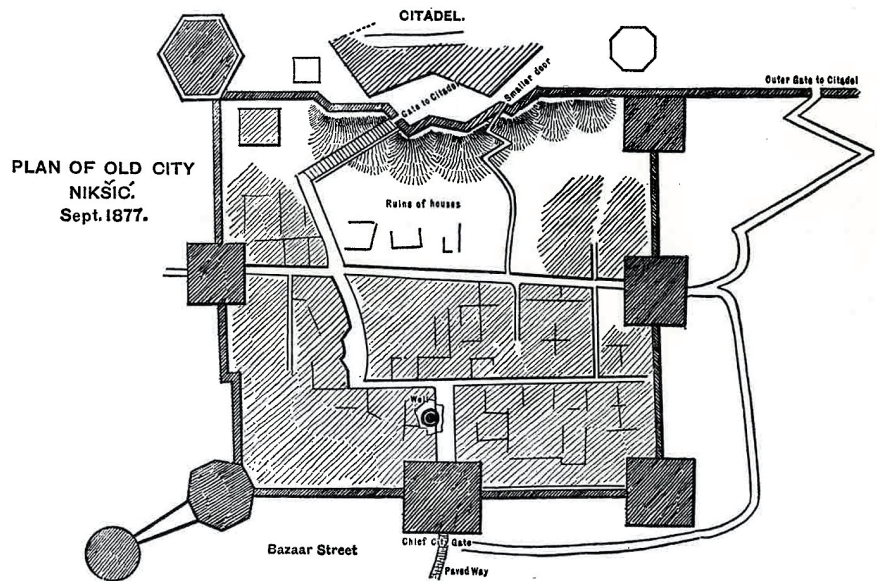


Figure 5. Arthur J. Evans, Plan of old Nikšić, 1877 (Evans, 1878).

The Upper Town, initially a castle and later the main fortress of the Onogošt district, held the significant defensive importance as the region's main fortress (Mijović and Kovačević, 1975). Petar Šobajić gives a detailed description of its structure. Located on a 250-metres-long rocky hill, the fortress had walls 1 to 2 metres thick and over 4 meter high, fortified with defensive loopholes. The southern side was protected by the three-storey pentagonal Nebojša Tower. This tower was pivotal for the city's defense. The northern side featured an octagonal tower with a cannon platform. At its centre were two square artillery emplacements, each 5 metres long and wide, alongside two buildings likely used by the *dizdar* (commander) and the city guard. Next to the cannon emplacement was a deep basement dug into the rock, roofed with vaulted walls, while a second basement near the Nebojša Tower, at Popi, served as a jail.

The Lower Town, next to the Upper Town, was fortified on three sides with walls about 4 metres high. While slightly shorter in length, it was wider

than the Upper Town, featuring three-storey defensive towers at strategic points (at the corner and in the middle of the wall) connected by walkable walls. The eastern wall had the main entry, the Great Gate, flanked by the Osa Tower to the south and the Prosenata Tower to the north. A transverse wall separated the northern "Old Town", consisting of 18 close-knit Muslim houses with narrow alleys belonging to people from Risan and Herceg Novi, from the southern part, which contained the commander's house, a hospital, kitchen and food reserves (**Figure 6, Figure 7**).

In Nikšić, the marketplace was located immediately outside the walls of the Lower Town. Most of the houses were located in the direct vicinity of the walls of the Lower Town, in an area known as *Stara varoš* (Old Town), where streets were narrow and winding. The market in Nikšić remained known as the "Crooked market". The houses had stone walls and earthen floors, while taller, multiple storey houses were roofed with shingle and straw. The ground floor typically featured an *izba* (the storage) paved with stone, and a wooden staircase led to the upper floor, where the inhabitants lived. The windows were small with wooden or iron grilles and the



Figure 6. View of the fortress from the south side (private archive of Mr Ognjen Bjelica)



Figure 7. View of the fortress from the west side (private archive of Mr Ognjen Bjelica)

courtyard was surrounded by tall walls. The houses' roof were mainly two-sided and oriented in a north–south direction.

Mahallahs were usually formed according to the religious affiliation of the population, and so there were two Muslim *Mahallahs*. Each *mahallah* contained a mosque or *masjids* (mosques without a minaret), including those in Onogošt/Nikšić. The *mahallahs* in Nikšić included Hercegovačka, Mušovina, Podgorička, Spuška, Kučka, Piperska, Ferizović and Grudska (Šobajić, 1938, 74–77).

ARCHITECTURE IN OTTOMAN NIKŠIĆ

Today, with great effort, we can imagine how Ottoman Nikšić might have looked like. A small number of written documents provide incomplete and imprecise descriptions, while engravings and sketches depicting the city are rare. However, based on these scarce sources and the remaining material evidence, we can form an idea of what certain typologically diverse structures may have looked like.

The constructions of Ottoman Nikšić can be into four categories: those that are long lost, those in a ruined state, those that are devastated, and, very rarely, those that are preserved. This paper primarily focuses on the ruined, devastated, and preserved structures, aiming to approximate, as much as possible, the spirit/essence of Ottoman Nikšić.

Among the rare remains of the once impressive Ottoman residential architecture in Nikšić are the houses of the Mušović family, of which only the foundations remain, and the house of the Mekić family, where only the entrance façade is preserved.

One of the most impressive constructions was the bey's house (12) of the Mušović family's, located in Popi on the southern side of the city. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Mušović family seized this building originally belonging to the Metropolitan of Onogošt, and turned it into a harem. It is likely that the medieval court of the Nemanjić dynasty was also located here (13). The main guest rooms of Captain Mušović were situated in a large, four-storey tower built from beautifully dressed stone. Over time, the Mušović family constructed additional buildings, which were surrounded by trenches. Unfortunately, only a pile of stones remains of these structures, and their reconstruction would be demanding (Figure 8).

12. The Mušovića are a Muslim family originally from Kolašin, who settled Nikšić at the end of the 17th century. The Mušović family ruled Nikšić for a long time (over 100 years), the most famous of them being Osman and Captain Hamza, and both in epic national poems (Ivanović, 1977).

13. The Nemanjića were a Serbian ruling dynasty, from 1168 to 1371 and provided the first Serbian king (Stefan Nemanjić) and the first Serbian emperor (Dušan the Mighty – Emperor of the Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians), who led Serbian to the height of its power, significantly expanding its borders southwards, taking advantage of the civil war in Byzantium (<https://zaduzbine-nemanjica.rs/Nemanjici.htm>).



Figure 8. Remains of the bey Mušović family house, old postcard (private archive of Mr Ognjen Bjelica)

14. After end of Ottoman era, the Mekić family moved to Sandžak in Serbia, and then to Macedonia, and then migrated permanently to Istanbul, Turkey. The Mekić family changed its name to Tara, after the eponymous river. The Mekić-Tara family gave rise to Turkish intellectuals such as Fevzija Mekić, whose son was Šark Tara, the founder of the largest Turkish construction company, ENKA (Svetlana Mandić, *Old Houses of Nikšić, When a Rock Speaks and Fairy Tales Come to Life*, Pogled no. 26, October 2018, Journal of the Chamber of Engineers of Montenegro, p. 68).

The Mekić family's house, (14) one of the few Ottoman houses located outside the city walls, was built in the mid-19th century and has undergone significant changes over time. The least altered part is the eastern entrance façade, made from finely dressed stone cubes. The entrance door is decorated with distinctive ornamentation (Figure 9). The house likely had shops on the ground floor where trade and craftworks took place. When the first regulatory plan was adopted in 1883, characterised by a strict geometrical layout, all the houses that did not fit into the future urban matrix were demolished, except for the Mekić family's house, which conformed to the new concept (Figure 10).

The oldest photograph likely showing the appearance of the Lower Town testifies to how houses looked in the oldest part of Ottoman Nikšić. The photograph, taken in 1890, is held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Figure 11). This photograph is a crucial record of how the old part of Nikšić appeared 13 years after the Ottomans left, and six years after the construction of the new Nikšić began. In the foreground of the photograph,



Figure 9. The original wall of the Mekić family house (photo by Milan Šapurić)



Figure 10. The ornament above the entrance of the Mekić family house (photo by Milan Šapurić)



Figure 11. Old Nikšić, around 1890.
(Bibliothèque nationale de France)

there is a significantly higher concentration of houses. Many of these feature typical Ottoman architectural elements such as high stone walls around the courtyard, a division between the economic and residential areas, four-pitched roofs, and smaller windows. In the background, the houses are arranged more sparsely with a different architectural logic: they have compact forms, steeply pitched two-sided roofs, and lack the dividing high walls between plots. These houses were likely built following the implementation of the first regulatory plan in 1883, marking a shift toward a new urban concept that abandoned the earlier Ottoman spatial organization and architectural style, typically characterized by defensive structures and central gathering spaces.

Unlike the houses in the background, those closer to the observer have more dynamic shapes, typically with four-sided roofs covered with either shingles or tiles, and with shallower pitch. These houses are surrounded by high walls, with openings called loopholes visible. Gates can also be seen on individual houses. One house features a ground-floor porch, while several others have porches on the first floor. In the central part of the photograph, a well is visible, with space around it only slightly wider than the street passing between the houses in the foreground. This space may have been used for public gatherings.

While these houses are probably located probably in the remains of the Lower Town, it is clear that they are typical Ottoman houses of the period, modified and adapted to the indigenous conditions. The Ottoman family house, a residential complex, was the main cell of the city, a self-contained unit oriented inward. The best example of this can be seen in the house in the foreground. The residential complex consists of a house extending two floors, with a larder or cattle shed probably accommodated on the ground floor. The complex is enclosed by high walls, forming a courtyard that contained a kitchen or *mutvaka*, a toilet, various types of storerooms, and possibly a garden with a vegetable plot and possibly water. Unfortunately,

15. Ali Pasha's Mosque in Sarajevo is the highest artistic expression of Ottoman architecture (Redžić, 1983).

16. This type of mosque is particularly characteristic of the northern part of Montenegro (Plav, Gusinje and Rožaje).

17. The Mosque of Hussein Pasha Boljanic (1569) is the most beautiful and most significant preserved domed building erected during the Ottoman period in Montenegro. It is located in Pljevlja, in the old market (Andrejević, 1984). It was placed under state protection in 1952. The central area, bordered by walls 1.12–1.13 metres thick, has a regular square foundation, supporting a dome 10.85 metres across. A high and massive porch extends along the entire breath of the north-western wall of the mosque. Along the front corner of the square foundations of the mosque an unusually tall (42 metres) minaret rises. On the mosque can be seen a wealth of decorative elements (decorative stalactites, bas-relief rosettes, bas-relief friezes, etc.).

no typical Ottoman houses from this period have been preserved in the Nikšić area.

Religious buildings play a crucial role in shaping urban spaces, and in the Balkans, a specific typology of mosque developed in response to historical circumstances. There are three main types of mosques in the region: single-room domed mosques with a porch (15) (the most represented type), multiple-room domed mosques, and mosques with a four-sided roof, which is the simplest mosque design in the Balkans (Redžić, 1983). The classic domed mosque appears in two forms: with a full dome or a semi-dome (Redžić, 1983: 120).

In Montenegro, mosques typology is fairly modest. The first type is a single-room domed mosque with a square base supporting a spacious cupola, couple with a porch covered by three smaller cupolas. The second type features a four-sided roof and a flat wooden ceiling, with or without a porch (Deroko, 1964; Redžić, 1983; Andrejević, 1984). This second type evolved in harmony with medieval architectural styles, and under the influence of local building traditions, the minaret took on the form of an archaic bell tower with a square cross-section (Andrejević, 1984). This second type evolved in harmony with medieval shapes, and under the influence of local building traditions, the minaret took on the form of an archaic bell tower with a square horizontal cross-section (16) (Andrejević, 1984). A feature of every mosque is that on the outside, alongside the structure, there is a minaret whose construction was precisely achieved using dressed stone. The cupola's diameter depended on the status of the town/settlement in which it was located. The most significant and impressive mosque in Montenegro is Hussein Pasha in Pljevlja (**Figure 12, Figure 13**) (17). No multiple-room domed mosques with an indented foundation, nor mosques with a dome on a hexagonal or octagonal base, were ever built in Montenegro.

In terms of their aesthetic conception, the mosques were built with a simple interior layout that functionally accommodated large gatherings. However, a harmonious external silhouette was also prioritized, blending the heavy, round, lead-covered spacious cupola with an exceptionally slender stone minaret (Deroko, 1964).

As the population of Ottoman Nikšić grew, the number of mosques also increased. Within the city, there were four mosques, and another five in the surrounding area, reflecting the territory covered by the kadiluk of Nikšić. Of these nine mosques, only one has survived to the present-day – Hadži Ismail's Mosque, located in the city's inner core. Built in 1807 by the Nikšić merchant Hadži Ismail Lekić of the Mehmednikić brotherhood, this mosque is of the type with a four-sided roof and a porch.

Hadži Ismail's Mosque is a smaller structure with a square base (**Figure 14**). Built from finely dressed stone, the walls were plastered and painted white. To the right of the entrance façade stands a minaret, also made of finely dressed stone (**Figure 15, Figure 16**). The *minaret* has a distinctive rectangular base and a cylindrical shape, with a spiral staircase inside. At the top, there is a *sherefe* (muezzin's balcony) used for calling people to prayer. Above the door, a stone plaque with date (*tarikh*) inscribed with Arabic-Turkish writing provides the date of construction and the name of the builder. The interior of the Mosque is also simple. The entrance leads to an antechamber on the right, which contains a *gusulhana* (the chapel), while on the left is the *imam's* office or *maktab* classroom.

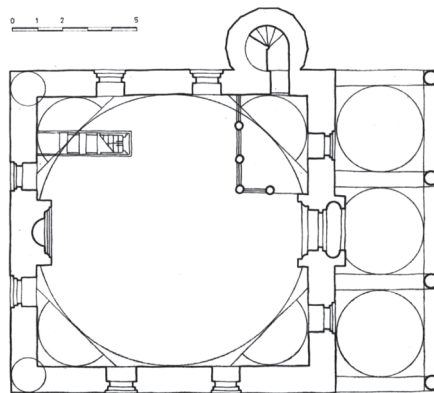


Figure 12. Hussein Pasha's Mosque, ground floor (State Archives of Montenegro, Cetinje)

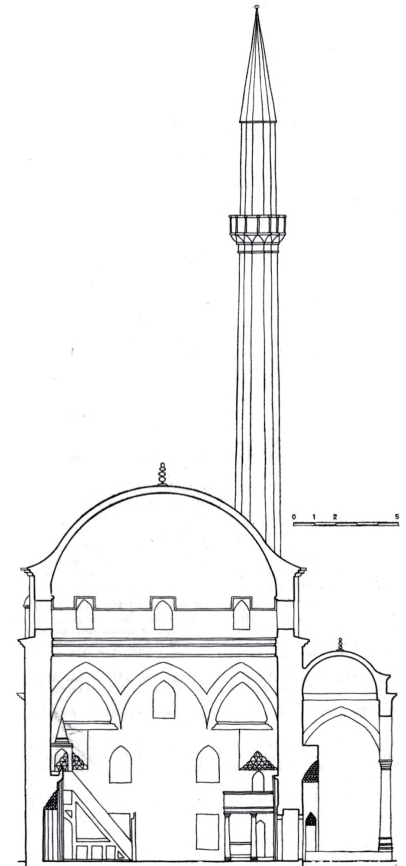


Figure 13. Hussein Pasha's Mosque, section (State Archives of Montenegro, Cetinje)

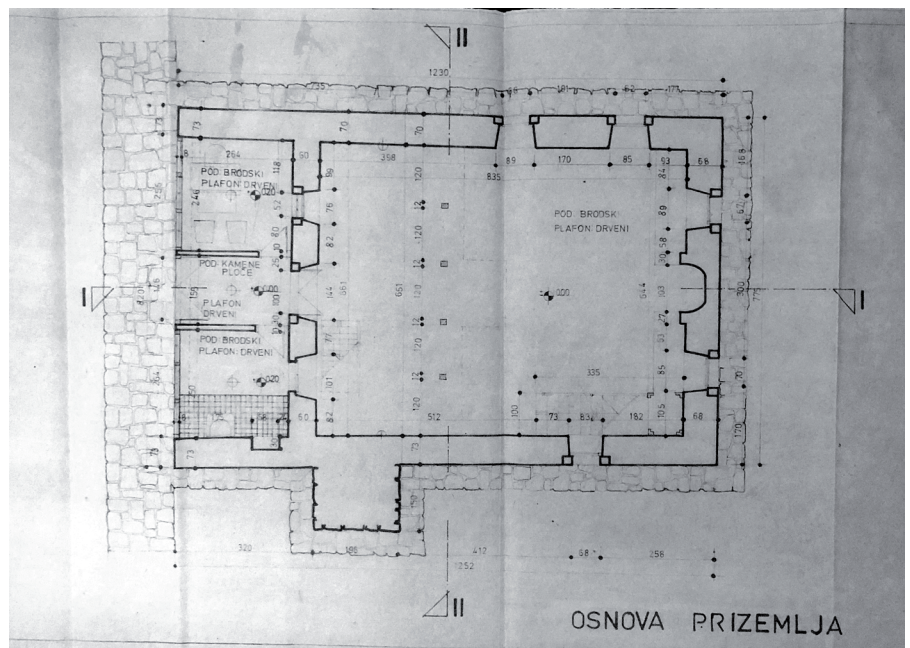


Figure 14. The ground floor of the mosque (The City Archive of Nikšić)

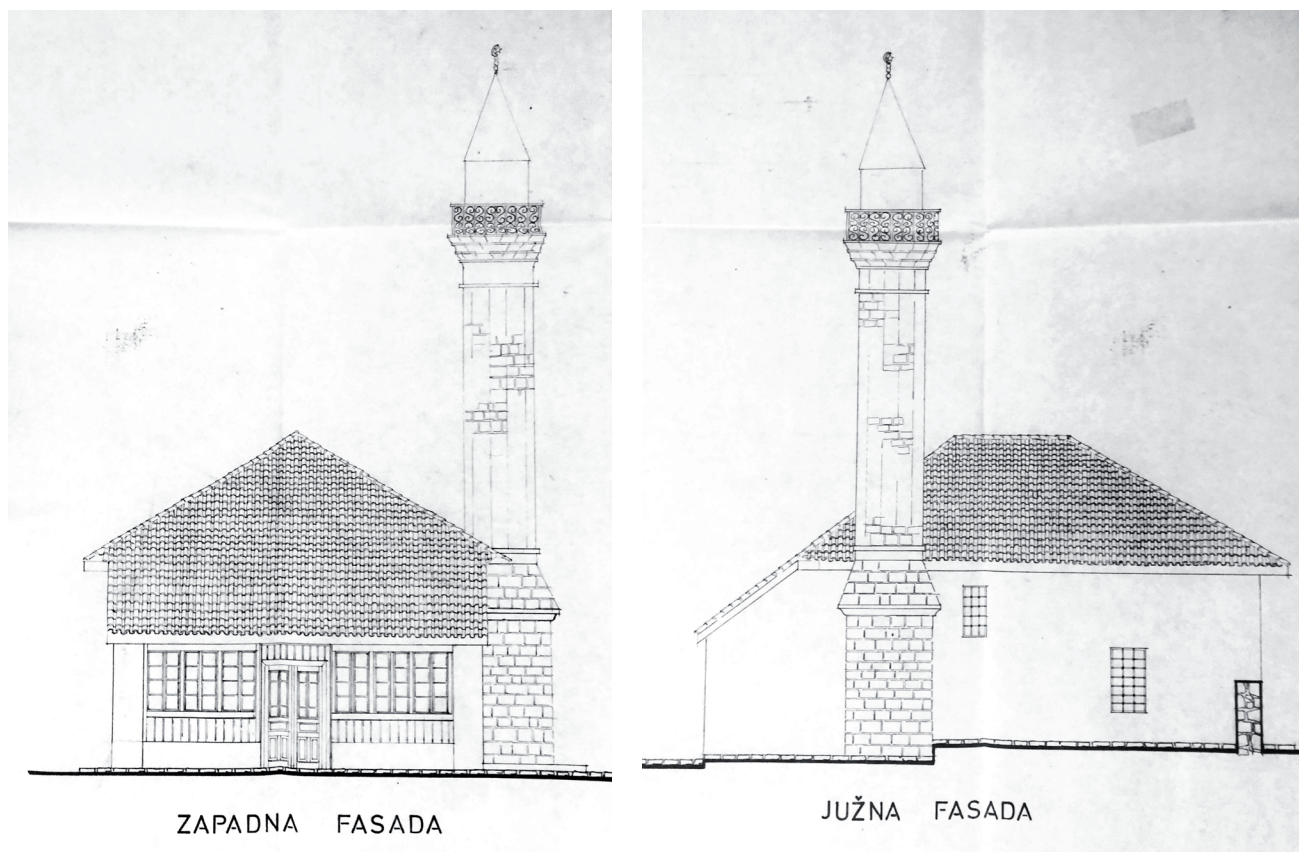


Figure 15. The west façade (The City Archive of Nikšić)

Figure 16. The south façade (The City Archive of Nikšić)

The prayer space in the mosque is illuminated by six windows on three sides. On the wall facing Mecca, there is a *mihrab* (niche) and a *minbar* (raised platform). A special spatial feature of the mosque is the *mahfili* gallery (the muezzin's platform), which spans the entire wall above the main entrance (Figure 17).

During the Ottoman period, Nikšić was characterised by the construction of numerous defensive towers. Of these, only the Leković Tower has been preserved, though it remains largely ruins (18). The method of construction and stonework style suggest it was constructed at the end of the 18th century or the beginning of the 19th century.

The Leković Tower is expertly built from finely dressed stone, resembling the craftsmanship of coastal master builders. The tower has only one door on the southern side, leading into a large, tall space with high-ceiling. From here, a narrow passage with wooden stairs provides access to the first floor. Narrow loopholes remain visible from the inner side of the building. The house partially lost its authentic features after extension work was carried out in 1950 (Figure 18).

18. There is a popular tradition that the Leković Tower in Kočani was built as long back as 1448. It is often mentioned in epic poetry as a meeting place.

19. The bridge of Grand Vizier Mehmed-pasha Sokolović on the River Drina in Višegrad, a work of the master builder Sinan (1577), represents the high point of the Ottoman classical style and Ottoman builders in general.

Ottoman builders distinguished themselves by their skill in constructing and forming bridge structures (Redžić, 1983). They knew the laws of statics, but they also had a particular sense for the proportion and form of bridges (19). One of the few remaining bridges from the Ottoman period in Nikšić is Hadži Ismail's Bridge over the River Zeta, located in Duklo. Built in 1807 by the merchant Hadži Ismail Lekić, the bridge is approximately 110 metres long and constructed from finely dressed stone cubes. It is characterised by irregular semicircular arch-openings (Figure 19). The site of the bridge was

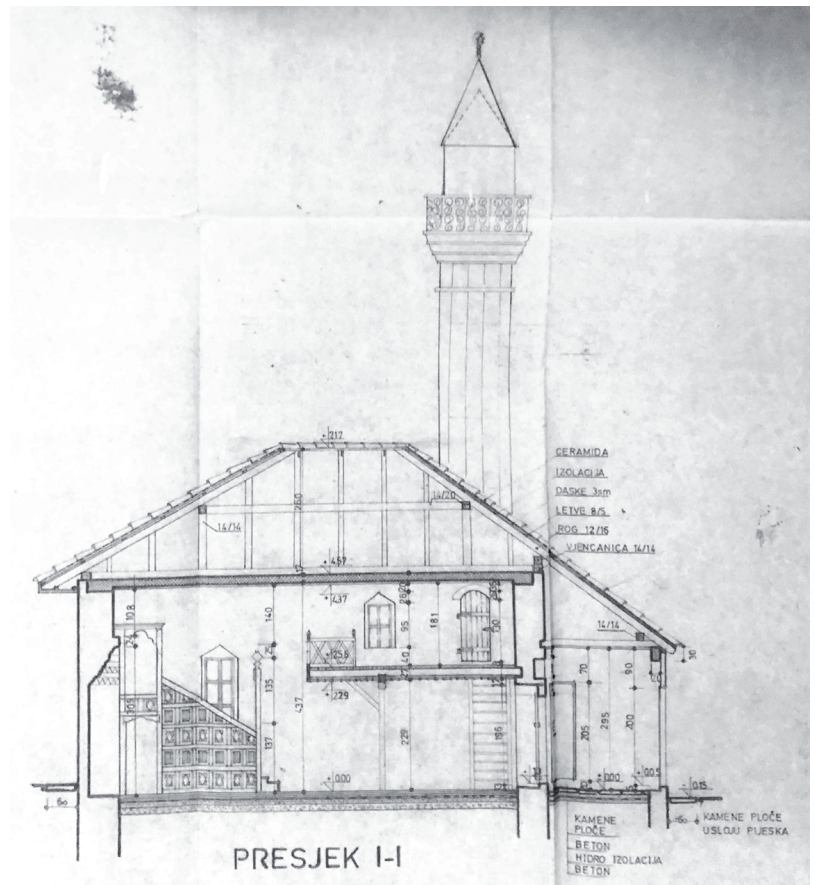


Figure 17. The section through the mosque
(The City Archive of Nikšić)



Figure 18. The Leković tower (private archive
of Mr Ognjen Bjelica)

strategically important, as it marked a crossing of trade routes and was accompanied by a defensive tower (Katanić and Gojković, 1961).



Figure 19. Haci Ismail Bridge on the Zeta River (photo by Milan Šapurić)

THE PROBLEM OF PRESERVING THE OTTOMAN HERITAGE IN THE AREA OF THE CITY OF NIKŠIĆ

The destruction and gradual disappearance of buildings of Ottoman architecture buildings is evident in many cities across Montenegro and beyond, especially in cities that were once under Ottoman control and where only a small Muslim population remains. The complex historical and political context of the Balkans, as well as the frequent changes in the demographic structure, complicates the understanding of the causes behind the neglect and degradation of this valuable cultural and architectural heritage. On one hand, the devastation of buildings from the Ottoman period can be attributed to the change of government in the Balkans during the 19th century (20). Kiel (1990, X) highlights the issue of “non-acceptance of Ottoman authority” in a significant part of the Western Balkans, leading to the rejection of Ottoman architecture and urbanism. He states that “*Ottoman architecture in the Balkans is the legacy of a yet undigested past*” (Kiel, 1990: IX). According to keil, the collective erasure of Ottoman history presents a challenge for studying its remnants—both in terms of urbanism and architecture—in this region. In this context, the city of Nikšić exemplifies how a change in government also brought about a shift in social, cultural, and architectural practices, reflected in the evolving organization and understanding of urban and architectural spaces.

On the other hand, the dynamic movements of migration in Nikšić played a crucial role (21). With the conquest of the city, the original population was expelled and replaced by new settlers, aiming to change the demographic structure. Due to the constant conflict between the Ottomans and the Nikšić tribe, the population in the city fluctuated, and the city itself, often reduced to ruins, remained unstable during the 16th and 17th centuries. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Ottomans began repopulating the city en masse (22) in order to transform it into a powerful stronghold for their battles in Herzegovina (23). After the Ottomans left, there was a mass exodus of Muslims (24), and the abandoned city of Nikšić was resettled by

20. The socio-political context in Yugoslavia after the “liberation from the Turks” is connected to the covert negation of art brought by the Ottomans. According to this logic and the practice of official science in the former Yugoslavia, there existed pretensions that, along with the Ottomans, their art would also leave these lands (Redžić, 1983: 10)

21. Jovan Cvijić believed that Nikšić, from the aspect of the population’s migration movements, was the most interesting point of the Balkans, calling it “a still which has been constantly bubbling away for the last 10 centuries” (Cvijić, 1925).

22. At the end of the Ottoman rule, Nikšić had a population of around 2,500 (Ivanović, 1977,48).

23. Before its conquest by the Montenegrins, Nikšić belonged to the Sanjak of Herzegovina, which was an integral part of the Vilayet of Bosnia.

24. There could have been various reasons for their emigration: religious intolerance and economic factors (the loss of feudal incomes from the serfs).

25. Of the 410 Muslim homes in Nikšić, the number during Ottoman rule, only 19 remained in 1882 (Ivanović, 1977,48). Many families moved to Turkey, as well as to Albania, Herzegovina and Bosnia.

people from remote mountain villages and other regions of Montenegro (25). The newly arrived population brought different habits and customs, which were manifested in a distinct architectural concept that could not be linked to the Ottoman heritage.

CONCLUSION

There are very few researchers who have focused on the subject of Ottoman architecture in Nikšić, even though the 400-year period under Ottoman rule left a deep imprint on the city. This overview of Ottoman architectural remnants in Nikšić contributes to the formation of a database for further research on this significant subject. It is evident that only a very small number of structures from that period have survived, and these are examples of rather modest architecture. Even so, these buildings are witnesses to a particular era, and their preservation and reconstruction should be a priority. Among the Ottoman structures, the following are under state protection: the city ramparts, Hadži Ismail's Mosque, Hadži Ismail's Bridge and the Leković Tower. Aside from the ramparts, which were "spirited away" and slowly disappeared as their stones were used for new constructions after the Ottomans left, the Authority for the Protection of Cultural Heritage has managed to preserve these buildings from further damage, but still, adequate steps have not yet been taken to completely restore them. In addition to these structures, this paper also lists other traces that should be a part of the revalorisation process for cultural heritage and nomination for the status of immovable cultural heritage of Montenegro, ensuring that they are adequately rebuilt and preserved for future generations.

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Alındı: 24.09.2023; Son Metin: 04.09.2024

Anahtar Sözcükler: Karadağ; Nikšić; kale; cami; surlar

KARADAĞ'IN NIKŠIĆ KENTİNDE OSMANLI MİMARİSİ KALINTILARI

Bir kentin bugününü ve oluşunu daha iyi anlayıp anlatabilmek için, koşulların ve eldeki verilerin elverdiği ölçüde geçmişini araştırmak, gelişiminin tüm aşamalarını analiz etmek gerekir. Nikšić şehrinin geçmişini inceleyerek, zengin ve çoğu zaman fırtınalı tarihi koşulların, dönemsel yerleşim ve inşaatlara, ardından yer değiştirme ve yıkımlara yansıyan bu şehrin dinamik gelişimini etkilediği sonucuna varılabilir. Bu süreçlere farklı tarihsel evrelerde şehrin adının değişmesi de eşlik etmiştir: Anderba (Anderva), Anagastum, Onogošt ve bugünkü Nikšić adı.

Dönemlendirme bağlamında Nikšić'in tarihi birkaç döneme ayrılabilir: İlirya, Roma, Gotik, Slav, Osmanlı, Osmanlıların ayrılışından sonraki dönem ve şehrin modern gelişimi. Bu tarihi aşamaların her biri, şehrin tasarımı ve işleyişine dair farklı mimari ve kentsel anlayışlar kazandırmıştır. Sonuçta çok katmanlı mekansal ve kültürel yapıya sahip bir şehir ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Osmanlı hakimiyeti dönemi mimari ve şehircilik açısından en az araştırılan dönemdir. Bunun nedeni ise Osmanlı Nikšić'i tam anlamıyla anlayabilmek adına bu döneme ait binaların çoğunun neredeyse hiç korunmamış olmasıdır. Yalnızca birkaç bina korunmuştur dolayısıyla mekansal tasarımın tipolojisi, inşaat yöntemi, mimari ve kentsel desenlerinin tam bir resmini oluşturmanın zor olmaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, geriye kalan ve bir kısmı harap duruma gelen yapıların, bir dönemin önemli anıtları olarak değerlendirilmesi ve vatandaşların hafızasında korunması amacıyla ilk kez ortaya konulmasıdır. Karadağ'ın ikinci büyük şehri olan Nikšić şehrinin doğuşunun daha net anlaşılması amacıyla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun kültürel mirası ilk kez mimari başarılar şeklinde verilen bu çalışmada sunulmaktadır.

Yazılı kaynaklara, çok nadir çizim ve fotoğraflara dayanarak Osmanlı Nikšić'in neye benzediğine ve o dönemin mimarisinin ne gibi özelliklere sahip olduğuna dair bir resim vermek mümkündür.

REMAINS OF OTTOMAN ARCHITECTURE IN THE CITY OF NIKŠIĆ IN MONTENEGRO

In order to understand the present-day situation and genesis of a city, it is necessary to research its past and analyse all stages of its development, as much as the available conditions and facts allow. In studying the history of Nikšić, it can be concluded that its rich and often turbulent historical circumstances led to dynamic development, reflected in periods of settlement and construction, followed by depopulation and destruction. These changes were also accompanied by shifts in the city's name during various historical phases: Anderba (Anderva), Anagastum, Onogošt and, today, Nikšić.

Nikšić's history can be divided into distinct periods, each marked by significant cultural and political transitions: the Illyrian, Roman, Gothic, Slavic, Ottoman, and post-Ottoman eras, followed by the city's modern development. Each of these stages contributed different architectural and urban understandings, shaping the city's multi-layered spatial and cultural structure.

The period of Ottoman rule, in terms of architecture and urbanism, is the least researched. This is due to the fact that most buildings from this period have been almost completely lost, preventing a complete insight into Ottoman Nikšić. Only a few buildings have survived, making it difficult to form a full picture of the city's architectural typology, construction methods, and urban planning patterns.

The objective of this paper is to present the remaining structures, some of which are in ruins, for the first time, in order for them to be valorised and preserved in the public consciousness as important monuments of that era. For the first time, the cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire, particularly its architectural achievements, is presented in this paper to offer a clearer understanding of the genesis of Nikšić, the second largest city in Montenegro. Based on written sources, very rare drawings, and photographs, it is possible to provide a rough idea of the appearance of Ottoman Nikšić and the characteristics of its architecture during that period.

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