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ICBE 2026

MAY 08th-09th, 2026
POLIS University, Tiranë

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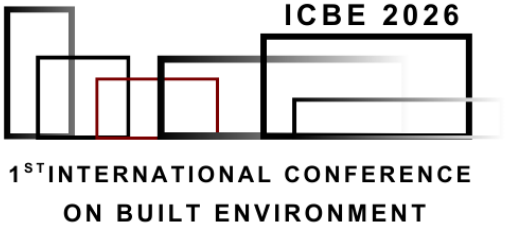
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1st International Conference on Built Environment

ICBE 2026

Conference Theme and Rationale

The 1st International Conference on Built Environment (ICBE 2026) was conceived as an international and interdisciplinary forum for advancing knowledge, critical discussion, and innovation across architecture, urban planning, engineering, construction, materials, design, and the wider built environment. Organized by POLIS University in collaboration with the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation in Albania (AKKSHI), the Academy of Sciences of Albania and the University of Ferrara in Italy, the conference brought together academics, researchers, practitioners, students, and industry representatives to exchange research findings, professional experience, and emerging perspectives on the transformation of contemporary cities and territories.

The conference theme reflected the increasingly complex challenges shaping the built environment, with particular attention to sustainability, resilience, technological innovation, heritage preservation, and socially responsive design. Contributions addressed sustainable architecture and green building, innovative construction technologies and materials, climate-responsive and energy-efficient design, disaster risk reduction, circular approaches to construction, and the integration of renewable energy. Equal emphasis was placed on digital transformation through Building Information Modeling, Geographic Information Systems, artificial intelligence, data analytics, automated solutions, digital fabrication, and advanced manufacturing.

ICBE 2026 also recognized that the future of the built environment cannot be approached through technological innovation alone. Urban transformation, cultural heritage, adaptive reuse, inclusive design, ecological thinking, art, and interdisciplinary research were therefore integral to the conference rationale. The scientific sessions examined topics ranging from seismic resilience, geotechnical engineering, and structural safety to urban fragmentation, public space, heritage conservation, adaptive environments, and new relationships between human and non-human systems.

Through keynote lectures, scientific presentations, case studies, and interdisciplinary debate, the conference encouraged connections between research and practice while promoting approaches capable of responding to environmental, social, cultural, and technological change. The breadth of contributions demonstrated the value of bringing engineering, architecture, urbanism, design, heritage, and emerging technologies into a shared academic framework for more resilient, sustainable, adaptive, and human-centered environments.

Held on 8-9 May 2026 at POLIS University in Tirana, with in-person and online participation, ICBE 2026 welcomed guest speakers and participants from Albanian and international universities, research institutions, professional organizations, and industry. Its sessions established a platform for presenting current research, exchanging expertise, strengthening meaningful collaboration, and identifying future directions for the built environment.

The event

The **1st International Conference on Built Environment (ICBE 2026)** is an interdisciplinary academic and professional forum dedicated to exploring contemporary challenges, emerging research, and innovative approaches shaping the future of the built environment. Bringing together researchers, academics, architects, engineers, urban planners, designers, practitioners, and industry professionals, the conference promotes the exchange of knowledge and encourages collaboration across traditionally interconnected disciplines. Its thematic scope encompasses sustainable and resilient construction, technological innovation, advanced building materials, urban transformation, cultural heritage, and interdisciplinary design approaches. Particular attention is given to the growing role of digital technologies, data-driven methodologies, intelligent design processes, and advanced analytical tools in supporting more informed and responsive approaches to architecture, engineering, and urban development. At the same time, ICBE 2026 recognizes the importance of environmental responsibility, cultural identity, social needs, and human-centered design in shaping contemporary cities and territories. Through keynote lectures, scientific sessions, case studies, and interdisciplinary exchange, the conference provides a platform for presenting current research, discussing professional experiences, and developing new perspectives capable of contributing to **safer, more sustainable, adaptive, inclusive, and resilient built environments**.

Objectives

- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration among researchers, academics, practitioners, and professionals in architecture, engineering, urban planning, construction, design, heritage, and related fields of the built environment.
- Advance the use of digital technologies and innovative methodologies, including BIM, GIS, artificial intelligence, data analytics, digital fabrication, and parametric approaches, in research and professional practice.
- Encourage sustainable, resilient, and climate-responsive approaches to architecture, construction, and urban development through innovative materials, energy-efficient strategies, and environmentally responsible design.
- Address contemporary challenges affecting cities, buildings, and infrastructure through scientific research, applied case studies, evidence-based approaches, and innovative design solutions.
- Promote the conservation, transformation, and adaptive reuse of cultural heritage, balancing cultural identity, contemporary needs, structural safety, and responsible urban development.
- Support human-centered and socially responsive urban transformation, considering public space, mobility, ecological systems, community needs, and the wider social and economic impacts of the built environment.
- Provide a platform for knowledge exchange and emerging research, enabling scholars, young researchers, professionals, and students to present innovative ideas, strengthen international collaboration, and contribute to future directions in the built environment.

Main Conference Themes

- Sustainable architecture and green building practices.
- Innovations in construction technologies and materials.
- Heritage preservation and adaptive reuse in the built environment.
- Digital tools and smart technologies in architecture and construction (e.g., BIM, GIS).
- Climate-responsive and energy-efficient design.
- Disaster risk reduction and resilience in the built environment.
- Circular economy approaches in construction and material usage.
- Integration of AI and data analytics in building design.
- Acoustic and thermal performance in building design.
- Renewable energy integration in building systems.
- Advanced manufacturing techniques in construction, such as 3D printing.
- Innovations in construction technologies and materials.
- Heritage preservation and adaptive reuse in the built environment.
- Disaster risk reduction and resilience in the built environment.
- Digital tools and smart technologies in architecture and construction.
- Advanced manufacturing techniques in construction.
- Geotechnical Engineering for Sustainable Development.
- Cartography and Geographic Information System.
- Computer Automated Solutions for Built Environment.
- Reliability in Civil Engineering.
- Urban planning strategies for resilient cities.
- Climate-responsive and energy-efficient design.
- Regulatory frameworks and policies impacting construction and urban development.
- Design in the Era of Anthropocene (Rethinking the Relation between Human and Non-Human Species)
- Speculative Design (with Attention to “Discursive” and “Critical” Design)
- Design and Cross-Disciplinarity (with Emphasis on Processes rather than Design Outputs)
- Inclusive Design
- Art and Urban Regeneration (Focus on Participatory, Collaborative, and Research-Based Practice)
- Relational Art and Architecture
- Monuments and ‘Anti-Monuments’ (Particular Attention to the Process of Designing and Building the City)

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The conference is structured around six thematic sessions, each addressing a specific area of research and practice within the built environment.
Each session is coordinated by experts in the relevant disciplinary field and is open to professors, researchers, PhD candidates, and other scholars and professionals contributing to the conference themes.

SESSION I
Urban Planning and Societal Impact

Chair: Dr. Gent Avdija

This session examines the relationship between urban transformation, spatial development, and their social implications within contemporary cities. Contributions address rapid urbanization, urban fragmentation, the transformation and loss of public space, informal and spontaneous development, and the challenges associated with balancing growth and modernization with human-scale urban environments. Particular attention is given to the evolving conditions of Albanian cities and to planning approaches capable of supporting more inclusive, sustainable, socially responsive, and livable urban environments.

SESSION II
Sustainable Materials, Resilient Construction & Smart Design

Chair: Dr. Endri Duro

This session explores innovative approaches to sustainable construction, resilient structural systems, and environmentally responsive design. Particular attention is given to sustainable materials, energy-efficient and climate-responsive strategies, prefabricated and lightweight construction technologies, and human-centered approaches to structural and architectural design. The session investigates how material innovation, technological development, and responsible design practices can contribute to safer, more efficient, adaptable, and environmentally sustainable built environments.

SESSION III
Technological Advancements and Seismic Design for Resilient Places

Chairs: Dr. Seyyed Behrad Emadi & Dr. Ornela Şen

This session examines the role of technological innovation and advanced engineering methodologies in developing safer, more resilient, and adaptable built environments. Contributions address seismic hazard and risk assessment, digital fabrication, parametric and computational approaches, transformations of building envelopes and prefabricated housing systems, and emerging concepts for future urban mobility. The session highlights how the integration of engineering knowledge, digital technologies, and resilience-oriented design can strengthen the capacity of buildings, infrastructure, and urban environments to respond to contemporary and future challenges.

SESSION IV

Cultural Heritage

Chairs: Dr. Nikolla Vesho & Dr. Marsela Demaj

This session addresses the preservation, interpretation, and transformation of cultural heritage within contemporary architectural and urban contexts. Contributions explore conservation strategies for historic buildings and sacred architecture, seismic assessment and strengthening of heritage structures, adaptive reuse, and the social implications of urban regeneration and heritage loss. Particular emphasis is placed on achieving a responsible balance between conservation ethics, cultural identity, structural safety, and the evolving functional requirements of historic buildings and urban environments.

SESSION V

Spaces of Connection: Art and Design for an Interspecies and Interdisciplinary Environment

Chair: Dr. Francesco Scasciamacchia

This session explores the intersections of art, architecture, design, technology, and the built environment through interdisciplinary and experimental perspectives. It investigates changing relationships between human and non-human systems, spatial perception, adaptive reuse, post-industrial landscapes, urban representation, digital heritage, and environmentally and socially engaged design practices. Through critical, speculative, participatory, and research-based approaches, the session examines how art and design can generate new forms of connection, reinterpret existing environments, and contribute to emerging cultural and spatial narratives within contemporary cities.

SESSION VI

Next-Generation Pioneers of the Built Environment

Chair: Dr. Flogerta Krosi

This session provides a dedicated platform for emerging researchers and students to present innovative, experimental, and forward-looking approaches to the built environment. Contributions span architecture, engineering, urban planning, environmental resilience, design, and related creative disciplines, reflecting the interdisciplinary character of a new generation of researchers and practitioners. Through projects addressing topics such as bioclimatic design, flood-risk management, structural technologies, architecture-inspired design, and critical interpretations of objects and social space, the session encourages critical inquiry, experimentation, and new perspectives on the future of the built environment.

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Cultural Heritage

Architectural and urban heritage: Historic buildings / Sacred architecture / Historic urban environments / Cultural identity.

Conservation and preservation: Heritage conservation strategies / Conservation ethics / Preservation of historic structures / Protection of architectural values.

Adaptive reuse and transformation: Adaptive reuse / Contemporary interventions in heritage / Functional transformation / Urban regeneration.

Heritage resilience and structural safety: Seismic strengthening / Structural assessment of historic buildings / Risk mitigation / Integration of conservation and structural performance.

Heritage and urban change: Urban renewal / Heritage loss and demolition / Social implications of transformation / Balance between preservation and development.

Preserving and Adapting Sacred Architecture:
A Case Study of the Jazak Monastery

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Abstract

This paper examines the preservation and transformation of Orthodox sacred architecture in the multicultural border region of Srem through the case study of the Jazak Monastery on Fruška Gora. Particular attention is given to the Old and the New Church, two buildings that fulfilled the same liturgical function while developing under different historical and political circumstances. For a certain period, both churches coexisted, reflecting distinct social, cultural, and architectural conditions. The research applies a case study approach supported by comparative and morphological analysis, operationalized through defined parameters: spatial organization, structural system, material use, stylistic articulation, and functional continuity. The findings indicate that the Old Church preserved a modest Serbian-Byzantine architectural expression, characterized by reduced scale and simplified structural form, while the New Church incorporated Baroque elements and reflected greater institutional and material capacity under later political conditions. The study demonstrates that continuity in sacred architecture is often achieved not through static preservation, but through adaptation, reinterpretation, and selective integration of new influences. These results contribute to broader discussions on conservation strategies for religious heritage in culturally layered regions.

Keywords: *comparative analysis, heritage, sacred architecture, architectural transformation, churches*

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the Jazak Monastery, one of the most important religious complexes on Fruška Gora (Medaković, 1990), with special attention to the Old and the New Church. These two buildings show how architecture in Srem changed over time under different social and cultural conditions. Srem has long been a region shaped by ethnic and religious diversity. This can be clearly seen in the way religious buildings were designed, used, and transformed. The Old and the New Church followed different paths of development, influenced by the context in which they existed. At the same time, they show how architecture can preserve Orthodox identity, but also reflect wider cultural interactions. Although both churches had the same religious purpose, they adapted differently to historical circumstances, community needs, and local conditions. The analysis looks at architectural, iconographic, and decorative elements, with particular focus on the iconostasis and frescoes. In this way, it becomes possible to see how traditional Serbian styles, such as the Morava and Raška schools, were either preserved or changed under the influence of Western European elements, especially Baroque. The development of the Jazak Monastery reflects the complex history of Srem, where Serbian Orthodox tradition intersected with Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and later Yugoslav influences. Through this layered context, the paper points to processes of preservation, adaptation, and transformation in Orthodox sacred architecture.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research has looked at Orthodox monasteries and churches in Srem from different perspectives, including architectural, historical, and social aspects. Utvić (1990) focuses mainly on the Old Jazak Monastery, while the New Church is mentioned only briefly. This shows that there is still a need for a more complete analysis that includes both buildings. Medaković (1990) places emphasis on the stylistic and aesthetic qualities of monastic complexes. However, his approach is mostly descriptive and focused on visual and structural features. Davidov (1990) documents the destruction of Serbian cultural heritage during the Second World War but does not connect material losses with stylistic transformations, whereas Fajfrić (1997) emphasizes restoration interventions within the context of social change. An analysis of the existing studies shows that there is no integrated approach connecting architectural, decorative, and stylistic aspects. Many interpretations also overlook how the presence of different ethnic and religious communities shapes both the function and the appearance of churches. By using archival documents, cadastral records, and analyses of plans and photographs, it is possible to follow these changes more clearly and relate them to the

multicultural context of Srem. This research is based on a comparative approach. It combines architectural analysis, archival research, and historical context in order to better understand how Orthodox churches in Srem have changed over time.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts an interdisciplinary methodological framework that integrates architectural analysis, historical interpretation, and cultural studies in order to examine the transformation of Orthodox sacred architecture within the multicultural context of Srem. The primary research strategy is a qualitative case study focused on the Jazak Monastery, with particular emphasis on the comparative analysis of the Old and the New Church.

The comparative method is operationalized through a set of clearly defined analytical parameters, including: spatial organization (plan typology and volumetric composition), structural system (load-bearing principles and construction techniques), materiality (use of stone, brick, wood, and surface treatment), stylistic articulation (Byzantine, Morava, Raška, and Baroque elements), and functional continuity (liturgical use and adaptation over time).

Morphological analysis is applied to examine the formal and spatial evolution of the two churches, with attention to changes in architectural language and compositional hierarchy. This approach allows for the identification of both continuity and transformation within the built form.

Archival research, historical documentation, and visual analysis of plans, drawings, and photographic material complement the architectural reading, enabling a contextual understanding of socio-political and cultural influences on construction, modification, and preservation processes.

By combining these methods, the study moves beyond descriptive historical narration and establishes a structured analytical framework for interpreting sacred architecture as a dynamic system shaped by continuous interaction between material form, cultural identity, and historical change. These parameters are consistently applied in the Results and Discussion section to enable a structured comparison between the two churches.

This study contributes to the field by demonstrating how architectural analysis based on defined parameters can clarify the relationship between cultural context and material transformation in sacred heritage.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the results according to the previously defined analytical parameters: spatial organization, structural system, material use, stylistic articulation, and functional continuity.

4.1 Geographical position and historical background

4.1.1 Geographical and historical background

Srem is located in the northern part of Serbia, within the province of Vojvodina, bounded by the Danube River to the north and the Sava River to the south, forming a borderland region that historically connected Eastern and Western cultural influences (Đerčan, Bjelajac, Bubalo-Živković, Lukić, Gatarić, & Pogrmić, 2024) as presented in Figure 1. The geographical position of Srem directly influenced the formation, function, and transformation of sacral architecture, as the region historically operated as a frontier zone where political, religious, and cultural systems intersected. The Hungarian authorities strengthened control over their southern borders by settling Serbs in the area and granting privileges to Serbian nobility and despots, with Despot Đurađ Branković playing an important role in organizing the local community and preserving Orthodox identity (Davidov, 1990). The establishment of such a spiritual complex reflects efforts to preserve cultural identity. These efforts also influenced decisions related to location, structural design, and functional organization. After the Ottoman attacks on Hungary and the destruction of several fortifications in Srem, significant privileges and estates were granted to the Serbian population in the region (Davidov, 1990). This shift improved the economic position of the Serbian nobility and enabled the construction of monasteries as a way to preserve faith and tradition along the border with the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, it highlights the contrast between a wartime environment and the development of spiritual institutions. The period between 1526 and 1699, when Srem was under Ottoman rule, is recorded in Ottoman defters as a time marked by complex processes of multicultural coexistence (Utvić, 1990).

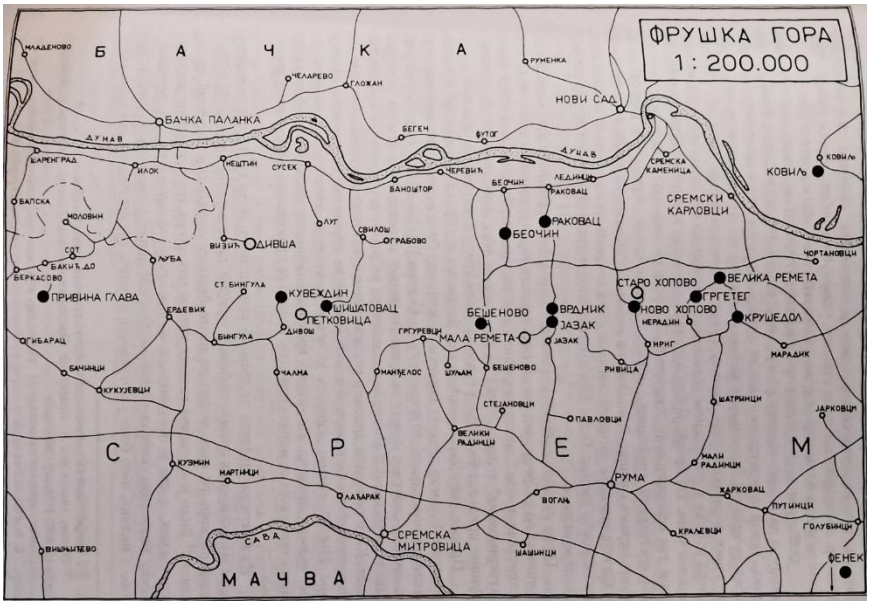


Figure 1. Map of Srem with marked monastery churches
Source: Fajfrić, 1997, p. 41.

4.1.2 Architectural Characteristics of the Surrounding Context

The analysis of late medieval structures in the Fruška Gora region shows that, at the time the monastery was founded, its architecture was strongly influenced by the Morava School (Kovačević & Kovačević, 2003). This indicates a continuous process of adaptation in which Byzantine architectural models were locally reinterpreted through regional building traditions. Morava architecture is based on a simplified cross-in-square plan, but its facades are enriched with stone and ceramic decoration, which gives it a distinctive character typical of late medieval Serbia (Maltseva, 2022). This combination of structural simplicity and decorative complexity reflects a dual architectural logic, where construction pragmatics coexist with symbolic representation.

These features show how local builders expressed cultural identity and religious ideas through architectural details. By the mid-eighteenth century, Serbian artists were producing works that connected Serbian art with broader European currents (Lesek, 2001). In architecture, this is visible in the combination of Serbian-Byzantine elements and Western European styles, forming a layered and complex visual language shaped by historical and cultural interaction. The development of Serbian Orthodox church architecture from the 12th to the 18th century shows continuity of traditional styles, such as the Raška and Morava schools, while also adapting to changing cultural and political conditions (Paroškin, 2015). Orthodox church architecture brings together spiritual, functional, and artistic aspects, linking religious meaning with structural design (Ristić, 2017). In this context, the monastery can be seen as a physical reflection of how geographical and historical changes shaped Orthodox sacred spaces.

4.2 Demographic changes and the ethnic structure of Srem

Prior to the arrival of the Branković dynasty, most of the population was Hungarian; however, at the beginning of the fifteenth century a demographic shift occurred, resulting in the Orthodox population becoming predominant (Fajfrić, 1997). The coexistence of shifting ethnic demographics and stable political control created a complex environment in which religious architecture functioned as a marker of identity and continuity. At the same time, institutions such as the Jazak Monastery had to function within this multicultural and politically layered environment. Migration processes triggered by Ottoman expansion (Utvić, 1990). contributed to the reconfiguration of religious institutions, including the adaptation of monastic architecture to new socio-political conditions. Srem became a region of strategic importance with a complex demographic structure, where different ethnic and religious communities lived together under uncertain political conditions. In this context, architectural decisions related to the Jazak Monastery can be seen as responses to the need to preserve identity. They also show how demographic and religious factors shaped the organization and function of sacral spaces.

4.3 The Old Church of Jazak Monastery

4.3.1 Foundation and Motives for Construction

The first known mention of Jazak Monastery appears in 1522 in a manuscript transcribed by

the monk Lavrentije (Milanović Jović & Momirović, 1990), establishing the temporal framework of its origin in the sixteenth century. The size of the tax (harach) paid by the monastery indicates the existence of substantial estates and considerable economic capacity (Fajfrić, 1997). Its economic strength, once recognized by the Hungarian authorities, was later reduced under Ottoman pressure, while the monastery retained an important role in preserving faith and tradition between two opposing powers during wartime. According to tradition, the monastery was founded by Despot Jovan Branković and dedicated to the Presentation of the Most Holy Theotokos (Utvić, 1990). In the absence of direct historical sources, such traditions remain important because they provide a time framework that can be linked to the architectural features of the period.

4.3.2 Architectural and Stylistic Features

The reconstruction drawings allow for a formal architectural reading of the Old Church's spatial and structural organization as presented in Figure 2. Based on these, it can be inferred that the building had a cruciform plan with three apses and a single window on each. This plan typology confirms continuity with Byzantine-Serbian ecclesiastical architecture, indicating structural and spatial consistency with established sacral models. The church was relatively low and modest in size, constructed of stone with a vault covered by oak shingles (Utvić, 1990). Material simplicity reflects adaptive construction under constrained political and economic conditions, demonstrating a direct relationship between resource availability and architectural form. At the same time, the cruciform layout, building form and apses indicate the continuity of Serbian sacral tradition in present-day Hungary and a form of resistance to Ottoman-era assimilation and wartime pressures. Although simple in execution, the spatial organization and structural features point to established sacral models, adapted to local materials and building practices. This combination of modesty and symbolic meaning suggests a conscious effort to preserve cultural identity through architecture. Even today, remnants of frescoes can be observed in the ruins of the Old Church of Jazak Monastery (Utvić, 1990). Remaining fresco fragments indicate the existence of a developed interior iconographic program aligned with Serbian medieval painting traditions. Attesting to the monastery's once well-maintained material condition and its artistic sophistication can be observed from the exterior structure, the interior, adorned with frescoes, reflects the Serbian medieval tradition of mural painting.

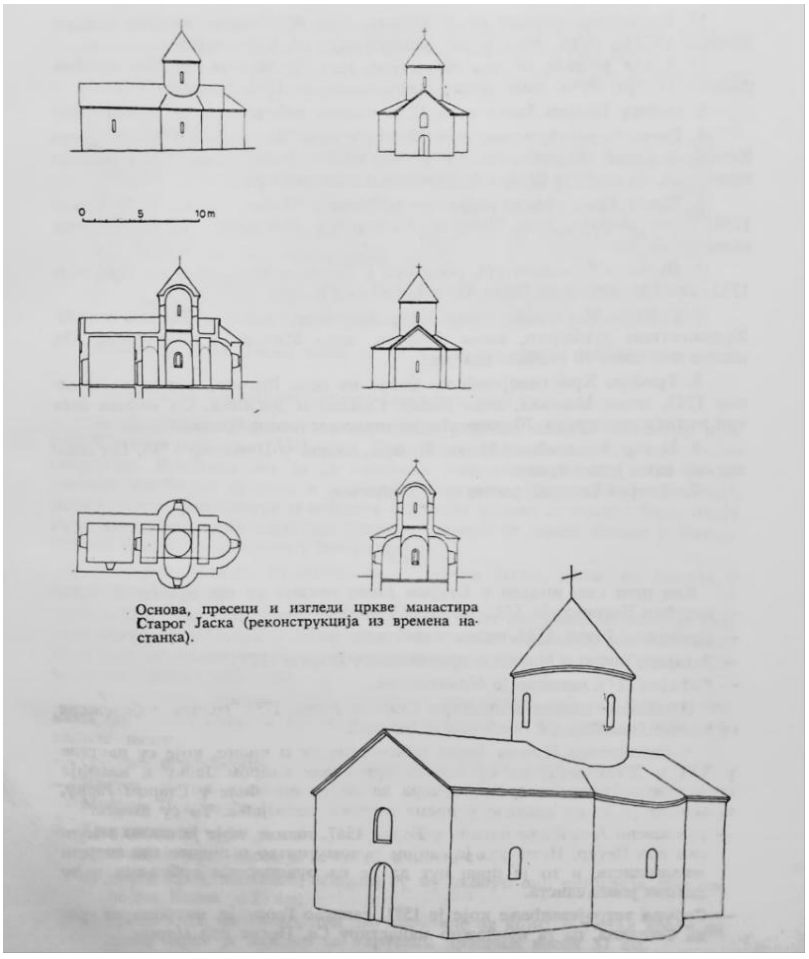


Figure 2. Drawing of the Old Church of Jazak Monastery
Source: Utvić, 1990, p. 15.

4.3.3 Symbolism and the Role in Preserving Religious Identity

In 1705, the relics of the last Serbian Emperor, Uroš, who was later canonized, were transferred to Jazak Monastery (Medaković, 1990). The relocation of relics significantly increased the symbolic and functional importance of the monastery within the regional Orthodox network. A nearby spring, believed to have healing properties as it flowed from beneath the place where Saint Emperor Uroš's relics were laid, played a key role in the cult's veneration, as even a healed visitor, who was Muslim, in 1710 expressed gratitude to the monastery with a silver gift (Utvić, 1990). This incident shows that the cult of Saint Emperor Uroš transcended confessional boundaries, attracting pilgrims from diverse backgrounds and establishing the monastery as both a religious and cultural center. The cult associated with the relics demonstrates the trans-confessional reach of sacred spaces in Srem.

4.3.4 The Regulation of Maria Theresa and the Suppression of the Monastery

The Old Jazak Monastery, converted into a female monastery without authorization and lacking estates, was officially abolished by Maria Theresa in 1774, with its property transferred to the new Jazak Monastery (Utvić, 1990). The Hungarian authorities' actions demonstrate

how state intervention controlled the status and functioning of religious institutions and also their economic capacities. These measures went beyond administration and influenced the architectural development of the monastery and its role as a spiritual and cultural center. The suppression of the Old Jazak Monastery reflects a broader strategy of combining religious control with economic regulation in Srem.

4.3.5 The Yugoslav Period – Destruction and Disappearance of the Old Monastery

The physical degradation of the Old Church resulted from a combination of neglect, material reuse, and socio-political discontinuity as presented in Figure 3. This sequence demonstrates how physical degradation, as a natural consequence of neglect and historical circumstances, acts as a critical factor in erasing the material testimony of cultural and spiritual tradition. Post-war ideological frameworks further limited restoration possibilities, contributing to the long-term material disappearance of the structure. This reflects the continuation of a strategy of control over Orthodox institutions, begun under Hungarian rule, as the earlier suppression of the monastery persisted through socio-political constraints during the communist period. The destruction of the Old Jazak Monastery was therefore not solely a result of age and neglect but also a consequence of long-term political and social influences that shaped the possibilities for the preservation and restoration of Orthodox sacred sites in the borderland, multicultural space of Srem.



Figure 3. Ruins of the Old Jazak Monastery Church, photograph from 1920
Source: Utvić, 1990, p. 19.

4.4 The New Church of Jazak Monastery

4.4.1 Construction context

As the Old Jazak Monastery increased in monastic membership and attracted a growing number of faithful largely due to the significance of Emperor Uroš's relics the need arose to construct a new monastery in proximity, and construction of the new monastery began in 1736 and was completed in 1741 (Utvić, 1990). The construction of the New Church was driven

by functional necessity and the need to accommodate increasing religious activity. The New Jazak Monastery is dedicated to the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and the relics of Emperor Uroš were transferred there (Medaković, 1990). This transfer demonstrates the intention to preserve the cult of the sainted emperor as a central element of the community's spiritual life. The chronological overlap between the decline of the Old Church and the construction of the New Church indicates institutional continuity rather than rupture.

4.4.2 Architectural and Stylistic Features

The New Church introduces more complex facade compositions and a combination of geometric and floral motifs, setting them apart within the Byzantine architectural heritage (Tadić & Gavrić, 2016). Intricate facade decoration and rich geometric motifs emphasize their visual and symbolic significance. This indicates that architectural articulation operates as a deliberate representational strategy, where decorative complexity reflects increased institutional and cultural capacity. The polychrome evident on the facade, blind arcades, cordon cornices, and playful rhythmic patterns represent clear hallmarks of the Serbian Byzantine tradition (Milanović Jović & Momirović, 1990). Furthermore, simultaneously illustrating how local craftsmen integrate international influences into their own aesthetic, preserving cultural continuity and adapting it to the specificities of their environment. Figure 4. Facade detail showing polychrome treatment, blind arcades, and rhythmic articulation of stone and brick, indicating the integration of Serbian-Byzantine and Baroque elements.



Figure 4. Detail of the facade Source: Medaković, 1990, p. 267

In addition to the Baroque tower, the church is characterized by its dome, evoking memory of the medieval period (Medaković, 1990). The findings show that the New Jazak Monastery represents a living example of the fusion of the Morava style with the Serbian-Byzantine architectural tradition. This is demonstrated throughout the monastery's facade, dome, and structural organization. However, the architecture of Jazak Monastery functions as a materialized indicator of historical, cultural, and political interactions in the region. The tower reinforcing the dominance of the Orthodox community through a Western European motif,

while creating a visual dialogue with the surrounding spaces as presented in Figure 5.

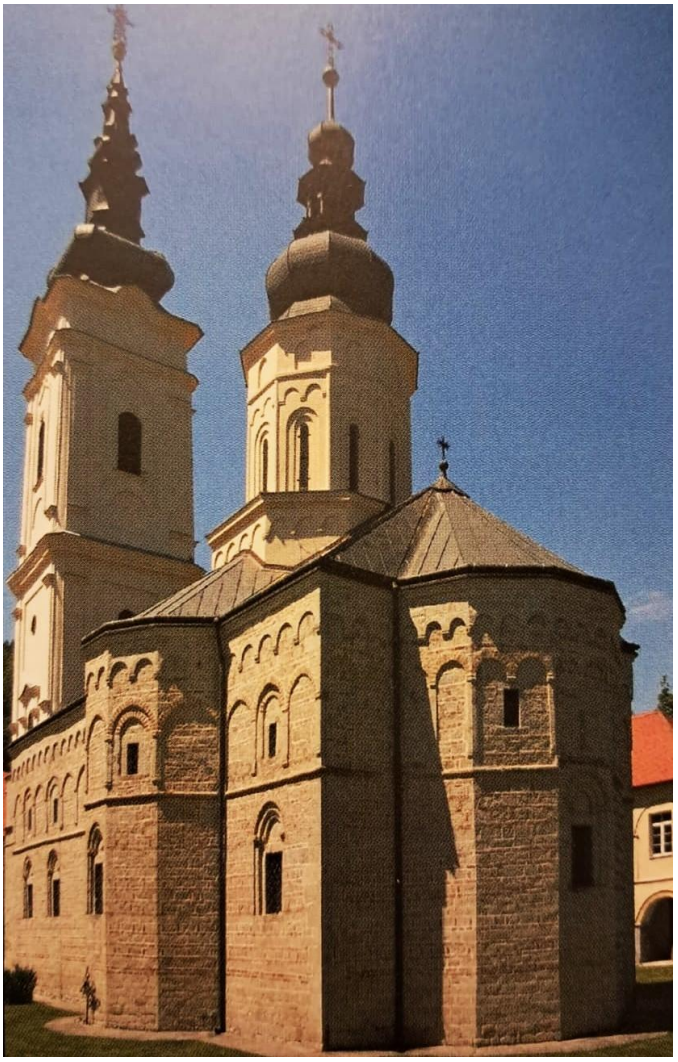


Figure 5. Church of the New Jazak Monastery
Source: Medaković, 1990, p. 268

4.4.3 Iconostasis, Frescoes, and Interior Design

Organizational changes within the Patriarchate and the arrival of teachers from Ukraine (Medaković, 1990) introduced new artistic influences into the interior design. The iconostasis represents a key example of cultural transfer, integrating Ukrainian Baroque decorative language into Orthodox liturgical space. Although the interior of the church was not painted (Milanović Jović & Momirović, 1990), the absence of wall painting shifts visual emphasis toward the iconostasis as the primary interior narrative structure. This creates a dialogue between traditional Serbian Orthodox aesthetics and Western European decorative elements. Each element, from the form of the iconostasis to the decorative motifs, carries both local and external influences. As a result, even in the absence of painted interiors, the presence of Ukrainian Baroque in the iconostasis demonstrates that minimal interventions can preserve the richness of visual and spiritual layers. The abrupt transition from traditional to Baroque

art is characterized by the use of vivid colors (Maricki Ostojić, 2007). Additional colorization enhances the visual emphasis of interior elements such as the iconostasis as shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Detail of the Iconostasis
Source: Medaković, 1990, p. 294

4.4.4 General restoration

Interwar restoration (Davidov, 1990), campaigns significantly upgraded the architectural condition of the monastery, reflecting renewed institutional investment in religious heritage. The focus on the renewal and preservation of architectural elements indicates how religion became a visible and affirmed factor of cultural and national identity due to the absence of Austro-Hungarian control. At the same time, this restoration reflects their responsiveness to the historical and cultural conditions.

4.4.5 Period of Destruction During World War II

The church of the Jazak Monastery survived physically intact, while the monastic residence suffered severe damage in a fire in 1942, and the roof was partially destroyed, including the corner between the southern and eastern sides (Davidov, 1990). World War II caused partial destruction of the monastic complex, while the church itself remained structurally intact, demonstrating differential vulnerability of architectural components. Figure 7 shows that the

church remained structurally stable. However, it was part of a larger monastic complex that suffered significant destruction. The lack of regular maintenance, together with the turbulent historical context, affected its condition. The Jazak church and its complex can be seen as a case study of how material and cultural heritage can be damaged, while still retaining their significance as spiritual and architectural testimonies, even in conditions of neglect. The damages disrupted physical fabric of the church and monastic buildings which lead to threatened their spiritual continuity and the cultural value of monastic assets (Davidov, 2006). This suggests the connection between architectural conservation and cultural memory. The findings show that the World War II further increased this vulnerability. Military operations and destruction affected the monastic residences and resources. As a result this shows how conflict can directly endanger the protection of heritage in the region.

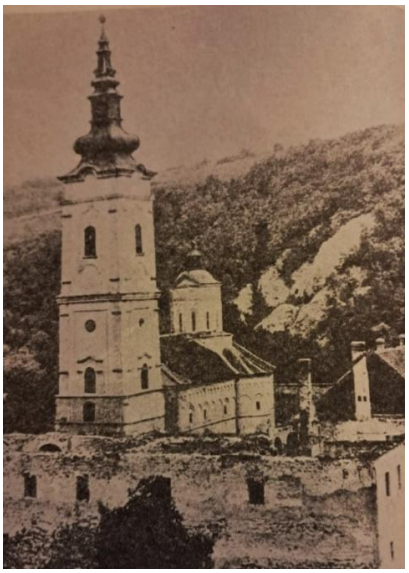


Figure 7. Jazak Monastery after World War II
Source: Davidov, 1990, p. 66.

4.4.6 Restoration and Contemporary

The restoration of the Jazak Monastery in the second half of the 20th century followed a prolonged period of neglect and destruction during World War II. Post-socialist restoration processes reflect renewed engagement with religious and cultural heritage as part of identity reconstruction. The relics of Emperor Uroš were severely desecrated in 1941 and temporarily transferred to Belgrade, only to be returned to the Jazak Monastery in 2001 (Medaković, 1990). The return of the relics simultaneously indicates both the continuity and fragility of cultural identity. The cult of the saint had, for centuries, brought together various ethnic and confessional communities. It functioned as a means of sustaining a shared spiritual and symbolic space in Srem. In contrast, its temporary removal shows how historical and political circumstances can disrupt this cultural continuity.

4.5 Architectural Continuity and Transformations

The Old Church demonstrates reduced architectural expression under constrained conditions, while the New Church reflects increased stylistic complexity and external influence.

(Milanović, 2008). The Old Church of Jazak, constructed under Ottoman administration and with limited resources, was conceived as a modest cruciform structure with three apses and without Baroque elements (Fajfrić, 1997). Its smaller scale and restrained architectural expression indicate not only continuity with Serbian-Byzantine tradition, but also clear limitations in terms of construction, decoration, and stylistic development imposed by unstable political conditions. The presence of fresco painting further reflects a reliance on traditional interior articulation typical of medieval Orthodox practice.

In contrast, the New Church of Jazak, built in the second half of the 18th century, represents a significantly larger and more architecturally developed structure. The introduction of a Baroque bell tower and a more articulated facade demonstrates a shift toward Western European influences and reflects improved material and political conditions (Medaković, 1990). Unlike the Old Church, the interior of the New Church is not characterized by fresco painting, but by a dominant iconostasis, indicating a transformation in the organization of visual and symbolic space.

This comparison shows that the two churches differ not only stylistically, but also in scale, architectural composition, and interior articulation. The Old Church reflects architectural reduction shaped by external constraints, while the New Church demonstrates expansion, adaptation, and selective integration of new stylistic elements. At the same time, both buildings retain the fundamental spatial and liturgical principles of Orthodox architecture, confirming that transformation occurs through modification rather than rupture.

4.6 Iconographic and Artistic Influences

The transition from fresco-based interior systems to iconostasis-centered visual hierarchy reflects a structural transformation in Orthodox visual theology. This shift reflects broader transformations in architectural and visual systems, directly linked to socio-political change. Such adaptation indicates a strategic modification of architectural and artistic language in response to the region's multiculturalism and political dynamics. At the same time it raising questions regarding the potential loss of the immediate spiritual experience that fresco painting had previously provided.

4.7 Multiculturalism as a Factor in Architectural Transformation

Multicultural conditions in Srem functioned as an active agent in shaping architectural transformation, rather than as a passive historical background. The architectural evolution of the monastery demonstrates continuous negotiation between Orthodox identity and external political frameworks. However, by decree of Maria Theresa, the Old Church was abolished, while the construction of the New Church, influenced by Hungarian political authority, led to the creation of a Baroque tower as a symbol of Western European influence. Nevertheless, the remainder of the building retained elements of the Serbian-Byzantine style, reflecting the community's effort to preserve local identity amid political and cultural transformation in the region. Comparative analysis shows that two buildings with the same function experienced very different outcomes, closely linked to attitudes toward Orthodox institutions. The Old Church was a result of administrative and political decisions, showing how external factors can shape the preservation of cultural heritage. In contrast, the New Church, as the result of a

compromise between local identity and state authority, demonstrates how architecture can be instrumentalized to maintain religious and cultural visibility. This contrast reveals the tension between tradition and imposed political structures. It also raises the question of whether architectural identity can be fully preserved under external pressure. Figure 8 presents a timeline showing the coexistence of the two monastic complexes and churches, located about one kilometer apart within the same ethnic environment, but treated differently by the multicultural community.

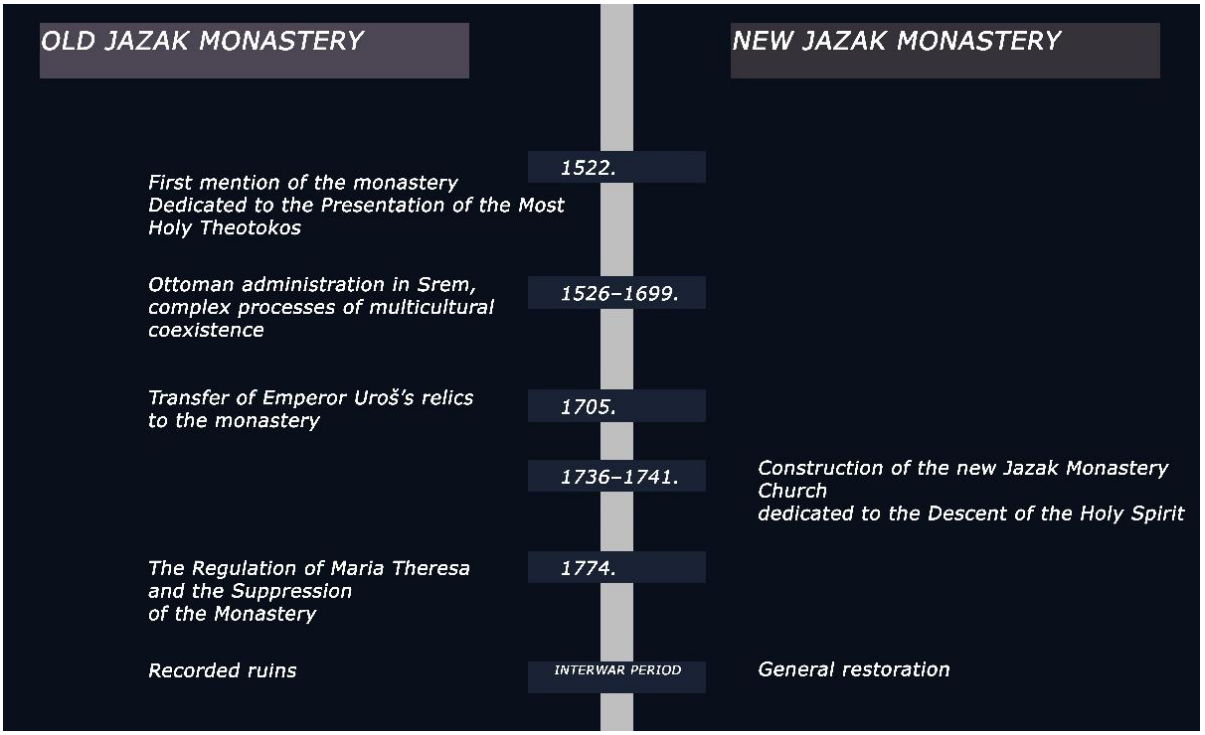


Figure 8. Comparative timeline of key historical events related to the Old and New Jazak Monastery. Source: Author

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results show that the Old and the New Church represent two distinct architectural responses to historical constraints and opportunities.

The Old Church is defined by reduced scale, a simple cruciform plan, the presence of fresco painting, and the absence of Baroque elements, reflecting limited material and political conditions.

In contrast, the New Church is larger in scale and introduces a Baroque bell tower, more complex facade articulation, and a shift from fresco-based interiors to an iconostasis-centered spatial organization, indicating increased institutional capacity and openness to external influences.

These differences demonstrate that architectural transformation operates through measurable changes in form, scale, and spatial articulation, rather than through symbolic interpretation alone.

At the same time, both churches retain core liturgical and spatial principles, confirming that adaptation in Orthodox architecture occurs through modification of existing models rather

than their replacement.

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