CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF OSIJEK-BARANJA COUNTY
Osićek – Baranja County, a primarily low-lying region of the North-East of Croatia, stretches along the south border of the Pannonian Plain. It is a region interwoven with geographical entities such as Baranja region and the regions encircling towns such as Đakovo, Valpovo and Donji Miholjac. The towns of Osićek, Našice, Đakovo, Beli Manastir, Donji Miholjac, Valpovo and the villages of Aljmaš, Erdut, Bizovac, Bilje, Darda, Kneževo, Batina, Topolje, etc. were founded in the distant past. The legacy of their rich history is a number of cultural monuments containing pearls of the European treasure-trove.

It is here that the rivers Drava, Karašica, Jošava, Vuka and the Danube created fertile soil for human life on which the Celts and later the Romans moved, leaving a powerful mark in the history of huge European regions and beyond. It is where the paths of exchange between the Thracians and Etruscans most likely led and it was across these rivers, along the marshlands and through Pannonian forests that many other nations were travelling from the North to the South and back. Not without reason, though; it is where the Danube Limes were situ-
Cultural and Historical Heritage of Osijek - Baranja County

Osijek – Tvrđa, Holy Trinity Square

and Bishop’s Palace are a reflection of the life of the Church in the region. Cultural heritage of many towns consists of many neo-classical and secession monuments side by side with modern architecture.

Each town and village in the Osijek – Baranja County has its own personality inherited with a particular historical era. A treasure-trove filled to its brim with cultural and historical values so becomes a part of everyone’s memory.

Osijek – Tvrđa, Holy Trinity Square

ated and where the Drava River flowed. Many towns and villages of the region witnessed to the subsequent historical events. Baroque buildings in Tvrđa bear witness to the intersection of lives of large military garrisons, state civil service, commercial and artisans’ class; many luxurious castles in Valpovo, Bilje, Knežev, Donji Miholjac, Našice are testimony to the practice of aristocratic families who took care of the land and the emergence of new economic practice; the Đakovo cathedral

Čakove – Castle

Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer

Đakovo – Bishop’s Palace and Cathedral
A long and turbulent history left many cultural and historical monuments in Osijek, especially those dating from the 18th and 19th century.

Although only partly preserved, Tvrda (the Citadel), a symmetrical construction built in the style of baroque, is one of the most important ancient town cores and urban entities in Croatia and beyond.

Monuments of the baroque Tvrda are grouped around the main square built in the quadrangular shape and dominated by a magnificent baroque Plague Statue – the Holy Trinity Column – erected in 1730. A large capital of the slender column represents the Holy Trinity with angels on clouds. Below is a pedestal with volutes on which protectors against the plague are situated. Four separate pedestals were added to the Plague Statue in 1784 with the statues of four saints (St. Sebastian, St. Rok, St. Rozalija and St. Catherine). It is one of the most appealing baroque buildings in Osijek.

The building in which the Museum of Slavonia is situated today was built in 1702 in the baroque style for the former town magistrate. Opposite of it is the town guard building dating back to 1709, facing the central square.
of Tvrđa with a range of arcades and its recognizable tower. At the northern side one can see the general headquarters (today’s Administration Building of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University and the Faculty of Agriculture), a building of huge dimensions with atlantes on the tall portal. There are dozens of other secular monuments in Tvrđa and the most important are the houses of

some aristocratic families, a line of army barracks with open rows of arcades, etc.

The old Franciscan monastery (with two wings – the eastern and southern – in a shape of the letter L) must be mentioned among sacral cultural monuments in Tvrđa. Its construction started in 1699 and it was completed in 1705. In the period from 1731 to 1733 a new wing of the monas-
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A large auxiliary churchyard was added east of the church, which actually became a new monastery completed in 1761 and connected to the eastern wing of the old monastery building by vaulted arches.

In the period from 1709 to 1732 the Franciscans built the baroque church of the Holy Cross, nicknamed the church of St. Anthony by the citizens of Osijek. The altar is situated in the east, the entrance in the west and its back part in the south. During construction it connected the corridor and organ loft with the monastery; the main altar of the Holy Cross (built in 1726) was moved away from the wall and the statue of Our Lady of Jud from the 15th century was erected on it. Many valuable altar paintings and other pieces of church furniture are kept in the church.

Parish Church of St. Michael the Archangel, the patron of the church, was situated in the west corner of the Juraj Križanić Square. This colossal building with a hall and two massive bell towers at the eastern front part is a representative example of the Austrian sacral baroque architecture in Slavonia. Thanks to its magnitude and highly valuable baroque objects, this longitudinal single-nave building with two side chapels on each side of the nave and a rounded sanctuary, dominates not only the main square but also the whole area of Tvrđa. Built in the style of late baroque characteristic of continental Croatia, missing only paintings on the interior walls, this church belongs to one of the most important sacral buildings in the Đakovo-Sirmium Diocese.

The Upper Town, built consistently and systematically in terms of the town planning, is a genuine historical treasure trove. Gradually acquiring all attributes of the town centre, in the second half of the 19th century the Upper Town became a representative part of the town. This statement is supported by its many squares and the position and appearance of its streets. In addition, many buildings built in the style of historicism and secession (Jugendstil) still attract attention.

One of the oldest sacral cultural and historical monuments is the Capuchin monastery built in 1710 and today's baroque church of St. Jacob, dating back to 1727. It has a simple facade without any ornaments. The interior of the church was decorated with representative oil paintings in the second half of the 18th and during the 19th century. The monumental altar palla built in the late baroque style of the Vienna Art Academy, showing the patron of the church, Apostle St. Jacob Senior in the battle with the Moors, is immensely valuable.

The centre of the Upper Town is dominated by the Parish Church

Vaulted arches
Our Lady of Osijek – Patron of the city

Franciscan Monastery and the Church of the Holy Cross

Cloister of the Franciscan monastery

The Capuchin Monastery and St. Jacob’s Church

The Church of the Holy Cross

Parish Church of St. Michael the Archangel

Interior of the Parish Church of St. Michael the Archangel
of St. Peter and Paul, with a brick facade. Its construction from 1894 to 1898 was supported by the then Bosnia-Đakovo-Sirmium bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer. Its bell-tower, conspicuous from all sides, is 90 meters tall. The interior of the church is divided into four galleries. Especially valuable among church treasures are frescos made by Mirko Rački. The parish church of St. Peter and Paul gave the central square (Ante Starčević Square) and Osijek as a whole its recognizable symbol – the town vertical and crown.

Among many buildings belonging to secular architecture in the Upper Town, especially prominent are the palace in which the seat of the then Virovitička county was situated, built in 1864 in the manner of classicism and which is used today as the seat of the Osijek-Baranja County Government; the building of the Croatian National Theatre built in 1866 in “pseudo-Moorish style” and the building of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, situated in the European Avenue. The Avenue boasts a whole array of public and privately owned buildings built in the period from 1904 to 1905,
Palace – the seat of the County Government

Secession buildings in European Avenue; several details
which make up the most beautiful row of secession buildings in Croatia. Among them are the main post office building and the Urania Cinema built in 1912.

The Lower Town of Osijek, built upon old foundations of the ancient town of Mursa, is mainly grouped around the main square. There are many valuable sacral and secular cultural and historical monuments. Among them is a baroque chapel of St. Rok.
built in 1744 during the great plague epidemic and the statue of Mary erected in 1754. The parish church of the Most Sacred Name of Mary, the most beautiful baroque church, was built in the period from 1733 to 1743. The former Jewish synagogue in Cvjetkova street, built in 1902, is a part of the Evangelical and Theological Faculty of Osijek. There are also many family houses built in the late baroque style in the second half of the 18th century, such as the houses of the Aksamović, Kragujević and other families.

In the most western part of Osijek, also known as Retfala, a single-storey castle of the count family Pejačević was built during the so-called Napoleonic period from 1796–1801 in the late baroque classicism, which was characteristic of the west and middle European castle architecture of that time. It belongs to the Legion of Mary Miraculous Medal today. West of the former gardens, there is a chapel-mausoleum built in a pavilion-style dedicated to the Pejačević family. Today it is a constituent part of the Retfala cemetery.
Bizovac

Bizovac is a charming Slavonian place, situated some twenty kilometres west of Osijek. Today it is well-known for its thermal spa water (and indoor and outdoor swimming pools) rather than its single-storey manor and the whole range of outbuildings owned by the counts of Prandau - Normann Ehrenfels, built in the first half of the 19th century. The single-storey castle is built in the style of historicism, shaped as a shallow letter “U” and furnished with idyllic windows trimmed with ornamented wooden frames.

Parish church of St. Matthew was built in 1802. It was extended and a sacristy was added in 1875. It is a simple classicistic single-nave building with a rounded sanctuary. A single-storey parish house was built in the second half of the 19th century.
Valpovo, the town on the Karašica River, is actually a town-museum. It developed from the medieval fortified town of Walpo, mentioned for the first time as early as the first half of the 15th century. Unlike most of medieval fortifications in Croatia, it has managed to stay preserved until the present day thanks to the Turks (Osmanli) who did not destroy it during their withdrawal in 1687.

In the 18th century the counts of the Hilleprand von Prandau family turned the former fortification into a castle with a tower on the front and spacious gardens were laid out around it. The northern part of the gardens (around the castle proper) was modelled after the English landscape gardens. The southern part of the gardens is in fact an autochthonous forest dominated by oak and linden trees.

The castle, today’s town museum, is one of the most important monuments of sacral architecture of the northern Croatia.

A funnel-shaped main square lies south-east of the old town, at the intersection of main roads. The northern part of the square is dominated by the parish church of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (built in 1733 in baroque manner and consecrated in 1737 after the interior of the church had been decorated) and a magnificent city hall built in the style of historicism.

The central part of the square was enclosed on one side by a late baroque single-storey hotel building and on the other by a late baroque house of the Desaty family and the houses of the families of Burjan and Šecar built in the classicistic style. When observed from a distance, those buildings create an astonishing frame for a visual experience of the Valpovo Prandau-Normann castle.
Donji Miholjac

Donji Miholjac, a town situated almost at the very bank of the river Drava, has been continually populated from times immemorial. There are two castles in the town in which aristocratic families lived. A fairly large building, also known as the old castle of Miholjac, was built in 1818 by the baroness Marija Ana (née Pejačević), the widow of baron Josip Ignac Hilleprand von Prandau. The single-storey castle built in the style of late baroque ends in a circular decorative turret in its south-eastern corner, moved away from it and connected with it by a terrace. The facade facing the street was given certain regularity by a row of 19 identical windows.

Late baroque one-storey castle of the Prandau family

with subtle late baroque ornaments and the facade facing the backyard offers the same impression by a row of bolted windows. The second castle in Miholjac, more recently built and as pretty as the first one, is that of the Mailáth family, built in the style of romanticism and historicism, with magnificent gardens modelled after the English gardens, creating thus a picture of a castle as if built in the tenor of the Tudor times. It was constructed in the period from 1903 to 1906 and belongs to one of the youngest, prettiest and the most romantic castles of Slavonia. A number of towers and chimneys, semicircular and other types of risalites, a terrace trimmed by iron pillar-like fences, turrets at the corners, etc. give this castle a particular romantic touch rarely seen in the Slavonian plains. (The Mailáth family acquired Donji Miholjac through marriage with the Prandau family.)

The new baroque parish church of St. Michael the Archangel, built on ancient Gothic foundations, is a colossal structure of the 18th century baroque architecture suggesting some elements of classicism; it is a single-nave church with a distinctive barrel-shaped arched ceiling and a rounded sanctuary.

Castle of the Mailáth family built in the style of romanticism and historicism
Našice

Našice is famous for its cultural and historical monuments as well as their remains dating back to the medieval times. It was the Franciscans who left a particularly important mark by building a colossal three-winged single-storey monastery in the 18th century, which was re-constructed in the period from 1712 to 1755. They also turned Našice renovated after the earthquake in 1817. It was expanded during the count Ladislav Pejačević’s life and took on its present appearance for the most part in 1850. In 1865 the castle was expanded considerably and rounded towers were added at the edges of the castle. (The castle is a home of the County Museum and art gallery today). Pejačević’s

the old gothic church of St. Anthony of Padua into a baroque church. There are medieval altars in the church (built 1765 – 1774), a pulpit (1769), confessionals (1772), an organ made by Josip Janeček of Budim (1776), a rococo oratory with the Pejačević family coat of arms, choir loft pews and other church furnishings.

The most impressive buildings in the centre of Našice are two castles of the count Pejačević family, situated in spacious English gardens. They are beautiful examples of the country-style architecture in eastern Croatia built in the manner of historicism and classicism. The main, great castle of the Pejačević family was built in 1812 and completely renovated after the earthquake in 1817. It was expanded during the count Ladislav Pejačević’s life and took on its present appearance for the most part in 1850. In 1865 the castle was expanded considerably and rounded towers were added at the edges of the castle. (The castle is a home of the County Museum and art gallery today). Pejačević’s

Great castle of the Pejačević family with gardens

Hunting castle or small castle of the Pejačević family

Franciscan monastery with the Church of St. Anthony of Padua

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Đakovo has every right to be proud of its past as well as many cultural and historical monuments dating from times immemorial and more recent ones from the 20th century. Known as Certissa in the Roman times or castrum Dyaco in the Middle Ages it was mentioned for the first time in 1239 in duke Koloman’s deed of donation. He was the brother of the Croatian-Hungarian king Bela IV, who donated the town of Đakovo with a large land area to Bosnian bishops. Symmetrically built and in terms of style uniform buildings, the parts of which originate from various historical periods – the walls from the 14th century, the parish church of All Saints – the former Turkish mosque from the 16th century, late baroque capitulary canonical residences, neoromanic bishop’s cathedral of St. Peter, Chancery, the diocesan museum, a memorial to the bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer and the museum of the Đakovo region with a picture gallery, the diocesan archives and library, monastery of the sisters of the Holy Cross with a church and some other buildings – have preserved the charm of the old town core which is interwoven with baroque, secession and historicism features.
The panorama of Đakovo is dominated by a monumental neoromanic cathedral of St. Peter with two bell towers (84 metres tall), erected by the Bosnia-Đakovo-Sirmium bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer. It was constructed in the period from 1866 to 1882 according to the design made by two Vienna architects, Karl Roesner and Friedrich von Schmidt. There is a crypt in the cathedral, the final resting place of bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer, which is ornamented with a famous relief, a work of Rudolf Valdec.
Aljmaš

In Aljmaš, a village situated in the vicinity of confluence of the rivers Drava and the Danube, witnesses to history - castle and manor of the aristocratic family Adamović - are situated at a hilly side of the village. A spacious castle in the style of classicism was built at the beginning of the 19th century. It is a single-storey building built in the shape of the letter “U” with a very pronounced and long portico at the entrance. The portico is supported by four massive rectangular columns and two rounded columns in the middle with a flight of five steps in between. This magnificent entrance portico ends with a large triangular gable decorated with a motif of blind arcades at the edges. The manor of the Adamović family was also built in the first half of the 19th century. It is a simple classicistic one-storey building laid out in the rectangular shape. Its front is composed by nine window axes, two of which are shallow risalite projections. (Both buildings were severely damaged in 1991.)

Aljmaš is a diocesan parish and one of the most important parish sites honouring the Blessed Virgin Mary in the eastern Croatia. The parish church of the Visitation of Mary contains a sanctuary with a statue of Our Lady of Consolation, brought there in 1704 by the Jesuits of Osijek. During his third papal visit to Croatia on June 7, 2003 His Holiness Pope John Paul II, crowned the votive statue of Our Lady of Consolation in a special ceremony at the Eucharist in Osijek.
Like guards at the Danube next to the village of Erdut stand the ruins of a former medieval fortified feudal town and later a seat of manorial estate. The place itself rises some hundred meters above the right bank of the Danube just in the centre of a meander created by the Danube between the villages of Aljmaš and Dalj.

The Adamović-Cseh family built a largish manor which served as a centre of the estate and residential area and owned many outhouses and large cellars which are used even today. The layout of the manor, built at the end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century in the style of historicism, is quite extended. It is a building with a single-storey wing and polygonal tower with a turret. (It is a place where on November 12, 1995 the Erdut Agreement was signed, a document marking the end of the Croatian War of Independence and founding of the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES).
Castle of Eugene of Savoy

Bilje, a village in Baranja situated next to one of the largest European marshland and bird-reserves bordering the Danube, Kopački Rit, boasts a magnificent baroque castle with large gardens, built by Prince Eugene of Savoy in the period from 1705 to 1712. The main and most representative part of the castle is a single-storey construction with a massive tower in the central part, ornamented by pilasters and profiled sculptural wreaths. Side wings are designed in a simple manner with regular rows of windows. At the front facade above the entrance passageway there is a well-preserved polychrome coat of arms of the Savoy family. The trench around the castle reminds of a medieval type of defence. The central building faces the bridge. The castle used to be a seat of the huge Belje manorial estate until 1827 when the management moved to Kneževo. The whole complex of the castle is supplemented by romantic, spacious and tended gardens.

The parish church of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was built in 1775. It used to be a sacral single-nave construction with rounded sanctuary and furnishings characteristic of late baroque and early classicism style. (During the aggression against Croatia in 1991/1992 the bell tower was destroyed, the sacristy burnt down and all treasures pillaged). After the peaceful reintegration of Baranja in 1998 the church was completely reconstructed and its former splendour was thus restored.
The castle complex and gardens of the Croatian-Hungarian family Eszterházy can be reached through a secession iron gate made by hand by an unknown artist. Although the castle in Darda is the so called ‘second category’ monument, it is in a very poor condition due to complete devastation and plundering during the Croatian War of Independence (1991/1992). It is still awaiting reconstruction. It is a single-storey building erected in the second half of the 18th century as a central part of the spacious estate owned by baron Eszterházy. It is a combination of a baroque layout characteristic of the time in which it was built and the concept of classicism which was just starting to develop in architecture. In the central part of the front, on three identical arcades, lies a wooden veranda fitted with glass and ending in a triangular classicistic gable. Side wings have simple lines and are connected with single-storey outhouses in the backyard.

There is a parish church of St. John the Baptist in the vicinity of the castle, which was built in the period from 1715 – 1717. This splendid baroque construction used to be a single-nave church with a risalite bell tower above the main entrance until it was completely destroyed during the Croatian War of Independence. The church had valuable interior treasures dating from the 18th and 19th century. (It has yet to be reconstructed).

There is also a parochial church of St. Michael in Darda, which was built in 1777 in the baroque style. It has a barrel-shaped ceiling in the nave and it is furnished by the 18th and for the most part the 19th century furniture characteristic of classicism.
In a natural paradise of the Danube marshlands, south of the Baranja village of Lug, a small single-storey hunting castle was built in the 19th century in a famous forest and hunting resort of Tikveš. The castle was probably built by arch-duke Fridrich von Habsburg. Until the World War I the castle was used as a summer house and a hunting lodge.

The main castle in Tikveš was built in the 1930s in a classicistic style with features characteristic of secession and several outhouses were added in the mid-twentieth century. The front of the castle demonstrates the liveliness of classicism, enclosed by tuck-pointed facade bricks and corners are plastered in such a way that the facade resembles stone blocks. (During the Croatian War of Independence in 1991/1992 it was devastated and pillaged and remained so all until the peaceful reintegration of Baranja in 1998. Today it is reconstructed and turned into tourist facilities. It is under the administration of the Nature Park Kopački Rit.)
There are two sacral buildings in Beli Manastir – parish church of St. Martin the Bishop and a parochial Orthodox church of St. Michael the Archangel.

The wooden parish church of St. Martin the Bishop was built in 1738 and a late baroque church was built on its foundations in 1777, which was later reconstructed several times during the 19th and the 20th century. (This sacral object was severely damaged and destroyed by the fire in the aggression against Croatia in 1991/1992. After the peaceful reintegration of Baranja in 1998 it was completely renovated and its former splendour was thus restored.)

A single-nave late baroque parochial Orthodox church of St. Michael the Archangel was built in 1771. Rich church furnishings were preserved in it.
Kneževo

There are several buildings in late baroque/historicism and classicism style in the very centre of Kneževo, which were used for economic and partly managerial purposes of the great Belje manorial estate.

The castle in Kneževo was built in 1828 (according to some sources in 1818) as a single-storey building with unpretentious classicistic features. It did not have any representative purpose but rather it was an economic seat of manor’s owners. Its layout demonstrates a very elongated rectangular shape. Its western main facade faces the village and its eastern the gardens. The central, two-storey part of the castle with a triangular gable, at the length of the window axes, rises above fundamental dimensions of the castle, showing ornaments in the shape of shallow risalite on the main facade. All front facades have simple forms, except for the main front facade decorated with a portal with a segmented arch, rustic ornaments in the ground-floor, two-storey pilasters in the central risalite part and a sculptured wreath dividing the ground-floor and the first-floor.
Parish church of St. Peter and Paul was built by order of Prince Eugene of Savoy in 1722 and represents a unique architectural and cultural asset. It is situated next to the road connecting two large Baranja villages, Topolje and Gajić in the north of the Osijek-Baranja County, just beside the old Danube backwaters. Its unique layout ends in semi-circular rounded sanctuary elevated with one step. A bright hall decorated with pilasters and richly decorated wreaths is illuminated by large windows letting daylight in. On the outside, there are pilasters on the wall and the gable is shaped in soft baroque lines. (The church was severely damaged during the World War II and the Croatian War of Independence, but was completely renovated at the beginning of the 21st century. Its purpose is mainly of liturgical nature, but there are many concerts and other cultural events taking place in the church today.)
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