

The Greek Orthodox Monastery in Vozuća

Country or territory:
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Name of organisation
compiling the information:
Commission to Preserve
National Monuments

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Name and address of bulding(s) or site:

THE GREEK ORTHODOX
MONASTERY IN VOZUĆA,
Zavidovići
06.1-02-1043/03-8

Inventory reference number(s):

Ensemble type(s):

Monumental, architectural ensemble
consisting of a monastery, the
church of the Holy Trinity, cottages,
school, the Kaluđerice spring and
the cemetery.

Main date(s):

16th – 20th century .
Major renovation from 1856 till
1859.

Current use(s):

Not in use

Significance:

The Vozuća monastery probably dates from the 16th century and, according to local tradition, was a Nemanjić foundation. The earliest documentary reference to Vozuća dates from 1617. In 1690, after Austria's defeat in the Austro-Turkish war, many monks left Vozuća monastery which remained empty for more than a century. It was renovated between 1856 and 1859. Documentation makes it clear that when renovations began in 1856 the monastery complex and the church itself were in a critical condition. Following the renovation of the church in Vozuća in 1856-1859, one of the best local painters of the first half of the 19th century, Todor Stanić Gračanić, painted icons of Christ, the Mother of God, the Holy Trinity and the Annunciation. These icons were painted towards the end of his working life as a painter, and reveal an attempt to keep up with contemporary stylistic trends, but a lack of the relevant knowledge, so that they are of greater importance as a document than as artistic valuables. (Mazalić, 1965, 152).

The church was originally dedicated to St. Nicholas, and the renovated church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, was consecrated only in 1865 by Bishop Visarion, deputy to the Sarajevo Metropolitan Ignjatija. Some works also state that the monastery church in Vozuća was dedicated to the Shroud of the Mother of God.

In 1858 a primary school building was erected beside the monastery church where, at first, the priests acted as teachers. The school closed in about 1894.

The monastery church of the Holy Trinity has a long axis running from east (the apse) to west (the entrance), with a slight deviation to the south-east/north-west. The church has a single nave with an entrance parvis, a three aisled nave, a centrally-placed dome, a transept with rectangular choirs to the sides, an apse at the east end, and a tripartite altar-space in the centre. The dome rests on a high drum set on a square base resting via the stereotomic structure of spherical triangles known as pendentives on the barrel vault of the transepts, or rather on the round stone arches set in line with the wall pilasters. The horizontal rigidity of the vaults and arches of the nave is achieved by laying horizontal oak tie beams longitudinally and transversally at the height of the geometric chord of the arches and vaults in the nave. The walls of the church are about 75-80 cm thick and of varying heights: the wall of the entrance parvis is lower than the walls of the nave, and those of the apse are the lowest of all. When the church was built, three types of local stone were used. The tops of all the walls and wall pilasters and the quoins, as well as all the arches within the church were made of cut blocks of mila, the stereotomic structures of the vaults of tuff (or dripstone), and the visible faces of the exterior walls of cut serpentine.

The entrance portal to the church and that, which leads into the nave are almost identical in size (approx. 1.70 x 3.00 m), and made in the same way, using stepped inset forms for the entrance reveals, semi-pilasters and voluts and simple lunettes. A marble memorial plaque is set into the wall to the left of the entrance door into the nave and high above the entrance portal, just below the barrel vault of the nave, is a decorative frieze with round-arched blind arcades.

The floors of the parvis, main area and altar space were stone-paved. In the central area of the nave was an Ambo in the form of an omphalion, or circle of the Mother of God, set level with the floor like a large mosaic. This is an oriental motif. The centre consists of an eight-pointed star of dark purplish stone, surrounded with eight elongated hexagons of red marble in a ring. The figures between the hexagons are of the same dark purplish stone as the star. No frescoes have survived.

In the nave area, there is a large niche in the wall below the apse window, with to the left of it a small squarish niche. Two small niches close to the ground serve as diaconicon. There is no doubt that these belonged to the original church, but were much altered in appearance during renovations. This is particularly the case for the niches for the deacon, of which, the upper one has been given an oriental appearance, similar to those introduced by known builders in the case of Ozren and Papraća.

The interior of the church is plastered and whitewashed; traces of over-painting in colour are visible at the base of the walls. There is no iconostasis, but as far as the priest Zoran Živković knows, the iconostasis was rescued and is in the Zvornik-Tuzla eparchy.

Movable heritage objects

According to Zoran Živković, who has recently begun serving in the church, not one book has survived. As far as he knows, the royal doors and one book (he does not know which) were taken to Ozren monastery in the past few years. These items are not in Ozren monastery now.

In the 1940s, referring to old books and records in Vozuća monastery, Milenko Filipović notes that they were kept in village houses and the priests' houses during the final decades of the 17th century, when the monastery was abandoned. Filipović says that a certain priest Simo, fleeing from Vozuća to Obudovac in the Posavina (Sava valley region), in 1819, took with him several books, including the following:

- A prayer book with Paschal calendar for 1736-1740.
- An Oktoih (Book of Psalms) with various prayers
- A book of Epistles

Filipović says that a well preserved Anthology of Božidar's printed in Venice in 1538 was kept in Gavro Kalaiš's house. There were no significant notes in it. The first page had a list of 36 names with, on the other side, «this is the book of councilor Gavro Kalaiš», and beneath that his distorted version of the sator-formula palindrome.

In addition, up to 1940 the following had also survived:

- Seven pages of a manuscript Constitution written on corrugated paper. The pages measure 13 x 17.5 cm. One of them has a note that the book was written in 1535 in Hilandar, and that in 1637 a church was roofed (Vožuća or Gostović monastery)
- Twenty-nine pages of a festival Menaion for March. This measured 21 x 31,2 cm and was written in a fine hand in red and black ink, on thick, finely corrugated paper. However, the handwriting was not identical throughout, and the book was probably written by two people. There are no notes on the Menaion, but there is a water mark on the centre page similar to the one on the Constitution, suggesting that it was written in about 1538.
- A missal, printed in Buda in 1799. At the time Filipović wrote his article this was owned by attorney Branko Stakić. The book had an inscription recording that it belonged to priest Risto Petrović Stakić of Vožuća.
- A large ritual book or Trebnik, printed in Moscow in 1847. At the time Filipović wrote his article this was in the church in Vožuća.
- A Trebnik, printed in Moscow in 1847. At the time Filipović wrote his article this was in the church in Vožuća.
- An Oktoih, printed in Moscow in 1850. At the time Filipović wrote his article this was in the church in Čaradak.
- A missal (1853)
- A prayer book, which in 1846 was owned by Blagoje Ristić of Bijela in Posavina. At the time Filipović wrote his article this was in the church in Vožuća, (Filipović, 1940, 29-32, Ševo, 2002, 269-272)

Categories of significance:

Of outstanding national importance

Categories of ownership or interest:

Of national interest.

Documentation and bibliographic references:

Documentation

The following documentation is in the possession of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments:

- Documentation on the location and current owner and user of the property (copy of cadastral plan and copy of land registry entry),
- Data on the previous and current condition and use of the property, including a description and photographs, data of war damage if any, data on restoration or other works on the property if any, etc.
- Historical, architectural and other documentary material on the property, as set out in the bibliography.

Bibliography

Documentation of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments

- 1889 Stakić, Vasa: *O manastiru Vozućoj*, Dabro-bosanski istočnik (on the Vozuća monastery, Dabro-bosanski source (publication for the ecclesiastical and educational needs of the Serbian Orthodox priesthood in BiH) Sarajevo, Nov. 1889, nos. 21 and 22,
- 1940 Filipović, Mil. S.: *Manastir Vozuća u Bosni*, (The Vozuća Monastery in Bosnia) Skoplje, 1940,
1950. Dr Vladimir R. Petković, *Pregled crkvenih spomenika kroz povescnicu srpskog naroda*, (Survey of church monuments over the history of the Serbian people) Serbian Academy of Sciences, special edition, vol. CLVII, social sciences dept, new series, vol 4, pp. 146, 412, Belgrade 1950.
- 1965 Mazalić, Đoko, *Slikarska umjetnost u Bosni i Hercegovini u tursko doba (1500-1878)*, (The painter's art in BiH in the Turkish period, 1500-1878) Sarajevo 1965,
- 1972 Zdravko Kajmaković: *Okolo problema datacije pravoslavnih manastira u sjeveroistočnoj Bosni sa posebnim osvrtom na Papraču*, (Problems of dating Orthodox monasteries in NE Bosnia with particular reference to Paprača) Naše starine, Annual of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 1972, XIII, pp. 149-171,
- 1991 Šuput, M.: *Spomenici srpskog crkvenog graditeljstva XVI-XVII vek*, (Monuments of Serbian ecclesiastical architecture C16-17) Belegrade-Novı Sad-Priština 1991, pp.47-49.

Condition:

Very bad

The monastery church of the Holy Trinity in Vozuća is in very bad condition. The vault and walls of the parvis are at risk of collapse. For 4 or 5 years the building was without any roof cladding and exposed to the elements, after the copper sheeting was removed. According to priest Živković, trees and shrubs had begun to grow on the roof of the parvis. As a result, the vault of the parvis has sagged, dramatically modifying its shape, and disturbing the equilibrium of the transfer of internal thrust to the transverse section of the vault. There was an increase in the horizontal thrust (the vault had in any case been built without tie beams), which led to cracks developing in the vault structure and that of the walls. These cracks are as much as 15 cm wide, and there is a serious risk of the parvis collapsing.

The interior of the church is in very poor condition, with the walls showing surface damage from ammunition of various calibers. The plaster is damaged. The building has no doors and windows and is unglazed, the stone Holy Throne has been broken (the remains have been collected and are in the stone-built room at the base of the tower), and the walls have been covered with various graffiti. There is no iconostasis.

Amount of war or associated damage:

Roof more than 30% damage, with significant damage to walls, but can be repaired.

- Building was without any roof cladding, after the copper sheeting was removed. Due to that humidity on the walls appeared as well as vegetation on the roof.
- Small amount of damage sustained caused by artillery is visible on the façade.
- The interior suffered significant damages.

Risk:

The area is at risk of rapid deterioration due to lack of maintenance and failure to implement even minimum protection measures. The site is at risk of deterioration from the elements.

Condition risk:

Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric, solution agreed but not implemented.

Technical assessment and costing:

Urgent protection measures to prevent further deterioration need to be prepared, as well as projects for the next phases of protection – sanitation, conservation and restoration.

The following protection measures shall be undertaken for the National Monument:

- all works on the monument are prohibited other than rehabilitation works with the approval of the Federal Ministry responsible for regional planning and under the expert supervision of the heritage protection authority of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- rehabilitation is undertaken by means of research works, works of conservation, structural repair and restoration.

The following urgent measures are stipulated to prevent further deterioration:

- the conservation, repair and structural consolidation of the walls and ceilings
- protection of the monument from damaging external influences.

The Government of the Federation shall be responsible in particular for implementing the following measures:

- research works to include a study of the stability and structure of the existing wall structures of the building, the petrographic and chemical characteristics of the stone and other building materials (mortar), and the gathering of data and information to draw up a rehabilitation project,
- a structural survey should be conducted and a project for the structural repair of the building drawn up; this must be consistent with the project to rehabilitate the National Monument.

In the area that surrounds the National monument the following protection measures shall be taken:

- the upper parts of the bridge must be rebuilt on the existing bridge supports in order to reconnect the monastery complex with the access road,
- the area that surrounds the National Monument is to be cleared of self-sown vegetation and landscaped
- the source of potable water on plot no. 2343 is to be regularly maintained
- the zone is to be properly fenced in (with a simple low wooden barrier)
- the conduct of archaeological research works is permitted, subject to any remains discovered being displayed appropriately within the monastery complex.

On the site of the cemetery that is still in use the following protection measures are stipulated:

- clear the site of the cemetery of weeds and overgrown trees and landscape it
- if necessary, fence the zone in a suitable manner (with a simple low wooden barrier).

Costing proposals for projects and above listed works have not been done.

Ownership:

Serbian Orthodox parish of Zavidovići

Occupation:

Not occupied

Management:

The provisions relating to protection and rehabilitation measures set by the Law on the Implementation of the Decisions of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments, established pursuant to Annex 8 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia

and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of the Federation of BiH nos. 2/02 and 27/02) shall apply to the National Monument.

The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be responsible for ensuring the legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary to protect, conserve, display and rehabilitate the National Monument.

The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be responsible for providing the resources needed to draw up and implement the necessary technical documentation for the rehabilitation of the National Monument.

Summary:

Applying the Criteria for the adoption of a decision on proclaiming an item of property a National Monument, this National Monument reaches the following criteria (criteria of significance):

- A. Time frame
- B. Historical value
- C. Artistic and aesthetic value
 - C. i. quality of workmanship
 - C. iii. proportions
 - C. iv. composition
 - C. v. value of details
- D. Clarity
 - D. iv. evidence of a particular type, style or regional manner
 - D. v. evidence of a typical way of life at a specific period
- E. Symbolic value
 - E. ii. religious value
 - E. iii. traditional value
 - E. iv. relation to rituals or ceremonies
 - E. v. significance for the identity of a group of people
- G. Authenticity
 - G. iv. traditions and techniques
 - G. v. location and setting
 - G. vi. spirit and feeling

The priority level for intervention is *high*.

NOTE:

Condition
Very bad

Condition risk
Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric, solution agreed but not begun

Criteria employed for the Priority Intervention List:

- The monuments are designated as national monuments,
- They represent rare or unique examples of the typology or chronological - stylistic corpus,
- They were damaged/destroyed during the 1992-1995 war in BiH or they were endangered by the post war conditions (illegal constructions, lack of funding for restoration and maintenance, inexpert reconstruction,) and are subject to further deterioration,
- Their restoration will encourage the return process in BiH,
- Their restoration will support development of the region.

Sign. and date: