

The Role of the Basilian Monasteries in the Formation of the Sacred Space of the Cities and Villages of Ukraine

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Abstract: The spiritual and intellectual influence of Basilian monasteries contributed to the cultural development of Ukrainians in the 18th century. Monastic complexes and ensembles featured unique architectural silhouettes that were organically integrated into the surrounding landscape, shaping the sacred spaces of towns and villages across Ukraine. Basilian monastic gardens, alleys, chapels with the “Stations of the Cross,” in harmonious connection with the architectural monastery buildings, were embedded in the natural structure of the landscape, highlighting the individual characteristics of each complex. Nowadays, there is growing interest among scholars and researchers in studying sacred landscapes that are harmoniously connected to the existing natural environment and form historical cultural landscapes. This article is dedicated to researching the role of Basilian monasteries in the formation of sacred spaces and examining their distinctive features, which create valuable cultural landscapes and should be preserved as part of Ukraine’s historical and cultural heritage.

Keywords: sacred space, role of Basilian monasteries, cultural landscape, historical and cultural value

Introduction

The emergence of cities and villages in Ukraine is closely tied to sacred objects – churches and monasteries – that not only served as spiritual centers but also became hubs of high culture within society. Often, residential and public buildings were formed around these sacred objects. Church and monastery structures stood out in the surrounding built environment with their silhouettes, acting as the main dominant features and significant formative elements of the sacred landscape. The space surrounding church and monastery objects of various denominations, together with natural and cultural elements, acquired a sacred quality and contributed to the formation of the religious landscape. Religious buildings of different denominations, located within a specific area, testify to the high spirituality of society during a particular historical period.

The temple space and monastic landscape, with all their monastic buildings, gardens, fields, water bodies, and fences, serve as organizing elements of sacred space and represent a type of cultural landscape. The sacred landscape carries cultural values and plays an essential role in the formation of national identity. The relevance of this research lies in the insufficient study of this issue and a deeper understanding of the influence of Basilian monasteries in shaping sacred spaces in historical towns and villages.

The study of the sacred space of medieval towns has been highlighted in the works of O.V. Belykov and K.O. Belykova (Belykov, Belykova, p. 22–29), A. Sorochuk (Sorochuk, p. 63–69). Religious centers, as pilgrimage sites with unique monastic structures that best preserve historical and natural landscapes, are discussed in the work of K.A. Polyvach (Polyvach, 2019, p. 33–40). The landscape environment of Basilian monasteries is examined in the monographic work of L. Chen (Chen, 2020). The spatial-hierarchical structure of the sacred landscape was revealed in the work of O.V. Mishchenko (Mishchenko, 2018). The aesthetic qualities of the landscape were explored in the dissertation work by Zh. I. Buchko (Buchko, abstract, 2002). However, no one has yet researched the role of Basilian monasteries in shaping the cultural sacred landscape.

The aim of the article is to demonstrate the role of Basilian monasteries in the formation of sacred landscapes in Ukrainian towns and villages, as well as to identify their distinctive features and influence on the formation of the cultural landscape.

The main point of the article

The cultural landscape of Ukrainian towns and villages, formed through the harmonious interaction between nature and society, is a phenomenon of the co-creation of nature and human activity. A significant influence on the formation of the cultural landscape came from sacred landscapes. Sacred landscapes are characterized by picturesque, harmonious vistas and aesthetic qualities, evoking strong religious and cultural associations. Ukraine, as a country with a rich history and multi-confessional society, home to numerous holy places and religious centers, has a high level of spiritual culture. Monasteries, with their harmoniously arranged landscape environment and unique architectural monuments, were and remain not only spiritual centers for pilgrims but also places that preserve historical and natural landscapes in their most intact form (Polyvach, p. 33–40).

The influence of monastic complexes on the formation of cultural landscapes has been decisive throughout all historical periods. Monasteries, as large religious centers with unique structures and monastic landscapes, hold great historical and cultural value and are part of Ukraine's historical heritage. During the Baroque period, Basilian monasteries, which adopted the Union, spread across Ukraine. Their landscape environment was formed based on pre-union Orthodox monasteries, and through the expansion by the Basilians, a new monastic environment developed that harmoniously complemented the existing one. The Mykolayiv Monastery complex in the village of Krekhiv, located among the wooded beech and pine hills of Roztochia at the foot of Mount Poboyna, is a striking example of the reorganization of the monastic landscape by the Basilians. The original Orthodox monastic ensemble resembled a fortress with wooden monastic buildings: the Transfiguration, Mykolayiv, Trinity, and Protection churches, two bell towers, cells, and farm buildings, arranged along the defensive walls, enclosed by a stone wall with battlements and corner towers, and a gate tower in the shape of a trapezoid (Chen, p. 55–56), surrounded by picturesque natural landscapes (Fig. 1).

With the transition of the monastery to the Union, the wooden structures were dismantled and replaced with masonry ones, resulting in the monastery consisting of the brick Mykolayiv Church, bell tower, cell and novitiate buildings, enclosed by a defensive wall with three corner towers and a gate (fig. 2). The monastic landscape, formed by the Basilians based on the natural morphological structure and under the influence of the creators' vision, enriched the environment with new properties, such as the creation of a regular-shaped monastery garden, the placement of a beehive in the garden, the arrangement of an organized vegetable garden, the planting of a walking linden alley, thus imbuing it with sacred meaning.



Fig. 1. Referencing the original Orthodox monastery in Krekhiv



Fig. 2. Regarding the Basilian brick monastery in Krekhiv

The sacred landscape of the Krekhiv monastery complex contains archaic, traditional Baroque, and modern elements that coexist harmoniously. The sacred landscape of the Krekhiv monastery holds religious and

historical-cultural value, attracting numerous pilgrims and tourists, drawing them into the understanding and recognition of spiritual culture, sacred architecture, religious landscapes, historical traditions, and the aesthetics of the beautiful monastic environment.

The Onufriivskiy Monastery in Dobromyl is a valuable historical man-made part of the mountainous landscape. The monastery complex is located in a cozy hollow under Slypa Mountain (Fig. 3). The monastery is in the shape of a polygon, with the Church of St. Onufrius located at the center of the territory, surrounded by cells with an attached bell tower, while other buildings encircle it from different sides. The main spatial focal point of the monastery is the church, which is subordinated to the main dominant element—the bell tower—positioned on an elevated spot. The monastery complex, along with its garden, is enclosed by a defensive wall. Situated in a lower area at the center of the hollow, the monastery is organically integrated into the wooded hills, and together with the monastic buildings, it creates the impression of a harmonious and architecturally complete complex, forming a sacred landscape. The landscape of the Dobromyl Monastery is an example of the harmonious interaction between nature and society, preserving the primary morphological features and landscape characteristics of the sacred space.



Fig. 3. Which is a lithograph by Napoleon Orda depicting the Monastery of St. Onufrius against the backdrop of Slypa Mountain and the Gerbut Castle in Dobromyl



Fig. 4. Which is a photograph of the Monastery of St. the Baptist in Ulashkivtsi, taken by the author

The sacred landscape in Ulashkivtsi stands out due to the location of the monastery on a high terrace along the Seret River, where the monastery complex dominates the surrounding area (Fig. 4). The monastery combines both landscape and architectural dominance, revealing itself for viewing from the surrounding villages. The well-organized inner space of the monastery grounds, featuring monastic buildings, a sculpture of the Virgin Mary, a fountain, and a garden, is partially enclosed by walls and partly by a wooden fence, giving it the appearance of a unified architectural complex. A little lower to the south is the well-organized Stations of the Cross, which descends toward the river, where today a stone cross stands, marking the site where there was once a church. All of these elements lend the monastery complex a sense of unity, compositional completeness, and create a distinct sacred landscape space. The monastery is an example where the natural, topographical, and architectural components come together to form a historically unified whole, with its sacred landscape shaping the cultural landscape for the surrounding villages.

The Nativity of Christ Monastery in Zhovkva is one of those monasteries located in the city center amid residential buildings, making it an essential element of the sacred space that contributes to the city's cultural landscape (Fig. 5). The uniqueness of the monastic ensemble is evident in the spatial combination and architectural design of its main parts: the church, bell tower, cells, printing house, and other monastic buildings. The church, as the primary architectural dominant in the monastery's structural development, is harmoniously complemented by the bell tower with an arched passage and occupies a dominant position over the monastic buildings. The value of the monastery complex lies in its inseparable unity with the historical surroundings. The architects' achievement is their ability to comprehend the urban environment and organically integrate the Basilian monastery complex into the residential and public buildings, highlighting its individuality, national identity, and sacred significance. The sacralization of the urban space in the historic part of Zhovkva, thanks

to the Basilian monastery, ensures a continuous spiritual and cultural connection with previous generations. The monastery complex plays not only a spiritual role but also serves as an important structural element in the formation of the city's cultural landscape.

The compositional harmony, unity, and integration of the monastery structure with the natural landscape are also evident in the monastery complex in Chervonograd, formerly known as Khrystynopol. The monastery is a crucial element not only in the low-rise buildings' structure but also in the architectural and historical image of the city. The monastic landscape imbues the central part of the city with sacred meaning and is a subsystem of its cultural landscape (Fig. 6).



Fig. 5. Which is an archival photo from the early 20th century of the Nativity of Christ Monastery in Zhovkva



Fig. 6. Which is an image of the monastery in Khrystynopol (Chervonograd)

Your description of the architectural ensembles of the Svjatojursky Monastery in Lviv and the Holy Cross Exaltation Monastery in Buchach paints a vivid picture of their historical and cultural significance. These monasteries not only play a crucial role in the religious and spiritual life of their respective regions but also contribute profoundly to the cultural landscape, with their harmonious integration of nature and architecture.

For Svjatojursky Monastery in Lviv, you highlighted its role as a dominant architectural and spatial feature, shaping the southwest part of the city. The way the monastery's structures form a cohesive ensemble around the Cathedral of St. George, coupled with its isolation from the surrounding urban fabric, creates an atmosphere of sanctity and serenity. The monastery's influence on the cultural landscape of the city is significant, contributing to national identity and attracting both worshippers and tourists.

In Buchach, the Holy Cross Exaltation Monastery, positioned on the slopes of Mount Fedir, is a prime example of how the natural landscape complements architectural design. The monastery complex not only dominates the surrounding landscape but is also a testament to the skillful integration of religious, cultural, and natural elements. The visual prominence of the monastery, its architectural composition, and the careful use of the landscape to highlight its sacred status all contribute to the unique cultural identity of the area.



Fig. 7. St. George Monastery Complex [4]

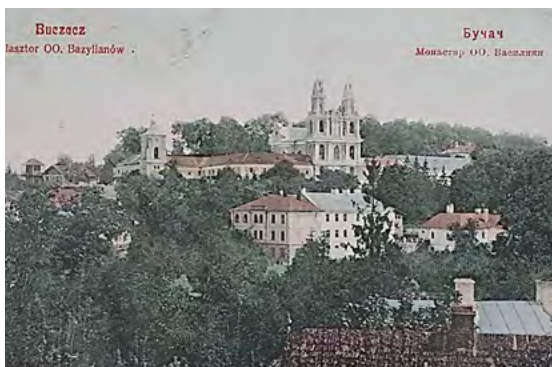


Fig. 8. Exaltation of the Holy Cross Monastery in Buchach [4]

These sites exemplify how sacred architecture and landscape design can create a profound sense of place, contributing to a city's or town's spiritual, historical, and cultural identity. They serve as living expressions of heritage and are critical to the preservation and promotion of Ukraine's cultural landscape.

The monastic ensemble in Zolochiv, located in the western part on the outskirts of the city, underwent changes in the layout of objects on the monastery grounds and the shape and size of the buildings as it expanded. Due to the most recent reconstructions, the monastery acquired a linear compositional scheme with a clear hierarchy in the relationship between buildings. In the context of the low-rise street development, it not only serves as a spatial dominant but also forms the sacred space of the western part of the city. The monastery, with its sacred landscape shaped over various historical periods, defines the uniqueness and character of the spiritual culture of the city's population.

The Annunciation Monastery in Pidhirtsi is part of the sacred landscapes shaped through the interaction of nature and humans (Fig.9). Located in a picturesque forested area near Pidhirtsi, the monastery has a configuration close to an irregular polygon and consists of a church, cells, a bell tower, and a utility building with a pond. To the northwest, a two-story building of cells, constructed between 1771 and 1786 based on the design by architect Ventslavskyi, adjoins the church, forming a semi-enclosed monastery courtyard. The main spatial dominant of the monastery is the Church of St. Onuphrius, which dominates the monastery space. The composition of the monastery was further complemented by a pond located to the east of the church, fed by water from a miraculous natural spring located in the chapel. In the monastery landscape, the natural and sacred cultural components are balanced and form a harmonious whole. While in this sacred space, a person feels a spiritual connection with God and nature.

The natural components of the landscape and human activity are adapted in the Ivanivskyi Monastery complex in Krasnopustia, located in a picturesque natural setting. The Monastery of St. John the Baptist is located on the outskirts of the village of Krasnopustia, in a cozy, picturesque valley surrounded by high forested hills. From natural springs in the valley, streams flow through the monastery grounds and merge into the eastern arm of the Zolota Lyipa River. The monastery complex in Krasnopustia has a trapezoidal shape, resembling an elongated rectangle from west to east. The main spatial dominant in the monastery is the Church of St. John the Baptist, built in the classical style, adjacent to an L-shaped building of cells, forming a semi-enclosed space. The sacred monastic space, interconnected with the natural landscape, shapes in the person a sacred perception of the entire natural-anthropogenic territorial system, with natural springs, forested areas, and hills. The sacred landscape of the Krasnopustia monastery evokes emotional admiration, filled with spiritual serenity and the aesthetic beauty of the surrounding nature.



Fig. 9. View of the monastery in Pidhirtsi. Lithograph by A. Lange, 1844 [4]



Fig. 10. The monastery in Krasnopushcha (archival photo) [4]

The monastery ensemble in Goshiv is one of the sacred complexes with a large number of pilgrim visits. The Transfiguration Monastery in Goshiv is located on Jasna Hill, in a picturesque natural landscape. The monastery can be considered part of associative sacred landscapes due to the monastery church that dominates the natural historical landscape. The monastery church is the main spatial dominant of the monastery, which dominates both the monastery and natural landscape. A three-tiered, octagonal, pyramid-shaped bell tower, built in 1843 south of the church, spatially complements the main monastery dominant. To the northeast of the monastery

church is the building of the monks' cells, and to the north is a two-story guesthouse for pilgrims. At the foot of Jasna Hill on the northern side, to the left of the pilgrims' road, a chapel of the Holy Family was built, and to the east of it, at the crossroads, a wooden chapel of St. John Nepomuk was erected. Halfway up the northeastern wooded slope of the hill, to the right of the pilgrims' road, a statue of St. Onuphrius, carved from stone, was placed. New utility buildings were constructed to the west of the guesthouse. The wayside chapel and the inn built to the north of the monastery, the large vegetable garden on the northern slope of the hill, the monks' cemetery to the north, and the clearing complement the spatial organization of the monastery complex. The harmonious combination of monastery buildings and natural components within the monastery environment creates a unique sacred space. The sacred space of the Goshiv monastery impresses with its incredible spiritual atmosphere and picturesque views of the surrounding landscape. The monastery is known for its miraculous icon of the Mother of God and is one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations. The presence of spiritual relics contributes to the special sacralization of the monastery landscape, encouraging mass visits by pilgrims and tourists, and holds historical, cultural, and natural value.

The St. Nicholas Monastery in the village of Strusiv was built in the 16th century on a hill above the Chortova Debra ravine, near Strusiv. Initially, two monks carved a cave chapel of St. Nicholas and cells in the rock, where they lived and built a wooden church in honor of St. Nicholas above the cave chapel. The monastery is located on the left high bank of the Seret River at the site of a pre-Christian pagan shrine. Over time, a rock monastery with a wooden church of St. Nicholas was established. In 1760, a stone Basilian St. Nicholas Monastery was built at the location of the rock monastery with a wooden St. Nicholas church. The original ensemble included the cave chambers, the ruins of the church, which was rebuilt in 1993, a small bell tower, and remnants of the monastery cemetery. The St. Nicholas Monastery Church, which dominates both the monastery space and the natural landscape, was built from stone in a relief area on a small rocky plateau that sharply descends into the Seret River valley. The project was designed by Czech architect Johann Kasper Zellner. In the monastery space, there is a spiritual connection with the natural landscape, contributing to the sacralization of the space.



Fig. 11. Panorama of the Goshiv Monastery, early 19th century. Lithograph. Artist Unknown [4]

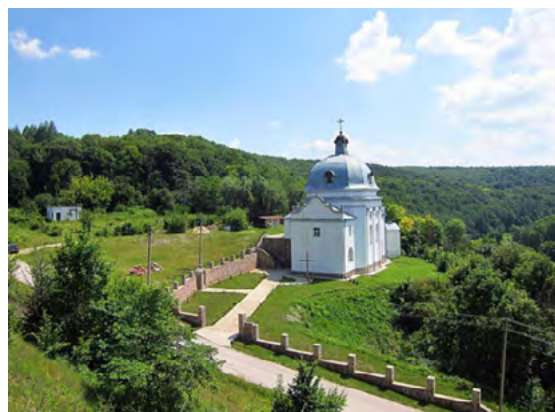


Fig. 12. Monastery in Strusiv. Photo by the author

The St. Michael's Monastery in Imstichovo is located in a mountainous area. The monastery complex was built in 1773 on an elevated natural terrace of a mountain (Chen, p. 168). Protected by mountain ridges from the east and west, the silhouette of the monastery complex opens up towards the town of Berehove. The central place in the spatial organization of the monastery complex is occupied by the St. Michael's Church, which has a distinctly baroque character in its architectural and spatial design and decoration. To the west of the main structure of the church is attached a rectangular, three-tiered bell tower with a baroque top. Adjacent to the monastery church is the building of the cells, placed at a right angle to the church, creating a semi-enclosed space. The monastery complex, with its buildings forming a semi-enclosed courtyard against the backdrop of the mountain landscape, creates an organic compositional integrity, contributing to the sacralization of the space and being an inseparable part of the cultural environment. The sacred landscape of the Imstich Monastery is a valuable source of interaction between humans and nature, evoking emotional admiration from visitors.

In the picturesque natural valley, high above the Uzh River, there is a monastery in the village of Maloye Berezno. The monastery complex is built high on the slope of Mount Dilok. The St. Nicholas Church occupies the dominant position, standing out in architectural form and height within the compact monastery complex. The buildings of the cells, surrounding the monastery church, are located at a lower elevation and spatially subordinate to the monastery church. The mountain backdrop complements the composition of the monastery complex. The natural mountain landscape, into which the monastery complex is integrated, gives it integrity and compositional completeness. The monastery serves as a unique sacred accent in the mountainous natural landscape and acts as a formative element of the cultural landscape.



Fig. 13. St. Michael's Monastery in Imstichovo. Photo by the author



Fig. 14. Monastery in Malyye Berezny (archive photo) [4]

Conclusion

Research on sacred spaces shows that during the Baroque period, Basilian monastic landscapes played a significant role in shaping cultural landscapes. The spiritually symbolic space of monasteries and the aesthetic qualities of their landscapes are crucial components of the cultural sacred environment. They hold significant religious and cultural value for pilgrims and visitors. Sacred landscapes, along with monastic architectural structures, served as places for rituals, community cohesion, and represented the intersection of spiritual and social structures. Monastic landscapes had distinct features and individual characteristics shaped by the morphostructure and the specific natural landscape environment, functioning as a type of cultural landscape. In the sacred monastic space, individuals are filled with spiritual emotions, tranquility, and an indescribable peace. Cultural landscapes enhance local authenticity, regional identity, and the image of towns and villages in Ukraine. Understanding the spiritual and cultural value of the cultural sacred landscape will contribute to its preservation and restoration as a significant part of Ukraine's cultural and natural heritage.

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Rola klasztorów bazylikańskich w kształtowaniu przestrzeni sakralnej miast i wsi Ukrainy

Streszczenie: Duchowy i intelektualny wpływ klasztorów bazylikańskich przyczynił się do rozwoju kulturowego Ukraińców w XVIII wieku. Kompleksy i zespoły klasztorne wyróżniały się unikalnymi sylwetkami architektonicznymi, które organicznie wkomponowywały się w otaczający krajobraz, kształtując przestrzenie sakralne miast i wsi na terenie Ukrainy. Ogrody klasztorne bazylikańskie, aleje, kaplice z „Drogą Krzyżową”, w harmonijnym połączeniu z architekturą budynków klasztornych, były integralnie związane z naturalną strukturą krajobrazu, podkreślając indywidualne cechy każdego zespołu. Obecnie rośnie zainteresowanie naukowców i badaczy badaniem krajobrazów sakralnych, które w harmonijny sposób łączą się z istniejącym środowiskiem naturalnym i tworzą historyczne krajobrazy kulturowe. Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest analizie roli klasztorów bazylikańskich w formowaniu przestrzeni sakralnych oraz badaniu ich charakterystycznych cech, które tworzą cenne krajobrazy kulturowe i powinny być zachowane jako część historycznego i kulturowego dziedzictwa Ukrainy.

Słowa kluczowe: przestrzeń sakralna, rola klasztorów bazylikańskich, krajobraz kulturowy, wartość historyczna i kulturowa