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## **DIGITALIZATION OF SERBIAN HERITAGE IN VILLAGE OSREDAK IN BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA**

**Abstract.** In the paper has been described digitalization of Serbian heritage in the village called Osredak, which belongs to municipality Cazin in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Not so long ago most of the residents in Osredak were Serbian nationality, but today only one family resides there. Digitalization has included the church of Saints Peter and Paul, the Tetraevangelion from the 19th century and head gravestones at the orthodox cemetery, which represent the historical evidence that the Serbian people existed on that territory.

### **Introduction**

Digitalization of the heritage of the migration of ethnic groups enables us to have an inside view of the way of life which these people lived on the territory from which they migrated from and it secures the connection of their ancestry roots. Having that purpose in mind, digitalization of Serbian heritage in the village called Osredak which belongs to municipality Cazin in Bosnia and Hercegovina had commenced.

Digitalization has included the church of Saints Peter and Paul, the Tetraevangelion from the 19th century and most of the head gravestones at the orthodox cemetery, which represent the historical evidence that the Serbian people existed on that territory.

Church of Saints Peter and Paul was built before World War I. To the Serbian residents this was not only the religion center, but it was also the center of their social life and meeting place. During World War II and then also during the beginning of civil war in former Yugoslavia it was severely damaged. Reconstruction of the church was commenced in the year 2012 initiated by former Serbian residents of Osredak and surrounding villages and their descendants.

Also, the Tetraevangelion was digitalized. It consists of the four canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Tetraevangelion is the most valuable treasure of the church which has been preserved in excellent condition.

Digitalization has commenced on the head gravestones at the orthodox cemetery, which in a special way tells a story of the village and its former residents. The map of the cemetery has been made and the head gravestones have been individually photographed.

### **Short history of the village**

Osredak is a village in Bosnia and Hercegovina in municipality Cazin which belongs to canton Una-Sana in the entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figure 1) . The last detailed anthropogeographical research regarding that region was conducted by the priest and ethnologist Milan Karanović in 1925, which he wrote in the book *Pounje*

u *Bosanskoj krajini* [1]. According to his findings, during the Dubica War (the last Austrian-Ottoman war, 1788–1791), when Austria tried to take over the Bihac Frontier, the Serbian residents of this area had to leave their homes and there were no Serbs in this area for 30 years. After which two families (Grbić and Marić from Dalmatia) were the first ones to settle in Osredak. In the first half of the 19th century fifteen more families migrated to Osredak and settled there. Three families were from Dalmatia (Crnobrnja, Marčeta, Grmuša), eight families were from Zmijanja (Majkić, Brkljač, Šteković, Banjac, Vuković, Lešić, Karanović, Rađenović) and four families were from Lika (Vignjević, Bogunović, Vojinović, Majstorović). Before World War II eight more families (Baglava, Čavić, Bokan, Dukić, Pavković, Zubović, Smiljanić and Jelač) migrated to Osredak. There is no record of where the four families (Džolić, Milošević, Mimić, Bošnjak) came from.



Figure 1: Map of part of Bosnia and Herzegovina in scale 1:400000. Village Osredak is labeled with the red mark.

During the wars which took place in this area, the village was left uninhabited as people were forced to leave their homes and after the wars the people would return again and revive the village. Until the breakup of the SFR Yugoslavia the main reason of migration related to wars and poor economic environment. After the breakup of the

SFR Yugoslavia the main reason of migration was due to the ethnic conflicts in this area. Migrated people did not return to their homes.

The ethnic structure of the residents in the village Osredak is shown in Table 1 for the period 1961 to 1991. The facts are from the result of census of population in the SFR Yugoslavia for that period [2],[3],[4],[5]. It can be seen how during the period of 30 years the percentage of Serbian residents reduced from 94% to less than 50%.

Year\Ethnic group	Serbs	Muslims	Others
1961	94.12%	5.66%	0.22%
1971	81.78%	17.78%	0.44%
1981	47.01%	51.73%	1.26%
1991	45.88%	53.48%	0.63%

Table 1: The ethnic structure of the residents in village Osredak for period 1961-1991

After the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina only one Serbian family (Vignjević) returned to Osredak [6].

### The church of Saints Peter and Paul

The church of Saints Peter and Paul was built before World War I. The exact year is not known. At first it was planned to only build the bell tower as part of the church Vaznesenje Gospodnje (eng. Ascension of Our Lord) from the neighboring village called Vrelo. But the residents decided to build a subsidiary church made of wood instead of just the bell tower. During the World War II the church was severely damaged. In its place a new church was built out of solid material and it was consecrated by bishop of Banja Luka Andrej Frušić in May 1967. [7] At the beginning of the civil war in SFR Yugoslavia the church was once again seriously damaged (Figure 2), and the reconstruction of it commenced in 2012 initiated by former Serbian residents of Osredak and surrounding villages and their descendants.



Figure 2: The remains of the church in Osredak after the civil war SFR Yugoslavia

The bell for the church was purchased in 1924 by donation of the residents from Osredak and Gradina. According to the original writing on the actual bell, it was cast in Belgrade in an iron foundry called Balkan. Due to the fact that the church after the civil war was left only with the outside walls, the bell was temporarily given to the church in the village called Radic. When the bell tower was reconstructed and the roof on the church was built the bell was returned to Osredak in June 2014 (Figure 3).



Figure 3: The bell of the church of Saints Peter and Paul in Osredak

### The Tetraevangelion

The Tetraevangelion consists of four canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is the most valuable treasure of the church which has been preserved in excellent condition. The Tetraevangelion was bought in 1882 by donation of the residents for the church Vaznesenje Gospodnje in the village Vrelo. It is not exactly known when it was given to the church of Saints Peter and Paul in Osredak, but it is evident from the note on the first page of the Tetraevangelion, that it was in the church of Saints Peter and Paul during the visit of bishop on 24.9.1980 (Figure 5).

During the civil war in former Yugoslavia, a resident of Osredak Branko Džolić took the Tetraevangelion with him while fleeing from Osredak and thanks to him it was saved from being destroyed or lost. He returned it to the church on 12.7.2013.



Figure 4: The cover of the Tetraevangelion



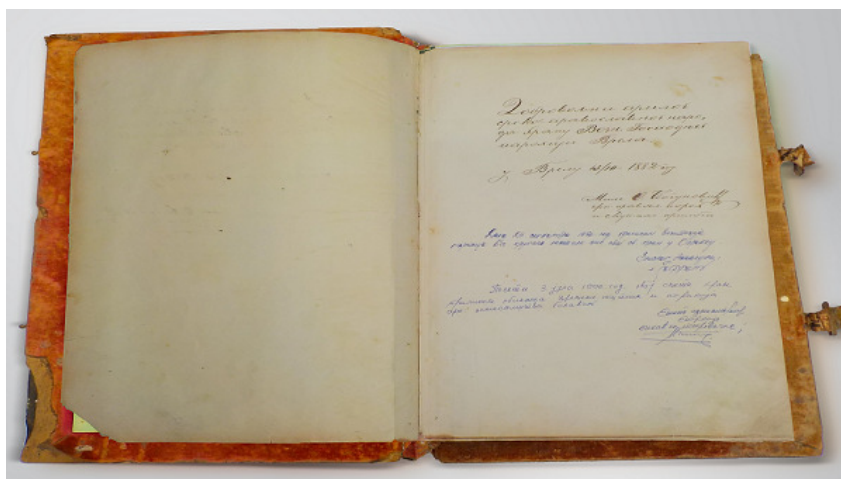


Figure 5: The first page of the Tetraevangelion

The Tetraevangelion was printed in Russia and it was made in hard cover with red plush. The size of the pages are 25 by 39 cm. It is ornamented with metal clutches and brassy embossed decoration. The embossed decorations on the corners of the front cover show all four evangelists with their accompanying symbols. While in the center of the front cover is Jesus. The embossed decorations on the back cover represent the Russian cross. All elements on the cover are well preserved, but the material has been damaged, especially on the front cover (Figure 4). The Tetraevangelion consists of 976 pages written in old church Slavonic language. All the pages have been preserved in excellent condition. The text has been written in black and red colors and some pages are decorated with graphics. The beginning of each gospel is decorated with the image and motives of the evangelist. On Figure 6 the beginning of the gospel of Matthew has been shown.



Figure 6: The beginning of gospel of Matthew

### The head gravestones in the orthodox cemetery

The old saying goes *If you wish to know the people look at their cemeteries*. The head gravestones in a special way to tell a story of the village and its former residents. They

are the real witnesses that tell us of the families who lived there and when, the average lifespan, literacy, financial position of a particular resident or the whole family, epidemic during which the death rate was high, wars which took place in that region, migrations, etc.

Beside the church, as a monument of Serbian people existing in Osredak, there is also the orthodox cemetery. To our knowledge, there is no record to date of any sort of research of head gravestones in the orthodox cemetery in Osredak have been done.

To make the search of head gravestones easier and to make possible detailed analysis of them, a map of the cemetery has been made (Figure 7) as part of the digitalization. The scale of the map is 1:150. All the head gravestones have been photographed, except the ones that have been damaged beyond recognition. Each head gravestone has been represented by a separate icon on the map which describes its shape and condition. Next to each icon the name of the deceased has been written only if it was possible to read the name on the head gravestone. For each head gravestone which has been photographed, its icon on the map is linked to the photograph of the same. Most of the members of the same family with the same surname were buried next to each other. For an easier search of the map, each family has been identified with different colors and, therefore, the icons of the deceased of the same family are colored in the same shade.

All together there are 291 head gravestones of which 179 have been photographed.

There are different types of head gravestones. Some of the head gravestones are very simple and the particulars engraved on them relating to the deceased are very modest. On the other hand, certain head gravestones are ornamented with different motives.

The first name or the second name of 184 deceased can be identified of which 93 were male and 91 were female. For 45 deceased either the year of birth or death can be identified but for 96 deceased both the year of birth and death can be identified. The oldest head gravestone on which the particulars can be read dates back to 1892. The last deceased was buried at this cemetery in the year 2012. According to the recorded data so far the oldest person died at the age of 107 years. There are also many small head gravestones for which we believe belonged to infants and small children. For the gravestones for which it has been established from which period they date back to, in Table 2 can be seen how many head gravestones date from which period.

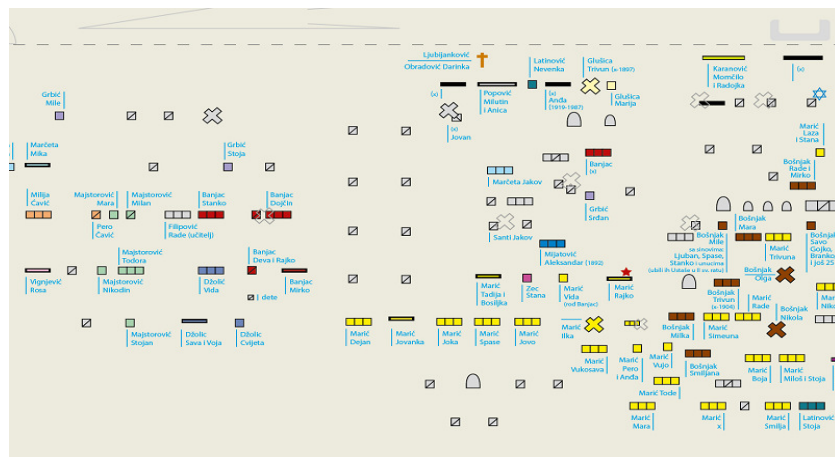


Figure 7: Part of map of orthodox cemetery in Osredak

According to the records from the head gravestones, 14 victims and soldiers from World War II have been identified. The list of all victims and soldiers from World War II can be seen in [9].

Period	To 1900	1901-1913	1914-1918	1919-1940	1941-1945	1946-1950	1951-1960	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	From 1991
Number of head gravestones	8	13	6	24	32	5	9	8	9	12	2

Table 2: Statistics of the number of head gravestones by the period when they were build

The head gravestones have been divided in 6 categories according to their shape and condition in which they were found. According to the shape, the head gravestones which have not been damaged are divided in *pier*, *cross*, *plaque* and *tombstone*. Tombstones do not have any motives or writing on them so it could not be identify from which period they are from. There are two categories of damaged head gravestones: *damaged cross* and *gravestone of unknown shape type*. Overturned crosses belong to category of *damaged cross*. The head gravestones from which only some parts are left and from which is impossible to determine the original shape and size belong to category *gravestone of unknown shape type*.



Figure 8: Legend of categories by which the gravestones had been marked on cemetery from left to right: pier, damaged cross, cross, gravestone of unknown shape type, plaque, tombstone

For each category has been assigned an icon, so each head gravestone of the same category is represented with the same icon on the map. The legend of all icons and the categories to which they belong to can be seen on Figure 8. From Figure 9, some examples of different categories of head gravestones can be seen.

By analyzing the head gravestones for which is known when they were built could be seen which categories were the most common in which period (Table 3). Up to the year 1940, all the head gravestones were built in the shape of crosses. After the year 1941, head gravestones were starting to be build in the shape of a pier and plaque. From the year 1941 to 1970 the most common shape of the head gravestones was pier (42% of all built head gravestones in that period), while the shapes cross and plaque were equally common. As of the year 1970 the most common shape was plaque (88% of all built head gravestones in that period).



Figure 9: Examples of head gravestones of different categories: 1- pier, 2- cross, 3- plaque, 4- damaged cross, 5- gravestone of unknown shape type, 6- tombstone

period/category	cross	pier	plaque
to 1940	100%	0%	0%
1941-1970	29%	42%	29%
from 1970	6%	6%	88%

Table 3: Statistics of used shapes of head gravestones in different periods

Engraved texts on the head gravestones were written in Serbian language and consist of details referring to the deceased (first and last name, date or year of birth, date or year of death) and the details of people who took part in building of the head gravestone. On one head gravestone it has been noted that the deceased was a teacher, while on the others there are no details in relation to the deceased's occupation during their life. On some of the head gravestones it is written that the deceased was killed in a war. Also, on some it has been recorded on the side of the head gravestone details of the person who made the same.

Most of the head gravestones have been ornamented only on the front side while the others were ornamented on front and back or on all four sides.

Most of the symbols are crosses of different shapes and sizes, for example the orthodox cross, the Golgotha cross, cross in a circle, cross decorated with twigs, etc (Figure 10). Symbols of the cross are usually engraved on the top of the front side of the



head gravestone. Besides the cross appearing on top of the front side, it also appears on the bottom or on the horizontal edges of the front side of the head gravestones. Small number of head gravestones has ornamented sides with symbols of crosses.



Figure 10: Examples of different crosses on the head gravestones

Beside the crosses, frequent symbols are rosettes with 4, 6 or 8 radii. (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Examples of rosettes on the head gravestones

On the head gravestones can be noticed different motives in shapes of flowers and twigs (Figure 12), as well as stars which represent the symbol of communism.



Figure 12: Examples of motives in shapes of flowers and twigs

On a small number of the head gravestones can be noticed motives of weapons and tools (Figure 13) which were probably closely associated with the deceased while he was alive.



Figure 13: Examples of motives of weapons and tools

Some of the head gravestones are decorated with borders. It can be noticed that the older head gravestones were decorated with motives using red color. During the classification of the noticed motives, the description of motives in [8] were used.

One head gravestone stands out from the others, as it is in a shape of a pier without any text but it has engraving of a symbol of the star of David (Figure 14). It is assumed that the deceased was of Jewish religion. According to [1] few Jewish families migrated to this area in second half of 19th century.



Figure 14: The head gravestone ornamented with a symbol of the star of David

### Conclusion

This paper represents the base for future research and systematization of data in digital form regarding the Serbian heritage in the village Osredak. Digitalization was done with the purpose to make them more available for expert analysis and also for easier access to the descendants of the Serbian people that left Osredak with an aim to preserve tradition and knowledge of their roots. Digitalization of the rest of the cemetery is in a process, as well as the web application which will include all the materials presented in the paper.

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