

## Article

# Principles of Urbanscape Transformation in the Historical Perimeter of Split, Croatia

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**Abstract:** The genesis of the historical core of the city of Split, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, rests on the continuity of urban life. The city has been subject to constant change over the course of almost two millennia, transforming from an ancient imperial palace into today's city. The ever-changing urban landscape implies the need for a continual dialogue between old and new, especially considering the efforts made throughout history to develop a new image of the city. By analysing three examples—Milesi Palace from the Baroque period, Bajamonti Palace from the age of Classicism, and Nakić Palace from the Secession period, all national heritage listed buildings, the significance of the urban logic behind their construction, as well as the impact these buildings had on the image of the city, is established. All three buildings are located on the perimeter of the city's public zone, and in different periods, they established new sets of urban rules, which they hold to this day. By researching their influence on the formation of Split's urban tissue on their immediate and wider surroundings, their role in the city-building process is defined, thus revealing their impact on the formation of the urbanscape, as well as the relationships between architectural heritage and the city's transformation.

**Keywords:** heritage; urban transformation; urban landscape; imageability



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## 1. Introduction

*“The most important characteristic of a city is, perhaps, the continuous change inherent in an urban environment, which we experience as an everyday situation. The city is subject to constant change, . . . Therefore, each intervention in act brings about a change in the significance of the other built forms to a greater or lesser extent” Herman Hertzberger [1] (p. 149)*

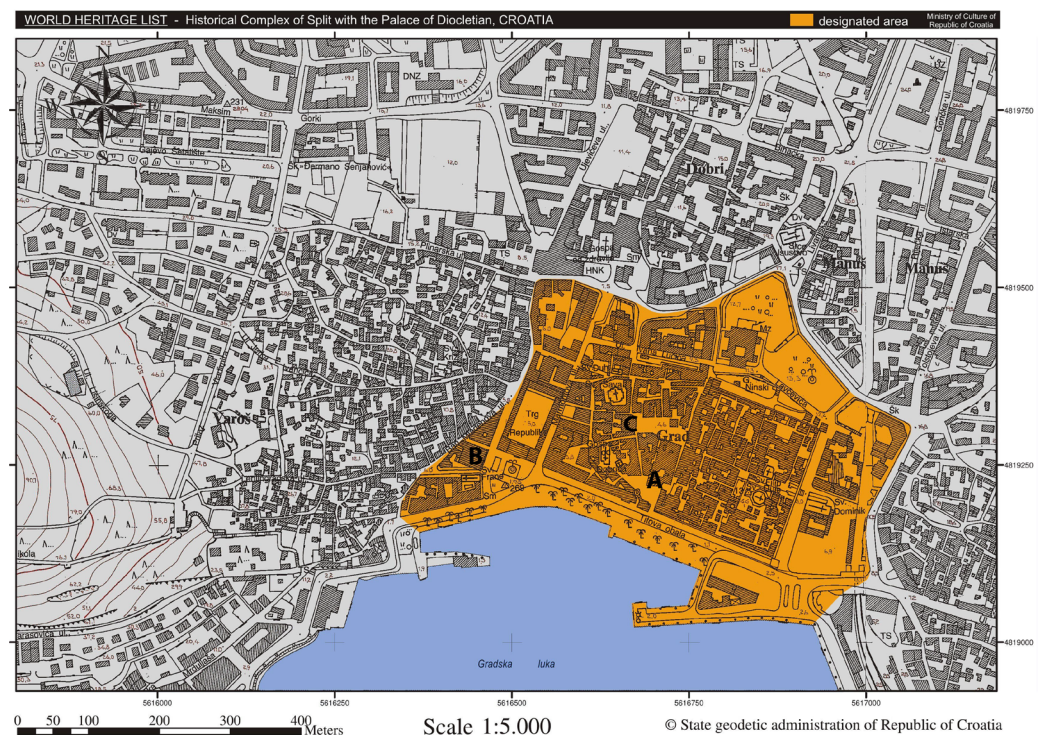
The genesis of the historical core of Split, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, rests on the continuity of urban life. Through a process of constant change over almost two millennia, Split transformed from the ancient palace of an emperor into today's city (Figures 1 and 2). When considering the specific urban context of protected historical zones, such as Split's historical core and the Palace of Diocletian, the question of urban planning, protection, and management arises. This paper aims to deepen the research on rethinking the role of heritage as an integral part of the urban landscape and land usage.





**Figure 1.** The wider area of the city of Split, Croatia. The thick dashed white line represents the border of the designated historical core, which is a World Heritage Site. The thin dashed white line represents the perimeter of Diocletian's Palace. The red dotted rectangles mark the positions of the buildings analysed here: "A" marks the position of Milesi Palace, "B" marks the position of Bajamonti Palace, and "C" marks the position of Nakić Palace.





**Figure 2.** Historical complex of Split with the Palace of Diocletian, Croatia. The yellow area shows the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The letter “A” marks the position of Milesi Palace, “B” marks the position of Bajamonti Palace, and “C” marks the position of Nakić Palace.

The transformation of the historical complex of Split captures the entire spectrum of transformations, beginning with the construction of a heterogeneous medieval structure built within the clearly marked and monumental ancient building, within whose perimeter even the significant buildings of the Renaissance and Baroque periods adhere to a specific narrow context. The process of transformation can be traced continuously by following the expansion of the city to the west of Diocletian’s Palace, first within the boundaries of the Renaissance fortifications and then within the imposing star-shaped Baroque fortifications. Later, following the disintegration of the fortifications, the city found itself in a new relationship with the ring of suburban settlements that surrounded it. The constantly changing urban landscape implied the need for a continuous dialogue between the old and the new, especially considering the efforts made throughout history to develop a new image of the city. This process aroused the research curiosity of numerous world-renowned experts throughout history—from Robert Adam, Georg Niemann, Ernest Hébrard, and Jacques Zeiller to Aldo Rossi, Jaap Bakema, Aldo Van Eyck, and Herman Hertzberger. Robert Adam wrote enthusiastically about the palace as early as 1764; Georg Niemann, Ernest Hébrard, and Jaques Zeiller at the beginning of the 20th century, at a time of avant-garde approaches to town planning and the birth of urbanism as a discipline (Adam, R. *The Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia*, Printed for the Author, Great Britain, 1764; Niemann, G. *Der Palast Diokletians in Spalato*, Vienna, Austria-Hungary, 1910; Hébrard, E., Zeiller, J. *Le Palais de Diocletien*, France, 1912). For the eminent protagonists of Team X—Herman Hertzberger, Aldo van Eyck, and Jaap Bakema, who were also the editors of the prominent magazine *Forum*—the palace was a reference point in the development of new architectural strategies: the social meaning of architecture, interpretation, and transformation, and the capacity for change. Using the palace as an example, Aldo Rossi developed theses on the transformation of use, adaptation, and meaning as key elements of urbanity. He did so by apostrophising the analogy of the city and the house (Bakema, J. *An Emperor’s House at Split became a town for 3000 People*. *Forum* 1962, No. 2, pp. 45–78.; Rossi, A. *L’architettura della città*, Marsilio, Italy, 1966;

Van Eyck, A. Writings, Sun Publisher, The Netherlands, 2006; Hertzberger, H. Lessons for Students in Architecture, 010 Publishers, The Netherlands, 1991). The focus of this study is to determine the planning and architectural tools used to establish a new urban scale in different phases of transformation of Split's urban fabric. More specifically, it addresses the following question: Can urban landscape transformation generate, create, and develop new heritage? In particular, can the transformation of the urban landscape become a catalyst for the creation of new heritage values? The results of this research aim to contribute to planning, decision-making, and policy processes in accordance with the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention set forth by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

By analysing the principles of urbanscape transformation in the historical perimeter of Split through three examples—Milesi Palace from the Baroque period, Bajamonti Palace from the age of Classicism, and Nakić Palace from the Secession period, all national heritage listed buildings—the urban logic behind their construction, as well as the impact these buildings had on the image of the city, will be established. All three buildings form the perimeter of the city's public areas: Two are located on medieval squares, while one is located on the west end of the waterfront. Each structure established new sets of urban rules in the historical period in which they were constructed, and they all hold those rules to this day. By researching their influence on the formation of the urban tissue, with respect to both their immediate and their wider surroundings, their role in the city-building process is defined, thus revealing their impact on the formation of the urbanscape, as well as the relationships between architectural heritage and the transformation of the city.

## 2. Research Framework—Materials, Methods, and Theory

This paper aims to deepen the research on rethinking the role of heritage as an integral part of urban landscapes and land usage. Specifically, the hypothesis that urban landscape transformation can become a catalyst for the creation of new heritage was examined. In the examples studied, the tangible and intangible layers that have influenced the creation of new values within the cultural identity of the city were analysed [2].

Methodologically, this paper examines three types of indicators of urbanscape transformation: Firstly, it considers **the multi-layered nature of the palimpsest-like structure** of the historical city (historical frames—social and political circumstances in relation to urban change); secondly, **the emplacement of the buildings** (position—urban setting) and the consolidation of the newly created structure; and thirdly, **its influence in the context of the formation of the city's physical, as well as its intangible, identity**, which echoes future development (amalgam impact of development—*imageability*).

**The first indicator** is usually considered self-evident in almost any urban genesis that is not the product of a comprehensive, ad hoc planning act. Nevertheless, it represents a crucial starting point for insights into development. Through insight and analysis of the historical urban transformation of Split, its multi-layered genesis is constructed through a dialogue between solid structures and structures that slowly infiltrate or supplement the existing urban fabric and that can therefore be called “softer” structures. In the beginning, solid structures consisted of regular ancient buildings. They were followed by several layers of defensive structures that were constructed successively at different intervals throughout history. Due to changes in the geopolitical and technological environment, and due to the growth of the city, the perimeters of these structures were subject to decay: Larger-scale structures dissolved, transformed, or were replaced by smaller structures.

All three examples can be placed in the context of historical social changes and modernisation, along with the rise of the middle class, which brings with it the communal and infrastructural improvement of the city under the influence of contemporary European cultural aspirations, as well as new urban and architectural paradigms [3,4].

The focus of **the second indicator** is on setting up a new building in the existing urban tissue following a new urban logic. It implies reading the dictates of the found structures and how the new construction “obeys” them—that is, assimilates and uses them.



In terms of morphology, all three examples—Milesi Palace, Bajamonti Palace, and Nakić Palace—question the theme of the edge and whether this means defining a new edge, transforming an existing one, or apostrophising an existing conglomerate of built space, naturally mastering it in the context of spatial and functional contact with public space.

Certainly, the character of the changes conditioned by the wider historical and cultural context is obvious, but at the same time, the derivations of these processes are shaped by specific “local” elements, in which some authors see an interesting creative narrative. Ljubo Karaman interprets it in the context of the diversity of the periphery and the province, whereby the province only “copies stylistic elements from the dominant cultural centre,” whereas the periphery reshapes them and leaves them to its influences [5] (pp. 30–31, 51–52). Ivan Rupnik later establishes this synthesis as the premise for a wide spectrum of architectural production in the contemporary context of Croatia as a geographical periphery, so we can apply it without hesitation to other historical periods as well [6]. Finally, Andrija Mohorovičić also attributes the specific creative intonation of the historical course of architectural creativity to this spatial boundary between continental Europe and the Mediterranean [7].

The analysis of archival materials and scientific papers that follow the development of the examples selected shows that the adopted urban sets were corrected depending on the specific urban context, and the architectural sets varied their archetypal stylistic forms, transforming them into expedient tools that operate in individual micro-situations. This specificity suggests an adaptability and the modernisation of design decisions, as well as the skill of local builders. At the turn of the 20th century, Camillo Sitte, a contemporary of Špiro Nakić, who designed one of the palaces discussed here, considered new theoretical principles for the relationship between the city and architecture. He recognised modifications to architectural language that can be found on the buildings discussed here. Marginalising the imperative of unequivocal design of the building itself, he subordinates it to a higher goal: the achievement of high-quality creative properties for urban space, which is precisely the focus of the second research indicator found in the examples from Split [8].

Newly created structures, if successfully developed, consolidate their urban “niches”, creating new edges and the appearance of urban structures. This can be read through their role in the identification and representation of the image of the city, but also in their flexibility and change in use, which ultimately forms a layered amalgam because the creation of the meaning of built space is the result of a fusion of chronological narrative, collective consciousness, and a wide range of individual perceptions [9]. The decision to protect of these structures, however, is not merely based on an expert evaluation of their urban and architectural characteristics but is also a product of their so-called instrumental connection with space (a dynamic process that is only partly conscious and that includes the evaluation of various individual characteristics). Such a meaning is, after all, an emotional construction that is necessary for architectural heritage to become a vital phenomenon and essence of the urban landscape [10]. This is the focus of the analysis of **the third indicator**.

This study collected and analysed existing scientific, professional, and archival materials. It included plans, cartographic representations, and photo documentation. In addition to the aforementioned data sets, a large number of cartographic representations of the city of Split were collected and analysed. They show the state of the urban fabric in periods significant for the analysis of the development of the area under consideration. In further work, by systematising the collected data, analyses of each building were made, which included the developmental stages of the space in which the building is located; a review of plans, studies, and photo documentation of the historical condition; and a review of the constructed buildings.

According to sociologist Ivan Rogić, urban form, like any form in any other use, guarantees the necessary stability of a certain phenomenon, process, or event. As events become more complicated and less transparent, the search for their form becomes more important. The author concludes that the urban phenomenon is considered extremely complex pre-

cisely because of its multiple intricacies, which result from parallel and connected events on multiple event levels [11]. Therefore, this requires a research methodology that forms a system on which it is possible to experimentally carry out logical analysis in order to extend the data obtained in this way to the phenomenon being investigated and to gain reliable knowledge about it [12].

By applying the modelling methodology outlined above, we were able to meet the aim of this study, which was to determine the urban, architectural, and other aspects that ensured the success of the architectural solution; in this case, this referred to the city-forming features of the buildings in question. With the aforementioned methodological key, the required features were distinguished through detailed processing of the examples selected. The urban planning and architectural tools used were identified and their relationship determined. Elements that appear in all three examples were synthesised using the comparative method, which supports the study's thesis and forms the basis for valorisation and the development of a widely applicable method for researching the dynamic processes within the field of contemporary revitalisation of architectural heritage and its anthropogenic cultural and social emanation as an integrative part of the city landscape.

### 3. Case Study Analysis of Urban Transformations in the Historical Perimeter of Split

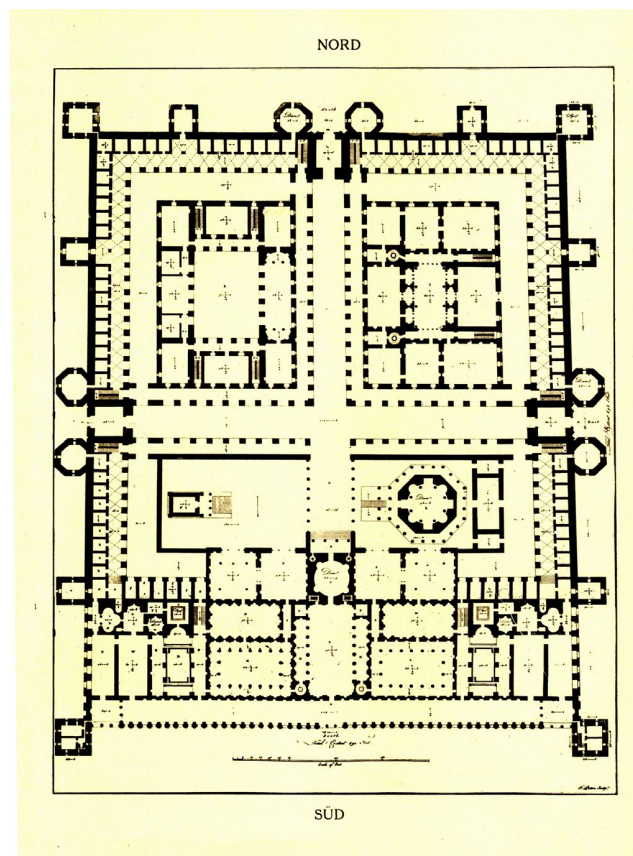
#### 3.1. Historical Background

The history of urban culture in Croatia spans more than 25 centuries, from the first Greek towns dating back to the 5th century BC to the present day. The richness of Croatia's heritage sites has been recognised on a global level: Nine sites and one building from Croatia have a place on UNESCO's World Heritage List. In order to fully understand the process of land transformation in relation to three examples of historical buildings, which are themselves located within a larger protected historical structure that has a history of more than 2000 years of continued human impact on land transformation, a brief overview of the historical development of the city of Split is needed.

##### 3.1.1. Roman Period

It can be claimed that the city of Split grew out of a single house. In the place where the historic centre of Split is today, the Roman emperor Diocletian built a large palace, which he moved into in 305 AD, following his abdication from the imperial throne (Figure 3). The layout of Diocletian's Palace, which combines features of a military camp (Lat. *castrum*) and a residential villa, has been recognised as a world-class example of a Roman building. The massive walls of the palace are fortified with 16 towers and organised into quadrants with two main cross streets (Lat. *cardo* and *decumanus*), which begin at the city gates. The walls enclose a structure that follows the layout of a Roman *castrum*, characteristic of many Roman colonies in Europe and North Africa. Examples of cities that developed from *castra* are Chester in England, Cologne in Germany, and Timgad on the north coast of Africa. Specific to Diocletian's Palace are the southern quadrants, which were intended for the imperial residence and a complex of religious buildings. This is especially evident in the southern façade of the palace, where, high above the sea, a covered arcaded porch (Lat. *cryptoportico*) stretched along its entire length in the manner of a summerhouse. Through the Northern Gate (Lat. *porta aurea*) via the *cardo*, one could proceed directly to the main square (Lat. *peristyle*), from which the main facilities could be accessed: the imperial chambers and the temples. Research has shown that the outstanding natural location, the favourable climatic conditions, and the existence of a source of curative sulphurous mineral water, which was used for rehabilitation treatments, played important roles in the selection of this particular site for the palace. Moreover, the site was also close to Salona, the capital of the Roman province of Dalmatia, which at that time represented an important harbour, as well as an administrative, economic, and military centre [13–15].





**Figure 3.** Plan of Diocletian's Palace by R. Adam from 1764.

### 3.1.2. Early Medieval Period

It was the destruction of Salona at the hands of the Avar and Slav tribes in the early seventh century that led to the first major transformation of the palace. Residents of Salona fleeing these attacks moved into the palace, using it as a shelter. Although the outer walls of the palace remained largely intact, still serving a defensive purpose, the interior was subjected to constant changes for centuries, caused by the needs of an increasing number of people in a limited space. Thus, for example, the main streets of the palace, the *cardo* and *decumanus*, which were once 12 m wide, were narrowed to only a few meters by the addition of new structures. The entire floor plan of the palace, previously geometrically clean, regular, and simple, became a labyrinth of semi-dark streets, small courtyards, and arched passages. Only one part of the palace remained wider and clear of buildings: the area in front of the mausoleum, which was converted into the city's cathedral. The peristyle, the central square of the former palace, became the centre of early medieval Split as well.

With the increase in the number of inhabitants over the course of the 10th and 11th centuries, the palace's framework became too narrow, so new settlements appeared on the slopes of the nearby hills of Marjan and Gripe. These settlements were unprotected and exposed to frequent attack, especially during the Tatar siege (1240–1242). In the 14th century, a new system of defensive walls was constructed to the west, thereby extending the city. Here, the city's inhabitants would seek shelter when under attack, and this structure gave Split a second urban frame within which to develop. This led to a change in the fabric of Split. The city went from being an extremely monocentric structure, with all its main facilities located on the peristyle, to being a bicentric structure. The religious facilities remained on the peristyle, while the city's municipal centre was transferred to today's Narodni trg (People's Square). At that time, the city had only one northern entrance, which was located in the new part of the defensive walls. This entrance marked the beginning of the shortest route to the municipal square, whereas the original northern gate of the palace was walled up.

### 3.1.3. Period of Venetian Rule

After 1420, Split was under the rule of Venice for almost four centuries. The city was included in the Venetian defensive system against the encroaching Ottomans, so the city's walls were reinforced on the northwest side and the ruling Venetians erected a defensive castle with towers around the southwest corner of the palace.

In the 16th century, the Turks conquered the fortress of Klis, which was located on a mountain pass near Split. This enabled free access to the coastal area from the hinterland, and consequently, Split once more faced the immediate threat of war. Despite this, the city continued to develop unhindered in every sense. Thanks to its geographical position on the Adriatic Sea and with good access via the mountain pass mentioned above to the neighbouring country of Bosnia, which was under Turkish occupation, in this period, Split became a lively port and a centre for economic exchange between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. Increasing maritime traffic led to further construction of the seashore in front of the palace. At the end of the 16th century, due to increased trade and defence against the plague, which was carried by caravans, the construction of a storage and quarantine facility began in the city's harbour, southeast of the palace [14].

The emergence of the third city framework, from the 17th century, was influenced by questions of defence rather than by the dynamics of growth. As a result, the city was developed to become a military stronghold: On the land side, it acquired a line of ramparts with bastions that were built around the old stone walls and separate fortifications located on a hill east of the bay, which defended the paths towards the city and the port from the seaward side [14]. These fortifications encircled the entire city, apart from the western and eastern suburbs (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Plan of the medieval city of Split from 1666, with fortifications surrounding the entire city, by Giuseppe Santini.

The war flared up in the 17th century, and the whole of Dalmatia was the stage for constant and exhausting clashes with the Ottoman invaders. However, when the Austrian army defeated the Turks near Belgrade in 1717 and the peace agreement in 1718 ended this age-old threat, the defensive wall system increasingly proved to be an obstacle to the further development of the city. The remainder of the 18th century saw people flee from

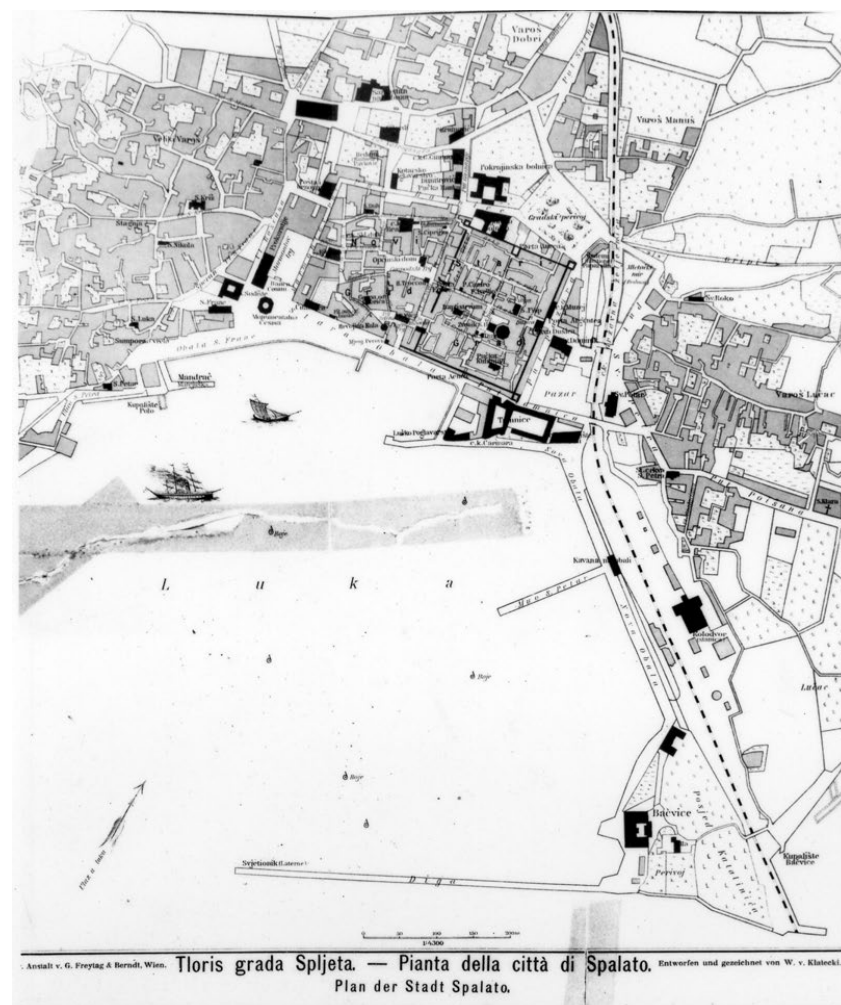


the surrounding areas, which remained under Turkish rule, and settle in the suburbs of Split. They thus enlarged the major settlements already forming around the defensive zone, which were cut off from the city's core.

### 3.1.4. Period of Austrian and French Rule

Split faced a series of changes caused by the Napoleonic Wars: the Austrian occupation in 1797, the French occupation in 1806 (which resulted in the end of the Republic of Venice as an independent state), the English occupation, and then the Austrian reoccupation in 1813. During a short administration (1806–1813), the French Marshal Auguste Marmont undertook a series of activities that were intended to improve the standard of living in the city. Part of the city's Baroque ramparts to the west and north, as well as part of the Venetian castle on the coast, were demolished. With the demolition of the ramparts, the process of merging the city with the surrounding suburbs had begun. On the site of the demolished ramparts, two city parks were built. A city hospital was constructed inside the northern bastion, and a new embankment was formed along the area in front of the southern façade of the palace [14].

The second Austro-Hungarian administration in Split lasted until the end of the First World War. With the arrival of the new administration, the gradual demolition of parts of the city's ramparts continued, and new buildings and gardens were erected in these locations. Thus, in the first few decades of the 19th century, Split lost its medieval form and the historical core increasingly began merging with the suburban settlements into a unique urban structure (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Plan of the city of Split from 1895, showing the disintegration of the fortifications and expansion of the city's tissue.

With this overview of the development of Split until the beginning of the 20th century, the processes and socio-political circumstances in which the city developed have been reviewed. Strong spatial frameworks, primarily defensive in nature, marked the city's historical development. Inside such clearly defined frameworks, despite numerous conquests and wars in this region, a continuity of construction was enabled so that consistent development and redevelopment of the urban fabric could take place. These processes continued in the 20th century, and the examples chosen for the following case studies illustrate them well. Through an analysis guided by methodological indicators, the case studies deal with three buildings—Milesi Palace, Bajamonti Palace, and Nakić Palace.

### 3.2. Milesi Palace

Milesi Palace has established itself as the most representative example of residential Baroque architecture in Split (Figure 6). The Milesi family emigrated from Bergamo at the end of the 16th century and earned the status of nobility by fighting in battles near the town of Herceg Novi. They also became prominent city officials. Although the exact date of construction of their palace was long uncertain, it ceased to be a point of contention following the discovery of information from a poem by Jerolim Kavanjin, a chronicler and poet from the beginning of the 18th century. As the construction of the palace is mentioned in Kavanjin's poem, the original assumption that it was built at the beginning of the 17th century was rejected. There appears to be no information in the archives about the construction, craftsmen, or works on Milesi Palace in Split [3,4].



**Figure 6.** Collage of images of Milesi Palace. (a) Cadastral plan from 1831. The dotted red line marks the position of Milesi Palace. (b) Site plan of Milesi Palace, marked in red, within today's urban tissue of the city of Split. (c) Photograph of the state of Milesi Palace today.



At the time the palace was constructed, the city was still confined within the ramparts, so its expansion to the west was not subject to the imperative of the existing structure to the same extent as the structures within the framework of Diocletian's Palace, the ramparts (the Venetian castle), and the urban tissue. The site of the palace features a conglomerate of three connected squares, which form a specific spatial context, a kind of edge to the city. In one part, fruits were sold—this was known in Italian as the *Piazza delle Legna*; in another it was vegetables—the Italian *Piazza dell'Erba*; and in the third, fish (the *Piazza del Pesce*). The structures that make up that edge belong, on the one hand, to the scale of defensive buildings (the Venetian tower), while on the other side, residential houses about the western perimeter of Diocletian's Palace. Milesi Palace, with its striking and, for its spatial context, sizeable dimensions, is precisely on the border between these two urban scales. This is confirmed by Viki Jakaša Borić, who states that the new palace dominates the space in which it is located [3], while Cvito Fisković notes that, with its position and size, it surpasses the scale of Split at that time [16]. With this, the palace changed the interrelationships in the existing structure, bringing a new value to the public space. The wars with the Ottoman invaders slowly waned, and with the triumph of the Austrian army in 1717, they were finally extinguished. Over time, the ramparts increasingly proved to be an obstacle to the further development of the city. Spatial transformations of the Venetian tower and its demolition over time emphasised the size of Milesi Palace even more, strengthening its role in defining the character of the complex of three squares at the junction of which it is located. The original floor plan, which also includes a record of the neighbouring streets, squares, and buildings, can best be read in the hand-drawn plans of Petar Kurir—they date to 1751, which is the most authentic document in existence, given that the original design for the palace has not been preserved [17]. The palace's main façade faces the Piazza del Pesce, and the building overlooks the smaller square, Piazza delle Legna, to the west. The eastern side is narrow, overlooks the Piazza dell'Erba, and is the most modest of the palace's façades. The north side of the palace overlooks a courtyard (*Corte dei Signori Fuina*). On the site of the former Gothic church of St. James a new building was added, which, unlike the church, leaned against the western part of the northern façade of the palace. Its position was therefore largely free in space, except for the northeast corner, where it rests on the neighbouring complex [3].

However, the urbanistic characteristics of the palace largely depart from the baroque disposition in terms of the usual geometrically clear emplacement, which, with its symmetry and monumentality, often imposes itself as a spatial anchor. In this case, we are referring to the constricted and "closed" city, which, under the constant threat of war, expands beyond its original borders with extreme caution, and as might be expected, first "strains" within them, increasing its density. Existing, usually smaller, medieval plots are combined in order to construct larger houses. Their contours do not change; in fact, they remain written in the floor plans of future buildings. This was recorded in the cadastral report of the municipality of Split, which was created in 1831. This irregularity in the floor plan becomes a compromise that is de facto written into the topos of Split's Baroque residential architecture [3,16]. Moreover, the new Baroque conception of space implies a kind of freedom in dealing with architectural structures and moving away from the classic canon [4]. Milesi Palace was built according to the same key, uniting old plots of land on which smaller buildings had previously stood [3]. This specific spatial adaptation is characterised by another act that diminishes the purity of the Baroque expression: Elements of the found medieval structures were reused in the new building, thus embodying the paradigm of multi-layeredness. Milesi Palace is a true example of this; the main portal was actually built with late Gothic jambs, although it has Baroque trabeation, so scholars agree that it is a question of integrated parts of the houses that were previously located on the site of the palace [3]. It is assumed that the palace takes its stylistic models from Venice but that the craftsmen were probably local and brought their own interpretive touch to the Venetian prototype. Kruno Prijatelj describes the palace as having a more provincial, chaste, and massive form; a dearth of decorative effects; and a restrained ornamental repertoire.

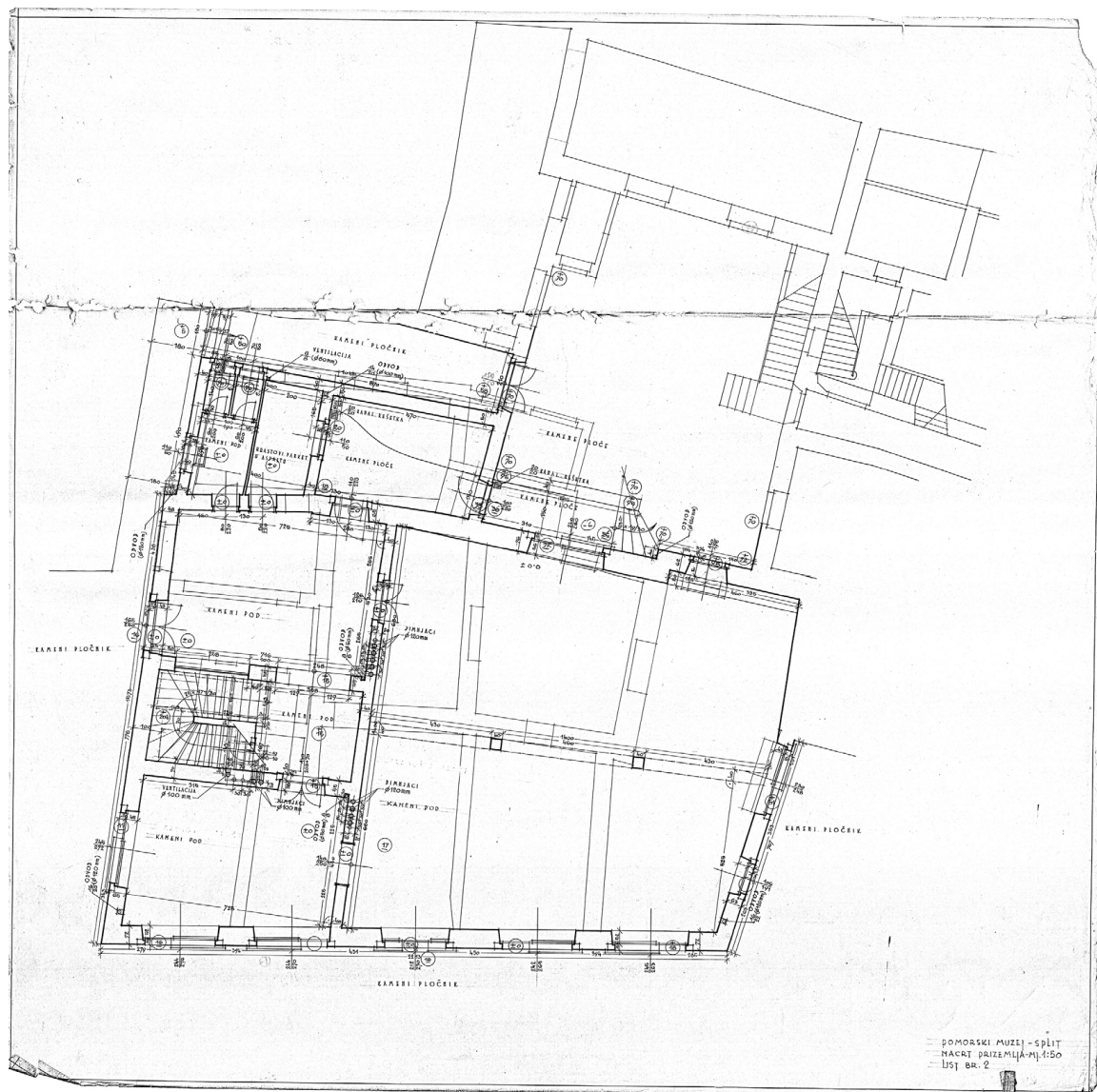
However, the fine sense of rhythm and space and the variations of full and empty on the surface of the façade add a kind of sluggishness, tedium, and heaviness [4]. On the other hand, richer and better-quality architectural elements are present on the upper floors. The lack of decoration on the ground floor is due to the commercial function of that part of the building, thus elaborating on the adaptability of stylistic imperatives to a specific context [3].

At a time when the city was experiencing modest growth, the architecture of Milesi Palace nevertheless echoed social changes: A new social class wanted to display its position and wealth, and the visible façade became a training ground for this very intention; the less visible change, meanwhile, takes place inside the house. Namely, the courtyard of the palace, into which the main portal leads and which has been a common feature since the 14th century, is now becoming smaller. The space that served the nobility as a contemplative garden and from which the main access to the upper floors led is no longer the focus of the floor plan; instead, the staircase retreats into the interior of the house [3]. The design of Milesi Palace's façade can also be seen in Petar Kurir's drawing: When considering the stylistic backbone of the façade, it consists of five axes with openings that graduate in shape and size towards the mansard floor, and their verticality is softened by horizontal dividing cornices. The *piano nobile* on the first floor connects three centrally placed openings with a balcony. However, urbanistically speaking, it is more important that the position of the main entrance to the palace, which by nature should be on the axis of the main façade, has been moved to the west at the expense of a series of shops that are symmetrically placed and subordinated to the central axis, while the entrance doors open the ground floor towards the square. On the one hand, therefore, we have stylistic adaptations, interpreted as the creative impulse of local masters, while on the other hand, the unexpected treatment of the ground floor and attic shows a departure from the expected representativeness and consistency of the Baroque palace [4,16]. The side façades are somewhat more modest both in terms of material (rougher and smaller stonework) and architectural expression, while alterations and additions from later periods can be seen on the western façade [3].

The function of the palace changed over time; it began as a residential building and later became a public one, but the nature of housing at the time the palace was built implied a striking reflection on the public life of the city. There was a casino on the first floor and a ballroom, with a reading room and a lounge, and the entertainment, in addition to games, dances, and formal academies, included music, from Strauss' waltzes to Verdi's compositions. The original function of the ground floor, which contained shops, a warehouse, and an inn, remained stable and thus maintained the dynamic relationship between the house and the public city space. Moreover, they contributed more to the liveliness of the square than the conversion of the palace from residential to public. All traces of the Milesi family gradually disappeared over the course of history. However, it is known that, after the World War, the palace was owned by the lawyer Dr. Leonardo Pezzolio and his sister Matilda. Between the wars, it housed the Czechoslovakian consulate, and since conservators at the time had already valorised the façade of the palace, the consulate had to remove a plate with its coat of arms, which it had installed in 1932 [18].

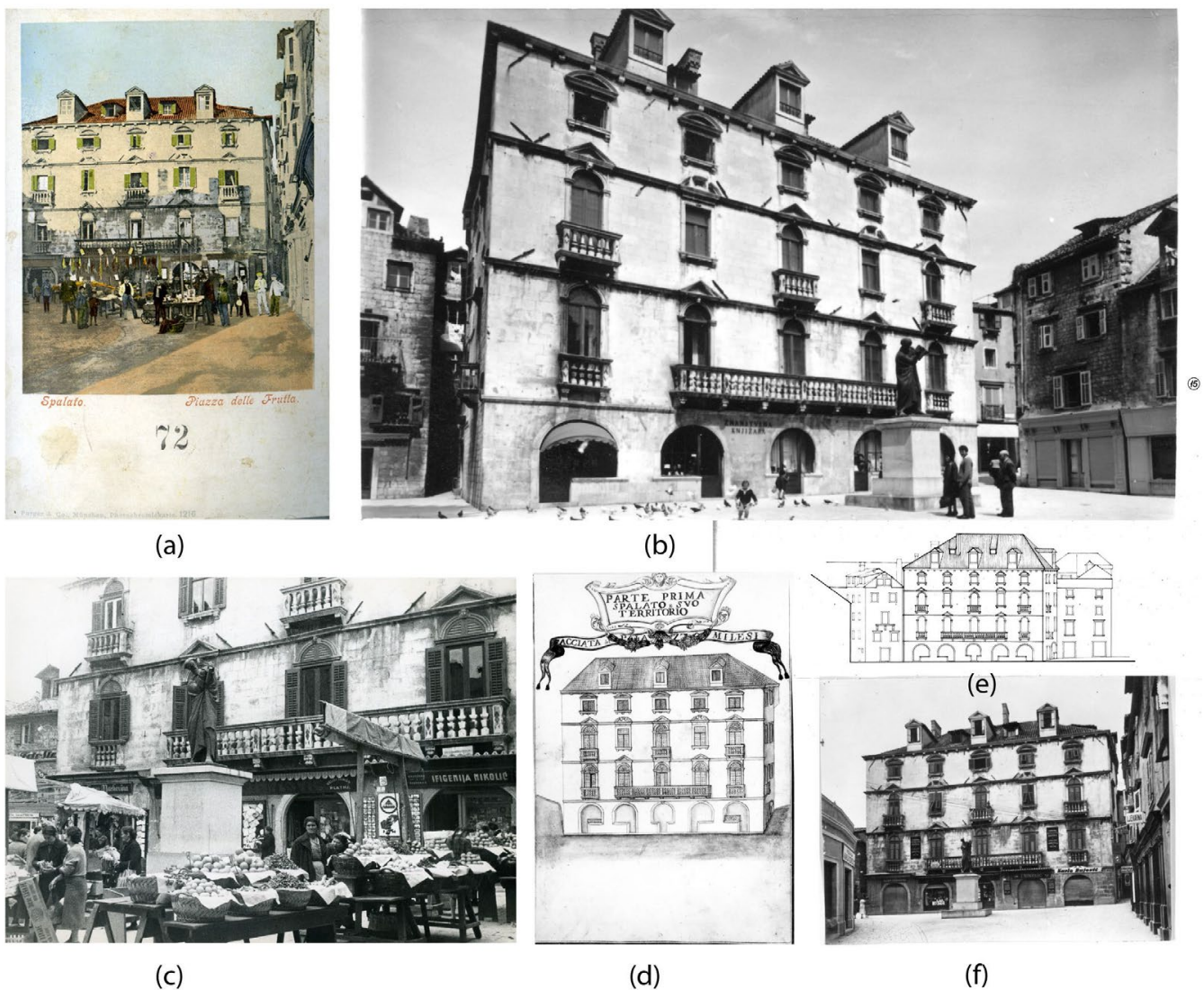
The building underwent changes in function after this date: The interior was completely transformed on several occasions, first in the 19th and later in the 20th century, when the architect Budimir Pervan created an adaptation project, the execution of which was supervised by the Conservation Institute for Dalmatia, which allowed the Maritime Museum to move into the palace at the end of 1954 (Figure 7). In addition to the static reconstruction, the layout of the floor plan was also changed, whereas the external part of the building was preserved, with the reconstruction of the door of the shop on the ground floor. The atrium and staircase retained their original appearance [19]. The museum was in operation until 1985, when it was replaced by the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (today the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts), which hosts numerous public events to this day.





**Figure 7.** Ground-floor plan of Milesi Palace, from the design for its adaptation into a museum from 1954.

The specific context in which Milesi Palace was built greatly influenced its spatial position. Significant modifications to the city's fringes—the defensive castle—successively placed the palace in a different relationship with the built structure. In the immediate collision of the scale of various structures, defensive on one side and residential on the other, this Baroque palace did not impose itself by occupying and emphasising an already defined perimeter; on the contrary, its urban position is unusual—like a kind of “buckle” that brings together the existing medieval structure, which is irregular and heterogeneous—it manages to give the space a firm footing without thwarting the character of functional diversity and thus the compelling nature of this complex spatial conglomerate (Figure 8). The characteristics of the palace's urban form and spatial implementation demonstrate an adaptability that overcomes stylistic imperatives. By significantly changing the morphology of the associated spatial context, the palace forms a new layer, and with its facilities it “preserves” the urbanity of its squares, the uses of which have changed significantly. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to conclude that it successfully consolidated the city space and formed a new urban landscape in the historical core of the city.



**Figure 8.** Collage of images illustrating the role of Milesi Palace in the urbanscape of the city of Split throughout history: (a) postcard c. 1910; (b) photograph c. 1960 following reconstruction; (c) photograph c. 1930; (d) hand-drawn plan by Petar Kurir, print from 1751; (e) measured building survey of the historical core block 20; (f) photograph from 1928.

### 3.3. Bajamonti Palace

Bajamonti Palace (Figure 9) was built between 1857 and 1858. It developed into a kind of apotheosis of a turbulent period in Split's history: On the one hand, it marked the beginning of a new political period of autonomist rule represented by Antonio Bajamonti's 20-year leadership, and on the other hand, in this private enterprise, Bajamonti symbolically compressed his ambition and the collectivist momentum of the city's progress in the context of modernisation. It is obvious, as Duško Kečkemet says, that Bajamonti was ideologically and politically stigmatised as an Irredentist—an opponent of the unification of what was then Dalmatia with northern Croatia—but it is undeniable that he put provincial Split on the map as a small but nevertheless European city [20]. In the mid-19th century, Split had a population of around 13,000. The majority of its inhabitants lived a semi-rural and difficult life. The middle class was built on the remains of the last noble families of medieval Split, as well as families of merchants and the families of officials who had immigrated during the Venetian administration. In addition, it also included Apennine and Austrian craftsmen who, over the course of several generations, completed the new bourgeois class. In addition, a touch of cultural modernisation was brought by sailors and captains, and



by wealthier citizens who took trips to Trieste, Venice, Vienna, and Paris [20]. Despite his political rigidity, Bajamonti, thanks to his family circle, in which his uncle Julije Bajamonti was a major influence, had libertarian and democratic beliefs, and he made his mark as a refined, progressive, and skilled speaker beloved by his fellow citizens. For him, Split was the city of the future (in Italian: “*città del avvenire*”) [20]. Moreover, Antonio Bajamonti did not merely speak of progress for the city: At the beginning of his mandate, a new regulatory plan was adopted by the municipal council in 1860 and was entrusted to the engineer Francesco Locati. In 1875, a new Construction Rulebook was adopted, and the so-called Official Commission was in charge of renovation, while the conservator of antiquities took care of Diocletian’s Palace, a task initially assigned to Vicko Andrić [20].



**Figure 9.** Collage of images of Bajamonti Palace. (a) Cadastral plan from 1831. The dotted red line marks the position of Bajamonti Palace. (b) Site plan of Bajamonti Palace, marked in red, within today’s urban tissue of the city of Split. (c) Photograph of the state of Bajamonti Palace today.

The spatial frame of Bajamonti Palace was generated by two factors. It finds itself at the convergence of the shoreline (known as the “Riva”, the harbourside walkway), the ground plan “imprint” of the demolished Baroque rampart Šperun, and the existing spatial frame of the Church of St. Francis, with a monastery behind it. At this time, the church and monastery marked the end of the city and the beginning of the periphery. The periphery at this time radiated a different kind of modernisation and progress, playing host to symbols of the city’s newfound prosperity: from the small harbour of St. Francis, which was given a shipyard in 1854; to the skerries further west along the coast; to the Giraldis and Bettiza



factory (from 1870 onwards), a soap and leather factory; to the Cukrov bell foundry [20]. The urban transformation of the coast began with the demolition of the Venetian tower [21], extending it by filling up the shoreline towards the west. The French general Marmont also intervened in the scale of the city: He aimed to make the new shoreline more attractive with a series of uniform houses by the architect Basili Mazzoli, with a striking urban park at the end, but the project was never built [20]. Bajamonti's house, meanwhile, developed as a result of interesting circumstances: through a symbiotic mix of his collective and private goals. The problems with the financing of Vicko Andrić's renovation of the city's water supply system were solved with an auction in 1855, during which the land on which the palace would one day stand was sold to raise funds. By purchasing the land, Antonio Bajamonti opportunely achieved his personal goal [20] (Figure 10).

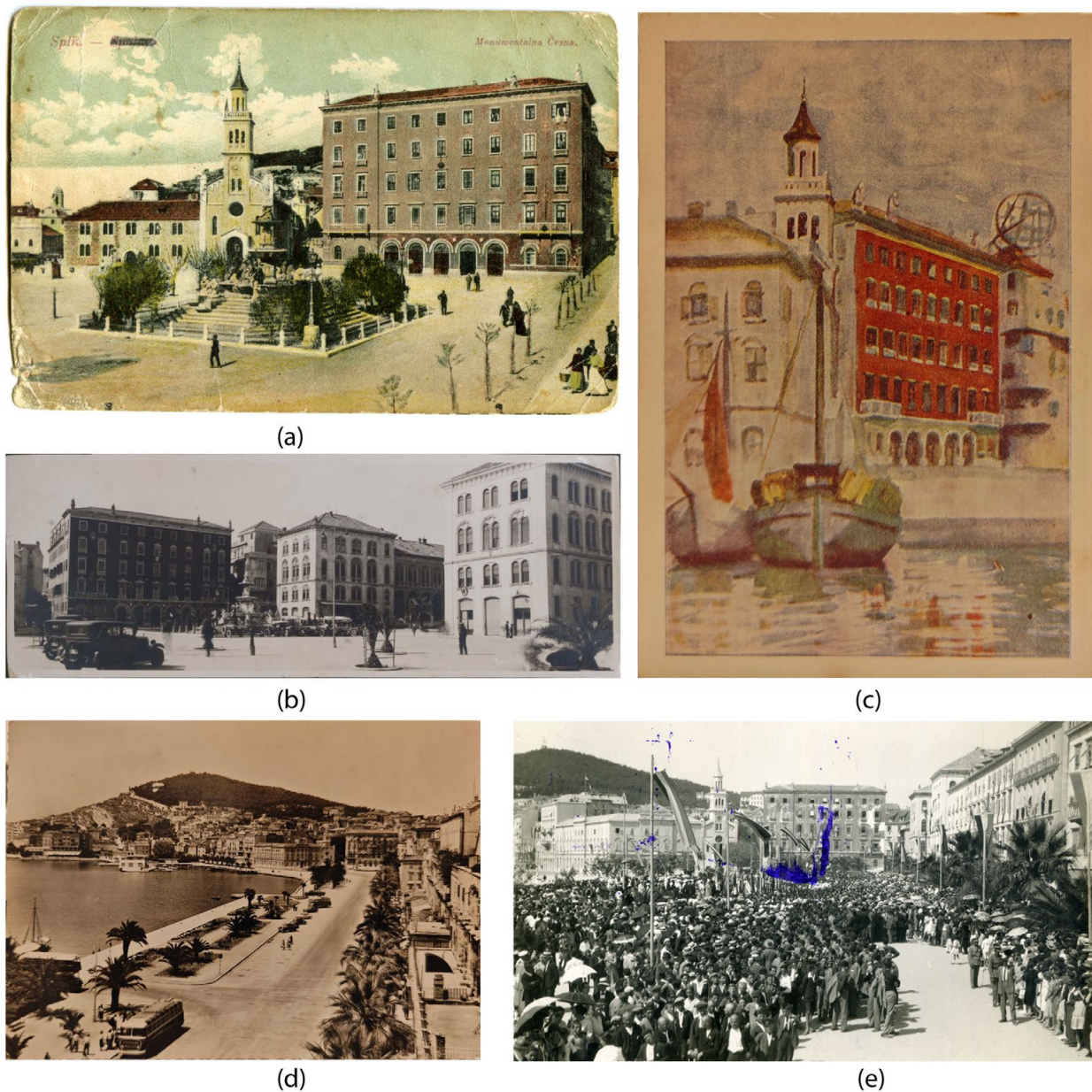
The location of the palace is not accidental. With its position beside the church and monastery of St. Francis, Bajamonti Palace closes off the western perimeter of Split's Riva, thus making ideas originally proposed by Auguste Marmont a reality. With its imposing height and size, it obscures the smaller structures of the city's suburbs, which some scholars interpret as a deliberate act, attributing it to the desire to design an imposing façade for the city [22]. The palace took its architectural language from the classical Venetian palatial repertoire. This impulse is, of course, in the spirit of the European influences at that time, but it also has a direct connection with Antonio Bajamonti. This is because Bajamonti acquired the funds for its construction from the sale of a Venetian palace on the Grand Canal, which he had inherited from Elena Cippico, Julie Bajamonti's daughter. With a strong feeling for Venetian architecture, he leant towards the Neo-Renaissance style. What also takes over is the principle of emphasising the main façade, with the three side wings unadorned. However, there is one variation: On the south wing there were niches with sculptures (today they are no longer there), which positioned the house towards the street that separates it from the church. The palace, an imposing three-story building with a mansard, is also decorated with four large sculptures, which are stylistically associated with the Venetian sculptor Luigi Ceccone.

Antonio Bajamonti built his new family house, but he did not intend it to serve only a residential function. The building also housed the municipal administration of the autonomist party (1861–1880), the chamber of commerce, the municipal office, the court half a century later, and, from 1932, the post office and the headquarters of some societies (for instance, the Workers' Society) [18]. The first Split photographers (Pietro Zink and others) had spaces in the attic, and it was from their studios that the first photographs of Split were taken [20]. In the 1930s, the studio of the famous sculptor Branko Dešković [20] was located there, and later Dujmo Penić and the painters Frano Meneghello-Dinčić, Mate Meneghello, and Vinko Foretić also worked in the palace [18]. Thus, in the spirit of Bajamonti's life and work, the palace undoubtedly played a significant role in the public, civic, and political, as well as in the cultural, life of Split.

Bajamonti Palace framed the western façade of the city's main coastal promenade, suggestively uniting the series of heterogeneous layers that surround it. As the first prominent palace of the new bourgeois class, its stylistic and architectural superiority, as well as its imposing nature in relation to its urban surroundings, marked it as a kind of symbol of the new, advanced city. It was also a visually recognisable building; although in the beginning it was plastered with colourless plaster, the main façade was later painted an eye-catching red [20], and it thus became an integral part of the city's views and marinas. Even serious changes in the immediate surroundings (the construction of the Prokurative buildings and the square that connects them to the coast, controversial changes around the fountain, and oscillations in the horticultural arrangement) did not "shake" the strong and dominant role of Bajamonti Palace in the formation of a new, impressive urban scape (Figure 11).







**Figure 11.** Collage of images illustrating the role of Bajamonti Palace in the urbanscape of the city of Split throughout history: (a) postcard from the turn of the 20th century, (b) photograph c. 1940, (c) postcard c. 1960, (d) postcard from 1960, (e) photograph from 1926.

### 3.4. Nakić Palace

The circumstances that preceded the construction of this palace on the western edge of the city's main medieval square resemble a palimpsest. The historical layers of construction have been repeatedly erased so that the space may be reused for new purposes that correspond to changes in socio-historical circumstances. The starting point of the development of this square is the Western (the so-called "Iron") Gate of Diocletian's Palace (Lat. *Porta Occidentalis*), from which the square has expanded to the west on several occasions throughout history.

Initially, a church was built at the eastern point of the square and then a cemetery around it, but over time the square lost its religious character and became the main secular centre of medieval Split. Trade began taking place on the square, and under Venetian rule, public buildings such as the duke's palace, dungeon, and theatre were placed on the square. Through each of these changes, the square changed its morphology and gradually



expanded towards the west. These changes are recorded in the historical maps of the city of Split [23].

In addition to the change in shape and new developments, the peripheral buildings were often upgraded in such a way that a floor or two was raised on top of the previous historical layer, or one block of buildings was completely demolished to build new, more impressive ones. The last major change in the square's morphology took place in the 1820s, when, due to deterioration, an entire complex of public buildings, which consisted of the duke's palace, dungeon, and theatre, was demolished. The square thus lost its articulated format and the city's facilities were relocated [23,24]. Consequently, the square expanded further west, and low and unremarkable houses, where the Špiro Nakić family's shop was located, became part of the perimeter of the square.

The end of the 19th century was marked by a change in the political leadership of the city (the People's Party won the elections in 1882 and replaced the government under the leadership of Antonio Bajamonti as mayor). The newly formed municipal administration strove to meet the city's living needs, and despite the lack of economic support from the state and underdeveloped industrial production, it contributed to the development of the city, which can be seen in active construction activity and increased cultural activities.

This was a period of economic prosperity in Split, which was mostly based on the wine trade. As a result of these activities, commercial traffic in the port of Split gradually but constantly grew, and at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the city of Split became the most important economic centre in Dalmatia and the second port in terms of traffic within the territories under Austrian rule. In addition to the wine industry, the drivers of development were local entrepreneurs, even though the economy was limited to craft production. The reasons for the absence of stronger industrial production were the lack of capital, lack of railway connections with the hinterland, and limited state investment.

These circumstances at the beginning of the 20th century had a positive effect on the cultural and artistic life of the city, and many cultural and artistic societies were founded, various newspapers and magazines were launched, and cultural establishments organised plays and exhibitions. Most of the young artists from Split went abroad to be educated, and on visits to their hometown, they would organise exhibitions, although they did not have adequate space for them. In the absence of an exhibition space, young sculptors and other artists from Split exhibited in shop windows and cafes [25].

In that period, Špiro Nakić, the son of a successful shop owner, finished his studies in architecture in Vienna and returned to live in Split. Schooled in a modern spirit, he successfully persuaded his father to invest in the construction of a new, modern palace within the historic core of the city of Split [26].

The store and warehouse of the Nakić family were located in a block of smaller and unremarkable buildings with shops on the ground floor, which gradually became the western edge of the main city square. This situation was recorded in the cadastral report of the municipality of Split, which was drawn up in 1831 [27].

The family recognised the potential and importance of the location and decided to sell off their warehoused goods in order to demolish the existing buildings and begin building a new palace. The architect Špiro Nakić designed a new building within the framework defined by the existing street network but different in expression and urban scale and thus successfully established a new image for the western perimeter of this city square (Figure 12).

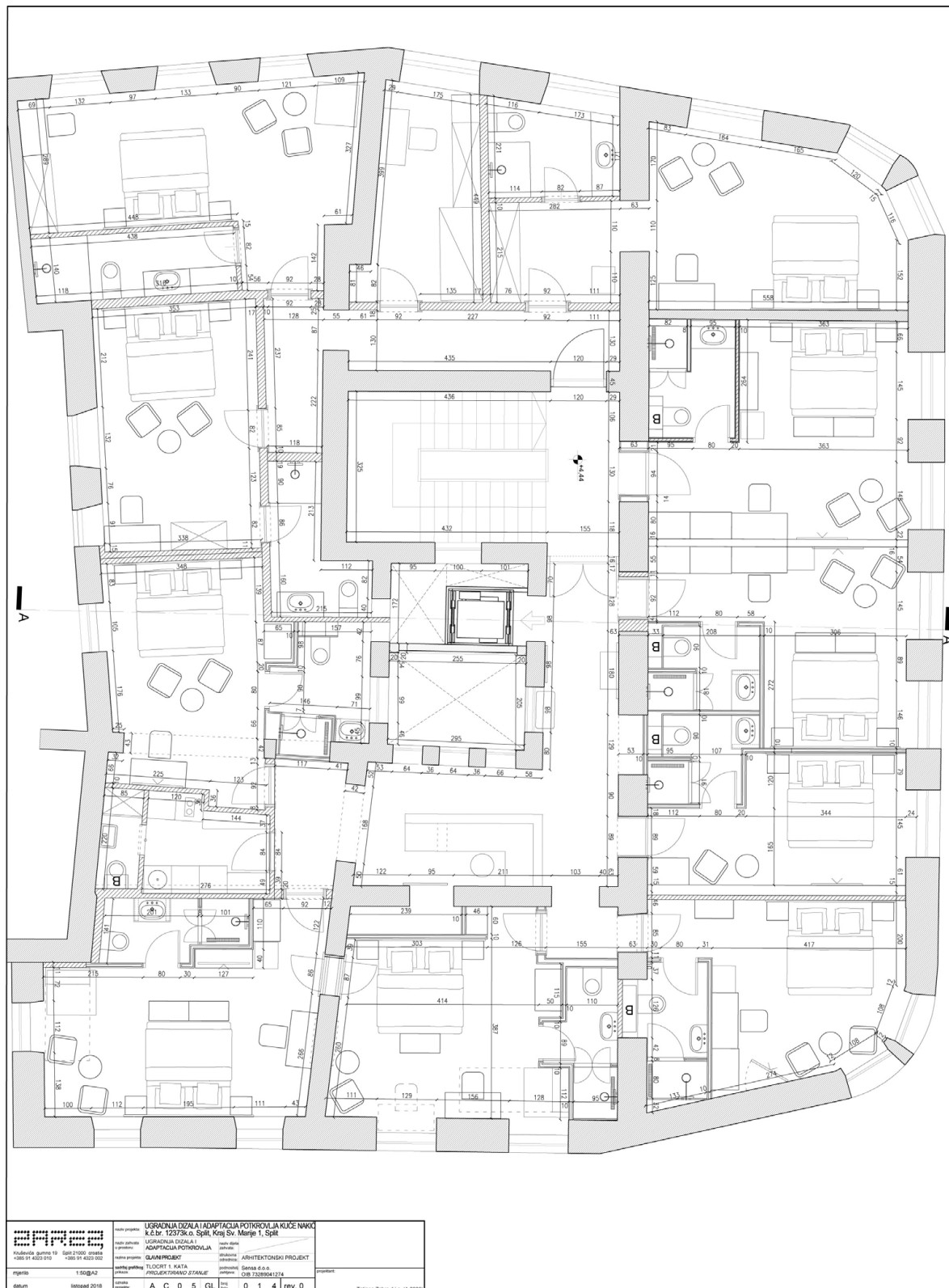
The shape of the building was mostly defined by the existing cadastral parcels, which already had a clearly defined edge towards the public city area and the surrounding narrow alleys and their associated buildings. The parcel on the northeast corner already had a specific trapezoid shape, the breaking point of which was at the junction of the street and the square. The parcels on the southeast corner formed a kind of extension of the street in contact with the square. This defined three sides of the building—north, east, and south—while the west side was incorporated into the existing block of buildings.

Furthermore, some of the walls from the previous building were reused as part of the new floor plan.

The building is an irregular quadrangle in shape, with specific rounded corners facing the square, and it was conceived as a four-story building with clear differentiation in the design of the ground floor, first floor, two upper floors, and the attic beneath the pitched roof (Figure 13). Several different architectural tools were used. The ground floor is designed with large glass panels and wooden elements painted in dark green and decorated with a series of stylised mouldings. The first floor is “separated” from the ground floor and the floors above by horizontal cornices and has an additional pronounced horizontality in the form of mouldings imitating rustic masonry. The upper two floors form a unique main design composition of which the first floor forms a sort of base, and the ground floor is read as a pedestal. The wall fabric of the second and third floors is plastered flat with a series of shallow protrusions—pilasters that extend through both floors between the window axes. The pilasters are richly ornamented with stylised plant ornaments, motifs typical of Art Nouveau. Above this is a steeply sloped red roof with round dormer windows.



**Figure 12.** Collage of images of Nakić Palace. (a) Cadastral plan from 1831. The dotted red line marks the position of Nakić Palace. (b) Site plan of Nakić Palace, marked in red, within today's urban tissue of the city of Split. (c) Contemporary photograph of the palace.



**Figure 13.** Second floor plan of Nakić Palace, the 2018 design for the adaptation of the palace into a hotel.

The division in design corresponds to the logic of the construction, as well as the distribution of facilities within the building. The structural solution for the ground floor involved a specific type of steel beam and concrete floor construction supported on the perimeter walls, which enabled good organisation of the stores on the ground floor, and



on the upper floors, where the offices and apartments were located. The rest of the floors and the roof were built with wooden constructions supplemented by exterior and partition walls made of brick. The first floor, which is slightly lower than the other floors, is assumed to have been originally intended for business premises, while two apartments per floor were placed on the second and third floors. The apartments were quite large and most certainly represented luxury for the period in which they were built. The original floor plans of the apartments were typical for the period of construction, dominated by narrow and long corridors in the back leading to spacious rooms on the outer walls of the building.

This differentiation is further emphasised by the design of the windows. Despite the axial and symmetrical setting, five window axes are oriented towards the square, with two in the rounded part, and in each horizontal zone they change format or size, thereby contributing to the reading of the different design elements of the façade. The roof windows, with their specific round shape, are set aside in relation to the façade, thereby beautifying the appearance of the roof surface and only participating in the composition from a greater distance, as the end of the window axes.

The specifics of the architectural organisation can be recognised in the somewhat eccentric removal of the main entrance from the main axis of the building. The entrance to the house is on the north side. It leads to a long, narrow corridor via which you enter the stairwell. Placing the entrance in this way allowed flexibility in the organisation of the shops on the ground floor, which faced the square. Numerous adaptations and changes in the functions of this part of the structure, none of which had a major impact on the overall appearance of the building, indicate the quality of this solution.

This building is the first in Split to be built in the Secession style, and it is among the first, if not the first, such building in Dalmatia. The decision to build in the Art Nouveau style was questioned by the public, as evidenced by several records from local newspapers of that period [23]. Despite this, the very quality of the design and its elegance were indisputable, and soon the building itself became a symbol of Split.

The construction of the building can be connected to the long period in which this city square was an important part of the life of the city. The site of frequent events, the square itself has been an unavoidable point of spontaneous socialising for many years. There was, of course, a period of stagnation due to the two world wars, but it remained a meeting place until the end of the 20th century, more precisely the 1990s, when there was once again a period of stagnation due to the Croatian War of Independence.

In most periods, the ground floor of the building was occupied by a bookstore, and for a short period, it also housed an information office, thus actively engaging in the life of the city square. But interestingly, the building itself has, in addition to the active role played by the facilities on the ground floor, often served as a part of the scenery, a canvas on which changes in socio-historical circumstances have been displayed to the public. All this is evidenced by numerous photos that show the various inscriptions and signs that were placed on the façade of the building throughout its history.

Therefore, the change that took place in 2019, when several small hotels were placed on the upper floors, can be characterised as successful, in that it maintained the role that the building had throughout history. The hotel rooms were laid out in such a way that the existing organisation of the space was respected, thus maintaining a good relationship between all the hotel rooms and windows overlooking the town square. The attic has also been remodelled into individual rooms. Given that it is unusual to place more than one hotel in a single building, the receptions are located on the first and second floors, and they are accessed from the stairwell, through the northern entrance. This maintains the logic of placing commercial facilities on the ground floor, which, as independent units, are accessed directly from the square. By keeping this solution, the active role of the building in the life of the square has continued. In addition, during the construction work, the entire façade was refurbished.

With the construction of this building, the image and identity of this part of the city was established, and there were no further morphological changes in the shape of the

square and surrounding urban structure. All further interventions in the arrangement of the square were either interior remodelling or the refurbishment of the façade of an individual building, including the restoration of the façade of Nakić Palace.

It is fair to say that Nakić Palace contributed to the creation of a new urban identity for the cityscape. The building arose as a reflection of the socio-political circumstances of the time and successfully became the bearer of an established identity in the following period. The rounded corners greatly contribute to the contemporary appearance of the building in the heterogeneous system of peripheral buildings that now line the square but with clear historical layers. This is a gesture with which incredible fluidity of the urban landscape has been obtained and which invites further exploration of the urban fabric (Figure 14).



**Figure 14.** Collage of images illustrating the role of Nakić Palace in the urbanscape of the city of Split throughout history: (a) photograph c. 1905, (b) photograph c. 1910, (c) postcard c.1910, (d) photograph c. 1910, (e) photograph c. 1930, (f) photograph c. 1967, (g) photograph c. 1960 at Christmastime.



#### 4. Discussion

The processes of development and the historical and spatial frameworks of the urban tissue within which the buildings discussed above were placed influenced all the essential characteristics of their urban and architectural solutions. The case study analysis resulted in a series of characteristics that belong to the selected methodological indicators—palimpsest, emplacement, and echoes. These characteristics were sorted in a table so that they can be read and compared (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Indicators of urbanscape transformation in the historical perimeter of Split.

Indicators	Milesi Palace	Bajamonti Palace	Nakić Palace
<b>Palimpsest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baroque style, one of the notable architectural projects of the 18th century in Split</li> <li>- Built by newly established nobility, prominent city officials of that period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neo-Renaissance style, representative example of residential architecture in Split from the 19th century</li> <li>- Built by the future mayor of the city</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First building in Split built in the Secession style, with large residential flats overlooking the city square</li> <li>- Built by a prominent merchant family from that period</li> </ul>
<b>Emplacement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transforming the edge of the city block</li> <li>- Transformation and merging of smaller existing plots</li> <li>- Dominating with scale within existing urban structure (creating new urban scale)</li> <li>- Leaning on existing urban tissue structure</li> <li>- Reusing found building structures (jambs, walls, etc.)</li> <li>- Corresponding square shaped by the demolition of fortifications (successively from 1806)</li> <li>- Development of irregular floor plan following the medieval plot matrix</li> <li>- Adaptation of the architectural expression to the local micro-context</li> <li>- Lateral positioning of the main entrance, giving priority to placement of shops on the ground floor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Closing and consolidating the western edge of the seaside promenade</li> <li>- Plot derived from the demolition of fortifications (around 1808)</li> <li>- Dominating with scale in relation to the nearby suburb of Varoš</li> <li>- Continuation of the building line of the façade of the neighbouring monastery</li> <li>- Adaptation of the architectural expression to the local micro-context</li> <li>- Placement of shops on the ground floor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Redefining the new edge of the city square</li> <li>- Transformation and merging of smaller existing plots</li> <li>- Dominating with scale within existing urban structure (creating new urban scale)</li> <li>- Deviation from the construction line by means of rounded corners</li> <li>- Corresponding square transformed by the demolition of deteriorating complex of public buildings (1821)</li> <li>- Leaning on existing urban tissue structure</li> <li>- Reuse of found building structures</li> <li>- Adaptation of the architectural expression to the local micro-context</li> <li>- Lateral positioning of the main entrance, giving priority to placement of shops on the ground floor</li> </ul>
<b>Echoes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Postcard motif: symbol of the city, frequently featured on postcards</li> <li>- Markets on the squares next to the building</li> <li>- Shops and warehouses on the ground floor, bookshop</li> <li>- Different public facilities on the first floor: reading room, ballroom, casino, lounge, consulate</li> <li>- Maritime Museum (1954–1985)</li> <li>- Yugoslav Academy of Science and Arts (since 1985)</li> <li>- Public events in front of the building, with advertising on the balcony of the first floor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Postcard motif: symbol of the city, frequently featured on postcards</li> <li>- Shops on the ground floor</li> <li>- Public facilities on the upper floors and studios on the attic floor: photographers' studios, artists' ateliers, municipal and political party offices, chamber of commerce, court, post office, headquarters of various societies</li> <li>- Political and religious events on the corresponding square next to the building</li> <li>- Public events in front of the building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Postcard motif: symbol of the city, frequently featured on postcards</li> <li>- Shops, information office, bookstore on the ground floor</li> <li>- Different facilities on the upper floors: administrative offices, small hotels</li> <li>- Political and religious events on the corresponding square next to the building</li> <li>- Public events in front of the building and on the balcony of the second floor</li> </ul>

Although the indicators mark clear characteristics of the processes of development, they should not be understood unambiguously. These processes are complex, and their role in urban transformations should be viewed integrally. As a response to the socio-historical circumstances, modernity in the design approach gave these buildings additional value, which was proven by the dynamic processes of the life of these structures. Although the very modernity of the design of these buildings was a topic of debate, time has confirmed



this type of approach. Moreover, if we look at the heterogeneity of the architectural language used in the individual design of these structures, it could also be considered a confirmation of the “theory of dressing” (Germ. *Bekleidungstheorie*) established by the German architect Gottfried Semper in 1860. According to Semper, in addition to closing the established constructive framework and lateral protection of the interior entity, the vertical envelope of the building took on the key function of communication with the immediate social environment and the entire living framework of the city. It is stated by researcher Karin Šerman, apostrophising this “exterior–exterior” communication as the most suitable and logical for the outer envelope of the building, that the outer space is what the building’s façade articulates and with which it imperatively—for the sake of accurate information and collective historical orientation—communicates coherently [28].

Consequently, we can read exactly these values in all three of the structures analysed above. The coherent communication between the façade and the spatial context, which was achieved precisely through active critical and creative expression resulting from adaptation and sensitivity towards the micro-context in all three examples, is proof of a rational balance between the architectural and stylistic patterns and the priorities derived from a concrete reading of the space. These interwoven city-building values ensured that these houses played an active role as bearers of cultural identity throughout the following centuries, despite a series of changes in their function and manner of use. It could be claimed that it was precisely because of these values that the structures retained and developed their significance. The relationship between open city spaces—squares and the main façades of the buildings analysed here—is the factor that sets them apart from other buildings from their period. Through this dialogue, they became a backdrop of city life. This is confirmed by the fact that their urban and architectural appearance has become instantly recognisable, a symbol of the city. They became a frequent and unavoidable motif on postcards, and with their various advertising and social inscriptions and messages, which were “glued” to their main façades, they were in constant communication with Split’s citizens.

The façade’s scenographic role can also be considered an important factor in the preservation of the buildings and their appearance to this day. Proof of this claim is the permanence of the buildings, despite the frequent changes that took place in the surrounding areas, where there was a constant search for consolidation. In the case of Milesi Palace, it was the changes in use or spatial dimensions, such as the removal of a series of buildings on an adjacent square. In the case of Bajamonti Palace, it was changes to the shoreline and the installation and subsequent demolition of the so-called “Bajamontuša” fountain and the extension of the Prokurative complex. In the case of Nakić Palace, it was disagreements over its role in defining the urban format of the People’s Square, as well as a series of different ground-floor arrangements and the placement of various types of monuments in the square. Also, the shapes of the plots were almost completely predefined, and the different incoherent urban scales of the surrounding developments called for the establishment of a new urban standard to articulate and/or consolidate those parts of the city in which they were built. Moreover, such circumstances required a shift in the use of established architectural and urban planning tools—more precisely, a fine-tuning of particular tools modified according to the circumstances encountered. This is evident in the floor plans of the buildings analysed, which were aligned with those of existing structures. It can also be seen in the deviation from the standard positioning of the main entrance on the main façade in the case of the Milesi and Nakić palaces and by the treatment of the main façade, which differs from the other elevations.

## 5. Conclusions

All three of the buildings discussed above are part of a historical complex protected by UNESCO and are themselves protected on the national level [29]. They play an active role in understanding of the city’s identity. They have become an integral part of the touristic landscape, which is consumed by an increasing number of visitors every year. What is important is to recognise the key elements of the contributions made by individual

structures to the image of the city. In the context of more than 1700 years of continued urban life on a single site, the multi-layered identities of the historical core, growing out of a process of constant change, have been recognised as having “outstanding universal value” by UNESCO. Therefore, it is imperative to preserve each layer of identity. When it comes to the three selected examples, the principles of transformation have been demonstrated: the multi-layered nature of the pre-existing structure, the consolidating effect of the specific urban emplacement, and the improvement to the *imageability* of the city—these represent the key elements that established city-building features, and they need to be actively considered for further protection and use. This confirms the approach that cultural heritage should not be seen as a static object but that it can and must be seen as an active participant in activities aimed at improving the quality of the landscape and the quality of life [2].

In light of UNESCO’s protection of Outstanding Universal Values for listed sites, within the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention [30], it is important to add the dynamic function of community life to heritage to strengthen the credibility of its role in the life of the city. This should be implemented through formal and informal mechanisms, from traditional practices to different levels of planning instruments. The historic core of Split is one of numerous UNESCO World Heritage Sites that include historic city centres that are still inhabited today. Solving the problems of its contemporary protection, management, and planning requires a holistic approach and the integration of numerous indicators that serve for detailed valorisation. Since 2011, UNESCO has recognised such urban structures, which are referred to as Historical Urban Landscapes (HULs). This approach considers living, protected historical centres for more than just their monumental and visual value [31]. Therefore, this analytical model can be applied to other examples of architectural heritage within the protected historical core of Split, as well as to other examples of buildings located within heterogeneous historical layers of any city, which represents the original scientific contribution of this research.

This study of urbanscape transformation is a continuation of previous historical studies that have always been the bearers of theoretical thoughts for the further modern development of cities, as well as a record of a living model of the transformation of the built environment in accordance with the needs of the population. The approach to such environments, which is shaped and modified throughout history and today is nurtured through the adaptive reuse of cultural heritage policies [32], shows that transformation and adaptation are the key to learning and, consequently, acting in space. In Split, this can be seen throughout history, from Robert Adam to Herman Hertzberger, who absorbed the nature of these processes through the transformation of the ancient Diocletian’s Palace to today, when we try to look at them as comprehensively as possible. Examples, such as the three selected for this study, which have been an integral part of city life for centuries, represent a valuable knowledge base from which the principles of urbanscape transformation can be recognised and improved in accordance with the needs of a living city while protecting architectural and urban heritage.

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