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THE CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

EKATERINA BESEDINA, ANASTASIA KHATSKEVICH, RAISA PLATONOVA
Polotsk State University, Belarus

This article presents an analysis of historical and architectural aspects of the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, located in the town of Disna, Miory district, Vitebsk region. Highlights cultural value and uniqueness of the object. Particular attention is paid to history of the town, which makes clear the importance of the architectural object for the town. Along with the architectural design work it provides information about the current state of the church.

Disna – the smallest city of the Republic of Belarus. The city has a population of 2 thousand people, and nevertheless the town is known not only in the country but also outside its borders. It is located in the northwest of the country, in Miory district, Vitebsk region, at the confluence of two rivers: The Disna and the Western Dvina [1].

For the first time in documents, the city was mentioned as far back as the 11th century under the name "Kopec-town" and has been an important subject in the way "from the Vikings to the Greeks." And in 1461 the town was mentioned under the present name Disna. However, the fortified settlement of Disna in the composition of the Polotsk province in the island at the confluence of two rivers known from later sources - according to the information of Polotsk "scribe books" for 1563.

It is said about the existence here Kopec, that is earthwork (from the word "копать"). At the same time in front of the fortified island on the left bank of the river Disna, "Disna village" has already existed. Thus, the rapid development and the strengthening of the city in the XVI century, due not only to favorable strategic and topographical situation, but "lived-in" of the land in the previous century [2].

Stefan Batory – his name is closely linked to the history of the city, he built fortifications on the banks of the Dvina. After the capture of Polotsk by Ivan the Terrible (1563), the Polish King Stefan Batory, trying to compensate for the loss, began to accelerate construction of the castle Disna. A new castle complex, stretching along the island (at the same time the southern channel of the river widens and deepens), absorbed old earthworks. The court builder S. BatoryGuinga from Urbino constructs Fortress of Disna. Kopec now became known as the Old Castle. In essence it was a single military fortress, is well known for wars XVI–XVIII centuries.

However, the castle, built by him and served as the basis for the formation of the city, could not resist and was destroyed, especially severe destruction it suffered in the 1812 war. To date, there are only ruins of the castle. Despite, in the city there are other interesting sights. Only the views that open from the lookout on the high banks of the Dvina dazzle the eyes of its power and beauty [3].

Franciscan Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary – is the main shrine and landmark in the city (fig. 1). This is one of the few historical and cultural heritage of the city of Disna preserved today. Stefan Batory built it to the same accelerated construction of the castle in 1553, but in the future it has been destroyed and in its place, in the 18th century, a new church was built. However, it could not resist and survive the Second World War.



Fig. 1. Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary - is undoubtedly a unique monument of architecture of the late 18th century. Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary – Catholic dogma, which states that the Virgin Mary was conceived though ordinary parents – Joachim and Anna, but the original sin has not passed on her. Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is celebrated in the Catholic world on December 8 [1].

The church was built in 1773 in Baroque style. For a long time it was the main place of worship in this town and its surroundings. However, as it has already been mentioned, it was badly damaged during the Second World War. After its graduation, the Church has been neglected, and time has continued to destroy it.

In the last decade, the reconstruction of the building: Vitebsk diocese holds its examination and the conservation is started – forests are set, the area of the church is fenced, the work on the prevention of the building from further damage is begun. In spite of the fact, that virtually all of it is "dressed" in scaffolding, even through it, it is perfectly visible that the architecture is majestic (fig. 2) [4].



Fig. 2. Restoration of the church, 2016

Thus, based on the study, it should be noted that the Church has a great cultural value for the city. It is not well known, however, as one of the oldest surviving buildings of the city, the church became an important cultural and historical monument of the city of Disna.

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