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## CENTRAL EUROPE AND BELGRADE: ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCES 1919-1941

### SREDNJA EVROPA I BEOGRAD: ARHITEKTONSKI UTICAJI 1918-1941

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Studies of the development of the Yugoslav architectural scene between the two world wars have recently been enriched by the monograph *Central Europe and Belgrade: Architectural Influences 1919-1941*, authored by Dr. Biljana Mišić. Stemming from her doctoral dissertation titled *Central European Influences on the Development of Belgrade Architecture 1919-1941*, defended in 2019 at the Department of Art History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, under the mentorship of Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Kadijević, this monograph represents the most comprehensive scientific synthesis to date in interpreting cultural transfers between Central Europe and Belgrade.

Although Central European stylistic paradigms inspired architects during the artistically prosperous period of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes / Yugoslavia, this topic has often been interpreted fragmentarily in scholarly historiography, lacking a fuller historiographic contextualization of this complex phenomenon. Therefore, Biljana Mišić's monograph, as a result of the author's years of research efforts, represents a significant scholarly contribution.

Published in 2022 by the Cultural Heritage Preservation Institute of Belgrade and the Institute for Contemporary History as co-publisher, the monograph has 343 pages and a plethora of high-quality illustrative materials. The illustrations, which facilitate easy tracking of the main narrative, significantly contribute to its quality, thanks to the fruitful collaboration between the author and numerous professional and scientific institutions, such as the Cabinet for Architecture and Urbanism of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Institute of Art History in Zagreb, and the Zagreb City Museum.

The main narrative of the monograph is functionally structured through five chapters, divided into several conceptual units in which the author analytically examines the adoption of creative impulses from Central Europe and their transposition onto the architectural scene of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes / Yugoslavia. Preceding them is an

*Introduction* in which the subject and aim of the research are clearly defined, along with a systematic presentation of previous historiographic contributions on this topic. Following the main narrative are *Concluding Remarks*, *Abbreviations*, an extensive list of *Sources and Literature*, a *Register of Names and Terms*, *Acknowledgments by the author*, and a very significant *Summary* in English, allowing researchers from a wider European area to have a concise overview of its content and main conclusions.

In the first chapter, titled *Central Europe: Historical, Cultural, and Artistic Framework*, the author points out the complex nature of the concept of *Central Europe*, used in the monograph as a term for one of the multiple creative sources of the architectural development of interwar Belgrade. In the second chapter, *Central Europe and Belgrade*, through several smaller units, gradual but continuous processes of Europeanization and modernization of Belgrade are presented within a chronological framework from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, materialized through the presence of Central European architectural paradigms in shaping Belgrade's distinctive, then contemporary identity. Significant roles in cultural and artistic exchange were also occupied by higher architectural institutions in Central Europe, interpreting the education and professional advancement of Yugoslav students in Prague, Munich, Berlin, Vienna, Graz, and other centers. In the next section, the author analyzes the significance that the conceptual principles of architects Otto Wagner, Adolf Loos, Peter Behrens, and Hans Poelzig had on Yugoslav architects, such as Viktor Kovačić, Vjekoslav Bastl, Hugo Ehrlich, Josip Pićman, Drago Ibler, and many others, who transmitted creative Central European impulses into Belgrade's architecture. The contribution of Yugoslav regional architectural schools to the penetration of Central European concepts in the construction of interwar Belgrade is also examined, with particular attention paid to Zagreb, a leader in modern

architectural tendencies in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

In the chapter *Sources of Central European Architectural Influences*, the author thoroughly analyzes the exchange and adoption of progressive Central European artistic concepts, interpreting, through specific sections, the history and course of some of the most significant Belgrade architectural and urban planning competitions, architectural exhibitions, and public lectures, the contribution of professional journals and literature, as well as the travels of artists, the importance of congresses, and fairs.

In the fourth chapter, titled *Central European Influences on the Development Trends of Interwar Belgrade Architecture*, the author provides a clear overview of the stylistic pluralism of the Belgrade architectural scene, founded on the stylistic ideas of Central Europe. This chapter previews the subsequent fifth chapter, *Belgrade Interwar Modernism: Architectural and Urban Concepts of Central European Origin*, which is the most extensive and analytically layered section in the monograph. Here, Central European stylistic paradigms are observed in numerous Belgrade objects, systematized into separate chapters according to their purpose. Projects by many European and Yugoslav architects are analyzed, such as Alois Mezer, Viktor Kovačić, Ernst Weissmann, Vjekoslav Bastl, Dionis Sunko, August Rheinfels, Alexander Popp, Otto Bartning, and many others.

The greatest significance of the monograph *Central Europe and Belgrade: Architectural Influences 1919-1941* lies in its comprehensive interpretation of complex cultural transfers between Central Europe and Belgrade. Through identifying similarities in the theoretical views of Yugoslav architects and their materializations, the author clearly defines and recognizes the presence of Central European stylistic matrices, significant for the evolution of Yugoslav architecture, in a layered and methodologically grounded manner. With its depth and comprehensiveness, it represents a valuable source for broader contextual interpretations of Yugoslav and European architecture.