

SUMMARY

Đakovo Cathedral

The role of Đakovo as the seat of a diocese began in the 13th century. Due to its unstable position in Bosnia where Bogomilism began spreading, the Diocese of Bosnia moved its seat to Đakovo since the Hungarian centralist rule which protected the Catholic Church was more strongly manifested in Slavonia. Soon after, the first half of the 14th century saw the construction of the first cathedral in the Gothic style whose chancel has survived to this day annexed to the lateral wall of the bishop's palace facing the courtyard. During the Turkish rule in Slavonia (16th – 17th century) the first cathedral served as a mosque. At the end of the 17th century, during the war against the Turks, the cathedral seemed to be rather damaged since the original medieval structure was almost entirely shrouded in considerable architectural alterations at the time of Bishop Juraj Patačić (1703-1716) and Bishop Petar Bakić (1716-1749). During the 18th century the cathedral received new baroque furniture as well as the adjoining grandiose one-floor bishop's palace in the late Baroque style. This period saw the expansion of the diocese – in 1773 it merged with the Diocese of Srijem and it has ever since borne the name the Diocese of Đakovo, Bosnia and Srijem.

However, fairly soon, Đakovo Cathedral could not measure up to other churches in the diocese regarding their size and grandeur. Therefore, the first efforts to build a new cathedral were taken already at end of the 18th century. However, the first specific steps were made by Bishop Franjo Matija Krtica (1773-1805). The design he commissioned was an example of the late Central European Baroque style with modest elements of Classicism. Bishop Antun Mandić (1805-1815) abandoned this design and commissioned two new ones. The first design dating from 1806 was sent to him by the Hungarian Court Chancery but that did not seem to be complementary with the bishop's wishes since he commissioned a new design in 1814 according to which the cathedral was to be a lavish Baroque - Classicist church with two towers. His successor Bishop Mirko (Emerik) Karlo Raffay (1816-1830) followed the steps of his predecessors. Determined in his efforts to build a new cathedral, he rejected all previous designs and commissioned new ones. He entrusted the creation of new designs to the Zagreb based architect Bartol Felbinger. He made the first designs in 1817 which showed a *Wandpfeiler* church with two towers and a crypt. Both in the spatial arrangement and

details of articulation this design was almost entirely dependent on Timișoara Cathedral (1736-1773), the work of Emanuel Fischer von Erlach. Solely in the details of the architectural articulation, which he made classicist to a certain degree, did Felbinger move away from his original model. Only two years later, Felbinger was entrusted with the creation of another design. Reasons for this new commission are not completely clear but it seems that the previous design was too expensive to be followed. It is interesting that the two works by the same architect differ entirely in style. Regarding spatial organisation, the church remained of the *Wandpfeiler* type but the architectural articulation of the 1819 design was made completely Classicist and much closer to the contemporary tendencies in European architecture of the time. This design, however, was rejected by the renowned architect Peter von Nobile, the then Viennese *Hofbaurath*, primarily due to an incomplete list of expenses. The Hungarian Court Chancery and the Viennese *Hofbaurath* tried to impose on Raffay their design in 1821, but the bishop did not give his consent which postponed the construction of the cathedral until Bishop Strossmayer assumed the leading position in the diocese.

Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815-1905) was born into a German - Croatian family from Osijek, the biggest town in the Diocese of Đakovo. After receiving education in Đakovo, Pest and Vienna and living for a short time in Slavonia, he spent the period from 1847 to 1849 as one of the three rectors of the Augustinian monastery in Vienna where he met the local painters Leopold Kupelwieser and Josef Führich who belonged to the Nazarene circle together with the architect Karl Rösner. He most probably became acquainted with the members of the circle through Rösner's brother Ambrose, one of the custodians of the monastery in Klosterneuburg near Vienna which also belonged to the Augustinian order. Within the context of the Nazarene circle Strossmayer developed his own attitude towards art and architecture which he was going to have all his life. During his 1853 travel in Central Europe he was impressed by the German medieval cathedrals in Cologne, Bamberg, Speyer and cathedrals, especially Romanesque ones, in other cities. That experience, alongside Rösner's designs for the church of Sts Cyril and Methodius in the Prague suburb of Karlin (Karolinenthal) which was at the time exhibited, made him choose exactly the Romanesque style for his future cathedral and Rösner as its architect.

Karl Rösner was then one of the most important architects in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy specialising in sacral architecture. Having brought Romanticist ideas and principles of the Nazarene circle gathered around Friedrich Overbeck from Rome where he was on a scholarship from 1830 to 1833, he was one of the first architect in Vienna and the entire monarchy to turn to medieval styles in constructing his churches (as is shown by the churches of St John Nepomuk in the two Vienna suburbs of Leopoldstadt (1841-1846) and Meidling (1842-1845).

Strossmayer commissioned a design for his cathedral in midsummer 1853 during his stay in Vienna and Rösner finished it by 1854 and sent it to Đakovo where it is still kept in the diocesan archive. Rösner designed a three-aisled, three-apsidal basilica in

the shape of the Latin cross with the transept and crypt spreading underneath the entire surface of the chancel and transept. Just as other architects of the time, Rösner found almost direct models for the cathedral in medieval heritage (the main apse strongly resembles the apse of the church of the Holy Apostles in Cologne) and contemporary buildings such as Hübsch's works in Southern Germany or the works by the circle of Schinkel's successors in Berlin. Although Rösner's design presents in numerous details a characteristic example of Romanticist architecture, it simultaneously shows unusually purity of style which clearly speaks about the growing tendencies towards accepting mature Historicism in the architecture of the time.

Eventually, the construction of the cathedral according to that design was abandoned due to the lack of funds. Once again in 1864, Bishop Strossmayer began discussing with Rösner about the completion of yet another design which the latter finished already in May 1865. However, it was also in need of modification so the cathedral started to be built according to the third design by the same architect which was finished in December 1865. After the Diocese signed a contract with Rösner on the 17th April 1865, the construction of the cathedral began in May the same year and lasted until October 1882. Even after the consecration the cathedral interior continued to be furnished during the 1880s and 1890s.

The design according to which Rösner's cathedral started to be built was an interpretation of the Lombard Romanesque style which was adopted, as the architect claimed, because Slavonia lied at the same latitude as Lombardy. However, noticeable are also references to the architectural heritage of Germany. Contemporary architecture of the period exerted the most discernible influence through the Altlerchenfelder Church in Vienna (evident, for example, in the manner the rose windows were set to play the role of window openings on the dome and nave). It is interesting that parallel to Rösner architect Stüler in Berlin employed the similar model on the Catholic church of St Peter and Paul in Potsdam. Even though the entire Central Europe was dominated by Gothic as the overriding architectural style, Strossmayer stood firmly by his decision to build a Romanesque cathedral, since he considered that style, the style of the round arch, to present a unifying factor of the architecture of the East and West Church, and it was one of the main goals of his life to achieve this unity. The unity of the Churches presented for him the crucial prerequisite for achieving the unity of peoples in the Slavic South. In other words, Strossmayer was very politically active in negotiations taking place in Vienna in the 1860s, that is, at the time when the construction of the cathedral began, about the future organisation of the monarchy. In those negotiations, he tried to achieve as greater independence for Croatia as possible and also its better position within the future administration.

Alongside the choice of style, the construction of a monumental dome over the crossing also presented in Strossmayer's views on architecture a reference to Byzantine architecture since this element was widespread in it. As well as the majority of other monumental churches of the 19th century, the cathedral was built equally as a national and religious monument.

In his 1865 design Rösner envisaged the cathedral as a three-aisled church over the Latin cross with one apse, two towers, transept, a dome over the crossing and a crypt spreading under the entire surface of the chancel and transept. In accordance with the chosen model the cathedral was built as a *Backsteinbau*. Architectural purity of style belonged to already mature Historicism even though the choice of style and dependence upon North Italian architecture spoke evidently about the still present tradition of Romanticist Classicism.

At the end of 1866, that is, the beginning of 1867, Rösner made another (fourth) design for the main façade of Đakovo Cathedral which showed a somewhat different appearance of the portal. That design was shown at the 1867 World Exhibition in Paris. During his work on the cathedral from 1868-1869, Rösner would make considerable changes in the design of the choir in the church interior, façades of the apses and the like.

Well acquainted with the architectural developments of the age, Strossmayer chose Friedrich Schmidt as Rösner's successor after the death of the latter. Soon after he moved to Vienna in 1859, Schmidt made his way up to the circle of the most esteemed names on the architectural scene in the monarchy's capital. The opportunity that he was presented with to finish the cathedral did not allow Schmidt to be reduced to a mere contractor for Rösner's designs. On the contrary, he made his own design for all the parts of the church which had not been finished and which departed, sometimes to a greater and sometimes to a lesser extent, from the plans of his predecessor. In his designs he strictly adhered to the Historicist tendencies for unity and regularity of style.

The cathedral's interior was completed according to Schmidt's designs but he left a mark in the unfinished parts of the church architecture as well. Certain elements of the articulation of the dome were executed following his designs (such as the gables at the drum of the dome and pinnacles between them) as well as the four pinnacles in the shape of baldachin set on the sides of the dome. Details of the articulation of the main façade towers, just as the main façade in general, were Schmidt's but the principal organisation was taken from Rösner's designs. Tower tops and the gable of the main façade were to a greater degree modified. Instead of one-light window Schmidt placed a blind tripartite window in the centre of the main gable. Entirely his were also the cornices on the main façade whose motifs were created by protruded and recessed bricks. A stairwell leading to the entrance of the cathedral which was designed entirely by Schmidt bridged the difference in height between the portal and the square in front of the church. Two picturesque cone-shaped crowns flanking the stairwell were made from facing brick, as the entire cathedral.

Schmidt left considerable marks in the architecture of the cathedral's interior, although not to such a degree as on the main façade. The principal architectural disposition of the interior was made according to Rösner's design. However, Schmidt's designs served as a model for the complete architectural sculpture which included keystones in the vaults, capitals of piers, responds and the like. Schmidt also designed three big stairwells

in the church among which the most interesting one was on the northern side which connected the crypt with the nave and first-floor oratory. It is characterised by skilful constructive execution and good design which evokes more Gothic than Romanesque architecture. Alongside individual elements of the architecture, entire interior church furniture was made according to Schmidt's designs, namely, the high altar with a ciborium and architectural frames of all other altars in the cathedral, organ, pulpit, choir stalls, bishop's throne, confessionals, chandeliers, liturgical vessels... In his design for the church furniture Schmidt sometimes relied more on Romanesque and sometimes more on Gothic models. Thus the confessional is pronouncedly Romanesque-like, modelled after the well known confessional at Pisa Cathedral, whereas the organ and choir stalls are more Gothic-like.

Friedrich Schmidt was employed in overseeing the works on Đakovo Cathedral from 1870 to its consecration in 1882 but he continued to acquire liturgical objects for the church from Vienna. In the course of events, Schmidt's engagement completely redirected the history of Croatian architecture of the 19th century, just as Bishop Strossmayer desired. Due to Strossmayer's support, Schmidt was going to be offered employment in a range of other buildings in Zagreb (construction of the Academy's building, restoration of the church of St Mark and Zagreb Cathedral) for which he had to form a special position of a construction supervisor for this area. This position was given to his studio assistant Hermann Bollé from Cologne. The arrival of Bollé to Croatia was thus connected (primarily) to Đakovo. Bollé was to be Croatia's future most important architect of sacral buildings in the style of mature and late Historicism. He was going to bring principles of Gothic revival and Historicist restoration to Croatia and as the head of the Building Department at the School of Arts and Crafts he would form the basis for the Croatian education in architecture. Another thing which could be related to Đakovo Cathedral was the friendship between Strossmayer and the first Croatian educated art historian Iso Kršnjavi which would lead to the formation of numerous institution providing ground for the establishment of the profession of art historian in Croatia – Art History Subdepartment (later Department), the Strossmayer Gallery, the Arts and Crafts Museum and many other.

Even before Bollé's engagement, architects working on the cathedral and employed by Rösner and Schmidt were all educated at the Vienna Art Academy. At the end of the 1850s Rösner's helpers were Rudolf Schwengberger, Ludwig Krausz and Heinrich Missong and in the 1860s and 1870s Schmidt's helpers were, besides Bollé, Karl Laužil and Heinrich Holitzky, and very shortly Dominik Avanzo and O. Specht.

Somewhat later, from 1887 to 1888, another crucial Friedrich Schmidt's Croatian apprentice contributed to the construction of the cathedral. It was Josip Vancaš who worked as an independent architect on the renewal of the dome lantern and restoration of the medieval wall on the north-west side of the bishop's complex.

Fresco paintings depicting scenes from the Old Testament in the nave and the New Testament scenes from the life of St Peter in the chancel were executed by the Roman

painters of German origin Alexander Maximilian and Ludovico Seitz, except for two frescoes which were painted by Achille Ansiglioni. The scenes from the life of St Peter were partially made according to the drawings created for Đakovo Cathedral by one of the leading Nazarene painters Friedrich Overbeck. Decorative segments of the paintings were executed by the Croatian painter Josip Voltolini with his helpers Ivan Betizza and Eduard Petz. Even the motifs of the wall paintings partially reveal Strossmayer's political views which can be seen in the south apse of the transept showing the scenes of the Adoration of the Magi and representatives of individual South Slavic peoples paying reverence to Christ.

Altar sculptures were executed mainly by Vatroslav Donegani, except for those on the altar of St Elias which were made by the Austrian sculptor Georg Feurstein. Reliefs in the tympanum of the portal were made by the sculptors Ivan Rendić, Toma Wodička and Alojzije Gangl. Following Schmidt's designs liturgical equipment was acquired from Brix & Anders Company and chandeliers from Dzedzinski & Hanusch Company from Vienna. The interior woodwork was made by the local carpenters Ivan Tordinac and Dragutin Turković, except for the organ which was made by Ignaz Karger from Vienna. Tordinac and Turković would continue working in Đakovo together with Petz, a painter of decorations, even after the completion of the cathedral. They would also refurbish a range of churches in the area of the Diocese of Đakovo and Srijem.

Total costs of the construction amounted in the end to the fascinating 1.2 million forint (2.4 million krone). Not a single forint was allocated either by the Croatian or imperial government. The whole construction was funded by the Diocese of Đakovo, the Curia, Strossmayer himself and to a lesser degree by charitable donations of the congregation.

Đakovo Cathedral was undoubtedly the most important newly built church of the Croatian Historicism. Its furniture and sculpture have completely survived to this day and the church therefore presents a unique *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the second half of the 20th century. The only big catastrophe that it went through during its history was the 1933 fire which destroyed the old organ and partially damaged the wall paintings in the nave. However, the church was given back its original appearance.

Prevela: Željka Miklošević