

A Viennese Project in Valpovo (Croatia)

Parish Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Valpovo and Baroque Churches with Two-Bay Naves

Katarina Horvat-Levaj and Margareta Turkalj Podmanicki

A slightly altered version of the article originally published as:

"Župna crkva Bezgrešnog začeća Blažene Djevice Marije u Valpovu – podrijetlo arhitektonskog tipa i kontekst", in: *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti / Journal of the Institute of Art History* 35 (2011), 157-176.

Translation initiated by:

Institute of Art History, Zagreb

Abstract

The Parish Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in Valpovo (1733–1736), exceptional both in its spatial organization and the design of its exterior, was constructed in specific circumstances in the aftermath of the liberation of Slavonia from the Ottoman occupation. The old lands of Valpovo, with the medieval fort of Morović, were, in accordance with the Habsburg politics, given as a feud to Baron Hillebrand by Charles VI. The baron initiated the construction of a monumental parish church on his estate by commissioning its design in Vienna, as evidenced by the rich archival material on Hillebrand's property housed at the State Archive in Osijek. In keeping with the provenance of its design, the church was built as a monumental structure consisting of a two-bay nave covered with domical vaults and flanked by a narrower semicircular groin-vaulted sanctuary and a facade belfry. The type represented by the church in Valpovo – single-aisled structure with two bays – was a sort of innovation by Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt, inspired by the famous church of San Fedele in Milan (1569) and often used by Hildebrandt in his own church projects built under the patronage of high Austrian nobility, such as the parish church in Seelowitz in Moravia (1722–27) with an integrated facade belfry, or the parish churches in Aspersdorf (1730), Stranzendorf (1733) and Großstelzendorf (1735–37). This architectural type was adopted and further developed by Hildebrandt's contemporaries, especially his immediate follower Franz Anton Pilgram, a Viennese architect whose design for the parish church in Münchendorf (1740) shows great similarity with the Valpovo church, both in its proportions and in the treatment of details. All this is hardly surprising if one keeps in mind the Viennese origin and the courtly status of the commissioner and donor of the parish church in Valpovo. It took more than two decades for the spatial features of this church to become popular in Slavonia, while its proportions and monumentality remained almost unsurpassed, with only few exceptions.

Contents

Introduction

Circumstances and stages of construction

Urban disposition and spatial organisation of the church

The architectural type of the church in the Central European context

Significance of the church for Croatian Baroque architecture

Introduction

[1] The Parish Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in Valpovo, whose construction in the 1730s was initiated by the feudal lord Peter Anton Hillebrand von Prandau from Vienna,¹ is a valuable architectural accomplishment, exceptional both in its spatial disposition and exterior design. The church is an innovative single-aisled building of

¹ Viliam Čuržik, *Valpovačka župa*, Valpovo 1995; Damir Stanić, "Barokna župna crkva u Valpovu", in: *Valpovački godišnjak* 4 (1999), 5-42.

monumental dimensions whose two-bay nave is flanked by a narrower semicircular sanctuary and a facade belfry. In addition to the peculiar two-bay concept of the nave, which originated in Italian mannerist architecture and was later revived in Austrian High Baroque architecture, the church owes its exceptional status within the Slavonian and, generally, Croatian architectural context, to a new structural treatment of bays and vaulting, and most probably to the originally planned, and innovative, design of the belfry. It is therefore necessary to agree with the canonical visitor who claimed immediately after the completion of the building in 1738 that "the church holds the first place in the architecture of the entire Slavonian region in terms of structure and interior decoration".² Despite this proof of admiration, its "structure" has not been sufficiently explored in professional literature.³ Still, a recent research into the "interior decoration" of the church has led Mirjana Repanić-Braun to attribute the altar paintings to the esteemed Viennese painter Anton Herzog and place the entire church into the context of Austrian architecture. That is, she suggests the church forms part of the architectural oeuvre of Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt, one of the most prominent architects of the period.⁴

[2] The question whether the church is really a work of this great Austrian architect, and perhaps more importantly, what is its significance in the Croatian and Central European context, may best be answered by an analysis of its architecture and by research of rich archival material on the history of the church construction. While only a small part of the records have hitherto been published,⁵ the information on the church contained in the Records of Hillebrand-Prandau's manorial estate has remained almost completely unknown to the public.⁶

² Stjepan Sršan, ed., *Kanonske vizitacije, Valpovačko-miholjačko područje (1730.–1830.)*, vol. III, Osijek 2005, 9.

³ The parish church in Valpovo is once mentioned in a footnote (p. 294) in: Anđela Horvat, "Barok u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj", in: Anđela Horvat, Radmila Matejčić, Kruno Prijatelj, *Barok u Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb 1982. The architectural history of the church and its furnishing was only recently published in: Stanić, "Barokna župna crkva u Valpovu", 5-42, and the church was also included in the overview of Baroque sacral architecture in Slavonia published in: Katarina Horvat-Levaj, "Barokna sakralna arhitektura – tragom Eugenove crkve", in: Vesna Kusin and Branka Šulc, eds., *Slavonija, Baranja i Srijem, vrela europske civilizacije*, exh. cat., vol. II, Zagreb 2009, 337-339.

⁴ Mirjana Repanić-Braun, "Djela bečkog slikara Antona Herzoga u Valpovu i Vukovaru", in: *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 28 (2004), 176-187.

⁵ Stjepan Sršan, *Katoličke župe u istočnoj Hrvatskoj 1733./34. godine*, Osijek 1995, 76-77; Josip Brüstzle, *Povijest katoličkih župa u istočnoj Hrvatskoj do 1880. godine*, Osijek 1999; Sršan, *Kanonske vizitacije, Valpovačko-miholjačko područje*, 3, 9, 43, 55, 121, 257, 505.

⁶ Research of the archival documents on the Manorial Estate of Valpovo (*Acta Viennensia, Archivium dominale, Protocollum der Herrschaft Valpovo*) at the Croatian State Archives in Osijek (further in the notes: DAOS) was conducted by Margareta Turkalj Podmanicki in collaboration with Stjepan Sršan (2008–2009). Part of the archival material was additionally researched and published in: Ljerka Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", in: *Scrinia slavonsica, Godišnjak Podružnice za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje Hrvatskog instituta za povijest* 9 (2009), 99-124. Documents on the Valpovo manor were also examined by historians, including Igor Karaman who wrote a PhD thesis on the topic. Historians were, however, more interested in the economic and political issues relating to the manor. Igor Karaman, *Valpovačko vlastelinstvo, ekonomsko-historijska analiza*, Zagreb 1962. Karaman published a short report by estate caretakers on the construction costs of the parish church in the period 1733–36. Karaman,

Circumstances and stages of construction

[3] The parish church in Valpovo was constructed in the midst of efforts to regenerate the region of Slavonia after a century-and-a-half long Ottoman occupation. The 1687 defeat of Grand Vizier Suleiman Pasha near the hill of Harsany in Mohacs, followed by the entry of the victorious Habsburg army in Osijek, also brought freedom to Valpovo.⁷ Subject to the Habsburg politics, the old estate of Valpovo with a medieval fort (bearing the coat-of-arms of the Morović family)⁸ came first under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Court Chamber, and then, on 31 December 1721, it was infeudated, together with the manorial estate of Miholjac, to Baron Hilleprand von Prandau in return for his longstanding service at the Chamber.⁹ Although he kept living in Vienna, the baron was actively engaged in the renovation and management of the Valpovo manor which he regularly visited each spring and autumn (1722–67)¹⁰ and was, consequently, invested in the care of the existing structures and new building projects envisaged for the estate. The renovation of the Gothic castle chapel and the Renaissance castle¹¹ with a facade tower imbued the entire medieval fort with Baroque characteristics, while the construction of a new monumental church in the centre of the estate inspired, according to the baron's own words, admiration of both canons and cardinals who came to Valpovo to see it.

[4] Contrary to the previous claims of certain authors,¹² the construction of the parish church occurred neither in the year when Hilleprand was initiated into the estate (1722)

Valpovačko vlastelinstvo, 20.

⁷ Ive Mažuran, *Valpovo, sedam stoljeća znakovite prošlosti*, Valpovo 2004, 55–59.

⁸ Mažuran, *Valpovo*, 18. Ivan Morović, lord of Mačva, was granted rights to the Valpovo manor by King Sigismund's charter in 1397.

⁹ According to Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 102: "After being initiated into the manor in the spring of 1722, 46-year old Baron P. A. Hilleprand, married, father of three daughters and at the time a trained lawyer with twenty years of service in imperial administration, was faced with a difficult task of organizing life in the devastated and impoverished region permeated with the memories on the Ottoman administrative practices and the realities of the current imperial administration and presence of the Christian community with active engagement of the Franciscans". His ancestors, who managed the Valpovo manorial estate, were his son Joseph Ignatz (1748–1816) who moved to Valpovo from Vienna and then his grandson Gustav (1807–85). Karaman, *Valpovačko vlastelinstvo*, 9; Mladen Obad Šćitaroci, Bojana Bojanić Obad Šćitaroci, *Dvorci i perivoji u Slavoniji: od Zagreba do Iloka*, Zagreb 1998, 308–311.

¹⁰ He was, furthermore, in close connection with the military authorities in Osijek. More in: Karaman, *Valpovačko vlastelinstvo*, 4–8; Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 102.

¹¹ According to Ratko Vučetić's research the buildings was a lavish built 16th-century Renaissance residence.

¹² The year 1722 was mentioned by Brüstle, *Povijest katoličkih župa u istočnoj Hrvatskoj do 1880. godine*, 162. The year 1727 as the construction date of the church was mentioned in the 19th century in the 1829 canonical visitation and a chronicle of the Valpovo parish (in: Z. Samaržija, *Vrela i literatura o Valpovštini*, manuscript submitted as a postgraduate course paper, PhD programme in history at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zagreb, 10). Cf. Stanić, "Barokna župna crkva u Valpovu", 7.

nor five years later (1727). In fact, there was no mention of the church construction before 1733 in any of the relatively numerous church documents that used to belong to the three church institutions: the Pécs and Zagreb Dioceses, both claiming jurisdiction over Valpovo, and to the Franciscan Province of Bosna Srebrena which succeeded in continuing Catholic practices during the Ottoman occupation and, in effect, managed most of Slavonian parishes in the 18th century. Since the first canonical visitation, announced in 1729 during the office of the Pécs bishop Nesselrode has not been preserved, relevant data have been provided by the surviving records of the 1730 visitation performed by Canon Josip Dumbović in Valpovo on behalf of the Zagreb bishop Juraj Branjug. This visitation mentions the existence of only the parish church of St. John the Baptist¹³ which was a simple wooden structure without a bell tower. The only thing in this church that could be said to have prefigured the patron saint of the new parish church was the main altar dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The earliest mention of a "beautiful brick-built church" first dedicated to St. John the Baptist, like the older church on the site of which it was built, was in the 1733 List of Franciscan parishes.¹⁴ However, a more precise date of the beginning of construction can be determined on the basis of Hilleprand's estate documents. These include letters (1733–37) exchanged between Hilleprand in Vienna and the Valpovo-based chief engineer and land surveyor Sebastian Freudhofer who supervised the renovation of the fort and the construction of the parish church (1733–36), a special list of expenses submitted by the baron himself (1738), and the reports drawn up by an inspection committee (1733) and the steward of the manor, Venceslav Anneis (February 1733–August 1735).¹⁵

[5] The baron's letters¹⁶ reveal that the church design was being finished in Austria in early 1733,¹⁷ after the renovation of the court chapel¹⁸ but during the extension of the

¹³ Sršan, *Kanonske vizitacije, Valpovačko-miholjačko područje*, 3.

¹⁴ Sršan, *Katoličke župe u istočnoj Hrvatskoj 1733./34. godine*, 76. The Franciscan Province of Bosna Srebrena made a list of thirty eight parishes under its jurisdiction which were located in the area spreading from Petrovaradin to Pakrac. The Valpovo parish was until 1781 managed by the Franciscans from Našice.

¹⁵ See note 6.

¹⁶ The archive houses hundreds of the baron's letters dating from the period 1722–67. In addition to information about the building projects, especially interesting are his analysis of manor management, circumstances in Slavonia and thought on the military administration in Vienna and Osijek. Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 102.

¹⁷ Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 114. In January and February, Hilleprand wrote to Freudhofer stating that he was expecting plans of the church. DAOS, Fond 14 (476), vol. 3, 14, 17.

¹⁸ Records on the Valpovo Manor contain a document dated December 1730 and issued by Charles VI that exempted Hilleprand from having to pay custom duties on imported building material for construction projects in Valpovo. The record also mentions stone slabs for a church but the material was obviously meant to be used for the renovation of the fort and the castle chapel. DAOS, Fond 14 (476), box 46, No. 1289, folder 20, 28 Nov 1730. The renovation of the castle chapel began in 1722, when the baron first visited Valpovo. Furnishings were purchased soon after. Cf. Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 108-110.

castle in Valpovo (which received at the time the second floor).¹⁹ Awaiting the building designs to be finished, the baron discussed with engineer Freudhofer²⁰ about the church facade, sacristy and the position of a door which could provide access to the future rectory.²¹ On 7 February an Osijek-based carrier delivered the designs from Vienna to Valpovo²² (engineer Freudhofer confirmed having received the designs for the church together with belfry and facade sections). The greatest part of construction work was completed by the end of the year²³ after which the church was examined by the inspection committee.²⁴ The year 1734 saw the completion of the nave,²⁵ and the following year witnessed the flooring of the church with brick and the completion of building and carpentry works, which included tile-roofing²⁶ in autumn the same year (in October the baron analyzed the conducted works and costs).²⁷ The next step was the completion of the belfry and definition of the roof, which would subsequently be redesigned. In early 1736, the baron mentions several times in his letters that the church was not completed and that he was still waiting for a new "model" (which was, in all likelihood, related to the belfry and

¹⁹ Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 108, 115. In October 1727 payments were made to a tinsmith for the copper cap of the castle tower, and to a stone-mason and a sculptor for the completion of the tower top and installation of two stone vases. In the spring of 1733 a contract was made in Vienna with the imperial architect Caspar Diesel who was supposed to spend several months supervising the construction of the castle's second floor. Cf. Obad Šćitaroci, Bojanić Obad Šćitaroci, *Dvorci i perivoji u Slavoniji*, 308-317; Vladimir Marković, "Dvorci 18. stoljeća – rafinirana upravna središta", in: Vesna Kusin, Branka Sulc, eds., *Slavonija, Baranja i Srijem, vrela europske civilizacije*, exh. cat., vol. II, Klovićevi dvori Gallery, Zagreb 2009, 349-357.

²⁰ According to the documents on the Valpovo manor, chief-engineer Freudhofer was supposed to arrive from Vienna 1722. However, it seems that his service to Baron Hilleprand began somewhat later (1724). Working as an engineer on the manor, Freudhofer received annual payment which amounted in the first year to 200 forint, and was then raised to 350 forint (1725/26). Some later data even mention the amount of 475 forint. In addition to land surveying and construction supervision, he was entrusted with creating designs for more simple buildings (structures for breeding pheasants and the grange in the vicinity of the castle). In 1736–63 Sebastian Freudhofer also managed the estate. In addition to him, names of other engineers are mentioned as working in Valpovo (Berent, Mathias Jung). Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 107-108.

²¹ Ibid, 114-115.

²² DAOS, Protocollum der Herrschaft Valpovo, 1732–36, 17, 75.

²³ Ibid. Building of church pews was also mentioned: 13 June 1733. Freudhofer thought they should be finished in a month's time.

²⁴ The inspection committee ascertained that the church did not have enough income and that the patronage belonged to Baron Hilleprand. The inspection was put in writing by Michael Repessa, the manor was represented by Steward Venceslav Anneis, and the religious community of Valpovo was represented by a judge and eight citizens. Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 114.

²⁵ Steward's invoice show that the area covering 44 fathoms was built up from February to April 1734. Masons received 106.55 forint for their work. DAOS, Provisorat Rechnung, May 1733–Apr 1734.

²⁶ In 1735, 6500 pieces of roof tiles were transported from the Osijek Fortress. DAOS, Statement of account for the Valpovo church in the period 1733–38.

²⁷ In October 1735, Hilleprand stated that he paid 3000 forint of his own money for the church construction and that the remaining works should be funded by the money collected from all feudal tenants in Valpovo. DAOS, Fond 14 (476), box 46, folder 2, No. 1291, 19 Oct 1735.

the adjacent part of the roof).²⁸ He finally received the design through Baron Pfeffershofen²⁹ and approved its execution in April the same year.³⁰ During the construction of the belfry, Hilleprand arrived in Valpovo with Baron Pfeffershofen (9–23 May 1736) upon which occasion he talked with the Franciscans about the construction of the rectory.³¹ After his return to Vienna, Hilleprand organized transport of the copper sheet that was to be used for the onion dome of the belfry and asked for the space in front of the church to remain free, that is, not to contain any new buildings since "that is the usual practice in other cities".³² In the following year, 1737, the interior of the church was furnished (the main altar had been shipped in seven cases from Vienna to Valpovo) after which the church was consecrated. In 1738 the baron wrote a short report on all the costs of the church construction³³ mentioning also payments which he made "directly from the Viennese treasury" to Mr Pock for the church design,³⁴ to Baron Koenigsbrunn from Graz for the sheet metal for the onion dome and to Mr Paumann for the transportation of the metal from Graz to Valpovo.³⁵ In the same year, the new church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, was described in the canonical visitation³⁶ of the Pécs Diocese. In addition to stressing its "first place in Slavonia" the visitor emphasized the role of Hilleprand and his finances in the construction of a completely new church³⁷ whose architecture "followed an

²⁸ According to Ljerka Perči the design in question was for the belfry, but the cited documents do not contain such information. Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 115. The letter dated February 1736 mentions merely a model, while the letter from 11 April mentions a roof model. DAOS, Fond 14 (476), vol. 3, 559, 566, 586. Nevertheless, the previous documents clearly show that the body of the church was at the time finished and roofed with tiles. The model of the roof at issue most probably relates to the part of the church roof adjacent to the facade belfry, and to the belfry itself which might have been integrated into the roof. This will be explored later in the paper.

²⁹ Baron Pfeffershofen was a member of the military unit situated in the Osijek Fort, who became in 1726 Hilleprand's son-in-law (living with his wife in Osijek until 1739). Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 103.

³⁰ DAOS, Fond 14 (476), vol. 3, 559, 566. After having seen the roof model in Vienna Hilleprand approved it in his letter to Freudhofer written on 11 April.

³¹ The cost estimates for the construction of the rectory (in the amount of 1292.47 forint) was prepared for the meeting. Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 116.

³² The letter to Freudhofer dated 1 September contains Hilleprand's plea to the Franciscan for some patience until his arrival, which leads to the conclusion that the Franciscans had wanted to build the rectory in front of the church. The problem was clearly solved with the baron's September visit to Valpovo. Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 116.

³³ Total cost amounted to 6924.45 forint.

³⁴ DAOS, Fond 14 (476), box 46, folder 2, No. 1275-1320.

³⁵ Pock was paid 10 forint for the church design, Koenigsbrunn received 420 forint for the copper sheet metal, the tower top made of sheet metal cost 24 forint, a locksmith received 38 forint for the cross, gilding cost 12 forint, Paumann was paid 11.2 forint for the transportation of the sheet metal from Graz. The total costs of the church were 7439.47 forint. Perči, "Valpovačka župna crkva i dvorska kapelica između 1722. i 1736.", 114.

³⁶ Sršan, ed., *Kanonske vizitacije, Valpovačko-miholjačko područje (1730.–1830.)*, 9. The head of the parish was at that time Antun Bačić, a Franciscan friar.

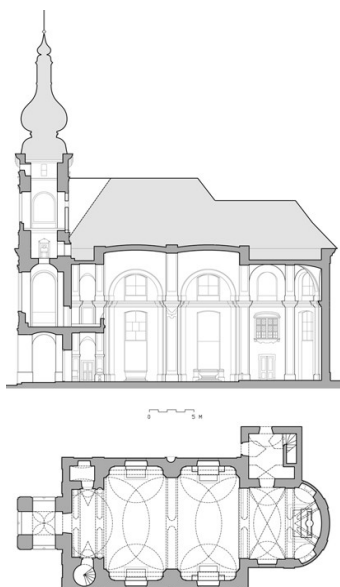
³⁷ Sources, however, attest to parishioners' contributions. DAOS, Provisorat Rechnung, 1732–1736.

Italian form". This phrase, however, should not be taken literally to mean the origin of the church design but more in terms of style, as a contemporary accomplishment of Baroque architecture, or in this case, as evidenced by historical sources, of the Viennese Baroque style.

[<top>](#)

Urban disposition and spatial organisation of the church

[6] The imposing brick-built "Viennese" church, constructed on the main town square at the foot of the renovated fort in the Baroque style, must have been a strong accent in the urban disposition previously dominated by the medieval fort. The main entrance on the west facade of the church today faces both the fort and the main square, while the other three sides are surrounded by a relatively wide green area of a town block.³⁸ The main facade and the adjoining longer facade of the single-storey rectory flanking the north side of the church contribute to the impressive appearance of the square.



1 Valpovo, parish church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (1733–36), ground plan and the longitudinal cross-section with a reconstruction of the sloping roof next to the belfry (architectural drawing: I. Haničar Buljan, M. Vojić)

[7] The spatial organisation of the church harmoniously unites a semicircular sanctuary, an entrance area with a choir loft and a rectangular nave which is the most emphasized spatial unit. In addition to its more elaborate plastic treatment, the nave is wider than the entrance area³⁹ and the sanctuary which is, in turn, equally wide and long

³⁸ In the mid-1920s, the appearance of the central town block in Valpovo was defaced by the destruction of historical houses and construction of a new shopping centre. More in: Željka Čorak, "Planiranje kao faktor obnove, obnova kao faktor planiranja – tri primjera", in: *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 17/1 (1993), 38-43.

³⁹ The entrance area below the choir loft, although narrower than the nave, is incorporated into the exterior contours of the ground floor of the church, and comprises, at one end, a spiral staircase leading to the choir loft and, at the opposite end, a small chapel.

as the entrance but considerably deeper. (Fig. 1) In contrast to the traditional vaulting of the sanctuary and the entrance area – one groin-vaulted bay and radial lunettes in the sanctuary and barrel vaults with lunettes below and over the choir loft – the nave is covered by domical vaults, the so called Bohemian caps, which was at the time a rather innovative type of vaulting in the region. (Fig. 2, 3) Furthermore, whereas pilasters are as the main articulating element of the entrance area and sanctuary, the nave contains another innovative element in terms of both structure and design – piers with cut-off corners and concave lateral sides which support wall arches with concave intrados. The spatial unity of the interior is achieved with the use of pilasters on the fronts of the wall piers that are surmounted by a stepped cornice continuing along the walls of the church. The pilasters support semicircular transverse arches which divide and frame the bays and form a triumphal arch at the intersection of the nave and the sanctuary and the corresponding arch which spans the choir loft. The edges of the lunettes in the sanctuary vault are emphasized by radially positioned moulded semi arches while pilasters and transverse arches are made visually prominent by decoration and plaster panelling.⁴⁰



2 Valpovo, parish church, view of the sanctuary
(photo: M. Drmić)



3 Valpovo, parish church, view of the two-bay nave and
the choir loft (photo: M. Drmić)

⁴⁰ *Valpovo, Parish Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Conservation and Restoration Report, Croatian Conservation Institute, Osijek Department of Conservations, Osijek 2004. Conservation research showed the original colour of the interior was white. Nevertheless, it was suggested to renovate it using the white colour only for the elements of architectural articulation and a yellowish tone for the walls, which could thereby be colour adjusted to suit the wall paintings in the cartouches created in the vaults around 1900.

[8] The high space of the church is intensely illuminated through segmental-arched window openings placed on both sides of the nave and sanctuary in two rows: big windows between the piers and pilasters and smaller windows above the cornice (those in the sanctuary are round-arched).⁴¹ The belfry, built in front of the main entrance, has domical vaults covering its ground floor and the first floor which provides access to the choir loft. The northern side of the sanctuary contains a barrel-vaulted sacristy (connected with a door to the sanctuary and the exterior) above which an oratory opens up towards the sanctuary with a two-light window topped with a segmental pediment.



4 Valpovo, parish church, facade belfry
(photo: M. Drmić)



5 Valpovo, parish church, view of the sanctuary and the
side facade (photo: M. Drmić)

[9] Characterized by elegant monumentality the church exterior reveals the composition consisting of the sanctuary (with the lower sacristy attached to it), the body of the nave (with an entrance area incorporated in it) which has equally tall walls but

⁴¹ The lower windows in the bay of the sanctuary were walled up in order to receive altars. Conservation research showed also two walled up entrances in the ground floor of the church (on the lateral side and in the sanctuary) but they were probably built to facilitate moving of building material into the church during its construction. *Valpovo, Parish Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 62-63.

different roof levels, and the belfry attached to the middle of the main facade and surmounted by the onion dome with a lantern on top. (Fig. 4) The three-storey belfry is relatively short in relation to the church: the ridge of the three-sided roof of the nave is almost at the same level as the crowning cornice of the belfry. The relationship of these two elements used to be more harmonious because the nave was previously covered by a hipped roof which created some space between the roof and the uppermost level of the belfry.

[10] All the church facades are articulated with lesenes and a continuous crowning cornice and pierced with windows whose frames are discretely emphasized by stucco moulding. (Fig. 5) The arrangement of the lesenes on the lateral sides of the nave and sanctuary reflect the division of the interior into the entrance area and bays, while the lesenes on the facade articulate the surfaces at each side of the belfry. A stronger plastic accent was given to the belfry which opens up with a ground floor porch into the public space of the town square. The other two levels of the belfry, divided by a moulded cornice (which continues into the crowning cornice of the church) are articulated with corner Tuscan pilasters and pierced with big arched windows. The first floor of the belfry is the only one containing a window opening on the main facade, whereas the lateral facades have blind windows. The second floor – bell chamber – used to have windows on all four sides but the window facing the church was walled up after the modification of the roof.⁴²

[11] This appearance of the church building resulted from the 1733 design and it is very likely that its main spatial units – the nave and sanctuary – were not considerably changed in the subsequent phases⁴³ despite the fact that the building had to go through renovation after two earthquakes in the 18th century (in the 1740s and again in 1778).⁴⁴ In addition to the structural reinforcement and plastering of the walls, the renovation works also included new flooring with another material and new roof covering, all of which is mentioned in canonical visitations.⁴⁵ In the 19th century, the onion dome of the

⁴² The walled up opening of the bell-chamber in the attic is somewhat higher than the other three windows. Clearly, it was made smaller subsequently.

⁴³ In spite of the created conservation report (see note 40), examined and assessed were only layers of plaster and paint, while structural assessment which could reveal development phases of architectural elements was not made.

⁴⁴ Sršan, *Kanonske vizitacije, Valpovačko-miholjačko područje*, 43, 121, 257, 505. The 1745 visitation mentions the earthquake-damaged roof and belfry (which split in places), while the subsequent visitation from 1754 brings a note on the repaired roof. After the 1778 earthquake, chaplain turned for help to the baron's son, Joseph Ignaz Hilleprand and the repair of the church was completed by the 1782 visitation. The 1810 visitation states that "the dome of the belfry threatens to collapse" because of which it was renovated "from the ground up" in 1827 owing to the "master's generosity", as is stated in the 1829 visitation.

⁴⁵ The 1829 visitation mentions the brick flooring of the nave, replacement of brick in the sanctuary with Cologne stone, and roofing with shingles as opposed to the original roofing with tiles. Sršan, *Kanonske vizitacije, Valpovačko-miholjačko područje*, 505.

belfry was replaced by a dome with a pointed top⁴⁶ and somewhat later, the slope of the roof adjacent to the belfry was also changed.⁴⁷ Moreover, the relationship between the belfry and the body of the church suggests that even bigger changes might have occurred in the design of the belfry. Regardless of a clearly better situation than before the construction of the new roof, the belfry is still not in a harmonious relationship either with the monumental body of the church or with its facade articulation.⁴⁸ The design of the vaulted vestibule under the choir loft, however, possibly points to the construction of the so called Baroque belfry behind the facade, that is, the belfry which is supported on one side by the church facade, and by the arch above the choir loft on the other.⁴⁹ The question whether such a belfry was actually built or this structurally demanding solution was abandoned even during construction works⁵⁰ in order to achieve a stronger emphasis on the main body of the church⁵¹ still remains unanswered. Nevertheless, there are several recorded renovations of the belfry, especially the one from 1827 when it was renovated "from the ground up",⁵² which might lead to the conclusion that the present appearance of the belfry resulted from additional interventions.

[12] These assumptions could be confirmed by an analysis of the spatial and formal organisation of the church in Valpovo within a wide architectural context of Central Europe to which the building belongs according to the origins of its design.

[<top>](#)

The architectural type of the church in the Central European context

[13] The type of church containing a single nave divided into two bays, as the one in Valpovo, is a sort of intervention created by Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt (1663–1745). He developed and used the same type in his designs for a group of churches that he built

⁴⁶ The present onion dome, having replaced a 19th century pyramidal cap, was restored according to the standards of the Croatian Conservation Institute in 1968–70. Information about the original copper cap of the belfry in the shape of onion dome can be found on the 18th century print and in written sources. More in: Conservation and Restoration Report (note 40), 17-18.

⁴⁷ Conservation and Restoration Report (note 40), the pyramidal cap and the church roof extending to the belfry can be seen on a postcard from 1899.

⁴⁸ There was no logical relationship between the main facade articulation with lesenes and the belfry.

⁴⁹ One of the basic features of the Baroque belfries integrated into the main facade is that their proportions determine the dimensions of the entrance of the church containing a choir loft. Günter Brucher, "Die Entwicklung barocker Kirchenfassaden in der Steiermark", in: *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Institutes des Universität Graz* 5 (1970), vol. I, 60-63. However, there are churches whose entrances have no belfries above the choir lofts, such as the two-bay churches in Aspersdorf and Großstelzendorf and, later, in St. Pölten, which have the belfry attached to the lateral side of the sanctuary, and not in front of the facade (as in Valpovo).

⁵⁰ See note 28.

⁵¹ A massive tower (originally also topped with an onion dome) emphasizes the entrance to the baron's residence in the fort. A scene of the castle with the tower was painted in the background of Baron Hillebrandt's portrait from 1750, and towers of both the castle and church can be seen on a 1774 print. Conservation and Restoration Report (note 40), 17.

⁵² Canonical visitations clearly show the belfry was repaired on several occasions (see note 44).

during the 1720s and 1730s in Lower Austria and Bohemia on the estates of his patrons who belonged to high aristocratic circles of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁵³ He defined the most basic features of the type already in the first of them – the parish church in Seelowitz (Židlochovice) in Moravia (1722–27).⁵⁴ The nave of the church is divided into two square bays with domical vaults supported by massive piers. The narrower semicircular sanctuary is topped by a barrel vault with a pair of lunettes and a semi dome with radial lunettes above the apse. The use of different vaulting systems is reflected in the variations of wall articulation – while the entablature in the nave is built in sections immediately above the piers, the one in the sanctuary, supported by pilasters, runs continuously along the walls. The further development of this architectural type depended at the time on the introduction of an important element – the piers with cut-off corners which additionally emphasize the centrality of the domed bays. The elegant spatial proportions and rich architectural sculpture of the church reveals Hildebrandt's signature, which can also be confirmed by archival sources.⁵⁵ His hand is furthermore evident in the design of the facade belfry and the choir loft. The relatively short belfry whose main facade is at the same time the main facade of the church is on the outside visually united with the body of the church through its concave lateral sides. On the inside, the belfry is supported by columns and arches of the choir loft which form the so called Palladian motif. While the aforementioned innovative way of integrating the belfry into the main facade is one of significant High Baroque architectural motifs created by Hildebrandt (first employed in the parish church in Pottendorf),⁵⁶ the Palladian motif on the choir loft is immediately suggestive of Northern Italy, the region where he could have found inspiration for the church type with a two-bay nave.

[14] The prototype of the two-bay nave with domical vaults was the well known Jesuit church San Fedele in Milan, built under the patronage of Charles Borromeo and designed by Pellegrino Tibaldi (1569).⁵⁷ Built for more than hundred years, the church was a topic of numerous tractates, including that of Andrea Pozzo (1693),⁵⁸ which contributed to its popularity not only in Northern Italy but also in Central Europe where the type was used

⁵³ Bruno Grimschitz, *Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt*, Wien, München 1959, 128-131.

⁵⁴ Bruno Grimschitz, *Johann Lucas von Hildebrandts Kirchenbauten*, Wien 1929, 270-272.

⁵⁵ Hildebrandt was mentioned in the correspondence between Count Philipp Ludwig Wenzel von Sinzendorf and the supervisor of construction works on his castle in Seelowitz. Grimschitz, *Johann Lucas von Hildebrandts Kirchenbauten*, 270.

⁵⁶ The church in Pottendorf, built in 1714–17, was attributed to Hildebrandt. Grimschitz, *Johann Lucas von Hildebrandts Kirchenbauten*, 263. More about the church belfry in: Brucher, "Die Entwicklung barocker Kirchenfassaden in der Steiermark", 60. Similar designs can be found in the works of Balthasar Neumann (churches in Wiesentheid and Trier) with whom Hildebrandt collaborated on the renovation of the Würzburg Residence.

⁵⁷ Roberta Maria Dal Mas, "Le opere architettoniche a Ragusa, Lubiana, Trieste, Montepulciano, Belluno e Trento", in: Vittorio De Feo, Valentino Martinelli, eds., *Andrea Pozzo*, Milano 1996, 188. The two-bay nave extends into the sanctuary covered with a dome.

⁵⁸ Dal Mas, "Le opere architettoniche a Ragusa, Lubiana, Trieste, Montepulciano, Belluno e Trento".

by Lombard builders during the 17th century.⁵⁹ Without going here into an analysis of Early Baroque Central European churches with two-bay naves (the so called spazio binato), it is still worth mentioning that the usual type of vaulting used in that time and in that region were barrel and groin vaults.⁶⁰ The reinterpretation of the Milan prototype based on the use of domical vaults occurred in Central Europe rather late, in the period of High Baroque, and the architect who played a key role in the use of the type was exactly Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt. Although the domical Bohemian caps⁶¹ had previously been introduced into Central European church architecture⁶² it is possible that, given his Genovese origins, Hildebrandt became familiar with domical vaults directly at its source, in Piedmont, where he began his career serving as engineer to Prince Eugene of Savoy on his military campaign, and where he formed his specific decorative repertoire grounded in North Italian mannerist architecture.⁶³

[15] The first Hildebrandt's church with a two-bay nave was not merely an experiment, and that became clear in the development of the type in several future church projects starting with the parish church in Jiříkov (Georgswalde) in north Bohemia which was built under the patronage of the counts of Harrach (1724–27),⁶⁴ and continuing with the parish churches in Aspersdorf (1730),⁶⁵ Stranzendorf (1733)⁶⁶ (Fig. 6, 7, 8) and Großstelzendorf (1735–37)⁶⁷ (Fig. 9), north of Vienna, on the Lower Austrian estates of Count Schönborn,

⁵⁹ Richard Bösel, "Die Nachfolgenbauten von S. Fedele in Mailand", in: *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 27 (1984), 67-87, 211-222.

⁶⁰ As in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Vrhnika, Slovenia; more in: Metoda Kemperl, *Romarske cerkve – novogradnje 17. in 18. stoletja na Slovenskem: arhitektura, tipi, poslikave, oprema*, PhD thesis, Ljubljana 2001, 83-107. Cf. Metoda Kemperl, "Cerkveni ustanovi knezov Eggenbergov v 17. stoletju na Kranjskem", in: *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino* XLIII (2007), 105-138.

⁶¹ They were built in North Italy already in Early Renaissance (ex. Brunelleschi's church of Santo Spirito in Florence).

⁶² Domical vaults (Bohemian caps) – *Platzlgewölbe* – appear in Central Europe in late 17th century, especially in *Wandpfeiler* churches and basilicas designed by Carlo Antonio Carlone. Eberhard Hempel, *Baroque Art and Architecture in Central Europe*, Harmondsworth 1965, 88. A two-bay nave covered with domical vaults was also successfully built in the Church of St. Ursula in Prague (1702–04) designed by the Lombard architect Marcantonio Canavale. Heinrich Gerhard Franz, *Bauten und Baumeister der Barockzeit in Böhmen*, Leipzig 1962, 85.

⁶³ Son of a German captain, born and raised in Genoa, received education from Carlo Fontana in Rome; Hempel, *Baroque Art and Architecture in Central Europe*, 95.

⁶⁴ Grimschitz, *Johann Lucas von Hildebrandts Kirchenbauten*, 272-274.

⁶⁵ The attribution of St. George's Church in Aspersdorf to Hildebrandt is most certain, though with no supporting information in the written sources. Grimschitz, *Johann Lucas von Hildebrandts Kirchenbauten*, 274-277. Dehio, *Niederösterreich nördlich der Donau*, Wien 1990, 54.

⁶⁶ Hildebrandt's designs for the Church of SS Peter and Paul have been preserved: Grimschitz, *Johann Lucas von Hildebrandts Kirchenbauten*, 281-285. Dehio, *Niederösterreich nördlich der Donau*, 1146, 1147.

⁶⁷ The authorship of the Church of St. Andrew in Großstelzendorf was ascribed to Hildebrandt though not supported by archival material. Dehio, *Niederösterreich nördlich der Donau*, 360. Altar paintings were made, as in the Valpovo church, by Anton Herzog: Repanić-Braun, "Djela bečkog slikara Antona Herzoga u Valpovu i Vukovaru", 180. The inscription on the church states that the church was built by Michael and Johan Hueber.

one of Hildebrandt's main patrons after Eugene of Savoy. In addition to different treatment of orders, entablature and vaulting in the sanctuary,⁶⁸ the nave in all these churches is topped by two domical vaults supported by massive trapezoidal piers. However, regardless of their abundant plasticity, the piers are shaped exclusively with cut-off corners (though without concave lateral sides as in Valpovo). As far as the exterior forms are concerned, Hildebrandt articulated lateral facades by characteristic lesenes and the main facade by pilasters. In contrast to a more traditional manner of building belfries conditioned by the preservation of previous structures,⁶⁹ he achieved, in cases of newly built churches such as the parish church in Stranzendorf, an effective integration of the belfry with the main body of the church by building the so called belfry behind the facade.



6 Stranzendorf, parish church of SS Peter and Paul (1733), main facade with an incorporated belfry (photo: P. Mofardin)

⁶⁸ The sanctuaries and entrances of the earlier two churches were, just like in the Seelowitz church, covered with groin and barrel vaults, while the churches in Stranzendorf and Großstelzendorf are covered with domical vaults.

⁶⁹ The belfries laterally attached to the sanctuary of the churches in Aspersdorf and Großstelzendorf were built in the Gothic style. Dehio, *Niederösterreich nördlich der Donau*, 54, 360.



7 Stranzendorf, parish church, view of the sanctuary and the side facade (photo: P. Mofardin)



8 Stranzendorf, parish church, view of the two-bay nave (photo: P. Mofardin)



9 Großstelzendorf, parish church of St. Andrew (1735–37), view to the two-bay nave and the sanctuary (photo: P. Mofardin)



10 Wiener Neustadt, former Jesuit church of St. Leopold (1737–43), main facade with an incorporated belfry (photo: P. Mofardin)



11 St. Pölten, former Carmelite church of St. Trinity (1757–68), view of the two-bay nave (photo: P. Mofardin)

[16] This adeptly developed type, almost exclusively used for non-urban ("rural") churches on aristocratic estates – the so called *Dorfkirchen* – was soon after employed by other architects, both unknown Hildebrandt's followers⁷⁰ and esteemed Austrian High and Late Baroque architects. The earliest structures with similar features were found, as could well be expected, in Lower Austria where the two-bay concept was quickly adopted for pilgrim churches such as the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary the Protectress in Göstritz, south of Vienna (1727–38),⁷¹ or for construction projects of the ambitious Jesuit

⁷⁰ The churches with two-bay naves in Magersdorf (1727) and Weyerburg (1730) have been attributed to Hildebrandt or his followers. Kemperl, *Romarske cerkve – novogradnje 17. in 18. stoletja na Slovenskem*, 96, after Wilhelm Georg Rizzi, *Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt. Ergänzende Forschungen zu seinem Werk*, PhD thesis, Wien 1975, 200-204.

order, such as the Church of St. Leopold in Wiener Neustadt (1737–43).⁷² (Fig. 10) The significance of these two buildings by unknown architects lies in the fact that another element was used in them at the same time when Hildebrandt was active in the region. This element, also present in the Valpovo church, and yet another important innovation, is piers with concave corners which contribute to the elliptical appearance of centralized domical bays⁷³ which was fully developed and used in the wider Central European area in the subsequent decades of Late Baroque.⁷⁴ (Fig. 11)

[17] All the aforementioned architectural elements were appropriated and further developed by Hildebrandt's most immediate follower, Viennese architect Franz Anton Pilgram (1699–1761) who owed his prestigious career to numerous building projects in the monarchy, most of which were, in addition to Lower Austria, carried out in Hungary and Slovakia.⁷⁵ His design for the two-bay parish church in Münchendorf, Lower Austria (1740)⁷⁶ shows in its proportions and treatment of details a great resemblance with the parish church in Valpovo. It is also indicative that here, just like in typical Hildebrandt's churches, the belfry is incorporated into the main facade. In terms of congruence with the Valpovo church, especially relevant is the introduction of concave sides of piers (though only in the sanctuary and choir loft), but this was the element which Pilgram would completely develop somewhat later, in the two-bay parish church in Tata, Hungary (1751).⁷⁷ (Fig. 12)

⁷¹ The church, built by Joseph Steingerger, was under the patronage of Count Joseph Leopold Julius von Wallsegg. Dehio, *Niederösterreich südlich der Donau*, Wien 2003, 558-559.

⁷² After the temporary dissolution of the Jesuit order in 1773, the building became a parish church. Dehio, *Niederösterreich südlich der Donau*, 2630, 2631.

⁷³ Piers with concave sides appear in various types of churches in a wider area of Central Europe even before, in the works of first rate architects, such as the members of the Dientzenhofer family in Bohemia or Johann Michael Fischer in Bavaria. More about the topic in: Franz, *Bauten und Baumeister der Barockzeit in Böhmen*, 135-159; Bernhard Schütz, *Die kirchliche Barockarchitektur in Bayern und Oberschwaben 1580–1780*, München 2000, 39.

⁷⁴ A harmonious design within the same architectural type was accomplished in Lower Austria by Mattias Munggenast in as the Church of the Holy Trinity in St. Pölten (1757–68). Dehio, *Niederösterreich südlich der Donau*, 1991. The main representative of Late Baroque sacral architecture with centralized elliptical bays covered with domical vaults in Styria was Joseph Hueber, an architect from Graz. Although his oeuvre feature churches with two-bay naves (parish church of St. Nicholas in Stubenberg, 1760–66), his favourite type of church were those that naves with three bays, central one of which was accentuated. Rochus Kohlbach, *Steirische Baumeister*, Graz 1961, 235-236; Hellmut Lorenz, "Architektur", in: Hellmut Lorenz, ed., *Barock, Geschichte der bildenen Kunst in Österreich*, München, London, New York 1999, 293.

⁷⁵ Pál Voit, *Franz Anton Pilgram (1699–1761)*, Budapest 1982.

⁷⁶ Pál Voit, "Unbekannte Entwürfe Franz Anton Pilgrams", in: *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 24 (1971), 123-131. The only surviving plans of the church, the ground floor plan and lateral facade elevation are kept in the monastic archives of Heiligenkreuz (Rub. 32, Folder 6, No. 3, 1). The church was later built according to a more simple design.

⁷⁷ Voit, *Franz Anton Pilgram*, 228. The type of church with two-bay nave covered with domical vaults became the most frequently used type in Hungarian sacral architecture in the second half of the 18th century and in the beginning of the 19th century, equally for small village churches and pretentious buildings such as the Classicist parish church in Papa.



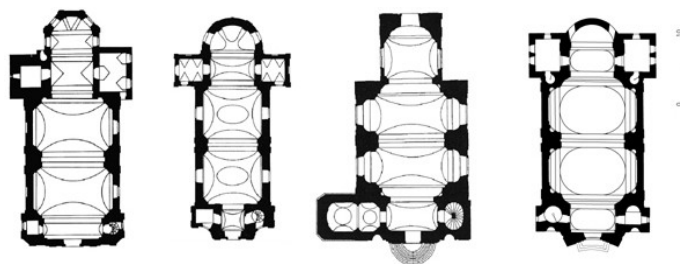
12 Tata, parish church (1751), two-bay nave
(photo: P. Mofardin)

[18] All this leads to the conclusion that the Valpovo church was at the time of its construction a modern and attractive building which belonged to the architectural type created by the leading Austrian architect of the period and built on the estates of Austrian nobility. The choice of architect made by Peter Anton Hillebrandt von Prandau was in that regard logical and well justified. Moreover, the baron's care about the design and construction of the church, in addition to his engagement in the management of the Valpovo manor could suggest that he turned personally to Hildebrandt, although historical sources are rather silent on that matter (considering the amount of altogether 10 forint paid to Mr Pock⁷⁸ for the church designs it is hardly possible that he himself created them). However, although the ground floor plan, vaulting and the exterior design of the church (provided that there had been an original design with an incorporated belfry) indeed correspond to Hildebrandt's two-bay churches, differences between them and the Valpovo church in terms of interior design and decorative detailing leaves room for different attributions. The difference in the interior treatment of the Valpovo church is evident not only in the complete absence of a complex decorative repertoire characteristic for the architect but also in the articulation of the nave supports which were, unlike typical Hildebrandt's trapezium piers, shaped with concave lateral sides that continue into the equally profiled intrados of arches.⁷⁹ As has already been mentioned, this typically Late Baroque element, which became a necessary part of a large number of Central European churches in the 18th century had already been used in Lower Austrian two-bay churches in the 1730s by Hildebrandt's contemporaries, and somewhat later by

⁷⁸ See note 34. The publication Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, eds., *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Leipzig, vol. 27–28, 170, mentions the builder Jacob Pock from Vienna (1604–51), but he lived one century before the creation of the design for the Valpovo church.

⁷⁹ The piers might have been redesigned in one of the renovation projects mentioned by the visitations, and that possibility should not be rejected. See note 44.

his main follower, Pilgram. (Fig. 13) It is, therefore, this circle of architects which should be examined in order to find the one who built the parish church in Valpovo.



13 Typical examples of churches with two-bay naves in Austria; ground floor plans of the churches in Aspersdorf, Stranzendorf, Wiener Neustadt and Münchendorf (architectural drawing: M. Vojtić)

[19] However, regardless of numerous other questions around the authorship of the church design, the spatial treatment of the Valpovo church was in the context of Croatian Baroque architecture of the 1730s in many ways innovative.

[<top>](#)

Significance of the church for Croatian Baroque architecture

[20] The revalorization of the exceptional but hitherto neglected church in Valpovo, that is, its re-contextualization within sacral Baroque architecture in Croatia has inevitably brought into question some of the previously accepted arguments. Not only was the church, as a realization of Viennese High Baroque, significant in the context of Baroque architecture in Slavonia but was also important for North-Western Croatia where its basic architectural elements – the two-bay nave with centralized domical vaults – served as a precursor for similar structures. First to follow the typology was the Chapel of St. Francis Xavier built on the Jesuit estate in Zagreb (1748–52) fifteen years after the completion of the church construction in Valpovo. (Fig. 14) However, apart from the spatial organization of the nave and the use of the same vaulting system, there are hardly any other similarities between the two structures, since St. Francis' chapel shows primarily Styrian architectural influences.



14 Zagreb, church of St. Francis Xavier (1748–52), view of the two-bay nave and the sanctuary (photo: P. Mofardin)

[21] Typologically, the Valpovo church remained for some time a unique occurrence in Slavonia where its complex design, except for certain individual elements, made its use for newly built churches in the surrounding areas difficult.⁸⁰ However, due to new winds blowing from the very centre of the Habsburg Monarchy, this type of church soon became one of the most frequently used types in Late Baroque sacral architecture in Slavonia. Emerging in the midst of the common Late Baroque practice to build longitudinal churches in which domical bays (of different number and dimensions) were used for creating effects of centralized space, this new trend of building two-bay churches owes its success, on the one hand, to the acceptance of the type in the mid-18th century among a wide circle of architects and engineers, and, on the other hand, to the decision of the Imperial Building Office in Vienna to promote this practical solution in order to bring uniformity into the sacral architectural practices in the monarchy in the late 18th century.⁸¹

[22] Seen in the context of this new building wave of Late Baroque churches with two-bay naves that spread through entire Slavonia, the first in a series of structures – the chapel of St. Theresa (1756–63) in Nova Gradiška, a military town founded on the initiative of General Filip Beck – can be said to belong to the oeuvre of an Austrian architect.⁸² However, in accordance with the date of its construction, the church nave shows a strong emphasis on the elliptically shaped bays which is achieved by increasing the depth of the concave lateral sides of the bays, by the use of a new concave element, the so called domed triumphal arch at either end of the nave⁸³ and by the design of the three apses in the sanctuary. The constituent part of such a concept was, naturally, the belfry behind the facade. In addition to numerous works with very similar typological features built on different estates across the Military Border,⁸⁴ new Late Baroque interpretations of the type, commissioned and financed by esteemed patrons, noblemen

⁸⁰ For example, the facade belfry with a ground-floor porch which was used in the construction of the 19th-century parish church of St. Peter in Petrijevci (the church was, according to canonical visitations, built in 1754; the stone belfry was first mentioned in the 1829 visitation). Sršan, *Kanonske vizitacije, Valpovačko-miholjačko područje*, 603.

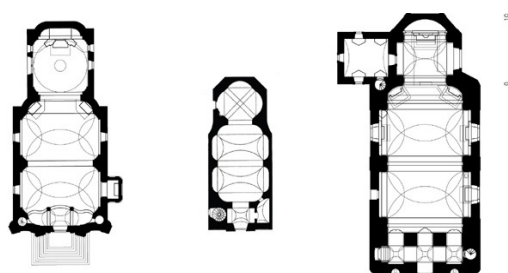
⁸¹ Dubravka Botica, *Četverolisne crkve u srednjoj Europi – problem tipologije sakralne arhitekture 18. stoljeća*, PhD thesis, Zagreb 2007, 157, according to: Christian Benedik, "Zur Geschichte der Zeichnungen hofbauamtlicher Provenienz", in: Richard Bösel, ed., *Exempla & exemplaria*, exh. cat., Wien, 1996, 47. Big longitudinal churches were envisaged to be built with three-bay naves while small churches were to have two bays in the nave.

⁸² Marija Mirković, "Crkvena umjetnost Nove Gradiške", in: *Nova Gradiška 250 godina – izabrane teme*, Nova Gradiška 1998, 94-104. After having been declared a parish church in 1760, the building was supposed to be taken down when a new parish church was built in the early 19th century. However, it was saved owing to the efforts of the parish priest and the general of Petrovaradin who interceded with the emperor for its survival. Đurđica Cvitanović, "Sakralna arhitektura baroknog i klasicističkog razdoblja", in: Tugomir Lukšić, Ivanka Reberski, eds., *Sveti trag, devetsto godina umjetnosti Zagrebačke nadbiskupije 1094.-1994.*, exh. cat., Zagreb 1994, 256.

⁸³ That element was then already widely accepted in North-Western Croatia.

⁸⁴ Đurđica Cvitanović, "Idejni nacrti za gradnju tipiziranih crkava u Vojnoj krajini", in: *Vojna Krajina, povijesni pregled – historiografija – rasprave*, Zagreb 1984, 411-429.

and bishops, show high architectural quality. They include the Parish Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Pakrac (1761–63) built under the patronage of the Counts of Janković and Franjo Thauzy, the Church of St. George in Kaptol near the town of Požega whose construction was initiated by Bishop Ivan Paxi⁸⁵ and which was envisaged to become the cathedral of the Srijem Diocese but never did. There are also numerous other parish churches such as those in Vinkovci (1772–77), Nova Kapela (1773–74) or Bilje (1775).⁸⁶ The way in which the transformation of an architectural type occurs in the shift from Late Baroque to Classicism is a topic for some other research. However, it should be mentioned here that all the mentioned buildings could not be properly assessed without the knowledge of Hildebrandt's architectural prototypes, one of which is reflected in the parish church in Valpovo. (Fig. 15)



15 Typical examples of churches with two-bay naves in Croatia, ground floor plans of the churches in Zagreb (Ksaver), Nova Gradiška, Vinkovci (architectural drawing: M. Vojtić)

[23] Therefore, although the Valpovo church was not the only sacral building, built in the first half of the 18th century in the liberated territory of Slavonia, which has been brought into relationship with the work or influence of one of the most significant Austrian architects of the period, proven by Zlatko Uzelac's⁸⁷ original interpretation of the votive church in Topolje (1722) and the church in the citadel of Slavonski Brod (1743), the church in Valpovo is the only building whose architectural influences could be felt in the subsequent developments of sacral architecture in the region.

Translation by Željka Miklošević

[<top>](#)

⁸⁵ This monumental building, comprised of two square bays of the nave defined by concave and convex surfaces of the piers and semicircular termination of the sanctuary covered by a dome, was obviously built with the intent to make it the cathedral of the Srijem Diocese. These pretentious plans were interrupted by the merger with the Đakovo (Bosnian) Diocese (1733) which resulted in Đakovo becoming the religious centre of the Eastern Slavonia and Srijem; Katarina Horvat-Levaj, "Barokna arhitektura", in: *Kulturna baština Požege i Požeštine*, Požega 2004, 198-199.

⁸⁶ More on the topic in: Horvat-Levaj, "Barokna sakralna arhitektura – tragom Eugenove crkve", 344-347.

⁸⁷ Zlatko Uzelac, "Tvrđavska crkva sv. Ane Johanna Lucasa von Hildebrandta u Slavonskom Brodu", in: *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 28 (2004), 188-207.

