

Velika Ludina, Parish Church of St. Michael the Archangel, High Altar

The international project *Tracing the Art of the Straub Family* (www.trars.eu) studied the heritage of the Straub family of sculptors. Croatian Conservation Institute (project leader), Bavarian State Department of Monuments and Sites, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, and Universities of Ljubljana and Graz participated in its implementation together with associate researchers from other heritage, religious, scientific and educational institutions. The project was co-funded by the *Creative Europe* Programme of the European Union.

The project explored the history and art of several generations of the Straub family. The work of five brothers from the third generation that grew up in Wiesensteig was particularly interesting. In the 18th century, they were leading sculptors in several cities in present-day Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia. When their birth town, and their father's and uncle's carpentry workshops, became too small, they set off in search of work. In time, they became leading sculptors in several cities in Central Europe: Munich, Graz, Maribor and Bad Radkersburg. The youngest brother, Franz Anton Straub, lived and worked in Zagreb and, judging by the altars and pulpits we still have today, he



was the most productive sculptor in the Diocese of Zagreb.

The largest artwork to emerge from Franz Anton Straub's workshop is the monumental high altar from the parish church of St. Michael the Archangel in Velika Ludina. Even though the altar completely fills the apse of the sanctuary (9 14 x 8 17 cm), the openings behind the sculptures of Sts. Zechariah and Joachim, bordered by rocaille lace, make it seem light and airy.

According to an inscription hidden behind the tabernacle, it was completed in 1762 when Petar Bursić was the parish priest. Several documents mention it somewhat earlier, in 1761, when the report from the canonical visitation describes the newly built altar in detail, and lists the statues of the saints. One of the mentioned sculptures is that of St. Lucy, which has unfortunately been lost.

According to another inscription about the altar's history, it was renovated in 1853 when Ivan Miković was the parish priest. At the same time, the present painting of St. Michael the Archangel by Johann Beyer from Graz was placed on the altar. The third renovation that left its mark was in 1906 when the entire sacral inventory and walls were repainted by the Slovenian painter and altar builder Petar Rutar.

Croatian Conservation Institute has been carrying out extensive conservation on the altar since 2003. Over the years, one can see how, starting from the top, the original polychromy of vivid colours with a multitude of gold and silver gilding, and glazing has been emerging as if from behind a descending veil. The most spectacular sight is the enormous curtain drawn back in the middle to show the Blessed Virgin in glory, illuminated from the back by light shining through the round window. The curtain is completely covered in silver gilding with shining green glazing, making it look like silk with gleaming folds. The same form, but on a smaller scale, is repeated on the tabernacle which is the only item carved by Franz Anton Straub with a preserved canopy.



Velika Ludina, župna crkva sv. Mihaela arkandela, glavni oltar

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Istraživanje baštine kiparske obitelji Straub provedeno je u sklopu međunarodnog projekta *Tragom umjetnosti obitelji Straub* (www.trars.eu). Uz Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, koji je bio voditelj projekta, u njegovoj su provedbi sudjelovali i Bavarski državni zavod za zaštitu spomenika, Javni zavod Republike Slovenije za zaštitu kulturne baštine te Sveučilišta u Ljubljani i Grazu, uz pridružene istraživače iz drugih baštinskih, vjerskih, znanstvenih i edukativnih ustanova. Projekt je sufinancirala Europska komisija programom *Kreativna Europa*.

U sklopu projekta istraženi su povijest i djela nekoliko naraštaja kiparske obitelji Straub. Osobito je zanimljiva djelatnost petorice braće iz trećeg poznatog nam naraštaja stasalog u Wiesensteigu, koji su djelovali tijekom 18. stoljeća u nekoliko gradova današnje Njemačke, Austrije, Slovenije i Hrvatske. Nakon što su im rodna sredina te očeva i stričeva stolarska radionica postale skućene, braća su se otisnula u potragu za poslom prema jugu i istoku. S vremenom su postali vodeći kipari u nekoliko srednjoeuropskih gradova: Münchenu, Grazu, Mariboru i Bad Radkersburgu. Najmlađi brat, Franz Anton Straub, živio je i radio u Zagrebu te je, sudeći prema sačuvanim oltarima i propovjedaonicama, bio najplodonosniji kipar svojega vremena na području tadašnje Zagrebačke biskupije.

Najveća umjetnina iz radionice Franza Antona Strauba je impozantni glavni oltar župne crkve sv. Mihaela arkandela u Velikoj Ludini. Iako oblikom u cijelosti ispunjava apsidalni dio svetišta (9 14 x 8 17 cm), ne djeluje masivno; prividno ga stanjuju otvori iza skulptura sv. Zaharije i Joakima, obrubljeni čipkom od rokaja.

Prema natpisu skrivenom iza svetohraništa, dovršen je 1762. godine za župnika Petra Bursića. U dokumentima se spominje još prethodne godine, kad se u izvještaju kanonske vizitacije detaljno opisuje netom podignuti oltar i poimenice nabrajaju skulpture svetaca. Među njima se nalazi i ona sv. Lucije koja je u međuvremenu izgubljena.

O povijesti oltara govori nam još jedan natpis, prema kojem saznajemo da je obnovljen 1853. godine, u vrijeme župnika Ivana Mikovića. Tada je postavljena slika sv. Mihaela arkandela gradačkog slikara Johanna Beyera. Druga obnova koja je obilježila taj oltar dogodila se 1906. godine, kad je cjelokupni sakralni inventar i zidne plohe nanovo oslikao slovenski slikar i graditelj oltara Petar Rutar.

Od 2003. godine Hrvatski restauratorski zavod provodi opsežne konzervatorsko-restauratorske radove na oltaru. Iz godine u godinu može se pratiti kako se odozgo nadolje, kao iza koprene koja se spušta, pojavljuje prvotna polikromija svježih boja, s mnoštvom pozlate, posrebrebnja i lazura. Najdojmljiviji prizor je golemi zastor koji se u sredini raskrtiljuje da bi prikazao Blaženu Djevicu u slavi, odostraga obasjanu svjetlošću s okruglog prozora. Zastor je u cijelosti posrebreben i prekriven sjajnom zelenom lazurou te se doima kao da je izrađen od svilene tkanine čiji se nabori presijavaju. Isti se oblik ponavlja na svetohraništu koje je jedino iz dlijeta Franza Antona Strauba na kojemu je baldahin ostao sačuvan do naših dana.



TrArS
Tracing the Art
of the Straub Family



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