

Pakrac, Parish Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, High Altar

The heritage of the Straub family of sculptors was researched in the international project *Tracing the Art of the Straub Family* (www.trars.eu). Besides the Croatian Conservation Institute (project leader), the Bavarian State Department of Monuments and Sites, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia and the 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 European Commission through the *Creative Europe* programme.

The project explores the history and artistic work of several generations of the Straub family. Particularly interesting is the activity of five brothers from the third generation that grew up in Wiesensteig. They were leading sculptors in the 18th century in several cities of today's Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia. When their birthtown and the carpentry workshops of their father and uncle became too narrow, they set off southwards and eastwards in search of work and in time grew into the leading sculptors in several Central-European cities: Munich, Graz, Maribor and Bad Radkersburg. The youngest brother, Franz Anton Straub, lived and worked in Zagreb and, judging by the preserved altars and pulpits, was the most productive sculptor in the area of the Zagreb Diocese of the time.

Although we rarely find works by Franz Anton Straub outside the territory of the then Zagreb Diocese, this carpenter and sculptor was commissioned owing to Bishop Francis Thauszy to execute the high altar for the parish church in Pakrac. Before he became Bishop of Zagreb, Francis Thauszy had for a short time, from 1750, served as Bishop of Đakovo and

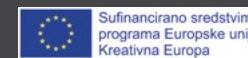
Bosnia. After the end of the Ottoman rule, he was devotedly committed to the reconstruction of that part of Slavonia. Since Pakrac became more important at that time and turned into a district seat, it is no surprise that Bishop Thauszy built a new church in Pakrac, furnishing it with valuable inventory. Among other artworks he obtained from Poland the painting of *Our Lady of Częstochowa*, which was erected in the church and finished with polychromy in 1760. Instead of a gable in the upper part, the altar has a carved curtain that opens in the middle to show the bishop's coat-of-arms through which light from an enlarged window used to dramatically illuminate the church.

During the 19th and 20th centuries the altar was partially or completely repainted four times. The painting of *Our Lady of Częstochowa*, in a richly carved frame, was replaced by a new one, and in 1942 by a somewhat too large painting of the *Assumption of the Blessed Mary* by Nikola Čipor. The biggest threat to the altar occurred during the Homeland War when the church was shelled in 1991. The bell tower and the roof were damaged, and the altar was for years exposed to the elements. Fortunately, as it later appeared, the thick subsequent coatings of paint protected and saved the fragile, original, water-soluble paint and gilding.

After the end of the Homeland War, the Croatian Conservation Institute restored the altar and it was reinstalled in the church sanctuary in 2013. In the course of the extensive conservation, the thick coatings of paint were removed and today the surface of the altar is as described in the report from the first canonical visitation of the church in 1761 – in different colours of marble and partly gilded.



TrAr
Tracing the Art
of the Straub Family



Pakrac, župna crkva Uznesenja Blažene Djevice Marije, 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 umjetničke obitelji Straub. Osobito je zanimljiva djelatnost petorice braće iz trećeg znanog nam naraštaja stasalog u Wiesensteigu. Oni su bili vodeći kipari 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.

Premda djela Franza Antona Strauba rijetko nalazimo izvan područja tadašnje Zagrebačke biskupije, zaslugom biskupa Franje Thauszyja, od tog je stolara i kipara naručen glavni oltar za župnu crkvu u Pakracu. Prije nego što je postao zagrebački biskup, Franjo Thauszy je od 1750. godine kratkotrajno obnašao dužnost đakovačko-bosanskog biskupa,

pa se nakon završetka osmanske vladavine znatno zalagao za obnovu toga dijela Slavonije. Budući da tada Pakrac dobiva na važnosti i postaje sjedište kotara, ne iznenađuje što je biskup Thauszy u tom gradu podigao novu crkvu i za nju priskrbio vrijedan inventar. Između ostaloga, u Poljskoj je nabavio sliku *Gospo Jasnogorske (Częstochowske)* za glavni oltar, koji je postavljen u crkvi i dovršen polikromiranjem 1760. godine. Umjesto zabata u gornjem dijelu, oltar ima rezbareni zastor koji je u sredini rastvoren da bi pokazao biskupov grb kroz koji je nekoć svjetlo s povećeg prozora dramatično obasjavalo crkvu.

Tijekom 19. i 20. stoljeća oltar je djelomično ili potpuno prebojavan čak četiri puta. Slika *Gospo Jasnogorske*, obrubljena bogatim rezbarijama, zamijenjena je novom, a potom, 1942. godine, ponešto prevelikom slikom *Marijina Uznesenja* Nikole Čipora. Najveću ugrozu oltar je doživio u Domovinskom ratu, kad je 1991. godine crkva granatirana. Zvonik i krov su oštećeni, a oltar je godinama bio izložen atmosferilijama. Kako se poslije pokazalo, debeli naknadni premazi tada su zapravo zaštitili i spasili nježnu vodotopivu prvotnu boju i pozlatu.

Nakon završetka Domovinskog rata oltar je restauriran u Hrvatskom restauratorskom zavodu i 2013. godine ponovno postavljen u svetište crkve. Tijekom opsežnih konzervatorsko-restauratorskih radova uklonjeni su debeli premazi boje te je danas površina oltara onakva kakva je opisana u izvještaju prvog kanonskog pohoda crkve 1761. godine – u različitim bojama mramora i djelomično pozlačena.



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