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18TH CENTURY SERBIAN ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES IN THE FORMER PROVINCES OF THE HABSBURG EMPIRE, A CASE STUDY ON BANAT AND HUNGARY

The baroque style has been often regarded by specialists as one of the first international movements transcending the limits of time and space, manifesting in areas found far from the centre that set the trend. The ideological discourse promoted by the Habsburgs had as a model the scenery of the great cities in the empire, with urban principles that stated the importance of the parochial church, or the main square adorned with monumental sculptures as visual rhetoric. It was quite a fashion to assert allegory and symbols as forms of power manifestation, having didactic and decorative values at the same time. The image instructs, the form sets boundaries to what is seen, and becomes a model to be followed in a manner that sets the prototype. The architectural prototypes of the churches raised in Hungary and Banat in the 18th century were configured by Lipót Kollonich. During Leopold I the Serbs were allowed to build churches made of stone replacing the wooden ones from the previous century. The study aims to present a comparison between the Serb architectural topography and style in two of the provinces found in the boundaries of the Habsburg Empire. How the central European models were received and set as trends in religious architecture is the main target of this research.

Key words: Baroque architecture, Banat, Hungary, Serbian architectural principles

This study represents an approach on the stylistic similarities between the art of the former provinces of the Habsburg Empire in the 18th century, comparison that was possible by getting in contact with researchers of the subject from all over Europe, especially from Hungary, Serbia and Austria.

The latest methodology of art history states that contextualization is the most important factor of artistic development. Thus the objects of art are not isolated items taken from their original location, in fact they stand as

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landmarks of their period and they should be reinterpreted and analyzed as they were seen and placed by the viewers at the time of their production.

By such a contextualization, art is endowed with new meanings that enrich the manner in which images express ideas and emotions, assert authority and presence, concretize beliefs and summon supernatural aid. What prevails in the study of the baroque art from Banat is that throughout social and political upheavals and changes, art grew and thrived into what we define as a local variant of the European style that is often referred to as Late Baroque.

The common features to all artistic manifestations of the 18th century are disregarded on behalf of what is unique, pointing out what makes the local variant of the style a particular manifestation at the border of the Habsburg Empire, in a period when baroque displays of imperial power proposed a range of subjects in connection with the evolution of the European society.

The present study is aimed to follow particular aspects of the baroque style in the territory of what use to be the historical province of Banat (area naturally delimited by the Mureş river at North, Tisa at East and the Danube at South) before 1919, when a consistent part became territory of the Serbian Croatian Kingdom, taking into consideration that previous studies never extended to this area, reevaluating local, particular aspects of the art, pointing up to date information on the issue.

Becoming an outpost of Christianity in an area where two leading forces collided, the province faced tremendous changes after the Habsburg conquest.

The ideological discourse promoted by the Habsburgs had as a model the scenery of the great cities in the empire, with urban principles that stated the importance of the parochial church, or the main square of a town adorned with monumental sculptures as visual rhetoric. It was quite a fashion to assert allegory and symbols as forms of power manifestation, having both didactic and decorative values at the same time. The image instructs, the form sets boundaries to what is seen, and becomes a model to be followed in a manner that sets prototypes and imposes values.

Each style has an evolution from an early stage when the style emerges from what existed before and transcends into a maturity stage with fully manifested forms as visual support of the ideology and dissipates into a final stage of evolution with new means of expression that surrender finally to dissolution.

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The achievements of the Baroque age serve the cause of international harmony in the cultural life of central Europe. In this internationalism the style that proliferated in Banat can be placed, as a form of manifestation with a set of values displaced from the political centre. The high baroque in the Habsburg lands situated chronologically between 1680s and 1730s was international rather than cosmopolitan, as Robert Evans so thoroughly expressed (Evans, 1993:80).

In the Austrian Monarchy royalty and monarchy were slowly becoming obsolete, as one of the pillars of the authority turned towards aristocracy, a category lacking in Banat, as the newly acquired province became the emperor's private domain. The European nobility set the trend for the provincial expressions of the style, like one may see in the variants of the baroque from Hungary and Transylvania.

European values transcend into the art of the province, setting the stage for the evolution towards modernity. The trends of this modernization started immediately after the conquest of the province, when the ideology of the enlightened despotism penetrated all fields.

Different Catholic orders set foot in the province and founded churches and schools, as the case of the Jesuits or the Franciscans from Bosnia, the Piarists and Brethren of Mercy. The religious propaganda turned visual by the use of rhetoric, this being the first stage in form and iconography of the baroque style dissemination. The churches of the Catholic orders followed the prototype of Anton Pilgram model that can be observed to set a real trend in church building in Banat. The architect managed to disseminate the model in the kingdom of Hungary working at the Premostratensian monastery of Jászá.

Masters of the Vauban-type baroque citadels set models in military constructions (the citadel of Timișoara and Ada Kaleh). The citadel of Timișoara was built having four monumental gates, only the one oriented towards west (Vienna Gate) being decorated with bas-reliefs representing armored soldiers, which are kept fragmentarily in the collection of the Banat museum. These were the first decorations placed on military buildings, very different than the decorations of the citadel from Alba-Iulia that sets the climax of the stylistic representations throughout complex iconography and symbols.

The military constructions of the period were illustrated in the Jesuit Anton Holler's book of engravings, published in 1733 by Johann Peter von Ghelen under the title: *Augusta carolinae Virtutis Monumenta seu Aedificia a Carolo VI. Imp. Max, P(ater P(atriciae). Per Orbem Austriacum Publico Bono posita*, in the fifth chapter entitled *Aedificia Bellica* (Sabău, 2002:100).

The Jesuits were the first to take over a church that existed during the Ottoman rule (the oldest church of Timișoara), that of Saint George (Rupp, 1876:96) and transform it into a Catholic one, for that being referred to in the documents as the Jesuit church. Another example is the church of Saint Nepomuk built inside the citadel walls between 1733 and 1736 having a baroque articulation of masses and a typical interior where all views converged towards the centre where the high altar dominated. Built as a symbol the interior of this church reveals the space uninterrupted towards the high altar as guidance for the worshippers, proclaiming the authority in the new land. The visual rhetoric is obvious, from the Latin cross plan to the vaulting systems and inside decorations.

The church dedicated to Saint Katherine was the third one to suffer modifications in time, built by Theodor Kostka in 1774, and rebuilt in 1888-1890 when the centered tower was repositioned, surviving hard times. The obelisk of St. Katherine (1763) was erected on the place where the church was initially erected, in front of the Transylvanian gate. The obelisk has a characteristic typology with engravings on the three sides that mark the entrance of the Franciscans in Banat, as the year 1717 on one side mentions, or 1756 when the new church was built and an inscription devoted to the deceased, stating that it was very common to all cities in the monarchy to have places marked in the memory of the inhabitants. The inscriptions rendered on the sides are as follows: *TrophaeVM soLo acqVatae saCrae aeDIS CatharInensIs, In qVa saCrIfICare Deo fLorente EvgenIo CaroLo seXto DoMinante signo Reformatos Fratres coepisse Minores*

SeD MarIa TheresIa apostoLICI RegnI Coronata RegIna hos In PraesIDIo LoCat et PatroCInIo aMbIt

Defunctis, quorum hic cineres ac ossa recondo, aeternam requiem ore et corde precare Viator (Vlăsceanu, 2002:69-74)

The architecture of these Catholic churches reveal a clearly articulated style, well balanced as the volume disposition is concerned with a monumental façade articulated with ornaments that transgress the periods that delineate the stages of the baroque from central Europe. The basic stylistic traits of the baroque churches indicate their relatedness. The ornaments adorn the façades using a vocabulary that alternates shapes like pilasters, lessens, profiled niches and wreaths. The architects will not work exclusively for official commissions, but will find themselves in a rather congenial environment. The baroque found an alternative provincial source of authority, removed from the centre but nevertheless less expressive and victorious.

The attitude of the period towards artistic manifestations, can be seen in the way baroque art was accepted or rejected in different media (the Orthodox media took over the typology of the Baroque churches, as official models), the ornamentals of the baroque was also adapted in the decoration of the iconostasis found in Romanian or Serbian churches. The so called academism throughout form giving birth to a variety of forms and techniques, from perfect adaptations of the academic layouts (brought by the European artists formed in academic media from Vienna, as the case of an official construction erected in Timișoara, namely the Catholic Cathedral devoted to Saint George, where renowned artists worked at its building and decoration to local adaptations of shapes and contents. This is the well balanced official stage of the Baroque penetration in Banat, the plan of the cathedral being attributed to a Viennese workshop (*Hoffbauamt*), with certain influences from the renowned Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (Diplich, 1972:52), an ideal plan dated 1723 placed during Karl VI reign. This is the year the architect died and his son Johann Fischer von Erlach Jr. continued his work, being assigned as author of the actual plan of the Catholic Church from Timișoara. The documents mention him as a direct follower of the prototypes projected by his father: *Plana proiectaque aedificii Viennae confecta sunt per aulicum caesare reg. celeberrimum architectum Emanuelem Fischer von Erlach* (Voit, 1971:48).

As we can observe from the plan, the actual façade was simplified by Johann Theodor Kostka *aedificator operis* designated by the documents and the decoration lacks completely, especially the statues that were placed in the niches or at the top representing the patron saint. The fact that the plan was not respected is a certain proof that the economic situation from Banat decreased especially during Maria Theresa, when the actual façade was completed. How baroque was accepted we can see in the phenomenon that followed after the second half of the century when most of the Catholic churches in rural Banat were built, and the Orthodox ones were contaminated with the models and took the type plan and specific ornamentation in iconostasis decoration and the themes of the religious painting were enriched with European values. The Orthodox iconostasis follows the models of the baroque altars, taking the architectural articulation as he main characteristic, with pillars and columns marking the entrance, divided horizontally by registers separated by profiled cornices and the abundant decoration that consists of motifs taken from other styles: the conch shell, acanthus scrolls, flower and leaf garlands, even the *rocaille* motif expressing the general character which tends to illustrate how baroque operated on visual level in all fields and domains. The most representative examples of such elevated iconostasis are the ones from Ciacova

(Serbian Orthodox church), Oravița, Caransebeș (St George and St. John the Baptizer churches (Vlăsceanu, Bona, 2007), Birta, Timișoara (Serbian Cathedral), Bezdin and Arad-Gai.

The Orthodox population found under the protection of the Illyrian privileges (Anuichi, 1980:19-20) struggled throughout the century to gain independence from the Serbian church. The Illyrian privileges represented between 1690-1790 a real constitution for the Orthodox population from Banat, in fact it was a case of extended Serbian authority in the direction of faith preservation against Catholicism, as means of ruler ship and unification. A strong decorativeness is its main characteristic, at the traditional forms of iconostasis being added the new Occidentalized ones in structure and decoration. A similar phenomenon took place in Hungary and Serbia, where the new trend was received as a stimulus in art evolution. (Nagy, 1994:75).

The Serbian baroque found its background at the Viennese Art Academy the one that spread throughout the province the new guidelines. The same homogeneity of eclectic styles specific for the 18th century Europe emerge from this area as well, from baroque to rococo and neoclassicism.

What makes the baroque architectural style so vital and exclamatory, is that it asserts primacy and authority in religious and social terms. In fact from hieratic symbolic images the 18th century turned decorative and votive exclusively.

The aspects in regard of the Viennese academism can be traced in different phases of manifestation, from forms that exults the ideology of the Counter Reform to forms having Enlightenment background, thus from baroque to rococo and neoclassicism, corresponding chronologically to the reigns of the 18th century from Banat: that of Carol VI, Maria Theresa and Joseph II.

Influences penetrated from the Western world as artists and architects traveled in search of new commissions. How the style was accepted we can observe as early as 1730s, even in the Orthodox media the models that prevailed were of western influence. After the period of Ottoman rule when restriction were imposed concerning the forms of the churches and materials of construction, the appearance of these churches changed as they grew in height and monumentality having imposing towers on the façade. The case of the Serbian churches is particular as it represents one of the particularities of the baroque from Banat. In 1724 Metropolitan Moisije Petrovič made some suggestions on the building of new churches and of their appearance. The recommendation suggested that the old tradition of long and narrow churches be abandoned in favor of long and as wider as possible churches. It was a clear suggestion of tradition abandonment and acceptance of the new. (Medaković,

1995:145-146) The metropolitan seat at Sremski Karlovči was a clear example of Baroque penetrating the Orthodox Serbian media.

When making considerations about the baroque of the Serbian churches, one has to look at the particular situation that arose when the Serbians that immigrated in Hungary were compelled to receive influences. It is the case of the great migration that followed after the defeat of the Habsburgs from 1690 at Belgrade, when fearing Turkish retribution, the Serbs moved to Hungary. Led by the head of the Serbian church, Arsenije III Čarnojevič they settled in Hungary, and built at first wooden churches and after the second half of the 18th century stone and brick churches. The baroque takeover was justified by the dignitaries of the Serbian church with the idea that the Serbs who found themselves in a central European environment after their great migration, could ensure their survival only if they assimilated into their new environment as much as possible. (Nagy, 2008.134) All these were town churches with baroque decorations, as we can notice at Szentendre (1746), Hodmezövásárhely, Buda, Pest and Eger. The old stone churches that underwent a process of refurbishment, receiving a baroque façade, or tower were those from Hodoş, Mesič, and Krušedol.

In the baroque art from Banat we can observe the rigor of the Austrian academism, towards which one should take into consideration the following ideological aspects: the relation existing between the model and its representation, knowing that the life of forms is the most complex phenomenon in art history, from the architectural program where we can see forms imposed as models (even the settlements were arranged according to the *Shackbrettdorf* model), endowed with churches having a general plan, or typology, elaborated by special workshops where imperial architects and engineers worked.

The baroque as a style created an unity in diversity as one may express, throughout the multiplicity of its multicultural aspects setting the stage for future contacts, influence penetration, even establishing dialogue between two worlds separated by hundred of years of evolution, the province of Banat being situated at crossroads between Orient and Occident.

The fact that in Banat we encounter multiple confessional entities configured this space accordingly, each one having a strong identity. To identify these interferences is required for a better understanding of the local specificity, the Romanian community managing to integrate itself in the European community by keeping alive traditional aspects. The baroque style became in Banat a bonding factor, in a society united by the modernization phenomenon initiated with the conquest of the province in 1716, by the Habsburg Empire. What happened was a polarization of sentiments manifested in different aspects in regard to the attachment to the Catholic Austrian world, in the way this area subscribed to the European life style, a proof of this being

the radical transformation of the province that followed immediately after the conquest.

Stylistically connections with central European centers, in particular with the Austrian area must be pointed out, as the style that evolved in Banat is different in style and manner than the initial impulse, comparison required to underline European origins of all artistic manifestations from Banat.

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PRINCIPES DE L'ARCHITECTURE RELIGIEUSE SERBE PENDANT LE XVIII^{ÈME} SIÈCLE. ÉTUDE DE CAS SUR LES DEUX PROVINCES DE L'EMPIRE DES HABSBOURG: LE BANAT ET L'HONGRIE

(Résumé)

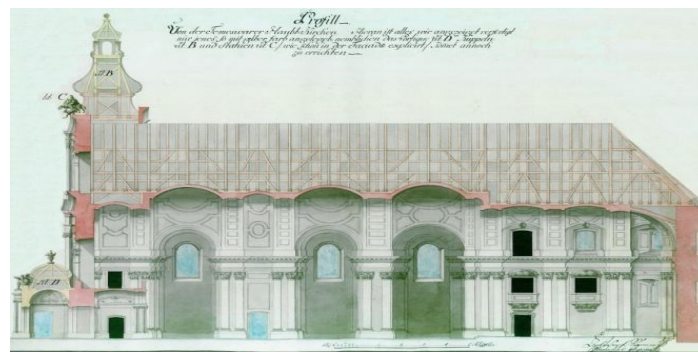
Les églises édifiées en Banat par les ordres religieux catholiques, pendant le XVIII^{ÈME} siècle, ont été des bâtiments monumentaux résultés du prototype créé par

Anton Pilgram: une structure basilicale avec deux tours sur la façade, un large chœur et un imposant intérieur, avec un autel principal et des autels latéraux comme des éléments obligatoires de la mise en scène baroque. On peut remarquer, à Timișoara, les plus expressives adaptations du concept, à l'ancienne église des Franciscanes Bosniens de Timișoara, consacrée au Saint Nepomuk ou à celle des Franciscanes Salvadoriens, „Sainte Écaterinne”, avec son premier tour, bâti par l'architecte Theodor Kostka, en s'intégrant au modèle avec un seul tour sur la façade, véritables prototypes qui inspireront, aussi, l'édification des églises au milieu orthodoxe du Banat historique. Le mode dans lequel ces modèles constitueront les normes formelles de l'évolution de l'architecture pendant le XVIII^{ème} siècle se précise, en même mesure, dans le phénomène constaté dans l'évolution des provinces voisines. Du point de vue de la typologie, le modèle d'église-type représente le repère de son évolution, en Banat, pendant le XVIII^{ème} siècle. La forme consacrée des édifices religieux avec une planimétrie structurée unitairement longitudinal couvrira, aussi, des aspects monumentaux conférés par l'emplacement d'un tour-clocher sur la façade.

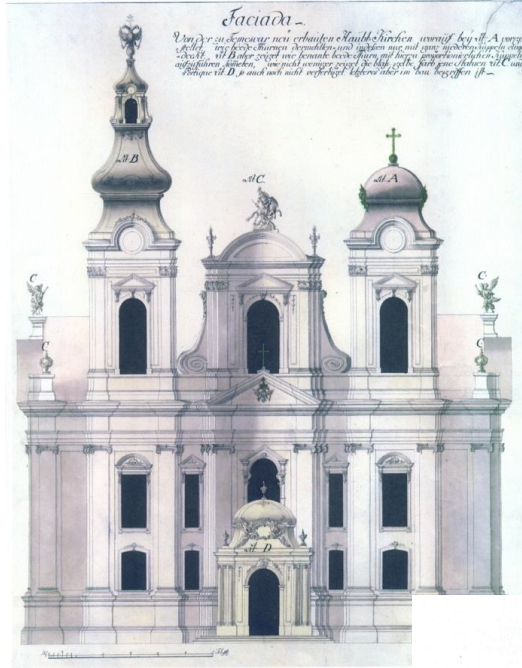
On fait exception les cathédrales avec deux tours sur la façade, représentatives pour le milieu orthodoxe du Banat pendant le XVIII^{ème} siècle, raccordé aux nouvelles valeurs proposées par le Siècle des Lumières par l'intermédiaire d'un rationalisme orthodoxe manifesté non seulement par la doctrine, mais aussi par une forme de sensibilité religieuse propre à cette période: l'église de la Mitropolie de Sremski Karlovač (1758-1762), l'église serbe de Timișoara (1744-1748) et l'église orthodoxe de Lugoj avec le patron „L'endormissement de la Mère du Dieu”, édifiée pendant la période 1759-1766.

Mots clés: l'architecture baroque, Banat, Hongrie, principes de l'architecture serbe

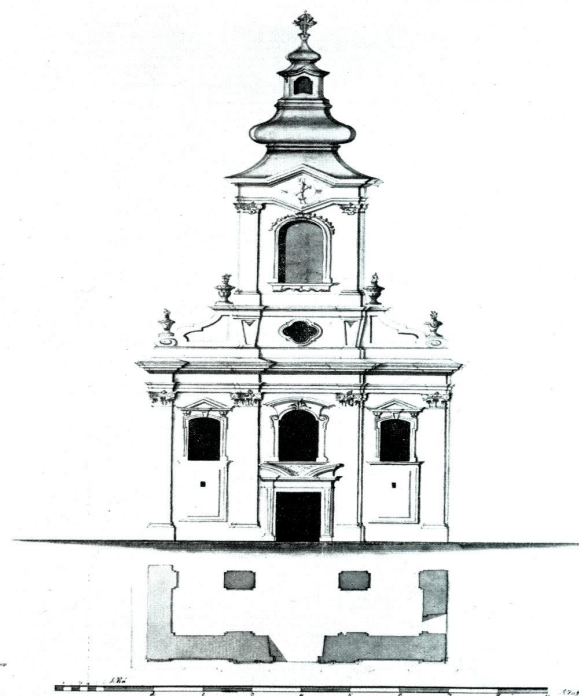
Illustrations



1. Roman Catholic Cathedral Timișoara (apud Catholic Diocesan Archive)



2. Sketch of the faade (Roman Catholic Cathedral Timișoara), apud Catholic Diocesan Archive)



3. Faade of Saint Katherine Church from Timișoara, (apud Catholic Diocesan Archive, Timișoara).



4. Facade of Saint. George church from Timișoara (apud Catholic Diecesan Archive, Timișoara).



5. Serbian Cathedral from Timișoara.



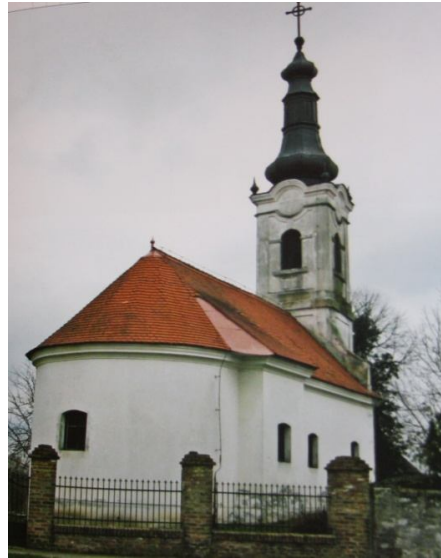
6. Serbian Church from Ciacova.



7. Orthodox Cathedral from Caransebeș.



8. Serbian Church from Kecskemet, Hungary.



9. Serbian Church from Beremend, Hungary.



10. Serbian Church from Szeged (Szoreg).

