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КОЛОНИЗАЦИЈА ПРИПАДНИКА  
ЊЕМАЧКЕ НАЦИОНАЛНЕ  
МАЊИНЕ И ЊИХОВА САКРАЛНА  
АРХИТЕКТУРА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ  
СРПСКОЈ

THE COLONIZATION OF  
GERMAN NATIONAL  
MINORITY AND ITS SACRED  
ARCHITECTURE IN  
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## КОЛОНИЗАЦИЈА ПРИПАДНИКА ЊЕМАЧКЕ НАЦИОНАЛНЕ МАЊИНЕ И ЊИХОВА САКРАЛНА АРХИТЕКТУРА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРПСКОЈ

### РЕЗИМЕ

Доласком аустро-угарских власти у Босну и Херцеговину након Берлинског конгреса 1878. године, створили су се предуслови за насељавање становништва из свих крајева Хабзбуршке монархије на територију БиХ. Припадници њемачке националне мањине су имали највише повластица и најорганизованији систем доласка, а због погодности обрадиве земље и планског насељавања, све њемачке колоније су формиране на територији данашње Републике Српске. Новопристигли Њемци су задржали свој национални, религијски и културни идентитет, те су одмах по доласку почели градити и помагати цркве и самостане, како римокатоличке, тако и евангелистичке деноминације, доприносећи тако формирању идентитета простора и архитектонског пејзажа. Вјерски објекти, чија су архитектура и историјски развој предмет овог рада, су у највећој мјери очувани до данас.

**Кључне ријечи:** Њемци, националне мањине, сакрална архитектура, Република Српска

## THE COLONIZATION OF GERMAN NATIONAL MINORITY AND ITS SACRED ARCHITECTURE IN REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

### ABSTRACT

The arrival of the Austro-Hungarian authorities to Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Congress of Berlin in 1878, created the preconditions for the inhabitation of people from all over the Habsburg Monarchy to the territory of BiH. The members of the German national minority had the most benefits and the most organized system of arrival, and due to the convenience of arable land and planned settlement, all German colonies were formed on the territory of today's Republic of Srpska. Germans who came, retained their national, religious and cultural identity, and immediately upon arrival began to build and help the churches and convents, belonging both to Roman-Catholic and Evangelical denominations, contributing to the establishment of the spatial identity and architectural landscape. The sacred buildings, whose architecture and historical development are the topic of this paper, are largely preserved to this day.

**Key words:** Germans, national minorities, sacred architecture, Republic of Srpska

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Significant inflow of foreign population was not recorded until the pre-occupation period in 1878, following the occupation and annexation (1878-1908 and 1908-1918). Major migration of national minorities in our region began with the systematic colonization that followed the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878. Although all occupying authorities that were taking turns in Bosnia and Herzegovina have left indelible marks with indelible consequences for the life of future generations, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy acted with the greatest number of moves in only four decades of their presence. One of the most prominent processes that was launched after the end of the occupation, and was announced even during the Ottoman rule, was the colonization.

Before the breakthrough to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Viennese authorities had already had experience with the development of lagging economy found in Galicia and Bukovina. For that purpose, they made up the so-called Plakolb's plan to create agricultural colonies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, indicatively was not mentioned in the process of colonization. [1:23-4]

It is necessary to identify the attempt of internal colonization that actually fell through, due to lack of comprehensive support of the State Government. So, on their own initiative, soon after the departure of the Ottoman officials, local residents tried to take erar properties without previously acquiring the right to use or own certain properties. Although the Government in certain instances tolerated such acts, as a rule, they were severely punished, and soon formally terminated by external colonization of farmers primarily from today's Austria, Germany, Hungary, and the Netherlands. [2:104-5]

*"The motives for colonization are interpreted differently in the historiography. Officially, the Government's position that the colonization is a positive process that will improve the economic situation in the province, in historiography is largely interpreted as a political objective with which the authorities want to settle disputed territories by reliable element. For the final conclusion all relevant factors must be investigated. However, it is very likely that the motives for the settlement of foreigners in Bosnia and Herzegovina were both political and economic."* [3, 4]

## 2. THE ARRIVAL OF GERMAN NATIONAL MINORITY TO TERRITORY OF THE PRESENT REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

Formally, the colonization was carried out in two phases: the first from 1878 to 1895, and the second from 1895 to 1905. [2:182] The first phase on one hand covered primarily population from Lika and Dalmatia, respectively the natives from the wider region, but has also been the result of a kind of promotion of individuals from the Catholic Church and the Trappist Abbey of Maria Stern from Delibašino Selo near Banja Luka, which was actually created as a precursor to the mass arrival of foreigners in the surroundings of Banja Luka during the time of Ottoman rule. It was only the second phase, which was conducted according to the measures of the occupying authorities, with their guidelines and legal frameworks. [5:369]

*"The conditions for colonization and the conditions under which the colonists got erar land to cultivate it were: that each family had to bring 600-700 forints in cash and enough manpower in order to, within 10 years, clean out 10-14 hectares of scrub and trees; during the first three years of immigration, immigrants pay nothing, but must clean out the land. From the fourth to the tenth year immigrants paid rent of one crown per hectare, and after that, if all requirements*

*were met, they acquired the citizenship of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the land became their property.” [6:121]*

Furthermore, the aforementioned abbey “Marija Zvijezda“, built in 1869, and founded formally in 1870, in Delibašino Selo near Banja Luka, was very important in promoting the opportunities that “new land” offered to potential immigrants. [7] This abbey belonging to Roman Catholic Order of reformed Cistercians of strict order - Trappists, was the first German colony in the Banja Luka region, and according to some sources even in Bosnia and Herzegovina in general. [8] Most of the credits belonged to Abbot Franz Wendelin Pfanner, who painstakingly worked on the development and construction of the abbey (inter alia - church, monastery, steam mill, production of cheese and beer, wool-carding drive, electrical power plant) and at the same time attracting residents from the remote parts of Germany and Austria, as well as the new members of the abbey. Thus, in 1920s the abbey became the largest Trappist congregation in the world.

Abbot Francis Pfanner used one of his extensive articles called “*Bosnien, ein Land für Ansiedlung*,” which was published in a Viennese magazine [9] and a magazine from Rheinland, [10] to invite deadbeat population of Germany and open the door to a better life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was accepted by individuals. Knowing the situation in the western regions of Germany where the religious conflicts of Catholics and Protestants took place, then the crisis in agriculture and a strong movement for emigration overseas, it becomes clear why abbot Pfanner’s invitation was accepted. The first colonists arrived from Essen, 28 families with 196 members settled in Brezik. The next formation consisted of three families of colonists, and later immigrants from Hanover, Oldenburg and Braunschweig, who settled in Laminci and Rovine, all around Banja Luka, downstream the Vrbas River. Along with those settlers, other groups from Schwaben, Baden, Rheinland, and Schlesien formed a colony Windhorst, [11:579] which soon expanded to include Upper, Lower and Middle (ger. Ober-, Unter-, and Mittel-Windhorst). [12:175] Windhorst is named after a parliament representative from Hannover, Ludwig Windhorst, [13:116] an adherent of religious and cultural equality and fighter against Bismarck’s legislation. [1:25-6] Another major colony was similarly formed in Aleksandrovac, formerly called Maglaj on Vrbas, renamed to Rudolfsthal in 1888, after a visit of heir to the throne of Habsburgs, prince Rudolf in 1886. [6:126] Families from Schlesien, Hannover and Oldenburg, [11:579] as well as from Braunschweig, Rheinpreussen, Koblenz and Essen formed this colony in Rudolfstal. [14:504] Rudolfstahl and Windthorst, besides Franz-Josefsfeld near Bjeljina, were the biggest German colonies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, formed mostly in order to explore the agricultural and livestock potentials. [15:454–5]

Elsewhere, during the first phase, the Evangelical Germans were settled in 1884 in Šibovska, district of Prnjavor. One of the examples of the State’s encouragement of immigration in the first stage of colonization, was recorded in the vicinity of Bijeljina, where a colony of Hungarians and Germans named Franzjosefsfeld was formed. [6:126]

In the context of the official colonization, with all the benefits, the German colonies were established in Branjevo, Dubrava (Königsfeld), Dugopolje, Glogovac (Schutzberg), Kadar, Ularice (Franz-Ferdinandshöhe) Prosara, Šibovska, Vranovac, Vrbaška - Trebovljani and Vrbovac. [16:91]

Officially, the settlement was completed in 1905, when the government stopped giving subsidies, but reports, however, indicated new inflows of foreigners. With the establishment of the Parliament in 1910, the local opposition began a political struggle against colonization and advocated for giving incentives to the local population without properties. [17:327]

### 3. SACRED ARCHITECTURE OF GERMAN NATIONAL MINORITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

#### 3.1. MARIASTERN ABBEY, DELIBAŠINO SELO, BANJA LUKA [18, 19:558-60]

Location: 1 Slatinska St, Delibašino Selo, Banja Luka

Confession: Roman Catholic

Trappists, or Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, are Catholic order, whose roots are in La Trappe Abbey, Normandy, France; their motto is “Pray and work” and they are famous for their cheese and beer production, all over Europe. Understanding the international connections of Mariastern Abbey is impossible without reviewing the background of Trappist order and their links to other male and female Catholic orders and clergy in Banja Luka, in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and wider. Trappists came to Banja Luka in 1869, under the leadership of Abbot Franz Pfanner. At the time, he wanted to make the new congregation in the Hungarian part of the Empire, in Slavonija exactly (today eastern Croatia), but the authorities did not allow it.

To be precise, after he left Mariawald convent in the village of Heimbach near Eifel in North Rhine-Westphalia, today in Germany, he spent some time in Rome reviving the Tre Fontane Abbey. Afterwards, he came to Zagreb and in July 1868 requested to set up a new Trappist congregation in Slavonija. He was refused and got the answer that it would not be possible before February 1869. Afterwards, Pfanner accepted the proposal from one Catholic Croatian priest, and left to Bosnia. Officially, he came to Banja Luka with six more monks on 21 June 1869. Abbot Pfanner was in touch with the Austro-Hungarian consul, born Croatian, Captain Stanislav Dragančić, who was in power from 1865 to 1873, [20:120] and had his offices in “Albania”, a house owned by Tomo Radulović, the richest non-Muslim merchandiser in Banja Luka. [21:20-1]

According to the contract between Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empire from 5th November 1869, Austrian citizens were allowed to buy the land properties in Bosnia, but only as private persons, not as a clergy. That did not force Pfanner to change his mind and he proved his persistency and determination in the project. The first attempt to buy properties in Klačnice, 12 km northern away from Banja Luka, failed. Then, Radulović offered his property Delibašino Selo, 4 km away from the city centre. And later on, he sold it for 1400 ducats. The history of Mariastern started.

Regarding Abbot Pfanner, he became the most important person in the history of Maria Stern convent and one of the most influential people in Banja Luka at that time, not to mention the most prominent Trappist ever. He was born on 21 November 1825 in Langen, near Bregenz in Voralberg, Austria. He attended schools in Langen, Feldkirch, Innsbruck, and Padua and lived in different congregations. Before he became a Trappist in convent Mariawald, he was the Head of the parish Haselstauden in Voralberg, Austria. He made decisional moves in the arrival of other Catholic clergy in Banja Luka and in Bosnia. Just to mention Banja Luka, he brought nuns from two orders: Sisters of Mercy of Saint Vincent De Paul and Adorers of the Blood of Christ.

Before the construction of a solid building, their first premises were settled in one wooden hut, also known as “cradle”, and its reconstructed version still stands in the main courtyard. After a rather complicated procedure and different obstructions, on 9 September 1870, the foundation stone for convent building was laid. The first wing was completed in the same year on Christmas

Eve. At that time, there were only twelve monks in the convent, all of them native Germans. [21:22]

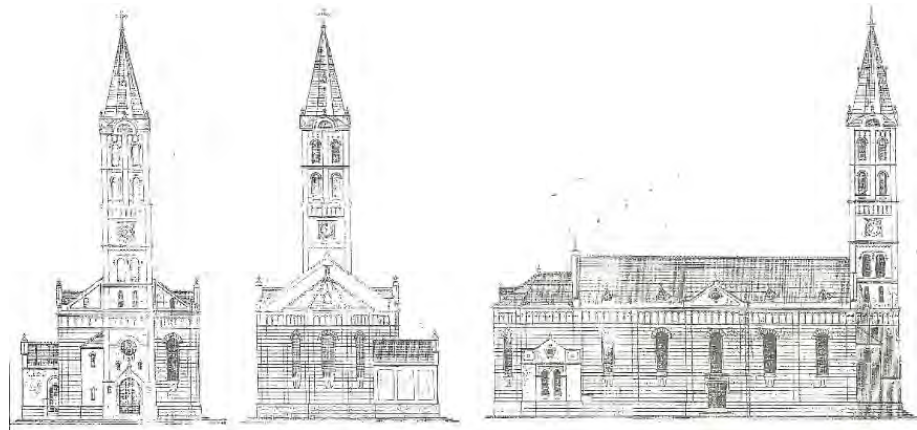


Figure 1. Church of The Resurrection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, first church; entrance, apse and side elevation views. [18:120]

At the same time, due to Turkish restrictions, church, devoted to The Resurrection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was interpolated into the first convent building. The construction works on the church started in 1872 and were completed in 1873; the consecration was done on 14 August 1875. [22:11] The first church was one of the typical examples of simple Gothic revival churches with a single bell tower. Not much information is preserved about this church, so all other descriptive theses could be based on drawings only. (Figures 3-4)

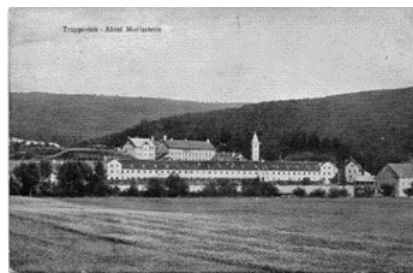


Figure 2. Mariastern Abbey with surrounding industrial facilities. Photograph taken before 1925. [18:119]

The list of different production facilities founded by Trappists is too long to be presented here. Some of them are facilities for production of: cheese (founded 1882), beer (1873), bricks (1869), roof tiles (1877), leather (1892), etc. Besides the traditional cheese, famous all over the world, and beer, today named “Nektar beer”, other important projects done by Trappists are the hydroelectric power station and the bridge over the River Vrbas, devoted to Saint Bernard, whose construction began in 1899 and 1904, respectively. [21:35] Furthermore, the hospital, opened for the public use was built (1878-1879) and an orphanage was opened on 1 March 1878. Regarding the power plant, first there was a steam turbine made by Viennese company Schuckert, but due to low efficiency, they ordered a new water turbine from the company Fährndrich located in Mödling, Vienna. The first bulb shone on 27 March 1899. [23:561]

Banja Luka Vorstadt Bahnhof got electricity in 1902 and in 1910 the production was strong enough to deliver electricity to the whole city of Banja Luka. [21:52] Along with other industrial facilities, this complex is known as the “old convent”, and does not exist anymore, except for the multi-storey mill. After WWI the “new convent” was built.



Figure 3. Mariastern Abbey; view of the new complex. [18:121]

The new church was constructed (1925-1927), according to a project done by Eberhard Wegandt, architect-monk who did the projects for several other facilities and churches in Banja Luka during the five decades of his stay. At the time, it was the biggest Catholic church in Bosnia and Herzegovina, [23:557] and that is certainly an important fact to state. The foundations were laid on the feast day of Saint Bernard, 20 August 1925. [22:51-2] It has a reversed orientation, then the usual: apse on the west with the entrance portal on the eastern side. In the floor plan, the church is three-naved basilica in the shape of an elongated Latin cross. Another “concealed” transept is present on the eastern entrance portal, which provides extension on the choir platform. It has discrete elements of the simplified late classicism revival with tympanums, which are seen on the entrance portal and side transepts. The rest of the decoration consists of arched windows on side naves and the apse walls, as well as biforas and triforas on side walls of the main nave and on the walls below the tympanums. The horizontal cornices are discretely emphasized with stucco and light yellow colour of the external façade layer. Although it has large footprint, the huge dome or bell tower does not dominate the church. Only one small bell tower extends beyond the roof, on the place of intersection of main and transept naves. The side façade walls are supported by unusual counterforts, which have a completely different architectural language in comparison to the overall design. (Figures 5-7)



Figure 4. Church of The Resurrection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, second church. Close up view; present condition. [18:123]

Wegandt did the project, which was later worked out by an architect Seidler from München. [21:559] The architectural language is enriched by important sculptural achievements, made

by Bruno Diamant, also from München. He is famous for his design of aircraft vessel for the count Zeppelin. [21:72]

Along with the church, almost as an extension, a new orphanage building was built, that was actually never used in its original purposes. In 1924, the monks moved in, and the boys stayed in the old convent building. [23:553] The situation after WWII was almost the same for all sacred buildings. Only the church retained its function, while the main building was nationalized and Orthopaedic clinic was moved in. The church was heavily damaged in an earthquake in October 1969, [24:320] just a month after its thorough reconstruction.

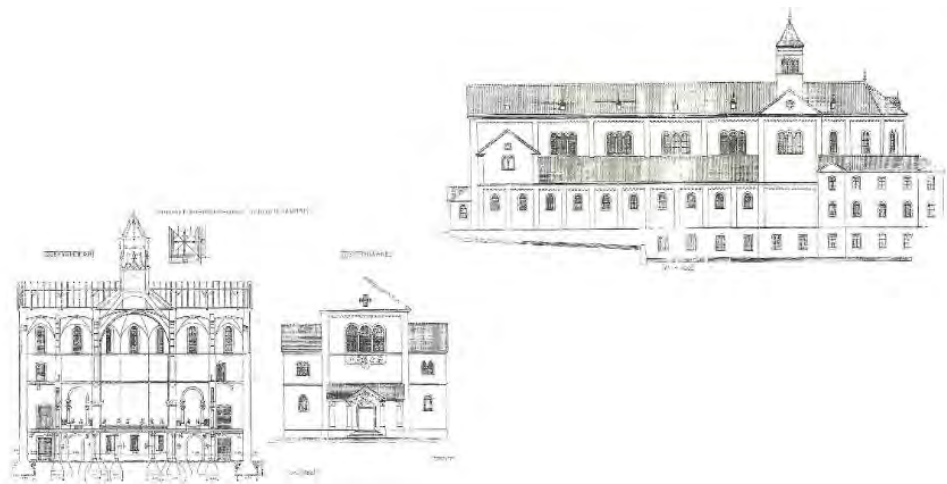


Figure 5. Church of The Resurrection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, second church; cross section, eastern entrance and northern side elevation views. [18:121]

At the peak of its era, before WWI, Maria Stern was the biggest Trappist congregation in the world, with more than 230 monks from 9 countries. Now, it is the smallest congregation, with no more than 3 to 5 monks. [21:31]

Disregarding the main facilities, other industrial buildings do not have exceptional architectural values, even though their importance and role as a heritage in Banja Luka development is priceless.

The church is listed as a national monument on the list of the Permanent National Monuments. [25] The Abbey is on the list of the Provisional National Monuments. [26]

### 3.2. CONVENT AND CHURCH NAZARETH [18:133-5]

Location: Banja Luka

Confession: Roman Catholic

The arrival of nuns belonging to the Adorers of the Blood of Christ in Bosnia was supported by an abbot Franz Pfanner, who visited the sisters in the spring of 1879, in Feldkirch, Austria. After a difficult situation regarding their transfer and accommodation, they finally came on 8 October 1879, in their Convent of Saint Joseph in Nazareth, later named just Nazareth. (Figures 8-9) [23:584]



This order wore mainly black dresses, and Banja Luka citizens soon named them the “black nuns”, and because of their native German language, sometimes they called them “Schwab nuns”.

The convent was located in the city district Budžak, today known as Lazarevo. It was situated in a place where today the military campus “Kozara” can be found.

With the support of Austro-Hungarian authorities, the sisters started construction works on the orphanage building in 1880, and in 1887 the foundation stones for a new church and the convent buildings were laid. As for many other Catholic buildings in Banja Luka, a brother from Mariastern, Eberhard Wegandt, did the project for this complex. [20:162]



Figure 6. Church of the Sinless Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary; photograph dated in years before WWII [18:134]

Construction works on the church started on 5 November 1887 and lasted until 1889, but the bell tower was finished in 1896. Convent buildings were completed in 1888. Later, other premises for the orphanage kids and priests were built in 1897 and 1898.

The church was devoted to the Sinless Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary. It was built in late Gothic Revival style and, interestingly, according to poor photo documentation, it was richly decorated in the interior. The main façade disposition and general design guidelines are significantly similar to the design of the Banja Luka parish church devoted to the Quest of Blessed Virgin Mary to Saint Elisabeth located in Salvatorgasse, today’s Srpska Street, in Banja Luka, and also the cathedral church, that was demolished after the earthquake in 1969.



Figure 7. Convent Nazareth with belonging facilities; photograph dated in years before WWII [18:133]

Unfortunately, after WWII, the communist authorities did not allow the existence of the Convent, but unlike the other facilities, this one was torn down completely and a military campus, that exists now, was built on its place. It is believed that the catastrophic destiny of the complex was affected also by the Austrian and German roots of sisters belonging to the Order. Most of them were forced to leave the country, and the remaining ones moved to the earlier founded branches of the Convent in the north of Banja Luka. The important branches, situated in the Banja Luka region are Branch Marjanovac in Rudolfstahl, today's Aleksandrovac and Branch of Holy Family in Mittel – Windthorst, today's Nova Topola. [14:502-7] Later on, in 1972, a new building for New Nazareth was built not more than 200 metres away from the Old Nazareth, and is still in function. [23:593-8]

### 3.3. PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN AND CONVENT MARJANOVAC [18:137]

Location: Aleksandrovac, the municipality of Laktaši

Confession: Roman Catholic

The convent Marjanovac, another branch of Adorers of the Blood of Christ, is located in the former German colony Rudolfstahl, today the large village of Aleksandrovac, situated some 30 km north of Banja Luka, on the road towards Nova Topola.



Figure 8. Convent with church in Marjanovac, Aleksandrovac. Photograph taken before 1969 [18:137]

The convent with the church, devoted to Saint John the Baptist, was erected in 1895-1899, according to the project by Eberhard Wegandt. [21:258, 593] Its design, done in the Gothic revival style with expressive lines and proportions, is almost the same as the church built about seven years earlier in Mittel-Windthorst - Nova Topola. In the floor plan, the church has a single nave, with the entrance and the bell tower on the west, and the apse with the altar on the east. It is built of brick, with emphasised external pilasters. Façade planes are plastered and coloured in white, while the pilasters and wall decorations are yellow. The main roof is gabled and covered with copper, while the bell tower has a complex spire roof over the hexagonal basis. Truth to be said, the church itself and convent building do not represent any significant examples of architecture, nor do they have some specific elements, especially in comparison to fairly better situated complex in Mittel-Windthorst. The convent building is now adapted to be home for drug addicts and the complex is no longer an official convent, yet it is still one ecclesial unit. (Figures 10-11)



Figure 9. Convent with church in Marjanovac, Aleksandrovac. View from the west; present condition. [18:137]

### 3.4. PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT JOSEPH AND CONVENT OF THE HOLY FAMILY [18:135-6]

Location: Nova Topola, the municipality of Gradiška

Confession: Roman Catholic

The convent devoted to the Holy family, one of the branches founded by the nuns belonging to the order Adorers of the Blood of Christ, is located in Mittel-Windthorst, today's large village named Nova Topola, some 35 km north of Banja Luka. A convent with belonging facilities and a church, devoted to Saint Joseph, is founded in 1888.



Figure 10. Convent of the Holy family: parish house, church and convent building; photograph taken 1894 by Heinrich Renner during his journey through Bosnia [18:135]

Although the information and detailed data about the architect and details regarding the church and the convent itself do not appear in researched literature, it can be concluded that Trappist monk Wegnandt designed the church. The similarity with the church in Marjanovac is far too obvious, and it is the same with the cathedral and parish church in Banja Luka. The church was built in 1891; [20:285] proportions and dimensions are undoubtedly similar with the mentioned churches; floor plans and façade design as well. Some differences, however, exist; this church originally had only an uncovered rough brick façade, without any covering plaster, unlike the church in Marjanovac. In addition, the displacement of the openings is a bit different. Overall, the structural concept and the used language are definitely the same. (Figures 12-13)

However, its Gothic revival style is even more expressive and emphasized here, with a strong colour contrast and typical decorations on the window and portal openings. The recent reconstruction of the church provided a new layer of plaster over the original bricks, and one rather unusual colour marking on the place where the brick joints are supposed to be. That certainly affected the original state of the stylistic proficiency of the church. Nevertheless, Gothic revival spirit and the overall experience are more or less preserved in an authentic level.

Beside the church, on the northern side, the original parish house built in 1889, [20:595] with retained brick façade, exists today. This building was not included in the latest reconstruction works, so it still has all the original decorative elements. Its style definition could be related to the influences of the typical houses from the mountainous regions of the former Empire, as it can be seen in many single-family houses in former Kaiserstraße in Banja Luka.

The convent building is located on the southern side. Today's building is basically original building built in 1888, which was demolished and damaged over time, but also repaired, adapted and extended. Therefore, it does not hold many properties of the initial structure.



Figure 11. Convent of the Holy family: parish house, church and new convent building; present condition. [18:136]

Beside these buildings, a branch of Mariastern Abbey (1892-1893) and a big church devoted to the Sacred Heart were built in Unter Windhorst, but both were demolished by the end of WWII.

### 3.5. EVANGELICAL PARISH HOUSE, BANJA LUKA [18:150-1]

Location: 4 Mladena Stojanovića St, Banja Luka

Confession: Evangelical

The design was done by Ludwig Huber, the same architect that built the Public Hospital in 1891-1892, in Banja Luka. The project was done in 1895, still under the influence of historicism background of Czech architect Karl Pařík. Huber later needed one decade more to transfer his design principles from historicism, overwhelmed with Renaissance revival models, to secession. (Figures 1-2) [27:84]

In the floor plan, the building is rectangular. The central corpus has one additional floor above the ground floor, which extends into two side wings, making the cascade composition of main façade. A strong plinth exists around the building, but cornices are not that strong as in earlier Huber's designs. The entrance was emphasized with a new volume extending from the main façade plain, covered with simple tympanum.



Figure 12. Evangelistic Parish house. View of the main façade from the southwestern corner; photograph taken during Austro-Hungarian period [18:150]

The corners on each of the volumes are outlined with *bossage* stone decoration, which is along with other façade decorations coloured in white. Interesting is the fact that the entrance façade has suffered certain changes, so that now the entrance portal does not exist, and a row of symmetrically displaced windows along the entire main corpus is added. Today, the building is used as an office building and generally it is not known as a former sacred building.



Figure 13. Evangelistic Parish house. View of the main façade from the northwestern corner; present condition. [18:151]

German Evangelistic Parish house, as a part of the cityscape ensemble in former Kaiserstraße, today's streets Kralja Petra I Karađorđevića and Mladena Stojanovića is on the list of the Provisional National Monuments. [26]

### 3.6. EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Location: Novo Selo, the municipality of Bijeljina

Confession: Evangelical

The ancestors of Semberija Germans, evangelists, moved in the 18<sup>th</sup> century from Baden-Württemberg to Srem, Banat, and Bačka. A century later, immediately after the Austro-Hungarian occupation, approximately one hundred German families from Srem were settled in Bijeljina surroundings. Three kilometres eastern of the city centre, their colony was founded. It was named Franzjosefsfeld, later Novo Selo. The village was also named Petar's Field, after the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, in honour of King Petar I Karađorđević. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the year of 1913, the German colonists built a massive, single-naved church with a bell tower on the western façade, in the Gothic Revival style. The stylistic appreciation, which in this case remains provincially difficult, indicate heavy buttresses that support the massive perimeter walls and pointed arches over the biforal windows completed with the pointed arch. The façade decoration is simple, consisting of lintel rim in the form of strips of fractured bricks and simply moulded cornice above the high plinth wall. On the western front there is a rectangular portal completed with lunette in the form of

a pointed arch, above which is the oculus accented with a brick frame. Massive church walls were built of brick, most likely produced in one of two Bijeljina brickyards which were owned by the family Devald. Today the church is devastated. (Figure 14)



Figure 14. Evangelical church, Novo Selo. View of the rear side with apse; present condition.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Along with the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian authorities many opportunities were created for a new life in newly occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, for people from all over Habsburg Monarchy. The first wave of colonization set on Trappist monk Franz Pfanner, who came to Bosnia and Herzegovina, even before the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Not only that he founded one of the most important abbeys in the Trappist world, but he animated dozens of German families to come to rich valleys and plains of northern Bosnia and Herzegovina, today the Republic of Srpska. Later followed the official system of colonization, organized by Government in Sarajevo.

The colonization of Germans was followed by the establishment of new parishes and the construction of churches and convents. The majority of buildings constructed on the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century, are preserved in their original condition, and have served as role models for many other churches built afterwards in their surroundings. Not all of them were designed by prominent and known architects, but still managed to contribute to the identity of urban cityscape and countryside landscape, depending on the site where they were built.

The architectural values vary from Trappist Abbey in Delibašino Selo, near Banja Luka, that was developed by team of architects and sculptors, with detailed documentation, to typical and repetitive architecture in churches in Banja Luka and southern colonies. In only one case, the state confiscated and demolished German properties, while all other are preserved, and moreover, in almost all cases they are very well maintained. In one case, due to large percent of repatriation of Evangelical Germans, the church in former Franzjosefsfeld lost its function and was left to rotten.

In the overall image of Roman Catholic and Evangelical architecture in Republic of Srpska, only Roman Catholic sites contribute with their qualities. Both Evangelical sites lost its initial function. In cases of churches in Banja Luka and its surroundings, these sites, depicted here, not only that they played important religious role for German colonists, but also are very important for understanding the architecture in the Austro-Hungarian period in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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