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## **ARTWORKS ON PARCHMENT AND PAPER MATERIAL OF PARISH ARCHIVES IN THE DRAVOGRAD-MEŽA VALLEY DEANERIES**

### **Zusammenfassung**

Der Autor behandelt in seinem Beitrag die Arten des Archivmaterials der Pfarren im Mießtal, welche unter die bildenden Kunstwerke auf Papier und Pergament eingestuft werden können. Das dort erhaltene Bildarchiv teilt er auf Bauplänen, Bildern

bzw. Postkarten der Kirchenobjekte, erhaltene Bildillustrationen, Andachtsbilder und kanonische Tafeln auf, sowie auf Bildnisse, unter welche er auch die einzige erhaltene Karikatur einordnet. Dabei stellt er die Archivalien, die aus jeder einzelnen Gruppe am repräsentativsten sind, etwas genauer vor.

**Keywords:** Meža valley, Carinthia, archive material, ecclesiastical history

### **Introduction**

Systematic recording of archives of parishes on the territory of the deanery of the Dravograd-Meža Valley has revealed a great deal of archival material painted on paper and some on parchment. Most of this kind of archival material was discovered in the parish archives in Prevalje, which is also the largest in scope, as it contains as many as 105 archive boxes. Individual fragments of this kind of material are found in the parish archives in Kotlje, Ravne, Črneče and St. Daniel near Prevalje. Two examples of this kind of material are painted on parchment and leather, while the rest are painted on paper. The purpose of this article is to present these archival materials to the general professional public.

### **Development of Church administration**

In the early Middle Ages, the Meža valley was part of the Aquileian patriarchate, which established an archidiaconate for the Carinthian region south of the Drava River, as a kind of intermediate stage between the arch parishes and the patriarchate. The territory of the Meža valley covered two more arch parishes: Šmihel near Pliberk/St. Michael ob Bleiburg, which covered the areas of the parishes of Črna, Mežica, Šentanel and Strojna, and the Šmartno near Slovenj Gradec, which included the parishes Kotlje, Guštanj (Prevalje and Ravne), Libeliče and Črneče. Until 1751, the parishes Prevalje, Libeliče, and Kotlje belonged to the Aquileian patriarchate. From this year onwards, until 1787, they were part of the newly established Gorizia Archbishopric. Unlike the aforementioned parishes, the parishes of Črna,

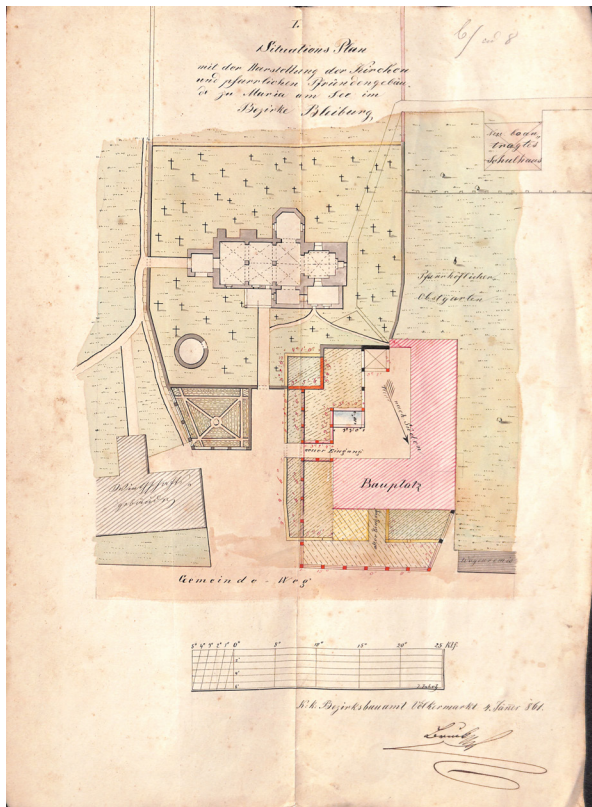


Fig. 1: Site plan of parish buildings in Prevalje, author: Bruck, 4. 1. 1861

Mežica, and Šentanel belonged from 1461 to 1787 to the Ljubljana diocese. That same year (1751), due to the regulation of the borders between the dioceses, all parishes in the area of the Meža valley were annexed to the Lavantian diocese. Between 1859 and 1964, they were part of the Gurk diocese. After 1964, they were again integrated into the Lavantian or Maribor diocese.<sup>1</sup>

## Examples of archival material

The first set consists of colour plans from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which were used in parishes for the renovation of buildings. Such

plans were partially preserved in parish archives in Črneče, Prevalje, Ravne, and Šentanel. They include the plans of the rectories, commercial buildings, churches, and also plans for their reconstructions and renovations. Amongst them, the site plan of the parish buildings in Prevalje stands out (Fig. 1). It was drawn by the Völkermarkt's district architect Bruck on the 1st of January 1861, for the planned renovations of the rectory. Its distinct feature is that it depicts a Romanesque ossuary, which was demolished a few years later. From the artistic and historical point of view, the layout of the old parish church in Prevalje is equally significant, because the old church, with the exception of the bell tower, was demolished in 1890 when the construction of a new church began. From the said plan we find that the original Romanesque church in Prevalje was among the churches with an eastern bell tower above the presbytery, and its nave was divided by two columns into two parts. On the sides, two chapels were attached, whereby its layout in the Baroque period was shaped like a cross.<sup>2</sup>

The second set consists of artistic depictions of churches, for example, postcards and colour drawings on the A5 format and date back to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This set is quite dispersed: such material can be found in parish archives in Šentanel, Kotlje, Ravne, Črneče, and Prevalje. One of the most striking pieces is the black-and-white drawing of the church of St. Barbara (in Zagrad, near Prevalje), drawn by F. Klemen in 1850. The special feature of the depiction is that the original Gothic bell tower is still present, which had risen above the presbytery and which was pulled down in 1908 and replaced by a neo-Gothic bell tower, which was added to the western wall of the nave. The second particular piece of art is a colour postcard of the Church of the Holy Cross near Dravograd from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup>

1 V. SKITEK, 'Oznanilne knjige župnij v 19. stoletju na območju jugovzhodne Koroške', in: *Obdobja 37, Starejši mediji slovenske književnosti: rokopisi in tiski* (Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 2018), 55-64. V. SKITEK, K. ODER, Prevalje skozi čas, in: *Žive vezi – Rastoča knjiga Koroške* (Ravne na Koroškem: Koroški pokrajinski muzej, 2015), 106; K. ODER, *Občina Ravne na Koroškem* (Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 1992) 24-26. On the development of mediaeval Ecclesiastical history in Carinthia, see also: J. HÖFLER, *O prvih cerkvah na Slovenskem* (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2017<sup>2</sup>).

2 S. JAVORNIK, *Likovna dediščina cerkva Mežiške doline* (Ravne na Koroškem: Koroški muzej, 2002), 46-49; Arhiv župnije Prevalje (AŽP), Načrti župnijskih objektov, škatla 94.



Fig. 2: Book (chronicle) of fraternity "Jesus, Marija, Jožef", Prevalje, 1688, photo: Aleksander Ocepek, 2019



Fig. 3: Book (chronicle) of the fraternity "St. Daniel", Šentanel near Prevalje, 1763, photo: Aleksander Ocepek, 2019

century. The unique feature of the postcard is that it depicts the church, which was consecrated in 1851, and the Makočnik farm. The farm was donated to the newly-built church by the farms' previous owners. The farm buildings were later demolished, and there is no trace of them today.<sup>3</sup>

The third set is represented by two fraternity books. The first book, from the parish archive in Prevalje, is of the Brotherhood of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, which was founded in 1688. On the paper pages, there is data on the establishment of the brotherhood, its members from the serf and bourgeois classes. This is followed by a parchment sheet decorated with coloured painted images of the Holy Family, or Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as the chief patrons of this brotherhood

and the name of the brotherhood. This is followed by four further parchment sheets decorated with a large green bay leaf wreath bound with two red bows. On these sheets, all the members of the brotherhood, who were members of the noble families or priests, are recorded (Fig. 2).

The other fraternal book is from Šentanel and has a brown leather cover with a lavish colour image of the prophet Daniel in the lions' den; on the other side of the cover, the name of the brotherhood is written in golden-brown letters as is the year of its foundation: 1763 (Fig. 3). The interior of the book, which consists of bound paper sheets, is for the census of members of the brotherhood and their contributions. Both fraternal books were created due to the needs of both brotherhoods for keeping the list of members and recording revenue and expenditure. Their rich decorations,

3 JAVORNIK, note 2, 33; AŽP (note 2), Risba cerkve sv. Barbare, škatla 94; Arhiv župnije Črneče, Dopisnice črneškemu župniku, škatla 8.

however, are external signs of their importance in domestic environments.<sup>4</sup>

The fourth set represents the religious images of saints and prayers. Two documents are presented in detail in this section. The first is a prayer plaque with the title *Sacerdos cum lavat manus dicat* originating most probably from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was used in the reading of Masses. It is rectangular and has a black base with a white border. On the black background, the image of the Baroque altar frame is depicted in which the text of the prayer is printed on a white background. The second is the image of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, most likely created at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is the size of A6 paper. A holy card with a photo of the young nun St. Theresa is different in form because the central place on a rectangular image occupies the photograph of the saint, and her name, written in French. Its origin is linked to purely religious motives, or with the desire to expand the knowledge and the prayer to this young saint.<sup>5</sup>

In the end, the drawings of the Kotlje's parish priest Ludvik Lajnšček are added to the presented documents. On 28 January 1941, a caricature was drawn with a pencil by the famous Slovenian cartoonist Ladislav Kondor in Murska Sobota.<sup>6</sup>

## Conclusion

Archival material, through its research, opens its eyes to the past. Graphic materials were often a supplement to written documents and therefore were not maintained to such an extent. It emerged from the need for building, by expressing the importance of institutions to the world, following religious devotion and

the fundamental need for art, out of which humanity prospers. In such an invaluable way, in addition to data-based knowledge, graphic materials give us a visual image of people and objects that shaped our history decades and centuries ago.

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4 AŽP, Knjiga bratovščine Jezus, Marija, Jožef, škatla 11; Arhiv župnije sv. Danijel, Knjiga bratovščine sv. Danijela (urbar), 1763, škatla 11.

5 Arhiv župnije Ravne, Podobica/kanonska tabla »Sacerdos«, škatla 5; AŽP, Podobice, škatla 97.

6 Arhiv župnije Kotlje, Karikatura Ludvika Lajnščka, Ladislav Kondor, 28.1.1941, škatla 16.