

Cathedral Church of Holy Trinity in Mostar - history of its building and rebuilding

MILIJANA OKILJ

Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, University of Banja Luka
Institute for Protection of Cultural-Historical and Natural Heritage of Republic of Srpska

Arhitektonsko-građevinsko-geodetski fakultet Univerziteta u Banjoj Luci
Zavod za zaštitu kulturno-istorijskog i prirodnog nasljeđa Republike Srpske
E-mail: milijana.okilj@aggf.unibl.org

UDK: 726.6(497.6 Mostar)(091)

Preliminary communication

Received: 18 January 2023

Accepted: 30 June 2023

MIROSLAV MALINOVIĆ

Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, University of Banja Luka

Arhitektonsko-građevinsko-geodetski fakultet Univerziteta u Banjoj Luci

E-mail: miroslav.malinovic@aggf.unibl.org

Translated by Jana Okilj

Summary

This paper examines the historical and architectural aspects of the Cathedral Church in Mostar, constructed between 1863 and 1873. Notable figures involved in its construction were Spasoje Vulić and Andreja Damjanov, who was one of the prominent builders of that era. Additionally, Momir Korunović played a significant role in the church's development during the 1930s by

overseeing the creation of the gate and the fence surrounding the churchyard. The research draws upon published works, historical sources, and particularly valuable field research conducted in 2005. This field research was instrumental in creating project documentation for the reconstruction of the church, which had been demolished in June 1992 during the preceding conflict. Furthermore, a comparative analysis between the Mostar Cathedral Church and other churches erected by Andreja Damjanov, such as the Cathedral Church in Sarajevo and the Church of the Assumption in Čajniče, is presented.

Keywords: Mostar; Andreja Damjanov; the church; architecture; history.

Saborna crkva Svete Trojice u Mostaru - istorija i arhitektura

Prethodno priopćenje
Primljeno: 18. siječnja 2023.
Prihvaćeno: 30. lipnja 2023.

Sažetak

Rad se bavi historijom i arhitekturom Saborne crkve u Mostaru, koja je građena u periodu od 1863. do 1873., a u čijoj gradnji su sudjelovali Spasoje Vulić i jedan od najznačajnijih graditelja toga vremena Andreja Damjanov. Značajan doprinos je i Momira Korunovića koji je tridesetih godina XX vijeka angažovan za izradu kapije i ogradu porte. Rad je baziran na istraživanju objavljenih radova, istorijskih izvora, a značajan je doprinos terenskih istraživanja koja su rađena 2005. godine, za potrebe izrade projektne dokumentacije za obnovu, crkve srušene u junu 1992. godine, tokom posljednjeg rata. Data je uporedna analiza mostarske i ostalih crkava graditelja Andreje Damjanova poput Saborne crkve u Sarajevu Crkva Bogorodičinog Uspenja u Čajniču.

Ključne riječi: Mostar; Andreja Damjanov; crkva; Crkva Bogorodičinog Uspenja u Čajniču; arhitektura; istorija.

Introduction

The Cathedral Church of Holy Trinity (Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostle), situated in Mostar, held the distinction of being the largest Orthodox place of worship in the surrounding region during its construction. Perched on the eastern slopes of Perkovina hill, the church's establishment was made possible by the reform measures implemented by the Ottoman Empire in 1839. These reforms facilitated the cultural revitalization of diverse religious and national communities, including the Serbian Orthodox community. After centuries of hindrance under Ottoman administration, the construction of monumental buildings commenced in the latter half of the 19th century in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Mostar church, erected from 1863 to 1873, stands as one such testament to this transformative period. The development of the Serbian Orthodox community in Mostar during the 18th century laid the foundation for the construction of the church. This period witnessed the establishment of the Metropolitanate in 1767, with Mostar serving as its headquarters. This pivotal event bolstered the Orthodox presence in the region. Recognizing the inadequacy of the existing church to meet the spatial requirements of the growing population, the decision was made to erect a new structure. The endeavor enlisted the expertise of several builders, with Andreja Damjanov, hailing from Veles, leaving the most indelible mark on the project. From the time of its completion until its unfortunate demolition in 1992, the church prominently graced the Mostar skyline from its elevated position on Perkovina hill. Tragically, the church suffered extensive damage during the shelling that occurred on June 7-8, 1992. Subsequently, on June 15, the bell tower was deliberately demolished, the temple was set ablaze, and ultimately, the structure was mined. Nevertheless, ongoing efforts to restore the church are currently in progress and nearing their final stages.¹

1 The architectural phase of the Renovation Project of the Cathedral in Mostar was carried out in the Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage of the Republic of Srpska in 2010, the author of the project is Miljana Okilj. The remains of the temple were cleared in 2005, between June 15 and October 29. The expert team recorded the remains of the church, which was the of extensive technical and photo documentation.

History

The Serbian Orthodox community in Mostar experienced a significant rise in importance during the latter half of the 18th century. Metropolitan Aksentije Palikuća, who held the position from 1751 until his passing in 1763, relocated the metropolitan chair from the Duži monastery to Mostar.² Subsequently, various Greek prelates assumed the metropolitan throne, and in 1767, the first Phanariot Bishop Antim established Mostar as the seat of the Metropolitanate with the Patriarchate's approval. Metropolitan Ignatius (1875-1888) was the final Greek-origin metropolitan to hold office.³

Precise information about the oldest Orthodox place of worship in Mostar remains elusive. However, a record from 1750 by Simo Milikić regarding the death of priest Nikola Opuhić makes mention of the church. The record states: "In Mostar, he was a minister of the church and of all Christians, and now we are left with a deaf church without him".⁴

The construction of the old Orthodox church in Mostar reached completion in 1835, following a permit issued two years earlier.⁵ Ali Pasha-Rizvanbegović sent Bishop Josif a letter in 1833 from Ljubuški, which included the following instructions: "...since I am now empty-handed, tell the Christians of Mostar to prepare 15,000 groschi for me until my return from Ljubuški, and 2,500 groschi for my son Zulfo, immediately gather the craftsmen and build a church, only no wider, no longer, no higher than it was before".⁶

Construction commenced that same year, featuring a stone vault. However, the vault collapsed either due to the rapid pace of construc-

2 VLADIMIR ČOROVIĆ, *Srpski manastiri u Hercegovini* (priredio Đorđe O. Piljević), (Cyrillic), Beograd, 1999, p. 189.

3 *Ibid*, p. 189.

4 LJUBOMIR STOJANOVIĆ, *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi*, knj. II, (Cyrillic), Srpska kraljevska akademija, Beograd, 1903, no. 2992, p. 164.

5 HIVZIJA HASANDEIĆ, "Kulturno-istorijski spomenici u Mostaru iz turskog doba", in: *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju X-XI/1960-61*, Sarajevo, 1961, p. 160, 163.

6 JOANKIJE PAMUČINA, "Život ali-paše Rizvanbegovića Stočanina", in: Čokorilo P. - Pamučina J. - Skenderova S., *Ljetopisi*, (Cyrillic), Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1976, p. 100.

tion or the builder's incompetence, prompting its subsequent replacement with a wooden structure.⁷

Prior to Ali Pasha Rizvanbegović's approval, the Muslim population of Mostar opposed the construction of a new Orthodox place of worship. A. Giljferding notes that the church was insufficiently sized for the needs of Mostar, stating: "The church building bears signs of fear in which the Christians lived when they built it. Its roof is barely visible behind the fence and is no different from the roof of an ordinary house. In order to raise the inner part of the temple by little, the Christians had to dig the building into the ground, so that a staircase with about twenty steps leads to it... It is so narrow that on major holidays, and especially when people from nearby villages come to Mostar (there are no churches or priests in any of these villages), very few believers can enter it. I happened to be in Mostar on Easter. The wide gate around the church was full of people. Worship did not even reach him..."⁸

According to Alexander Giljferding, adjacent to the church's fence were the metropolitan's modest residence, a house for priests and monks.⁹ and the New Serbian School, constructed between 1855 and 1856. The school stood as one of the most distinguished buildings in Mostar at that time.¹⁰ Following the elementary school's completion, the Women's School was erected in 1862, followed by the Civic Serbian School.¹¹

The construction of the new church followed suit, positioned between the two schools, below the old church, and near the Metropolitan's building. This location offered a panoramic view of the entire city. The site on Perkovina, an area inhabited by Serbs and previously occupied by Ali Pasha's vineyards, had been chosen earlier by the Mostar Serbs. Extensive deliberations ensued, but Omer Pasha Latas

7 *Ibid*, p. 100.

8 ALEKSANDAR GILJFERDING, *Putovanje po Hercegovini, Bosni i Staroj Srbiji*, (Cyrillic), Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1972, p. 55.

9 *Ibid*, p. 55. Giljferding states that the school started operating in 1854 (p. 57), it is not known why, because it was built from May 1855 to June 1866.

10 VLADIMIR ČOROVIĆ, *Mostar i njegova srpska pravoslavna opština*, (Cyrillic), Beograd, 1933, p. 63; H. HASANDEDIĆ, *Ibid*, p. 163.

11 V. ČOROVIĆ, *Mostar...*, 1933, p. 67.

put an end to the discussions on June 2, 1862. Subsequently, the initial construction works commenced on March 15, 1863.¹²



Figure 1. Church of Holy Trinity, view from the south;
personal archive of Ćiril Ciro Raič

The construction process encountered various challenges, resulting in a slow progress. The size of the church and a shortage of funds contributed to the delays. The majority of the construction funds were provided by the Serbian community of Mostar and its surrounding areas, with additional donations coming from Russia. Sultan Abdul Aziz also contributed 100,000 gross towards the project.¹³ To ensure transparency and efficient use of resources, three elected individuals took turns on a weekly basis to oversee the construction and monitor the expenditure of funds. On October 31, 1863, the church was consecrated during a ceremony presided over by Archimandrite Joanikije Pamučina, with a significant number of devotees in attendance. Tragically, on June 7-8, 1992, the church fell victim to shelling. Su-

12 *Ibid*, p. 67, 70. The author refers to the notebook preserved in the archives of the municipality of Mostar, which refers to calculations for work in that year.

13 *Ibid*, p. 70. The author states that in the first year, 162,032.35 grosz was spent on construction.

Subsequently, on June 15, the bell tower was intentionally demolished, and the temple was set ablaze before being ultimately destroyed by explosives. The site and the remains of the historical building - the Cathedral (Church of the Holy Trinity) in Mostar were officially designated a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2004.

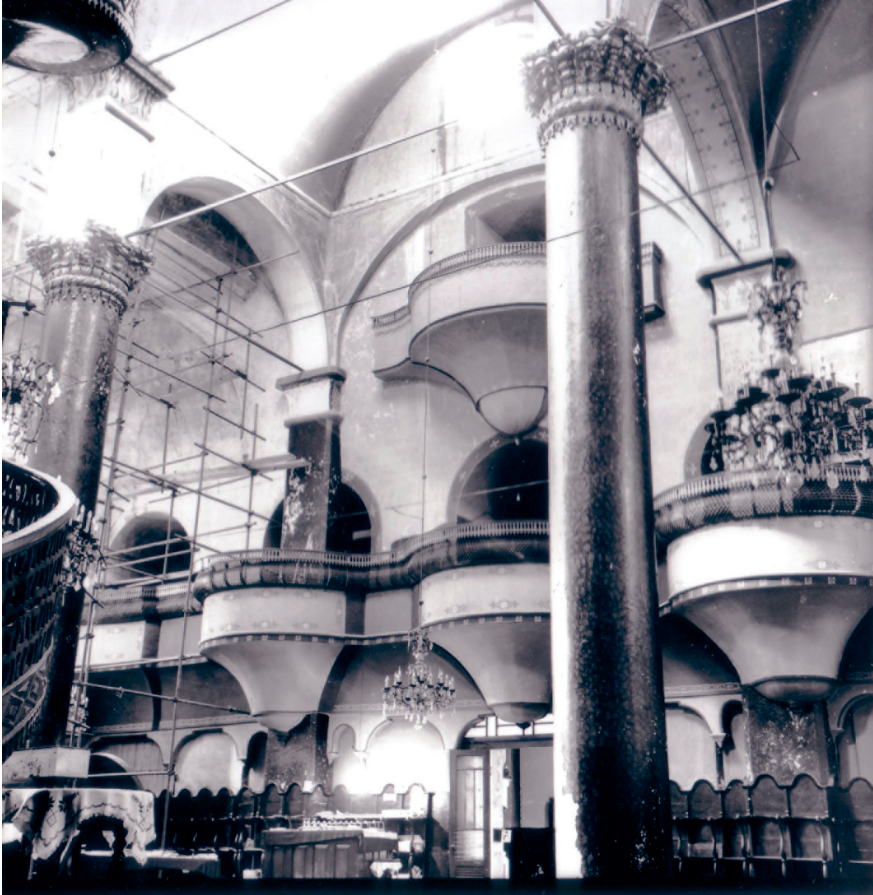


Figure 2. The interior of the Church of Holy Trinity, a photograph taken by Ćiril Ćiro Raić

Builders

Spasoje Vulić

One of the prominent builders involved in the construction of the Cathedral Church in Mostar was Spasoje Vulić Hailing from Strujići

in Popovo polje,¹⁴ Vulić was selected as the builder based on his remarkable architectural prowess. Prior to his involvement in the Mostar project, Vulić had already demonstrated his impressive skills by constructing the church of St. Nicholas in Foča in 1857. The Vulić family had gained renown in the field of construction, and Spasoje Vulić was a respected member of this esteemed lineage. Following his contributions to the Mostar project, Spasoje Vulić was laid to rest in the cemetery adjacent to the church in Strujići. An inscription on his tombstone reveals that he lived from 1813 to 1898 and was recognized as a talented builder.

Andreja Damjanov

Andreja Damjanov, an esteemed architect of the late Ottoman era in the Western Balkans, played a significant role in the construction of the Cathedral Church in Mostar. Born into the Renzovski family in the village of Papradište near Veles, Macedonia, around 1813, Damjanov showcased a keen interest and talent for construction from a young age. He died in 1878 and was buried in the family tomb near the church of Saint Panteleimon in Veles.¹⁵

Being part of a family with a construction background, he began honing his skills under his father's guidance and eventually took charge of managing workers. The exact time when the family started to build is difficult to determine because there are no written records. It is certain that at the end of the 17th century, the family signature was already established.¹⁶

14 In older literature, as well as in the Decision of the Commission for the Preservation of National Monuments on the declaration of the site and remains of the historical building - the Cathedral Church (Church of the Holy Trinity) in Mostar as a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Službeni glasnik Bosne i Hercegovine", 44/04), it was stated that the builder was Spasoje Vulić from Tetovo. The building family Vulić was famous in Herzegovina in the 19th century, and Spasoje Vulić was buried in the cemetery next to the Orthodox church in Strujići. It is not clear how the error occurred because Vujić's descendants live in Strujići and the memory of the family's construction activity is still alive. According to descendants, he built a wall next to the source of the river Ombla (Dubrovnik's river).

15 МІЛЕНКО С. ФИЛІПОВИЋ, "Неимари цркве Свете Богородице у Скопљу, Прошлост рода Зографских у Велесу", in: *Spomenica srpsko-pravoslavnog sabornog hrama Sv. Bogorodice u Skoplju 1835-1935*, Skoplje, 1935, p. 312.

16 Јасмина Хаџиева Алексиевска - Елизабета Касапова, *Архитект Андреја Дамјанов 1813-1878*, Скопје, 2001, p. 9.

Damjanov relocated to Veles around 1850 and embarked on a successful career as an architect.¹⁷ His architectural endeavors spanned from 1835 to 1878 and encompassed the construction of numerous churches in Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Collaborating with his father and later with his son Damet, Damjanov showcased his expertise as a builder and introduced innovative spatial and stylistic elements in church architecture.

During the initial phase of his career, Damjanov constructed notable churches in Macedonia, including St. John in Kratovo (1836), St. Panteleimon in Veles (1840), St. Ilija in Pečenjevci (1844), and St. Joachim of Osogorski in Kriva Palanka (1845). During the initial phase of his career, Damjanov constructed notable churches in Macedonia, including St. John in Kratovo (1836), St. Panteleimon in Veles (1840), St. Ilija in Pečenjevci (1844), and St. Joachim of Osogorski in Kriva Palanka (1845), among others. These churches typically featured grand three-nave basilicas surrounded by porticoes and incorporated elements of Byzantine, Islamic, neo-baroque, and neo-renaissance styles. These churches typically featured grand three-nave basilicas surrounded by porticoes and incorporated elements of Byzantine, Islamic, neo-baroque, and neo-renaissance styles.

Subsequently, Damjanov extended his architectural prowess to Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and beyond. Noteworthy projects include St. George in Smederevo (1850-1854), the Congregational Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles in Niš (1857-1872), Holy Trinity in Nova Varoš (1857-1873), Nativity of the Blessed Virgin in Sarajevo (1863-1868), and the Holy Trinity in Mostar (1863-1873). He also contributed to the construction of the Catholic Church of St. Anthony of Padua in Sarajevo (1853-1855).¹⁸

17 Крум Томовски, "Творечкиот опус на прото-мајсторот Андреја Дамјанов (1813-1878)", у: *Архитектурата на почвата на Македонија: од средината на XIX до крајот на XX век: прилози за истражувањето на историјата на културата на почвата на Македонија (Историја на културата на Македонија, кн. 14)*, Македонска академија на науките и уметностите, Скопје, 2006, p. 55.

18 NENAD MAKULJEVIĆ, "Andreja Damjanov: arhitekta poznoosmanskog Balkana", in: *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice Srpske*, 38, (Cyrillic), Novi Sad, 2010, p. 146, with older literature. Brother Jako Baltić testified: "The vault of the same church was made by a Bulgarian engineer, whom the vizier would have supplied to make the arch that covers the Miljacka river".

Damjanov's architectural style in Serbia often drew inspiration from medieval monastery churches, particularly the Moravska school. The Church of St. George in Smederevo, for instance, incorporated elements reminiscent of the Manasija monastery church. According to the architect Pera Popović, and according to the story of his professor Andro Stefanović: "Lord Andro, while building the Smederevo church, whenever he could, went to Manasija and Ravanica to see, to learn and to copy."¹⁹ Church was built between 1851 and 1855, which marks a turning point in Serbian architecture of the XIX century.²⁰ He also applied the idea of combining local tradition and western influences during the construction of the Cathedral Church in Nis (1856-1872). The wish of local Serbs was to build a church similar to the church of the Gračanica monastery, which was built in the Byzantine style in Kosovo polje in the period 1315-1321. That is why Damjanov combined a basic basilica and an elaborate cross layout surrounded by porticoes. Damjanov's approach involved a harmonious fusion of local architectural traditions with contemporary Western influences.

The church in Turekovac, Serbia, burned down in a fire in 1995, the church in Niš was also damaged in a fire in 2002.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Damjanov left his mark with the construction of churches in Čajniče, Sarajevo, and Mostar. It is recorded that, when they asked to see the plan of the church, he told the Sarajevo Serbs that there was no plan, but that they should look at the churches in Niš and Smederevo and that they would build similar, but nicer one in Sarajevo.²¹

19 Крум Томовски, *Ibid*, p. 55.

20 ALEKSANDAR KADIJEVIĆ, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi (sredina XIX-sredina XX veka)*, (Cyrillic), Građevinska knjiga, Beograd, 1997, p. 17.

21 VLADISLAV SKARIĆ, *Izabrana djela*, knj. I, *Sarajevo i njegova okolina od najstarijih vremena do austro-ugarske okupacije*, (Cyrillic), Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1985, p. 266. Described in note 296. Skarić states: "The foundation was laid on June 25, 1863. The first builder was a certain Andrija from Veles, who brought with him masons from there. However, he died returning home before winter, and another builder continued the construction." Given that Damjanov died in 1878, the Sarajevo church was completed in 1872, and that he worked for Mostar in 1873, the information about the death cannot be considered accurate.

For the Sarajevo Cathedral Church (1863-1868), he employed a rectangular three-nave layout featuring five domes on tambours and a prominent baroque-classical bell tower on the western facade. The application of several styles is evident, both in the spatial solution and in the application of decorative plastic. He repeated the layout of the domes from the temple in Niš, and the spatial scheme and the high bell tower on the facade were taken from the one in Smederevo. A little earlier, the cathedral church in Belgrade became a model for the construction of baroque-classical bell towers.²²

Similarly, the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Čajniče exhibited a rectangular, three-aisled design with a tall bell tower and a blend of Eastern and Western architectural elements. The side naves are separated from the central nave by colonnades of octagonal stone pillars. Above the side naves, Damjanov placed fourteen blind domes, and above the main nave, three domes on the low, octagonal, tambour and one more above the altar area. Eastern influences can be felt in the design of the belfry dome and blind domes. Andreja Damjanov's architectural legacy exemplifies his proficiency in combining local traditions with contemporary influences, resulting in unique and aesthetically pleasing structures.

Momir Korunović

Momir Korunović, born on January 1, 1883, in Glogovac near Jagodina, into a family of priests, and died in Belgrade on April 17, 1969. He was a prominent Serbian architect who played a pivotal role in shaping the national style of interwar architecture in Serbia. He is widely regarded as the originator of a style that drew inspiration from the Serbian-Byzantine and folklore traditions. Korunović completed his education at the First Male High School and the Architecture Department of the Technical Faculty of the Great School in Belgrade. He devoted the majority of his professional career to the Architectural Department of the Ministry of Construction in Belgrade.²³

22 ALEKSANDAR KADIJEVIĆ, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi (sredina XIX-sredina XX veka)*, (Cyrillic), Građevinska knjiga, Beograd, 1997, p. 21.

23 ALEKSANDAR KADIJEVIĆ, "Arhitekta Momir Korunović i ratna 1912. godina", in: *Arhitektura i urbanizam*, 37, (Cyrillic), Beograd, 2013, p. 43-44.

Korunović's impressive body of work includes over 80 realized projects, with a particular focus on churches and Sokol homes (Sokolski dom). His architectural style, deeply rooted in medieval Serbian traditions, incorporated elements from the Raška and Moravska schools as well as the Serbian-Byzantine style. He skillfully infused these influences with his personal touch, resulting in unique designs that bear his distinct signature. Korunović is widely recognized as one of the most prolific architects of the former Yugoslav region during the period between the two world wars. His projects spanned from Ohrid to Maribor, and he notably designed the Sokolski dom building in Bijeljina, located in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the 1950s, Korunović collaborated with Dušan Milosavljević on the re-



Figure 3. Entrance gate, project by Momir Korunović,
a photo taken by Ćiril Ćiro Raič

storation project of the Church of the Virgin Mary in Čajniče. The church had suffered significant damage during the Second World War, resulting in the demolition of parts of the vault, the southern wall, and the dome. Korunović's project aimed to restore and preserve the original splendor of the church. Additionally, in the 1930s, Korunović designed a three-part gate and fence for a church in Mostar, showcasing his architectural prowess and dedication to detail.

Momir Korunović's legacy resides in his significant contributions to Serbian architecture, particularly within the realm of ecclesiastical design. His churches, characterized by a blend of medieval tradition and his own innovative vision, remain an enduring testament to his skill and artistic sensibility.

Architecture Description

The Church of Mostar, as described, exhibits a basilican architectural style with a three-aisled structure and a developed inscribed cross. The church's base includes a three-part altar space on the east side and a tall bell tower on the west facade, serving as the main entrance. Initially, Spasoje Vulić initiated the construction of the church in

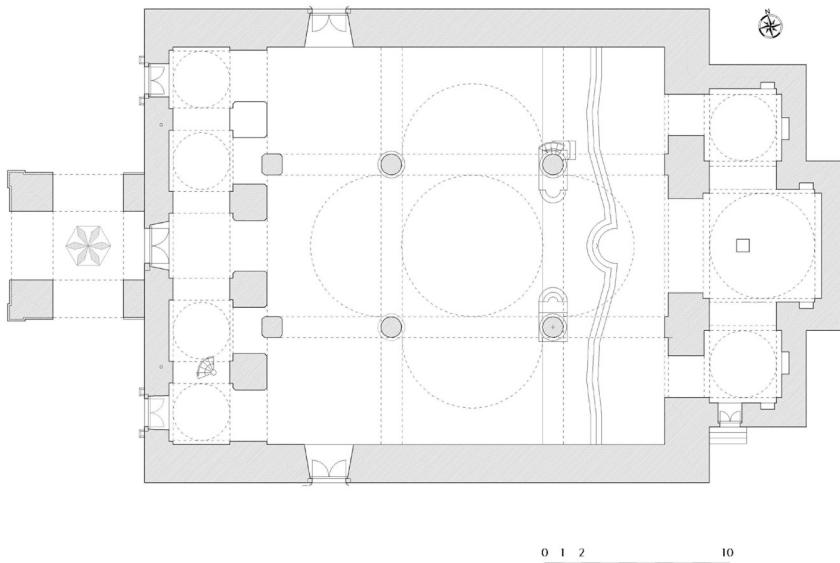


Figure 4. Ground plan (Documentation of the Institute for Protection of Cultural-Historical and Natural Heritage of Republic of Srpska)

1863. His design featured a rectangular space with four columns in the nave and six domes, employing an unconventional dome system (2+1+3). However, cracks began to appear on the pillars and walls, leading to the decision to halt construction.

To complete the church, the people of Mostar sought the expertise of the renowned builder Andreja Damjanov, who was in the process of finishing the Cathedral Church in Sarajevo at the time. Damjanov expanded the church's base by adding two octagonal columns between the existing circular ones, which separated the nave and narthex. He also constructed a large dome above the central part of the nave, three smaller domes above the altar area, and two domes above the narthex. Damjanov's eclectic approach incorporated various styles, resulting in a unique and personalized architectural expression. The works were completed in 1873.



Figure 5. Longitudinal section (Documentation of the Institute for Protection of Cultural-Historical and Natural Heritage of Republic of Srpska)

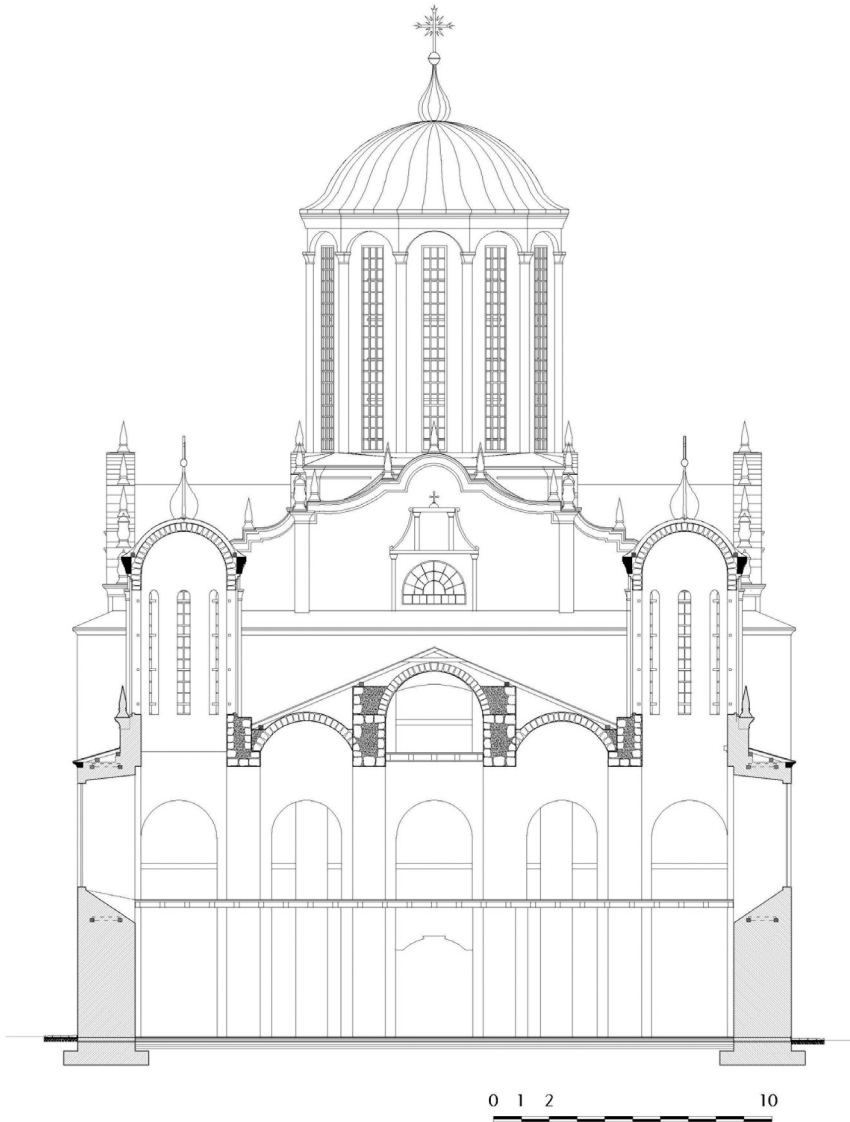


Figure 6. Cross section (Documentation of the Institute for Protection of Cultural-Historical and Natural Heritage of Republic of Srpska)

The dimensions of the Church of Mostar include a total length of 45.32 meters, including the bell tower and altar apse, and a width of 25.66 meters. The walls vary in width from 130 to 206 centimeters. The internal width of the nave measures 21.53 meters, with a central vault height of 17.96 meters. A dodecagonal dome sits at the inter-

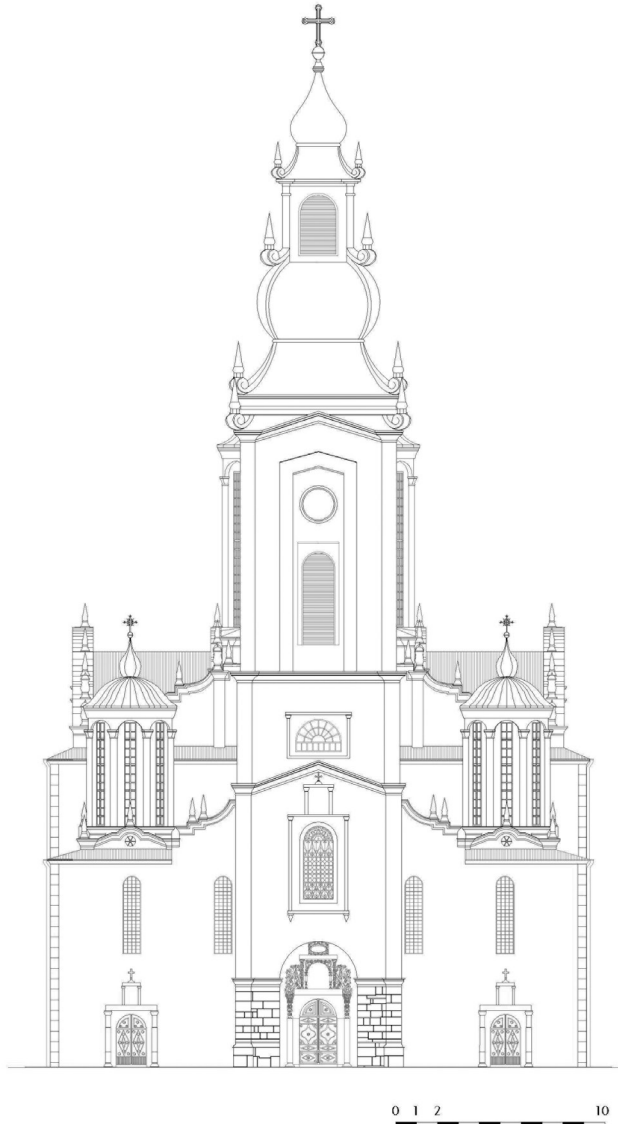


Figure 7. West facade (Documentation of the Institute for Protection of Cultural-Historical and Natural Heritage of Republic of Srpska)

section of the cross's arms, supported by a square-shaped tambour. Above the altar area, three octagonal domes rise, with the central dome being higher than those in the proscomidia and diaconicon. Two additional octagonal domes, along with two blind domes, are located above the narthex. The three-part altar space is rectangular in shape and separated from the nave by a brick partition.

The church features multiple entrances, including the main entrance adorned with a richly decorated portal. Two other entrances are positioned on the eastern facade, while symmetrically placed entrances can be found on the southern and northern facades. Additionally, a semicircular portal leads to the altar area on the southern facade. The cruciform base of the church is emphasized externally by curved oval attics atop the facade walls. These attics house centrally positioned semicircular top windows. The north and south sides feature eight arched windows each, with two rows of windows in the central zone (one under the eaves), and one window each in the narthex and altar areas.



Figure 8. The main portal, a photo taken by Ćiril Ćiro Raič

The western facade boasts four windows, and the eastern facade has three. The rectangular-based bell tower measures 8.32 by 7.36 meters, with a height reaching 49.33 meters to the cross. The tower's perimeter dimensions and wall thickness decrease towards the top. Profiled cordon cornices accentuate each segment of the belfry, while the roof is elaborately decorated and covered in copper sheeting. In the early 20th century, the wooden roof structure of the belfry underwent repairs.



Figure 9. A drawing of a part of the decoration found during the clearing of the ruins in 2005 (Documentation of the Institute for Protection of Cultural-Historical and Natural Heritage of Republic of Srpska)

The church's portals feature rich decorative elements, incorporating figural motifs and decorative plastic with vegetative and zoomorphic designs. The influence of Romanesque architecture, particularly from the Dalmatian coast, can be observed in the facade decorations. Stone niches framed by pilasters, topped with arched lunettes, are present above the doorposts and lintels. The lower zones of the walls predominantly lack facade plastic, emphasizing the massiveness of the wall fabric, while the upper zones exhibit a gradual transition. Neo-Baroque motifs adorn the attics and bell tower, adding to the overall aesthetic. The pointed dome ends reflect influences from oriental and Gothic architectural styles.

The Church of Mostar harmoniously blends with the Herzegovinian environment, paying homage to the local heritage and climate. The surrounding terrain consists of Osulin and Siparic sediments, characterized by mechanically decomposed fragments of parent rocks. The church was constructed using various types of stone found in its

immediate vicinity, including conglomerate, breccia, limestone, tufa, and sandstone. Tenelia, a type of stone, was employed for facade decorations and altar stairs. Lime mortar was used for masonry.



Figure 10. Axonometric view (Documentation of the Institute for Protection of Cultural-Historical and Natural Heritage of Republic of Srpska)

Notable icons housed within the church include the iconic painting of Jesus Christ the Great Hierarch, created by Andreja Damjanov in 1873.²⁴ Other valuable icons include the Passionate Virgin, crafted in the 16th century by the Cretan master Andreja Ricos, and the Ascension of Christ, the work of an unknown master from the 17th century. The church also preserves an 18th-century Russian icon of the Virgin Mary with Christ, Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel with

24 ĐOKO MAZALIĆ, *Slikarska umjetnost u Bosni i Hercegovini u tursko doba (1500-1878)*, Sarajevo, 1965, p. 162.

saints, and Prince Lazar, based on the copper engraving by Zaharije Orfelin from 1773.²⁵

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Cathedral Church of Mostar holds great significance as a prominent landmark in the city, representing the architectural achievements of Andreja Damjanov, a notable builder of the 19th century. The church stands out within the Herzegovinian architectural environment, showcasing Damjanov's skillful combination of stylistic patterns and elements inherited from the local heritage.

The construction of monumental Serbian Orthodox churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina began in the second half of the 19th century, following the introduction of the Tanzimat reform laws in the Ottoman Empire. These reforms enabled the cultural reformation of various religious and national communities, allowing for the construction and reconstruction of Christian places of worship. The Orthodox churches in Mostar, both the old and the new, serve as examples of the changing architectural circumstances brought about by the Tanzimat.

The new Church of Mostar, built between 1863 and 1873, involved the participation of several builders, with Andreja Damjanov playing a pivotal role. His incorporation of various styles and the monumental scale of the church reflect the significant development of the Serbian Orthodox community in Mostar during the 18th century. From its construction until its unfortunate demolition in 1992, the church stood as a dominant presence in the city's urban landscape.

Today, efforts are underway to reconstruct the Cathedral Church of Mostar, with the project completed in 2010 and the reconstruction currently in its final stages. Extensive research and analysis of the remains of the original temple have been conducted, confirming the earlier conclusions regarding the construction phases.

The Church of Mostar remains a testament to the architectural heritage of the region, embodying the historical, cultural, and religious significance of Mostar's Serbian Orthodox community. Its restoration serves not only as a physical reconstruction but also as a symbol of resilience, preserving the legacy of this iconic structure for future generations to appreciate and admire.

25 SVETLANA RAKIĆ, *Ikone Bosne i Hercegovine (XVI do XIX vijek)*, (Cyrillic), Beograd, 1998, p. 172.