

From Master Builders to Architects: Constructing Franciscan Convents and Churches in Bosna Srebrena

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Summary

This paper examines the architectural history of the Franciscan Province of *Bosna Srebrena* through the individuals responsible for the design and construction of its convents and churches. Rather than offering a conventional chronological survey of buildings and sites, the study focuses on master builders, architects, engineers, and associated collaborators whose work shaped Franciscan architectural production from the late Ottoman period to the post-1995 era. Drawing on archival material, published scholarship, and the analysis of realised projects, the paper traces the gradual transformation of building practice from a craft-based culture of locally or regionally engaged master builders to a professionally defined architectural field dominated by academically trained architects.

Particular attention is given to the changing models of authorship and patronage across successive historical periods: the late Ottoman era, the Austro-Hungarian period, the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia, socialist Yugoslavia, and the post-war decades after 1995. The study highlights the role of major figures such as Josip pl. Vančaš, Karel Pařík, Jože Plečnik, Zlatko Ugljen, and Ivan Štraus, while also recovering the contributions of

less-studied builders and designers whose work formed an essential part of the Province's architectural landscape.

The paper argues that the architectural heritage of *Bosna Srebrena* should not be understood solely through stylistic or site-based analysis. Instead, it can be approached as a product of shifting historical conditions, institutional needs, and architectural networks extending across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, and the wider Central European sphere. In this way, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Franciscan architecture as a field shaped by both continuity and transformation.

Keywords: Bosna Srebrena; Franciscan architecture; sacred architecture; master builders; architects; Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Od graditelja do arhitekata: izgradnja franjevačkih samostana i crkava u Bosni Srebrenoj

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Sažetak

Ovaj rad razmatra arhitektonsku povijest Franjevačke provincije Bosne Srebrene kroz osobe odgovorne za projektiranje i izgradnju njezinih samostana i crkava. Umjesto uobičajenoga, konvencionalnog kronološkog pregleda građevina i lokacija, istraživanje se usredotočuje na graditelje, arhitekte, inženjere i povezane suradnike čiji je rad oblikovao franjevačku arhitektonsku produkciju od kasnog osmanskog razdoblja do vremena nakon 1995. godine. Oslanjajući se na arhivsku građu, objavljenu literaturu i analizu realiziranih projekata, rad prati postupnu preobrazbu graditeljske prakse od zanatski utemeljene kulture lokalno i regionalno angažiranih graditelja prema profesionalno definiranom arhitektonskom području kojim dominiraju akademski obrazovani arhitekti.

Posebna se pozornost posvećuje promjenjivim modelima autorstva i narudžbina projekata kroz povijesna razdoblja: kasno osmansko doba, austro-ugarsko razdoblje, međuratno razdoblje Kraljevine Jugoslavije, socijalističku Jugoslaviju te poslijeratna desetljeća nakon 1995. godine. Rad ističe ulogu ključnih osoba poput Josipa pl. Vancaša, Karela Pařika, Jože Plečnika, Zlatka Ugljena i Ivana Štrausa, ali istodobno rekonstruira i doprinos manje istraženih graditelja i projekatnata čiji je rad činio važan dio arhitektonskog krajolika Provincije.

Rad polazi od pretpostavke da se arhitektonska baština Bosne Srebrene ne mora sagledavati isključivo kroz stilsku analizu ili analizu pojedinih lokaliteta. Naprotiv, moguće ju je promatrati kao rezultat promjenjivih povijesnih okolnosti, institucionalnih potreba i arhitektonskih mreža koje su se protezale kroz Bosnu i Hercegovinu, Hrvatsku, Sloveniju, Srbiju i širi srednjoeuropski prostor. Na taj način istraživanje pridonosi nijansiranim razumijevanju franjevačke arhitekture kao područja obilježena istodobno kontinuitetom i transformacijom.

Ključne riječi: Bosna Srebrena; franjevačka arhitektura; sakralna arhitektura; graditelji; arhitekti; Bosna i Hercegovina.

Introduction

The architectural history of the Franciscan Province OFM¹ *Bosna Srebrena* (Bosna Argentina) represents a complex and multi-layered field shaped by shifting political, cultural, and technological contexts. From the late Ottoman period, through the Austro-Hungarian administration and into the twentieth century and beyond, the construction of Franciscan convents and churches reflects not only the continuity of religious life but also broader transformations in architectural practice. Those engaged within this process evolved significantly from locally trained craftsmen operating within established building traditions, to "imported" foreign and academically educated architects engaged with international stylistic and technical developments, followed by, finally, domestic architects who were born, educated, and lived in this cultural space. The paper is limited in its scope to the period from the late Ottoman era onwards, due to the fact that earlier commissioned builders remain unknown or unrecovered in available research resources.

This paper examines and presents the individuals responsible for the design and construction of Franciscan convents and convent churches. By focusing on key figures active across different historical

¹ OFM – *Ordo fratrum minorum*, founded by St Francis of Assisi in 1209, the Order of Friars Minor is a religious fraternity grounded in the Franciscan ideal of total dedication to God. Its members express this vocation through the profession of obedience, poverty, and chastity, understood as the fullest realisation of their baptismal calling in the spirit of St Francis.

periods, the paper seeks to illuminate the changing nature of authorship and the professionalisation of design within the Province.

It should therefore be emphasised that this paper approaches Bosnian Franciscan architecture from a relatively uncommon perspective. Instead of analysing buildings and sites in a strictly chronological sequence, it foregrounds the individuals involved in their design and construction. Through concise biographical notes, the study seeks to underscore both their specific role in Franciscan architectural production and their broader significance within the architectural culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region.

The paper argues that the architectural history of the Franciscan Province of *Bosna Srebrena* reflects a gradual but decisive shift from a building culture shaped primarily by master builders and local craft traditions to one increasingly defined by academically trained architects, professional authorship, and transregional architectural exchange. In this sense, the Province may be understood not merely as a patron of individual buildings, but as a distinct institutional framework within which processes of professionalisation, cultural transfer, and stylistic transformation became visible across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

By reconstructing the Province's architectural production through its agents of design and construction, the paper proposes *Bosna Srebrena* as a distinct case study in the cultural history of architectural professionalisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider South Slavic region.

Methodology

The analysis combines archival project documentation, Franciscan chronicles and schematisms, published art-historical and architectural scholarship, on-site visits, and comparative reading of realised projects within their historical context. Rather than offering a purely chronological overview, the paper aims to identify patterns and shifts in architectural practice, situating individual contributions within a broader historical and cultural framework. The varying length and depth of the individual biographical entries are determined by both the differing architectural importance of particular figures and the uneven state of the available sources. While some architects and

builders are well documented in archival records and scholarly literature, others can be identified only through specific commissions or fragmentary references. This asymmetry is therefore methodological rather than accidental. In doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the architectural heritage of *Bosna Srebrena* and highlights the role of its builders and architects in shaping the ecclesial architectural landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the focus is on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the paper also includes a limited number of sites outside the country where commissions of *Bosna Srebrena* extend the Province's architectural network within its territorial framework.

1. Construction Practices during the Late Ottoman Period

In the final decades of Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina, prior to the Austro-Hungarian occupation, the Franciscan Province of *Bosna Srebrena* initiated a series of construction interventions across its convent sites. These works were, for the most part, limited to the repair, extension, or reconstruction of existing and relatively modest convent residences, whereas the construction of entirely new churches occurred only at a small number of locations.

At this stage, building practices within the Province had not yet developed into a coordinated or institutionally standardised activity. Commissions were therefore entrusted primarily to master builders, very often from the local surroundings, rather than to formally educated architects. Nevertheless, many of the structures associated with this period testify to a high level of craftsmanship and remain valuable examples of nineteenth-century sacred building culture, several of which have been preserved to the present.

The specific political circumstances of the period, combined with the broad territorial dispersal of the Province, significantly influenced the selection of builders. Commissions were generally entrusted based on personal recommendation, local reputation, or prior experience in the construction of Catholic ecclesiastical buildings, whether the builders originated from the immediate region or from more distant centres. Several master builders from this period may thus be identified as significant participants in various phases of construction at Franciscan convent sites across the Province. However,

some were evidently engaged only on an *ad-hoc* basis for individual commissions. This period is significant not only as the final phase of Ottoman rule, but also as the last stage in which Franciscan building activity relied predominantly on non-academic, practice-based forms of construction knowledge.

One of the first individuals appearing in this scope is **Ante Ciciliani** (17 February 1815, Trogir – unknown), for whom little reliable information has been preserved concerning his life and professional formation. He is known to have participated in several construction projects in Trogir, as well as in the building of the convent and parish church in Imotski, Dalmatia, between 1863 and 1867.² Nevertheless, his most significant works for the Province remain the projects for the reconstruction of the convent in **Fojnica** in 1863, the construction of the church in **Gorica**, done in the period 1854-1856, and the construction of both the convent and church in **Guča Gora**³ – first phase starting in 1856.⁴

Franjo Moyses,⁵ a master builder occasionally referred to as an architect, originated from Split. He was active during the second half of the nineteenth century, and his most important works recorded within the Province were in **Gorica** and **Fojnica**.⁶ He designed the church in **Gorica, Livno**, probably around the year the construction

² MILAN IVANIŠEVIĆ, "Crkva svetog Franje u Imotskom", in: BRUNO PEZO (ed.), *Čuvari baštine. Zbornik radova simpozija u prigodi 250. obljetnice prijenosa Franjevačkog samostana u grad Imotski*, Franjevački samostan, Imotski – Služba Božja, Makarska, Imotski, 1989, p. 356.

³ ŽELJKA ČORAK, "Sv. Mihovil u Ovčarevu između historije i historicizma", in: *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, 28, Zagreb, 2004, p. 274.

⁴ MARKO KARAMATIĆ, "Guča Gora i graditeljski val u Bosni Srebrenoj pod konac osmanske vlast", in: *Franjevački samostan u Gučjoj Gori: zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa u povodu 150. obljetnice samostana*, Kulturno-povijesni institut Provincije Bosne Srebre – Franjevački samostan, Sarajevo – Guča Gora, 2009, p. 218.

⁵ Sometimes recorded as Franjo Moises.

⁶ MARKO KARAMATIĆ, *Franjevačka Provincija Bosna Srebrena: Šematizam*, Franjevački provincijalat, Sarajevo, 1991, p. 73.

began in 1854. Moyses⁷ also designed and constructed the church in **Fojnica**, which was demolished in 1880 due to its poor quality.

Matija Lovrinović was a master builder from Guča Gora, who was involved in the construction activities on the church and convent in **Guča Gora** for a short time after Ante Ciciliani had left the project in 1856.⁸ **Špiro Marić** from Vis Island, Croatia, succeeded Lovrinović in **Guča Gora**, seeing the construction to its end in 1859.⁹ Lovrinović had an unsuccessful campaign in **Fojnica**, where he constructed the convent in 1864, whose walls subsequently threatened to collapse.

Antun Lindarević, a master builder from Tuzla, was responsible for the project and construction of the church in **Tuzla**. The church was built in 1871-1872, but was demolished 20 years later.¹⁰

It is interesting that none of the masters of Dalmatian origin – Ciciliani, Moyses, and Marić – are listed in one of the most comprehensive lists of construction masters in Dalmatia.¹¹

Georg Eichorn, a master builder from Osijek, Croatia, built the parish house in 1855-1856,¹² and the church in Tolisa in 1864-1881. It is less known that the actual model for this church was the old Jesuit Church of Saint Michael in Osijek, Croatia, built 1725-1766.¹³ **Dausch**

⁷ MIJO BATINIĆ, *Franjevački samostan u Fojnici od stoljeća XIV.-XX.*, Tiskara i litografija C. Albrechta, Zagreb, 1913, p. 126.

⁸ VELIMIR VALJAN, "Od lašvanskog do gučogorskog samostana", in: *Franjevački samostan u Gučjoj Gori: zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa u povodu 150. obljetnice samostana*, Kulturno-povijesni institut provincije Bosne Srebrene Sarajevo – Franjevački Samostan, Guča Gora, 2009, p. 37-38.

⁹ M. BATINIĆ, *Franjevački samostan u Fojnici od stoljeća XIV.-XX.*, p. 115-117.

¹⁰ M. KARAMATIĆ, *Franjevačka Provincija Bosna Srebrene*, p. 203.

¹¹ NEVENKA BEZIĆ-BOŽANIĆ, "Majstori od IX do XIX stoljeća u Dalmaciji (VI)", in: *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji*, 28, Split, 1989, pp. 253-304.

¹² JULIJAN JELENIĆ, *Kultura i bosanski franjevci: Sveska 2*, Prva hrvatska tiskara Kramarić & Raguz, Sarajevo, 1915, p. 587; BONO NEDIĆ, *Kratka povjest župe crkve i samostana toliškog*, Pécs, 1887, pp. 46-47.

¹³ KATARINA HORVAT-LEVAJ – MARGARETA TURKALJ PODMANICKI, "Nekadašnja isusovačka crkva sv. Mihovila u Osijeku u srednjoeuropskom kontekstu", in: *Peristil*, 54, Zagreb, 2011, p. 207.

and **Pietro Rimaldi** are lesser-known architects who designed the bell towers attached to Eichorn's church.¹⁴

For construction activities during this period, the participation of individual builders cannot always be assessed through a clearly identifiable personal influence on architectural design in the later, authorial sense of the term. Their role was more often defined by practical construction knowledge, technical execution, adaptation of existing models, and the ability to respond to restrictive political, material, and financial circumstances. In other words, the architectural outcome was shaped less by an individual stylistic programme than by the conditions of construction itself: available resources, local building traditions, ecclesiastical needs, permissions, and the master builder's experience.

2. The Emergence of Academic Architecture in the Austro-Hungarian Period

The Austro-Hungarian occupation represented a major turning point in the architectural history of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, consequently, in the building activity of *Bosna Srebrena*. Unlike the preceding period, which was dominated by master builders trained through practice, the new political and administrative order introduced academically educated architects, particularly those formed in the royal university centres, together with new technical, stylistic, and institutional models of architectural production.

Among the architects who most decisively shaped this period, Josip pl. Vancaš and Karel Pařík stand out as the most influential. Both came to Bosnia within the framework of the new Austro-Hungarian administration and soon assumed an important role in the design of public and sacred buildings throughout the country. They were likewise commissioned to design a number of convents and churches for the Province. Their work marks a crucial stage in the professionalisation of architecture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the transformation of the Franciscan building practice from a

¹⁴ MATO ORŠOLIĆ, *Franjevački samostan i župa Tolisa*, Franjevački samostan, Tolisa, 1998, pp. 20-22.

craft-based tradition towards academically grounded architectural design.

The following figures illustrate not only the arrival of academic architectural training, but also the coexistence of formally educated architects with master builders who continued to play an important practical role in Franciscan construction.

Josip Vancaš,¹⁵ Czech by origin (22 March 1859 in Sopron (Ödenburg), Hungary – 15 December 1932, Zagreb) was among the most influential architects active in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Austro-Hungarian period. Educated in Vienna under Heinrich von Ferstel and Friedrich Schmidt,¹⁶ he arrived in Sarajevo in 1883 and soon became one of the central figures in the architectural transformation of the country. His extensive oeuvre, shaped initially by historicism and later by Secession and the so-called Bosnian style, encompassed more than 240 buildings of various types.¹⁷ Vancaš was

¹⁵ More extensive data on Vancaš's biography can be found in: MIROSLAV MALINOVIĆ, *A Monograph: The Architecture in Banja Luka during the Austro-Hungarian Rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1878 and 1918*, 2nd Extended Volume, University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Banja Luka, 2025, pp. 92-93; MIROSLAV MALINOVIĆ, "Arhitektura franjevačkog samostana i župne crkve Svetog Ivana Krstitelja u Kraljevoj Sutjesci", in: *Hercegovina*, 10, serija 3, Mostar – Zagreb, 2024, pp. 157-158; JELENA BOŽIĆ, "Novi prilog životopisu Josipa pl. Vancaša (1859.-1932.): obiteljski temelji, uzori i poticaji društvenoga i kulturnog djelovanja", in: *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru*, 62, Zadar, 2020, pp. 277-316.

¹⁶ IBRAHIM KRZOVIĆ, *Arhitektura Bosne i Hercegovine, 1878-1918*, Umjetnička galerija Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, 1989, p. 253.

¹⁷ More extensive data on Vancaš's oeuvre can be found in: JELENA BOŽIĆ, *Arhitekt Josip Vancaš: Značaj i doprinos arhitekturi Sarajeva*, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, Istočno Sarajevo, 2006, p. 36; JELENA BOŽIĆ, "Novi prilog životopisu Josipa pl. Vancaša (1859.-1932.): obiteljski temelji, uzori i poticaji društvenoga i kulturnog djelovanja", in: *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru*, 62, Zadar, 2020, p. 298; DRAGAN DAMJANOVIĆ – SANJA ZADRO, "Arhitekt Josip Vancaš i pregradnja franjevačkih crkava u Gučoj Gori kod Travnika, na Gorici u Livnu i u Tolisi: prilog povijesti arhitekture historizma u Bosni i Hercegovini", in: *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, 38, Zagreb, 2014, pp. 219-229; DRAGAN DAMJANOVIĆ, "Neogotička arhitektura u opusu Josipa Vancaša; Radovi u Italiji, Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji – Neo-Gothic Architecture in Josip Vancaš's Work Projects in Italy, Croatia and Slovenia", in: *Prostor*, 2(48), Zagreb, 2014, pp. 254-255.

also deeply engaged in the social and political life of Sarajevo, where he established and supported numerous foundations, organisations, and cultural initiatives. He lived in Sarajevo until 1921, before returning to Zagreb where he continued this public engagement. In 1929, he was elected an honorary member of the Viennese architectural association *Wiener Bauhütte*, an honorary member of the association *Braća hrvatskoga zmaja*, and a corresponding member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU), then the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU).

Although he designed major public and representative buildings, sacred architecture remained a central field of his work, including numerous churches, convents, and parish houses for the Franciscan Province of *Bosna Srebrena*.

For the Province, on the convents' sites, Vancaš designed churches in **Tuzla** (1893-1894), **Guča Gora** (1894, reconstruction and enlargement), **Fojnica** (1886-1889, new construction after the demolition), **Plehan** (1896, 1898-1902, rejected), **Gorica** (1903-1906, reconstruction and enlargement), **Kraljeva Sutjeska** (1904-1905, 1910), **Tolisa** (1909-1912, reconstruction and enlargement), **Bistrik** (1911-1913), and the extension of the convent in **Gorica** (1921-1923).

Through his projects for Tuzla, Fojnica, Guča Gora, Gorica, Kraljeva Sutjeska, Tolisa, Bistrik, and other sites, he introduced a more coherent architectural language into the Province's sacral building practice. His work gave Franciscan churches a representative architectural form aligned with Central European historicism, while at the same time adapting their scale, spatial organisation, and decorative vocabulary to local ecclesiastical and material circumstances.

Karel Pařík (5 July 1857, Veliš, near Jičín (Titschein), Czech Republic – 16 June 1942, Sarajevo), standing next to Vancaš, ranks among the most important architects active in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Austro-Hungarian period. Educated in Vienna under Theophil von Hansen, and the only architect from Bosnia and Herzegovina to belong to the Hansen-Club in Vienna, he came to Sarajevo in 1884 and over the following decades produced an extensive and highly diverse architectural oeuvre that decisively shaped the urban and architectural landscape of the country. Before his retirement in 1916, he completed a series of major works, in addition to which, he was

also engaged in sacred commissions and later worked on numerous projects for the Archdiocese of Vrhbosna and the Province.¹⁸ His engagement in sacred architecture reached beyond his retirement, foremostly for the Province. On the sites of the convents and their affiliate churches, Pařík designed a new church in **Kreševo** (1921-1924),¹⁹ followed by the new constructions of convents in **Plehan** (1931-1932) and **Jajce** (1934-1935),

Another very active architect in public service, but with only one recorded activity on convents' sites was **Carl Panek**. He was born on 11 June 1860, in Místek, today part of the unified city of Frýdek-Místek in the Czech Republic. He completed his studies in architecture in 1883 in Vienna. In Bosnia, Panek worked in the field of structural construction within the Department of Civil Engineering of the Provincial Government, based in Sarajevo. His most significant project for the Province was the construction of the new convent in **Bistrik, Sarajevo**, which he designed in 1893-1894, standing next to Vancaš's church.

Johann and **Franjo Holz**, master builders – uncle and nephew – were frequently referred to as architects and were based in Slavonska Požega. They were active at the turn of the century, predominantly in Croatia and Bosnia, with several commissions for the Province.²⁰

Both were commissioned in **Visoko**, albeit at different times. Johann constructed the building that houses the classical high school, convent, and the church in 1899, which was extended by Franjo in 1913.²¹

¹⁸ MIROSLAV MALINOVIĆ, "Arhitektonski opus Karela Paříka za samostane Bosne Srebrene", in: *Bosna franciscana*, 54, Sarajevo, 2021, pp. 46-48; BRANKA DIMITRIJEVIĆ, *Arhitekt Karlo Paržik (Karel Pařík)*, Dissertation, Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb, 1989, p. 7.

¹⁹ EVANGELOS DIMITRIJEVIĆ, *Izvjestaj o građevinskom stanju franjevačke crkve u Kreševu i problem spasavalačkih radova*, Sarajevo, 1960, in: Archive Kreševo Gr.Gr.Sp.17; B. DIMITRIJEVIĆ, *Arhitekt Karlo Paržik (Karel Pařík)*, p. 60.

²⁰ MIROSLAV MALINOVIĆ, "Architectural Heritage of Franciscan Convent in Fojnica (Bosnia and Herzegovina)", in: *Prostor*, 2(68), Zagreb, 2024, p. 284.

²¹ IGNACIJE GAVRAN, *Vrata u život: uz 100. obljetnicu postojanja zgrade franjevačke klasične gimnazije u Visokom*, Svjetlo riječi, Sarajevo, 2000, p. 23.

Johann Holz designed and built the new church in **Plehan** in 1898-1902, according to a design which was very similar to Josip Vancaš's proposal that had been rejected previously.²² He also designed and constructed the convents in **Kreševo** in 1889 and in **Kraljeva Sutjeska** in 1890-1892²³ on the site of old medieval structures. He supervised the construction of Panek's project for the convent in **Bistrik** in 1896²⁴ and subsequently the second phase of construction of the church on the same site in 1911-1912.²⁵

Franjo Holz supervised the reconstruction of the church in **Gorica** in 1905-1906, according to the project by Josip Vancaš.²⁶ The same collaboration was done in **Kraljeva Sutjeska**, where he supervised Vancaš's project from 1906-1908. His following project was the second convent building in **Rama-Šćit** in 1913.²⁷ In the post-war period, he was commissioned to construct the convent in **Jajce** in 1934, according to the project by Karel Pařík.²⁸

Franjo also designed a few projects that were rejected, like the one for the church in **Kreševo** in 1913,²⁹ and a project for the church in **Petrićevac** in 1928.

Florian Strauss, a master builder from **Tuzla**, was recorded with a single project, the first building of the new convent in **Tolisa**, dated in 1923. The same year, it was constructed by **Johann Bernhardt**, a master builder from Novi Sad, Serbia.

Johann Pimperl, a master builder from Zavidovići, was recorded in an ad hoc role of conducting the construction works for the

²² Archive Plehan, unindexed document.

²³ M. KARAMATIĆ, *Franjevačka Provincija Bosna Srebrena*, pp. 118-119.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 34.

²⁵ FRANJO M. BLAŽEVIĆ, *Crkva Sv. Ante Padovanskog u Sarajevu*, Odbor za gradnju crkve, Sarajevo, 1917, p. 63.

²⁶ MLADEN GLIBIĆ – IVO ČOLAK – VLAHO AKMADŽIĆ, "Characteristics of Structure of the Church in Gorica Near Livno", in: Chapter 72, *DAAAM International Scientific Book*, 2009, pp. 751-762.

²⁷ M. KARAMATIĆ, *Franjevačka Provincija Bosna Srebrena*, p. 183.

²⁸ B. DIMITRIJEVIĆ, *Arhitekt Karlo Paržik (Karel Pařík)*, p. 203.

²⁹ ARCHIVE KREŠEVO, *Gradnja crkve. Nacrta (neizvedeni), ugovori, dopisi. Gr.Gr. Sp.18*.

reconstruction and extension of Eichorn's church in **Tolisa** in 1911, according to Vancaš's project.³⁰

Among the small projects recorded, there is the construction of a new sacristy at the existing church in **Petrićevac**,³¹ done by **Josip Dubsky** in 1907. Dubsky was a distinguished civil engineer from Zagreb. In this particular project for the Province, he worked through his company "Josip Dubsky i sin". He participated in a number of industrial construction projects. He was active primarily in Zagreb, while also undertaking commissions throughout Croatia at the turn of the century.

Unlike the late Ottoman period, in which the individual contribution of master builders is often difficult to separate from the general conditions of construction, the Austro-Hungarian period allows for a clearer identification of architectural authorship. This is particularly evident in the work of Josip pl. Vancaš and Karel Pařík, whose participation cannot be reduced to technical execution or construction supervision. Their role lay primarily in the formulation of architectural concepts, the introduction of academically grounded design methods, and the translation of Central European stylistic and institutional models into the architectural framework of *Bosna Srebre-na*. Vancaš contributed most visibly through the design of churches, where historicist idioms, especially Neo-Gothic and Neo-Romanesque tendencies, were adapted to the liturgical, symbolic, and representative needs of the Province. Pařík, by contrast, appears as an architect whose contribution was closely connected to his later period of life and career as a very experienced and established architect. Together, their work marks the moment when Franciscan construction moved from a predominantly craft-based building practice toward a professional architectural culture in which individual authorship became more clearly recognisable.

³⁰ M. ORŠOLIĆ, *Franjevački samostan i župa Tolisa*, pp. 37-38.

³¹ FRANJO MARIĆ – ANTO ORLOVAC, *Banjolučka biskupija u riječi i slici od 1881. do 2006: povodom 125. obljetnice utemeljenja Biskupije*, Biskupski ordinarijat, Banja Luka, 2006, p. 535.

3. Interwar Era – Kingdom of Yugoslavia

During the interwar period, under the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, relatively few construction projects were undertaken at the convent sites of *Bosna Srebrena*. In comparison with the preceding Austro-Hungarian period, architectural activity was more limited, both in scale and number. Even so, this era produced several notable works whose significance exceeds their relatively modest number.

Although limited in the number of realised commissions, the interwar period is crucial for understanding the entry of highly individualised and conceptually sophisticated architectural authorship into Franciscan building practice. The architects discussed below demonstrate how a relatively limited number of commissions nevertheless produced some of the most conceptually ambitious works in the Province's architectural history.

The most important figure associated with this period was Jože Plečnik, whose architectural approach introduced a new level of conceptual and artistic refinement into the design of Franciscan buildings. His involvement, together with that of several architects connected to his circle, gave rise to some of the most remarkable architectural achievements of the period within the Province.

Jože Plečnik³² (23 January 1872, in Laibach, present day Ljubljana – 7 January 1957, Ljubljana) was by far the most prominent Slovenian architect of the twentieth century, occupying a singular place in the history of modern sacred architecture in Central Europe. Educated in Vienna under Otto Wagner and active in Vienna, Prague, and Ljubljana, he developed an architectural language of exceptional originality, marked by a synthesis of classical order, liturgical sensitivity, and powerful symbolic expression. Today, however, he is regarded as one of the most significant architects of the twentieth century and one of the principal reformers of modern sacred architecture.³³ His

³² More extensive data on Plečnik's biography can be found in: MIROSLAV MALINOVIĆ – DANIJELA UČOVIĆ – MILIJANA OKILJ, "The Peak of Jože Plečnik's Ecclesial Oeuvre: the Parish Church of Saint Anthony of Padua in Belgrade", in: *Hercegovina*, 8, serija 3, Mostar – Zagreb, 2022, pp. 288-290.

³³ PETER KREČIČ – JOŽE PLEČNIK, *Plečnik, the Complete Works*, Whitney Library of Design, New York, 1993, p. 7-11.

involvement in Franciscan commissions, not only in *Bosna Srebrena*, but beyond, represents one of the most distinguished episodes in the sacred architectural production of the Franciscans during the inter-war period.

His only commission for the Province was a new church in **Belgrade**,³⁴ designed and constructed between 1926 and 1962. The church in Belgrade occupies a particularly important place, not only from the perspective of the Province, but also within Plečnik's overall architectural legacy, as it represents his final realised sacred project. With Plečnik's commission in Belgrade, several architects from Slovenia, like Janez Valentičič, Antun Bitenc, and Harald Bilinič, followed as his associates or later as independent architects. They all later proved to be very successful architects not only in sacred, but in general public architecture, overall.

After graduating in 1927 under the mentorship of Jože Plečnik, **Janez Valentinčič**³⁵ (17 November 1904, Ljubljana – 7 June 1994, Ljubljana) began working in Ljubljana as an architectural supervisor. His university career commenced in 1931, first as Plečnik's assistant and later as an independent professor. His contribution to architecture, particularly in the field of sacred design, left a lasting mark on Slovenia and the wider region.

Being one of Plečnik's closest associates, he was commissioned upon Plečnik's death to continue the works in Belgrade. As Plečnik's assistant, he participated in several important projects in Ljubljana and beyond, while from the late 1930s onward, he also developed an independent body of work that included churches, bell towers, private villas, public buildings, and urban interventions. His later oeuvre continued to reflect a strong interest in ecclesiastical architecture,

³⁴ DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK, "Plečnikova Cerkev Sv. Antona Padovanskega V Beogradu", in: *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica*, 25, Ljubljana, 2020, p. 212.

³⁵ More extensive data on Valentičič's biography can be found in: M. MALINOVIČ – D. UČOVIČ – M. OKILJ, "The Peak of Jože Plečnik's Ecclesial Oeuvre: the Parish Church of Saint Anthony of Padua in Belgrade", pp. 304; <https://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi756262/> – DAMJAN PRELOVŠEK, *Valentinčič, Janez (1904-1994)*, Slovenska biografija – Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti – Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU.

particularly through church extensions, adaptations, and interior refurbishments in Slovenia and the wider Yugoslav context.

Architects Anton Bitenc and Harold Bilinić became involved in Plečnik's project during the 1940s, most notably in connection with the phase of interior articulation and decoration. **Anton-Tone Bitenc**³⁶ (6 January 1920, Ljubljana – 14 June 1977) began his architectural studies in Ljubljana in 1939, in the studio of Jože Plečnik. Even before completing his degree in 1947, he had already been engaged by Plečnik as a technical draftsman. After graduation, Bitenc worked briefly in the Ministry of Construction before being appointed as an assistant in Plečnik's studio at the Technical Faculty in 1949, becoming the last architect to hold that position. He distinguished himself particularly in the preservation and presentation of architectural heritage, working on several important historical and archaeological sites in Slovenia. At the same time, a substantial part of his oeuvre was devoted to the adaptation of churches, altars, and liturgical furnishings in accordance with the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, making him an important figure in the post-war development of Slovenian sacred architecture.

Harold Bilinić³⁷ (7 August 1894, Split – 1984, Zagreb) completed his studies in architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence in 1922. After graduating, Bilinić worked in Zagreb and later in Buenos Aires (1926–1932) before returning to Croatia, where he continued his architectural practice. His oeuvre is most closely associated with his collaboration with Ivan Meštrović, for whose sculptural and commemorative projects he designed architectural frameworks of considerable importance. In this context, Bilinić occupies a notable place in the development of twentieth-century monumental architecture in Croatia and the wider South Slavic region.

³⁶ More extensive data on Bitenc's biography can be found in: M. MALINOVIĆ – D. UČOVIĆ – M. OKILJ, "The Peak of Jože Plečnik's Ecclesial Oeuvre", p. 302; <https://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi1018480/> – HELENA SERAŽIN, *Bitenc, Anton (1920-1977)*, Slovenska biografija – Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti – Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU.

³⁷ More extensive data on Bilinić's biography can be found in: M. MALINOVIĆ – D. UČOVIĆ – M. OKILJ, "The Peak of Jože Plečnik's Ecclesial Oeuvre", pp. 293–294.

Blaž Misita-Katušić³⁸ (15 September 1886, Kostajnica, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy – 4 February 1961, Osijek) was an architect and conservation specialist whose professional activity spanned several regions of Southeast Europe.³⁹ Misita-Katušić's oeuvre encompasses a broad spectrum of architectural production, ranging from military and civil infrastructure to sacred buildings. His sustained commitment to the research, documentation, and preservation of cultural heritage left a lasting imprint on architectural practice and monument conservation in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia.

Among others, some of his important projects include: Officers' Home in Topčider, Belgrade (1925–1927), Competition designs for the Sanatorium on Avala (1931), and the Aero Club in Belgrade (1932).⁴⁰

In addition to many public projects across Serbia and Croatia, he was involved in the reconstruction of churches, castles, and fortifications. His most sacred projects are the Pejačević Curia on Strossmayer Street in Osijek and the Chapel of St Roch in the city centre,⁴¹ followed by the Belgrade Cathedral (1925), and Catholic churches in Kraljevo and the municipality of Čukarica, Belgrade.⁴²

For the Province, Misita-Katušić produced an extensive volume of works: the second **church** (1927–1929) and the third **convent** in **Petrićevac** (1930–1931), a new convent building in **Belgrade** (1926–1927), and the new construction of the Boarding facility for external

³⁸ More extensive data on Misita-Katušić's biography can be found in: M. MALINOVIĆ – D. UCOVIĆ – M. OKILJ, "The Peak of Jože Plečnik's Ecclesial Oeuvre", p. 302; <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=1955> – PREMIERL TOMISLAV, *Bilinić, Harold*, Hrvatski bibliografski leksion – Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža.

³⁹ MILAN BALIĆ, "Trideset godina zaštite spomenika kulture u Slavoniji 1945.-1975.", in: *Muzeologija*, 19, Zagreb, 1975, pp. 147.

⁴⁰ ALEKSANDAR KADIJEVIĆ, "Hrvatski arhitekti u izgradnji Beograda u 20. stoljeću", in: *Prostor*, 2(42), Zagreb, 2011, pp. 466-477.

⁴¹ M. BALIĆ, "Trideset godina zaštite spomenika kulture u Slavoniji 1945.-1975.", pp.146-147.

⁴² A. KADIJEVIĆ, "Hrvatski arhitekti u izgradnji Beograda u 20. stoljeću", pp. 466-477.

students at the Franciscan Classical High School in **Visoko** (1927–1928).⁴³

Shortly before the Second World War, two commissions were recorded, both done by **Franjo Lavrenčić** (1904, Ljubljana – 1965, Austria). His commissions for the Province include two residential buildings – contents: the extension of the convent in **Fojnica** (1940) and a new construction of the complex in **Kovačići, Sarajevo** (1940). In 1923, he enrolled at the Higher Technical School in Ljubljana, and in 1928, he continued his studies at the Faculty of Architecture in Prague. He remained in Prague for only one year, leaving formal studies in favour of direct architectural practice. From 1931 onward, he was active in Sarajevo, as well as in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Tuzla, where he developed an early modernist architectural expression within the South Slavic context. His work was focused primarily on residential and public architecture, with the *Crni Vrh* housing complex representing one of his most important achievements. In addition to several distinguished family houses in Sarajevo, he also remained professionally active in the post-war period through projects in Zagreb and Tuzla.⁴⁴

In this period, the individual role of the architect becomes particularly visible through the work of Jože Plečnik. Unlike the late Ottoman master builders, whose contribution was often conditioned by practical construction knowledge and local circumstances, and unlike the Austro-Hungarian architects whose work introduced academic historicism and institutional models of design, Plečnik's contribution was primarily conceptual, liturgical, and symbolic. His church in Belgrade introduced an exceptionally individual architectural language into Franciscan sacred architecture. Through the spatial organisation of the church, the treatment of volume, the articulation of liturgical space, and the integration of architectural and symbolic elements, Plečnik transformed the commission into a work

⁴³ ZLATA ŽIVAKOVIĆ-KERŽE, *Osječka Sjećanja, njihov život u našem sjećanju*, 2. dio, Studio HS internet d.o.o, Osijek – Hrvatski institut za povijest: Podružnica za povijest Slavonije, Baranje i Srijema, Slavonski Brod, 2011, p. 182.

⁴⁴ M. MALINOVIĆ, "Architectural Heritage of Franciscan Convent in Fojnica (Bosnia and Herzegovina)", p. 284.

that exceeded local functional requirements and entered the broader history of modern Central European sacred architecture.

4. Socialist Yugoslavia

During the socialist period of Yugoslavia, the architectural production of *Bosna Srebrena* increasingly engaged academically trained architects whose work reflected both modernist principles and a sensitivity to local cultural context. Among the most prominent figures were architects Zlatko Ugljen and Ivan Štraus. Ugljen's architecture is distinguished by a refined synthesis of modern expression and regional identity, particularly evident in his sacred projects, where spatial composition, materiality, and symbolic articulation respond to the specific cultural landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In contrast, Štraus, primarily known for his large-scale public and commercial buildings, introduced a rigorously modernist vocabulary marked by geometric clarity, structural innovation, and technological sophistication. Together, their work illustrates the diversification of architectural approaches in the late twentieth century, as well as the integration of contemporary design methodologies into the traditionally grounded architectural practice of the Franciscan Province.

In this phase, the Province increasingly collaborated with architects formed within the Yugoslav professional and educational system, indicating a shift from imported expertise toward regionally embedded modern architectural practice.

Zlatko Ugljen was born on 15 September 1929 in Mostar. In 1938, he moved to Breza, where he completed his primary education. In 1941, he enrolled at the Franciscan Classical High School in Visoko, but already the following year he transferred to the Classical High School in Mostar. After his father joined the Partisans in 1943, in the midst of the Second World War, Ugljen was forced to interrupt his schooling.

Together with his mother, sister, and brother, he lived clandestinely in Sarajevo in the household of Juraj Neidhardt, then the leading architect in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This period proved crucial for his architectural formation, as Neidhardt's influence decisively shaped

Ugljen's intellectual and professional development.⁴⁵ After the war, Ugljen resumed his education in Sarajevo and graduated from the Technical School in 1949. In 1950, he enrolled in the study of architecture at the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the University of Sarajevo.

From 1990, he was a corresponding member, and from 2002 a full member, of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was also a corresponding member of HAZU (*Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti*) and SAZU (*Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti*).⁴⁶

After graduating in 1958, he developed a dual career as both architect and academic, eventually becoming one of the leading figures of architectural culture and education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. His work is characterised by a distinctive synthesis of modern architectural language and regional cultural identity, an approach that gained international recognition with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1983 for the Šerefudin White Mosque in Visoko.⁴⁷ His major works include a wide range of public, tourist, and sacred buildings, among them the hotels *Visoko*, *Ruža*, *Bregava*, and *Vučko*, the National Theatre in Zenica, and several important Islamic religious buildings. His projects represent a synthesis of tradition and modernism, consistently emphasizing harmony with the surrounding environment and the historical context. Ugljen's exceptional contribution to the architecture of Bosnia and Herzegovina secured him international recognition, and his work continues to inspire new generations of architects.

For the Province, Ugljen designed a handful of projects: extension of the convent in **Gorica** (1982-1986), assisted by **Rodoljub Mikulić**, the convent and church in **Tuzla** (1977-1981, a new complex on the site of the old), a new interior of the chapel in the convent in **Nedžarići**,

⁴⁵ ZLATKO UGLJEN – STANE BERNIK – JURAJ MARTINOVIĆ, *Arhitekt Zlatko Ugljen=Architect Zlatko Ugljen*, Međunarodna galerija portreta, Tuzla, 2002, p. 235.

⁴⁶ ("Zlatko Ugljen").

⁴⁷ Z. UGLJEN – S. BERNIK – J. MARTINOVIĆ, *Arhitekt Zlatko Ugljen=Architect Zlatko Ugljen*, p. 8.

Sarajevo (1984), and the new convent and church in **Plehan** (1993, 1998, a new complex on the site of the old), with the latest being a reconstruction of the so-called Convict (Boarding facility) of the convent in **Visoko** (2007). Very often, Ugljen was assisted by **Husejn Dropić**, an architect from Tuzla (1950-), like in the case of Plehan.

Father and son, Danilo and Janez Fürst, were involved in the post-earthquake, new construction of the convent and church in Petričevac in the period 1973-1989.

Janez Fürst was first commissioned for the project in Petričevac. At the time, he was already an established Slovenian architect and known as the son of the prominent Slovenian architect Danilo Fürst. He died tragically in a car accident in 1981, interrupting his project in Petričevac – later to be succeeded by his father. Fürst's architectural contribution is characterised by a modern interpretation of sacred architecture, with particular emphasis on functionality and harmony with the surrounding environment.

Danilo Fürst (6 April 1912, Maribor – 4 August 2005, Ljubljana) was among the most accomplished students of Plečnik and, alongside the architect Edvard Ravnikar, is regarded as one of the most prominent representatives of modern architecture in Slovenia. His architectural oeuvre was remarkably diverse, particularly his contribution to the development of modernism in Slovenia, encompassing social housing, innovative prefabricated residential buildings, industrial complexes, landscape architecture, hotel developments, schools, administrative buildings, and furniture design.

Not all interventions during Yugoslavia were of a size and scale comparable to, for example, Petričevac. Some were, like in **Guča Gora**, reconstructions after the damage of the Second World War. In 1957, the convent in Guča Gora was reconstructed after the project done by **Romeo Tiberio** and **Vlado Smoljan**. Romeo Tiberio was born in 1912 as the son of Italian Antonio Tiberio (1872-1957) from Treviso. He was predominantly engaged in a variety of public and housing projects in Mostar, thereby making a significant contribution to the architectural development of his native city. Vlado Smoljan (Zagreb, 1926 – Mostar, 27 September 2008) was a civil engineer, an established entrepreneur and a public figure based in Mostar. His most important construction achievements remain infrastructural and

engineering buildings in Mostar and across the region of Herzegovina, while the convent in Guča Gora remains the sole important sacred project.⁴⁸

One of the interesting commissions in this period was the one by **Božidar Borić** (18 October 1934, Sarajevo – 23 November 2012, Sarajevo), who distinguished himself particularly through his engagement in sacred projects. His most significant contribution is associated with the reconstruction of the convent building in **Kreševo** in 1975-1981.⁴⁹

Borić was a Franciscan friar and a member of *Bosna Srebrena*, within which he initially worked in the field of theological education. He began his schooling at the Franciscan Classical Classical High School in Visoko (1948-1955) and continued his education at the Franciscan Faculty of Theology in Bistrik (1955-1959). After a short period in Kreševo (1963-1965), he was transferred again to Sarajevo, where he remained active between 1965 and 1976. During this period, more precisely between 1965 and 1970, he completed his architectural studies in Sarajevo, after which he became involved in numerous architectural projects for the Franciscan Province of Bosna Srebrena. He was a member of the Provincial Commission for the construction and design of sacred buildings.

Ahead of Borić's reconstruction, on the site of Pařík's demolished church, architect **Antun Karavanić** (29 May 1930, Belgrade – 12 June 2006, Zagreb) built a new church in 1963-1965.⁵⁰ He graduated in architecture from the University of Zagreb in 1955. He spent most of his professional career working as an independent artist in his own studio in Zagreb. His oeuvre encompassed a wide range of buildings and interiors, as well as important work in the field of industrial design.

⁴⁸ STJEPAN IVANKOVIĆ, "Mr. sc. Vlado Smoljan (1926.-2008.)", in: *Hercegovina*, 22, serija 2, Mostar, 2008, pp. 343-345.

⁴⁹ ARCHIVE KREŠEVO, *Muzej, nacrti, fr. Božo Borić, Gr.Gr.Sp.69*; *Samostan: prijedlog sanacije, adaptacije i investicionog ulaganja, fr. Božo Borić, Gr.Gr. Sp.70-2*

⁵⁰ STJEPAN BULJAN, *Povijesne crtice Kreševa i franjevačkog samostana 1897-1997*, Napredak, Kiseljak, 1997, p. 61-63.

Besides Kreševo, there was another big project underway in the 1960s. **Zdravko Ćuk**, an architect from Zagreb, was commissioned for the construction of the new complex in Nedžarići, Sarajevo (1966-1975). On this site, construction of the auditorium by **G. Jovanović** followed in 1989.

In the 1980s, construction activities were recorded across the Province. **Branko Tadić**, an architect from Sarajevo, was commissioned for the construction of the second convent building in **Tolisa** in 1986-1987, together with **Ivo Boras**, also a Sarajevo-based architect, who did the interior decoration. **Vinko Grabovac**, an architect from Zagreb, was commissioned for the extension and reconstruction of the convent in **Visoko** (1985), the construction of the third convent building in **Rama** (1985-1986), and the reconstruction of the convent in **Belgrade** (1990), built by Blaž Misita-Katušić.

One of the last projects realised during the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the construction of the north-eastern-wing extension to the existing convent in **Gorica** by Split-based architect **Zoran Jeramaz** (5 May 1950, Metković – 12 June 2021, Split). He graduated from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo. From 1978 he lived and worked in Split, where he realised numerous residential and commercial projects.

In the socialist period, the individual contribution of architects becomes visible in a different way than in the preceding phases. Unlike his predecessors, architects such as Zlatko Ugljen worked within a mature Yugoslav modernist context. His contribution lay in the adaptation of modern architectural language to the specific spiritual, institutional, and symbolic needs of the Franciscan Province. Ugljen's role was especially important in projects in which sacral architecture was interpreted through the synthesis of modern form, regional identity, material sensitivity, and contextual integration.

5. Post War era

Following the end of the war (1992-1995), architectural activity within the Province entered a new phase shaped by post-war reconstruction, institutional renewal, and evolving architectural paradigms. This period is characterised by the engagement of both established architects, foremostly Ugljen, who had already been commissioned

by the Province as shown, and Ivan Štraus, followed by, often ad-hoc only, in some cases, the younger generation of designers, whose work reflects a synthesis of contemporary architectural language, technological advancement, and a renewed sensitivity to historical continuity and local identity. Projects undertaken after 1995 often respond simultaneously to practical needs – rebuilding damaged or destroyed structures – and to symbolic imperatives, seeking to re-assert the cultural and spiritual presence of the Franciscan community within a transformed socio-political landscape. As a result, the architecture of this period demonstrates a pluralism of approaches, ranging from restrained contextual interventions to more expressive reinterpretations of sacred space, marking a significant shift from earlier, more unified stylistic frameworks.

In the post-war decades, Franciscan architecture became a field in which reconstruction, institutional continuity, and new architectural pluralism intersected, often under conditions shaped as much by symbolic necessity as by functional demand.

One of the first projects developed after the War is the extension of the convent building in the seat of the Province, housing the Shrine of St Nicholas Tavelić in **Kovačići, Sarajevo** (1997-2013) by Sarajevo-based architect **Radivoje-Rajko Mandić** (1947, Risovac, Bosanska Krupa). Mandić graduated from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo in the early 1970s, where he subsequently remained professionally active. Soon after graduation, he participated in several important projects, among which the design of the University Hospital in Banja Luka is generally regarded as the most significant. Even though Mandić is publicly regarded as the architect of hospitals, his significant oeuvre remains realised for the Province, including churches and parish houses.

Following the project in the Province's seat, a very important project was developed for the church and convent in Senvetska Sopnica, Zagreb, in 1999 by **Srećko Kreitmayer**. Kreitmayer is an architect with roots in Bosnia and Herzegovina who lives and works in Ljubljana. His commission for the large-scale complex in Zagreb remains the only remarkable sacred architecture in his oeuvre, in general, rich with industrial and technical facilities.

One of the most remarkable achievements on one of the convents' sites after the civil war is the construction of a new church in **Jajce** (2001-), on the site of the demolished church during the war. It was designed by the famous Zagreb-based duo, **Zvonimir Krznarić** and **Marijan Hržić**, which was their sole commission for the Province.

Zvonimir Krznarić⁵¹ (2 June 1938, Berovo, Macedonia – 30 June 2011, Novi Vinodolski, Croatia) was one of the most prolific Croatian architects and urban planners of the twentieth century. Krznarić was educated in Zagreb, where he studied architecture under Vladimir Turina, later supplementing his training with specialist studies in Paris. Active as both an architect and urban planner, he worked for decades at the Urban Planning Institute of Croatia before establishing his own practice in 1993. His exceptionally broad oeuvre ranges from urban and tourist planning to public buildings, reconstructions, interiors, and memorial architecture, with such major works as the Crematorium at Mirogoj and the National and University Library in Zagreb. For his contribution to Croatian architecture and urbanism, he received numerous major professional awards, including the Zagreb Salon Award, the *Borba* Award,⁵² and the *Vladimir Nazor* Award. His farewell ceremony was held at the crematorium at Mirogoj, itself one of his most accomplished architectural works.

Marijan Hržić (8 January 1944, Zagreb) graduated in 1967 from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Zagreb in the studio of Vladimir Turina,⁵³ where he later also completed his master's and doctoral studies and pursued an academic career. He belongs to the generation of architects who decisively shaped the contemporary architectural identity of Zagreb, combining architectural practice, urban thought, and teaching. Much of his career was closely connected to Zvonimir Krznarić, therefore overlapping in their notable works. His most notable works include the Crematorium at Mirogoj, the

⁵¹ <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/krznaric-zvonimir> – DARJA RADOVIĆ MAHEČIĆ, *Krznarić, Zvonimir*, Hrvatski biografski leksikon (1983-2025), mrežno izdanje. Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2026. (11. 5. 2026).

⁵² ŽELJKA ČORAK, "Marijan Hržić, Zvonimir Krznarić, Davor Mance dobitnici nagrade 'Borbe' za najbolje arhitektonsko ostvarenje na području SFR Jugoslavije u 1985. godini", in: *Čovjek i prostor*, 398, Zagreb, 1986, p. 6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

National and University Library in Zagreb, the Cibona Sports Centre, several important churches and pastoral centres, the *Krešimir Ćosić* Sports Hall in Zadar, and the Eurotower complex in Zagreb. For his contribution to Croatian architecture, he received numerous major professional awards, including the *Vladimir Nazor* Award and the *Viktor Kovačić* Award. His significant contribution to architecture lies in the synthesis of modernist and functionalist principles, combined with a pronounced sensitivity to urban planning, the integration of architecture into its environment, and the affirmation of the legacy of the Zagreb School of Architecture.

Ivan Štraus (1928 Kremna, Zlatibor District – 24 August 2018, Sarajevo) spent his early childhood in Banja Luka. He began his architectural education in Zagreb in 1947 and continued it in Sarajevo, where he graduated in 1958.

From 1984, Štraus was a corresponding member, and from 1995 a full member, of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ANUBiH); from 2012, he was also a full member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU). Over the course of his distinguished career, he received numerous national and international awards, confirming his status as one of the most important architects of his generation. Among the major achievements of his oeuvre are the Main Post Office and Ministry of Telecommunications in Addis Ababa (1969), the headquarters of Elektroprivreda BiH in Sarajevo (1978), Hotel Onogošt in Nikšić (1982), Hotel Holiday Inn in Sarajevo (1983), the UNIS Business Centre in Sarajevo (1986), and the Museum of Aviation in Belgrade (1989).

Štraus was not only a prolific architect but also an important architectural writer and critic of the built environment. His architecture is characterised by geometric clarity, compositional discipline, and structural boldness, qualities that made his work a defining contribution to the modern architecture of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region.

With mosques in his oeuvre, Štraus sealed and proved his success in sacred architecture through several projects for the Roman Catholic Church. For the Province, he designed churches on convent sites in the last phase of his career: **Dubrave** (2002, a new church on the site

of the old church), and **Petrićevac** (2003-, new church on the site of the demolished).

So, Štraus's individual contribution to the Province is most clearly visible in the late phase of his career, when his experience in large-scale public and representative architecture was translated into Roman Catholic sacral commissions. In the churches in Dubrave and Petrićevac, his role was not limited to the provision of functional religious space but consisted in articulating a modernist vocabulary marked by geometric clarity, structural confidence, and a restrained monumentality suited to the symbolic presence of the Franciscan community. His work thus shows that the Province's architectural production in this period was no longer dependent on external stylistic models but had become part of a broader regional modernist culture shaped by architects formed within the Yugoslav professional and academic milieu.

The commission of Ivan Prtenjak, internationally known for the design sculpture symbolizing NATO in Brussels, for the Province was very fruitful. In **Dubrave** he designed Šimun Gallery (2006-2010) and the interior decoration (completed by 2013) of the church, built according to the project of Ivan Štraus. **Ivan Prtenjak**⁵⁴ (9 June 1939, Plavić, near Klanjec, Croatia –) completed his studies in architecture in Zagreb in 1965, where he subsequently worked at the Institute of Art History. Since 1968, Prtenjak has lived and worked in Brussels, developing a broad and diverse architectural practice that includes social housing in Belgium, tourist and residential buildings in Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, and major projects in Croatia, such as the Church of St Peter at Boninovo, the reconstruction of Dubrovnik Cathedral, the Rupe Museum and Revelin Fortress, the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb, and the Ivan Meštrović Gallery in Split. His work is characterised by a synthesis of modern architectural expression and cultural-historical context, through which he made a significant contribution across different architectural and artistic disciplines.

⁵⁴ <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/prtenjak-ivan> – *Prtenjak, Ivan*, Hrvatska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje, Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013. – 2026. (10. 5. 2026).

In the oeuvre of smaller or sole commissions, there are several recorded architects, including **Nada Džankić**, an architect from Sarajevo, who was engaged for the reconstruction and renovation of the first convent building in Tolisa (2000s), while architect **Zlatko Čolić** did the refurbishment and extension of the convent in **Dubrave** (2001-2002). Further on, architect **Anto Tomić** did the reconstruction of the first convent building in Rama (2005-2007).⁵⁵ **Krešimir Kolovrat**, an architect from Bugojno, was commissioned for the reconstruction of the first convent wing in Fojnica (2001). **Drago Rimac**, an architect from Livno, was commissioned for the construction of a new, reinforced concrete choir in the church in **Gorica** (2004). Among the last projects of this kind, a Zagreb-based duo **Damir Derjanović** (1st January 1961–) and **Emil Bersak**, was recorded for the reconstruction and extension of the second convent building in **Rama** (2008).

6. Discussion

This study demonstrates that the architectural history of *Bosna Srebrena* cannot be adequately understood solely through stylistic analysis or through monographic treatment of individual sites. When approached through the actors responsible for design and construction, a more complex historical picture emerges, shaped by changing forms of authorship, professionalisation, patronage, and cultural transfer.

Methodologically, this conclusion emerges from the combined reading of several types of evidence. Archival project documentation makes it possible to identify concrete commissions, authorship, dates, and in some cases unrealised or altered designs. Franciscan chronicles and schematisms provide the institutional context in which these commissions were initiated, recorded, and transmitted within the Province. Published architectural and art-historical scholarship enables the individual figures to be situated within broader professional and stylistic developments, while on-site visits and comparative analysis of realised projects allow the documented evidence to be tested against the built fabric itself. Taken together, these sources

⁵⁵ TOMISLAV BRKOVIĆ et al, *Franjevački samostan Rama-Šćit*, Franjevački samostan Rama-Šćit, Rama, undated, p. 33.

show that the Province's architectural production was not a set of isolated building episodes, but a continuous field in which institutional needs, available expertise, and changing architectural models interacted over time.

The Province functioned as an institutional framework in several interconnected ways. First, its architectural activity was not limited to isolated acts of construction but formed a continuous pattern of patronage across different political regimes, from the late Ottoman period and Austro-Hungarian administration to the Yugoslav and post-war contexts. Secondly, the Province repeatedly mediated between local needs and external expertise, engaging local master builders, architects educated in Vienna and Prague, and later architects formed within Yugoslav professional and academic institutions. Thirdly, through its network of convents, parish churches, schools, residences, and later cultural and pastoral facilities, the Province created a stable institutional demand for architectural production. In this sense, *Bosna Srebrena* was not merely a passive recipient of architectural models, but an active agent that selected, adapted, and transmitted architectural knowledge across different cultural and professional environments.

The comparative reading of realised projects further confirms these shifts. Late Ottoman examples, such as Guča Gora, Gorica, Fojnica, and Tolisa, reveal a building culture primarily shaped by practical construction knowledge, local or regional master builders, and the adaptation of relatively modest convent and church structures to restrictive political and material circumstances. By contrast, the Austro-Hungarian commissions associated with Vančaš and Pařík demonstrate a different architectural regime: design becomes more clearly individualised, formally articulated, and connected to Central European historicist and institutional models. Plečnik's church in Belgrade introduces another level of comparison, since its significance lies less in the number of commissions and more in the exceptional conceptual, liturgical, and spatial refinement of a single realised work. In the socialist period, projects by Ugljen, Štraus, and the Fürsts show how modernist architectural language could be adapted to Franciscan needs while remaining sensitive to regional identity, material expression, and the symbolic role of sacral space. Finally, post-1995 projects reveal a more plural field of reconstruction,

extension, and symbolic renewal, in which architectural intervention often responded simultaneously to functional necessity and the re-establishment of institutional continuity. Seen comparatively, these projects demonstrate that the Province's architecture changed not only in style, but also in the organisation of design, the status of authorship, and the relationship between local needs and wider architectural currents.

In the late Ottoman period, building activity depended primarily on master builders whose commissions were determined by local reputation, recommendation, and practical experience rather than by formal architectural education. This phase reveals a construction culture grounded in craftsmanship, mobility, and adaptation to difficult political and territorial circumstances. At the same time, the surviving buildings confirm that the absence of academic training did not preclude architectural quality or historical significance.

A decisive transformation occurred during the Austro-Hungarian period, when academically educated architects – above all Josip pl. Vancaš and Karel Pařík – introduced new professional, stylistic, and institutional models of architectural production. In this context, Franciscan patronage became part of broader processes of modernisation and cultural integration within Central European architectural currents. The Province thus moved from an essentially craft-based building culture toward one increasingly shaped by academic design, technical specialisation, and more self-conscious stylistic expression.

Although quantitatively more modest, the interwar period produced some of the most conceptually ambitious works within the Province, above all through the involvement of Jože Plečnik and architects associated with his circle. This phase demonstrates that *Bosna Srebre-na* was not isolated from the most original developments in Central European sacral architecture, but could, under specific historical circumstances, participate in them directly and at a high artistic level.

During socialist Yugoslavia and in the post-1995 period, the Province increasingly collaborated with established architects from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia, among them Zlatko Ugljen, Ivan Štraus, Zvonimir Krznarić, and Marijan Hržić. In these later stages, the Franciscan architecture reflects a marked pluralism of approaches – modernist, regionalist, reconstructive, and symbolically

charged in the post-war context. The architectural identity of the Province was therefore never stylistically uniform; rather, it was continually redefined in response to changing historical conditions and through collaboration with different generations of designers.

Viewed from this perspective, the architectural history of the Province reveals not only changes in style or building type but also changes in the social organisation of architectural production. The same institutional body that once relied on master builders selected through reputation and practical experience later commissioned architects associated with Central European historicism, Plečnik's sacral modernism, Yugoslav modernist culture, and post-war reconstruction. This continuity of patronage across changing architectural regimes is precisely what makes *Bosna Srebrena* a useful case study for examining professionalisation and cultural transfer in the architecture of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region.

Taken as a whole, the material confirms that the history of *Bosna Srebrena* is also a history of architectural networks: local and trans-regional, Franciscan and civic, artisanal and academic. These biographical trajectories show that the Province's architectural production was not simply a sequence of isolated commissions, but a record of changing forms of expertise, authorship, and institutional patronage. Its significance lies not only in the number of buildings it commissioned, but in the way those buildings reflect broader transformations in the architectural culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider South Slavic region.

Conclusion

The architectural production of *Bosna Srebrena* developed through a long and uneven transition from the world of master builders to that of academically trained architects. This transition was neither abrupt nor linear; rather, it unfolded through overlapping practices, collaborations, and adjustments shaped by political change, ecclesiastical needs, and broader cultural currents.

By shifting attention from buildings alone to the individuals responsible for their design and construction, this study has highlighted the changing nature of architectural authorship within the Province. The paper shows that *Bosna Srebrena* relied not only on local

craftsmanship but also on some of the most important architects active in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, and the wider Central European sphere. In this sense, the Province should be understood not as a marginal recipient of external models, but as an active participant in wider architectural developments across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

At the same time, the paper suggests that the architecture of *Bosna Srebrena* should be understood as a field shaped by both continuity and transformation: continuity in the persistence of institutional and spiritual needs, and transformation in the architectural languages, technical means, and professional actors through which those needs were articulated. Future research may extend this perspective through comparative analysis of individual sites, closer study of unbuilt or altered projects, and further investigation of the relationship between Franciscan patronage and regional architectural culture.