

Valpovački vlastelini Prandau–Normann

VALPOVO LANDOWNERS
PRANDAU - NORMANN

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The Crypt of the Chapel of st Roch in Valpovo

St Roch's Chapel in Valpovo

With its historical story, its functionality, and its architectural features, the chapel of St Roch in Valpovo is truly a special and significant cultural monument of our region. It was erected way back in 1796, on a small hill in Valpovo known as Zeleni brijeg, by the baron of Valpovo, Josip Ignjat Žigmund Hillebrand von Prandau, during the second great plague epidemic that spread to Slavonia. This is confirmed by the original Latin text engraved in the memorial plaque at the centre of the chapel's façade, above the entrance, and the translation of the Latin text to Croatian is engraved on the memorial plaque to the right of the entrance to the chapel. This late-Baroque chapel was built in honour of St Roch, the protector against the plague epidemic, in which the population, offering vows to that exceptionally revered saint, and directly to God, prayed for the preservation and the protection of the city of Valpovo and the Valpovo Estate. The first major reconstruction of the chapel took place in 1860, when Baron Anton Gustav Hillebrand of Prandau added the underground brick crypt that today holds 17 graves of Valpovo landowners. The reconstruction itself is mentioned in the inscription on the same memorial plaque that speaks about the construction. The chapel received its final appearance in the reconstruction of 1860, and the late-Baroque features were replaced by new, neo-Romanesque features. This is demonstrated by the unique example in the building construction of Slavonia and the entire northern Croatia – a bell-gable, which is a feature usually seen in Mediterranean countries. In 1926, the second thorough reconstruction of the chapel of St Roch was undertaken by the final count of Valpovo, Rudolf Joseph (Rudolf I) von Normann-Ehrenfels. A new see-through iron fence, with beautiful ends shaped like small Greek crosses and flaming candles, was placed around the chapel

and its two exterior graves. In the middle of the 20th century, the Society of Friends of Antiquity from Valpovo, which was using the chapel as an exhibition space, started maintaining that unique cultural monument. The third thorough reconstruction of the chapel was initiated in 2005 by the German People's Union – National Association of Danube Swabians in Croatia. The work was completed in the spring of 2008, and many interventions on the structure restored its old look. Along with the reconstruction, the first Memorial Centre of Danube Swabians in Croatia was founded, as a memorial to the members of the German and Austrian minority who were sent to death camps by the Yugoslav communist regime after World War II, where they suffered genocide from 1945 to 1948.¹ One of such camps was the one in Valpovo, where about 3,500 people were incarcerated during 1945 and 1946, 1,500 of whom lost their lives.

The Crypt

In the chapel of St Roch, right next to the entrance, there is a hatch with staircase leading down to the crypt, which is approximately of the same size as the chapel itself. The hatch is usually covered with a massive wood door in order to allow unobstructed access to the chapel, and if someone wants to enter the crypt, the door is lifted. The interior of the crypt, same as the chapel, is separated into the nave and the sanctuary, and the sanctuary contains the original altar stone. Rhythm is provided to the side walls of the crypt with semicolumns carrying flanges which are parallel to the side wall, and which carry the groin-barrel vaults. The sanctuary is vaulted by a shallow dome resting on a rectangular base.² The walls of the crypt have horizontal recesses holding the coffins of the Valpovo landowners, the family of the barons Prandau and the counts Normann,

¹ Trischler, R.; Puncer, M. Kapela sv. Roka u Valpovu – budući memorijalni centar Podunavskih Švaba u Hrvatskoj. In: Valpovački godišnjak 13(2008), p. 114–124.

² Archives of the Roman Catholic parish Valpovo (The Architectural information has been taken from the newer decision of the Ministry of Culture on awarding the status of a cultural asset to the chapel of St Roch in Valpovo, at the address Ulica J. J. Strossmayera, located at the cadastral plot 309, k. Valpovo. Class: UP-1-612-08/04-01/332, Registry number: 532-10-1/8/UBJ-04-2, Zagreb, 23 September 2004)

and the recesses have been sealed with black slabs containing the engraved names of the deceased. Written on the 17 slabs, 16 of which are marble and one is made of wood, there are texts written in Latin, Hungarian, and Croatian.

When descending into the crypt, the wall on the left contains the following marble slabs:

1. KARLO LUDVIG NORMANN EHRENFELS – the son of Rudolf Joseph (Rudolf I.) and Julijana Normann-Ehrenfels nee Edle von Vest.
2. MARIANNA NORMANN EHRENFELS nee Baroness HILLEPRAND OD PRANDAUA – the oldest daughter of Baron Anton Gustav Hilleprand von Prandau. When she married Count Heinrich Fridrich Konstantin von Normann-Ehrenfels in 1852, the Valpovo Estate became property of the family of the counts Normann-Ehrenfels.³
3. GUSTAV, NIKOLA, ALVINA NORMANN EHRENFELS – the children of Marijana and Konstantin Normann-Ehrenfels.
4. ADELHAIDA HILLEPRAND OD PRANDAUA rod. pl. ČEH – (Adela) the wife of Baron Anton Gustav Hilleprand von Prandau.
5. KOLOMAN HILLEPRAND OD PRANDAUA – the son of Anton Gustav and Adelhaida (Adela) Hilleprand von Prandau.
6. RUDOLF I. NORMANN EHRENFELŠKI – the last of the counts of Valpovo, a great benefactor and philanthropist, he died at the age of 85, on 22 May 1942, and he was buried with great honours in the crypt of the chapel of St Roch on 26 May 1942. The place reserved at the crypt for the wife of the last count of Valpovo, Rudolf I Normann-Ehrenfels, Countess Julijana Normann-Ehrenfels, remained empty. Namely, after the death of her husband in 1942 and the departure of her son, Rudolf Konstantin Gustav (Rudolf II), with his family to Austria, Julijana remained at the Prandau-Normann castle, as the last representative of the family of counts, until 1945, when the communist regime relocated her from the castle.⁴ In 1952 she moved in with her son in Austria (castle Rothenthurn), where she died in 1959.

The following gravestones are located at the altar:

7. GUSTAV HILLEPRAND OD PRANDAUA – the younger son of Baron Josip Ignjat Žigmund Hilleprand von Prandau and Marija Ana Eleonora nee Countess Pejačević Virovitička, the last male member of his family, the builder of the family tomb of the Valpovo landowners, where he transferred the remains of his father Baron Josip Ignjat and his son Koloman, on 13 October 1860, which were previously interred at the Baroque parish church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Valpovo.
8. KARLO pl. VEST – the brother of the last countess of Valpovo, Julijana Normann-Ehrenfels nee Edle von Vest.
9. JOSEF IGNATZ HILLEPRAND OD PRANDAUA – the son of Baron Petar II Antun Hilleprand von Prandau and the second owner of the

Valpovo castle and estate. In 1796, he built the chapel of St Roch, and in 1803, he started the renovation of the castle, which suffered a fire on New Year's Eve 1801 to 1802 that lasted for three days. The renovation of the castle lasted until 1810.⁵ In Osijek, at the modern day Trg A. Starčevića, he erected a building that today houses the county mayor of the Osijek-Baranja County. Thanks to his efforts, Osijek gained the status of a free royal city in 1809, and the settlements Valpovo, Donji Miholjac, Čadavica, and Moslavina gained the status of market towns.⁶ His most significant contribution to the development of the cultural life in Valpovo was the theatre, which he had built in 1809, next to the formal Baroque stable, not far from the Valpovo castle. This old Prandau theatre building is the oldest theatre building in Slavonia today.⁷ Baron Josip Ignjat Žigmund Hilleprand von Prandau died in Valpovo, on 13 October 1816 at the age of 68. He was originally interred in the Baroque parish church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Valpovo, but after 44 years, on the anniversary of his death, 13 October 1860, his remains were transferred by his son, Anton Gustav Hilleprand von Prandau, to the crypt of the chapel of St Roch.⁸

10. ANA MARIJA HILLEPRAND OD PRANDAUA rod. grofica PEJAČEVIĆ – the third wife of Baron Josip Ignjat Žigmund Hilleprand von Prandau.
11. LOTHAR pl. BERKS – the husband of Marija Ana Normann-Ehrenfels, the daughter of Count Rudolf I and Countess Julijana. After World War II, Lothar and Marija Ana were deported to the camp for persons of German nationality, where Lothar died of abdominal typhoid on 25 September 1945 and Marija Ana survived the terrors of the communist regime in the work camp, and died six years after the death of her husband, in 1951.⁹ The bodies of the late Lothar and Marija Ana von Berks were secretly, without religious ceremonies or a priest, interred into the crypt of the chapel of St Roch. Their marble gravestones were blank for a long time, due to a ban imposed by the communist regime. It was possible to organise an appropriate religious ceremony and pay respects to the deceased only after the free Croatian state was established, so, on 18 June 1999, about a hundred people gathered in front of the chapel of St Roch and they paid their respects to the dead, who were given an appropriate funeral ceremony and whose names were finally engraved on their marble gravestones.¹⁰

The remaining gravestones on the right:

12. KARLO ŽIGMUND HILLEPRAND OD PRANDAUA – the older son of Baron Josip Ignjat Žigmund Hilleprand von Prandau and Marija Ana nee Countess Pejačević. This highly respected musician, patron of the arts, and benefactor died in Vienna on 11 April 1865, his body was transported on a steam ship to Osijek, then delivered to Valpovo and

interred in the family tomb in the chapel of St Roch in Valpovo.

13. ALVINA PEJAČEVIĆ rod. barunica HILLEPRAND OD PRANDAUA – the daughter of Baron Anton Gustav and Adelhaida (Adela) Hilleprand von Prandau.
14. MARIJA ANA pl. BERKS rod. grofica NORMANN EHRENFELŠKA – the daughter of Countess Julijana and Count Rudolf I Normann-Ehrenfels.
15. ADELHAIDA PARČETIĆ rod. barunica HILLEPRAND OD PRANDAUA – the daughter of Baron Josip Ignjat Žigmund Hilleprand von Prandau.
16. STJEPAN KÖVER – the son-in-law of Baron Josip Ignjat Žigmund Hilleprand von Prandau
17. TEREZIJA KÖVER – the granddaughter of Baron Josip Ignjat Žigmund Hilleprand von Prandau.

There are two graves in the fenced part of the grounds around the chapel. The first grave, surrounded by a decorative, see-through, 60 centimetres high, iron fence, according to the inscription in German, holds the brother of Count Rudolf I Normann-Ehrenfels, Karl Count Normann-Ehrenfels, the corporal of the fifth cavalry regiment, who died at the age of 18, on 10 November 1877. The second, larger and better decorated grave, that unfortunately had its gravestone with the inscription removed, holds Johanna Flora von Radivojevič nee Baroness Hilleprand von Prandau (1804 – 1878), the daughter of Baron Josip Ignjat Žigmund Hilleprand von Prandau and his wife Marija Ana Eleonora nee Countess Pejačević.¹¹



3 Paušak, M. Tiskana ostavština valpovačkih vlastelina : katalog izložbe. Valpovo : Ustanova za kulturne djelatnosti „Ante Evetović-Mirosljub“, Muzej Valpovštine, 2015, p. 4-7.

4 Ibid.

5 Mažuran, I. Valpovo i valpovačko vlastelinstvo od 1790. do 1848. godine. In: Valpovo – sedam stoljeća znakovite prošlosti. Najman, S. (ed.). Valpovo : Poglavarstvo grada : Matica hrvatska, Ogranak ; Osijek : Grafika, 2004, p. 86–98.

6 Hrvatski biografski leksikon. Sv. 5. Macan, T. (ed.). Zagreb : Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2002, p. 570–573.

7 Perčić, Lj. Nekoliko riječi o otkriću valpovačkog kazališta. In: Valpovački godišnjak 13(2008), Valpovo, p. 7–11.

8 Čuržik, V. Barun Josip Ignac. In: Valpovačka šupa. Slovaček, D. (ed.). Valpovo : Matica hrvatska, Ogranak, 1995, p. 31–32.

9 Paušak, M. 70 godina od smrti posljednjeg valpovačkog grofa : katalog izložbe. Valpovo : Ustanova za kulturne djelatnosti „Ante Evetović-Mirosljub“, 2012, p. 4–5.

10 Samardan, D. In memoriam Lothar et Marija Ana Berks. In: Valpovački godišnjak 5(2000), Valpovo, p. 151–152.

11 Stanić, D. Zaboravljeni jubilej – 200 godina kapelice sv. Roka na Zelenom brijegu. In: Valpovački godišnjak 3(1998), Valpovo, p. 111–120.