

SZOMBATHELY



THE EPISCOPAL TOWN



Colonia Claudia Savaria, the predecessor of Szombathely, was founded by Emperor Claudius in 43 A. D. It went down to history as the provincial state of the Empire. In the time of the early Christianity, St Quirinus, the bishop of Sescia, was executed here and St. Martin, later the bishop of Tours, the well-known saint of the western Christianity, was born here. The settlement was destroyed by an earthquake in the 5th century, but it remained inhabited afterwards, too. Initially it belonged to the land of the bishopric of Győr, but a new era began in the history of the town alongside the reconstructions in the 18th century.



THE DIOCESE OF SZOMBATHELY

The newly founded bishopric came into being with the centre of Szombathely according to the ecclesiastical reform of Marie Theresa in 1777. János Szily (1735-1799), the erudite suffragan bishop of Győr, was appointed to the head of the Diocese of Szombathely. It was confirmed by the bull of Pope Pius VI. Besides the coordination tasks of the new diocese, Szily considered having the church buildings constructed urgent. His name is associated with brilliant buildings, whose construction was accompanied by



his intellectual associate and excellent architect Melchior Hefe (1716-1794). The square marked by the Episcopal Palace, the Cathedral, the Seminar (a student hostel today) and the Eölbei-house opposite them enshrine the memory of the grandiose era of constructions at the end of the 18th century. These late baroque style buildings sign the core historic centre of Szombathely.

THE EPISCOPAL PALACE

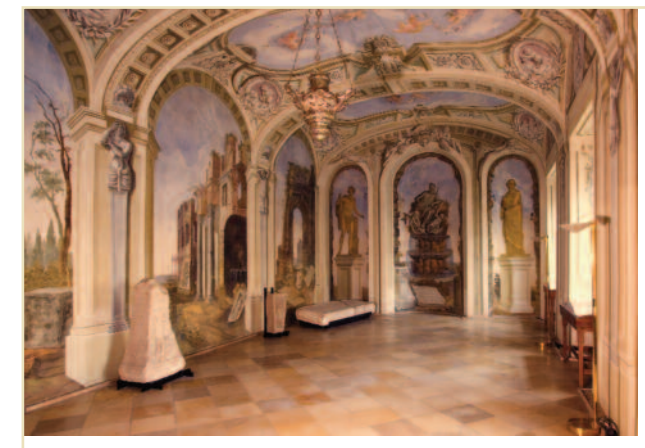
The Episcopal Palace is one of the most beautiful Hungarian historic buildings of the late baroque, the so-called ponytail style. The outer splendour of the two-storey, U-shaped building is combined with its inner embellishment and furnishing. Out of the smaller and bigger chambers of the residence on the first floor the great chamber particularly stands out to delight one's eyes with its impressive size, frescos and furniture. The grisaille pictures of the great chamber, which depict the history of Savaria and the frescos on the ceiling were made by Franz Anton Maulbertsch (1724-1796), who was an excellent painter of the late baroque, early romantic style. Blessed Charles IV stayed in the Palace as a guest several times.



SALA TERRENA

During the construction works of the diocese buildings a great number of stonework remains of the ancient town of Savaria were excavated, which used to be exhibited in the ornamental garden that only existed then and in the Sala Terrena, the hall on the ground floor, in the north axis of the Episcopal Palace. The room of the Sala Terrena was the first archeological exhibition room (lapidarium) in 1784, whose frescos were painted by István Dorffmaister (appr.1725-1797). At the end of the 19th century the hall was under the control of the Archeological Society in Vas County, and then it was closed after the bombardment against Szombathely on 4th March, 1945. After several decades it was

reopened for visitors in 1990 following the necessary reconstruction works. In the following year new rooms



were opened to enlarge the museum where a generous treasury collection was exhibited. On the walls of the Sala Terrena besides some mythological personalities you can see the painted architectural compositions of the ancient Rome: the Triumphal Arch of Titus and the Porta Maggiore, according to Piranesi prints. The parts of the buildings recall the era and the settings from which the exhibits are originated. On the painted walls the stone remains of the ancient Savaria can be depicted in scale relations. There are some original stone remains standing in front of the artefacts painted more than two hundred years ago.

THE CATHEDRAL

Our Cathedral is standing between the Episcopal Palace and the Student Hostel of the Diocese (once seminar) making an artificial unit together. The church was erected in honour of Our Lady. Its basis forms a Latin cross, as for its style, it is neoclassical baroque. The façade is straddled by two slim towers. The outer façade is proportioned by four Tuscan and four Ionic pillars. On the pillars there are the statues of Moses, St. John the Baptist, St. Peter and St. Paul Apostles. They and the statues inside the church on the side of the main altar were made by master sculptor Philipp Prokop (1740-1814). The woman sitting above the

pillars is holding a chalice (faith), the children have a hook (hope) and a cross (love). As far as its measurements are concerned, the Cathedral is the third biggest church in Hungary after the one in Esztergom and Eger, seating 5000 people. This monumental neoclassic baroque building was erected between 1791 and 1797. Its measurements (including the walls): its length is 78.7 meters (258.2 feet), the width of the transept is 38 metres (124.67 feet), and the width of the nave is 24 metres (78.74 feet). Its height inside is 27.18 metres (89.17 feet), its outer height including the towers up to the tip of the cross is 62.5 metres (205.05 feet). The original ceiling pictures were painted by Josef Winterhalder (1743-1807) and Anton Spreng (1770-1845). Unfortunately they were destroyed in the bombardment affecting Szombathely, but the archive photos in the museum make it possible to admire their past beauty. Out of the original altar pictures (I. Dorffmaister, A. Maulbertsch, and A. Spreng) some entirely and some partially were damaged, the latter were managed to be restored. On the two sides of the nave there are 3-3 semi-circularly closing side-chapels. The pictures on the altars here on the right on the northern side: St. Theresa from Lisieux (Masa Feszty), King St. Stephen (I. Dorffmaister), Jesus' Heart (István Takács). On the left on the southern side: Martyr St. Sebastian, St. John of Nepomucky (both by A. Spreng), St. John the Baptist with Jesus (I. Dorffmaister). The picture in the side-chapel on the right of the transept depicts St. Martin (A. Maulbertsch), the



patron saint of the diocese, who was born in the ancient Savaria in approximately 316 AD. The saint's relic bones are held in the St Martin herm on the altar. St. Quirinus is remembered by the side chapel next to the vestry-room (A. Maulbertsch). During the early Christian era St. Quirinus died a martyr in Savaria in about 303. Four oil pictures of the size of 4 metres times 4 metres (13.12 feet) can be seen in the transept and which were painted by Ádám Kisléghi Nagy on the main events of Blessed Virgin Mary's life. The main altar picture to be seen today is the Visitation by István Takács. The canon stalls were made in 1807, the Episcopal throne in 1810. The vestry-room opens from the southern transept with the capitular and parochial vestry-rooms. The partially new organ was consecrated in 1999, being 12 metres (39.37 feet) high, it has 4500 pipes and it is equipped by 54 registers and 3 manuals. In the crypt below the church one can find the burial places of the bishops and canons.

THE MADONNA CHAPEL

The Madonna chapel opens from the northern transept, it is the only sacred area of the church that has been intact and was not destroyed during the



war. The Venetian sculptor Romanelli carved the copy of the statue of the Madonna of Sixtine (Raffaello) placed here out of Carrara marble. The statue was placed in the apse in 1928, which is the source of the name of the chapel. On the right of the altar Raphael

guarding angel and Tobias, on the left the guardian angel and his favourites can be seen. On the ceiling the scene of the Last Judgement can be seen that is J. Winterhalder's only remaining piece (1800). The master's signature can be depicted above the entablature on the left of the entrance. The picture above the door refers to the history of the Cathedral Chapter of Vasvár-Szombathely: in the middle there is the one on the establishment of the cathedral Chapter, on the left the first centre in Vasvár, on the right the townscape of Szombathely. According to the decision of the parliament in 1578 the Cathedral Chapter was removed here.

THE DIOCESE LIBRARY

Bishop Szily offered his private collection of books for the Cathedral in 1791. He designated the place for them to be the building of the Seminar and not the church. The collection then was placed on the second floor so not only seminarists and their teachers but the local civilians could also make use of it. The terms of the use of the library only allowed use on the spot. This way the first bibliotheca of the town was born, where a monk-librarian ensured the services. Fresco embellishments by István Dorffmaister decorate the ceilings of the library and the readers' room. On the ceiling of the bigger room you can discover the figures of the four great western Fathers of the Church: Pope Great Saint Gregory, Pope Saint Augustine, Pope Saint Ambrose and Pope Saint Jerome. The name and function of the building has changed meanwhile, today it is the Diocese Dormitory. The name of the library has also been modified several times, the adjunct Cathedral was replaced by the Seminar, today it is known as the Diocese Library. In 1884 during Kornél Hidasy's episcopacy the small library placed in the Dorffmaister hall could not hold the ever growing



collection, so a new, baroque style room was created in the place of the present one on the first floor. At the same time the building of the Seminar was also enlarged. Ferenc Storno and his son were in charge of painting the big hall with the loft (1885). On the ceiling the most appropriate personalities were painted: Socrates, Saint Paul Apostle, Pope Great Saint Gregory and Moses. The most precious parts of the collection are 16 codices of the Middle Ages and 96 incunabula, which were purchased by Szily. Some old prints, manuscripts and unique copies make the library generous, which

prides itself on a detailed collection of periodicals and a unique special collection called Herzan Library as well.



Written by Mrs Katalin Simon Horváth
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Places to visit:

Diocese Museum:

from 2nd May to 30th September; from Tuesday to Saturday: open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; closed on festive occasions.

Tel.: (94) 317-929, E-mail: muzeum@martinus.hu

Diocese Library: by prearrangement,

Tel: 94/509-763, E-mail: konyvtar@martinus.hu

Cathedral

Information available at the address of the museum.