

The History of the Church of Jarek

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(Source: Batschki Jarek. J. Schmidt et al, Werbas, 1937 (p. 105 ff)

In the first years after its settlement, Jarek had neither a church nor a pastor. In 1790 Pastor Johann Gets was appointed. Unfortunately he died only six years later.

The first house of God in the village of Jarek was erected in 1791 by the so-called "Kameral" authority and did not differ in any way from the other houses in the village. It consisted of air-dried bricks and was 10 klafters long and 3.5 klafters wide. It was situated in the place of the later churchyard at the crossing of the Hauptgasse (Main Lane) and the Kreuzgasse (Cross Lane). Beside it a simple bell tower for the Josef's bell, a present form Emperor Josef, was built.

It can be assumed that the other church utensils were also presents offered by the 'Kameral' authority, though no documents concerning them have been preserved. The chapel was equipped with the following objects: "1 pulpit, 1 altar, 1 gilded chalice, 1 gilded plate for the hosts, 1 tin baptismal font and pitcher, 1 Hostieneise (host iron), 1 crucifix, moreover all the clerical garments and cloths".

In 1807 already the parish procured a further bell at its own expense, which weighed 445 pounds and had been produced by a bell founder at Karlovac.

Very soon the modest chapel became too small for the growing population of the village and was in a dilapidated state, too. From 1802 to 1818 the population more than doubled and amounted to 892 persons. At that time the construction of a new church was due to a very courageous decision and reflected very great confidence and faith in God.

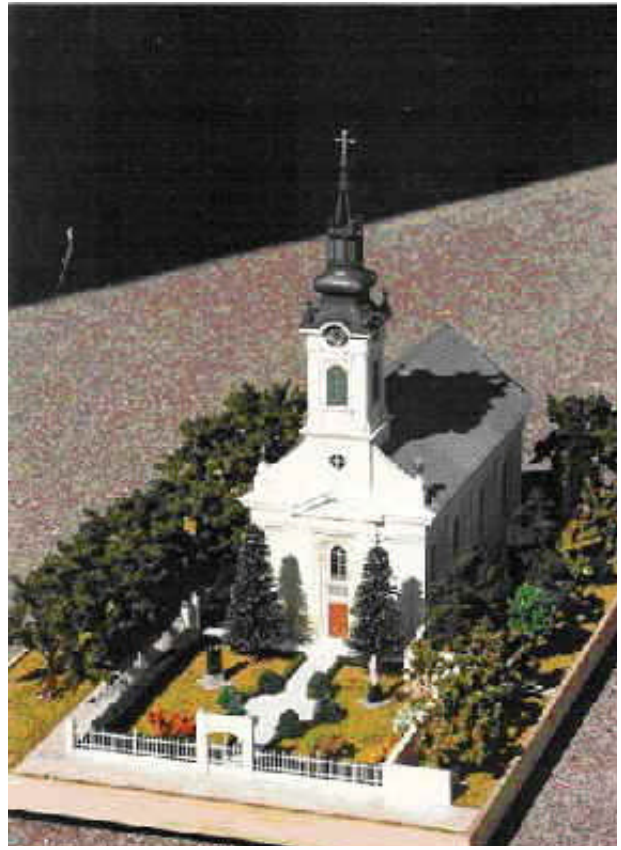
In order to get enough money for the construction of a church, the landowner Count Szechenji suggested that each farmer plant rape on the sixth part of his fields and to deliver the profits to the count. He saved the money for the construction of the church, which was insufficient of course. So all the inhabitants were expected to make more sacrifices for the church, above all perform a lot of work during the construction.

The church was built in late Baroque style and was 18 klafters long, 6 klafters and 4 feet wide, and the tower was **21** klafters and 4 feet high. (1 Vienna klafter is 1.89 m.) The construction costs amounted to 5,550 guldens. In the "contract" printed in the "Heimatbuch": "Wie die Aehren im Wind" (by Schmidt Michael et al, Weinheim 1975) on page 163, the conditions are exactly listed.

The church was built by Mathias Gröhlich from Novi Sad. It had to be finished by 1825, and the master bricklayer vouched his total property for the completion of the church "together with the decoration and embellishment".



The church of Jarek (from the Hauptgasse (Main Lane) with the large gate and the beautiful wrought iron enclosure..



Model of the church of Jarek (made by Franz Fuderer +) with the Luther Monument on the right and the Ancestors' Monument on the left.

In the beginning the interior decoration was rather modest. Probably the church was whitewashed within and without. According to oral legend the count had donated the altar; the other utensils had been transferred from the old chapel. On the Sunday "after Gallus", i. e. the third Sunday in October, 1823, the two bells called the inhabitants of Jarek to take part in the consecration of their beautiful new church, which had been built in the record time of exactly one year. Pastor Johann Korossy, Sr., Pastor Gets' successor, gave the consecration sermon. Above the main entrance there was the inscription: "Soli Deo Gloria", ("glory to God in the highest alone").

That did not prevent the looters in the year of the revolution, 1848, (Link) when the whole village was burnt down, from invading the church, dashing the altar and the pulpit to pieces, smashing the pews and robbing and carting away the bells from the tower.

Our ancestors' faith and willingness to make sacrifices were stupendous, when two years after the 'Ausreiss' ('escape') they returned to their totally destroyed village and started cleaning the devastated interior of their church and clearing away the debris of the altar and pulpit.

Pastor Johann Korossy Jr., who had succeeded his father in 1842, consecrated the church. In 1857 the bells were discovered at Karlovac and taken back again. Until 1868

a sum of 1,350 guildens consisting of private donations was collected to finance the altar and pulpit. Both were erected by the sculptor Kister from Novi Sad and remained in good condition until the destruction of the church in 1946. At the same time the acquisition of the organ was envisaged which was actually purchased for 3,200 guildens two years later. If you consider that the villagers had to take out a big loan for the reconstruction of their houses, which they could only pay off with difficulty, (Link) this achievement was immense.

In the course of time the bells were damaged and were to be replaced, respectively founded anew. Again there were magnanimous donators, the church inspector Michael Lenhardt and his wife Dorothea nee Krumm, who finally, in 1912, presented the parish with three new bells for 3,106 crowns. But these bells were to render service for a few years only. In the November of 1916 the biggest and the smallest bell were confiscated by the military, and no sooner than in 1923 could these bells be replaced. They were solemnly consecrated by the fourth pastor of Jarek, Peter Wack, Sr. (1824 - 1928).

Towards the end of the 19th century already the villagers had become wealthy and started redecorating the interior of the church. Until then it had been whitewashed inside since the restoration after the destruction. Now an oil painting of 9.5 square meters was installed above the altar, which showed the institution of the Lord's Supper. It had been produced by an Italian painter. On the right and on the left side the walls in the round arches were decorated by two paintings showing Luther and Melanchthon. In 1902 the church was consecrated again by Pastor Peter Wack.



*The interior of the church
after the redecoration of 1902.*

*(Illustration: Cover of the book
“Jarek in Gegenwart und
Geschichte” (“Jarek at Present
and in History”) by Rosi Amthor)*

In the following years money was collected for a wrought-iron enclosure of the churchyard. One year later, in 1912, the curator Georg Reichert and his wife donated the Luther Monument in remembrance of their deceased daughter Theresia. It was made of terracotta in life-size and placed on a cast stone pedestal 1.20 m. high. A year afterwards a small patch with box trees was arranged round the monument.



Present were at the 1912 unveiling of the Luther Monument:

*(from left to right:)
 Pastor Peter Wack,
 notary Ewinger,
 inspector Johann Lenhardt,
 the donator Georg Reichert,
 treasurer Sebele and
 teacher Wilhelm Heinz.*

In the course of the following years great sums were invested in the restoration of the tower and in roofing work, and the exterior was white washed. In 1923, when the centenary of the church tower was solemnly celebrated, the church radiated in all its glory. The interior of the church was also continuously embellished with many further donations.

The dead of World War I were commemorated by a marble plaque placed in the interior of the church with the 85 names of all the villagers killed in action. It was unveiled in 1927. Electric current was also installed in the church. In 1935 the donated chandeliers were connected to the power supply network. (In the village electric current had been installed in 1922.)

The consecration of the "Ancestors' Monument" in the churchyard in 1937.



Before erecting the Ancestors' Monument the Luther Monument had been removed from the centre of the small patch lined by box trees to the right under the trees. Then the Ancestors' Monument was placed opposite on the left side. (The speaker is unknown.)



Close-up of the "Ancestors' Monument"

The crowning event in the arrangement of the churchyard was finally the erection of the Ancestors' Monument made of black marble. It was also financed by donations. At the 150th anniversary in 1937 it was meant to commemorate the 80 settler families who had come from Ruma to Jarek in 1787 (*“Link to: Winter at Ruma”*). On its upper part it was decorated on all sides by the arms of the village, the pelican, the ploughshare and the coulter. The pelican is a symbol of the many sacrifices the villagers had to make again and again in the course of their history. With the help of the ploughshares and their unremitting diligence they had nevertheless managed to obtain such good crops on the fertile soil of the Pannonian Lowlands that in the end they were able to establish a solid existence after all the setbacks in the century before.

Pastor Jakob Wallrabenstein (*“Link to: The pastors of Jarek”*), who was born at Jarek and, inter alia, worked at Bethel, explained the arms in the booklet commemorating the 150th anniversary by the following poem (loc. cit. p. 181):



*There are three pictures on the arms:
The bleeding pelican nourishing its child,
The coulter and the ploughshare
As symbols of hard work indeed.
Self-sacrificing love and hard work
Were above all our ancestors' virtues.
And shall remain ours forever.*



*These three pictures are from the Jarek memorial at the Jarek site at the entrance of the cemetery of our sponsoring community Beuren. (Germany/Baden-Württemberg). The first picture shows the emblem of the community Jarek on the back side of the stone. On the left side of the memorial stone you can see a plough-coulter (**“Sech”**) and on the right side there is a plough (**“Schar”**). The pelican was the heraldic emblem of the community of Jarek. (He is spreading his wings tutelary over his offspring and this bird even feeds his young with his own blood in hard times.)*

The inhabitants of Jarek had indeed every reason for celebrating. And so there was a great festivity with the participation of all the villagers and of course the friends and relatives from the neighbouring villages, too. As a result of ancestor research relatives had been found in Germany, who had now come to Jarek for a visit in great numbers. Pastor Franz Morgenthaler, Jr. gave the solemn sermon. He had finally become his father's successor in 1935 after Pastor Haas had served as vacancy pastor for more than a year. As the successor of Peter Wack (1884 - 1928) his father had been the pastor of Jarek for six years only, from 1928 to 1934. He was from Jarek. His son was not granted to be pastor of Jarek for more than 8 Years. He died in 1943 at the age of only 34 years.

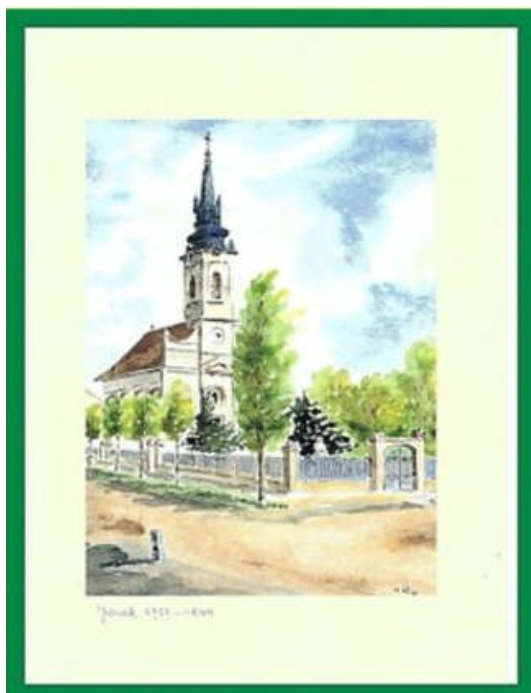
The events of World War II did not spare the villagers, and beside the marble plaque with the names of the soldiers killed in action in World War I the wall was slowly filled with the pictures of the victims of the new war and a list of their names.

In the fateful year 1944 the history of the Danube Swabian village of Jarek should finally come to an end. When on October 6 and 7 the villagers left their beautiful community in several treks, the teacher Wilhelm Heinz played "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" ("A Mighty Fortress Is Our God") and many other old and familiar hymns on the organ. On their sad way out of the village the people looked at the church-tower again and again, until it finally disappeared. For 157 years full of strokes of fate they and their forefathers had found help and solace in that house of God, which represented a symbol of their village. But none of them thought he would never see it again, for hope is the last to die. But none of them saw the church again, as it was blown up by the partisans in 1946. When entering the village in 1944, the Russians and the partisans are said to have shot at the Luther Monument, which they took for a Hitler statue.

Two years later, when the church was finally destroyed, the fugitives were dispersed all over the world. Many years passed, until the first risked going "home" again and they were shocked to find a supermarket in the place of the church, which is still there today.

Unfortunately there are no really good pictures of the church left. The model made by Franz Fuderer gives an idea of its former beauty. The picture of the Luther Monument is taken from the 'Heimatbuch'. The water colour below was painted in 1948. However, the once beloved house of God will forever remain in the memories and hearts of the people from Jarek.

(Source: Batschki Jarek. J Schmidt et al, Werbas, 1937 (p. 105 ff))



This picture from the church in Jarek was painted a few years after the Second World War. .

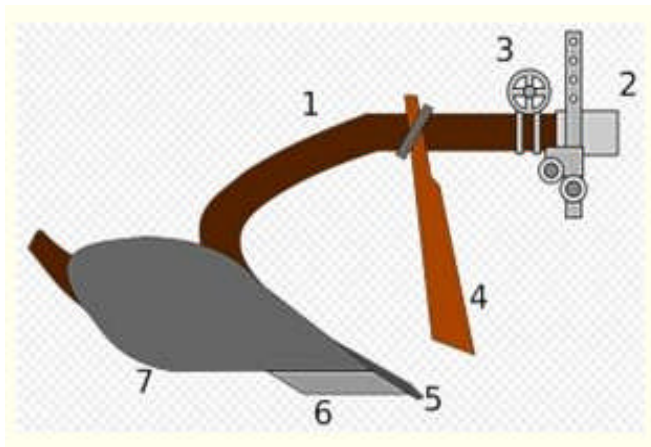
The artist is regrettable unknown.

But surely "he" or "she" came from Jarek and surely had a good childhood, youth and many wonderful years, until the banishment and the flight of all people from Jarek in October 1944.

The explanation of "Sech" and "Schar", the cutting components of a plough:

The "Sech" (also called plough-"Sech", plough-knife, taper tap or peeler) is the component of a plough (4), which is vertical cutting the farmland ahead the ploughshare. In former times the "Sech" often looks like a long curved knife. Since the Middle Ages in Europe mostly a plough is equipped with a "Sech". This was an important advancement of the fieldwork, because the tensile strength of the plough become lower and the furrows on the fields get to be deeper, more exact and straighter.

The "Schar" (ploughshare) is the cutter of a plough and is cutting the farmland before the mouldboard turns the earth. Mostly on top of the "Schar" there is added a chisel (5), which provides the cutting of the "Schar".



Components of a simple drawn plough:

- 1** - frame
- 2** - the three point connection
- 3** - height regulator
- 4** - knife (or coulter) > **"Sech"**
- 5** - chisel
- 6** - ploughshare > **"Schar"**
in former times **5** and **6**
together built the **"Schar"**