

Summary

MICHAŁ PIECZKA / St. Martin Church in Barkowo near Żmigród – current state of knowledge, analysis and value

The article deals with the complex history of the place and the circumstances of raising St. Martin Church in Barkowo near Żmigród. The author, however, focuses foremost on analysing and interpreting artistic phenomena related to the object. The architecture and furnishing of St. Martin church come as the crucial question amidst the author's considerations being a fairly interesting example of Late Baroque sacral architecture from the area of the borderline between Silesia and Greater Poland. The church was raised in the years 1783-1787 within the domain of von Hatzfeldt family most probably as the foundation of the bishop of Wrocław Anton Ferdinand von Rothkirch-Panthen. Still it is not known who was its architect as there are no archival records referring directly to the act of building the church.

St. Martin Church in Barkowo is an oriented, elongated, one-aisle building which was raised on a rectangular plan with an ellipse inscribed inside it. It consists of a nave, a narrower presbytery with a semi-circular termination and a high square tower with a bell-shaped helm. A rare in Silesia two-layer scheme was applied in the church construction. It comes from the difference between the exterior view of a rectangular structure and the oval interior. The nave inside was covered with a slightly flattened dome supported by massive pillars that constitute a baldachin system. It comes as a frequent element in a repertoire of the Dientzenhofers' architectural language.

A special attention should be paid to a rich and almost completely preserved Late Baroque and Rococo furnishing of the church deriving from around 1790. It is constituted by a non-architectural main altar, twin side altars, a pulpit of an elegant form and a baptismal font, rich in its architectural and sculptural decoration. Besides, a Late Baroque sculpture group of St. Martin with a beggar is situated in the church. The furnishing is completed by objects deriving from the previous, not preserved, St. Martin church. These are: a Gothic figure of Pietá from ca. 1400, a Late Gothic sculpture of Crucified Christ and a Gothic bell from 1474, the latter discovered by the author in the church tower.

Therefore the temple comes as a fairly valuable, both historically and artistically, example of a Late Baroque village church of Lower Silesia. As such, St. Martin Church in Barkowo richly deserves the attention of not only specialised researchers but also broader circles of art lovers. Eventually the church inscribes in a significant way into a cultural landscape of Lower Silesia as a precious monument of sacral architecture of the region.