

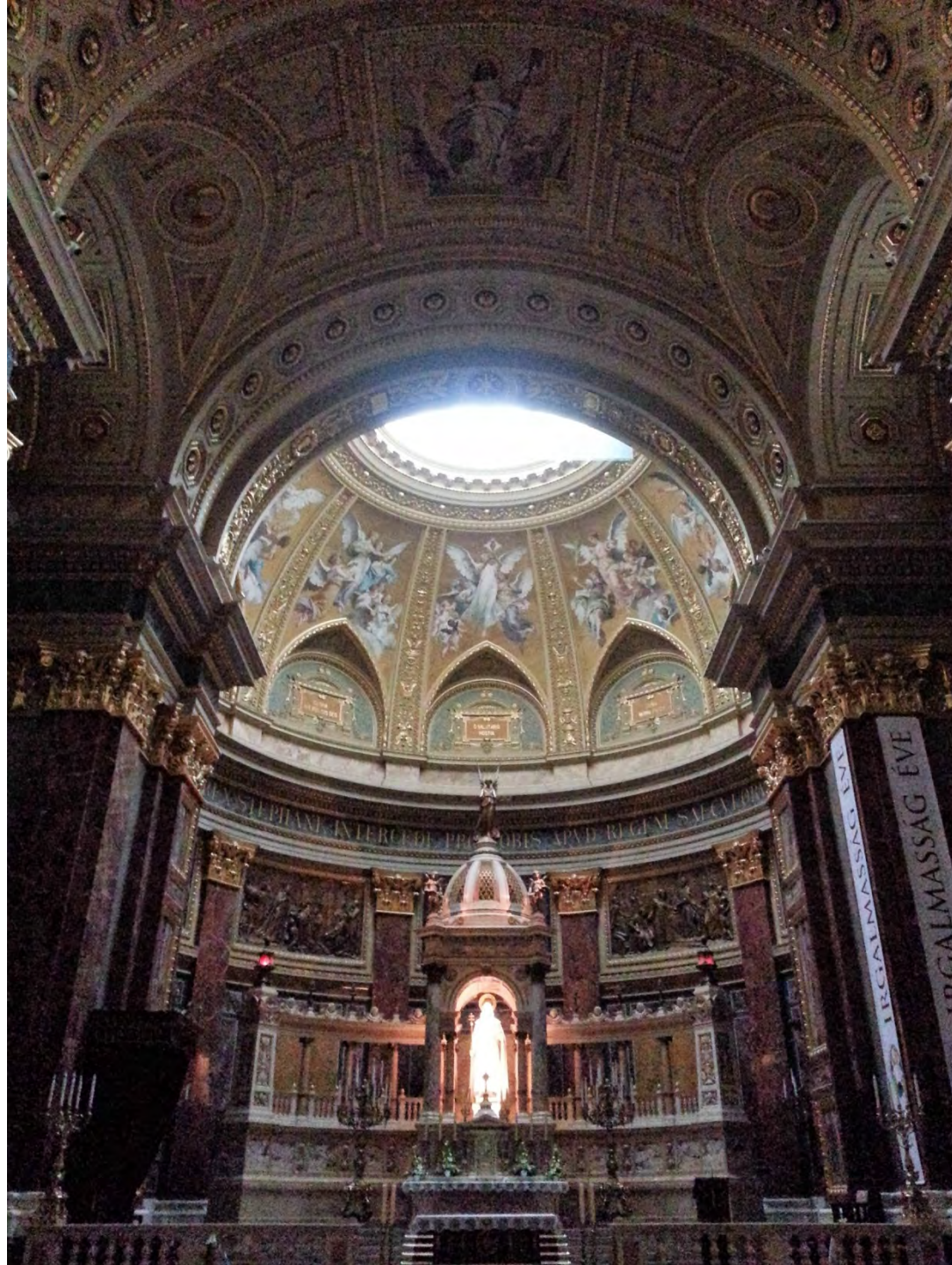
BUDAPEST
ST. STEPHEN'S BASILICA

St. Stephen's Basilica, the **largest church** in Budapest, is dedicated to Hungary's first king, St. Stephen. About 8 500 people can get in the beautiful Neoclassical cathedral at the same time.

The church is named after Saint Stephen I of Hungary, the first King of Hungary (c. 975–1038), whose "incorruptible" right hand is said to be housed in the reliquary.

The architectural style is Neo-Classical; it has a Greek cross ground plan. The façade is anchored by two large bell towers. In the southern tower is Hungary's biggest bell, weighing over 9 tonnes (8.9 long tons; 9.9 short tons). Its predecessor had a weight of almost 8 tonnes (7.9 long tons; 8.8 short tons), but it was used for military purposes during World War II.

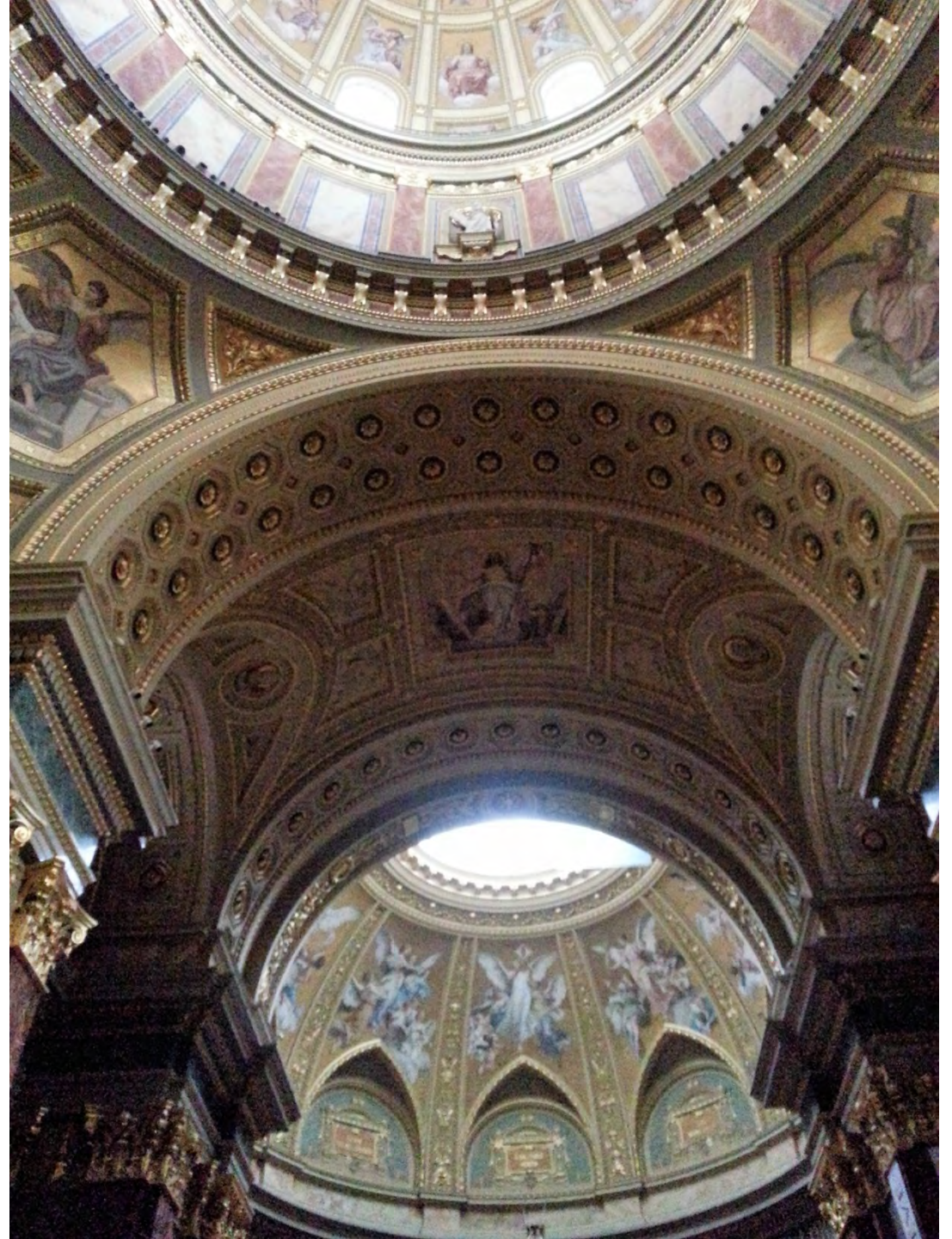


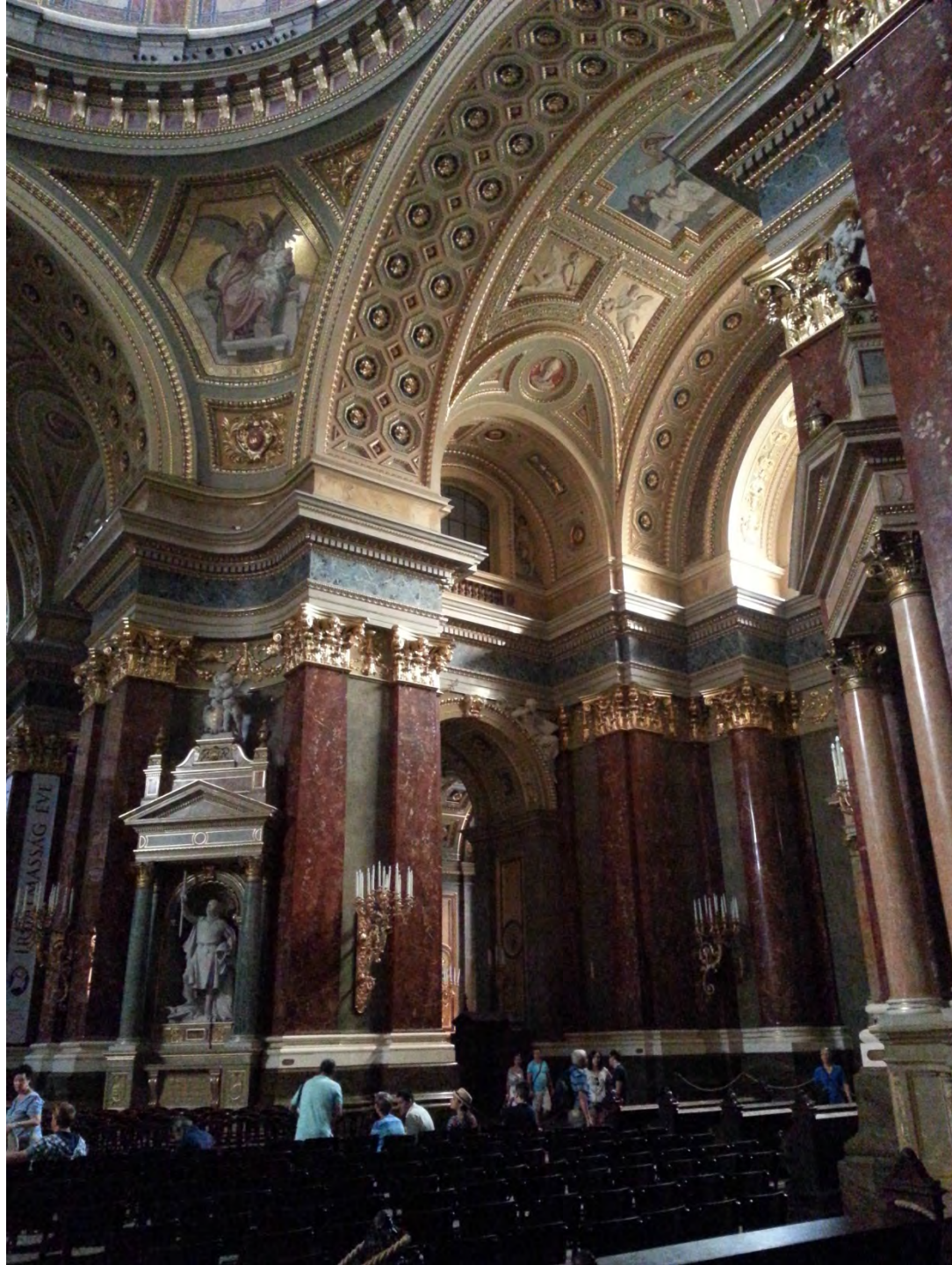




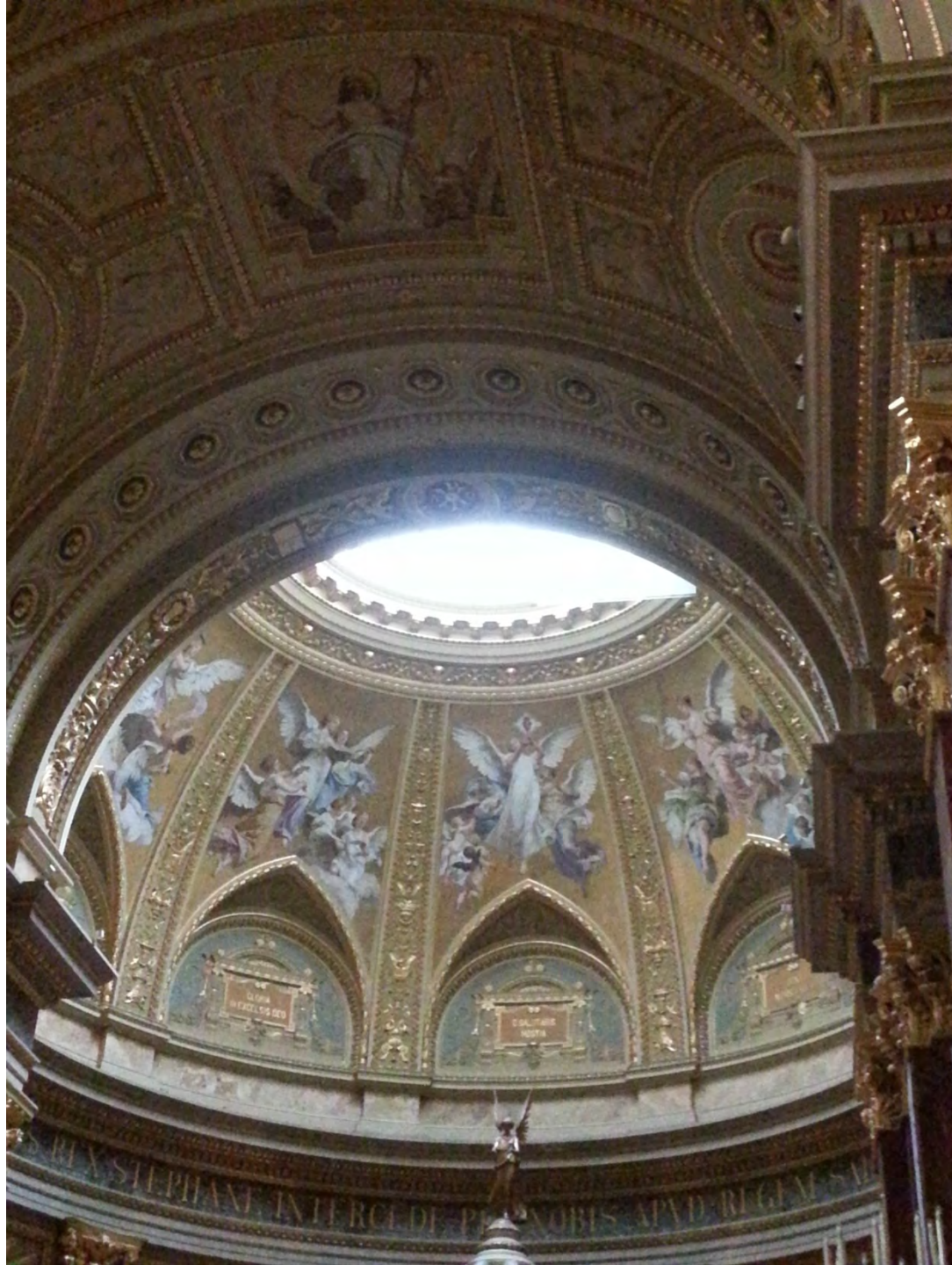












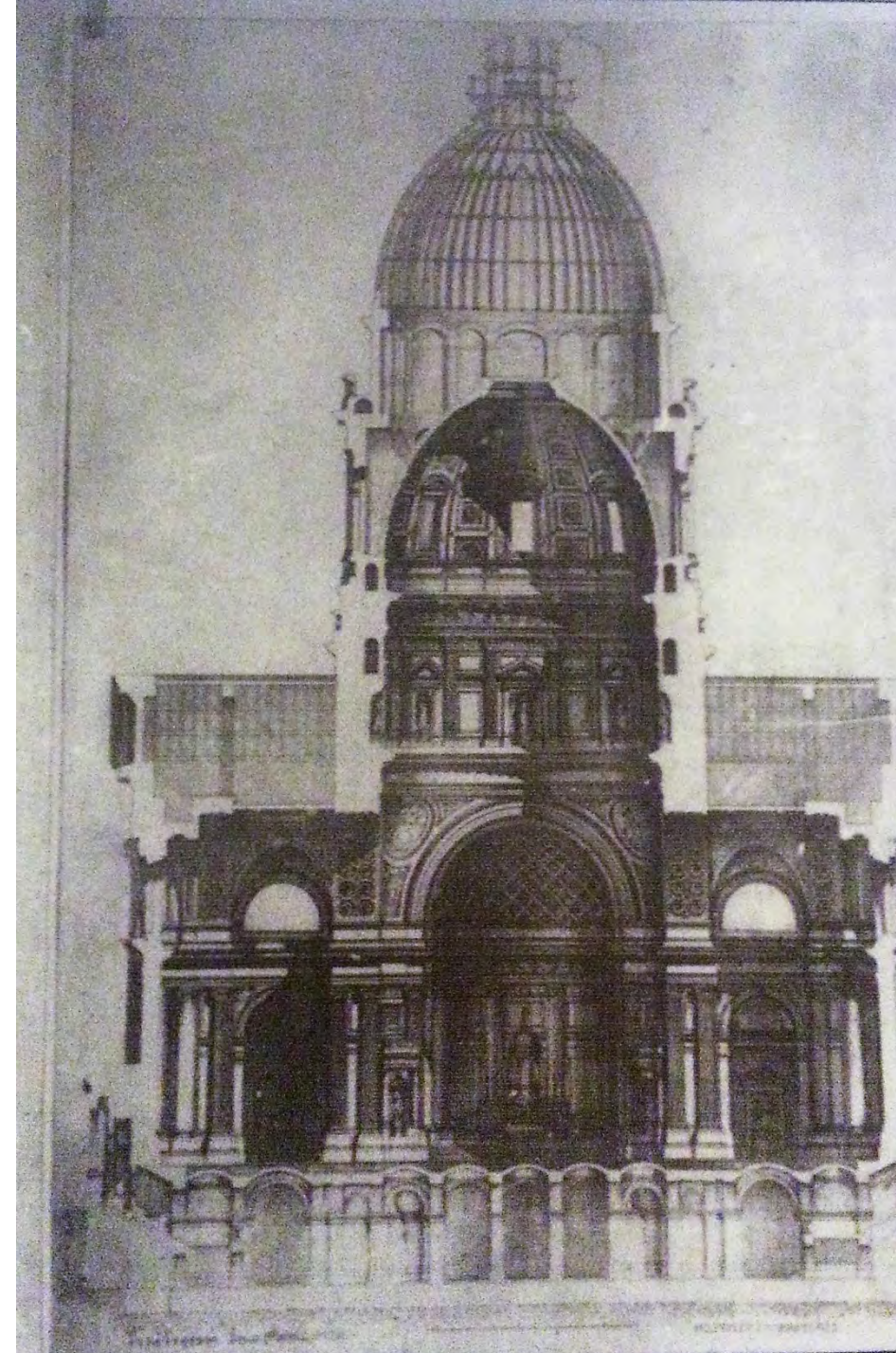


A beomlás utáni első alaprajz, vörössel jelölve az újjáépítendő részek, 1868. *First layout plan after the fell-in, red parts showing the parts to be reconstructed, 1868.*

Nagy Bazilika-terv sorozat, fő- és hátsó homlokzat, keresztmetszet. 1874. BFL
The Great Cathedral-series, main and back facade, cross-section. 1874. BFL



Távlati kép az 1874-es tervről a szentély felől. Schickedanz Albert akvarellje. BTM, Kiscelli Múzeum
Perspective from the direction of the shrine in 1874, aquarell of Albert Schickedanz. BTM, Museum of Kiscell



THE HISTORY OF THE ST. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL'S BUILDING

The part of the city where the St. Stephen's cathedral is standing has only begun to be built upon in the 18th century. It was planned with an orderly street structure, and even in the first plans they left a big space for the cathedral.

In 1845 József Hild (1789-1867), the greatest architect of Pest's classicism, created the first plans for the church, commissioned by the city of Pest. He imagined a building with a central layout, with towers and a dome, in which the vestry would be in the back of the semi-circular shrine and the chapel. The construction begun in 1851, based on somewhat modified plans. In 1861, the place of the vestry was consecrated and used as a temporary temple, until the finishing of the cathedral.

After the death of József Hild, the greatest architect of historicism in Budapest, Miklós Ybl (1814-1891) continued with the construction. In 1868 January 22, not long after the death of Hild, when the construction only got to the ledge of the dome, a part of the church fell in. The fell-in was based on several different causes. Presumably the quality of the building material was not good enough; the workers completed the masonry-work at the dome's supporting spandrel erroneously; and also Hild wanted to build a higher dome than in the original plans. The reason behind this was that the height of the buildings around the cathedral were growing very fast.

After the fell-in, the construction paused for long years. In 1874 Miklós Ybl could devise the new plans, and in 1875, they begun the reconstruction. Ybl gradually reworked the classicist plans of Hild, and created a monumental neorenaissance architecture. He was considering the shape of the dome for a long time, and the final solution only came to him around 1885. The dome was finished in 1889. When Miklós Ybl died in 1891, he left a complete work behind, the outer facade, the towers, the dome and the inner space were all finished.

The designer and overseer of the temple's ornamental works was József Kauser (1848-1919). The adornment of the inner space was created during his time, and the iconographical program of provost priest Lénárd Lollok took place in this time also. In 1898, the city got permission to devote the cathedral instead of the original patron saint, Austrian Saint Lipót, to Saint Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian state. The mosaics of the church, that can be seen in the dome, the spandrel, the girth and the shrine, are showing motifs taken from the Catholic Church's iconography, while the statues in the shrine and at the pillars of the dome are commemorating the saints of the Hungarian Catholic Church, like Saint Stephen, Saint Ladislav, Saint Elizabeth of House Árpád. In this cathedral, the christianism of the west admits the Hungarian church, with its king-saints, history, and country devoted to the celestials as an oyster admits a pearl.

After the consecration of the cathedral the high mass was celebrated by the archbishop of Kalocsa, Gyula Várossy, in 1905 November 19. The first mass of the parish was celebrated by provost priest Lénárd Lollok in 1905 November 20.

Architectural drawing of the dome of St. Stephen's Cathedral, Budapest, 1889. The drawing is a reproduction of the original drawing. The drawing is a reproduction of the original drawing. The drawing is a reproduction of the original drawing.