

STYLISTIC CHANGES IN CONTEMPORARY SACRED ARCHITECTURE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE IDEOLOGICAL AND ARTISTIC TRENDS PREVAILING AT THE TIME (1971–2000)

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Summary

The phenomenon of transformation in shaping the architecture of churches, observed in Poland after 1970, remains as fascinating as it is unusual. Despite the great crisis in the field of religious architecture, the latter presents a wealth of original and innovative architectural and functional solutions. A radical change in the conditions in which ecclesial investors had to operate when undertaking the construction of temples, coupled with the political, economic and social transformations taking place on a large scale, significantly contributed to the feasibility and functioning of this architecture and the evolution of its forms. Regardless of the solutions applied, it represents a wealth of content, both ideological and material.

Keywords

stylistic changes • artistic movements • Archdiocese of Kraków • contemporary sacred architecture (1971–2000)

1. Introduction

Sacred architecture in the area of the Kraków Archdiocese in the years 1945–2000 underwent dynamic changes, adjusted to the changing socio-political situation. The phenomenon of transformation in the way of shaping the architecture of churches, which continued until late 1990s, remains as fascinating as it is unusual. Despite the great crisis in the field of religious architecture, the latter presents a wealth of original and innovative architectural and functional solutions. The latter were associated with a number of circumstances, which undoubtedly left their mark. Above all, they were under the impact of the prevailing political-economic as well as legal-social situation of Poland at the time.

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contributed to the feasibility and functioning of this architecture and the evolution of its forms. Regardless of the solutions applied, it represents a wealth of content, both ideological and material.

These buildings have enriched the architectural culture of the region and, in many cases, they have determined the planning direction and systems of the city or the area where they were constructed [Gil-Mastalerczyk 2013].

2. Sacred architecture in the Kraków Diocese: 1970–2000 (Figs 1–10)

In the sacred architecture of the 1970s and 1980s, we see a fundamental change in the aesthetic and intellectual terms, compared to the previous realisations. Suddenly, there is an inflow of information from abroad. The most current ideological and artistic movements can be seen. The architecture designed in this period is in no way inferior to the architecture anywhere else in the world. Intellectual quality remains high, and the projects represent a consistent continuation of the aesthetics. The only delays are caused by practical and technological difficulties, and limited access to contemporary engineering and construction craft – due to the precarious economic situation in the country [Gil-Mastalerczyk 2013].

The guidelines of Vatican II, especially the renewal of the liturgy, resulted in full acceptance of the contemporary artistic trends and currents. Emerging pluralistic trends were immediately used and accepted by the Church, furthermore, this happened even before the recommendations of the conciliar. M.E. Rosier-Siedlecka notes: 'It is an interesting fact that the reaction to the new theological tendencies happened in church construction almost instantaneously – they were taken into account in some projects already before the Council, which means that some issues, novelties, and sometimes also, some severe perceptions and calls for renewal – existed in the Church many years before Vatican II. The Council revealed and organised that exuberant dynamism – which was sometimes perhaps a little anxious, but which also testified to the eternal youth of the Church (...). The changing mentality, which opened the field to diversity and exploration, is a positive fact, as a more mature stage in the life of the Church' [Rosier-Siedlecka 1979, 125, 8].

In view of the on-going social changes and the provisions of the council, the search for new architectural solutions, other than the existing traditional types of temples, was initiated. Plurality of spatial forms and architectural solutions seems to have become an important feature of church construction [Rosier-Siedlecka 1979, 125, 8]. Therefore, in the architectural solutions of the churches built in 1970s and 1980s, we note the distinctive individuality of forms, each of which requires appropriate reflection on the new organization of space – also in line with the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council.

A breakthrough example of such work – not only on the scale of the Kraków Archdiocese, but the whole Poland – implementing the provisions of the conciliar functional solutions, is the 'Lord's Ark' church in Nowa Huta. Due to the materials used, the configuration of the architectural forms, the aesthetics, and the use of new

technologies that produced the open-space within, this is justly considered the first modern, post-conciliar religious building of the Cracovian and Polish Catholic Church.

In the years 1971–1989, the architecture of churches was marked by late modernism, and much later by postmodernism, sculptural architecture movement, and the most representative, symbolic movement – particularly evident in the external forms of churches, and also in the elements and features of the interior. Also present are the trends of new geometry, high technology, and the influences of historicism, expressionism and deconstruction (for instance, in the buildings of the Resurrectionist Order in Kraków's Zakrzówek, see Figure 6).

The stylistic development of religious architecture, in the early 1970s, felt a significant impact of the changing political and economic situation of the country. Ewa Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich wrote: 'Breaking the monopoly of mass, collectivised construction, opening the possibility for the creation of small companies and cooperatives using their own resources and bank loans, new laws regarding the organization of the project design and implementation, the emergence of individual architects' offices and private companies in the sphere of construction materials production – all these combined to create favourable conditions for the reception of new aesthetic patterns of postmodernism, and facilitated their assimilation in the Polish architecture of the 1980s' [Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich 1996b, 468–469].

After 1980, we can distinguish at least two trends in the field of sacred architecture: one, strong historicist movement – referring to the past and to the forms of old, where the form takes precedence over function, dominated by the desire to restore the former importance of the sacred space (as well as opposing simplicity and regular forms of modernism); and the other, the modernity-oriented trend [Wroński 2010, 460]. In the church of St. Albert at Czyżyny Airport (Figure 5), old Gothic forms were used in a new compositional system, and received a new meaning. The solid, and the interior of the church 'impress with their classical elegance, the purity of the means of expression used, and the consistency in creating the space by subordinating it to the dominance of the sacred' [Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich 1996a, 325].

During the period of political breakthrough and transition, post-modern movement arrived in Poland. In the Kraków Diocese, it became popular after 1980 [Wroński 2010, 460]. It meant, among other things, a return to tradition, drawing inspiration from the past, as well as from the cultural and regional sources. It was not a universal phenomenon, but it carried the power of intellectual influence. The works of postmodern, symbolic architecture, presented in this paper, are characterized by a wealth of innovative and original solutions, a variety of forms and aesthetic expressions – for instance, the church of St. Jadwiga the Queen in Krowodrza in Kraków (Figure 2), the church of St. Peter the Apostle in Wadowice (Figure 3), or the Centre of Resurrectionists in Zakrzówek in Kraków (Figure 6). Many churches, with simple and geometric composition, become modern objects, albeit traditional in their form (such as the church of St. Albert in Czyżyny).

In the architecture of the churches of this period, we can see the influence of historicism, expressionism and deconstruction. That becomes particularly apparent in the

expression of sculptural shapes and architectural forms (as in the church of St. Jadwiga the Queen in Kraków's Krowodrza, or in the Resurrectionists' Centre in Kraków's Zakrzówek), but also in sculpture which dominates in the interior furnishings (as in the 'Lord's Ark' church in Nowa Huta, or the church of St. Jadwiga the Queen in Krowodrza).

Next to the sculptural church of 'Lord's Ark' in Nowa Huta, with its fancy, liquid and oval forms, another interesting example is found in the group of churches, presenting individualism of forms and using modern solutions, namely, the so-called 'tent churches'. An interesting example of a sculptural tent church – 'roof-shaped', deriving from the Gothic tradition [Olszewski 1989, 87], is a temple at Olcza in Zakopane (Figure 4) – with a strong, robust form, and perpendicular, as if soaring, tent roof surfaces. An example of the Church of strict geometrical form, and simple, monumental interior, is the church of Saint Jadwiga the Queen in Kraków. In the church of St. Peter the Apostle in Wadowice, built in the postmodern style, interesting design solutions were used in the layout of the interior – namely, in the central part of the temple, at the intersection of the nave and the transept, a *rectangular form* was designed, supported on immaterial elements – the *pillars of light*.¹ The design of the Votive Church in Wadowice is among the examples of religious architecture, in which the influence of postmodernism equipped the structure with a decorative role. The trick used by the designers – to undercut and overhang the columns – is an example of subordinating the design logic to certain mannerisms.

Implementation of a building compound of the Religious Seminary belonging to the Congregation of the Resurrectionists in Kraków is particularly striking, surprising the viewer with surreal fragments of architecture, transgressing the categories of fundamental construction principles [Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich 1996a, 328]. Innovative solutions – such as enormous, free-standing and suddenly broken off porches; huge columns that do not support anything or are suddenly broken off just above the ground; spans of screen walls, several storey high, set directly on other walls, suddenly rupturing to form the main entrance to the compound – all make a huge impression on the visitor.

It should be noted that the churches built during the years 1971–1989 represent diverse and varied architectural propositions, interdependent of different socio-political experiences and distinct stylistic assumptions. To quote an example of two very different structures, expressing completely different creative attitudes of their authors: 'Lord's Ark' in Nowa Huta, and the church of Queen Jadwiga in Krowodrza – the first belonging to the sculptural trend, and the second, representing the late modernism and High Tech stylistics. In the church of St. Queen Jadwiga, architects apply geometric forms, which are *divisible*, exemplifying the end of the modernist era, and the beginning of post-functionalism [Wroński 2010, 457–459].

¹ Light is of particular importance in this part of the temple – the light, which is also inextricably linked to the symbolism of the sanctuary. The central part of the temple (transept and choir) has received the strongest illumination. Therefore, the intersection of the nave and the transept has a *rectangular form*, and is not based on material supports, but instead, supported on the *pillars of light* [Szafer 1998, 161].

The overview of churches presented in this article, leads us to conclude that the sacred architecture of the Archdiocese of Kraków is diverse and idiosyncratic.

In the sacred architecture, designed in the years 1971–1989, we can find motifs associated with the Basilica of St. Peter's in Rome. Architectural quotation from the Vatican Basilica were used by J. and E. Gyurkovich and P. Szafer, who incorporated them into their architectural solutions at the Votive Church of St. Peter in Wadowice. The guiding principle of the urban structure and the architectural forms was to combine geometry and logic with historical layouts and symbols [Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich 1996b, 472–473].

International architectural trends also manifested themselves in the local church architecture. In the church of 'Lord's Ark' in Nowa Huta, inspiration is noted (albeit with considerable delay), of a foreign work – Le Corbusier's Ronchamp chapel. In the context of Polish architecture, this was a significant work, because it testified to the progress of architectural thought in times of mounting difficulties, and numerous obstacles to the creativity of designers.

Le Corbusier's projects, presenting a consistent continuation of the aesthetics of concrete, have also become a source of inspiration for architects – who represented the Kraków school of architecture – and who created projects using the same material. Concrete ceased to be regarded as a material with purely utilitarian characteristics; instead, it became 'a means of aesthetic expression to materialize architectural thought' [Bigaj 2006, 160–165]. Dariusz Kozłowski attributed it with soul: 'Concrete has soul – initially, this metaphorical statement carries anthropomorphic associations – when watching an architectural object made of concrete, we deal with its exteriority, looking at its 'skin' to assess the form. When our reflection or our curiosity requires an insight, an inward look, then we are able to see the power of the material, the forces running inside the structure – sometimes, moulded as the structure which is merely sensed, the system of the steel parts hidden within it. Sometimes you can see the soul of the concrete – when the shape of things reveals the only possible connection – of beauty, purpose, efficacy, durability – of the product of human imagination' [Kozłowski 2001, 5].

Dariusz Kozłowski used the raw, aesthetic values of the concrete, inherent in its nature, and introduced them into the compound of the Resurrectionist Order at Zakrzówek in Kraków, built in surreal style. The use of the material became particularly apparent in the interiors of the building – both as a construction material, and finishing material, for instance, in the form of revealed reinforced concrete casts [Kozłowski 1992, 67].

Also the church St. Jadwiga the Queen in Kraków's Krowodrza was built in the reinforced concrete structure, cast with uniformly and consistently imprinted formwork and revealing raw texture of the concrete, which provided the ascetic decoration of both the exterior walls and the interior. The church belongs to the trend of mature, late modernism [Mroczek 1991].

In the last decade of the twentieth century, a reference to the traditional patterns and sober, calm layouts (longitudinal, rectangular, and square-approximating) is often noted in church plans. Architects depart from the dynamic and sculptural forms. Return

to classical forms can be observed. There is a noticeable care for the harmonious fit of the new temples within the existing surroundings, a soft adjustment of the elevation to the immediate environment and the landscape of towns and villages. Shapes of the churches enter the environment and establish a relationship therewith (see the church of St. Adalbert in Bronowice as an example). Still, because of their size, scale and height, these buildings remain visible and dominating in the surrounding landscape.

In conclusion, we can state that the political, economic and social factors, and the transition that Poland experienced, had the tremendous impact on the development of the style of religious architecture at the time, including the form and shape of the churches of the Archdiocese of Kraków during the period of 1945–2000. The extremely difficult situation in which the Catholic Church found itself, various activities aimed at destabilizing its strength, the legal and administrative procedures restricting its freedom of action, exerted a major influence on the architecture of religious buildings.

Against the background of the conditions analysed herein, as well as contemporary ideological and artistic movements of the time, it is clear that the process of stylistic transformation is particularly highlighted in the evolution and pursuit of appropriate forms and functional programs. Occurring in subsequent periods, the systemic, economic, legal, and social transformations, clearly demonstrate and reflect the atmosphere of those times, the aesthetics of the era, and represent the real picture of religious architecture.



Photo by Gil-Mastalerczyk

Fig. 1. The church of Our Lady the Queen of Poland, so-called 'Lord's Ark' in Nowa Huta; 1967–1977, designed by Wojciech Pietrzyk



Photo by Gil-Mastalerczyk

Fig. 2. The church of Saint Jadwiga the Queen in Kraków, 1978–1988, designed by Romuald Loegler, Jacek Czekaj



Photo by Gil-Mastalerczyk

Fig. 3. The church of Saint Peter the Apostle in Wadowice, 1986–1991, designed by Jacek Gyurkovich, Ewa Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich and Przemysław Szafer



Photo by Gil-Mastalerczyk

Fig. 4. Church of Our Lady the Immaculate Revealing the Miraculous Medal in Zakopane at Olcza, 1981–1988, designed by J. Tadeusz Gawłowski, M. Teresa Lisowska-Gawłowska



Photo by Gil-Mastalerczyk

Fig. 5. Church of St. Albert Chmielowski, Kraków Nowa Huta – Czyżyny, 1986–1994, designed by Witold Cęckiewicz



Photo by Gil-Mastalerczyk

Fig. 6. Sacred compound of the Centrum Resurrectionis of the Resurrectionist Order at Zakrzówek in Kraków, 1985–1993, designed by Dariusz Kozłowski, Waław Stefański, Maria Misiągiewicz



Photo by Gil-Mastalerczyk

Fig. 7. Church of Saint Adalbert in Kraków, Osiedle Bronowickie, 1992–1997, designed by Waław Seruga, Małgorzata Boratyńska-Seruga



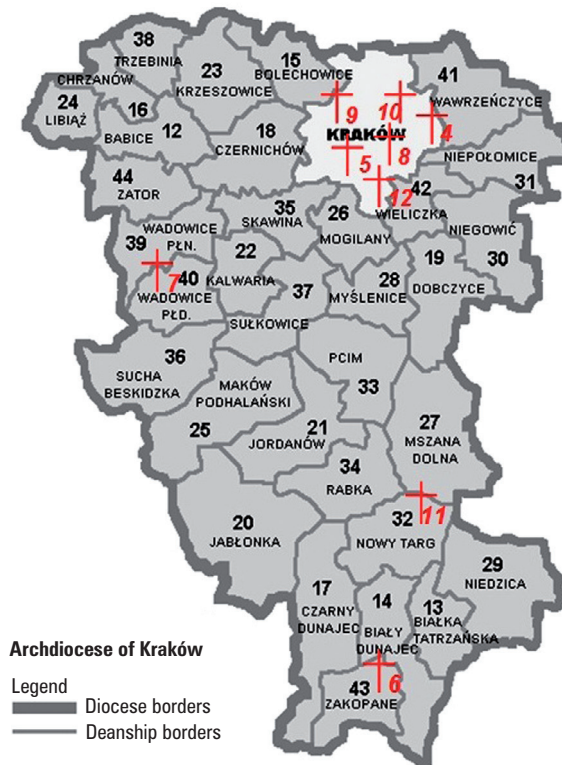
Photo by Gil-Mastalerczyk

Fig. 8. Church of the Saint Brother Albert, Nowy Targ – Niwa, 1994–1997, designed by Jerzy Głodkiewicz



Photo by Gil-Mastalerczyk

Fig. 9. Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy in Łagiewniki, Św. Faustyny 3, Kraków, 1998–2002, designed by Witold Cęckiewicz



Source: author's study

Fig. 10. Area of the Archdiocese of Kraków, divided into deanships, showing approximate locations of the discussed churches, built between 1971–2000 (according to the author's report). 4. Kraków – Nowa Huta, *NMP Królowej Polski 'Arka Pana'* [‘Lord’s Ark’ Church of Our Lady], Deanship 11, Kraków-Bieńczyce, 1967–1977; 5. Kraków – Krowodrza, *Św. Jadwigi Królowej* [Saint Jadwiga the Queen], Deanship 5, Kraków – Krowodrza, 1980–1990; 6. Zakopane – Olcza, *NMP Niepokalanej Objawiającej Cudowny Medalik* [Our Lady the Immaculate Revealing the Miraculous Medal], Deanship 43, Zakopane – Olcza, 1981–1988; 7. Wadowice, *Św. Piotra Apostoła* [Saint Peter the Apostle], Deanship 40, Wadowice Południe; 1986–1991; 8. Kraków Nowa Huta, *Św. Brata Alberta Chmielowskiego* [Saint Albert Chmielowski], Deanship 10, Kraków – Mogiła, 1986–1994; 9. Kraków – Zakrzówek, *Zespół sakralny XX. Zmartwychwstańców* [Sacred compound of the Ressurrectionist Order], Deanship 3, Kraków-Salwator, 1985–1993; 10. Kraków – Bronowice, *Świętego Wojciecha* [Saint Adalbert], Deanship 4, Kraków – Bronowice, 1992–1997; 11. Nowy Targ – Niwa, *Świętego Brata Alberta* [Saint Brother Albert], Deanship 32, Nowy Targ; 1994–1997; 12. Kraków – Łagiewniki, *Sanktuarium Bożego Miłosierdzia* [Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy], Deanship 40, Kraków – Borek Fałęcki, 1999–2002

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, it is clear that creative activity in the field of religious architecture, in the area of the Archdiocese of Kraków, from 1945 to the end of the 1990s, bears the marks of the avant-garde. Ewa Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich believes that: 'Kraków milieu has always been open to international novelties, and therefore the reception of avant-garde thought here is broad and very conscious. Visual artists are ahead of the architects. In Kraków, surrealist trends prevailed in the visual arts, both before the war (...) and in the post-war period (primarily, in the Kraków Group). Conscious choices and individual creative attitudes of the architects of the young and middle generation became significant; these artists followed current fashions and avant-garde projects in the latest world architecture, and had the ambition to keep up' [Węclawowicz-Gyurkovich 1996a, 328–329].

Absolute creative freedom after 1989 allowed for the implementation of projects devoid of aesthetic value, in a manner that clearly differs from the traditional assumptions, previously accepted as classical. Many religious buildings reveal the diverse face of modern architecture. Especially when we consider buildings constructed in 1990a, we find different paths of stylistic pursuit. It should also be noted that the total freedom of design, recovered after 1989, led in some cases to rather ill-advised architectural realizations.

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