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Sacred vs. profane – ruined temples

Abstract

The work concerns activities in sacral buildings in a state of ruin that require more intervention than conventional conservation. It focuses on searching for modern methods of saving the architecture of temples from ruination and desecration, while ensuring its dignified transformation.

The work presents selected examples of full or partial reconstructions of the ruins of temples. It also shows the process of transformation of spatial and functional structures as well as iconography of the temples. It covers problems in architectural conservation as well as essential ideological aspects of symbolic and liturgical nature. Examples of such rescue and conservation activities are the contemporary projects to reconstruction, restoration and revitalization of ruins of churches in Supraśl, Wałbrzych, Żąbkowice and Mielnik. They exemplify a design method of a “non-invasive” approach to historical monuments, including respect for their historical values and adding new qualities at the same time.

These examples of the protection of temples from degradation, destruction and desecration – through reconstruction, integration, adaptation and incorporation – have a common intentional basis. All of them seem to come from the same ideological premises. They also share a common main criterion – the protection of existing material values, but also the further development of spiritual values. In this process of protection and conservation, priority is given to spiritual values over material values. For spiritual values are where they see the search for the truth and the sense of their existence, the authentic protection of their past and present mission in the time and space of this world.

The projects prove that the methodology of hierarchical merging of their forms into the structure of their material and spiritual values is of key importance in this revitalization process. This is done through the hermeneutic discovery of the Tradition of this architecture and its exposition.

Key words: architecture, temple, ruin, tradition, *sacrum*

Introduction

This work – through a preliminary diagnosis of the conflict between the *profane* and the *sacred*, manifested in particular in the ruin of sacred architecture – presents cases selected by the author of experimental and design rescue measures for this architecture. In accordance with the status of architecture and urban planning as empirical sciences, the research presented here is of an implementation nature. Its essence is the methodical recognition of architecture and its state of preservation in terms of religious service through the discovery and exposition of ideological values encoded in the archetypal and symbolic structures of this architecture.

Description of own research

The state of basic research on sacred architecture is limited to the author’s research, as no one has conducted such research before. The research uses a hermeneutic method, typical of the humanities, in the fields of history of religion, theology and cultural anthropology. The author presented this method and its application in relation to the hermeneutics of Orthodox temple architecture in detail in his monograph (Uścińowicz 1997), therefore its in-depth justification, which goes beyond the status and methodological assumptions of this study, has been omitted here.

Sacred vs. profane

The “holy war” is heresy in Christianity. It is a rejection of Christ’s love, aggression directed towards the Holy Spirit. Its witnesses are the destroyed homes of people and the ruined houses of God – temples. An attack on a temple

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is sacrilege directed at Heavenly Jerusalem, of which it is a prefiguration.

Ruined temples are an ethical, religious and social problem. It is also an age-old problem of architecture. After every war, hundreds of them remain. War tears away part of their substance – it must be integrated, given new life, and sometimes reconstructed from scratch. Evidence of their original forms is often lacking. However, the spirit of the place remains in them. There are several dozen such temple ruins in Poland. In Ukraine, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and the Balkans, there are hundreds, perhaps even thousands.

Much has changed today in the spiritual values of religious people. In Africa and the Middle East, temples are being demolished or converted into places of worship for other religions, as in the past, but this is also happening in the West¹, which is closer to us. Aggression towards sacredness is escalating, ranging from complete denial of spirituality and secularisation to religious proselytism and religious war. The forecasts are alarming. The magazine *Observatoire du Patrimoine Religieux* reports that of the approximately 100,000 churches in France today, including 45,000 parish churches, 5,000 to 10,000 temples managed by municipalities, i.e., 5–10% of all temples, will be demolished by 2030. The situation will be similar in Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Ireland, Austria and even in very religious Italy. The Archbishop of Utrecht, Cardinal Willem Eijk, has publicly announced the closure of a thousand churches in the Netherlands. In Western European countries – as was the case not so long ago in the USSR, where 70,000 temples² were demolished during the communist era – churches are being systematically demolished or converted into restaurants, discos, warehouses, hotels and shops, or even brothels and toilets.

This is the case today in the West, and it was and still is the case in Poland. We have lost dozens of temples forever, many have been desecrated and lie in ruins. A bizarre event, showing a lack of respect for “other” sanctity, was the establishment of the “Rink Weis” disco in the beautiful Neo-Gothic Evangelical temple in Wieldzadz in the 1990s. A drink bar was set up in place of the altar, and a toilet was installed directly below it, in the crypt under the altar. In the middle of the nave, a huge stage with a pool for sex (less perverse here, but more so in a separate room above the porch)³ was installed. The new sanctuary was even consecrated by a priest, who was probably unaware of what was going on. A similar fate befell the beautiful Orthodox church in Sokołowsko, located in a spa park, which was converted into a dacha after World War II. Its dome, symbolising Jesus Christ, along with the cross, was cruelly cut

off so as not to arouse unnecessary associations. Inside, an apartment was built, complete with a toilet. This is not a unique case. The same thing happened on Holy Mountain Jawor, where the Lemko religious sanctuary was converted into a toilet for Border Guard soldiers. Is this right?

There are still dozens of such mutilated, desecrated temples, “silent witnesses”. Among them are former Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches in Chodel, Jałówka, Mielnik, Pisarzowice, Rumia, Wałbrzych, Wojnowice, Żeliszów, Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches in Babice, Berezka, Huta Różaniecka, Kniaziach, Krywe, Mięksisz stand in increasingly less “permanent ruin”. They are waiting for better times. Will they come?

Spirit and matter

Conflicts between the profane and the sacred have always existed, inscribed in the genetic code of this world. They intensified in the face of proselytism, religious wars and revolutions. Today, they are rationally explained by the progress of civilisation, especially the secularisation of life and its subordination to the laws of economics, the glorification of material values and the dictates of money. But this conflict is also evident in culture. It manifests itself in art history and in the protection and conservation of monuments.

One of the postulates of the 1964 Venice Charter is to abandon restoration. This reinforces the rather strict ban on reconstruction. Article 15 states that [...] *all reconstruction work should however be ruled out “a priori”*. *Only anastylosis, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted* (Karta Wenecka 1964). The document recommends respecting the original substance of the structure and material of the historic building, and all newly added elements should be distinguishable from the original ones. Where it is impossible to use traditional technologies corresponding to the object, the use of new technologies that have been tested in modern times is permitted. It also calls for the protection of fragments of the building from all stages of its construction, categorically prohibiting the replacement of original building elements with faithful copies.

The 2012 Charter for the Protection of Historical Ruins clearly states that ruins should be recognised as fully-fledged monuments (Karta Ochrony... 2012). But is recognising ruins as fully-fledged monuments (even though they will never be fully so) and providing ad hoc assistance in legal protection and conservation sufficient? Is this all that is needed in view of the possibilities that arise with the development of civilisation? New methods of creation, contemporary materials, techniques and technologies, especially virtual ones, offer the possibility of moving to a different level of artistic activity and visual reception, variable in time and space. Doctrinal provisions are important; they serve to legally protect historic substances that are our heritage, defend the authenticity of forms and historical truth, and counteract their falsification. But does the sacredness of a monument exclude it from the procedures applied in all other categories? Does it not require actions appropriate to its status and value? Can we act differently than before in the creation of “sacred” ruins from the dead?

In some architectural monuments, material values play a secondary role. They merely serve as intermediaries in

¹ A notorious example of this was the desecrated and ultimately demolished 19th-century Neo-Gothic church of Saint-Jacques d'Abbeville in France in 2013. During its demolition, sacrilege took place – the destruction of sacred sculptures and paintings. The cross of Christ was thrown away with the rubble into a rubbish bin.

² In 1914, there were 54,174 Orthodox churches, 25,593 chapels and 1,025 monasteries in the Russian Empire. By 1987, only 6,893 churches (12%) and 15 monasteries (1.5%) remained in the USSR (Kesler 2021).

³ The information comes from the author's site visit to Wieldzadz and interviews with witnesses to the events.

expressing values that are more important than themselves. This category of monuments includes sacred architecture – temples, which are primarily places of worship. Their primary value, which requires respect and protection, is their religious function. This is where their fundamental purpose is fulfilled. The ideological basis for temples is the unchanging truth of Christianity: the truth of tradition. Tradition is the fundamental ontological criterion of Christianity, the meaning of its functioning in the world. The history of religion proves that the assessment of temple architecture has always been based on premises other than architectural ones. It was a vehicle for God's truth, a theological statement whose source was tradition. And although temples may be outstanding works of art, they always serve religion first and culture second. The conservation and restoration of ruined temples is therefore not about simply reproducing old forms, copying them, but about transposing their essence and order and their structural functioning in the so-called image of the whole.

The fundamental postulate and ideological core of all conservation doctrines and practices is the struggle for the authenticity of a monument, treating it in a manner appropriate to the conditions of its creation – without falsification or contamination. The authenticity of a sacred art monument can be understood as the authenticity of its material substance, forms, functions and technologies used, as well as the authenticity of its ideological message, its impact as an object of religious worship in the transmission of hierophanic content. It is therefore a matter of material, physical and historical transmission, but also spiritual, mystical, theological and symbolic transmission. It is this that constitutes the supreme value referred to as *sacrum*⁴. What, then, is the most important criterion of authenticity in this category of architecture? Is it the value of cultural and historical, material and physical heritage, or are they sacred, spiritual and ideological values? Does the need to preserve historical forms as carriers of the heritage of the material and spiritual values of a given religion take precedence over the need to preserve the truths of faith, worship, dogmas, and the ideological coherence of theological and aesthetic expression, which is the *raison d'être* of a temple, its ontological value? Does theology not have more to say here?

Sacred art theology shifts – in confrontation with art history – the focus of interpretation and axiological evaluation of a work to the reception of what is inscribed in it. It is not interested in the creators, historical and cultural context, dating, belonging to styles and their purity. It is not interested in the historiographical or scientific value of a work. It is indifferent to its material aspect, unless it conceals significant ideological content. It even assumes, to a certain extent, its physical destruction. For it has a differ-

ent perspective – history is merely a method of transition to eternity, necessary for the deification and salvation of the world.

What is the current meaning of the existence of ancient sacred art? In the face of decay, ruin and inevitable destruction, can it be reconstructed, and, when its time has run out, deconstructed? What might be the scope of its possible transformations?

Let us use selected examples to examine various actions in temple ruins: from complete reconstruction of the object, through restoration consisting of the integration of degraded parts with contemporary reinterpretative additions, to discreet revitalisation, consisting of the incorporation of new elements that are ideologically significant, formally autonomous, but spiritually integrated with them.

Reconstruction

The first example is the reconstruction of the 16th-century Orthodox church of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God in Supraśl, which is important for the culture of the borderland. It is a unique temple, a phenomenon in the history of architecture. Together with the churches in Synkowice and Mołomożejków from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, it forms a typologically distinct group of Orthodox churches, Eastern Gothic, defensive, rectangular in plan, cruciform or cross-domed, four-pillar (nine-bay), single or triple apsidal, flanked by four towers. Their tripartite, centric-longitudinal, spatial-liturgical structure, canonical for Orthodox churches, was overlaid with Gothic elements. Their exterior resembles Western Latin churches, while their interiors resemble Eastern Greek-Russian churches.

The *katholikon* in Supraśl, with its unusual Orthodox-Gothic architecture and magnificent iconography derived from the Balkan culture of the 2nd half of the 16th century, has a tragic history. Its history – from its creation to its destruction – is a testimony to the progressive neutralisation and elimination of the values of Orthodox art. This art used to occupy an important place in Poland, especially in the borderlands. It co-created the indigenous core of the country's multi-ethnic and multi-religious culture. After its conversion to the Uniate Church in the 17th century, the church gradually began to lose its original character and ideological coherence. The original iconostasis was replaced with a Baroque one in 1664. Some of the unique frescoes were destroyed, painted over or covered when new stucco decorations were added to the walls. The original interior design was changed. Side altars, a new pulpit and a choir balcony were added. After the return to Orthodoxy in 1839, an attempt was made to partially restore the original decor, but this process was interrupted after the monks were forced to leave the monastery in 1915. Damaged during the interwar period and finally during World War II – first by the Soviet army and then, after 1941, by the German army – the temple was blown up on 23 July 1944 (Fig. 1). After this act of vandalism, the church remained in ruins until the 1980s. Thirty fragments of the original frescoes, removed by conservators from the stumps of pillars and walls, have survived to this day. These fragments, along with old photographs, engravings and post-inventory drawings, are

⁴ In conservation doctrine, the authenticity of a monument is recognised not only in terms of its material substance, formerly considered the highest value worthy of protection, but also in terms of its ideological message, the methods used to create its structure, the authenticity of its forms, functions, place of influence as a place of worship, typological references, hierophanic messages, etc. This is particularly applicable in sacred architecture. The administrator of a church, according to rev. Janusz St. Pasierb, has the right to demand that conservators respect the function that the monument fulfils within worship (Pasierb 2001, 12–18).

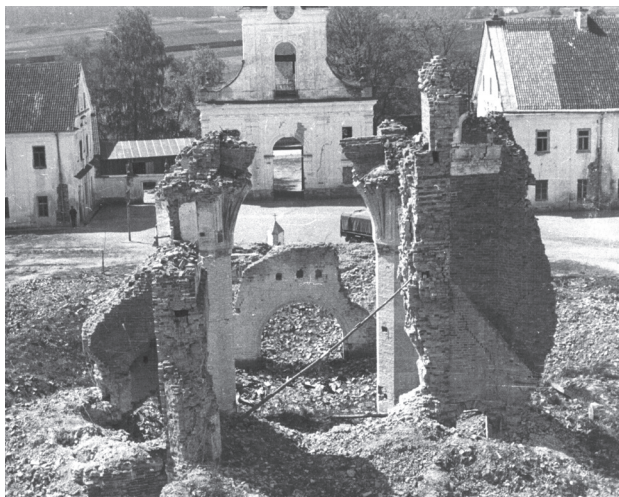


Fig. 1. Supraśl, ruins of the church after its destruction by the Nazis on July 23, 1944
(photo by P. Kosiński, 1947,
source: Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences,
neg. no. 1255R)

Il. 1. Supraśl, ruiny cerkwi po zburzeniu przez hitlerowców 23 lipca 1944 r.
(fot. P. Kosiński, 1947,
źródło: IS PAN, nr neg. 1255R)



Fig. 2. Supraśl, Church of Zwiastowanie Przenajświętszej Bogurodzicy [Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God], view after reconstruction from the southwest, 2018
(photo by J. Uścińowicz)

Il. 2. Supraśl, cerkiew Zwiastowania Przenajświętszej Bogurodzicy, widok po rekonstrukcji, od strony południowo-zachodniej, 2018
(fot. J. Uścińowicz)

evidence of the church's unique iconography, most likely created by an artel led by "Serbin Naktarij Malar".

The ruinous state of the church was always considered temporary. How could one consider the famous Supraśl Lavra, the spiritual centre of Polish Orthodoxy, which had existed for five centuries, without its spiritual heart: the catholicon? However, when the state took over the monastery and its extensive lands after World War II, the temple was not reconstructed, even though it was technically possible to do so – a large part of it remained stable, and methods for raising such structures from ruins were already known. The protruding stumps of walls and pillars were cut off, creating an "impermanent ruin". Nevertheless, thanks to the generosity and efforts of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, the temple was reconstructed on its former foundations (Fig. 2). This was done contrary to the provisions of the Venice Charter and the Charter of Ruins.

This was done – and rightly so. For what testimony could the ruined Orthodox church in Supraśl have provided? What could it have told us, apart from the story of desecration and the loss of former spiritual values? What message could it convey as cultural heritage, apart from exposing material destruction, decline and the desecration of a cult that once thrived here? And this is a Lavra! A phenomenon of Orthodox architecture and art in a cultural borderland. The only Orthodox temple of such importance and so far west. Does not it deserve a new life? Even without the high status of a cultural monument, but with the highest status of a temple of Orthodox worship.

Incorporation

Another example of rescue efforts in ruins is the conversion project of a church in Podgórze, Wałbrzych. It is a neo-Gothic Evangelical church from the early 20th century, where Lutherans prayed until 1964, when their German-speaking parish was dissolved and the congregation left. The temple was then taken over by the Wałbrzych municipality. The space was handed over to the Graphic Arts Factory, which set up a paper warehouse there. Only the sacristy was left for religious use, serving as an Orthodox church for the faithful. However, the printing house did not take care of the church. All its furnishings were removed. An entrance for lorries was cut into the south wall. No renovations were carried out, and no mining damage was repaired. In the early 1990^s, a fire broke out in the building, seriously damaging the roof structure and side galleries. In 1994, the temple was finally abandoned. No one wanted it. Demolition was not profitable for the municipality. After the Evangelicals refused to take over the church, the Orthodox took pity on it.

The temple required immediate rescue (Fig. 3), so it underwent thorough conservation. The roof was completely replaced, and most of the structures of the portals, arches, beams and ceilings, walls, pillars and stairs were restored. However, the biggest problem from the very beginning was the location of the church and its size. The temple could not be protected from vandalism and devastation – break-ins, burning of the tower, smashing of windows, vulgar inscriptions on the walls, desecration of the altar, icons and litur-

gical vestments. The enormous volume made it difficult to maintain and conduct Orthodox services.

The guiding principle behind the restoration of the former church (Uścińowicz 2003) was to incorporate an independent, yet geometrically connected, temple-sanctuary into its nave (Fig. 4). Both temples – the Orthodox church and the Catholic church – remain separate, but at the same time complement each other, creating a community of liturgical time and space. The temple-sanctuary serves both as a temple and as a hierateion. In the first case, the altar in the apse serves as the bema, while in the second, the temple is a sanctuary – the Holy of Holies. Its front wall with three entrances and iconic reliefs of Christ Pantocrator and the Mother of God then serves as an external iconostasis, and the nave as an external courtyard for the celebration of festive services.

The new chapel is a rotunda. In terms of its concept, it refers to the Kuvuklion (gr. Κουβούκλιον) of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Derived from the architecture of early Christian memorials and baptisteries, it has its prototype in the ancient rotunda of St. George in Thessaloniki and the rotundas of Rome and New Rome – Constantinople. They also became a model for the architecture of Great Moravia, which spread from the time of the Cyril and Methodius mission of the Apostles of the Slavs, including in Lower Silesia (Małachowicz 2008).

A slightly different example in this category of rescue measures is the Church of St. George in Żąbkowice Śląskie. It is a former chapel belonging to the first municipal hospital⁵. The rectangular temple has a single nave, a hall layout, no pillars, and a narrower, rectangular chancel covered with a rib vault. It is an oriented church with buttresses on the west and north sides. The body of the church – simple, compact, single-storey – is covered with a gable roof, topped with a distinctive octagonal prism with a dome. The nave of the temple, formerly covered with a mirror vault, is now open. From above, it is closed only by the vault of heaven (Fig. 5). The only thing that reminds us of the Orthodox temple in the church is a simple iconostasis with icons of Christ Pantocrator, the Mother of God with the Child, Saint Panteleimon, Saint Alexius, Saint Nicholas and Saint George. In 2004, an initiative was launched to establish a monastic skete, or hermitage, for four monks here.

The main intention of the project (Uścińowicz 2004) was to recreate the Gothic shape and structure of the former



Fig. 3. Wałbrzych, former Evangelical church, view of the ruined interior from the west, 2003 (photo by J. Uścińowicz)

Il. 3. Wałbrzych, dawny kościół ewangelicki, widok zrujnowanego wnętrza świątyni od strony zachodniej, 2003 (fot. J. Uścińowicz)



Fig. 4. Wałbrzych, Orthodox Church of Wszystkich Świętych [All Saints], interior view of the former church with the new rotunda-style church, design by J. Uścińowicz, 2004

Il. 4. Wałbrzych, cerkiew prawosławna Wszystkich Świętych, widok wnętrza dawnego kościoła wraz z nową cerkwią-rotundą, proj. J. Uścińowicz, 2004

⁵ The hospital was founded in 1319 by Prince Mikołaj of Ziębice and Mayor Jan Socklin. A chapel existed next to it as early as 1363. In 1538, it passed from the hands of the Holy Sepulchre Order of Nysa to the ownership of the town. In 1646, the nave of the chapel collapsed, and around 1720, a new nave was added to the surviving part with the presbytery vault, which has been preserved in the walls to this day. This was done thanks to Christophomus Thieller, as commemorated by a plaque at the entrance to the church. In 1824, the chapel underwent another renovation, carried out by Bittner and Rotter. In 1824, it was extended with a sacristy, and in 1857 it was renovated again. The façade decoration was probably made during another renovation in 1903. Fragments of Gothic frescoes depicting scenes from the life of Jesus Christ and the Mother of God, as well as a huge scene depicting Saint George fighting a dragon, have been preserved on the wall of the presbytery. They date back to the end of the 14th century and were restored in 1969–1970. They are among the most magnificent representations of this type in Silesia.

church. This was to be achieved primarily by recreating the former form of the roof, with glass in the central part and solid in the western part. A new, independent structural framework was introduced into the interior of the temple. The western gable wall is also to be reconstructed, with the roof trusses exposed, similar to half-timbered walls.

The design separates sacred and secular functions. A skete is planned in the place of the western porch of the church. It houses a refectory, a library-scriptorium, an icon workshop and two monastic cells. The cells are located on the top floor, “under the sky”. They open onto the courtyard and have their own gallery, which surrounds the courtyard, creating a kind of cloister, used by the monks for contemplation during their sky-high walks. The former presbytery of the church, now an Orthodox church, is to be used for



Fig. 5. Zabkowice Śląskie, former Roman Catholic church,
view of the ruined nave walls, 2003
(photo by J. Uścińowicz)

Il. 5. Zabkowice Śląskie, dawny kościół rzymskokatolicki,
widok zrujnowanych ścian dawnej nawy, 2003
(fot. J. Uścińowicz)

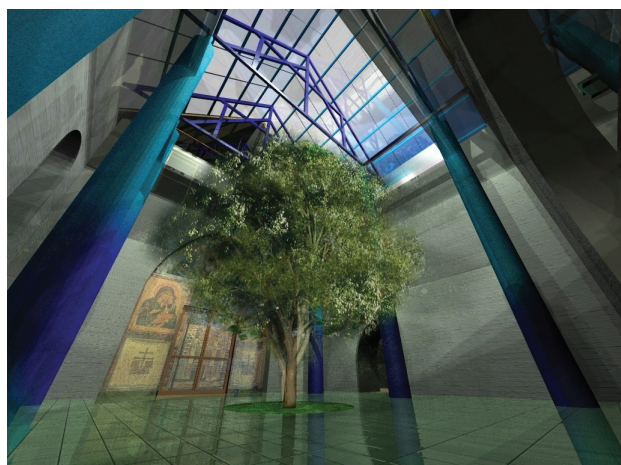


Fig. 6. Zabkowice Śląskie,
Orthodox monastic skete of Święty Jerzy [St. George],
interior view from the west,
design by J. Uścińowicz, 2004

Il. 6. Zabkowice Śląskie,
prawosławny skit monastyczny Świętego Jerzego,
widok wnętrza od strony zachodniej,
proj. J. Uścińowicz, 2004

the celebration of monastic services. Its outer western wall will be closed off by a panel iconostasis. Under the former rainbow arch, its central part will be created – with the gates of paradise and deacons and icons of Christ Pantocrator, the Mother of God Hodegetria and the Eucharist. Inside the presbytery, a new iconostasis in the form of a templon will be erected. The naos of the temple will then be the inner courtyard of the skete. In its centre, as in the biblical Eden, a symbolic Tree of Life – the Cross – will be planted. On the highest ceiling, a terrace-garden will be created, a transposition of the Garden of Eden (Fig. 6).

The solutions used in both temples are a nod to ancient history, but also a discreet departure from it. This was achieved both through the ecumenical status and character of the new architecture and iconography, as well as through the ideological unity and consistency of their spiritual impact. Christian tradition is not a closed book, but a living process that develops alongside humanity, its spirituality and religious sensitivity.

Integration

A different case of activities in ruins is the project to revitalise the church, Orthodox church, presbytery and former castle walls in Mielnik on the Bug River. There is no scientific basis for a complete reconstruction of the forms that once existed here. The project (Uścińowicz 1997), although carried out with a greater degree of innovation and freedom, remains traditional in its concept and method, strongly rooted in the archetypal-symbolic system of forms, spaces and boundaries. It attempts to rebuild and supplement the damaged architecture and inscribe into it the spirit that once existed here.

The stronghold, and later the castle, is a unique complex in the cultural and natural landscape of Mielnik. Located on a high river terrace escarpment, it is divided into two parts, the upper and lower parts, already referred to in the late Middle Ages as the Upper and Lower Castles. The lower part contains the ruins of a former church and presbytery, as well as underground relics of the castle walls. The higher part consists of the remains of the walls of the former stronghold, crowned by the ruins of an Orthodox church. In the past, the castle had a defensive status. Today, it is unable to protect the remaining ruins of temples from destruction.

The origins of the stronghold date back to the 11th century. It is mentioned in 1260 in connection with the description of the stay of Daniel Romanovich the King of Rus in the Orthodox Church of the Most Holy Mother of God in the stronghold. He prayed here before the miraculous icon of Spas Izbavnik (Ипатьевская летопись 1908, 778–791). The later castle was built in the 1st half of the 14th century and expanded in the 15th and 16th centuries. In 1420, Prince Vytautas founded the Catholic Church of Corpus Christi, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Nicholas. The locations of both temples – the Orthodox church and the Catholic church – are not entirely known. The present church was probably built before 1577. During the wars, it was demolished and rebuilt several times, and in the 19th century it was converted into an Orthodox church. In 1915, it was burned down, and in 1940–1941, it was partially demol-

ished. Today, it is devastated (Fig. 7). Only free-standing fragments of sloping walls with unsecured crowns, open vertical cracks and fissures have survived. The brick vaults of the crypts have collapsed. The church and the castle walls are threatened with destruction due to the landslide. The chapel of Saint Alexander Nevsky, built in 1865 on the hill of the Upper Castle, is also in a state of ruin, close to destruction. It was demolished to its foundations in 1927.

The project (Uścińowicz 2018) brings together all the ruins of the temples, leaving their authentic parts – silent witnesses to worship, culture and history – unchanged. Between the ruins, it introduces steel and glass structural coverings and transparent reinterpretative fillings⁶, striving to preserve and protect the ruins and the spirit that still exists here.

Today, the ruins of the church are an open space. Its boundaries are marked by the relics of former pillars, walls and basement vaults. The space is discreetly filled with a new, openwork structure of galleries, platforms and stairs, bypassing the former crypts and ossuary. It non-invasively preserves the single space, ensuring communication. At basement level, it runs axially between the former pillars, culminating at the altar with a *croce dipinta*⁷. At ground floor level, it is centripetal, running circumferentially. It allows a view into the basement space, which conceals the former nine-field structure of the temple (Fig. 8).

The temple was given its former Gothic appearance in the design. The theological symbolism was also restored: it is reminiscent of the edge geometry of Gothic star vaults and the rainbow beam with a stained glass crucifix. The boundary of the former chancel with the eastern wall with the altar retable was discreetly marked. The missing gaps in the thick walls will be filled, like a display case, with a double glass and aluminium structure that preserves their tectonic character. It will also ensure their structural integration (Fig. 9). The walls have been filled in accordance with the degree of recognition of their structure and form – these are authentic sections of brick walls with a Wendish pattern, a steel Corten coating, filling in the gaps in the towers, cornices and pointed window glyphs, and a steel and glass structure with windows set inside, which will be filled with stained glass depicting saints. This will differentiate



Fig. 7. Mielnik, ruins of the Church of Święta Trójca [Holy Trinity] at the Zamek Dolny [Lower Castle], 2017 (photo by J. Uścińowicz)

Il. 7. Mielnik, ruiny kościoła Świętej Trójcy na Zamku Dolnym, 2017, fot. J. Uścińowicz

the old from the new. Without falsification, ensuring ideological and formal integrity (Fig. 10).

The project also envisages the consolidation of the ruins of the Orthodox church. As a “permanent ruin”, it is an open-air trace of a place of worship, covered with a steel and glass display case. In its centre is a memorial altar stone with a *croce dipinta* cross – common to the sister Churches: Orthodox and Catholic. Ecumenically⁸.

The primary purpose of the reinterpretative fillings is to combine the “old” with the “new”. This is achieved by glass with its dual image creation method – real and illusory. Using the optical process of light reflection and transmission, it enables the creation of both a real image of the forms located next to and behind the glass surface on the retina of the human eye, as well as their illusion in the form of shining after-images. By analysing visual stimuli, the brain not only strives to analyse the situation in real time and place, but also constantly synthesises it in relation to the past and future. With a double or even triple status (view, afterimage and transparency), the fillings used on the walls of the ruin are both a carrier of the value of matter and its absence: the project creates an image of the existence of form, leaving it in a state of ruin, and the illusion of filling its absence with light-giving matter. Light brings us closer to its immaterial perception⁹, introducing us to the level of spiritual interpretation⁹.

The ruins of the Catholic church and the Orthodox church, as well as the remaining castle walls, will remain part of the overall landscape. The new wall and roof structures provide

⁶ Reinterpretation is a form of dialogue with history. It remains intentionally consistent with the so-called interpretative supplement introduced by Jan Tajchman, proposing a dialogue between architectural forms at the level of contemporary understanding of their former ideas. In the case of ruins, it consists in evoking [...] *thoughts and associations, rather than restoring the monument to its fullest state* (Tajchman 2012, 9–25). In the architecture of a temple, anointed by Tradition and its transmission (paradosis), this dialogue constitutes an indispensable eschatological opening to the sphere of the sacred.

⁷ The icon of the Crucifixion was the most widespread type of icon in medieval Italy. Byzantine-Italian crucifixes painted on wood, *croce dipinta*, are typical of 12th- and 13th-century Tuscan art and the so-called *maniera greca*. They were brought to Italy by Syrian monks. These huge icons, known as *croci storiata*, together with figures of the Mother of God and St John the Theologian and scenes from the Passion, once crowned the top of every iconostasis architrave in Italian churches. They were commonly called the Cross of Saint Francis or the Cross of Saint Damiano. It was this cross that became the object of Saint Francis' contemplation, as depicted by Giotto di Bondone in a fresco in the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi. These icons have survived and remain a link between the Christian East and West to this day.

⁸ The cross is a symbol and icon of the Crucifixion. It has many types and representations, established in both Eastern and Western Christianity. Regardless of its roots, it is always the cross of Christ. It cannot be limited by the name of a region, origin or religion.

⁹ It is worth recalling here one of the principles of Władysław Strzemiński's theory of vision, according to which [...] *in the process of seeing, what is important is not what the eye mechanically captures, but what a person realises from their vision* (Strzemiński 2016, 53).

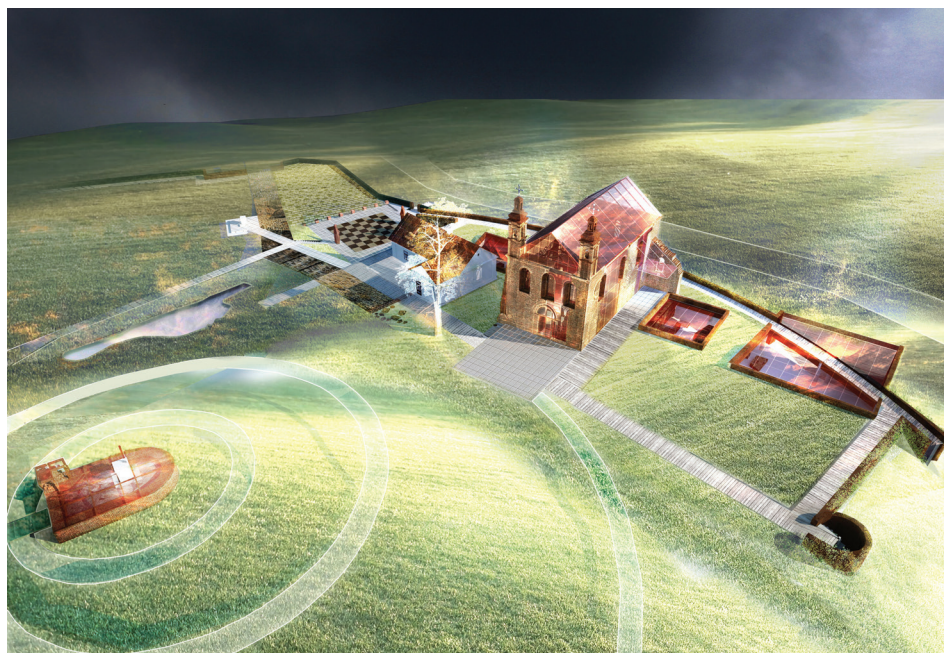


Fig. 8. Mielnik, proposed restoration and revitalization of the ruins complex: former church, former Orthodox church, rectory, and castle walls with an underground archaeological museum, design by J. Uścińowicz, 2018

Il. 8. Mielnik, projekt restauracji i rewitalizacji zespołu ruin dawnego kościoła, dawnej cerkwi, plebanii i murów zamkowych z podziemnym muzeum archeologicznym, proj. J. Uścińowicz, 2018



Fig. 9. Mielnik, view of the former Church of Święta Trójca [Holy Trinity] from the southwest, design by J. Uścińowicz, 2018

Il. 9. Mielnik, widok dawnego kościoła Świętej Trójcy od strony południowo-zachodniej, proj. J. Uścińowicz, 2018

the necessary geometric contours for the incomplete forms and their flat, textured brick fillings. They also have an additional advantage: they enable a new interpretation of the old walls and their tectonic closure, as well as protection against further destruction, without closing the door to future transformations. When used as surfaces for holographic creations and 3D video mapping, they create a virtual vision of architectural forms and their iconic image, changing in real time and still verifiable in the future.

The aim of the actions taken in Mielnik was to stop the destruction and desecration of the ruins of the church and Orthodox church, to raise their spiritual status and to

merge them. However, the motivation behind these actions prompts deeper reflection on the fate of fallen temples. What kind of sanctity remains in them when there are no longer priests and worshippers for whom they were built, when there is no prayer? When spiritual life in them has been exhausted and their durability is interpreted as “impermanent” ruins that are reanimated every few years? A picturesque arrangement of stones and bricks, mutilated stumps of walls without form, an abstract guess at their original form, an afterimage of ancient history, the substantial value of matter? Is the spirit of prayer, unconfined by walls and vaults, still present in them?



Fig. 10. Mielnik, interior view of the former Church of Święta Trójca [Holy Trinity] from the west, design by J. Uścińowicz, 2018

Il. 10. Mielnik, widok wnętrza dawnego kościoła Świętej Trójcy od strony zachodniej, proj. J. Uścińowicz, 2018

Summary

More important than the numerous conservation issues are the ideological aspects resulting from the different nature of temples as spiritual places. These seem to determine the respect for their historical value with a reinterpretation appropriate to this nature and the development of new theological values that contemporary homo religiosus brings to worship¹⁰.

The examples presented here of personal experiences related to the restoration of temple ruins have a common ideological basis: integration. In Old Slavonic, this term means spiritual and physical healing (scs. исцѣленіе доуши і тѣла). Its aim is to rebuild, preserve and protect the existing material values of these temples, but with priority given to spiritual values. They are subject to constant theological reinterpretation over time, in ideological accordance with Tradition. In the process of its transmission (paradosis), it is in them that the truth, purpose and meaning of the temple's existence lie. For it is through them that it is fulfilled on man's journey from Paradise to Heavenly Jerusalem. Where they are profaned or eliminated, the

fundamental value is not the authenticity of the material, the exhibition value of the building material, the forms of architecture and construction, or the historiosophical credibility of their origin, stylistic affiliation, dating, existence in history or attribution. The most important thing is the ideological message of this architecture and its spiritual values. It is this that is discovered, rebuilt and continued; it precedes and guides all actions; it determines how ruins and their values are raised from the dead. For it is for this that the temple exists. It is to lead us to salvation; this is its fundamental purpose.

Each era brings with it its own unique perception of reality, distinct from previous ones. This is followed by different experiences and artistic practices, which require new forms and methods of expression, adequate to the evolving consciousness and intuitive sensitivity. Without them, it remains trapped, unable to create creative works and extend the values of cultural heritage in them (Strzeмиński 2016).

When Józef Muczkowski decided that a work of art should constitute a harmonious whole, manifested in *an intact form and pure colour*, he opposed ancient values to modern ones, resulting in all kinds of "cleansing" restorations of monuments to restore their stylistic unity (Dettlof 2006). Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz opposed this, arguing that the progress of scientific knowledge is inevitable and that knowledge of past styles in art changes over time, sometimes fundamentally. He advocated the widespread use of contemporary art in historic architecture: [...] *a true art lover should combine knowledge and accurate assessment of monuments with an understanding of living art and new forms of development. [...] His task [is] to support modern art wherever it can be done without harming monuments* (Szyszko-Bohusz 1913, 14–18).

In the process of raising buildings from ruins, the methodology of hierarchically integrating forms into a structure of values seems to be crucial. This is achieved through hermeneutic discovery of the tradition of this architecture and exposure of its spiritual values, accessible through sacred

¹⁰ The rescue measures presented in this paper in relation to temple ruins are part of the current global trend of attempting to integrate new and historic forms of architecture, using contemporary materials, techniques and technologies, known as reinterpretative infills. Some examples of contemporary projects demonstrate a creative approach to the ruins of sacred architecture, including: the Kolumb Museum in Cologne (architect Peter Zumthor), Blencowe Hall in Cumbria, the Ara Pacis Museum in Rome (architect Richard Meier), Norwich Cathedral Hostry (Hopkins Architects), the restoration of the church of Corbera d'Ebre in Terra Alta (architect Ferran Vizoso), the covering of the archaeological ruins of St. Maurice Abbey (Saint-Maurice, architect Savioz Fabrizio Architectes), Villa Romana del Casale (Sicily), reconstruction of the Basilica of Santa Maria di Siponto (Manfredonia, Edoardo Tresoldi), Museum of Architecture in the former Bernardine monastery in Wrocław (architect E. Małachowicz). These examples demonstrate creative awareness and a proper understanding of the ideological aspects of sacred architecture and its soteriological significance.

symbols and archetypes (Uścińowicz 1997). It is in discovering the content of their message, their theological significance – in moving from the level of aesthetics to the level of religion – that we should seek a way to understand the meaning of their existence, and thus to authentically protect their former and present mission of existence in time and space.

Tradition is not a static, closed and constant truth in this process. It is dynamic and open to new theophanic revelations and new forms of expressing them, constantly re-

newed and deepened. It also abolishes the basic dichotomy of history, because the future is part of the past, and the past participates in the future. Paul Evdokimov rightly says: *Tradition is an agreement with the future of what is in the past* (Evdokimov 1986, 251). That is why *Tradition never worships ashes. It fuels the flame*, as Gustav Mahler claimed. But does it still smoulder in the ruins of temples?

Translated by
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Streszczenie

Sacrum vs. profanum – zrujnowane świątynie

Artykuł dotyczy działań w obiektach zrujnowanych, które wymagają interwencji większej niż konwencjonalna konserwacja. Autor skoncentrował się na poszukiwaniu nowoczesnych metod ratowania architektury świątyni przed rujnacją i profanacją, przy jednoczesnym zapewnieniu jej godnej transformacji.

W pracy przedstawiono wybrane przykłady pełnych lub częściowych rekonstrukcji ruin świątyni. Ukazano także proces przekształceń struktur przestrzennych i funkcjonalnych oraz ikonografii świątyni i poruszono problemy konserwacji architektonicznej oraz istotne aspekty ideowe o charakterze symbolicznym i liturgicznym. Przykładem działań ratunkowych są wykonane projekty rekonstrukcji, restauracji i rewitalizacji ruin świątyni w Supraślu, Wałbrzychu, Ząbkowicach Śląskich i Mielniku. Egzemplifikują one metodę „nieinwazyjnego” podejścia do zabytków, z poszanowaniem ich wartości historycznych i jednoczesnym nadaniem im nowych wartości.

Różne przykłady ochrony świątyni przed degradacją, zniszczeniem, profanacją – poprzez rekonstrukcję, integrację, adaptację i inkorporację – wydają się wychodzić z tych samych założeń ideologicznych. Procesy te łączy główne kryterium – ochrona istniejących wartości materialnych, ale i dalszy rozwój wartości duchowych, które mają nad nimi pierwszeństwo. W wartościach duchowych widzą bowiem poszukiwanie prawdy i sensu istnienia świątyni, ochronę ich przeszłej i obecnej misji w czasie i przestrzeni.

Projekty dowodzą, że w procesach tych kluczowa jest metodyka hierarchicznego skalania form w strukturę ich wartości materialnych i duchowych. Dokonuje się to poprzez hermeneutyczne odkrywanie tradycji tej architektury i ekspozycję jej wartości teologicznych.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura, świątynia, ruina, tradycja, *sacrum*