
TRENDS IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF SACRAL BUILDINGS IN POLAND: LUBELSKA AS A CASE STUDY

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(Received 3 September 2024, revised 21 February 2025)

Abstract

Religious architecture in Poland is a reflection of spiritual and social changes that have taken place in our country over the centuries. After the period of martial law, there were significant changes in church architecture that shaped the contemporary face of churches. Roman Catholic ecclesiastical architecture from this period is extremely varied, as it was created under very different social and spatial conditions. This short article analyses in detail the contemporary Roman Catholic churches built in the Lublin metropolis after the political breakthrough of 1989. The aim of the article is to make a comparative analysis of the churches in the study area, to determine their functions, characteristics and changing trends in construction and architecture. The research method used was to examine Roman Catholic churches in the selected area, selecting only those built in the last 35 years, with additional analysis of those built after 2000. The most characteristic features of each church were extracted, from which interesting conclusions could be drawn. The results of the study are summarised in descriptive form and graphically.

Keywords: religious architecture, contemporary trends in religious architecture, Roman Catholic religious architecture

1. Introduction

Interest in ecclesiastical architecture has for many years been popular with scholars around the world in terms of construction [1], building and reconstruction [2], origins [3], authorship [4], art and decoration [5] and spirituality [6, 7]. For hundreds of years, sacred buildings have been recognised as places of prayer and community gathering. The symbolism and majesty they contained played an important role in shaping their massing and plan. Their silhouettes reflect the architectural transformations that followed in successive eras, where the temple space provided a place for the cultural life of the inhabitants. The long history of Christianity shows that it is the community of people that counts, not the building itself. However, the communal creation of a material church still provides a strong foundation for spirituality and the maintenance of human bonds [8].

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After the end of martial law in Poland, great political and economic changes took place, which also affected art and architecture. During this period, church architecture underwent significant changes, moving away from traditional forms and styles in favour of the new and unknown. During the communist era, the construction of new buildings was heavily controlled by the communist authorities, who imposed conservative forms and designs, limiting the imagination and creativity of architects. After 1989, with the fall of communism and the advent of freedom of speech and expression, architects gained greater freedom to create modern and innovative religious buildings. They sought simplicity and minimalism. Architects rejected ostentation and excessive decoration in favour of clarity and functionality. Buildings became more streamlined and austere, focusing on the essence of the sacred and spirituality. Sacred architecture then opened up to modern technology and innovation. Designers began to experiment with new materials and building technologies, creating ever more innovative and futuristic sacred buildings, open to dialogue and mutual understanding between different communities.

Religious architecture in Poland underwent significant changes after the end of martial law. Gradually, it began to move away from traditional forms and styles in favour of original solutions. Newly built sacred buildings became increasingly bold in their form and economical in their decoration. They began to create unique spaces for prayer and reflection. At the same time, architects looked to the traditions and roots of Christian art for inspiration, drawing on archaic forms and symbols. Contemporary religious architecture throughout Poland has been subject to similar trends and transformations, constantly evolving and combining tradition with modernity.

For the purpose of this article, sacral architecture built in the area of the Archdiocese of Lublin after the fall of martial law until the present day has been considered. The selected buildings were analysed in terms of their functionality, structure, architectural and construction solutions, and the materials and construction solutions used. Attention was paid to aesthetic, functional, structural and decorative values, structural and decorative qualities. The material collected was compared with information on historic churches in the area in order to detail the changing trends in historic sacral church building. The research produced a list of 792 churches, of which 128 were analysed. Particular attention was paid to churches built after 2000, which are characterised by modern and minimalist forms. The choice of a particular period was dictated by the fact that the objects of sacred architecture had never been so diverse. Their variability and heterogeneity made it possible to show the ideological and formal development of the buildings not only in the selected area, but also in Poland as a whole.

2. Characteristics of the sacred architecture

The history of church architecture is rich and varied, reflecting the changing trends and styles over the centuries. The influence of particular architectural styles on the construction of churches is extremely varied, which can be seen in the Lublin metropolis as well as in the rest of the country. Church building is closely

connected with the history of Christianity and universal history in general (social and national). Despite the internal divisions that have occurred over the years, the genesis is common to Christianity as a whole.

The situation for church building during martial law was difficult, as it was almost impossible to get permission to build a new church. Various solutions were sought to support this initiative. At that time, the emphasis was on renovating and extending existing churches. After 1983 and the easing of restrictions, a period of mass construction of sacred architecture followed. At that time, a record number of churches were built in Poland compared to the European average. By 1989, as a result of social and political changes, Poland was already enjoying a high degree of independence in both its economy and architecture. In order to understand these changes, it is necessary to look at the development of churches over the centuries, taking into account the influence of different architectural styles and the economic and political situation of the country.

The origins of religious architecture in Poland date back to the early Middle Ages, when the first Romanesque churches were built in the country. They were characterised by a simple form, thick walls, small windows and rich interior decoration. Between the 12th and 15th centuries, with the development of the Gothic style, churches began to take on a more majestic character. Tall, slender towers, wide naves and richly decorated portals and windows were added. With the advent of the Romantic period, reference was made to the architectural styles of the past, resulting in the construction of neo-Gothic churches. During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, church building in Poland became more decorative, with richly ornamented facades and interiors. At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, classicist buildings with late Baroque elements were erected. Characteristic was the basilica form, usually consisting of three naves, an elongated chancel closed at right angles, where a chapel was placed on the left and right sides. The presence of pilasters, vaults or tympanums was typical. The choir and nave were often covered with a barrel vault with lunettes, while the aisles had cross vaults and the interiors were late Baroque. The end of the 19th century marked the beginning of the development of modern technology and construction, including sacral construction. More and more churches were built in the spirit of modernism, characterised by austerity of form, simplicity and geometry. Modernist churches exemplified the adaptation of modern architectural style to the Catholic liturgy. Some of the designs of sacred architecture built in the first half of the 20th century occupied an intermediate position between avant-garde and late historicism, less often in the spirit of Art Deco or 20th century classicism. At that time, the main aim of sacred architecture was to create a place for prayer, and the works of art placed there were intended to enhance the beauty of the place.

After the fall of communism in Poland, church architecture began to reflect the changing trends in society. Churches were built that combined traditional elements with modern construction and architectural solutions. Efforts were made to preserve what was characteristic of certain styles from the past, while experimenting with new forms and technologies, preserving what was important and unchanging for religious buildings. As a result of the social changes that were

taking place, churches began to adapt to the prevailing conditions and embarked on a path of transformation. An important element that became popular during this period was the return to minimalism. Churches began to be designed in an ascetic spirit, focusing on functionality and simplicity of form. It was popular at the time for churches to open up to their surroundings and community, becoming more welcoming to all worshippers. Traditional building materials such as stone and brick began to be replaced by reinforced concrete structures, which allowed for individual temple silhouettes. The new technology and materials used then became some of the most important factors in shaping the contemporary style, allowing the creation of unlimited forms. This aesthetic of minimalism is still prevalent in religious architecture today, not only in Poland but throughout Europe.

Contemporary trends in the design of churches in the Lublin metropolitan area, located in the Lubelskie Voivodeship (Figure 1), are quite diverse and reflect a variety of styles from previous eras (Figure 2). The buildings studied are mainly located in the larger towns of the region. Among them we can distinguish both traditional forms of churches with Gothic, Baroque or Neo-Gothic elements, as well as those following modern trends. The last two decades have seen profound changes in the design of sacred architecture, particularly in relation to sustainable design and the use of modern energy sources. Increasingly, churches are being designed that combine traditional architectural elements with original forms in glass or steel. The changing trends reflect the social and spiritual needs of modern people. Churches are becoming more open to the needs of worshippers. They blend into the surrounding landscape, creating places for meditation, meeting and cultural events, and are an important part of the country's culture and heritage.



Figure 1. Map illustrating the study area covering the Lublin Metropolis.
Author's illustration

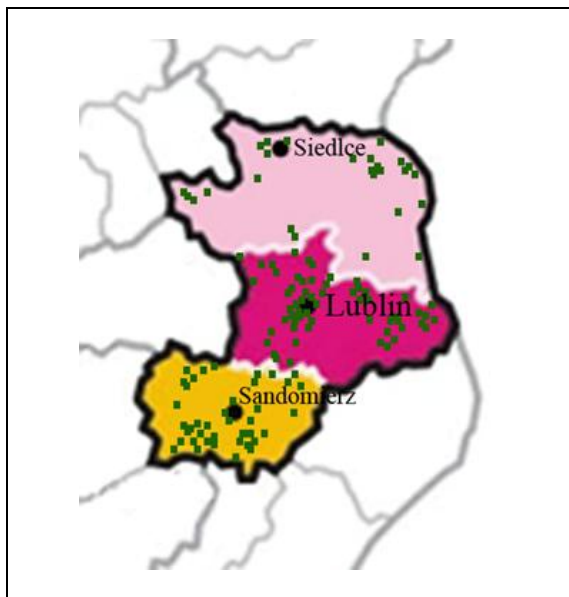


Figure 2. A map illustrating the distribution of churches built after 1989 in the study area. Author's illustration.

3. Literature review

In the past, issues related to sacred architecture were not given much space, but this does not mean that the subject was ignored. Attention was mainly focused on the function that buildings had to fulfil for the faithful [9], with the liturgy being the foundation of the Catholic Church [10]. It was believed that sacred architecture should meet the requirements of promoting prayer, reverence, contemplation, community building and the creation of an atmosphere of remembrance. In this way, these buildings were to be distinguished from other buildings [11, p. 10].

The way churches have been designed since the beginning of history has been linked to their purpose of gathering the faithful and praying. The sacred building is therefore not just architecture, but sanctuary [12, p. 9]. The space of the church is characterised by its elaborate symbolism, which developed particularly in the Middle Ages, especially in the Gothic period. At that time, temples were seen as images of heaven, as described in the New Testament [13, p. 18]. They were seen as a sign of God's presence, and therefore attempts were made to make them stand out from the surrounding buildings by introducing new artistic and architectural forms [14, p. 107].

In recent years there has been a growing interest in trends in sacred architecture, both nationally and locally. Outside the country, research has been carried out into its significance in religious contexts [15, p. 106-107] and its impact on the community of believers [16]. It is also worth mentioning the works of Polish authors dealing with contemporary trends in the Western Church [17], as well as the socio-political transformation in Poland after 1989 in the context of sacred architecture [18]. The state and potential of the Catholic Church in Poland

were also examined [19], as well as how sacred architecture is remembered by future generations [20]. Key practices and theoretical aspects of the design and construction of churches from the last decade of the communist era were described [21]. The impact of sacred assumptions of the twentieth century on the environment and the transformation of the functional and spatial structure of the Kielce urban area is also analysed [22, p. 7]. Attention was also paid to the formation and function of monumental postmodern churches in the space of 1970s and 1980s housing estates [23]. Through their form and functional spatial arrangement, location or decoration, secular buildings have always been carriers of many symbolic meanings and transcendental associations. These transformations have been linked to complex changes at many levels of social life. It is worth mentioning ecology and the use of modern materials and technologies in the construction of churches [24]. The post-war sacral architecture in the Wadowice powiat was researched by Michał Żmuda [25]. The author presented the history of the construction of these buildings, outlining the period in which they were built and the circumstances of their completion. He described the churches built mainly during the communist period, emphasising the social commitment of their builders. The article was the first study devoted to the issues of contemporary sacral architecture in the Wadowice district. It is worth noting that research on the changes in sacral architecture after 1983 in the Lubelskie Voivodeship is still relatively scarce and requires further analysis. It seems important that the design and construction of sacred buildings should meet liturgical requirements, contribute to community building and create an atmosphere of concentration [26].

Sacred buildings, which set the main trends in the history of architecture, can be considered priceless wonders of civilisation. The churches built today have undergone many formal transformations, but their importance as cultural spaces has not diminished. They are among the most visited architectural sites in the world. The Lublin agglomeration is characterised by a long-standing high level of trust in the Church. The above-mentioned characteristics of the region and the population living in it led to the choice of this area as the research area for the study. The choice of this topic is due to the fact that there is a high proportion of Roman Catholic churches in the area, which is directly reflected in the denominational structure of the area [9]. An important reason for taking up this topic was the desire to draw attention to the changing trends in religious architecture as a result of following modernity, changing social needs and preserving tradition. The focus was on buildings that are characterised by a modern approach to form, multifunctionality and uniqueness. These buildings provide an excellent space for art that enriches the spiritual experience of the faithful, and the appearance and functionality of the architecture is an important factor in determining the desire to stay in sacred buildings.

4. Research methods

Of the 792 existing churches in the Archdiocese of Lublin, 128 built after 1989 were selected for analysis. Of these, 32 were built after the year 2000. The

buildings studied were compared with each other, taking into account their location, date of construction and the most important and characteristic features. By collecting and comparing this information, the main results were summarised and presented in the form of graphs.

The primary research method in this study was the analysis of literature sources and archival documentation of churches. A comparison was made between existing sacred buildings built in the last three decades that still have a sacred function, and those that were designed in the past. The research was carried out through visits to selected sites, research on diocesan, deanery and parish websites, interviews with site managers and archival research. Information on parish churches from the Archdiocesan Archive in Lublin, The Diocese of Lublin - Historical and Administrative Guide by Rev. M. T. Zahajkiewicz [27, p. 12-13] and the Clergy and Parish Directory of the Diocese of Siedlce and Sandomierz proved to be important.

5. Results of the research

The silhouettes of churches that stand out in the skylines of modern cities [28] function as centres of faith, characterised by openness and accessibility to all worshippers. They are buildings or complexes of buildings with a complex programme of services that intermingle with residential, study or work zones. The sense of building such places of worship is conditioned by the consciousness of the local community of worshippers.

During the communist period (1944-1989) the whole process of building churches was centralised, which did not allow them to be built outside state structures. A characteristic feature of the Polish nation from this period was the extremely strong link between national affairs and the Church. This was reflected in the care given to religious institutions in terms of funding, expansion and the building of new churches. Churches in this period were usually built using economic methods and financed by donations from the faithful. Churches were then built by the faithful themselves, using the various materials available, which meant that construction often took years. The churches that were built often had austere and modernist forms, in keeping with the other buildings of the period. These buildings were marginalised and their construction was linked to overcoming propaganda and administrative difficulties. New churches were increasingly built on the outskirts of settlements, which limited their size and functional scope. They were built in a hurry, often according to incoherent architectural and urban planning guidelines. As the years went by, larger and larger churches were designed because it was not known when the authorities would grant new building permissions and whether the existing ones would be revoked. As a result, two-storey churches were built so that one floor could be used for worship and to raise funds to complete the other. The increasingly unusual shapes of the religious buildings came from a desire to oppose the monotonous rhythm of the modernist buildings imposed by the authorities. The churches were meant to dominate the rest of the city, to stand out from their surroundings and to surprise with their form and architecture.

In the 1980s, a record number of churches were built in Poland, and their appearance became increasingly different from that of previous churches. This had to do with the relationship between the state and the church at the time, the financing of investments and the prevailing atmosphere in society. Since the collapse of the communist system in Eastern Europe in 1989, we have seen many changes in church building. These include not only the architecture and decoration of churches, but also their functionality and purpose. One trend that took place in the late 1980s was the adaptation of these buildings for new purposes. At that time, many churches lost their original purpose and were converted into museums, libraries, cultural centres or even music clubs. The fact that they have been transformed into modern cultural facilities and used in ways that continue to serve the public seems important. An example of a desecrated church in the Lublin Voivodeship is the current building of the Lublin Cultural Centre on Peowiaków Street, which used to be a convent of the Visitation Sisters. In the inter-war period it was the headquarters of a military hospital and other Polish army institutions. After the Second World War, part of the building was used for the Medical Academy, with lecture halls, laboratories, a prosectorium and a body waxing room. In 1991, the Lublin Cultural Centre was merged with the Lublin Theatre School to form a new institution, the Lublin Cultural Centre. Since 2009, it has been one of the largest municipal cultural and educational institutions in Lublin [M. Federowicz, *Dawny kościół i klasztor wizytek w Lublinie (obecnie Centrum Kultury)* (pol.), Ośrodek Brama Grodzka, accessed online 12.05.2011: <https://teatrnn.pl/lublin-fotografia/dawny-kosciol-i-klasztor-wizytek-w-lublinie>]. Another interesting example of desecration is St Casimir's Church on Bernardyńska Street in Lublin. A modest temple without a tower, it served as a military barracks and a home for the poor in the 19th century. It was later converted into a vodka distillery and then a brewery. At present, the former church building is part of a disused brewery complex owned by the Perła - Browary Lubelskie company [H. Maćcik, *Kościół pw. św. Kazimierza w Lublinie (nieistniejący, ul. Bernardyńska 15)*, accessed online 12.05.2011: <https://teatrnn.pl/leksykon/artykuly/kosciol-pw-sw-kazimierza-w-lublinie-nieistniejacy-ul-bernardyńska-15/#3>]. The historic post-convent complex of the Poor Clares in Zamość has also been converted into a music school, where the former church now serves as a concert hall and the convent houses classrooms [29].

The process of modernising churches has depended on changing social and religious needs as well as the involvement of local communities. Adapting the interior of churches to meet the contemporary needs of worshippers is an important element we have seen in recent years. As technology develops and societal needs change, so do the expectations that worshippers have of places of worship. It is not only the appearance that is changing, but also the facilities within churches, where modern sound systems, lighting or projection screens are being introduced. As a result, secular buildings are becoming more accessible to all worshippers, while also serving as places of social, educational and charitable activity. Churches are centres of help for the poor, shelters for the homeless or venues for cultural events, making them important places of social life.

Religious buildings constructed in the late 1980s tended to be based on an almost square plan with high pitched roofs separated from the masonry massing. Large window openings were introduced, often filled with stained glass or mullions. Above the temples, a monumental or openwork cross of reinforced concrete was placed at the top or above the entrance. Its form was often duplicated in other parts of the temple. They varied in size and the aim was to create a homogeneous, open, unsupported interior space that directed the worshippers' gaze towards the main altar. The 1990s were dominated by temples with an irregular polygonal ground plan. They were characterised by dynamism and a pediment at the front. High windows were used and the interiors tried to follow a strict style. Unlike the churches built in previous years, they had a coherent compositional arrangement. The massing of the buildings was clear and uniform.

The temples of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have a clear plan with a single tower and few window openings. They are characterised by a restrained exterior contrasting with a bright interior. Buildings from this period are often a combination of Baroque, Renaissance and Art Nouveau architecture. There are cruciform, rectangular and elliptical churches with cornices and pilasters. The composition of the whole mass is crowned by a central tower with a belfry or cross. The external façade is usually plastered in red brick, although this is less common. Temples from this period are characterised by a narrow wall of red brick or plastered surfaces. The geometric composition of the architectural details gives the buildings a strongly vertical character. There are simple modernist forms and rosettes above the entrance. In some of the churches, a three-nave basilica with a transept and a separate presbytery was clearly visible. The churches built at that time were located in an area of intense urban development.

At the beginning of the 21st century, churches were built with basilican, cruciform, central or longitudinal layouts. Research outside Poland has shown that the Ronchamp Chapel, designed by Le Corbusier between 1950 and 1955, was the first such innovative and minimalist religious building in Europe. It changed the face of modern ecclesiastical architecture through new forms of external massing and the use of concrete. In Poland, minimalism in religious architecture is rare. Contemporary churches are extremely diverse and multifaceted. They are dominated by the rich surroundings, decoration and ornamentation of the communist period. The urban chaos of the housing estates also encourages 'dubious' neo-style blocks, which are often too large and lack distinctive common features. The new forms of church buildings stand out in the skyline of modern cities. They are multifunctional buildings with a complex programme of uses. They are characterised by religious symbols placed both inside and outside the building. They are less and less monumental, although they still stand out from the rest of the city in terms of architecture and size. The space of the churches is characterised by its openness and accessibility. They are characterised by a complex functional programme that involves the faithful in the activities of the local community. In this respect, the architectural forms of the building complexes have been outlined. Over the years there has been a change in the improvement of their functionality and urban layout. In the past, a church complex included a parsonage, a pastoral centre and rooms for clergy and laity, in addition to the

church. Nowadays, religious buildings consist mainly of a church, often surrounded by a complex of residential buildings.

The churches built in the region in the late 20th and early 21st centuries had very different characteristics. Those built in the 1990s and later (Figure 3a) had a central plan, rectangular or square, irregular, and less often cruciform (Figure 3b). Of the 128 churches surveyed, 108 are single-aisled, while the remaining 20 are three-aisled (Figure 3c). The survey shows that only 4 of these have two towers each, most of which are topped by a single tower or turret, while the remainder have none (Figure 3d). A similar number of churches from this period are rendered on the outside and built of brick, and only a few use a combination of the two materials (Figure 3e). Most churches were topped with a cross, while the interiors were rendered and painted white or ecru colour. Of those built after 2000, a quarter stand out from the rest of the period. They do not have distinctive towers or high roofs, but blend into the urban fabric, resembling modern houses or secular buildings.

Not only were the plans of the buildings different, but also the size and style. The year 1989, which brought radical political and economic changes to Poland, was a great opportunity for architecture. As the years went by, more and more firms appeared, which undertook the construction and realisation of unusual architectural projects. At the same time, design studios began to emerge, often employing young and well-prepared architects. At the end of the 1990s, large development companies began to dominate the construction industry by building as many projects as possible. Buildings from this period therefore surprise with unexpected formal solutions full of hidden meanings. Architects became more willing to use innovative elements and to seek increasingly unusual solutions in their work. It was typical for them to take their cue from what was being built abroad, but also to create their own designs according to the wishes of the clergy and the faithful. These buildings were usually single-nave churches with a high altar and a large entrance. Temples from this period are characterised by their individual and unique character. One such example is the Church of St Andrew Bobola in Lublin (1985-1901) (Figure 4.). The exterior of the building resembles a red brick ship's hull, topped by an openwork cross. The interior is unusual, dark with a predominance of black, blue, gold and red. It is unlike most Roman Catholic churches of the period, which are dominated by white, wood and gold. The body of the building has a central layout, with a single high altar, behind which is the crucified Christ. It is undoubtedly a work characterised by the original language of contemporary art, designed by Dobrosław Baginski. Its unconventionality allows us to discover the uniqueness of this holy place. The artist built the ideological message on the basis of biblical typology. He incorporated the most ancient, often forgotten, codes of Christian symbolism, shown through a theological vision, creating a coherent iconographic programme.

The most beautiful examples of religious architecture from the beginning of the 21st century are diverse in character. In the Church of St Albert Chmielowski in Lublin (2004-2011), the finest details have been carefully worked out. The simple form of the building, with its gabled roof, sophisticated interior architecture and unusual ceiling, impresses with its delicacy and gives the place a

unique character (Figure 5). The small Church of Christ the King in Lublin is striking in its external form and beautifully light interior. The traditional layout has been contrasted with contemporary materials and formal solutions. The plan of the church is based on a square with bell towers and a small tower on the roof. The external façade is mainly of red brick, partly rendered, with a tin roof (Figure 6).

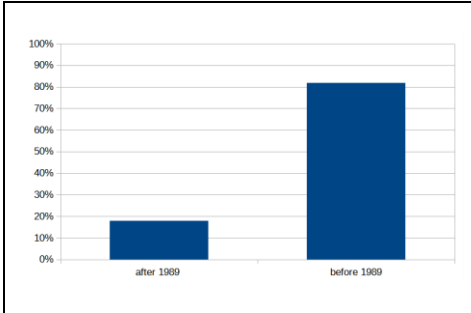


Figure 3a. Chart illustrating the breakdown of the churches surveyed taking into account the years of construction.

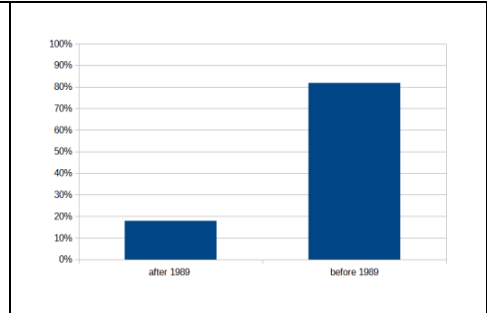


Figure 3b. Diagram illustrating the breakdown of the surveyed churches by plan, plan view.

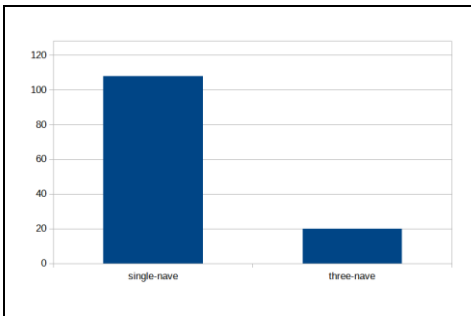


Figure 3c. Chart illustrating the breakdown of the churches surveyed by number of nave.

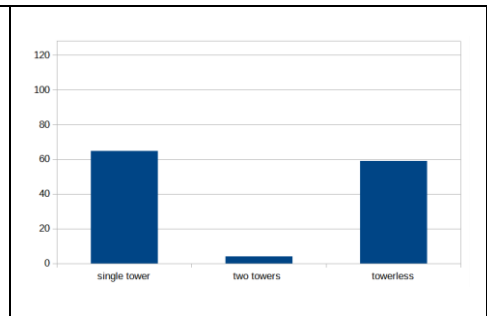


Figure 3d. Diagram illustrating the breakdown of the churches surveyed by the number of towers.

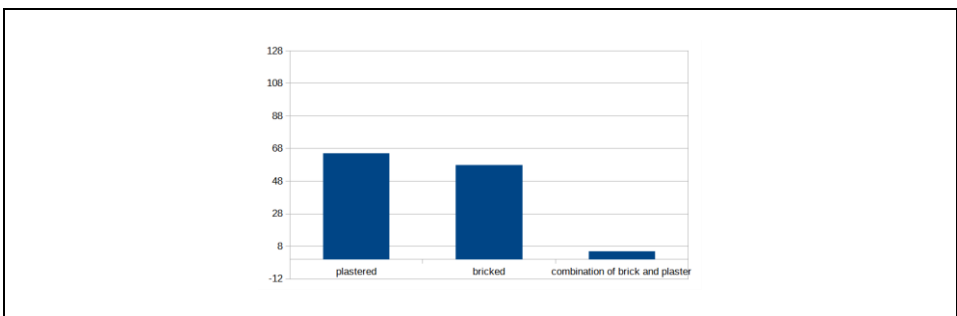


Figure 3e. Chart illustrating the breakdown of the churches surveyed by the type of material used.



Figure 4. St Andrew Bobola Church in Lublin built between 1985 and 1991.
Photograph by the author.



Figure 5. St Albert Chmielowski Church in Lublin built in 1990-1991.
Photograph by the author.



Figure 6. Roman Catholic Parish Church of the Holy Cross in Lublin. Christ the King in Lublin in 2010. Photograph by the author.

Sacral architecture built after 2000 combines elements of ancient art with what is modern and popular. The Church of Our Lady of the Rosary in Lublin (2021-2007), with its tall tower and belfry topped by a cross, is reminiscent of ancient rectangular churches. However, one side of the building is topped by a straight, sloping roof, while the other side is gently shaped like a 'hanging cloth' (Figure 7). The interior of the building, with its unusual wooden ceiling, resembles a huge boat. Like other churches designed in recent years, the interior is dominated by white and gold. There are no heavy chandeliers, which have been replaced by simple LED lighting. The Stations of the Cross are placed on the balustrade of the balcony around the church, depicting each scene of Christ's Passion. Nowadays it is more common for the individual stations to be represented by small reliefs or symbols. Interesting examples from this period are churches that are not high, simple in form and sparsely decorated, whose architecture is only slightly different from the rest of the urban development, as in the case of the parish of St. Padre Pio in Rakowiski (Figure 8).



Figure 7. The Church of Our Lady of the Rosary in Lublin built 2001-2007.
Photograph by the author.



Figure 8. An example of contemporary religious architecture. St Padre Pio Parish in Rakowiski, built in 2019. Photograph by the author.

It is characterised by a simple, light structure, a double-gabled roof without towers, and bright, spacious interiors with a predominance of wood, gold and white. It is significant that churches from this period were designed in collaboration with artists, with decorative elements being an integral part of the architecture. Today, church building is seeing a return to traditional forms from the past, combined with modernity. Brick, concrete and wood, which were not used so often in the past, are being used for construction. It is these materials that create the unique atmosphere of the interior, bringing in light through the use of skylights in the chancel or windows. There was a return to building large churches with basilica-like towers to accommodate as many worshippers as possible (Figure 9).

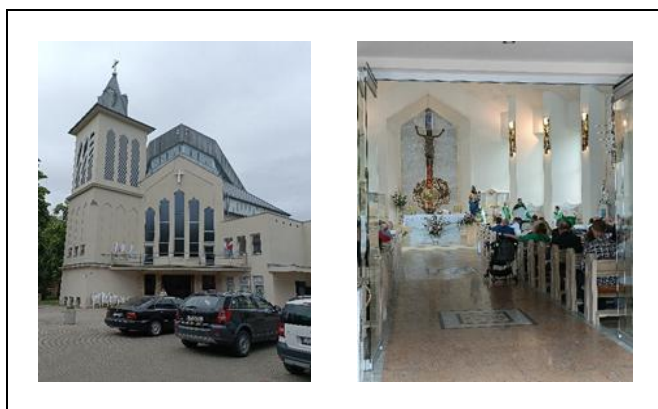


Figure 9. The Roman Catholic Church of Blessed Peter George Frassati built between 2005 and 2020. Photograph by the author.

The introduction of unusual designs of sculpture, painting decoration or polychromy in an unusual way completes the whole, creating a special atmosphere of the interior. The peculiarities of these objects make it possible to absorb the atmosphere of the place, to give peace and to move a person spiritually. Nowadays, the interiors are less decorative, often with vaulted elements and interesting architectural solutions to draw the eyes of the faithful upwards. The sanctuary is usually lower than the aisles, and the rooms are separated by pillars or arcades. The floors are marble or ceramic. The interior is designed so that all the worshippers sitting in the pews can see the high altar. Temples from this period are characterised by an unprecedented variety of artistic forms and a great variety of facades (Figure 10).

Despite the many changes that have taken place in church architecture over the years, certain solutions have remained the same. Some churches retain a traditional, classical character, while others are characterised by the use of innovative solutions. However, the common denominator of all the changes is the concern for the aesthetics, beauty and uniqueness of the place, so that it is conducive to contemplation and prayer. These buildings have become symbols of their time. They influence the consciousness of the faithful through the architectural forms, construction and building solutions used, showing their

independence. Not every temple built during this period is awe-inspiring, but each is in some way appropriate to the time, place and community in which it was built.



Figure 10. Examples of churches under construction in the Archdiocese of Lublin. Church and presbytery under construction - the Parish Church of Blessed Bishop Władysław Goral and the Parish Church of Biskupa Władysław Goral and the Transfiguration of the Lord in Lublin. Photograph by the author.

6. Conclusions

The results of the study show that the trends in the design of sacred architecture in the Lublin metropolis over the last three decades are in line with the general trends in the country as a whole. At the same time, more innovative design solutions for Roman Catholic church architecture were already popular in Western Europe.

The development of church building in Poland between 1945 and 1989 brought a record number of new churches, which began to differ from the popular style of the time. Churches built after 1989, when church building was at its height, are characterised by great diversity. They range from the non-historical, to the non-modern, to the regionally built. The regulations of the time made it very difficult for architects to undertake design commissions. Despite these difficult conditions, many churches were built whose main characteristic was the individual stamp given to them by their creator. Within the modernism and postmodernism that had previously been applied, many solutions were surprising. Especially surprising was the creation of unconventional designs and the extraction of completely new values from the Gothic, Baroque or Classicist traditions from the typical style of forms and materials. These were presented in a peculiar and modern form, creating architecture that was rich in narrative, symbolism and theology. In previous eras, the temples built had their own unique character and style. They were distinguished by their individuality and the prevailing mood was an artistic means of identification. Recurring and recognisable motifs acted as signs and symbols of artistic and aesthetic value in the creation of the sacred. Church buildings played a role similar to and as important as words in prayer, where architectural elements took on meaning and symbolic value.

The year 1989 was a time of political and economic reforms in Poland, which led to personnel and organisational changes in the main state institutions. The building of churches with donations from the faithful allowed them to decide

on their appearance. Rapid economic growth, systemic and economic stabilisation and improved living conditions meant that Polish society began to assert itself in various areas of public life. Years of enslavement and numerous restrictions contributed to the search for novelty and freshness. This was also true of religious architecture, which began to fulfil a social, advisory and communicative function, satisfying people's spiritual and emotional needs. It is impossible to define a single type of building that is characteristic of this period, but there is no doubt that these buildings are a manifestation of faith, originality and individuality.

Summing up the above considerations and taking into account the complexity of historical factors, we can conclude that the trends in contemporary church architecture outlined above give these sacred places an individual character. No two churches from this period are alike. Each is different, unique in shape and form. We can identify certain common features, such as the size, the type of material used, the colour scheme or the presence of permanent religious elements. These temples do not have such characteristic elements as those built in previous eras. However, this gives them a unique appearance and their diversity gives these places of worship an individual identity.

There are currently 792 functioning Roman Catholic churches in the Lublin metropolis, 128 of which were built after 1989. They represent a new type of building, often modelled on European ones, while retaining their own individual character. A significant number of churches built after 2000 are modern, tall buildings that still stand out in the landscape of Polish cities, no longer dominant but still standing out against the background of the remaining urban development.

The modern church, at least on the surface, today allows the architectural community complete freedom to seek a new canon in the development of the vision and form of contemporary churches. However, the solemnity of sacred buildings requires of the designer not only talent, but also mystical sensitivity and creative responsibility to create an atmosphere conducive to concentration and prayer [30, p. 46].

Trends in the design of newly built churches during this period were similar throughout the country. They reflected both current trends in sacred art and design. The fact that a balance was maintained between tradition and modernity seems to have been important. The state of research into the history of ecclesiastical architecture in the region allows several important themes to be identified. Since 1989, Roman Catholic churches have become separate entities. The construction of new churches after this period was fairly smooth. Not only did the number of temples increase, but their functionality also evolved. The above-mentioned studies have made it possible not only to show the trends of ideological and formal change that prevailed at the time, but also to relate them to the processes taking place in society.

In the 1990s, the Church became involved in the country's social and political problems. Today it remains an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Polish nation. It is an important component of identity and the source of many noble social initiatives. Its activities at various institutional levels are public and remain under the close scrutiny of local communities. Today, the Church cannot claim to be the authority of all citizens. However, any changes are reflected in the

architecture created for the faithful, where the process of building Christian churches is an integral part of urbanisation.

At present, church building in our country is at a crossroads, both in terms of its place in public space and in social life. However, this is not an obstacle to the construction of new churches. The forms of contemporary churches continue to reflect the complex cultural reality of which man is the creator. They represent an open and safe space. In designing contemporary churches, architects are faced with the daunting task of building a house of God that is closely integrated into the environment and social life. Today's churches bring order to existing spatial structures and are important public buildings in the city. They stand out artistically and aesthetically, hierarchise the spaces they occupy and enliven the urban fabric.

The analysis of individual objects has made it possible to highlight the changes taking place in sacred architecture. The characteristics of contemporary sacral architecture in the Lublin metropolis outlined in the study show its great diversity and cultural value. These objects constitute an important part of the national heritage, which will remain in the consciousness of future generations for a long time.

Acknowledgement

My sincere thanks for the assistance with this article to, PhD, Piotr Gleń.

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