



ISSN 2223-3822

Szajda, M. (2018). Transposition of sacral space in Poland as a result of desacralization of sacred objects. *Sotsialno-ekonomichni problemy i derzhava* [Socio-Economic Problems and the State] (electronic journal), Vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 214-226. Available at: <http://sepd.tntu.edu.ua/images/stories/pdf/2018/18mssoso.pdf>



## TRANSPPOSITION OF SACRAL SPACE IN POLAND AS A RESULT OF DESACRALIZATION OF SACRED OBJECTS

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### Article history:

Received: April, 2018

1st Revision: April, 2018

Accepted: May, 2018

### JEL classification:

Z0

### UDC:

72.03

### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.33108/sepd2018.01.214>

**Abstract:** *A. Basista, analyzing the status of historic architectural objects, states: "The question, of what is the truth and the morality of architecture, is the most difficult"<sup>1</sup>. It is interesting to see the dependence between the former function of the object and the present or future state. It may be noted that in regard to sacred buildings, it seems important to respect their particular transcendent dimension.*

*The paradigm of sacred architecture abstracts from the typically civilized needs of the inhabitants of cities and villages. Faith exists not only in statu nascendi, but is confirmed by centuries-old tradition. The sacred space is not influenced by time, reminding about it at the same time. It seems that temples exist outside the culture of time and space, obligatory belonging to civilization or being removed from it.*

*Józef Tischner notes that desacralization exists because it is the other side, the reverse of the sacralisation<sup>2</sup>. If a man has an overwhelming desire to sacralize everything he meets and surrounds himself because he feels special, the natural course of things is the reverse process that balances the tendency to reach the good in the world of good and evil. J. Tischner, as a priest, recognizes desacralization, does not reject it, but treats it as a process of reaching the source. He notes that in order to know God, one must first know himself - a man who is the reflection of God. He writes: "The process of desacrification is a marvelous process. I see in it above all a path of man to his own loneliness. The man must finally feel the experience of being alone. He must take responsibility for himself. He*

<sup>1</sup> A. Basista, *Architektura i wartości*, op. cit., p. 377.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. Tischner, *Dialog ze współczesnym światem*, „Znak” 670(2011), [online], [www.miesiecznik.znak.com.pl/3203/3/dialog-ze-wspolczesnym-swiatem](http://www.miesiecznik.znak.com.pl/3203/3/dialog-ze-wspolczesnym-swiatem), dated 2.08.2017.



Szajda, M. Transposition of sacral space in Poland as a result of desacralization of sacred objects [Електронний ресурс] / Mariusz Szajda // Соціально-економічні проблеми і держава. — 2018. — Вип. 1(18). — С. 214-227. — Режим доступу до журн.: <http://sepd.tntu.edu.ua/images/stories/pdf/2018/18mssoso.pdf>



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*must agree that he is free. And in that sense, he has to say goodbye to various deities that restrict him. Often this farewell to deities looks like laicism, like atheism. And in my opinion, in this desacralization there is a hand of God"<sup>3</sup>.*

*The contemporary blurring of two opposing tendencies of sacralization and desacralization is an immanent feature in statu nascendi. This process demonstrates the quality of life and the possibility of discourse on confrontational issues that can be identified with dialogue between tradition and modernity. Homo religiosus and homo futurus should not fight for purely pragmatic reasons: Every fight leads to destruction, and none of the above human tendencies consequently cares about decay, but on the continuity. Therefore, the dialogue of opponents and followers of the actual presence of the sacred sphere in public life seems so important in everyday life. Nevertheless, in the process of desacralization associated with the transposition of sacred buildings, it is important to find a new function for the object that will not be in complete opposition to its original purpose. Therefore, adaptations, aimed at initiating functions related to the promotion of a broadly understood culture, appear to be as legitimate as possible. The major effect of the changes is, above all, the protection of the historic building tissue against their further degradation.*

*The Catholic Church in Poland, having a centuries-long tradition and merit for the cultivating of cultural values, seems to be able to educate in a significant way on the promotion of such values, which will allow to bring them a new life on the social level in the face of devastation. It should be noted, however, that the sacrum in the public sphere is manifested not only by the implementation of the typically religious function of certain architectural objects, but also by the promotion of all values associated with it. One of them is certainly building, through good art, both visual and musical, the space of development of culture open to transcendence.*

**Key Words:** *desacralization, transposition, architecture, sacred objects, function.*

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In recent times, trends to overturn traditional principles are becoming more and more noticeable, which is due to various reasons, starting from the worldview, through utilitarian, to the aesthetic ending. In other words, the architecture of the 20th and 21st centuries is more boldly transposing in the sacral area, causing *expressis verbis* a dramatic change in the character of the utilized buildings. A particular importance is attributed to historic sacred buildings, which are an example of the universal transformation of sanctuaries, causing their invariance, while at the same time prolonging the vitality of the public space. Already Vitruvius pointed out that the architecture should meet three basic objectives: durability, utility, and beauty (*firmitas, utilitas, venustas*)<sup>4</sup>. As can be imagined, religious urban planning in a particular way assumes this objectives.

Desacralization as a sociological-religious phenomenon refers to the collectivity and transferring the accent from the *sacrum* to the *profanum*. The scale of this phenomenon and

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<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Witruwiusz, *O architekturze ksiąg dziesięć*, trans. K. Kumaniecki, pub. Prószyński i S-ka, Warsaw 2004, p. 32.

the intensity with which it is made are particularly evident in Western European countries. Also in Poland, the process of transposing sacred objects into a public utility objects has its place. Speaking of desacralization in architecture, attention is most often drawn to depriving the object of sacred function and giving it a new secular one. In the philosophical plane one can speak of the profanation of the sacred space, that is, the extension of the *profanum* to the *sacrum* realm and the deprivation of the sacred dimension from this reality. It would be a question of whether such alarming secularization should be treated in terms of danger or whether it is a chance for a new quality that is not opposed to the religion.

It seems that the subject should be approached erstatically. If there is a need to abandon the use of buildings for religious worship (for example, because of the reduction of the number of believers), this very fact is not a threat in the strict sense because there is no faith without its believers and vice versa - when there are no believers, it is difficult to talk about the space of faith. Such religiousness should be treated as serving to man. In turn, the development of the devastating and degrading temple can paradoxically serve the often-historic tissue of a sacred building.

In Poland, the Roman Catholic Church plays a leading role in the religious field. Its dominant role arises primarily from the historical conditions and the centuries-long promotion of this type of spirituality. Nevertheless, also in the space of the Christian religion in our country nowadays it comes to the desacralization of sacred objects. To a large extent, this applies to Protestant temples in western Poland which until the Second World War belonged to the German state dominated by the aforementioned fraction of Christianity. In Poland, there are also many sacred buildings which reconstruction for various reasons was abandoned after the destruction of war. Both the deserted churches and the destroyed ones have become a call for local communities. Questions are asked today not only about what to do with these objects, but also what are the boundaries of the desacralization of sacred buildings. On the one hand, it is important to recognize the role that the Christian Church played in the process of Polish lands sacralization and, on the other hand, to find indications of the transposition of sacred objects in Poland in the perspective of the changes that have already taken place in this regard.

### **Catholic Church in Poland as a carrier of patriotism and culture**

Christian religion developed in the space of the church, since the time of Constantine the Great<sup>5</sup>, was considered to be equal with the existing pagan beliefs. For almost 1,700 years, it is consistently developing in the urban area, gathering both land and raising buildings for religious worship. Issued by Constantine the Great in 312, the Edict of Milan not only ended the persecution period, but also allowed the freedom of practicing the faith and the return of estates occupied by the empire<sup>6</sup>. As a result of the expansion, the Church played a primary

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Constantine the Great (272 - 337) was the son of St. Helena and Emperor Constantius Chlorus. After the death of his father, he was in 306 condemned by the army the Emperor of the West. He married Maximilian's daughter, Fausta. In 308, he called himself an Augustus. In the period of his rule, he has conducted numerous reforms to strengthen his power. His particular achievement was the publication of the edict of freedom of religion in Milan in 313. Despite tolerance to traditional beliefs, its support gave Christianity a privileged position in the state and greatly accelerated the Christianization of the Empire. He saw in the Church the power to consolidate the state. In addition, he was the founder of the first great basilica: of St. Peter in the Vatican in Rome or the Tomb of the Lord in Jerusalem. He probably was baptized on the death bed. One of his most important decisions was the establishment of the second capital of the Empire, Constantinople, called New Rome. Cf. J. Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, pub. Routledge, London 1949; N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2006, p. 59; R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. 100-400*, Yale University Press, New Haven - London 1984, p. 44; G. T. Armstrong, *Constantine's Churches: Symbol and Structure*, „The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians” (1974)33, pp. 5-16; A. Cameron, S. G. Hall, *Life of Constantine*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Excerpts from the Edict of Milan: "So we have decided to give Christians and all others the freedom to profess the religion they want, so as for us as well as for all under our rule, a Divinity exists in the heavenly capital as the purpose of prayers and the source of mercy.(...) We have decided Your Thoughtfulness as best as possible make aware, to you know that we have given these Christians a free and ruthless capacity to profess their religion. When you find out that we have allowed this, you understand, your Grace, that also for others, free and open, was granted the opportunity in our peaceful times to choose the object of worship, because in no way we want to offend or dishonor anybody or any religion. Moreover, we decide for the Christians that the places in which they had been gathered before, and which also in the earlier writings were mentioned to your office, shall be returned to them free of charge, without any compensation, without any delay or

role in shaping modern European society, and subsequently also the global one. The Christian worldview, already dominating nearly two thousand years ago, has set the framework for everyday life and politics, and has prepared the long-term plans for civilization development. At the time of the greatest Christian founder, as Constantine the Great was called by the history, Christ's followers naturally began to occupy the space left by the Greek and Roman mythological gods. In this way, many pagan temples, changing their character and decor, have been preserved in their original form, presenting a living remembrance and at the same time a work of architectural art<sup>7</sup>. There is no doubt that, due to the distant period of the construction, all material monuments, including the architectural ones, take on a unique value, purely of a museum character, but also of aesthetic and ethical nature. An example of this is the transposition of the Roman Pantheon from the pagan temple dedicated to the seven deities to the Christian church.

Also when analyzing the development of Polish statehood, one can find the important role of the Church in shaping its identity. Therefore, it must be stated that Christianity in Poland is undoubtedly a success story in both the sphere of spirit and the matter. Thanks to the Christian religion, it became possible to count the Polish state as a European power. It was precisely thanks to diplomatic and far-sighted treatment, the adoption of the Baptism in 966 by Mieszko I marriage to the Czech Dobrawa<sup>8</sup>. Also, we should not forget about the Church's role in maintaining the nationality and spirit of the liberation struggle as a result of the partitioning which lasted more than one hundred and twenty-three years<sup>9</sup>. Standing on guard for motherland memorabilia, Polish speech, and Catholic faith, the Church has permanently built its personal and material facilities. This construction sometimes had a very dynamic dimension, sometimes involving the expansion of goods and the building of new centers of worship, but also the loss of buildings and lands raised over centuries.

This, what by the centuries constituted the mission and strength of the Church, was undoubtedly the evangelization and associated process of the promotion of spiritual values. One of the fruits of the mission of the Church, apart from the conversion of the believers, was the development of culture. Its visible sign was the development of architecture and art. It can be said that they were to become a weapon in the struggle for human souls. Spiritual values were a foundation of the progress of architecture. Among them undoubtedly the most valuable were the worship given to God and the spirit of piety. The visual aspect was not only to raise human eyes and hearts toward God, but also to promote in the world a special position of the Church as a carrier of true faith.

At the time of the Baptism adoption in 966, Poland has taken place in the great European Christian family, after the Reformation - in the Catholic one. The more than millennial history of the Church in the Republic of Poland is consistent with Catholic doctrine, which can not be said of the reformed Church of the West. The authority of the Catholic Church was aided, paradoxically, by the tragic history of the Polish nation: the danger of Islamization of Europe from the Turkish-Tatars site (Poland became a bulwark of Christianity), over 100 years of partition, First and Second World War, postwar times of communism<sup>10</sup>. In analyzing the turbulent history of Poland, it can be noted that "the Polish people in their patriotic feelings have worked out the great love of national liberty and for this ideal, it did not retreat in its history from any sacrifice. No measure of blood was too great for it when it came to the defense of a great idea: the Freedom of the faith of Christ, the political freedom of other nations, and the independence of one's own"<sup>11</sup>. The believers of the Catholic Church in Poland in the first place put up the triad of values: God, honor, homeland. The term

hesitation, even if they were sold or by our treasure, or by anyone else" - J. Czuj, *Pisma Ojców Kościoła*, vol. XVI, pub. Uniwersyteckie, Poznań 1933, pp. 73-75.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. Basista, *Architektura i wartości*, pub. Universitas, Kraków 2009, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. S. Rosik, P. Wiszewski, *Księga królów i książąt polskich*, pub. Dolnośląskie, Wrocław 2007, pp.18 – 21.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 285 – 288.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. Pilikowski, *Szkolny słownik historii Polski*, pub. Zielona Sowa, Kraków 2002, p. 81.

<sup>11</sup> W. Babicz (ed.), *Dzieje Kościoła polskiego*, vol. IX, pub. Oficyna Wydawnicza DRUCK, Poznań 2001, p. 33.

"semper fidelis" appeared on votive deposit, crosses, and medallions as a sign of faith and a testimony of the promotion of Christian ideas.

The Church in Poland, despite the variability of history, has always been guarding Christian and national values. It was an oasis of patriotism, a refuge for the needy, a spiritual and material aid; it hyperbolizes the martyrization if required by the historical necessity. Religious people, treating their work as a mission, felt the burden of responsibility for culture, language, and national heritage. It was thanks to them that the uprising families in 1830 or 1863 were able to rise from the fall, often financially, as a result of the seizure of estates and deportations to Siberia<sup>12</sup>. The Church was then an advocate of Polish education and health care. As J. Pilikowski adds: "At not any point in captivity, Poland did not consider its own affairs to be complete, but from the time of signing the partition judgment it continued to protest against this violation. The protest was as strong and deep as is the feeling of the Polish heart. Everything, what could be born of this heart, took a living part in this protest: clanging of a weapon, living and writing word, poetry and prose, tones of a musical instrument, sculptor's chisel, and a brush of national genius went on a contest to provoke the just judgment of the nations by a scream against a harm made to us, and to restore the Homeland its right to independent existence"<sup>13</sup>. So it was the unshakeable faith of the Poles in the power of God and the unity of the threatened community that became a weapon of struggle for freedom and justice. As a result, all the hopes of regaining political freedom were also closely linked to the love to the cross as a sign of victory.

Due to the socio-political situation in the 19th century, the fate of sacral architecture in Poland ceased to be a priority not only for the occupying forces, but also for the Polish nation. As Krzysztof Stefański writes: "The January Uprising and its repercussions interrupted the development of church construction in the Russian Partition for several years. The construction of many churches has been suspended for several years, and in Lithuania and so-called Taken Lands where the czarism used the uprising for the systematic persecution of Polishness, the construction of some objects could not be renewed until the beginning of our century"<sup>14</sup>. This stagnation of the development of the sacred architecture that lasted for many years was a time of unity of national liberation values with spiritual values. The hope for freedom grew on the ground of cultivated religious faith, the primary carrier of which was the Church.

In the seventies of the 19th century, an increase in the number of sacred buildings was observed, probably due to the demographic explosion in the lands of the Russian Partition and the economic progression associated with peasant emancipation and proletarian capitalism. However, as K. Stefański notes, the emergence of new buildings was often linked to the liquidation of old wooden buildings: "The massive expansion of new temples, however, also had negative effects. The victims of this were numerous old, especially wooden churches, sometimes of great historical value. They were willingly replaced, not always perfectly reasonably, by new magnificent buildings of "rural cathedrals", as they were later ironically called - whose artistic value was often questionable"<sup>15</sup>. However, it was the time of the beginning of the end of the Partitions was important for the creation of the Polish national style of sacred architecture. There was a nationwide discussion on the trends of church buildings, and it was even strongly assisted by organizing competitions in the field of architectural drawing. At least two persons of Warsaw art critics and publicists can be mentioned who were the cornerstone of what could be called a native style: Karol Matuszewski and Franciszek Ksawery Martynowski<sup>16</sup>. The other one saw the national sacral architecture in the perspective of the European space, that is, the one that would correspond

<sup>12</sup> Cf. J. Pilikowski, *Szkolny słownik historii Polski*, op. cit., pp. 237 – 250.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>14</sup> K. Stefański, *Polska architektura sakralna w poszukiwaniu stylu narodowego*, pub. University of Łódź, Łódź 2002, p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 28.

to the tendencies of the epoch. In turn, K. Matuszewski, while avoiding Europeanization, encouraged to homeliness<sup>17</sup>. Thus, the style of Gothic of Vistula and Baltic was born<sup>18</sup>. It seems that the mentioned period in the history of sacral architecture in Poland belongs to the most fertile and creative. Unfortunately, this time was brutally interrupted by the outbreak of World War I. Paradoxically, this event has become the beginning of the new Second Republic of Poland. In the interwar period in Poland developed the trend of creating modern architecture in the international style. Founded at the Warsaw University of Technology, the Faculty of Architecture, set the tone that crystallized architectural directions of the interwar Poland<sup>19</sup>.

The Catholic Church, in its history, has a very rich, real martyrdom among clergy and secular believers<sup>20</sup>. The literature of the Church often mentions many of those who died in defense of the possibility of celebrating the Holy Mass in Polish churches. The suffragan bishop of Sandomierz, Paweł Kubicki, on the thirty-seven pages of the martyrdom of the Roman Catholic clergy and of believers in the Prussian and Russian Partitions, mentions the names of several thousand priests who died for the faith<sup>21</sup>. The situation of the Polish clergy was as dramatic as the whole Polish nation. But it was the priests who, by their example, strengthened the national spirit. However, the bishop Kubicki's list does not end, because the Nazi night of the occupation along with the Soviet communist authorities are increasing the list of the next few thousand. Here we also have to mention the victim and the symbol - Maximilian Kolbe, who died in martyrdom in a hunger bunker, giving his life for a prisoner<sup>22</sup>.

At the end of World War II, between 1945 and 1989, the decision to build more churches or chapels was given by the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR). For the Polish nation and the church, it was a time of persecution and trial. The period most favorable to the Church was the situation that has been formed at the turn of 1956/1957 due to the so-called thaw. At that time, communist authorities issued more than 200 permits for the construction of sacred buildings. Unfortunately, some of these permits were withdrawn shortly after this time, which caused great tension between the Church and the government, and even conflicts with the believers, such as in Nowa Huta<sup>23</sup>. By the year 1970, about 300 new churches were built. However, it must be remembered that a great many of them had historical roots and belonged to a certain class of monuments. The situation changed radically when the movements of workers' strikes allowed for the creation of trade unions. It can be said that in the 1980s there was an irreversible breakthrough in issuing permits and obtaining permission to erect temples. After the martial law period, new religious buildings were built. The believers, longing for fresh breath after the communist partitions, felt an inner imperative to thank God for changes in their homeland. The churches were made up of donations, social activities, and with a great help from the Western Europe. It was impossible to stop religion where it was suppressed by force and was a supply base for freedom. In particular, the Polish people, from whom the then Pope John Paul II was born, had special prerogatives for the urban planning of the Catholic Church. It was then that most of the temples were built, and they were filled with the believers. In just four years (1984-1988), an incredible number of more than 460 churches and 600 chapels were put into use, and next

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> More broadly, the Vistula-Baltic style has been analyzed by: A. Majdowski, *Nurt narodowy w architekturze sakralnej Królestwa Polskiego od drugiej połowy XIX wieku*, in: *Idem, Studia z historii architektury sakralnej w Królestwie Polskim*, pub. Neriton, Warsaw 1993, pp. 101-156.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A. Miłobędzki, *Zarys dziejów architektury w Polsce*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warsaw 1978, pp. 311 – 312.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. W. Babicz, (ed.), *Dzieje Kościoła polskiego*, vol. VII, Oficyna Wydawnicza DRUCK s. c., Poznań 2001, pp. 295.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. L. Rogier, R. Aubert, M. Knowles (ed.), *Historia Kościoła*, vol. V, pub. PAX, Warsaw 1984, p. 82: "The Russian authorities reacted very sharply to the support for the insurgents provided by a part of the lower clergy, and above all by the monks, often without the knowledge of their superiors. More than 400 priests were deported to Siberia, 114 of the 197 existing monasteries were closed, resulting in a decrease in the number of monks during ten years (1864-1874) from 1638 to 264. Irrespective of this, there appeared prohibitions of processions and pilgrimages, which played such an important role in popular piety, police surveillance of sermons was increased, and in some cases even over confession. The repetitive protests of Pius IX have only aggravated the situation so much that the government (Russian) did not allow even Polish bishops to take part in the Vatican Council".

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 595.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. N. Davies, *Europa. Rozprawa historyka z historią*, pub. Znak, Kraków 2010, p. 1140.

thousand churches were under construction.

After the election of the Polish Pope, Karol Wojtyła, Poland became a kind of axis mundi, and our compatriot's advances on such a prominent position contributed to a large extent to shedding the yoke of the Soviet captivity. The period of John Paul II, Norman Davies sums up with the words: "It was always a pope of wide horizons and great compassion. In the West, he entered the Anglican cave in Canterbury; he personally pleaded for peace in Ireland. In the East, he played a very important role in his native Poland, undermining the foundations of communism by the power of his personality and support for the idea of human rights. He assisted the persecuted Lithuanians and Uniate Ukrainians; he declared his respect for the Orthodox Church. For the enslaved peoples of the Soviet bloc, he became the surest light of hope, shining from the West. Despite resistance from the Russian Orthodox Church, which boycotted the invitation to the synod of bishops of Europe (1991), he managed to bring the East to the West. He deeply engaged in the work of integrating both Christian and ecumenical Europe"<sup>24</sup>. The Polish Pope became a renewal of the Church as well as its great reformer. He sought above all to respect human dignity, family law, and ecumenism between Christian religions.

The Church in Poland, through its social involvement in the communism period, was somehow associated with certain political backgrounds. Of course, the determinant was the martyrological history which took place until the founding of the Independent Self-governing Labour Union "Solidarity" movement in 1980. At present, the Church is not free from the so-called pigeonholing and, depending on a political option, it is described as ultra-right-wing, right-wing or extreme right-wing. It is true, however, that the Church as an institution, having gathered sacred power in its hands, has a special influence on the secular part, especially since the supporters of the Church often participate actively in social and political life. Today, in addition to strictly political objections, the Church in Poland must also face internal problems of morality.

Despite many problems, the Church in Poland does not suffer the effects of ostracism as is the case in Protestant churches in the West of Europe. Relation of the believers to religion is certainly institutionalized, although sanctified by the generational tradition and largely by social intolerance to the neglect of religious values. However, more and more situations are encountered where sacred objects cease to fulfill their original function. There are many reasons for doing so in Poland. The most important is the disappearance of the inhabitants of small towns or ruins of which nobody wants to take care of their renovation.

### **Examples of desacralization of sacred objects in Poland**

Catholicism in Poland, in comparison with other religions in Western European countries, seems to be quite stable. Attachment to faith is immanently linked to the history of our country. In other words, the Catholic religion in Poland is so good that the possible transfunctionality of the temples mostly involves buildings not belonging to a Catholic religious group in Christianity or simply other religions' buildings.

Despite considerable care for historic buildings in Poland, there are still many ruins of churches that have served as prayer houses for centuries. An example may be found in the Lubuskie Voivodeship, the ruin of the parish church in Gubin (Fig.1). Dating back to the 13th century, the temple was originally built in the Romanesque style as a three-nave basilica with a rectangular chancel finished with an apse, probably dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene<sup>25</sup>. It should be noted that from the original structure of the church preserved are brick walls of the corps and presbytery made of double stretcher brick bond.

After the fire that took place in the 16th century, the church was rebuilt in Gothic style,

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 1150.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. A. Małachowicz, *Koncepcja rewitalizacji fary w Gubinie. Próba wykorzystania energii słonecznej w procesie adaptacji zabytkowego kościoła na centrum kultury i komunikacji*, „Czasopismo inżynierii lądowej, środowiska i architektury” 62(2015)2, p. 291.

while the final form was obtained in 1844. Unfortunately, during World War II the temple was almost completely destroyed and never rebuilt.



**Fig. 1. Ruins of the parish church in Gubin<sup>26</sup>**

At present, works are being carried out to adapt the facility to the Gubin Center for Culture and Communication on the basis of the architectural design project of Heinle, Wicher und Partner from Wrocław (Fig. 2-3.). The project essentially presupposes the preservation of the existing historic monolith of the church. However, the House of Culture located in the interior will be modern and simple in its form, and made of materials that clearly contrast the preserved brick substance in terms of both color and texture. The House of Culture will be covered with a transparent light roof through which you will be able to see the structure of the building. The frame will be closed by a translucent membrane, thanks to which will be possible the penetration of the historic tissue of the church with the interior of the House of Culture. The new building will have new functions: tourist, cultural, and communal. Other than its previous destiny, however, it does not stand in opposition to the original foundation of the building. The new life of the church building will cause the cultural value will also refer to the transcendent dimension, the original foundation of the building.



**Fig. 2. Project of the House of Culture in Gubin<sup>27</sup>**

<sup>26</sup> City church ruins in Gubin, Lubusz Voivodeship, Poland, [online]: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruiny\\_ko%C5%9Bcio%C5%82a\\_farnego\\_w\\_Gubinie#/media/File:Niederlausitz\\_08-13\\_img12\\_Gubin\\_\(PL\).jpg](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruiny_ko%C5%9Bcio%C5%82a_farnego_w_Gubinie#/media/File:Niederlausitz_08-13_img12_Gubin_(PL).jpg), 12.08.2017.

<sup>27</sup> Project of the House of Culture in Gubin, in: Ronet.Architectural Portal, [online]: [http://www.a-ronet.pl/index.php?mod=nagroda&n\\_id=3262](http://www.a-ronet.pl/index.php?mod=nagroda&n_id=3262), 12.04.2017.



**Fig. 3. Project of the House of Culture in Gubin, the interior<sup>28</sup>**

Thus, the cultural heritage of the ancient temples can still be used, though in a modified than the original form. The religious and sacred sphere was renamed to the cultural only.

Another example of the adaptation already made is the Art Center Gallery EL in Elbląg, functioning de facto as a palimpsest of memory in the original Dominican Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The first solid of the building was built in the middle of the 13th century. The oldest part of the building, coming from approx. 1246 or 1248, is the chancel, sacristy, and two annexes adjoining the western side<sup>29</sup>. In 1504, the church burned down, but it was rebuilt ten years later, and then the net vaults of the nave emerged. In the middle of the 16th century, the church was handed over to the Evangelical Church (Fig. 4.). During the Second World War, the Germans used the building as a shelter and thus the church and the adjacent monastery were destroyed in 1945. The temple was rebuilt after 1959 and devoted to cultural purposes.



**Fig. 4. View of Evangelical church in Elbląg<sup>30</sup>**

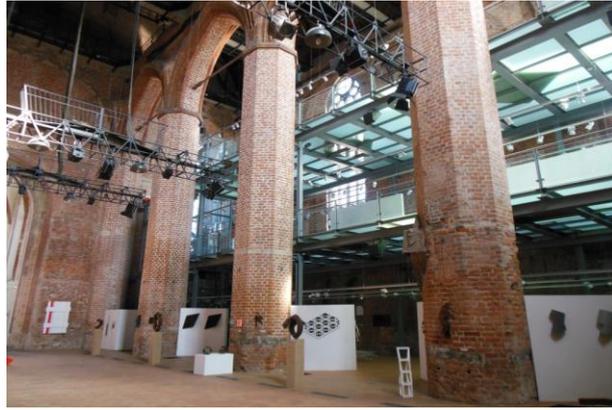
The change of the original function of the sacred building and its associated desacrification as a consequence has helped to save the original historic tissue of the church. To this day, for over half a century, the historic architecture works well with the urban and environmental space of the Elbląg residents, being a kind of showcase of the city.

The Art Center Gallery EL in Elbląg (Fig. 5.), since its inception, has become a major center of cultural life in the city. Due to its origin, which is visible explicite in the existing architecture, the building has now become an important tourist attraction.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

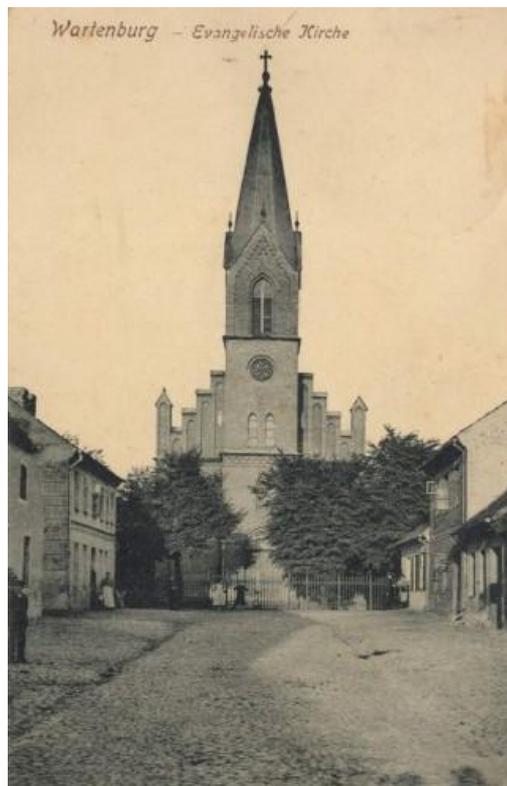
<sup>29</sup> Cf. Old Church, in: the Art Center Gallery EL, [online]: <http://www.galeria-el.pl/dawny-kosciol.html>, 12.07.2017.

<sup>30</sup> Evangelical church in Elbląg, [online]: [http://www.galeria-el.pl/tl\\_files/galeria/pliki/dokumenty/zdjecia\\_historia/Klasztor/gallery30.jpg](http://www.galeria-el.pl/tl_files/galeria/pliki/dokumenty/zdjecia_historia/Klasztor/gallery30.jpg), 12.05.2017.



**Fig. 5. Interior of the Art Center Gallery EL in Elbląg<sup>31</sup>**

Similar to Elbląg, however, on a smaller scale, took place the desecration of the former Protestant church in Barczewo, in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (Fig. 6.). The church was built in 1871 as a neo-Gothic one-nave building, with bright brick and covered with a gable roof<sup>32</sup>. The front elevation was topped with a stepped peak with pinnacles on the sides. The tower, built at the church, measures 30 meters. After 1945, the church was abandoned by the post-war resettlement of the German population and became the property of the state. Over time, the temple underwent further destruction and only in the years 2012-2013 was saved from further devastation. This was accomplished by transposing the former Evangelical church to the Treasury of European Culture (Fig. 7.).



**Fig. 6. Evangelical church in Barczewo<sup>33</sup>**

<sup>31</sup> Interior of the Art Center Gallery EL in Elbląg, [online]: <http://www.maszwolne.pl/zobacz/Centrum-Sztuki-Galeria-EL-w-Elblagu-1259>, 12.05.2017.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. A. Markowicz, *Perły Barczewa. Skarby kultury europejskiej – były kościół ewangelicki*, „Barczewskie Wiadomości” 276(2017)6, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Evangelical church in Barczewo, [online]: <http://historia.luter2017.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/11/barczewo-1-322x500.jpg>, 12.05.2017.



**Fig. 7. Treasury of European Culture in Barczewo (now)<sup>34</sup>**

In this case, the change of function that occurred in the object resulted in protection of the building from further devastation and degradation. Although its original religious values have not been restored, however, the change of use of the building has created a space for spreading the widely understood culture. It seems that the transformation has returned the object to a higher value referring a man through art to the metaphysical direction.

Despite many worldviews and social changes taking place in Poland in the last twenty-five years, the sale of sacred buildings, which had until recently functioned and were abandoned because of the departure of believers from the faith, is generally rare. These offers, that sometimes appear, generally concern real estate which belonged to other non-Catholic religious groups and have been forwarded to the local government. Although they are essentially historic buildings, they are often devastated and require a large amount of funding for regeneration. Therefore, it seems that the secularisation of sacred buildings in Poland takes place in a completely different way than in Western Europe. This situation can be optimistic because the universal tendency to change the function of sacred buildings, that prevail in many European countries, is becoming worrying.

Despite all, there is quite a lot sacred buildings in Poland put up for sale. It should be noted that the church exhibited for sale has certainly been previously deconsecrated and most often do not perform a primary function for more than a dozen years or even several decades. In the era of hedonistic advertising, when you can buy and sell almost everything, owners of this type of property of sacral-historic nature, that is, most local governments, want most often get rid of expensive to maintain buildings which often are under a conservator of monuments. The low selling price is to encourage potential buyers, who must have a right idea for a new architectural image. In addition, a bad technical condition which requires continuous repairs due to the age of the object cause the owner to be exposed to significant costs.

In Poland religious properties, in which religious ceremonies have been held, so far do not raise much enthusiasm among potential buyers. An example of unfinished transfunctionality is the stone post-Protestant church in Łądek Zdrój from 1846<sup>35</sup>. Since 1946, it is completely deserted, subject to degradation (Fig. 8.). The municipality was obliged to maintain it, which resulted in the lack of professional care of the monument and consequently the fire in 1999. Unfortunately, lack of the idea of the development of the object results in a

<sup>34</sup> Treasury of European Culture in Barczewo, [online]:

[http://www.modernizacjaroku.org.pl/File/Section/image/objects\\_letap\\_2015/274\\_Barczewo\\_skarbiec\\_kultury\\_europejskie.jpg](http://www.modernizacjaroku.org.pl/File/Section/image/objects_letap_2015/274_Barczewo_skarbiec_kultury_europejskie.jpg), 12.05.2017.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Evangelical church (ruins), in: *Wratislaviae Amici*, [online]: [https://dolny-slask.org.pl/514865,Ladek\\_Zdroj,Kosciol\\_ewangelicki\\_ruiny.html](https://dolny-slask.org.pl/514865,Ladek_Zdroj,Kosciol_ewangelicki_ruiny.html), 12.05.2017.

further destruction of the remaining tissue of the historic church.



**Fig. 8. Post-Protestant church in Łądek Zdrój<sup>36</sup>**

Similarly is in Izbica Kujawska, where the more than a hundred years old neo-Gothic, dating from 1909, Evangelical church is waiting for a new owner<sup>37</sup>. The private owner originally bought it for the purpose of demolition and reuse of brick material, but the refusal of the conservator of the monuments caused the building to continue to deteriorate due to a lack of ideas for its future. Another example is the situation of a sacred building in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship, where in the village of Piotrowo the mayor of the municipality is looking for a buyer for a historic church from the 19th century which has the status of a monument. The council of the municipality expresses a clause according to which a new owner should arrange a cultural institution in the church. This also results in a low price offered for the purchase of the building - only 50 000 PLN. However, for the proposed status quo to undertake so probably unprofitable activity and, at the same time, to be obliged to take care of the proper state of usability and security of the building, there are no willing. Similarly, in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship, in the village of Śliwice, the municipality seeks a purchaser of a 19th-century Evangelical church, which just after the war ceased to fulfill its sacred function. The building was not deteriorated in the post-war years, it has been destined for the warehouse. The above examples help to realize both the size and the need for secularization of temples. It turns out that it is not so easy in Poland, with the current status quo, to sell a church.

### **Appendix A. Supplementary material**

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at <http://sepd.tntu.edu.ua/images/stories/pdf/2018/18mssoso.pdf>

### **Funding**

The authors received no direct funding for this research.

### **Citation information**

Szajda, M. (2018). Transposition of sacral space in Poland as a result of desacralization of sacred objects. *Sotsialno-ekonomichni problemy i derzhava* [Socio-Economic Problems and the State] (electronic journal), Vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 214-226. Available at: <http://sepd.tntu.edu.ua/images/stories/pdf/2018/18mssoso.pdf>

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<sup>37</sup> B. Nowicki, *Parafia ewangelicko – augsburska w Izbicy Kujawskiej. Zarys historii parafii*, in: Izbica Kujawska online, [online]: [http://izbica-kujawska.com/informacje/parafia\\_ewangelicka\\_historia.php](http://izbica-kujawska.com/informacje/parafia_ewangelicka_historia.php), 12.05.2017.

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Socio-Economic Problems and the State (ISSN: 2223-3822) is published by Academy of Social Management (ASM) and Ternopil Ivan Pul'uj National Technical University (TNTU), Ukraine, Europe.

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