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DOGMA, CANON, TRADITION – RESOURCES OF CONTEMPORARY SACRED ARCHITECTURE

1. THE CRISIS

1.1. A GENERAL VIEW OF ECCLESIASTICAL SPACE

If Christian religious architecture is currently in crisis, then one of the main issues in this crisis touches upon the categories of people involved in its use and in its making: the believers, as direct users, the clergy, both as beneficiaries and users, and the architects, as authors and mediators of the discourse. From the believers' point of view, the architecture of the church appears to come second place to the issues that are to them of real importance, such as its material presence and the proximity of a priest often called on to perform various "services"; their needs are basically material and rarely spiritual. From the point of view of the clergy, a "good church" must conform to functional needs and to models, most of which are arbitrarily selected, though in the end regarded as true archetypes.¹ From the architects' point of view the church is an architectural program that needs to be renewed, even if the reference points do not appear clearly.

We can thus note the various perspectives of the categories involved. What appears as a difficulty to one is the immutable reference point for another. As for the rest, the issue is simply of no interest to them. For instance, the formal inertias expressed in church architecture over the last 200 years have been criticized by some architects, yet they represent the only valid models for the majority of the clergy, while laity does not seem to show any interest in the problem. On the other hand, the relation between tradition and innovation is still a latent source of conflict between architects and the clergy.

The connection of man to the sacred in general, and to the Church in particular has been undergoing such a change that ecclesiastical architecture itself became a variable, and this led to very personal representations of what could be considered the ideal place of worship. Beyond the confessional restrictions there are certain elements that have immediate influence on the individual's options (the ethnic group, the geographic region, the cultural background and the proximity to the place of origin). Thus, the place of worship has now become a very personal and individual matter. That notwithstanding, we cannot blame a very specific type of architecture for not conforming with high ideals as long as it fulfils certain tasks. On Easter and Christmas and sometimes even at Sunday services, people attend church, the sacraments performed in each church are valid, carpeting maintains warmth, electric candles give off no smoke and the plastic flowers never wither. Why should we talk of the holiness of the Church Fathers when the priest has a price list for the services performed? Why should we make reference to icons that most people will never see when images of Jesus playfully winking offer proof of a humanity no Ecumenical Council could explain better? Why should we look for revealed architectural models when a postcard bearing "Greetings from Suceava"² is much more efficient in showing what a church should look like than is a vision of a 4th century saint? The answers to all these questions rely on the fact that the church is not just the gathering place of believers (though it is also *domus ecclesiae*), but also the house of God and that there are rules and symbols to its architecture that must be known.

One aspect of religious architecture concerns the dilemma of the architects caught between firm clerical opinions, the secularization of society, and the presumptions of their own profession. A lack of communication with the clergy and the absence of mutual confidence normally introduce tension to any potential dialogue.

1.2. ARCHITECTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON ECCLESIASTICAL SPACE

Most architects work with different definitions that are not always explicit and that are normally expressed in terms of two main conceptual options: the functional and the formal. They come across one another both in theory and practice.

1.2.1. "THE FUNCTIONAL" PERSPECTIVE

In the functional perspective, the distinction between *domus dei* and *domus ecclesiae* shifts the emphasis from "the house of God" to "the house of man". "The first church" is considered to be "the large upper room",³ where the Christians gathered to celebrate the Last Supper, as the house of God cannot be built by human hands. Based on some interpretations of the Bible,⁴ and on the Christian world of the early centuries,⁵ this scission has some immediate consequences for architecture: on the one hand, it leads to the annulment of all hierarchies of interior spaces of the church, while on the other hand it implies the loss of sacred meaning. "The multifunctional churches" of the 20th century are hall-type spaces (photo 1), with no precise destination, as fit for concerts, conferences and meetings as for religious services. In the Middle Ages churches also performed several functions; however, most human activity was placed under the sign of the Sacred. Today, the same building might shelter the town hall, while at the same time being a place sometimes used as a church,⁶ and this is not because civil power has submitted to religious power, but because the profane has invaded the territory of the sacred.

It is common practice to define the church as the sum of the functions it covers. Thus, it becomes "a praying machine" where people, away from their "living machine", sometimes take refuge. Architect Barry Byrne's statements are relevant to this attitude. In 1929 he was explaining the building principles for a church as follows: *The way of architecture is from the ground up; from the general to the particular. Function is first; building second. In a Catholic church, then, what are the functions? First, the altar. It is primary. The church building exists to house it, the celebrants at it and the people who come before it. The building structure surrounds these with walls, covers them with the span of a roof. This is a church. [...] The modern church is for the people who build it and of the day that produces it. It fulfils the functions and the use of its structures, it is a church in the truest sense of that word.*⁷ An extreme position was stated by Philippe Bruneau (former Director of Centre d'Archéologie moderne et contemporaine, Université de Paris-Sorbonne) in an article published in *Techniques&Architecture* review.⁸ In his opinion ecclesiastical space houses parts of everyday human activity: sleeping, eating (the *Eucharistic snack*), entertainment (the religious service as theatre show), education (through books and images), hygiene (the baptistery), shopping (books,

booklets and reviews displayed to the visitor); the church is nothing more than the “flat” where the believers gather together.

In conclusion, sooner or later a functionalist approach will lead to the secularization of the Church as institution and, in consequence, to the secularization of the place of worship, and, therefore, references will mostly be in terms of quantities: sizes, dimensions, capacity, and surfaces.

1.2.2. “THE FORMAL” PERSPECTIVE

Formal approaches can have two types of results: either a sterile mimesis, or a funny invention. Orthodox space refers to so-called models, often generated by images altered by the memory of a presumed tradition: walls decorated with niches, useless rosettes or many high towers. To collate a type of church from Maramureș with a residential district of Bucharest does not provide the answer to preserving tradition, nor is it a potential start for a renewal of this tradition, and the economic argument is unconvincing since the interior decoration is ostentatious, quality being replaced by quantity.

The historicist revivals that nourished the fantasies of the architects are tributary to the same formalist discourse and only generate copies. A different type of approach might exploit formally answers to questions such as: *Have you ever thought what it would be like to live inside a giant sapphire?*⁹ The result was The First Presbyterian Church (Connecticut), built in 1958 by Wallace Harrison – a transparent building whose interior resembles a great tent with walls of jewels. Other attempts, despite their intentions, did not surpass the same formalist level: the star–church (architect Otto Bartning, 1922) or a Christian tower of Babel (architect Dominikus Böhm, 1923).

1.3. PARADOXES

In a relative world and a secularized Church, religious architecture sometimes finds itself in unusual situations.

1.3.1. MUSEUM-CHURCHES can inspire profane pilgrimages and the esthetic emotion becomes a substitute for religious experience. It is hard to say whether Matisse’s Vence Chapel is appreciated as a place of worship or as a space for the display of precious stained-glass windows.

Similarly, visitors to Le Corbusier's Ronchamp Chapel (initially conceived as "the" total work of art) include both Christian believers and art lovers (and there is no intention of drawing a border between these two groups). Previously churches were known by the saint they were dedicated to. Today they unofficially receive the name of the architect. The diversity in approaches is due to the various languages practiced by architects, rather than to different interpretations of faith, dogma or religious tradition. Thus, when Steven Holl designs a Jesuit chapel for a University in Seattle, his religious knowledge is less important than the orchestration of the sky domes oriented towards the cardinal points; when architects Bernardo Fort Brescia and Laurinda Spear are in charge of the design of a new church in Miami, we learn more about their playful architectural language than about the religious *habitus* of the Hispanics in Florida; if Eliado Dieste builds three new churches in Alcala diocese, then the matter of utmost interest is the adjustment of his ceramic structures to technological constraints, rather than the real liturgical needs due to the demographic boom in Corredor del Henares.¹⁰

1.3.2. DISNEYLAND CHURCHES. Alain Besançon once criticized the state of French contemporary sacred art¹¹ by placing it between two poles: that of being too abstract for the ordinary Christian, and that of being excessively popular. The latter was the result of representations of the Virgin Mary that resembled Barbie dolls or Snow White, and in order to be politically correct, they at times borrow Asian or African features...

The Orthodox Church has the option of moving closer to the believers at any cost, and this is not only just a metaphor. It may seem strange that a priest was able to build up a small business inside the mortuary chapel next to his church, whose profit came from selling cigarettes and chocolate.¹² It may also seem strange to sell (and buy) phosphorescent icons from markets in the very heart of the city. Now plastic flowers and electrified crosses are quite fashionable in many a church, and, in a similar vain, I recently discovered big golden clocks placed proudly on the iconostasis or in one of the apses of some churches. They must be measuring the time left to the Last Judgment...

1.3.3. FAST-FOOD CHURCHES. If there are drive-in cinemas and drive-in MacDonald's, then we can hardly argue with the idea of the drive-in church if the services performed there bring full satisfaction to

the clients! In the 1960s, the architect Richard Neutra built the first drive-in church in Garden Grove, California, while his wedding chapels in Las Vegas are highly acclaimed and have become one of the main attractions of the city. Efficiency and promptness makes everyone happy!

One conclusion is that we are faced today with at least three levels of perception of a church: as direct presence in peoples' lives (the Church), as part of a constructed tissue that influences and is influenced by its environment, and as architectural object. The link between these conditions is religion, as *religious architecture is not a matter of architecture, but a matter of religion*.¹³ We shall focus our interest in the following on the last two mentioned aspects.

2. THE SITE

2.1. CENTRAL ORGANISATION VS. LINEAR ORGANIZATION

Locating a site for a church is a difficult task in the absence of any vision that might identify beyond any doubt the correct place to build a sanctuary. It is hard to discover the potential a particular location might have to offer something different from the rest of the territory since the web of consecrated spaces no longer organizes towns, and sites for a church are established according to the same criteria as for supermarkets. The superposition of layers succeeding each other on the same site (even under different forms) certifies the existence of a distinct place and its temporal continuity. On the other hand, ritual consecration cuts out a piece of the profane territory, resulting in a sacred space as "efficient" as the revealed space.

A less ordinary choice was the site for one of the two orthodox churches in Barcelona, which was placed in the inner court of a housing unit. The configuration of this site contains a particular message: placed in the heart of a bigger house, safe from external touch, the church is the Centre itself of the community, both physically and spiritually. *Axis Mundi* is close to everyone.

In a seemingly similar example, in the Bucharest of the 1980s, some churches were moved from their original locations to the precincts of newly built communist apartment blocks. The similarities stop here, however, as there are some essential qualitative differences. In the case

of the church in Barcelona, the church was meant to be put there, in a place previously consecrated; in Bucharest, the locations were violently imposed by means of negation of the original site. The difference can be concisely defined: protection versus suppression.

Every sanctuary is placed in the centre of the world. The tradition of the temple situated in the centre of the town or village can no longer be followed in the absence of the entity that the centre is supposed to organize, i.e. the congregation. The town plans of old Bucharest show how the parishes were organized around the churches.¹⁴ Razing of the churches also meant the canceling of the physical territories they organized. The attempt to build new apartment blocks without any form of center was bound to fail.

In the last decade, a huge number of churches have been built. Now, more important than their centrality, is their need to be visible: placed mainly on the side of streets, the new churches state their presence, though they can hardly organize their neighborhoods (photo 2). The need for isolation, together with the need for visibility, means that the newly built churches of the Russian Old Believers (who were persecuted until recently) are placed not inside, but outside the villages. Another culture and another reading code show that a church outside an English town or village, for example, may have two meanings: either the settlement has been moved or the church has been placed on a pre-Christian site.¹⁵

2.2. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The two churches (Church of the Light and Church on the Water) by the Japanese architect Tadao Ando are consequences of the configuration of the sites. The first site is urban, strictly bound by two streets, which has immediate influences on architecture: the exterior of the church is blind and the only opening of the nave is a cross-shaped cutting (photo 3). The second site is a natural site and the architect followed all the steps of a consecration ritual: a continuous wall marks the boundaries and cuts the sacred space out of the profane territory. Access is gained beneath a three-dimensional cross and the way leads through a dark tunnel to the nave, which is spectacularly opened to nature by a wall entirely of glass. The view is focused on a cross, which was placed outside, on an artificial pond (photo 4). Both interventions are rather theatrical and they are meant to guide the visitors from their ordinary space to another space one would be at pains to define as mystical, religious, spiritual or simply different.

Mark Rothko's chapel at the University of St. Thomas, Houston, makes two statements: as an architectural object, it correlates the space and the works displayed in a very particular way; as an element of the urban tissue, it is also part of an experiment: *The University has bought up lots of early twentieth-century bungalows on the surrounding streets which are then painted the same grey all over, as if made from a special material or carved from single blocks. The whole enterprise is a reinterpretation of the suburb as a single work of art, and like a Mondrian it is asymmetric in detail but rigorous underneath.*¹⁶

2.3. SITE AND MONUMENTAL SCALE

The scale of a church often symbolizes the power of an institution (the Church, the State, and the City). In the 19th century, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow was meant to be at the same time a temple, a monument and a national museum. After two architectural competitions and successive changes in architects and styles, the opening of this church designed for 15,000 people was planned to coincide with the coronation of Alexander the 3rd in 1883. After 1917, the new communist regime applied the then latest method of destruction - that was dynamite - to erase all trace of the cathedral. Simultaneously, they proceeded to erase its memory. Beginning in 1922, four competitions for the never to be built Palace of Labor were held for the same site, with the final solution suggesting a building two and a half times higher than the original cathedral. Though commenced in 1937, building was abandoned in 1942, and in 1960 a swimming pool was built on the same site. The building of a new cathedral that started after 1990 is now doing the work of repairing the tragedy of the sacred-profane, full-empty, presence-absence confusion. *How could they ever repent for the "crime" they committed? Scale seemed to be the only answer – an enormous building to repent for an enormous crime.*¹⁷ For over two hundred years this site continued to be a battlefield for ideas, the territory of the powers that be, be that the Church, the monarchy, the communist regime or the post communist state. Its consecration, its profanation and its exorcism become key elements in building new identities.

At the beginning of the 21st century discussion of the Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest was re-ignited and a competition was staged to establish a winning project. For now, we shall focus on the issue of the site. In 1999, the first competition took place for a central site situated in

Piața Unirii, the lowest point of the city and as such not appropriate for the location of the most important sanctuary of the nation. Though vehemently objected to by the architects, the site seemed to have been irrevocably consecrated by the presence of Pope Paul II who personally laid a cross at that location. The results of this first competition were irrelevant and never taken into consideration. Three years later, in 2002, another competition was held, this time for a different site. The newly proposed site faced Casa Poporului (House of the People), now known as Palatul Parlamentului (Palace of Parliament), on the Unirii Boulevard that leads to Piața Alba Iulia. The future cathedral will have an impressive perspective. Controversy still separates the architects, but the decision for this site seems to be final.¹⁸ From an urban point of view, the configuration of the site and its neighborhoods asks for monumental scale, however the pedestrian paths and connecting roadways present something of a problem. On the other hand, the spiritual potential of the place can hardly be “measured”. There is no question of preserving the sacredness of the space, as there was no previous sanctuary known at that location, thus nothing validates this precise option. Nonetheless, the “palimpsest place” is not the only possible choice for the site of a new church. Therefore, the question still stands and only the architectural object itself will confirm the legitimacy of the place.

3. THE OBJECT

Views that regard the church as an architectural object are various. Two categories of influences generate differences stemming on the one hand from the effects of the physical and cultural background (different evolutions of societies and communities, geographical space, historical moment, technologies), and, on the other hand, from specific dogmatic and liturgical constraints. Beyond some particular positions, there are certain convergent discourses, at least from a theoretical point of view. But they are shaped in architectural language in quite different manners.

3.1. CONVERGENT THEORETICAL DISCOURSES

3.1.1. BACK TO THE ORIGIN

Protestantism, in ignoring the Holy Tradition and the Sacraments,¹⁹ considers the Bible the unique source of the revealed truth and the Word

the only means of spreading it. The consequences for sacred space result from the privilege accorded to the act of listening that replaces the act of seeing – the image is a potentially idolatrous object. Inside the temple, the centre of the space is the place where the Bible is read and the sermon pronounced. The Eucharistic table replaces the altar and is also the place of the Bible. There are no hierarchies of interior spaces. Great austerity and a lack of decoration are significant features. The temporal reference point is that of the Last Supper.

One of the landmarks of Roman Catholicism is the gothic style. Unfortunately, it was taken over and reworked, mainly formally, by various *revivals* that flourished in particular during Romanticism. Meanwhile, Orthodoxy leans upon so-called models, dating mostly from the 18th or 19th centuries, despite the support found in the theology of the ancient Church Fathers, and constantly ignores the rich architectural resources of the first Christian millennium.

Thus, despite the seemingly common discourse of going back to the origin, none of these denominations is looking towards a potential model offered by the Undivided Church. It is there that the principles of catholicity that all claim to express are to be found, and could be taken as a starting point. As a meeting point for the transcendental world and the world of the senses, the church will rely on a final reality. If this reality is unique, then its representations will naturally be fundamentally similar. The resemblance of all faces of all saints in all icons is not about stereotypes, but about an archetype that they all mirror: the portrait of Christ. In architecture, the first Christian millennium shows that sanctuaries are generated by reference to the same model, which is reflected in various ways, without, however, leading to identities because similar elements are associated with a great variety of solutions.

A few churches built in the same period (9th century) show that their “common looks” cannot be explained by typologies (which are different), nor by their attachment to geographic regions (which are also different – Spain, France, Byzantium). The complex of churches in Terrassa, Spain (Santa Maria, San Miguel and San Pedro), was built between the 4th and 9th centuries in the former Egara diocese (photo 5). The church in Germigny-des-Près, Loiret, France (806), belongs to a particular typology – that of the tripartite western chevet (photo 6). The Church of the Dormition, Skripou, Boetia (874), belongs to the domed Greek cross plan typology, which is typical of Byzantine architecture of the Middle Period (photo 7).

3.1.2. SIMPLICITY

In the case of the Catholic Church, the appeal to simplicity and minimalism coincides with the Modern Movement in architecture that promotes sobriety and austerity. In the Catholic world, one of the purposes of the Liturgical Movement and later of the Vatican II Council was to convert the believer from a passive observer to an active participant in the Liturgy. Physical barriers that used to impose a hierarchy on the interior spaces of a church were abolished, priests turned their faces towards the believers, and wood replaced stone for the altar table in a return to the symbolism of the Last Supper. A consequence of the need for identical visibility and acoustics for everybody was the reduction of the dimensions of the sanctuary. The purpose of architecture was to encourage a sense of community, and this was also one of the aims of the Modern Movement. In 1951, English architects Alison and Peter Smithson proposed a design for the Coventry Cathedral competition, writing in the report that accompanied their entry that *the building of this cathedral will finally explode the fallacy that Modern Architecture is incapable of expressing abstract ideas and will prove that only Modern Architecture is capable of creating a symbol of the dogmatic truths of the Christian faith.*²⁰ Practice, however, does not always show the difference between the simple and the simplistic, between austerity of forms and poverty of message. (The opposite of this, which has almost the same consequences, is the excess of familiarity, the agglomeration of small colored objects that transform the church into a useless overcharged vestibule of eternity. To bring the Church closer to people does not mean degrading it. Fortunately, and practice confirms this, there are ways to bring people into the church precisely because they are looking for another, maybe not always conceptualized, but nonetheless present dimension, and not for a sense of familiarity that might come from embroidered towels, plastic flowers and photocopied icons.)

While the Protestants discouraged both abstract and figurative art, the Catholic world connected to the modern movements in art and architecture of the 1950s. In France, Père Couturier gathered around the Church famous artists of the time who contributed to the completion of the churches of Assy, Vence, Audincourt, Ronchamp and La Tourette. Unfortunately, these buildings are not able to overcome their “artistic condition”, as they are known first of all as monuments of architecture or as art galleries and only secondly as places of worship and devotion. In fact, Le Corbusier

himself admitted to his intention of conceiving the Ronchamp Chapel as a total work of art in which image and sound worked together. For the design of Vence Chapel (photo 8), there was constant and close collaboration between Henri Matisse and Père Couturier and besides the object itself, an impressive book was left behind that was like a diary of the birth of a building.²¹ In another famous example, this time with the Rothko Chapel in Houston, one of the purposes of building the chapel was to accomplish *the dream of Mark Rothko that his paintings should be seen alone where they can expand to fill the viewer's whole visual field.*²²

The Church should endeavor to constantly encourage artists to come closer to sacred art as its space should not be conceived as a museum, nor guided only by the goodwill and enthusiasm of the parishioners. As first steps towards a desired conciliation between clergy and artists and architects, direct dialogue, common language and mutual confidence in each other's abilities would be very helpful.

3.1.3. THE SPECIFIC DIFFERENCE

Despite their compatibility, discourses on the simplicity of a church and the "specific difference" produce, paradoxically, opposite results. On the one hand, churches come to identify themselves with their surroundings for the sake of simplicity, completely ignoring the specific difference in comparison with the contiguous buildings. On the other hand, in the name of freedom from dogmatic constraints, something much too different arises. This latter case is often the result of exclusively formal inventions, far away not only from *domus dei*, but from any decent appearance of the *domus ecclesiae*. Meanwhile, Christian denominations seem to agree on the importance of the particularity of religious architecture as compared to lay architecture. *The exterior of a church should not attempt to imitate contemporary secular buildings either in its proportions, its structure or its decoration. Nor should it try to catch the attention of the passer-by with the architectural equivalent of the cries of the marketplace. The aim should instead be to announce in a manner which is both dignified and eloquent the totally different nature of what lies within the church – totally different because of its belonging to another world – and yet at the same time to allow the building to take its place harmoniously within its surroundings.*²³

Non-theological works confirm the demand for a different approach to ecclesiastical architecture: *Since religions are concerned with reality*

*... the church building must strike the notes of honesty and authenticity in design and materials. Against the disorder of the world it must show coherence; against worldly strife and confusion, it must be a place of peacefulness and rest; to strident and disruptive affluence it must present the challenge of simplicity and austerity.*²⁴

A case in point is to be found in Orthodox space in the latest book²⁵ by the Romanian icon painter Sorin Dumitrescu. One of the main topics in this book deals precisely with the issue of the church as “something else”, as “another” realm that is not necessarily better or prettier, but “different” and consequently subordinated to other rules and orders. Inside a church we should identify *another* beauty, *another* wealth and *another* intelligence, unrelated to the outside world.

3.1.4. AN ECUMENICAL SPACE?

Practice shows us that there is normally no space left to cover the distances between us, even if those things that bring us together seem more significant than those that separate us. Contemporary ecumenism has not yet found a significant architectural discourse, though plans are afoot. By way of example, we can take the Abraham Centre (photo 9) built in Barcelona by the Catalan architect Agustí Mateos for the Olympic Games in 1992. The building was planned for use by believers of all religions and the fish was chosen as the symbol to express this ecumenism. However, the refined silhouette, the sensual curves and the bright material - all orchestrated in an elegant architectural object - do not compose a church. This led to tension between the architect and the priest, who placed a cross on the entrance façade, ignoring the architect’s concern for the purity of his work.

Another example is the church built in 1992 at Roubaix by French architects Olivier Bonte and Philippe Escudié (photo 10). This space was designed with no specific denomination(s) in mind and its ecumenism is expressed by an interior tree-pillar that sprouts twelve branches above. The return to the symbol of the Tree of Life can be read on several levels (the Centre of the world, the *Axis Mundi*, the connection of the Old and the New Testaments, the unity of faith etc.), but it does not guarantee the sacredness of the space. Thus, due to an absence of particular signs, no denomination that used it has actually appropriated this architecture.

It is hard to say what an ecumenical church ought to look like or, indeed, if such a church is possible. The still standing churches of the

first millennium offer a potential direction to follow because they emphasize precisely those features that are common to all Christian denominations. Nevertheless, it is now hard to detect these identical roots since the differences appear to be decisive. However, despite these circumstances, architecture might still offer some of the tools required for the comprehension of theological tradition and liturgical meaning.

3.2. DIFFERENCES

Besides the proximity of Christian denominations, every specific place of worship is governed by dogmatic and liturgical differences and, as a result, the distinct trajectories followed by the Christian denominations find their reflection also in religious architecture.

3.2.1. PROTESTANTISM

The Protestant contribution is less present in the area of the image, and the architecture of the temple, which has its roots in Catholic architecture, is no longer a sacred space, but a place where the believers simply gather; the true holiness and the true prayer are to be found inside each individual, while exterior expressions of faith are less important. One of the main elements of dogma that separates Protestants from Catholics and Orthodox is that in Protestantism the true Church is invisible, it is the community of saints where the Gospel is studied and the Sacraments cared for. The architecture of a Protestant temple usually contains no distinctive features from the surrounding buildings. Hence, an Evangelical church from Barcelona is aligned with the street, and the *graffiti* that “decorate” its façade are the same as those of its neighbors (photo 11). The design of the MVRDV team of a church in Holland draws attention to itself because of a cross placed at the entrance to the church, whose horizontal arm “shelters” an electronic thermometer (photo 12).

3.2.2. CATHOLICISM

In the Catholic world, Vatican II suggested a series of principles of liturgical reform and renewal with a direct impact on architecture. From that moment on certain general issues govern the church building: the physical dimensions of liturgical space are reduced in order to establish a closer relationship between clergy and lay people, and the nave, as

the main space where believers gather, should afford equal access to the altar. This latter is the highest point of the space, while the pulpit should be positioned so as to spontaneously focus the attention of the believers.²⁶

The Catholic Church seems to allow great freedom to the artists precisely because no explicit references regarding the physical form are made. The absence of recommendations regarding hierarchies of spaces will generally lead to a hall-church typology in which the unique interior space of the nave is “dressed” in various exterior shapes and materials.

3.2.3. ORTHODOXY

In Orthodoxy, the religion of the architect can still be considered decisive to his ability to design a place of worship. The Orthodox Church generally prefers an architect at least officially belonging to the Orthodox faith. The attitude of the Catholic Church is different. Six well-known architects²⁷ were invited to enter the competition for the symbolic Church of the Year 2000 in Rome. No experience of ecclesiastical design was requested, nor was the architects’ faith considered relevant (in fact, three of those selected were of Jewish background). However, the absence of an open competition afforded the Vicariate of Rome the “cover” of a famous name as a guarantee for quality, though the religion of the architect was not one of the selection criteria.²⁸ Architect Richard Meier won the competition (photo 13).

Romania has undergone changes in the last decade. The enthusiasm of the early 1990s was not strengthened through a more sustained theoretical reflection.²⁹ The best way in practice to discover new approaches in Romania lies with the architectural competition, as it does all over the world. In Romania, this practice was abandoned after several enthusiastic years. This was in part due to the fact that winning entries were never built or, worse still, were replaced by other designs, more convenient for the client.³⁰ Consequently, the credibility of the idea has diminished, as has the number of competitions accordingly.

A useful comparison can be made of two competitions held within twelve years of each other, i.e. the Orthodox Cathedral in Suceava (1990) and the Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest (2002). Both competitions had two stages. In Suceava, six entries were selected for final judgment, while in Bucharest, three designs entered the final stage. The remarks of the juries and the debates that then took place are important because

they afford access to some of the rare official statements by the Orthodox Church regarding religious architecture.

In Suceava, the main remarks of the jury at the end of the first stage indicated that: 1. The functionality of a place of worship is liturgical and catechetical and is represented by the main interior space. 2. Sacred architecture must express the two spiritual messages: that of being the House of God and that of being the Gate to Heaven. The plan of the nave symbolizes the Ark of Noah, but the cross plan may also be used. The winning entry³¹ (photo 14) is a delirious mixture of theological ignorance and architectural clumsiness, which, surprisingly, was appreciated by both clergy and architects for its so-called orchestration of functions, for the preserving of the interior atmosphere and for the quality of the volumes. The ridiculous and useless scaffolding that was to crown the building was nothing less than the symbol of the scales of Jacob, purporting to carry the idea of the scales of virtues and of spiritual ascent. The other designs swing between a stiff traditionalist mimesis (photo 15) and a provincial modernity (photo 16).

In the case of the Bucharest competition, some explanation is required before proceeding to any comments: 1. The 2002 competition was preceded by another competition in 1999, the main difference being the change of the proposed site from Piața Unirii to the Alba Iulia Boulevard. 2. The competition brief suggested a basilical plan typology; however, the central plan typology should not have been excluded since there still exist a remarkable number of (mainly Byzantine) churches that owe their monumentality precisely to the configuration of the plan. 3. The short length of the first stage of the competition (less than three months) for a design of huge complexity discouraged many talented architects from participating. In the end the final number of entries was eighteen, out of a total of eighty application forms that were requested. We shall abstain here from questioning the very opportunity of such a building; since the decision to build it is final, the result is now far more important than endless debate around some of the initial issues.

The designs adhere to three approaches and consequently to three categories of architectural language. They are: a historicist-eclectic one (photo 17), a so-called modern, but un-orthodox one (photo 18), and one that attempts to harmonize both dogmatic and architectural constraints. Fortunately, the first two prizes were chosen from amongst the very few proposals belonging in the last category. The first prize, won by architect Augustin Ioan (photo 19), plays on two effects: the material used would

be translucent rock that filters light, and the sliding entrance gates would be decorated entirely by two monumental icons. The volumes would be minimalist, purged of any residual ornamental elements. The second prize, won by architect Florin Biciușcă³² (photo 20), was for a design based on the intelligent orchestration of basic volumes that are defined by specific materials and colors. The volumes are articulated so as to reduce the huge dimensions and achieve a human scale. The third prize, won by architect Nicolae Vlădescu (photo 21), illustrates historicist nostalgias and seems to be the unfortunate twin of Casa Poporului (the House of the People), placed on the opposite side of the boulevard. At the end of the second stage, the winning entry was that of architect Augustin Ioan.

Beyond the immediate impact of the first prize, this competition represents a crucial moment in contemporary Romanian religious architecture. The choice of the two first entries (selected by a jury including both architects and representatives of the clergy) indicates the official intention of the Church to promote an ecclesiastical architecture that finally interrupts the tiresome circle of formalist inertias of the last two hundred years. The existence of such a precedent should have a decisive influence on future religious architecture because the modernity of these designs is nothing else than another (contemporary) face of church building tradition.³³

At this point it is important to examine the issue surrounding the potential models to be taken into account in order to avoid dangerous deviations from Christian dogma, as well as a “typifying” in sterile architectural forms.

4. THE MODEL

4.1. USE OF THE MODEL

The meaning of the term “model” is complex. It can mean: archetype, standard, example, rule, essential representation of a process or system, structure of values, criteria or principles. Furthermore, the “model of a sacred space” will be considered as a web of reference points, not necessarily architectural objects, which are able to generate various structured forms and to ensure permanent contact with the reality beyond the sensitive world.

Tradition and innovation seem to be bound to the place of worship. Apparently they deny each other, both in the East, which is never tired of reiterating the same meaningless shapes, and in the West, which is always ready to catch the challenging shift.

There is enough room for both tradition and innovation in sacred architecture. The conflict between restraining tradition and liberating creativity is a false dispute. To hide a gift, meaning to annul potential growth, is as useless and dangerous as to ignore it, by taking upon oneself an *ex nihilo* creation. To create out of nothing is no longer possible since the world has already been created, but one can work to continue this genesis. Every form of sacred art tries to go beyond appearances and to reveal, even if only in part, the essence of the object. The model is placed between tradition and innovation. Sacred architecture makes no exception.

The model will be sought inside the Church and the place of worship will be different from the outer space. Beyond objective influences that cannot be neglected, an implicit model governs the place of worship, coming from the dogma and rituals of each denomination. This is what the Temple is supposed to “translate” from the invisible space of utterance to the material space of building.

4.2. THE BIBLICAL MODEL

When we suggest the Temple of Jerusalem as a model for a church, our intention is not to recommend a rebuilding of this sanctuary. Throughout history, architecture has been confronted by a number of similar attempts,³⁴ down to proposing it as a school exercise to students. In my opinion, to take the biblical Temple as a model for the ecclesiastical space means to examine the spatial configurations and their articulations, as they appear in written descriptions. At the same time, one might find an alternative to the current determinist position that places the origin of the Christian church exclusively in the Roman basilica.³⁵ There are, in fact, two sides to this issue: on the one hand, there is the origin of the church, while on the other, there is the model it refers to. The history of architecture never mentions the Temple of Jerusalem as a crucial moment and the model is usually treated almost exclusively in terms of material origins, sources and influences. The object-model is no doubt a “face” of the “model”, in certain circumstances we shall refer to later.

The sanctuaries of the Old Testament (the Ark of the Covenant, the Temple of Solomon) have their origins in revelations, where God Himself offers the model to the builder. The New Testament does not seem to refer explicitly to a certain type of sacred space. Moreover, the gathering of believers seems to be possible anywhere, inside or outside the city, and not in a sacred space. What was later to become the church apparently had quite a different origin and that was to change, mostly within Protestantism, the view on the sacred space.³⁶ Considered to be the first church, “the upper room” seems to be only the place where the Christians gathered to celebrate the Last Supper because the house of God cannot be built by human hands: *God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.*³⁷ However, a church goes beyond physical space and belongs also to a transcendental level; its nature is double - both material and spiritual. And if *the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands*³⁸ this is not the refusal of material buildings, but rather the call for sources and resources other than human.

It is known that the Old Testament is the pre-figuration of the New, that there are symmetries and analogies between the two, and architecture is no doubt also present in the New Testament. The Temple of Solomon appears under the name of “the first covenant” and its description is summarized in Hebrews 9:1-8: *Then indeed the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lamp stand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary. And behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit indicated this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.*

The validity of the model of the Temple as a sacred space is not under question, its essential elements are simply being summarized and the

origin, the model and the source of the place of worship are mentioned, together with the fundamental presence that makes the essential difference between Old Law and New Law, i.e. Christ: *Not with blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once and for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*³⁹ As long as Christ is present among people He does not need a temple because He *is* the temple. It is important to notice that the description of the model of the temple comes after His death and resurrection, in other words, after His physical presence on earth. In the same way, the city of the end of time, the New Jerusalem, is the true house of God, which has no temple inside because *the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*⁴⁰

Thus it is appropriate to speak about the house of God on earth during the time of Jesus' *symbolic* presence among man, which is *before* the birth of Christ and *after* resurrection. There is an obvious similarity between things on earth and things in Heaven, the former being the projection of the latter: *For Christ has not entered the holy place made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*⁴¹ Finally, inside the celestial City, the Temple and the Most Holy Place coincide with *the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.*⁴² Moreover, the Old Law and the New Law are explained in architectural terms: *By faith [Abraham] dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*⁴³ The course of man from the fall from Heaven to the gates of celestial Jerusalem is nothing other than wandering through the world since leaving the garden till entering the City – an architectural place of outer order, in harmony with the peace inside.

4.3. THE DOGMA

How can we establish a relationship between Christian dogma and the place of worship, in particular between Orthodox dogma and the church?

Dogma is an immutable truth, revealed by God, formulated thereafter by the Church, and preached to Christians for redemption. Knowledge that was not previously revealed cannot become dogma; neither can revealed knowledge become dogma if not defined by the Church as such. In this respect, the place of worship is canonically defined and not

dogmatic, though the question of the influence of dogma on ecclesiastical architecture still stands. I will now dare to comment on a few issues.

The Church is the extension of Christ in people, the Heavenly Jerusalem to be revealed at the end of time. The physical space that embraces the believers is also a church and both are “receptacles” where the Holy Trinity is present. If the relationships within the divine trinity are at the same time a model for human relationships, then architecture should be governed by the same principles. The way grace descends from the Father, through the Son, to the apostles, and further to the entire clerical hierarchy, is one of the relationships that architecture should represent. The best-known way to achieve this is, for instance, with the four pendants (the four painted evangelists) that support the dome of the Pantocrator. The same association of “support”, “discharge”, and “hierarchy” appears in some medieval miniatures where Atlas, who supports the skies, stands for the four evangelists.

The Creed of Nicaea and Constantinople assigns four features to the Church: Unity, Holiness, Universality and Apostolic meaning. The Church is one – united, but not uniform. The architectural meaning of unity is not evenness, but a common denominator of all places of worship. The difference that a church should express in comparison to its neighborhood should ensure avoidance of the extreme attitude that causes a church not to be perceived as a church. Keeping the right balance is difficult to translate in material forms, so this must be taken into account. Churches built in different times and geographical areas show that unity is not a matter of style, historical period or even denomination, but one of concept (photos 22-28). It is not the object of this study to pass comment on the various meanings of unity in other Christian denominations; suffice it to say that Catholic unity is more of a calling around the Pope, whereas the Protestants consider unity to be the Invisible Church of all believers of all times, dead and alive.

Holiness in architecture was associated with that part of the church where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, and later, with the idea of the church as the house of God Himself, where God dwells and speaks. The Spanish theoretician Luis Fernandez Galiano wrote that *hoy las formas sagradas son profanas: las formas del culto han dado lugar al culto de las formas, y los templos se han desplazado del dominio de la teología al territorio del arte*.⁴⁴ It is true that religious architecture has turned from the territory of religion to that of art, but we do not consider the holiness

of a place to be a matter of form, as it is acquired in the first place as a consequence of the consecration ritual. However, holiness is a matter of symbols that have different forms, uttered or material, used in theological as well as architectural language.⁴⁵ Unlike the Orthodox and the Catholics, Protestants only assign holiness to the Grace and the Word of God.

The Church is Universal because it embraces the entirety of space and time and all peoples, unlike heresy, that is local and transient. The defining of dogma first appeared when Christianity was confronted in the early centuries by the danger of heresy, though a “heretical architecture” was not purposefully built. “Universal” has currently been replaced by a term of Greek origin,⁴⁶ the meaning of which is a whole whose essence does not change after splitting, a whole whose essential features are to be found in its smallest parts. In architecture, a modulating system with divisions and sub-divisions, multiples and sub-multiples is one possible way to relate the whole to the individual parts, and vice versa. The practice is far from new and the study of “sacred geometries” is well known. Proportions themselves do not certify the sacredness of the space and the procedure has also been used throughout history for lay architecture. What I intend to suggest is an orchestration of all the elements of a church such that they make one conscious that things are *“on Earth as in Heaven”*. Protestantism assigns Universality, as well as Unity, to the Invisible Church.

Finally, apostolic meaning shows that the true Church is the one that has preserved what Christ taught, in the same way that the apostles communicated it. This attribute is closely connected to the Holy Tradition. Since the Church is hierarchically organized, relations established between spaces and volumes (ordination-subordination, main-secondary, downside-upside, etc.) can also express the hierarchy in ecclesiastical architecture. There are precise moments in history when the hierarchy of spaces was determined due to elements of ritual and liturgy. For example, at the beginning of the 6th century, the Visigoths conquered Spain, by 560 their court had been established in Toledo, and in 587 the Visigothic king Rekhared converted to Catholicism. They had a particular type of liturgy, not known nowadays, which influenced the interior space of places of worship whose partitions are reminiscent of Byzantine churches⁴⁷ (photo 29). The (peripatetic) Carolingian liturgy had its origins in the Gallic tradition and was rich in processions, leading to the bipolarity of some churches (the monastery of Centula, 790-799; Saint-Riquier Church; Fulda

Church). The pilgrimages caused the creation of radial chapels around the choir in order to permit simultaneous religious services and worship of relics of different saints. All these elements are part of the ritual. However, they cannot be separated from Christian dogma because liturgical theology is determined by dogmatic theology. The Protestants find Apostolic meaning by identifying what they teach with what the apostles taught and, as they do not allow any ecclesiastic hierarchy, their temples mirror this: they are not considered sacred and the space has no hierarchical distributions.

4.4. THE OBJECT – MODEL

Closer than a revealed model, most often another architectural object is regarded as bearer of the imprint of the archetype and as the source of work to come. The approach is actually the personal option of the architect because the same object can generate a copy, or it can function as a model for a future design. There are normally two directions that can be followed. On the one hand, a level of reading that deals strictly with the forms produces a result that is also focused on the form, whereas on the other hand, a level of reading that addresses the “origins” of the object, its inner structure and articulations might provide the start for a richer design. Given these circumstances, innovation based on tradition may find its place, even if (apparently) constrained by dogma and canon (photos 30–33).

One type of church often, though unfairly, regarded as a model, is the wooden church of Maramureș. This is a typology which appeared under very particular conditions (in respect of historical period, geographic area and cultural background). It is a somewhat “closed” model, because it doesn’t allow for future investigations that might lead to original creations rather than to copies (photos 34–35). What really promises high potential are not the wooden churches of Maramureș, but simply those wooden churches whose composition in terms of forms and symbols is remarkably rich.

Among contemporary tools, architects use the “quote” (photo 36) and the “collage” that refer, more or less explicitly, to an object, a style or a certain period.

4.5. SUGGESTION FOR A “THEORETICAL MODEL” OF AN ORTHODOX CHURCH

In place of conclusions we shall try to suggest a theoretical model for an Orthodox church.

A church, as well as an icon, shows the *final destination* – the transcendent world, which is different from the world of the senses and has its own rules, other than those familiar to us. Therefore, with an icon, the composition is organized in height and not in depth with regard to the surface on which it is painted. The vanishing point is not behind, but in front of the painting, inside the viewer. Therefore, the altar of a church – the most Holy Place that represents the essence of the other world – is not accessible to everybody because it is governed by other rules than those familiar to us. The continuous relationship between space and image thus reveals the final place in architectural and iconographic terms. The terrestrial imprint of the building is, or should be, different from the plan above in order to express the difference between here and there, near and far. Movement is controlled by axes that are determined by moving forward in two directions, in the horizontal plane and in the vertical plane. Both the altar and the dome are physically inaccessible and they represent the promised world. In other words, all ways lead towards the same final destination.

The liturgy, the icon and space work together to represent not only the transcendent reality, but also the potential *paths* of redemption. The model as support indicates not only the final destination, but also the path to be followed. The place of worship is a sequence of spaces that relate the world of the senses to the transcendent one. There are thresholds, stops, openings that mark the way and control the interior space and volume; the route cannot run evenly and without emotion towards an indifferent end, there are certain rules to follow and stages to cover and thus hierarchy becomes essential. The iconostasis is an element usually perceived as a barrier. Situated at the border between the nave and the altar, it does not close the way, but purifies the sight and prepares it for viewing the beauty to come. Also, it protects the unprepared from seeing beautiful but awe-inspiring truths. It is not opaque, but transparent or rather translucent, because the icons open to realities inaccessible in other ways.

The gradual progression of light is not accidental and the semi-darkness is not an artifice. It emphasizes the light inside the icons (or in the golden

imperial mosaics), it slows down the rhythm of the procession, focuses attention and sets immaterial boundaries between inside and outside. Another meaning of the light is the shadow that hides the mystery, not the doubt. In a lecture entitled *Espacio sacro: el ultimo refugio de la sombra*, Antonio Puerta spoke of the different meanings of light in the East and the West: *Mientras los occidentales apreciamos el brillo del metal, resultado de una cultura de la luz y del crystal, en Oriente valoran el paso del tiempo por los metales, la patina sobre la plata o el cobre, la penumbra y la opacidad*.⁴⁸ The sacred space is the meeting place of two worlds, it separates without splitting, it brings together without standardizing and thus there results a tension defined also by the hues of the light.

Furthermore, the relationship between light and substance is not casual. Each material has different vibrations and symbolic meanings, and it is important to understand the ways in which matter works naturally. The power of a wall could be expressed in brick as well as in stone, concrete or metal. Technically, building a glass dome does not present a problem, the question is whether a given dome should be made of glass or not. *There are many things we might know, but not all of them are useful*, says the Apostle Paul - and this is where ecclesiastical architecture is placed, between the infinity of potential things to be accomplished and the restrictions set by the wish to accomplish valuable things.



Photo 1. Catholic church, Tokio, arch. Fumihiko Maki



Photo 2. New built Greek Catholic church in Bucharest,
placed on the border of the street



Photo 3. Church of the Light, arch. Tadao Ando



Photo 4. Church on the Water, arch. Tadao Ando



Photo 5. Church Santa Maria, Terrassa, Spain, 4th – 9th century



Photo 6. Church in Germigny-des-Pres, Loiret, France, 9th century



Photo 7. Church of the Dormition, Skripou, Boetia, 9th century



Photo 8. Vence Chapel, Henri Matisse



Photo 9. Abraham Centre, Barcelona, arch. Agustí Mateos



Photo 10. Church, Roubaix, arch. Philippe Escudié, arch. Olivier Bonte



Photo 11. Evangelic church, Barcelona



Photo 12. Evangelic church, Holland, arch. MVRDV

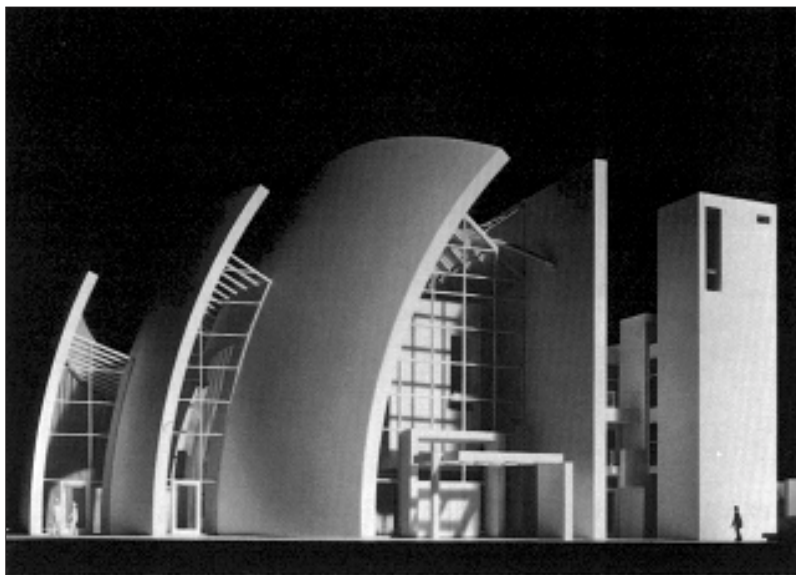


Photo 13. Winning design for the Church of the Year 2000,
arch. Richard Meier

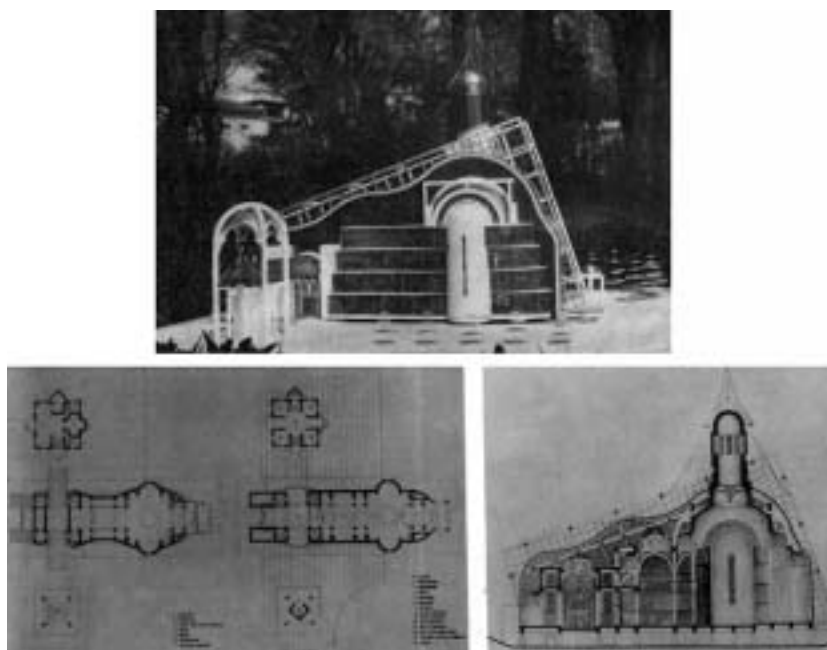


Photo 14. Winning design for the Orthodox Cathedral, Suceava,
arch. Constantin Gorcea

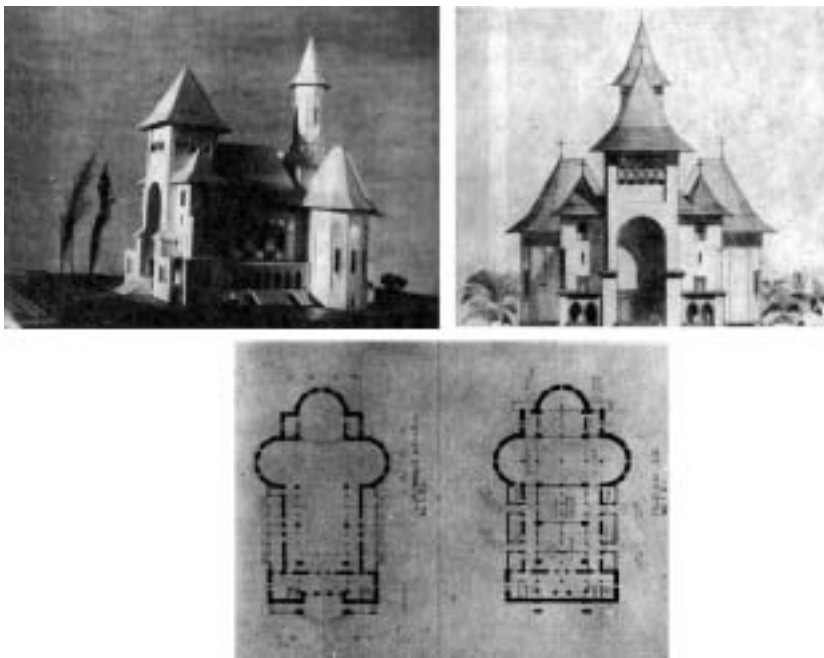


Photo 15. Design for the Orthodox Cathedral, Suceava,
arch. Nicolae Diaconu

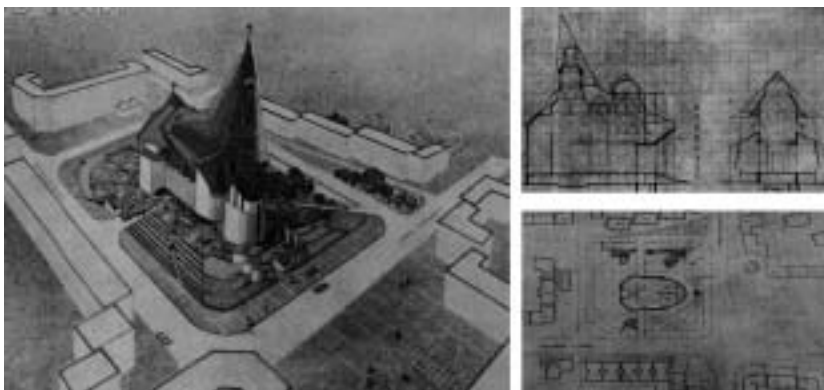


Photo 16. Design for the Orthodox Cathedral, Suceava,
arch. Doru Olaș

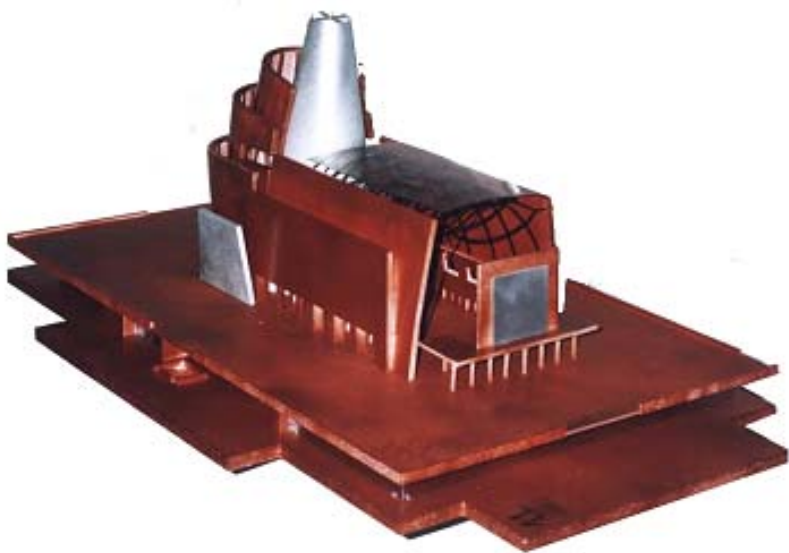


Photo 17,18. Designs for the Patriarchal Cathedral, Bucharest



Photo 19. Design for the Patriarchal Cathedral, Bucharest – 1st Prize, arch. Augustin Ioan



Photo 20. Design for the Patriarchal Cathedral, Bucharest – 2nd Prize,
arch. Florin Biciușcă

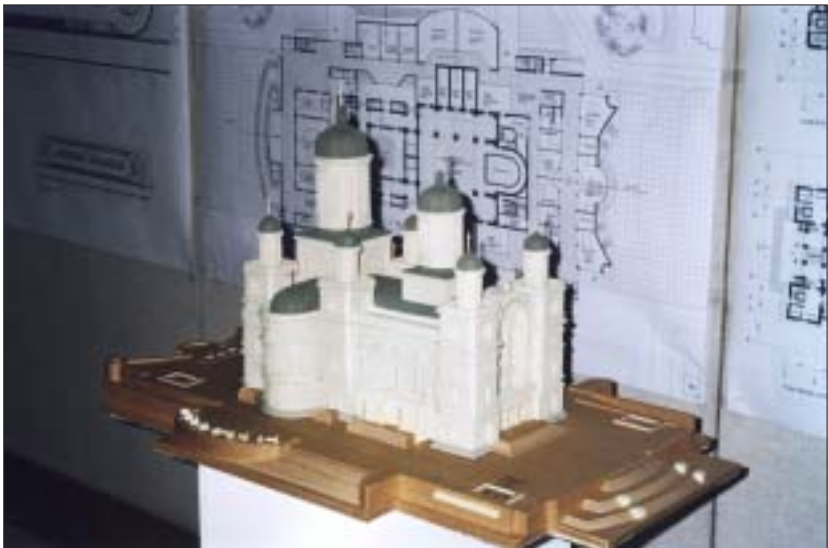


Photo 21. Design for the Patriarchal Cathedral, Bucharest – 3rd Prize,
arch. Nicolae Vlădescu



Photo 22. Ticino, 1990-1996, arch. Mario Botta



Photo 23. Manikata, arch. Richard England

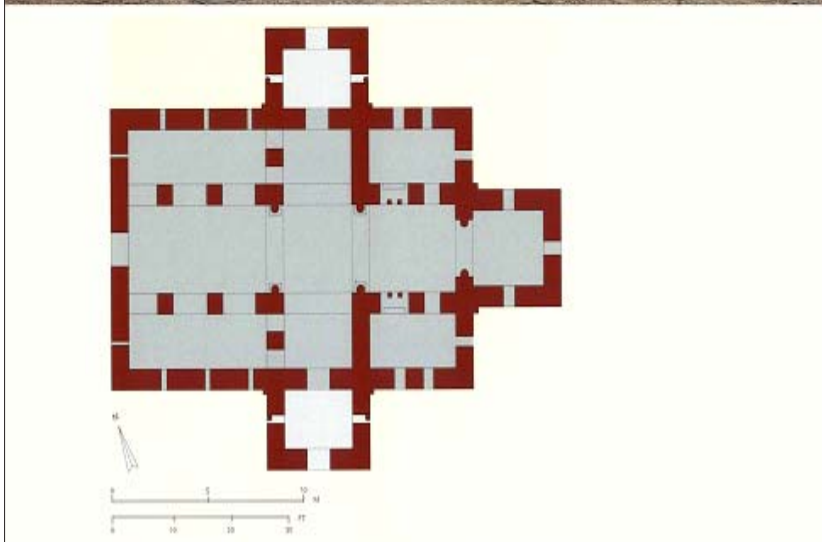


Photo 24. San Pedro de la Nave, Zamora, 7th century



Photo 25. Vistabella, 1918, arch. J.M. Jujol



Photo 26. Catholic church, arch. Imre Makovecz



Photo 27. Traditional Norwegian Church



Photo 28. Design for an Orthodox Greek church, Zürich,
arch. Herzog & de Meuron



Photo 29. Santa Cristina de Lena, Oviedo, 9th century – original Visigothic interior pieces



Photo 30. Design for an Orthodox church, arch. Florin Biciușcă



Photo 31. Design for an Orthodox church, arch. Ioan Andreescu,
arch. Vlad Gaivoronschi



Photo 32. Catholic church, Vucova, arch. Radu Mihăilescu

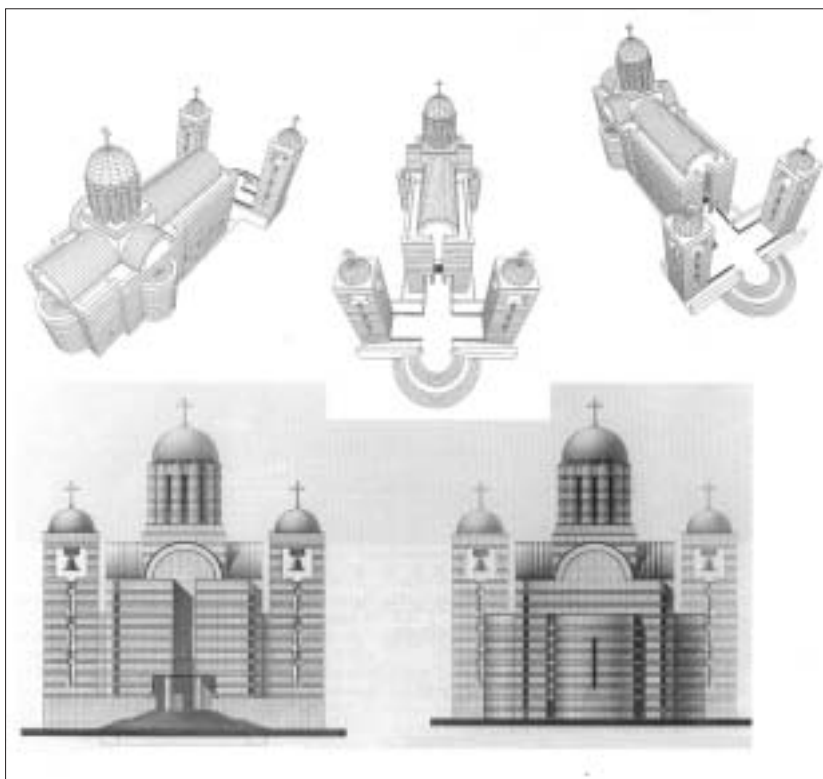


Photo 33. Winning design for the Church of the Heroes,
 arch. Dan Marin, arch. Zeno Bogdănescu



Photo 34. Traditional wooden churches from Maramureș



Photo 35. Contemporary wooden church in Bucharest



Photo 36. Monastery, Canada, arch. Dan Hanganu

NOTES

- 1 The typology of churches from monasteries of Northern Moldavia or the wooden churches from Maramureş are constantly imported in different areas (in Romania or even abroad, inside Romanian communities) with no concern for the cultural background or the history of each particular place.
- 2 Suceava is a city in Northern Moldavia known for its old and very particular churches.
- 3 "And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us." (Mark 14:13-15; see also Luke 22:10-12)
- 4 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands." (Acts 17:24)
- 5 It appears that during the early centuries Christians gathered in "improvised" churches in dwellings, but it seems that not every house would have been suitable for such a use.
- 6 Architect Pierre Fauroux built a church/town hall at Valbonne, France at the end of the 1980s. The two institutions coexist in a closed envelope with no exterior signs that would indicate a hierarchy. Inside the envelope, each is independent, with its own circulation system.
- 7 Heathcote, Edwin; Spens, Iona, *Church Builders*, London: Academy Editions, 1997, p. 54.
- 8 Bruneau, Philippe, "Qu'est-ce qu'une église?", in *Techniques&Architecture*, 405, décembre 1992.
- 9 Heathcote, Edwin; Spens, Iona, *Church Builders*, London: Academy Editions, 1997, p. 57.
- 10 For more details see "Iglesias de autor – del signo religiosa a la identidad artistica", in *Arquitectura Viva* 69, pp. 38-39.
- 11 See Besançon, Alain, *Trois Tentations dans l'église*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1996.
- 12 The shop still exists in Bucharest, near the church on Barbu Vacarescu Street.
- 13 Gio Ponti to Richard England in Heathcote, Edwin; Spens, Iona, *Church Builders*, London: Academy Editions, 1997, p. 52.
- 14 For more details, see Harhoiu, Dana, *Bucureşti, un oras intre Orient si Occident (Bucarest, une ville entre Orient et Occident)*, Bucureşti: Editura Simetria, 1997.
- 15 See Harbison, Robert, *Thirteen Ways*, MIT Press, 2001, p.140.
- 16 See Harbison, Robert, *Thirteen Ways*, MIT Press, 2001, p.152.

- 17 See Chibireva, Natasha, *Airbrushed Moscow*, in *The Hieroglyphics of Space*, edited by Neil Leach, London: Routledge, 2001, p.76.
- 18 By the time this text was edited, the officials of the Church have once again contested the decision of the jury that they have previously approved, so the site remains uncertain and it oscillates from one location to another, from Parcul Carol (apparently the option of the clergy) to Parcul Tineretului or Parcul Izvor (two possible sites suggested by the City Hall).
- 19 They only accept and recognize the Baptism and the Last Supper.
- 20 Heathcote, Edwin; Spens, Iona, *Church Builders*, London: Academy Editions, 1997, p. 63.
- 21 Matisse, Henri; Couturier, M.-A.; Rayssiguier, *La Chapelle de Vence*, Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1993.
- 22 Harbison, Robert, *Thirteen Ways*, MIT Press, 2001, p.152.
- 23 *Point three* of the “Guiding principles for the design of churches according to the spirit of the Roman liturgy” issued by *The German Liturgical Commission*, apud Heathcote, Edwin; Spens, Iona, *Church Builders*, London: Academy Editions, 1997, p. 41.
- 24 Turner, Harold, *From Temple to Meeting House*, Mouton Publishers, Haga, 1979, p. 344.
- 25 Dumitrescu, Sorin, *Chivotele lui Petru Rareș și modelul lor ceresc*, București: Anastasia, 2001.
- 26 More details on the topic of the influence of Vatican II on church building can be found in the chapter *Concreciones prácticas de la constitución sobre la Sagrada Liturgia para los artistas en la proyección de una nueva iglesia* by Dr. Julián Lopez (bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo from 1994, professor of Sacred Liturgy at Facultad de Teología del Norte de España and Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca) published in *Arte sacro: un proyecto actual. Actas del curso celebrado en Madrid, octubre, 1999*, Granada: Fundación Felix Granada, 2000.
- 27 Richard Meier, Tadao Ando, Frank Gehry, Santiago Calatrava, Günter Behnisch, Peter Eisenman.
- 28 In this respect we should mention other remarkable examples: asked if the architect of a church should be an active Christian, Le Corbusier answered: *Foutez-moi le camp!* That didn’t stop him from building Ronchamp Chapel or La Tourette Monastery. Paolo Portoghesi built a mosque in Rome after building a Catholic church in Salerno, Mario Botta designed a synagogue despite his fame as a church builder, and Herzog & de Meuron, who are not Orthodox, won the competition for an Orthodox Greek church (unfortunately never built) in Zürich.
- 29 Remarkable exceptions are the books of the Romanian architect Augustin Ioan, among which we will mention: *Visul Lui Ezechiel*, București: Anastasia, 1996; *Bizanț după Bizanț după Bizanț*, Constanța: Ex Ponto, 2000; *Spațiul sacru*, Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 2001; *O (nouă) estetică a reconstrucției*, București: Paideia, 2002.

- 30 An example is the competition held for the Church of the Heroes of the
1989 Revolution, won by the architects Dan Marin and Zeno Bogdanescu;
another church was built instead.
- 31 The authors are architect Constantin Gorcea, architect Dan Spineanu,
architect Constantin Stroescu, engineer Mihai Jitanic.
- 32 The authors of the winning entries, architect Augustin Ioan and architect
Florin Biciușcă both teach at "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and
Urban Planning. They are authors of important books on the theory of
architecture and coordinators of the two-year post-graduated program "The
Anthropology of Sacred Space".
- 33 As it was mentioned before, the Church has radically changed its position
concerning both the site and the design of the potential Cathedral, so that
the original optimism of this text has seriously diminished. The incapacity to
take a final and irrevocable decision and the hesitating (yet sometimes almost
aggressive) attitude prove that after all the Church does not have reasonable
arguments to support its point of view and at the present it is not prepared to
assume the achievement of such an important goal.
- 34 One of the best known attempts at a reconstitution of the Temple of Jerusalem
was made by Juan-Baptista Villalpanda (1596 – 1604) in the 2nd volume of
a work written together with another Jesuit – Jerónimo Prado; the historical
background was particular: King Philip the 2nd of Spain, who financed the
research, fancied himself as King of Jerusalem; hence, the parallels made
between his palace-monastery (El Escorial) and the Temple. In 1642 the
Rabbi Jacob Jehuda de Leon produced a wooden model reconstruction of
the Temple and in 1694 the architect Johann Jakob Erasmus of Hamburg
finished another wooden model. (A summary of the interpretations regarding
the Temple of Jerusalem can be found in RYKWERT, Joseph, *On Adam's
House in Paradise: the Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History*,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, The MIT Press, 1997, the
chapter on "The Temple of Jerusalem, or Vitruvius revealed".) Among
contemporary studies, we will mention MARCH, Lionel, *Architectonics of
Humanism*, London: Academy Editions, 1998, chapter "Judaic Heritage".
- 35 The issue of the origin of the church is controversial. Among non-clerical
works in this field we will mention Ioan, Augustin, *Khora*, București: Paideia,
1998, the chapter "*Lapis exilis*" – *argumente pentru reconsiderarea
comparatismului architectural* ("*Lapis exilis* – arguments for reconsidering
architectural comparatism").
- 36 See note 3.
- 37 Acts, 17:24.
- 38 Acts, 7:48.
- 39 Hebrews, 9:12.
- 40 Revelation, 21:22.
- 41 Hebrews, 9:24.

- ⁴² Revelation, 21:22.
⁴³ Hebrews, 11:9-10.
⁴⁴ "Today sacred forms are profane: the forms of cult left room to the cult of forms and temples passed from theology into the territory of art", Luis Fernando Galiano, "Sagrada Forma", in *Arquitectura Viva*, nr.58, 1998, p. 3.
⁴⁵ One of the works that makes the connection between theology and architecture, between God, Man and the built church is the *Mystagogy* of Saint Maxim the Confessor.
⁴⁶ *Sobor*.
⁴⁷ The newly Christianized kings followed the model of the Court of the Byzantine Emperor.
⁴⁸ "While Westerners appreciate the brightness of metal as a result of a culture of light and glass, in the East they value the passing of time over metal, the patina of silver and copper, the half-light and the opacity." Puerta, Antonio, "Espacio sacro: el ultimo refugio de la sombra", in *Arte sacro: un proyecto actual. Actas del curso celebrado en Madrid, octubre, 1999*, Granada: Fundación Felix Granada, 2000, p. 159.

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