Historical and New Sacred Forms in The Landscape of the Contemporary City of Kielce

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Abstract. This paper presents selected issues concerning sacred architecture in the landscape of the modern city (exemplified by Kielce). The author’s research interest is focused on historical and modern buildings of sacred architecture from the Kielce area. This city has a complex architectural structure that has been frequently modified for centuries. Buildings of sacred architecture played a crucial role in shaping and defining the language of spatial forms. Once towering over the surroundings, historical sacred forms are dominant elements of the urban fabric on a considerably smaller scale today. They continue to be recognisable objects for a given place and strongly formulate and define urban public spaces. They constitute valuable substance and cultural heritage in the space of the modern city. Among buildings erected a relatively short time ago, we can also notice works that have become part of social awareness and are unequivocally identified with the city. They become a symbol of the place and characteristic points of reference in the city.

1. Introduction
In the modern urban organism filled by commercial buildings, relations of sacred forms have changed considerably. They are difficult to define and arouse numerous discussions and questions. Because of their outstanding role and exceptional sacred function, large cathedrals and basilicas, extensive monastery complexes, or smaller churches and chapels still play a major role in specific complexes of urban structures. Erected within the city development area, buildings of sacred architecture contain a wealth of various contents. They include particularly an appropriately shaped body and a functional program that is well thought out in terms of needs and intended use. Thanks to characteristic forms, they become visual dominant features and spatial accents contributing to the clarity and transparency of urban layouts. They make it possible to identify places and they emphasise their prestige. In the urban fabric, they play a crystallising role and are still significant and decisive as public facilities. Due to their size, public buildings stand out among the mass of residential buildings ... It is the most characteristic buildings in the city that most often remain in memory... They also form architectural dominant features in the outline of the city [1].

This paper presents selected issues concerning relations of sacred forms in the landscape of the modern city. The author’s research interest is focused on historic and modern buildings of sacred architecture from the city of Kielce.

2. Kielce – a characteristic spatial place and the capital of the Świętokrzyski Region
The Świętokrzyski Region is distinguished by its peculiar appearance and landscape values that carry much information. Since time immemorial, the area of Kielce has been surrounded by an aura of mystery...
and mysticism. Before the adoption of Christianity, pagan centres of religious cult were formed. The biggest of them was the Łysa Góra mountain, today the Sanctuary of Holy Cross Wood Relic, with its range going beyond the region limits. On this mountain, as well as in the site of pagan temples on Góra Grodowa and Dobrzeszowska Góra hills, we can come across stone circles (embankments) surrounding holy sites [2].

As a characteristic place and the capital of the Świętokrzyski Region, Kielce plays a significant role. Along with the entire region, the city cultivates the historical past and tradition. In the times of Christianity, new places of religious cult were formed in this place and have continuously attracted pilgrims ever since.

Today the old city of Kielce is over ten centuries old. The beginning of settlements and centuries-old temple-building traditions are rooted in the early Middle Ages (10th-11th century). The germs of church life in the city are connected with the oldest traditions of Polish statehood, and its subsequent development is connected with the seat of Kraków bishops, whose majestic early Baroque gems of architecture grew into the panorama of the city and have survived till modern times (Figure 1, 2).

Figure 1. The make-up of Castle Hill in the second half of the 18th century. Reconstruction [3].

1 Existing till today, the complex of sacred buildings with a cohesive spatial structure (created in the 16th-18th century) exerted a decisive impact on the spatial development of the city. It is connected mainly with the historic area of the city centre – a space determining the identity of the entire urban organism and the culturally most valuable matter, which is related to the formation of the primary urban structure. The 16th-century Palace of Kraków Bishops with a layout of historic surroundings has also survived till today. The areas of the bishop’s garden were transformed into the current municipal park. The Plac Marii Panny square, which separates church buildings from bourgeois-style buildings, remains unchanged, too. See also: [4, 5].
Figure 2. Castle Hill, The ownership chart, the 1950s/1960s. (colour: dark orange – state-owned areas, yellow – city areas, grey – church areas, light orange – abandoned areas), source: Kielce City Council, Urban Development and Regeneration Department, December 2016 [6].

For many centuries, the city was located within the Kraków diocese and was owned along with the entire region by Kraków bishops. Since the seat of the bishopry was established in Kielce at the beginning of the 19th century, the city has become an important centre of church life and constitutes an autonomous centre of the religious culture of the region. The modern city of Kielce as the capital of the Świętokrzyski Region has imposing plans of bold development, an unusual rich geological structure and magnificent gems of sacred architecture that form an inseparable part of the city landscape. These buildings form the face of the new city and reflect various aspects of its history. They are essentially invaluable treasures of our heritage, which form also the culture of the Świętokrzyski Region from the Middle Ages till today.

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2 Kielce belonged to Kraków Bishops until the end of the 18th century. In the 19th and 20th century, they became the capital of the Świętokrzyski Region.
3. Forms of sacred architecture in the landscape of the city. Tradition and modernity

The history of architecture and sacred art is the story of a constant search for the language of forms making it possible to build bridges between Earth and Heaven..., a space to pray and to meet God. Each epoch and each community have the right to create them for their own use [7].

The Church has been present in the city since the earliest periods of history. For centuries, humans have erected buildings of religious cult with highest respect. Forms of sacred buildings were usually among the most imposing ones in the city. They stood out among city development areas due to their scale and the characteristic shape of blocks and were one of the first architectural dominant features. Shapes of historical and modern sacred forms have been determined by religious, theological, philosophical, social, ideological and political contents.

During the early Middle Ages, defence buildings and seats of authorities towered over other items in the panorama of cities. Then came the building development related to the cult of God, a secular city hall and related market square development blocks. The height of church towers reflected the influence of the clergy, whereas the height of city hall towers referred to the secular authority. The increase of population in cities in successive historical periods went hand in hand with the change of architectural styles and growing social and economic demand for specific buildings. In the age of the Renaissance and Baroque – a period of flourishing of cities and coming of townspeople and craft guilds into power; new dominant features came into being in the city panorama. Apart from city halls, they included public offices, palaces and high churches, often funded by a wealthy society [8]. The 19th century and the early 20th century saw a period of industrial changes and spatial composition [9]. Large factories, railway stations and railways were built at that time. At the end of the 19th century, along with the advent of new socio-economic trends and access to new technologies, the role of dominant features in the city was taken over by tall buildings [10]. The panorama of cities became dominated by high-rise office buildings, residential buildings, industrial and service buildings, logistic centres, etc. Forms of churches were no longer the only dominant features and focus points [11]. The first decade of the 21st century is as interesting as past epochs on the building market. The demand for increasingly unique and spectacular buildings still increases.

Kielce is a city with a rich history. The origins of the city date back to the early Middle Ages (the 10th-11th century); the same goes for sacred buildings, the forms of which were adapted to prevailing styles and traditions over the centuries. Some magnificent buildings of sacred architecture erected in the Middle Ages, which prove the skills and craftsmanship of their builders, have survived in Kielce till today (Figure 3, 4). The rich collections of sacred art are the remaining part of church patronage exercised from the medieval period, mainly by Kraków bishops, members of the Kraków and Kielce chapter and laypersons [12].

One of the oldest and most valuable landmarks of Kielce is a complex of convent buildings related historically to Castle Hill. The complex with defensive features is situated on the rocky forested Karczówka hill, away from the Kielce city centre. The complex was connected with Castle Hill by a few kilometres long alley with Stations of the Cross. The original monastery buildings erected around the middle of the 17th century was devastated by the Swedes. The item that towers over Kielce today is the outline of the rebuilt and expanded monastery complex emphasised by the body of the Church of Saint Charles Borromeo. The entire architectural and urban complex is clearly distinguished in the urban structure of the city. In the landscape and panorama of Kielce, it is a distinguishing sacred feature, which contributes to the exceptional climate of the cultural landscape (Figure 3).
A particularly outstanding element in the open landscape of the city is the Basilica of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Kielce situated on a cathedral hill with an auxiliary complex of buildings and the Palace of Kraków Bishops. The current basilica bears valuable testimony to a small brick church funded by the Kraków bishop Gedko circa 1171. Erected from stone blocks from local sandstones, the original simple form of a Roman temple has often been rebuilt and transformed for centuries (the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th century). The current three-aisle building of the Kielce collegiate church with neo-Baroque facades (the eastern and western one) and the remaining features of the Roman style is a precious landmark in the city. The unique outline towers over the buildings of the Kielce city centre, forming the dominant material of the urban fabric. The towers of the basilica rise over the dimensions of the existing building development of the old city; the same goes for steep roofs of the Palace of Kraków Bishops, which become visible from many locations in the city.

It must be stressed that the entire historic architectural & urban complex has become an element that crystallises the city. As a spatial accent, it contributes to the clarity and transparency of the historical urban layout that is visually distinguished in the urban space. In the vertical dimension, it forms a visual dominant – in the panorama of the city and the space of squares and streets. On the endings of perspective views of streets, it is particularly distinguished by the distinct outline of the cathedral with an unusual form, which is commonly appreciated by many contemporary recipients (Figure 4).

A particularly climatic place in Kielce is the Holy Trinity Church located near the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is exposed in the site of the former hospital chapel connected with the collegiate church3 [15]. This small single-aisle seminar church stands out among street facing

3 The hospital functioned as a shelter for elderly and severely incapacitated persons. It was located alongside a chapel, where Mass was celebrated once a year on Rogation Days. After many years, a hospital presbytery was established here. In 1644, in the site of the former hospital chapel, the Church of the Holy Trinity was built. The hospital and presbytery buildings adjoined the church on both sides. In 1726, after the establishment of the Seminary, the hospital presbytery was included in the facilities of the seminary. After 1865, the hospital was separated from the seminary, and the hospital church became a seminar church [15, 16].
developments due to the gable roof with a ridge turret and the facade without decorations. Combining the features of the Renaissance and the early Baroque, the simple form of the temple informs people about the existence of the sacrum in the city from a large distance. The building plays the role of the local dominant feature in the perspective of Jana Pawła II street. In the middle of the frontage with the building of the Higher Seminary in Kielce, it forms the dominant architectural accent in the building development of the city centre (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Examples of the historical sacred architecture of Kielce within the structures of the modern city, Kielce: the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary (12th c.), the seminary church of the Holy Trinity (17th c.), the Church of Saint Adalbert (11th c., 18th c.), the Church of the Exultation of the Holy Cross⁴ (1904), the garrison church of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1926), (photos: author, June 2016).

In the structures of the modern city of Kielce, a sacred layout with the Church of Saint Adalbert stands out in an equally transparent manner. The first wooden sacred building located in this place was erected near the oldest fair settlement in Kielce in the original city centre at the turn of the 12th century.

⁴ More: [4].
The first Kielce parish was formed near the church. Erected in 1763 and considerably enlarged in the 19th century, the current brick temple rises near the strict city centre between IX. Wieków and Bodzentyńska streets. The body of the church remains visible from many viewpoints in the city and forms the local dominant feature in the space of the Plac Świętego Wojciecha square and perspectives of streets. The outline of the church towers over the current large-sized development and still forms a characteristic accent of the landscape of Kielce. Thanks to its outstanding form, it strongly defines public space and co-builds the spatial structure of this part of the urban fabric.

Kielce is not only catholic temples; in the past, many religious buildings of various denominations existed here. Some of them have survived till today, such as the former synagogue at Warszawska street, or the Orthodox Church of Saint Nikolaos the Wonderworker at the intersection of Chęcińska and Karczówkowska streets. The Orthodox church was erected for soldiers of the Tsarist army at the beginning of the 20th century, but since 1925 it has housed a Roman Catholic garrison church of the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen of Poland.

Postwar Polish sacred architecture arose from deep social demand. During that period, the Church acted as a patron of architecture and sacred art and promoted the creation of new values. Undoubtedly, from a historical viewpoint, sacred buildings played a primary role in reviving the architectural landscape of the People’s Republic of Poland. At the beginning of the 1970s, with standard dull large-panel housing estates spreading out intrusively all around, churches being built on a mass scale began to attract attention. Unfortunately, their form often leaves much to be desired – newly erected buildings were undoubtedly unique and abandoned the then prevailing cult of semi-finished products, but they were often very average and formally retarded ...

The new solutions being created at that time, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, are characterised by the pluralism of spatial forms. Forms of Catholic churches completed in compliance with the epoch and recommendations of the Second Vatican Council are marked by openness. In the method of shaping bodies of Kielce churches, we can notice particularly the use of traditional and regional means of expression along with the use of elements of modern art (Figure 5).

In the second half of the 20th century, a number of new churches was built in Kielce with individually and uniquely designed architectural bodies and a different aesthetics of forms. Carried out in response to spiritual needs of the contemporary human being, modern conceptions are no longer a symbol of power. They hesitantly stand out from their environment. Their importance and distinctness arise from the differentiation of material, shape and detail. Their outlines are no longer crowned by tall towers. Apart from concrete, which favours the mood of contemplation with its simplicity and crudeness of texture, other materials are sought for. Simple modern forms using regional materials correspond to the tradition of the place and become a part of modern city structures. An example is the post-conciliar Church of Saint Joseph the Worker (1975-1995) designed by Władysław Pieńkowski in the spirit of late modernism and regionalism. The building represents modern Polish sacred architecture of high aesthetic qualities. In spite of its unfavourable location in the field, it stands out from the environment due to its unique form.

After the 1990s, as a result of the stabilised political situation of Poland and the regulated legal situation of the Church, large-sized sculpture and expressive forms that had prevailed in the architecture of temples until then “calm down.” The city landscape is dominated by small serene forms originating from longitudinal plans, which is particularly visible in the composition of bodies. Modern new forms of Kielce churches are marked by creative individualism, diversity, multiple layers and emotionality. Because of their size, scale and remarkable height, these buildings remain visible in the urban space and dominate in the surrounding landscape. However, they are not dominant features in height in the panorama and outline of the city (the Church of Saint Joseph the Worker, the Church of Christ the King, the Church of Divine Mercy, the Church of the Blessed Bishop Jerzy Matulewicz, the Church of the Exaltation of the Cross, the Church of Saint Stanislaus the Bishop and Martyr, the Church of Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe). New church buildings were often erected in the neighbourhood of the existing structures, so it was not always possible to ensure the proper location of the body and a relation that would be cohesive or contrast with the established forms and their immediate vicinity.
Figure 5. Examples of the modern sacred architecture of Kielce, 20th c., the Church of Saint Joseph the Worker, the Church of Divine Mercy, the Church of the Blessed Jerzy Matulewicz, the Church of Maximilian Maria Kolbe, the Church of Saint Stanislaus the Bishop and Martyr (photos: author, June 2017).

It must be stressed that, irrespective of the formation of external bodies, new Catholic churches have become a permanent part of the landscape of Kielce and are identified with its specific fragments. Standing out in internal structures of the city, their distinct and unique architectural form meets with
general recognition from contemporary recipients. These facilities earned also the rank of a symbol, independently of their artistic level.

4. Summary and conclusions
Sacred architecture played a very important role in historical cities. *It created new stylish canons, building new artistic trends both in external and internal forms and attesting progress in technical and building solutions. It was churches that determined the transformation of the artistic face of cities* [18, 19].

The role of sacred forms in the city landscape significantly changed over the centuries. Rapid urbanisation processes, the dynamics of economic growth and socio-economic phenomena changed the method of composition of urban space, at the same time introducing the diversity of heights of architectural forms. With globalisation progressing in the last several years and tall office and residential buildings entering city centres, the signs that have been legible until today in the form of towers and bodies of churches are no longer the only compositional dominant features in the outline and physical form of the city. Until quite recently, because of their size and the method of shaping of dominant bodies, historical sacred buildings of Kielce have towered over the surroundings and determined the appearance of the panorama of the city [20]. Today, in spite of numerous functional and spatial transformations of the urban fabric, which has often been exposed to technical changes, historic churches continue to play a dominant role in the internal space of the city. They play the role of dominant heights to a smaller extent, but they continue to be formal dominant features with cultural, historical and artistic values. They emphasise the space, thus allowing individual structures to be identified. They influence the quality of the urban microstructure, shaping the conditions of its reception by the human being and its emotional and aesthetic impact. They continue to recognisable objects for a given place, and their monumental forms help to feel the identity of these places.

Among buildings erected a relatively short time ago, we can also notice works that have become part of social awareness and are unequivocally identified with a specific place. Although forms of modern projects did not hold a preferred position in the structure of the urban system, they still play the role of accents and fulfil a significant function in visual information as important and characteristic points of reference in the city and as symbols of the place and a given fragment of the city. They owe their exceptional importance to the distinctness and diversity of formations in the space that is usually shaped by a building development with relatively homogeneous characteristics, dimensions and functions. In this way, they have become a sign providing information about the entirely different role and a distinguishing factor of important places and have increased the attractiveness of specific sequences of urban spaces.

To sum up, we must say that the temples once towering over the city were a symbol of authority and divine power. In the structures of the modern city, their relations have changed; they are mainly a place of spiritual meditation, concentration and silence.

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