Innovativeness of the Tradition of Religious Architecture

Yuriy Kryvoruchko

Lviv Polytechnic National University. Institute of Architecture, Department of Design and Architecture Fundamentals, 12 Bandera str. 79013 Lviv, Ukraine
yurikryv@gmail.com

Abstract. The innovativeness of the tradition of religious architecture - it sounds quite contradictory if we are to consider the accepted definitions of tradition - a sort of permanence or canonicity, and innovation (from the Latin innovatio - renewal) - a process of the introduction of new values or qualities concerning goals or manners of their achievement in the development of some structure. Innovativeness is usually understood as a result of all manners of scientific, technical, technological and other rational actions, which lead to the implementation of change in human life. Tradition is less rational, based on national or group stereotypes, customs or individual principles. Innovativeness in culture, faith or creative activity occurs as a factor based on human ideas, its representations which go beyond the sphere of ratio. Innovativeness occurs primarily as a contradiction of something, for instance said tradition, or - on the basis of said tradition or the capacity of innovation to cooperate with tradition, developing tradition itself, causing its change, development, adaptation to something new, preserving tradition as a form, message or symbol. The tradition of religious architecture is based on the tradition of Liturgy, the principles of faith, revelation. Tradition is strongly justified by the permanence of the phenomenon of eternity, about which man cannot gain knowledge rationally. This is why to fight tradition is to fight eternity, which makes no sense. If eternity is beyond rational categories, then tradition is not exhaustible by these terms. This is why tradition manifests itself through ritual, epos, images. Such manners are characterised by something that is beyond rational, at the same time exerting a strong impact through their syncretism and synergism. The synergy of the images of religious architecture is also very suggestive, evoking a strong influence on the thoughts and imagination of man. Liturgy, the parish, its members, contemplation, meditation, rituals, the architect, artists, the common efforts of the participants of the construction of a temple - that is what is important to the synergy of religious architecture. The temple - is a place of the work of the Holy Spirit, which is not a person, but an action, which is why the temple can more easily be expressed through its activity, the Word, Wisdom, instead of the image and likeness. The perfection of the non-figurative depiction within religious architecture is its skeleton and the abstract shapes occur in the form of images of a symbolic language. A temple is simultaneously a static element, embodied in its structural elements - floor plans, spaces, the external and internal surfaces of walls and ceilings, icons and frescoes, in being filled with liturgical objects and services. Sensing, achieving the theology of man, the icon and the temple through the Divine image and likeness, as well as the work of the Holy Spirit all express a deep innovativeness of the tradition of religious architecture.

1. Introduction

The innovativeness of the tradition of religious architecture - the term itself sounds quite contradictory, if we are to rely on the established definition of tradition as a certain constant permanence, all the way to canonicity, and of innovation (from the Latin innovatio - renewal) as a process of the introduction of new values or qualities concerning goals or methods of their achievement in the development of any object.
Innovativeness is usually understood as a result of various scientific, technical, technological, organisational and other - rational - efforts, which, of course, lead to the introduction of changes into human life.

Innovativeness in the sphere of culture, faith, creative activity - man's creative work - is seen as a factor that is based on ideas, views, imaginings, the sensitivity of man, his depictions, which go far beyond the sphere of ratio.

Tradition, in turn, is based on either national or group stereotypes, customs, habits or on individual, personal principles or precepts. Tradition is a quality of societies that are characterised by a value system that has been formed over a long time, often entire centuries. This value system expresses itself not only in ideas, views and customs, but also in structures of material culture, forms of behaviour and upbringing, in superstitions and fears, constituting a certain national, religious, social, age-related, group or other type of archetype. Everything that has continuity over time can exist as a sign of tradition. Time - is one of the distinct qualities of tradition.

Tradition is distinct for civilisations with a settled lifestyle - for people who cultivate land, establish settlements, for whom the flow of time and of life has been directly and most strongly associated with the seasons, which in turn change with permanent regularity, cyclically over time. The settled way of life and the circle of time - in traditional cultures - refer to a feminine beginning. And this is very heavily correlated with constancy, eternity, and with them constituted stability, which we call tradition.

Innovation, conversely, can be derived from a male beginning, from those civilisations for which movement, the way of the nomad, the gatherer, the wanderer, was the one that constituted their way of life, as well as a linear flow of time. Change, adventure, novelty - these sides of life dictated the configuration of a certain character and a reference to the world as a whole.

Tradition is highly associated with memory, a repetition of something which has positively been confirmed in the experience of both the socium and the individual. This system of values is tied with evaluation, which is why tradition attempts to maintain axiological systems in a certain balance and even permanence. Independence from time brings to mind - and draws us closer to - a dimension outside of time, to eternity. Such lost time exudes a different quality of tradition - a certain independence from time. In this case, tradition becomes an effective tool of religion, of faith in something that cannot change for some small reason and is a constant all the way to a visible infinity.

In this, tradition is used not only as an instrument, but is also one of the threads of the essence of faith itself, as its conveyor, its shape in this constancy, which reinforces and strengthens faith. Constancy over time plays the role of a conservator of something which gains strength thanks to its constant action. This is why tradition is always conservative. Tradition shapes patterns, models to be repeated, to try on, compare something in terms of its belonging to something tested, known, familiar, precious.

The reinforcement of tradition - is building relations, ties between time and eternity, between the fluidity of human imagination and Divine permanence, but also leading to man feeling that which is the most general, even superhuman, that which exceeds man himself, the man who exists here and now, to an existence outside of a place and time, beyond the real space-time of the present.

Such a link is born out of man's ability to meditate, contemplate, to become at peace, to gain experience in being in a spiritual high. The natural everyday state of contemplation - is weighing man's individual efforts, his past and actions, against something good and accepted that has previously been tested. The constancy of good in man's experiences gives faith in everyday matters, a faith which, with its course, reinforces faith in and of itself, elevating man to a reality of salvation, and bringing said reality itself closer to man.

2. Between tradition and innovation

We can thus see that tradition is not solely a flat definition outlining the conservative nature of faith, but a living mechanism of human motion along a vertical axis. It is also understandable that this motion requires certain effort from man, that it is not performed in and of itself, without his participation. But the thing is that man often does not see sense in it, does not recognise it or is not inclined to such self-development, to work on his own life. This is why he rejects that which does not work by itself, for he is so accustomed to the contemporary "civilisation of the push of a button" or of a "mouse click" - push and get results.

Contemporary man also does not like intangible work, one that does not provide immediate gratification. He goes to a temple out of tradition, because of this "flat understanding", not because of a need for self-development. Man often does not have the will, the strength for, nor any satisfaction from
working on self-improvement. This works over the long term, while man wants results in the form of immediate success in order to feel satisfaction and sate his curiosity from the outside.

It is curiosity that, among other qualities, elicits an interest in the new. This is why innovation is a mechanism of gaining knowledge and of discovering the world - both the external and internal one. Through self-discovery man learns of the world, gets to know himself as a complex constitution, which is not merely a part, but the entirety of the world, the world itself. This quality of man in the aforementioned mechanism of the working of tradition comes very close to understanding the instruments of the capacity for knowledge and development. It turns out that innovation is an element of tradition, its living part, the branches of the Tree of Life, whose trunk is tradition itself, swaying on the wind.

Such reasoning about tradition and innovation in the life of man can be received, understood, discussed in some way - or it can be disagreed with or completely misunderstood. When looking at the process of how we approach the world of the images of tradition, manifested in places of worship, of the reclamation of the sense of human life - religious buildings - the matter does not become as clear as in its definitions, the verbal expressions in which it is easier to find directness, or at least tell apart the threads of the separation and combination of content. The language of art, however, as well as religious buildings, is made in their material embodiment, as the effects of the work of numerous artists - from masters of building to architects and painters - to masters of song and music as those who crown the artistic efforts of a religious structure. This language is characterised by subjectivity, ambiguity, at the same time fierce striking into the deepest spheres and layers of man, associated with the most important matters in his life, in an emotional sense. Presence, action, the performance of Liturgy, the sermons that are given by the priest at the temple, are seen through his unchangeably canonical behaviour, however, they also refer to creative acts, and even the most important ones, if the performance of Liturgy (despite its canonicity) can be seen as creative.

Innovation in and of itself is created in reference to tradition; first, in contradicting something that came before, often something traditional - for instance, tradition itself, second - in its declarative leaning on tradition, or - third - in the capacity for innovation to cooperate with tradition, developing tradition itself and its understanding in current times. Innovation can take place as a stimulus for this development, for adaptation - more in the form of discovering, delving between the layers of tradition's potential - striving for something new, contemporary, while preserving tradition as a form, a shape, a sense, message or symbol of its former roots. Such an understanding of tradition most often serves as an instrument in the achievement of this goal.

3. Innovativeness of the tradition of religious architecture

The tradition of religious architecture is based on the tradition of Liturgy, on the principles of faith, Revelation. The phenomenon of tradition is strongly justified by the permanence of eternity, which cannot be rationally known by man. This is why to fight tradition is to fight eternity, which makes no sense at all. Just as eternity itself is beyond all categories, tradition itself is not exhaustible in explaining through categories. This is why tradition is achieved through ritual, epos or through images. Such forms are characterised by a non-rationality, while at the same time having a strong capacity to affect us through their syncretism and synergy, their cooperation with man through their holistic nature. The synergy of the images of religious architecture is also very suggestive, exerting strong influence on the thoughts and imagination of man [3]. The following elements are important for the synergy of religious architecture: Liturgy, the priest, the parishioners, contemplation, meditation, services, the architect, the ornamentation artists, the common work of both the participants of a temple's construction, as well as the participants of holy mass.

The temple - is a place of the activity of the Holy Ghost, who is not a hypostasy, but an action, which is why the temple, in bringing us closer to the reality of salvation, can be expressed easier through action, the Word, Wisdom, instead of with an image and likeness. The perfection of a non-figurative depiction in the image of religious architecture is its structure, and the abstract shapes manifest themselves in the form of symbolic language. The temple is simultaneously a static element, being expressed in elements of the structure - floor plans, spaces, interior and external wall and vault surfaces, icons, frescoes, in being filled with elements necessary to perform Liturgy and celebrations.

The theological, spiritual purpose of the temple, as well as of the icon - is metaphysical communication, a communion towards the Highest - through the Eucharist, the Blood and Body of Christ. The meaning of the content of the temple - is a communion with God, while the form of achieving
the content of the temple is the service, the mass, the sacrament, Liturgy. The temple as a material space also has its content and shape. However, the nave, the apse, the presbytery, the dome, the vaults, arches, columns and walls all exist as concrete in their forms, shapes and colours, depicting the body of the temple that can be perceived. However, the geometry, the proportions, the floor plans, perspectives - are perfect shapes - the circle, the rectangle, the pyramid, they are axes, the vertical and horizontal division, they are symmetry - they occur as the content of the architectural form, precisely because the materiality of the temple - is the shape of this form.

In this unity of the form of the temple they convey the perfect message of the absolute, in which the sacred nature of the form in and of itself is born. The content of the form of the temple (the perfect forms of the circle, the rectangle and the cross) and the form of this content (the walk around the altar, the walk around the temple) correlate with each other. The content of the form is transferred to the form of the content, it binds with it: the absolute of the form points to the absolute of the content - which is why the sacred nature of the temple begins with the geometry of its form, which through its absolutism depicts the eternity of God. Thus is man also elevated, when seeing the shape of the temple, which reveals to his eyes in the far views of the landscape, infallibly connecting images with individual visual experiences. The canon of the form displays through its geometry and allows itself to be seen through the visuality of the form. We can say that the form is self-sufficient and absolute, it induces holiness, it is its sign, its portent, mediator and resonator. In a holy place, the holiness is immanent to a place of Divine creation - which is why "a holy place is not an empty one".

The content-form manifests on:

- the sensory level, constituting a temple through services, participation in celebrations, discovering the direct, communicative, God-serving use of the temple
- the suprasensory level, seen with one's internal, spiritual sight, performing an intermediary, meditative, symbolic, theological function.

The architecture of the temple lays out and organises, embodies and expresses, symbolises and eschatologises, for it is an icon of the Divine World, a Heavenly Jerusalem on Earth. As a consequence, ontology, ethic and the aesthetic of God in the earthly dimension manifests itself in the holiness of the construction of temples, which in essence expands the reach of the subject of architecture, introducing a new level to architecture - the holiness of space. Let us look at and interpret a number of examples from the author's own work.

4. Designs

A tall belfry was designed for a large church in Lviv, the image of whose architectural form was devised as a collection of all the saints present during Liturgy and services, when the bells are ringing. In the canonical icon, a veil was lifted, with a small opening through which we can see the saints, gathered in the clouds. This needle-like image of the opening, very directly, without any symbolism, metaphor or abstraction, immediately transforms into an image of a belfry, from an empty space through which we can see the saints to a material, hard edifice made of concrete. Indirectly, such a hinge refers to the hinge of the temple of Jerusalem, and further, to contemporary times, to the hinges of the Imperial Doors in the iconostasis of an eastern Orthodox church (Figure 1, 2).
Figure 1. a) – sketch - the idea of the belfry; b) – inspiration for the idea for the architectural form through an icon of the All Saints (original work)

Thinking in this manner does not show any departure from tradition, nor traditional thinking itself. There is no trace of modernist, futurist, figurative or abstract thinking. There is also no element of postmodernity, nor post-postmodernity. It is thinking using simple images that we see every day and which do not need any know-it-all texts in order to explain its concept or justify its existence. This is the right of the creative, subjective vision of an artist. We can even say that in this idea there is no creativity within accepted definitions, as an expression of subjectivity, the subconscious, an emotional uniqueness of the creative act. Simple words, simple images and working towards the right direction - to people.

This has one, undeniable advantage - such an image can be easily explained to the audience, which is perhaps the greatest problem of contemporary religious architecture - its perception and acceptance by the parishioners, even by tourists - in relation to an image of the sacred that appeals to them. and this image, whether we want it or not, lays out in the mind of most people in a traditional manner - one that accumulates individual and social achievements across a long-term perception of the sacred in its various forms and traces.
Figure 2. a) – facade of the belfry; b) belfry cross-section; c) – floors at levels: (from the bottom to the top): 0,00 m; 12,25 m; 35,65 m; 46,70 m.
The second design is that of a church in Lviv, on the site of a former cemetery where Cossacks who died in the defence of Lviv in the seventeenth century had been buried, where nearby an old timber and later masonry church of the Baptism of Christ had been built and later destroyed during Austro-Hungarian times. In order to commemorate these structures, the author designed a church whose architectural form was inspired by a folk icon painted on glass - a sort of folk icon that became widely popular in the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century. The shine of the glass in the darkened spaces of Hutsul huts delivered the glow of the sacred to the people inside and created a bright holy image. Just like tiles from which furnaces were built, shining with their glazing in the dark space of the hut's interior.

The church, whose main image-forming (formogenic) material was to be glass designed as frescos, was meant to create an exceptionally joyful, colourful image of the contemplation of the site and the events that transpired throughout the long centuries of history.

The main image-forming element is light, which works most expressively at night, when temples are usually closed, as if asleep along with the entire city and its people. This temple, however, holds a vigil over the city, over the people who sleep after a long day of work, providing joy to the man who strolls by late at night... giving a moment of thought, during the night, when there is a clarity of thought.

When discussing the work of architects from both the western and eastern traditions of Christianity, we can conclude that it is in the personal revelation of the designer that the revelation of faith and the manifestation of the sacred take place. The personal revelation of the designer and the revelation of the sacred within him are proof that in the true work of an artist the sharp differences between the western and eastern versions of Christian faith become blurred. The categorical and territorial continuity in the religious works of both branches of Christianity is born and made out of a single Tradition of Revelation, through the Gospel, through the experience of the Eucharist. The art of the icon and of architecture, by introducing the image to a level of eschatological reality, overrules the discursive difference in the views of the various branches and sects of Christianity, but it can also serve as a binding foundation for the process of agreement between them. Agreement between the branches of Christianity is possible only when accepting the truth of the syncretism of the Image and will come about when the faithful come to understand the essence and meaning of this combination. The work of icon painters and architects is a living testament of these conclusions and helps the Church on its path towards this goal.

Beauty will be the salvation of the world...

**Figure 3.** Inspiration for the design of the church - a folk icon of St. Yuriy in glass a) [2] and a tile designed by I. Baraniuk (1840, Kosiv) from the Ukrainian National Folk Culture Centre "Ivan Honchar Museum" b) [1].
5. Conclusions

The perception and achievement of the theology of man, the icon and the temple through the Divine image and likeness, as well as the work of the Holy Ghost, express a deep innovativeness of the tradition of religious architecture throughout its entire existence in the human conscious and... or maybe even outside of it.

References
[1] Mashino ceramics of Kosovo and Pistyn XIX - early XX centuries. Lviv, 2012, (in Ukrainian).
[2] Nina Polishchuk. Western Ukrainian icon on the glass: "Fantastic irreal beauty". Ukrainian painters and painters. Religious Information Service of Ukraine. March 2, 2017. (in Ukrainian).
[3] Yuriy Kryvoruchko, Bogusław Podhalański Sakrum a Synergia (Sacrum versus Synergy). Budownictwo i Architektura. 16(1) (2017) 69-80. Politechnika Lubelska, Lublin, 2017. S. 69-80. (in Ukrainian).