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The directions of evolution of church architecture in the background of the cultural landscape of seaside area of Western Pomerania

Introduction

The seaside area of Western Pomerania is the perfect example of the directions of evolution of church architecture after World War II in villages and small towns[1]. This paper presents examples of church buildings from different historical periods including the first churches that appeared in this area in the Romanesque period to the Neo-Gothic examples from the first half of the 20th century that provide solid proof of the existing cultural heritage from that area which was seen by new settlers, to the examples of new church architecture from the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Western Pomerania comprises the area between the sea line north of the valley of the Warta and Noteć Rivers between the mouth of the Odra River in the West and the border with Eastern Pomerania east of Lębork [6, p. 45]. The coastal Western Pomerania comprises the area stretching from the north-west of the city of Świnoujście to the north-east near the city of Jarosławiec.

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[1] Because about 23 new places of worship were built (both new churches and conversions of buildings for religious purposes) over the period of sixty years alone on the area of four seaside districts of the Szczecińsko-Kamieńska Curia.

The Origins of the Church in Western Pomerania

Christianity that grew from about 13th century in Europe also came to the area of Pomerania. The first attempts at christianization of this area were made during the reign of the first Polish rulers. The missionary journeys of Bishop Otto from 1124–1125 and 1128 resulted in constructing the first temples, places of cult, and establishing a network of parishes in Pomerania. The origins of sacred architecture in this area date back to the end of the 12th century – late Romanesque. The first buildings come from the times of Otto's missions and undoubtedly followed the patterns of western Baltic areas as well as the churches of the Altmark. The church architecture fully developed in the Gothic period because it is estimated that the peak development of the network of parish churches occurred by about 1300; at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, there were about 220 churches in the area of today's Kamieńska Diocese alone [4, pp. 90–91]. The forms of Romanesque churches located in villages[2] that have survived until today are single-space hall buildings – often with choirs and apses, with rectangular choirs or with no choirs, often with an articulated tower covered by a steep roof – those churches had a different character than the churches with a greater liturgical significance such as parish churches, collegiate churches or cathedrals which were built in cities and had more elaborate

[2] "[...] a kind of village churches, older ones (with apses) followed directly the originals from the Altmark, whereas the younger ones (with more simple choir end) developed as a result of adaptation of Saxon patterns and are common in the area of Western Pomerania and north-east Brandenburg. Apart from the dominant Saxon-Brandenburg influence, the architecture of granite churches in Pomerania shows some construction features of the neighboring Mecklenburg. On the other hand, the architecture of town churches shows the features of basilicas and the cruciform from Westphalia […]". Source: [7, p. 60].

Fig. 1. Górki Pomorskie, Romanesque-Gothic village church from the beginning of the 15th century. Source [1]

Il.1. Górki Pomorskie, wiejski kościół romańsko-gotycki z początku XV w. Źródło [1]

forms with several naves on the plan of the Latin cross or as basilicas. The ecclesiastical buildings were constructed with granite which is popular in that area in the form of blocks or carefully cut quarters which was the basic building material; this is why that kind of architecture is commonly called the "granite architecture", however, it was gradually replaced by bricks (Fig. 1). The next art currents which appeared in Europe caused the development of a new style in architecture – namely Gothic – which emerged also in the area of Western Pomerania which developed in that cultural area from the end of the 13th century to the middle of the 15th century. So called south variant of brick Gothic – which is characteristic of Western Pomerania (mainly in the cities by the Baltic Sea) – became popular in the whole area of Pomerania. In the first stage of Gothic, the brick was still used in combination with granite, however, the brick was the prevailing and universally common building material for that current. Those materials were combined only in the case of extensions and remodeling granite buildings. The characteristic features of that style include first of all massive brick walls, richly decorated gables as well as stellar vaults or three-pillar bays inside [3]. The churches in villages and small towns are most often buildings with halls and special regional features and especially village parish churches which are simple halls with no choirs or halls with separate presbyteries, unlike parish churches or cathedrals (Fig. 2) have more elaborate architectural forms and exquisite details. Such an intensive expansion that lasted at the beginning and in the middle stage of Gothic, when new parishes were established and churches were built, slowed down at the end of the 14th century, however, what was created at that time and the earlier Romanesque period left a permanent imprint in the cultural landscape, becoming the source of tradition in that area.

The history of the church from Gothic to Neo-Gothic

At the close of the Middle Ages, the new church buildings appeared only sporadically. Most work in the area of sacred architecture included remodelings and annexing towers, porches, and sacristies to the existing buildings as for instance in the village church in Cerkwica (Fig. 3).

Renaissance brought significant changes in the church doctrine, first in Europe and soon afterwards in Western Pomerania. The appearance of Martin Luther, the internal church crisis, and the collapse of the whole essence of Catholic faith triggered reformation and divisions inside the church. The Pomeranian ordination regulations which were published in 1535 triggered the development of new protestant church organization [4, pp. 134–136] which for many centuries dramatically changed the further history of church architecture created over the earlier centuries. A lot of church buildings and especially monasteries were transformed and converted to serve other purposes, whereas the churches which were taken over under the protestant jurisdiction most often did not undergo any major changes in respect of their main body structure. The austere Protestantism introduced greater changes inside the church buildings, removing the superfluous decorations from the area near altars. Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassicism all contributed to such an intensive growth of church architecture in this area that occurred in the preceding periods. Few new buildings and partly extensions of the existing churches, which usually included adding towers or presbyteries as well as reconstructions of damaged buildings, prove only that new architectural styles came to Western Pomerania. However, the small number and scale of the new church buildings did not produce the characteristic features of those periods in the area which was surveyed. Before the Neo-Romanesque and Neo-Gothic buildings were constructed in villages from the 15th to 19th century, a special form of timber frame architecture developed which is exemplified by the village church in Świerzno from 1681 (Fig. 4). That form combined different historical periods, and the economic simplicity as well as easy construction contributed to the popularity of that architecture in the villages and small towns in that region. When the churches were built that area was under the jurisdiction of the Protestant Church and it was only after World War II that the churches were adopted for the purposes of the Catholic Church. Most of these buildings have simple plans; they are usually hall churches with east-west orientation covered by steep double-pitched roofs, without towers or with towers located before or in the westwork; the tower was most often made of wood capped with a spire and the timber frame main structure with clear stages. At present the common characteristic feature of that architecture is the white infills between dark wood members[3] and the special function of the tower as the most prominent and sculptured element of the whole design of the church which was most often located on a little hill usually in the village center.

[3] "The timber frame (post-and-beam) construction most often made of oak rendered a checker pattern of rather regular square-like fields. Originally, the fields were filled with poles wrapped with straw and filled with clay. Later the fields were filled with other materials such as dried and burned bricks". Source: [2].

Fig. 2. Kamień Pomorski, small town church with Romanesque and Gothic features, view from the presbytery. Source: [1]

Il. 2. Kamień Pomorski, małomiasteczkowy kościół kontrkatedralny, cechy romańskie i gotyckie, widok od strony prezbiterium. Źródło: [1]

Fig. 3. Cerkwica, village church built after 1400 with an annexed tower. Source: [1]

Il. 3. Cerkwica, wiejski kościół wzniesiony po 1400 r. z dobudowaną wieżą. Źródło: [1]

Fig. 4. Świerzno, village church in the timber frame structure from 1681. Source: [1]

Il. 4. Świerzno , wiejski kościół w konstrukcji ryglowej z 1681 r. Źródło: [1]

Fig. 5. Lubin, Neo-Gothic city church from 1861. Source: [1]

Il. 5. Lubin, neogotycki kościół miejski z 1861 r. Źródło: [1]

Intensive growth of church architecture of the 20th century

The first half of the 20th century was the beginning of the search for the right canon in church art that would fit the sacred space. What had been applied earlier in architecture was re-evaluated and the return to Gothic forms of decoration, the ideas of space, and the general assumptions of the design as well as materials was the result of accepting Gothic as the "religious style", which in turn gave birth to the Gothic Revival which became a typical form of the Catholic church [6, pp. 123–126] (Fig. 5). At that time churches were built from red brick, usually on a rectangular plan as halls with a separated presbytery, one or two towers situated in the main body of the church or annexed from the west; the only new feature of this pseudo-style was the location the church in an open space and not squeezing it into the existing urban fabric.

The 20th century became a stage of a search for new forms, and its second half brought a totally different look at the main body of the church. New buildings in the seaside villages in Western Pomerania do not refer in any way to the tradition of granite churches, Gothic churches or timber frame architecture which constitute integral part with the cultural landscape of the area where they are located.

Because of a lot of new churches built after World War II by the coast, whose number is the highest since location of the first parishes[4], it can be claimed that the archi-

[4] After WWII most of existing churches in Western Pomerania returned under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church; new parishes were created because of many new settlers came and their number naturally grew which resulted in construction or conversion for religious purposes about 23 new buildings in the coastal area over a short period of time (only sixty years) only.

Fig. 6. Międzywodzie, parish church from 1993, proj. by Walenty Zaborowski (photo by D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Il. 6. Międzywodzie, kościół parafialny z ok. 1993 r. wg proj. Walentego Zaborowskiego (fot. D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Fig. 7. Rewal, parish chuch from 1970., proj. by Zbigniew Zaborowski (photo by D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Il. 7. Rewal, kościół parafialny z lat 70. XX wieku wg proj. Zbigniewa Zaborowskiego (fot. D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Fig. 8. Niechorze, chuch in construction since 2000, proj. by Halina Rutyna (photo by D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Il. 8. Niechorze, kościół w budowie od 2000 r. wg proj. Haliny Rutyny (fot. D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Fig. 9. Pobierowo, parish chuch 1984–1986, proj. by Jerzy Okniński (photo by D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Il. 9. Pobierowo, kościół parafialny 1984–1986 wg proj. Jerzego Oknińskiego (fot. D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

tectural and historic heritage of that area with its canon for the sacred space was not further developed. What's even worse is that the new designers did not respect or continue the tradition of the cultural landscape. Their constant and ineffectual search for new forms, something different and innovative is evident in every new building. Every new church has a different architectural form.

The parish church in Międzywodzie (Fig. 6) built in the 1990s has a simplified conservative form; its main body is designed on a rectangular plan with east-west orientation. It is a hall church with a separated presbytery covered by a double-pitched steep roof and with a tower added on the left side by the entrance portal. The temple's windows, mostly filled with stained glass, are located in the main and side entrance portals. The parish church in Rewal (Fig. 7), built in 1976–1978, resembles a boat in its visual form, whereas its main body in its oval section resembles a heart and it is a single space irregular design with an amphitheatrical choir; the whole structure is covered by an irregular double-pitched roof, it has a tower added from the north and its north wall has stained-glass windows. The church in Niechorze (Fig. 8), in construction since 2000, is a single space building on an irregular plan with a separated presbytery, covered by a steep roof with a false tower; the whole structure is a result of free expression on Gothic. The parish church in Pobierowo built in 1984–1986 (Fig. 9) has a single space form on a rectangular plan with an elevated presbytery inside; the church was connected with residential quarters and there is a tower adjacent to the main body of the building; the whole structure is covered by a steep double-pitched roof declining toward the presbytery. That example of a sacred space demonstrates an attempt at achieving ideal. Some of the new churches show repetitive patterns like the one

Fig. 10. Dziwnówek, parish chuch from ca. 1990., proj. by Jerzy Okniński (photo by D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Il.10 Dziwnówek, kościół parafialny z ok.1990 r. wg proj. Jerzego Oknińskiego (fot. D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

in Dziwnówek (Fig. 10) built around 1990 which is a replica of the existing church designed by A. Szymski and M. Wołoszyn in the 1970s in Dębno Lubuskie. The parish church in Dziwnów (Fig. 11), built in 1973–1977, is another example. It is based on a rectangular plan with the choir in the south part. The church has an east-west orientation, with the tower in its central part of west portal. The whole structure has a simple modernist form where the cross is the only indicator of the building's religious purpose. The church in Pogorzelica (Fig. 12) from around 1995 is one of many examples of unsuccessful combination of historical styles. Other examples include the filial church built in Czaplin Wielki (Fig. 13) around 1995 whose form is anti-Neo-Romanesque or the parish church in Łukęcin (Fig. 14) that has been in the process of construction since 2001. The latter is also an example of unsuccessful return to the tradition of timber-frame architecture. The churches

Fig. 11. Dziwnów, parish chuch from 1973–1977, proj. by Otton Odon (photo by D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Il. 11. Dziwnów, kościół parafialny z lat 1973–1977 wg proj. Ottona Odona (fot. D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Fig. 12. Pogorzelica, branch chuch from ca. 1995, proj. by Walenty Zaborowski (photo by D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Il. 12. Pogorzelica, kościół filialny z ok. 1995 r. wg proj. Walentego Zaborowskiego (fot. D. Janisio-Pawłowska, 2011)

Fig. 13. Czaplin Wielki, branch chuch from ca. 1995, proj. by Witold Chmielewski. Source: [1]

Il. 13. Czaplin Wielki, kościół filialny z ok. 1995 r. wg proj. Witolda Chmielewskiego. Źródło: [1]

Fig. 14. Łukęcin, parish chuch in construction since 2001, proj. by Ewa Neli. Source: [1]

Il. 14. Łukęcin, kościół parafialny w budowie od 2001 r. wg proj. Ewy Neli. Źródło: [1]

mentioned in this paper are only some examples of the new church architecture that have been built in Pomerania over the last sixty years. Their great variety in all cities and villages testifies to the lack of common direction of the development of church forms and their frequently awkward designs as well as clumsy attempts to repeat the historical forms testify to the negligence of the existing cultural landscape.

Summary

The new churches which were built in the second half of the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st century on many occasions deviated with their forms from the existing cultural landscape of the urban or rural fabric in which they were located and they often became negative landmarks. Through their innovative forms they often try to force their distinctness from the space surrounding them and consequently they provide a glaring cultural dissonance which is even greater because there are no historical connections that would testify to the continuation of certain traditions and canons of church architecture of previous ages. Undoubtedly such a situation contributes to the breaking of the cultural continuity of those places and it is one of significant elements causing aesthetic chaos in the perception of the changing landscape of that area.

New churches still appear in Western Pomerania and the "freedom in expressing their creative ideas" with the respect for the whole history of church architecture, the church's acceptance of new directions and search in architecture and art still can produce valuable structures in our space which were built to find new forms for sacred space.

Translated by
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Kierunki rozwoju architektury sakralnej na tle krajobrazu kulturowego terenów nadmorskich Pomorza Zachodniego

Rejon nadmorski Pomorza Zachodniego jest doskonałym przykładem zobrazowania kierunków rozwojowych powojennej architektury sakralnej terenów wiejskich i małomiasteczkowych. W wielu przypadkach forma tych obiektów znacznie odbiega od zastanego krajobrazu kulturowego tkanki urbanistycznej bądź ruralistycznej, w której są lokowane, stanowiąc negatywne dominanty krajobrazowe.

Swą krzykliwą formą, często usiłującą na siłę udowodnić swą odmienność od otaczającej ją przestrzeni, stanowią istotny dysonans kulturowy, który jeszcze bardziej jest pogłębiany przez brak powiązań historycznych świadczących o kontynuacji pewnych tradycji i kanonów budownictwa sakralnego minionych wieków tego terenu. Taki stan rzeczy niewątpliwe przyczynia się do zerwania ciągłości kulturowej tych miejsc i jest jednym z istotnych elementów wprowadzających chaos estetyczny w odbiorze zmieniającego się krajobrazu tych terenów.

Key words: church, ecclesiastical architecture, cultural landscape

Słowa kluczowe: kościół , architektura sakralna, krajobraz kulturowy