



László Csaba: Church
of St László, Hollóháza,
1964 – 1967

László Csaba: Kostol
sv. Ladislava, Hollóháza,
1964 – 1967

MODERN TRADITION AND LITURGY

The Ways of Modernism in Hungarian Church Architecture in 20th Century

MODERNÁ TRADÍCIA A LITURGIA

Cesty modernizmu v maďarskej cirkevnej architektúre 20. storočia

Maďarská cirkevná architektúra 20. storočia dobre odráža procesy historického a umeleckého vývoja v Európe v tomto období. Hoci pre 20. storočie bolo typické obohatenie daného regiónu jeho vlastnými hodnotami, môžeme hovoriť aj o kontinuite foriem, štruktúr alebo umenia spojenej s cudzokrajnými vplyvmi, ktorá sa prejavovala v niekoľkých smeroch. Zhoda v dizajne budov projektovaných paralelne pracujúcimi architektmi sa nedá vždy odvodiť od pôsobenia istej architektonickej školy. No dá sa vo všeobecnosti povedať, že duch moderného obdobia vyžadoval, aby oslobodzujúce možnosti technológií a ich filozofické, estetické a ekonomické hodnoty prepísali ideály historizmu, ktoré boli obmedzené formalitami. Ale vnútorné protirečia modernistického hnutia, ktoré nebolo definované uspokojivým spôsobom v stavebnom, historickom a priestorovom kontexte ani vo svojej architektonickej podstate, prejavili sa v zjavnej trhline vo vývoji sakrálnej architektúry založenej na liturgických tradíciách. Hoci v tretej štvrtine storočia môžeme nájsť príklady dokonca istej industriálno-konstruktivistickej interpretácie sakrálnych budov, z hľadiska nových spoločenských potrieb a technológií zmena pozície cirkvi môže byť definovaná len dočasne alebo neúplne.

Maďarská cirkevná architektúra 20. storočia jasne odráža historický pokrok a architektonické tendencie v Európe. Moderný duch architektúry vo všeobecnosti vyžadoval premenu v stvárnení ustálených ideálov historizmu prostredníctvom oslobodzujúcich možností technológií a ich uvedenie ako filozofických, estetických a ekonomických hodnôt. Zhodné charakteristiky modernizmu však zjavne odkazujú na alternatívne prístupy; tie sa líšia svojím vzťahom buď k liturgickej tradícii, alebo k reprezentatívnym či industriálnym zámerom.

Rôznorodosť cirkevnej architektúry v Maďarsku v medzivojnovom období pramení z kultúrnej diverzity krajiny, ktorá na jednej strane bola spojená so západnou Európou, a na druhej strane sa snažila hľadať garanciu svojej nezávislosti v spolupráci s Vatikánom. V danom období neobaroková reprezentácia katolíckej cirkvi bola

v dobrom súlade s „tehlovým modernizmom“, pre ktorý boli príznačné geometrické formy a plastický povrch v cirkevnej architektúre. Tento sloh sa odvíjal od neskorého romanizmu nemeckého a škandinávského regiónu a od expresionizmu Klinta a Poelziga a súvisel s holandským, francúzskym aj so švajčiarskym modernizmom sústredeným na štruktúrach, s neoklasickými experimentmi s formami a s liturgickou architektúrou románskej školy, ktorá bola zameraná na univerzálnu syntézu.

Spomedzi spomenutých trendov len románska škola mohla byť pomerne jasným determinantom, aj to len počas krátkeho obdobia: tento sloh zjednotil tvorivú sviežosť modernistického hnutia a požiadavky katolíckej reformácie tohto obdobia, ktoré sa v predstihu Druhého vatikánskeho koncilu obrátili k cirkvi.

Moderná liturgická architektúra skúmaného obdobia v Maďarsku bola určená tromi paralelnými interpretáciami modernistickej tradície: románskou školou s jej talianskymi koreňmi, modernizmom orientovaným na Nemecko, a po vojnovým plasticizmom a industriálnym konstruktivizmom, ktoré sa prejavili po roku 1945. Románska škola sa javila ako najvýznamnejší maďarský architektonický a umelecký smer medzivojnového obdobia v cirkevnej architektúre súbežnej s talianskym Novecento a metafyzickým hnutím. Patrili k nej bádatelia románskej Akadémie, ako aj komunita pridružených odborníkov. Jedným z hlavných architektonických cieľov hnutia bola modernizácia liturgickej tradície prostredníctvom implementovania jednotného ikonografického programu nezávislého maďarského štátu a katolíckej cirkvi. Gyula Rimanóczy, Aladár a Bertalan Árkayovci, Károly Weichinger, Iván Kotsis st. a Nándor Körmendy boli najvýznamnejšími architektmi tohto hnutia. Ich štýl sa vyznačoval symetrickou alebo na symetrii založenou pozdĺžnou konfiguráciou priestoru, ktorá má pôvod v starokresťanských rímskych bazilikách, ako aj spojením riadkových betónových štruktúr s figurálnym umením.

Súbežne s románskou školou v rámci medzinárodných dielní vznikli významné stavby, v ktorých sa prejavuje vplyv holandskej,

škandinávskej a predovšetkým nemeckej architektúry; tie boli určené predovšetkým protestantským komunitám. Východiskom nemeckej orientácie bola súdobá nemecká cirkevná architektúra tohto obdobia, najmä architektonický vývoj v protestantskom Berlíne (Otto Bartning, Fritz Höger) a vývoj katolíckych liturgických hnutí, ktoré boli zamerané na reformáciu cirkvi v celom Nemecku (Dominikus Böhm, Rudolf Schwarz, Romano Guardini).

Spomenuté zmeny zahrnovali predovšetkým modifikáciu liturgie a v podstate odrážali výsledky a základné koncepty experimentov uskutočnených „liturgickými dielňami“ v Rothenfelse, Mníchove, Rattenbachu alebo v Melku v Rakúsku. Tieto dielne vytvorili náčrty, ktoré sa mohli modifikovať a prispôsobiť rôznym typom liturgie. Vďaka tejto flexibilitě, ako aj vďaka pozornosti, ktorá sa venovala oltárnej komunite svätého prijímania, tieto experimenty predurčili ekumenickú predohru medzi kresťanskými denomináciami, a tým aj šancu liturgického pozvania protestantských bratov. Preto nie je prekvapivé, že v maďarskej protestantskej cirkevnej architektúre tohto obdobia sa stali módnymi pronemecké postoje. Táto nenáročná protestantská architektúra, ktorá sa však nevyhýbala použitiu skromných dekoratívnych detailov, dostala modernú definíciu ako pevný, ale plastický priestor s dynamickými proporáciami; jej modernita nie je podstatne modifikovaná ani vchodom, ani osovou symetriou, ani romantickými polkruhovými oknami veže. Detaily architektúry kostolov postavených pre industriálne komunity na vidieku boli spojené s tradičnými spôsobmi výroby, a v tomto zmysle aj s istými lokalitami.

Najprominentnejšími odborníkmi tohto obdobia boli József Borsos a Pál Szontágh. Pre ich tvorbu je charakteristická kompaktná reinterpretácia stredovekých liturgických priestorových konfigurácií (ústredný plán, Westwerk), remodelovanie klasických priestorových vzorov prostredníctvom modernistického tvarovania inšpirovaného industriálnym racionalizmom, a používanie tehly ako stavebného materiálu pripomínajúceho tradičnú výrobu. Táto orientácia sa znova objavila v maďarskej cirkevnej architektúre po politickej zmene v deväťdesiatych

rokoch vďaka tvorbe Gábora Kruppu, Balásza Szolyáka, ako aj Pétera Fejérdyho.

Obidve významné tradicionalistické tendencie boli v opozícii modernému plasticizmu, ktorý vznikol po druhej svetovej vojne pod medzinárodným vplyvom expresívnych modernistov, takých ako Oscar Niemeyer, Eero Saarinen, Aarno Ruusovuori alebo do istej miery aj Le Corbusier. Počas osemdesiatych rokov do istej miery ako „bočný efekt“ vznikol a vyvíjal sa industriálny konštruktivizmus. Prvý smer aplikoval základné priestorové koncepcie a geometrické idey a pokúšal sa využiť priestorovú voľnosť poskytovanú betónovými schránkami; druhý vytváral zo štruktúrovaných oceľových rámcov platonickú pevnosť. V oboch prípadoch primárnymi aspektmi tvorby bolo heroické formovanie a ekonomická implementácia. Spomedzi najznámejších architektov najdôležitejšími postavami boli László Csaba, József Getto a István Szabó, ale špecifické pojmú plasticizmu pokračuje počas postkomunistického znovuoživenia aj v cirkevnej architektúre Ferenc Bána a Istvána Lengyela.

Tieto kostoly pôsobia ako kryštálové domy, ktoré obracajú pohľad k slnku: sú konštruktivistickým hymnom slnka v zenite. Ale aj napriek ich heroickej povahe tieto príklady sú extrémnymi prípadmi v časovom diagrame maďarskej cirkevnej architektúry. Orientácia na svetlo sa stáva dominantným prvkom v priestore, kde jednota symetrickej osi kontrastuje so zložitou cirkulárnou vzorcom náčrtu. Liturgický priestor je prechodnou oblasťou medzi dvoma geometrickými extrémami. Túto metamorfózu môžeme sledovať na čistých bielych stenách a neskôr na štruktúre strechy.

Hoci po zmene režimu nadšenie ohľadne výstavby kostolov vzrástlo a paleta architektov v tejto oblasti sa stala rôznorodou, jasné formovanie, možnosť interpretácií a jednoduchosť modernizmu môže byť spojené predovšetkým s formálnym ustálením uhorskej cirkevnej architektúry počas ostatných rokov. Tendencia pokojného vyjadrovania v modernizme spojená s liturgickou tradíciou sa prejavuje v posledných prácach Jánosa Goldu alebo Gábora a Pétra Gerebenovcov.

Hungarian church architecture of the 20th century accurately reflects the European historical and artistic development processes of the given period. Though this century was typified by its enriching of the region by presenting the values of individuality, at several points it is still possible to observe the continuity of forms, structures or the craft itself related to foreign connections can be observed at several points. The architectural consensus of buildings designed by architects working in parallel cannot always be derived from the activity of any architectural school. However, it can be noted in general that the spirit of the modern age demanded everywhere the overcoming of the ideals of historicism bound by formalities with the help of the liberating facilities of technology, and by presenting their philosophical, aesthetical and economical values. Nevertheless, the intrinsic contradictions of the Modern Movement ^{11/}, which had defined itself only in an unsatisfactory way regarding the matter of tectonics, historic and space context and architectural immanence, were manifested in an apparent break in sacral architecture rooted in liturgical traditions. Though in the third quarter of the century we can find examples of even some industrial-constructivist interpretations of sacral buildings, from the point of view of new social demands and technology the Church's changed role can be defined only temporarily or incompletely.

We also have to take into consideration the iconological hiatus that arose from the modernist repudiation of the spatial and textual symbolic order that had previously existed in historicism, in the church architecture of Art Nouveau or in the Hungarian national movement at the turn of the century. The iconological patterns were dissolved in the expressive form, in the avant-garde reduction of liturgical arts and in the space-topography; while the liturgical spaces cleansed of narratives and allegories emphasized the independence of holiness from space and time as well as its direct and universal aspect. Consequently, this purity of sacral spaces was attached to the development of a religious community into an intellectual centre, while the uniqueness of the liturgical word, which was just being born, was connected to the speciality and singleness of individual space-formation ^{12/}. It may seem rather contradictory that

in the decades when the experimental form of modernity spread through Europe, Hungarian church architecture of the period between the two world wars was much more connected to historical archetypes, to 'common taste' and to the emphasis on the community creating the role of the church than the Hungarian state architecture of the era after World War II, in which architecture professed social realism, the will of people and communism, but soon performed a complete turn to modernism ^{13/}. After the liquidation of the communist regime, the liturgical architecture of the era had the chance to take inspiration once more from studying the outstanding examples of the movements present before the world war, and to search for continuity along the curve of the broken traditions ^{14/}.

Modernizing the adherence to tradition

The variety of Hungarian church architecture between the world wars comes from the cultural diversity of the country, which was connected to Western Europe but strove to find a guarantee for its independence in a co-operation with the Vatican. In the period under discussion, the neo-baroque idiom favoured by the Catholic Church harmonised well with the geometric and surface-plastic church architecture of the 'brick-modernism' developing from the German and Scandinavian late-Romanticism and the expressionism of Klint and Poelzig, as well as with the Dutch, French and Swiss modernism that focused on structures, or with the formal experiments of Neo-Classicism and with the liturgical architecture of the Roman School that aimed at a universal synthesis.

Out of these trends, only the Roman School was able to achieve sufficient force, and only for a short time, since it had unified the creative freshness of the Modern Movement and the Catholic reformation demand – partly in advance of the Second Vatican Council – of the period, which turned to the Church. This modernist freshness, together with the results of modern science and philosophy, was intended to be put in the service of the Church and Christian education by the encyclical of Pius XI in 1929 ^{15/}. In 1931, Tibor Gerevich defined the aims of this artist group, which may be considered the Hungarian parallel of the Novecento Italiano ^{16/}, but at the same time

bore the marks of the direct influence of the Italian metaphysical movement. He put special stress on the idea that the development of the basic idea should be started simultaneously, parallel and interlocked in all fields: in architecture, in sculpture, in painting and in applied arts in order to form the desired and anticipated new style, a new spirit in an organic way, with the united interaction of the different arts ^{/7/}. This total art aimed to combine the 'Italianate manner' with the modern style, and as such hoped to connect to the aims of national politics and the projected wider spread of Catholicism in Eastern Europe, objectives that had common ground with the row of Eucharistic congresses inspired by the modern religious movements ^{/8/}. Among the artists of the Roman School, we can mention Vilmos Aba-Novák, Pál Molnár-C. and Béla Ohmann, who worked as co-operative artists with the architect-scholars of the Hungarian Academy, Rome (Bertalan Árkay, Alfréd Bardon or György Korompay) and as the colleagues of Gyula Rimanóczy and Iván Kotsis Senior who joined the movement for intellectual reasons. Besides the reformation of aesthetic goals, their aims did not focus on a modern experiment that broke with liturgical and architectural traditions, but much more on a possible way of modernizing traditionalism ^{/9/}.

Four emblematic church buildings of the decade of the Roman School – showing multiple formal and architectural relationships with each other – are the Catholic Parish Church of Jézus Szíve (Jesus' Heart) by Aladár Árkay in Budapest, Városmajor (1931 – 1933), also built in Budapest and at virtually the same time, the Parish Church and Franciscan friary of St. Anthony of Padua (1933 – 1934) by Gyula Rimanóczy in Pasarét ^{/10/}, the monastery of Prince St Emeric for the order of St Paul (1937) by Károly Weichinger in Pécs and the church of Iván Kotsis Senior in Balatonboglár, later completed with a presbytery office (1931). There are several common features in these constructions, such as the longitudinal-axial space organization, the use of an Italianate campanile independent from the main body of the church, the visual section created according to Mediterranean proportions, the method of a layout system either symmetric or developed from a symmetric shape (which can be traced back to the Ancient Christian

basilica) as well as the use of rough materials that establish a contrast with all the above-mentioned elements and the reinforced concrete structure left exposed in its pure form in the interior or sometimes even outside. In contrast to the contemporary church architecture of Novecento Italiano, inspired by the antique Roman scale system and Lombard brick-architecture, like Giovanni Muzio's church of Sta. Maria Annunciata in Chiesa Rossa in Milan (1932) or his church of Sant' Ambroggio in Cremona (1935 – 1938) ^{/11/}, the Hungarian examples are not as rich in details: they are much more restrained and more faithfully express the construction technology. This character was in harmony with the facilities provided by the developing building industry of the era, namely that the congregation was able to build a church in one phase, with a low budget and short deadlines without relinquishing the solemnity of scale. In this way, the new church architecture, though attacked by the critics who were used to an eclectic language, became the symbol of congregations making a virtue of their poverty. For example, we can compare the church of Gyula Rimanóczy in Pasarét to the church on Rezső Square designed by Jenő Kismarty-Lechner in 'palatine-style', to widespread public appreciation (1929 – 1931). Both are the same size but the former was constructed for the cost of one fifth of the latter one ^{/12/}.

The church designed by Rimanóczy in Pasarét opens up to the surrounding world with the modesty and naivety of the Canticle of the Sun by St Francis of Assisi. Far from using architectural tools in a merely adaptive way, the architect focuses instead on the clear play of masses within the composition. This attitude is reflected again in the south-oriented belfry connected to the body of the church with a narrow chapel, with the tower positioned on the slightly bent axis of Pasaréti út. The exposition of the place positioning the tower is completed by the quarter-circle block of the bus station. Constructed from Rimanóczy's design in 1938, this utilitarian facility continues the façade line of the monastic building complex: it follows the architecture of the church and thus forms a kind of forefront for the complex. The intent to unify the construction can also be traced in the entrance and side façades, as in the rhythm of the slender reinforced concrete arcades



Photo Foto: Vilmos Katona

Aladár and Bertalan
Árkay: Jesus' Heart Parish
Church, 1931 – 1933,
Budapest-Városmajor

Aladár a Bertalan Árkay:
Obecný Kostol Ježišovho
Srdca, 1931 – 1933,
Budapešť-Városmajor

determining the architrave of the campanile, whose arcades dominate the composition by projecting the interior order (the longitudinal and cross section) outward to the exterior. The pillar-order of the reinforced concrete vault-frames of Gothic slenderness proved an inexhaustible architectural resource, as well as the re-discovery of glass. These tools made the massive bulk of the building ethereal and abstract ^{7/13/} citing the interplay of light and mass play of the mother church in Assisi, and at the same time expressed the iconographic program of the Hungarian Catholic Church of the 1930s. The slightly raised, curved apse is encir-

led by a row of pillars ending in arcades – where the pillars are narrowed to the static limit of stability – and from their heads, the ceiling light breaks into the sanctuary. This wreath of side-light illuminates the fresco by György Leszkovszky, which illustrates St Anthony of Padua in the centre field of the apse. The sgraffito-like frescos of Franciscan monks, or other saints who are role models for the Franciscans, are abstract in their plainness: they are symbolic figures in front of an imaginous plane that dissolves in the wall of the church. Their picturesque character avoids perspectival space and quotes the secretive, illusionistic painting of Giotto

di Bondone, who also worked in Assisi, or of Paolo Uccello ^{/14/}.

The plain slab with reinforced beams cites the Latin basilicas, where the open roof structure is articulated by the rafters. Though they disturb the axial symmetry that determines the main nave, the side-chapels are positioned only on the northern side – and in this way represent the additive character of the liturgical action space related to the Stations of the Cross and the Christian pilgrimage. Within the renewed church, the modern pilgrimage focused particularly on the Holy Heart (Sacré Coeur), the Eucharist and the Holy Family: the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, who were both provided with own chapels on the northern side. Their chapels are placed opposite to the

chapel of St Francis, which – with the wall-relief of Jesus and Francis by István Bicskei Karle in the middle – manifests in its direct simplicity the initiating mystery of faith. The Eucharistic iconography program is made unambiguous with the high reliefs of Béla Ohmann too, whose artworks – illustrating the sacrifice of Abraham, Melchizedek and Christ – decorate the altar ^{/15/} originally planned for the centre of the sanctuary.

The unusual idea of the centre altar, proposed 30 years before the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, also appears in the plans designed for the Városmajor church by Aladár Árkay. The first plans of Árkay, designed in 1927, contained a church on the plan of a Greek cross with an imposing central dome, similar to the plans



Károly Weichinger:
Monastery of Prince St.
Emeric for the order of
St Paul, 1937, Pécs

Károly Weichinger: Kláštor
kniežaťa sv. Emerica
postavený pre rád
sv. Pavla, 1937, Pécs

that his son Bertalan prepared in 1929 for the Memorial Church of Bishop Ottokár Prohászka in Székesfehérvár, where the central sanctuary again is the relevant chief feature ^{/16/}. Nevertheless, after the intermediate construction of the Church of St Laszlo in Győr-Gyárvaros (1928 – 1929), the new concept of the church for Városmajor contained a clearly longitudinal building, where the form of the sanctuary as a cube with skylights still adhered to the original intention of a central position. The concentration of the need for centrality in the sanctuary presents not only a prefiguration of liturgical reform, in other words the solemnity of the *communio* ^{/17/} of the church; but also provides a convincing testament to the abstract re-adaptation of the apse-type of the pilgrimage churches, created for the ceremony of circumambulation and originating from the layout of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem ^{/18/}. In case of the Church of Jesus' Heart, similarly to the church in Pasarét, a row of chapels lead to the elevated floor of the sanctuary, but this time the chapels can be found on both sides and can be entered from each other. The rows of the chapels are connected to the sanctuary with openings breaking through the triumphal gate. The joint side-chapels are embedded in robust cubes, which also makes them recognizable from the outside; between these cubes, painted glass windows are wedged, attached to the ceiling in a quarter-circle form. The chapels have a 'temporary' feeling, since as a result of their openness they can easily be turned to be chambers of the Stations of the Cross. In this case, the sanctuary becomes the programmatic centre of the series of the stations and provides the optional background of the passion play. The longitudinal dynamics of the church space are further enhanced by the fresco cycle of Vilmos Aba-Novák (1938), which repeats Michelangelo's conception for the Sistine Chapel in Vatican, illustrating the days of the Creation in the rectangular fields of the ceiling of the main nave, which is articulated with reinforced rims. The first day of Creation, namely the birth of Light, starts from the sanctuary and leads toward the glass window of the gallery of St Cecilia. As this space is oriented in the direction opposite to the course of the stations, it creates a double orientation typical of the chapel in the Vatican, and as a result gives rise to

a liturgical 'impulse-momentum' as well.

In the church, the traditional three-nave layout with side-chapels was realized with a rigid structure of reinforced concrete, without vaulting but with painted glass windows of the complete interior height, citing the hall churches of the Late Gothic style. The iconographic program of the glass windows of Lili Sztehló, which portrayed St Elizabeth and the Hungarian saints but were destroyed in 1942, the double paintings of King St Stephen painted by Aba-Novák onto aluminium sheets and placed in the sanctuary as well as the St Emeric altar designed by Pál Molnár-C. were all connected to the celebrations of the independent Hungarian state in 1930 and 1938. At the same time, however, this program emphasized the importance of Christian education in an era under threat from by atheism and neo-paganism ^{/19/}. Nevertheless, this church formulated with historical consciousness was merely realized with modern tools. The influence of the architect's son, Bertalan Árkay can be found both in the final plans and also in their implementation. After graduating from the Királyi József Műegyetem (Royal Technical University of Budapest), Bertalan studied under the guidance of Peter Behrens in the master school of the College of Fine Arts, Vienna, and then achieved professional experiences in the Thiers office in Paris. The application of reinforced concrete structures together with large glass surfaces is very likely the result of his experience in France, where the first example of this method appeared in church architecture with the church of Notre-Dame du Raincy by Auguste Perret (1922 – 1923). It is reasonable to assume that Aladár Árkay was been familiar with the church of St Antonius by Karl Moser and Gustav Doppler in Basel (1925 – 1927) and presumably the church of Christus-König by Adolf Muesmann in Rosenheim (1928 – 1929) too, since the church in Városmajor is a subjective transcription of the latter one ^{/20/}. This relationship is further ensured by the fact that the pylon-framed abstract building mass was originally constructed from exposed concrete with a rough surface, similar to the examples mentioned. The light-coloured travertine cladding that can be seen today was installed on the façade in 1938 to soften the roughness; this alteration – together with the high relief which decorates the semicircular gate – made the progressive

modern impression a bit 'more understandable'. A similar process can be noticed in case of the glass window with a depiction of Christ positioned towards the apse; during the renovation following bomb damage after the war, the stern features of Christ were redrawn to a more genial expression.

There was no need of such consolidation in case of the monastery of St Paul in Pécs designed by Károly Weichinger, since it was originally constructed with rough stone cladding from the Mecsek quarries. Moreover, its appearance – along with the laconic style committed to the physical essence of the building and the basilica's monastic stance – was more easily accepted by the clientele of a religious order ^{/21/}. Few church gardens can compete with the light-swept harmony of the monastery courtyard built on the southern slope of the Mecsek Mountains. Its complex is counterbalanced with an imposing belfry; and in this courtyard, reclusive souls can experience silence even today. Nonetheless, such examples of a contextual Modernism filled with historic and local references were not sufficiently powerful in this period to prevent the resurgence of historicism with new force. As such instances of revived historicism, we have to mention not only the neo-baroque Cistercian church of St Emeric by Gyula Wälder designed for Villányi út, Budapest, constructed from reinforced concrete (1937 – 1938) or the Parish Church of Jesus' Heart in Lemezgyártelep, also built in this 'Wälder-baroque' in Borsodnádásd (1934), but also the examples of authentically interpreted historic spaces, like the centrally organized Votive Church by Aladár and Bertalan Árkay in Mohács (1929 – 1940) or the still unfinished Church of the Holy Land in Budapest-Hűvösvölgy (1942 – 1949), designed by Farkas Molnár and characterised by its elliptic dome. This last building was the final attempt at reconciling the spatial language of historicism to the structural and formal language of the Bauhaus, and which – as a liturgical and secular symbol – was tragically left a mere fragment after the war. Comparable to the purity of this experiment is the smaller-scale Parish Church of St Emeric by Nándor Körmeny in Győr-Nádorváros (1942), likewise a search for the archetypes of antique and modern at the same time, which it found in its monofocal horizontality, the row of high positioned windows run-

ning around the space, the white plastered walls and the southern gallery ^{/22/}. The Catholic Parish Church of St Anthony in Taksony (1958) designed by Bertalan Árkay can be considered modern regarding its architectural tools, but at the same time it is still connected to the Roman School in its spatial conceptualization. In addition, considering the date of its construction, this building is an unexampled creation, the last messenger of the golden age between the two world wars in the new world of the 'Eastern Bloc' ^{/23/}.

The hidden roads of the 'other' modernism

In the Alföld region, several churches and memorials bear witnesses to a church architecture inspired by historical classicism instead of the neoclassicism generated by the politics of the era. One example is the University Church in Debrecen (1941) by József Borsos, the design of which continued the style of the famed Calvinist Great Church (1803 – 1823) by Mihály Péchy and József Thaller. Behind the gate, which is decorated with a tympanum and articulated with stretched Doric columns, a space of polygonal layout and great height opens up. Here, the strongly articulated focal point is the place of the pulpit located in the building corner opposite the entrance gallery. The perfection of the engineering-geometric design fits in well with the asymmetric central layout that became crystallized in the Calvinist liturgical traditions ^{/24/}, and which – leaving behind most of its classic decorations – gained a formally puritanical appearance. In this church, the enlightened architecture of Platonic bodies, a Protestant sense of purity and modern social-economic directives met each other not as innovation but as elements based on 150-year-old traditions. This search for architectural style was equivalent to the emerging expressive trend which finally manifested itself in the Church of Gustav-Adolf designed by Otto Bartning with its triangular layout ^{/25/} (1932 – 1934). A modern conception can also be discerned in the belfry, the mass of which is connected to the building but can be clearly separated as a stereometric, architrave-free tower with openings that dissolves upwards. Similarly, the Mausoleum of Heroes designed by Pál Szontágh and Jenő Kismarty-Lechner for the military cemetery in Debrecen (1932) shows modern characteristics

with its dissolved proportions and nearly industrial-like block building containing a purely classicist dome-space ^{/26/}. The under structure of the dome with tambour can be defined in terms of a vertically slightly stretched rectangular block elevated on a square layout. While the interior of the mausoleum, which is defined by paired semicircular arches, appears as the symbolic basic element of the space conception, the surrounding form does not provide any space for representation: the dome lightened by a symbolic 24 windows is covered with a horizontally closed superstructure of 24 sides. The edges of the alternating yellow and white coloured rectangular windows are bent so slightly as to be hardly be differentiated from a circle; and this break of angles is much more evident in the focus of the formation of the superstructure than the metaphorical diaphragm of the hidden dome. The simple brick architecture softens the small but still robust mass with its play of colours and breaks of angles, and makes the bulk rich in detail and more human, especially at the corners and on the light-swept surface of the pillars which articulate the entrance.

Architects living in the eastern regions of Hungary, the "Tiszántúl", where the majority belong to the Calvinist Church, presented a trend in church architecture further removed from the main Catholic ecclesiastical-political line, but still participated in the enthusiasm typical of the period; and this architecture can be discussed separately. In addition, the denominational relationships led Protestant church architecture to be oriented mainly towards German, Scandinavian and Dutch developments. These German-Protestant relationships were at least as multiple and fruitful as the nearly parallel period of Italian-Catholic orientations that likewise manifested itself typically in brick architecture in Hungary. Tectonic use of burned brick, natural wood and industrial steel, together with the reinforced frame structure in a less historical but much more consciously artistic way, fitted the concept of the German Christian reform movements. This idea treats architecture as the profession of building, celebrates the liturgy in the communion of the Holy Spirit and emphasizes its nature much more as a mercy than a sacrifice. These reform movements had worked effectively in Germany and in USA until 1933, when Hitler

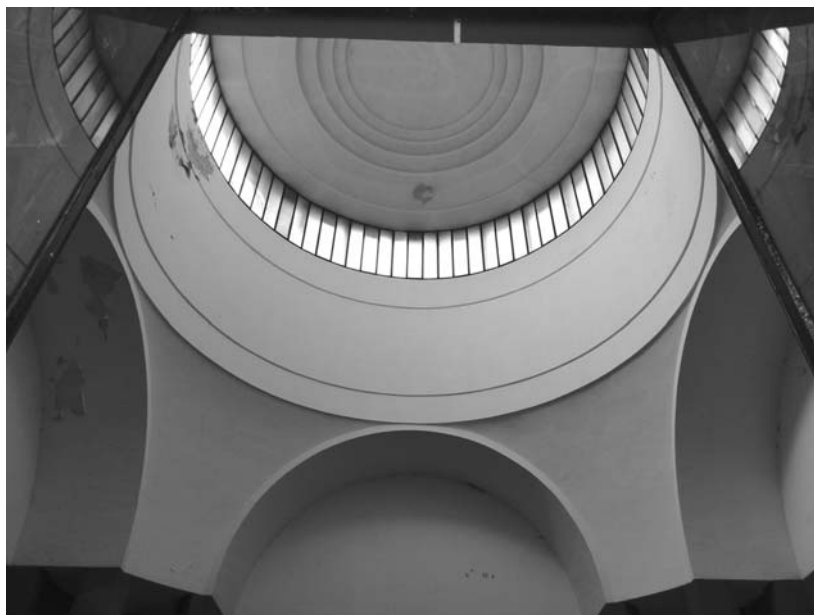


Photo Foto: Vilmos Katona

came to power ^{/27/}. The activity of Rudolf Schwarz, Dominikus Böhm, Romano Guardini as well as the international Christian-socialist reform movement of the Quickborn all played a relevant role in the theological changes which led up to the Second Vatican Council; and these changes happened first in the German and Swiss religious education faculties that edited the program proposal for the council to be held within three decades ^{/28/}. The changes contained first the modification of the liturgy and essentially reflected the results and basic concepts of the experiments done by the 'liturgical workshops' of Rothenfels, München, Rattenbach or Melk, Austria. These workshops designed modifiable layouts that can be adapted to the different types of liturgies. Due to this great degree of mobility and to the attention paid to the table-community of the Holy Communion, these experiments predestined the ecumenical overture between the Christian denominations, in this way the chance for the liturgical invitation of the Protestant brethren. Thus, not surprisingly, the inspiration of Germany came into fashion in the

Pál Szontágh – Jenő
Kismarty-Lechner:
Mausoleum of Heroes,
1932, Debrecen

Pál Szontágh – Jenő
Kismarty-Lechner:
Mauzóleum hrđinov,
1932, Debrecen

Hungarian Protestant church architecture of the period ^{/29/}.

The theologically determined architectural parallelisms were accompanied by the more secular tradition of German church architecture, mainly the results achieved in the Prussian capital. The city of Berlin is inexhaustibly rich in examples that may have had a direct influence on the liturgical architecture of Hungarian 'red-brick-modernism'. We can talk not just about formal analogies but also about conceptual similarities – especially in relation to the visible duality embedded in the elaboration of a mainly homogenous, fabric-like brick cladding and the interiors defined by a rough reinforced concrete framework. In terms of the use of brick and in the element of rough concrete circle-segments – often quoting the Gothic style – the stance of Late Romanticism, which expanding in parallel with the 19th century Classicism of Schinkel and Klenze, developed into the contextual 'other' modernism in a nearly unbroken trajectory ^{/30/}. The process leading from the German Romanticism, embodied by the Church of Friedrichswerder in Berlin by Schinkel (1824 – 1930), to the modernity of the Church of St. Heinrich in Bamberg by Michael Kurz (1927 – 1929) then to Fritz Höger's Church of Hohenzollerndamm in Berlin ^{/31/} (1931 – 1932), is analogous with the process which extends from the Fogadalmi templom (Votive Church) of Szeged by Frigyes Schulek and Ernő Foerk (1913 – 1930) to the Calvinist church of József Borsos ^{/32/} located in the same city (1941). The design of the buildings around Dóm tér in Szeged (1929 – 1930) is connected to Béla Rerrich; while the crematorium in Nagyerdő (1931) designed by Borsos can be connected to Romanticism from many aspects; and both can be considered as the works of this very workshop. The Hungarian masters of brick architecture were the bearers of a tradition alive in Middle and Northern Europe that still had connections to artisanship; and in these regions, this tradition created an architecture that shared common traits but was adapted to local conditions. This group contains Berlage, de Klerk and the Amsterdam School; in terms of individual buildings, the Town Hall in Stockholm by Ragnar Östberg (1911 – 1923), the Chilehaus by Fritz Höger in Hamburg (1922 – 1924) or the plans of Hans Poelzig, as well

as the above-mentioned examples from religious architecture ^{/33/}. These works occupied a position midway between the form-language of historicism and the architecture of pure spaces and masses of the modernist concept.

Beyond the Alföld region, the design activity of Pál Szontágh in Northern Hungary can also be considered relevant. The masonry stone wall of his Franciscan Church in Salgótarján (1934 – 1936) is a kind of reminiscence of the previously mentioned church of Kurz in Bamberg. Again, the German style is reflected in the Westwerk-like linear composition articulated with side-chapels and completed with one belfry. Simultaneously with the construction of this church, another church was erected for the Evangelical workers of the sheet-metal factory of Borsodnádásd (1934), designed in explicit contrast to the nearby Baroque building of Gyula Wälde. If we omit the single side-chapel of the church in Salgótarján, it is possible to recognize in it the characteristic form of the other church in Borsodnádásd. Bearing in mind its small dimensions, its complexity is quite considerable, proof indeed of the architect's wide architectural knowledge. The elliptic interior can be accessed through a centrally positioned gate; and the different elements of the inner functions can be easily read from the additive masses: the organ-gallery from the belfry gate or in another way, from the reduced Westwerk, the twisted staircase running up to the gallery from the towers of the buttress, the centrally and at the same time axially oriented nave from the elliptic bulk, the linearly finished apse from the rear addition of the space, insofar as the vestry can be recognized from the side construction. The typical German precursors of this central liturgical composition, which is nearly 'pinned' or fixed with the help of the belfry gate, are the Kreuzkirche of Ernst and Günther Paulus in Berlin (1927 – 1929) and the Lutheran Church of Hans Hertlein in Siemensstadt, where there are even more similarities in the layout system (1929 – 1931) ^{/34/}.

The greyish-brown brick cladding of the building hides a pure, whitewashed interior with yellow-white, geometrically divided high-placed windows, of a type to that seen at the mausoleum in Debrecen. At this time, the homogeneous and usually curved space, which is lightened from the



Photo Foto: Vilmos Katona

wall edges, had become a central trope of modern architectural for the expression of verticality; and later it appeared as a typical instrument in such works as the Parish Church of St. Michael in Frankfurt-Nordend (1953) or the Parish Church of St. Theresia in Linz (1961), both designed by Rudolf Schwarz⁷³⁵. Szontágh covered the simple space with a rib-grid slab, which cites the wooden coffering of the ceilings in Lutheran churches in the countryside. Wrought-iron icons of the sheet metal factory were inserted in the timbered panels of the rib grids. This Protestant architecture of modesty, which at the same time did not avoid the use of some modest decorative details, gained a

modern definition with the dynamic proportions as a solid but plastic space, and this modernity is not modified essentially either by the gate, the axial symmetry or the romantic impression of the semicircular windows of the tower. As such, the detailing of the church, built for a rural yet industrial community, was connected to the traditions of manufacturing in its immediate location.

Despite its noble simplicity, the German-inspired church architecture has not made a new appearance in Hungary, not even after the decades of 'silence' following the war; and this statement seems to be questioned only by the contemporary tendencies of recent years. In Mátrakeresztes, in the

Pál Szontágh:
Lutheran church, 1934,
Borsodnádásd

Pál Szontágh: Evanjelický
kostol, 1934, Borsodnádásd

Gábor Kruppa: Parish
 Church of the Blessed Sára
 Salkaházi, 2006 – 2008,
 Budapest–Újpalota

Gábor Kruppa: Obecny
 kostol kostol Blahoslavnej
 Sary Salkaháziovej,
 2006 – 2008,
 Budapest–Újpalota

Chapel of Nagybaldogasszony by Balázs Szóják (2001 – 2008) the typology of a brick church with an elliptic layout and buttress reinforcement makes its appearance again. The building fits into the row of houses located in the wooded valley of the northern projection of the Mátra Mountains, with the new complex replacing a chapel that had been reconstructed from a forester's house in 1946. According to local history, open-air masses

had been celebrated around a bell on this spot until the 18th century, and in one sense, the memory of this 'standing around the pole' was inscribed into the elliptic form of the chapel^{136/}. Regarding the building structure, there are two main elements: the space of the chapel and a courtyard. From the use of materials and the standpoint of composition, these two parts are organically connected, but from the formal aspect they are only attached inorganically to each other. In this case, the use of brick is merely art for art's sake and a strong architectural element. However, the liturgy held behind the closed walls and the courtyard open for other programs presume each other's existence on the basis of traditional predecessors. The court encircled by an L-shape construction, which is reduced to a simple wall on the side, is a contemporary transcription of a traditional monastery cloister.

While the main gate leads to the forefront of the chapel at an oblique angle, the courtyards entrance opens directly into the sanctuary. The elliptical cylinder is articulated with pillars and covered with a sloping slab; the space is not divided by any centrally positioned paths: the sanctuary and the rows of benches can be accessed from the right-hand side of the chapel. The choir gallery, the roof rising towards the apse and the court are connected by a uniform order of disposition, which interprets the curved and quadratic design together. The slender windows of the western wall counterbalance the staircase of the gallery rising on the eastern side. The reinforced wall structure is borne by a robust crossbeam frame, and the tectonic concept that can be recognized in this solution acts with the power of artlessness, similarly to the reduced altar, the pulpit and the tabernacle. The metal-framed belfry is a separated element of the composition; and it marks out the place in a way that connects the chapel and the courtyard. The red-brick Greek Catholic Church of the Holy Spirit by Péter Fejérdy^{137/} (1997 – 2000) was built at the turn of the millennium in Csepel, on the southern border of Budapest. The drop-shaped church is marked out by a belfry, and – similarly to the solutions of Szontágh and his German peers - this work tries to find a brief answer for solving the liturgical problem of centrality-linearity. Here, centrality is abandoned with an axis of motion lying at the



Photo Foto: Zorán Vukoszávlyev

tangent of the curved layout, resulting in a space with rotating dynamics. A direct precursor to this solution is the Parish Church built in Felsőpakony (1994) designed by Ferenc Török, the architect Fejérdy's teacher.

The German style of Schwarz probably appeared the most forcefully in the Parish Church of the Blessed Sára Salkaházi (2006 – 2008) designed by Gábor Kruppa for Budapest-Újpalota^{/38/}. The church, which plays a mission role in the residential area of Újpalota, is rich in references from the history of architecture. The double naves and L-shape of the layout system ending in a tower cites the Church of St Anna in Düren^{/39/} by Rudolf Schwarz (1951 – 1956) as well as the large eastern (in the case of Düren, southern) window and the monolithic logic of construction – but this concept has already been realized with its pure façade and spatial composition and asymmetric double naves in the Church of St. Fronleichnam in Aachen (1928 – 1930) also designed by Schwarz^{/40/}. The high wall pillars of the sunken courtyard of the church's single mass are the reminiscences of the atrium that can be seen in the monastery church by Dom Hans van der Laan in Vaals (1956 – 1986) as well as the stairs rising under the protection of these pillars^{/41/}. At the same time the homogenous, side-lightened hall of the church in Újpalota, which synthesises space and material, can be related to Swedish church architecture, especially to the Church of St Thomas in Stockholm-Vällingby (1960) by Peter Celsing. In spite of the retrospective indications, Kruppa's church has fresh buoyancy resulting not only from its characteristic brick architecture but also from the re-interpretation of the liturgical reform period of Schwarz, which has begun to be topical again^{/42/}.

Plasticism and constructivism

The anti-church attitude of the Soviet regime imposed on Eastern Europe extended the post-war travails of Hungarian church architecture by at least two decades, since in this period no communion buildings were built that could be compared to the churches before World War II. This long silence was first broken by László Csaba, who graduated from the Kegyestaniőrendi (Piarist) High School in Budapest, and who protested directly against the inactive politics of ar-



Photo Foto: Vilmos Katona

chitecture typical for the fifties. After his speech in 1961, Csaba was nominated for Secretary General at MÉSZ (Association of Hungarian Architects)^{/43/}. By this time, a church designed by him had already been erected in Cserépváralja (1959 – 1961), being constructed by the own work of the local believers, and deservedly dedicated to St Joseph^{/44/}. This community church was built from rustic stone with symbolically white mortar joints. Unlike the same architect's later work, the Church of St László (1964 – 1967) in Hollóháza, the church of Cserépváralja, in spite of its avant-garde scale of spaces, did not follow the plasticity of international modernism laid down by by Le Corbusier or Oscar Niemeyer.

Csaba was commissioned with preparing the plans of the church of Hollóháza during his years spent at Iparterv. Though his latter employer TTI (Típustervező Intézet = Institute for Type Designing) did not favour the preparation of the construction plans of the church being close to realization, the unbroken enthusiasm of believers

László Csaba: Church of St László, 1964 – 1967, Hollóháza

László Csaba: Kostol sv. Ladislava, 1964 – 1967, Hollóháza



Photo Foto: Vilmos Katona

József Getto: Roman Catholic church, 1981, Pécs-Postavölgy

József Getto: Rímskötölícky kostol, 1981, Pécs-Postavölgy

led to the erection of a highly symbolic building in Hollóháza ^{/45/}. This settlement in the Zemplén Mountains was already famous for its glass furnaces in the 18th century. Its earthenware, and later porcelain manufacture, was an inspiration not only for architecture, which was oriented towards “reform” in both an aesthetic and a religious sense, but also for the contemporary fine artists. Yet the building only worked as an illustration for the radicalism of the ideal of industrial production; in reality, it seized the modernist style through its idealist of geometrical form. The church gathered the works of the following artists under one roof: the porcelain images on the parapet of the gallery (Endre Szász), the ceramic Stations of the Cross (Margit Kovács) and the Corpse of Christ hung above the altar designed by József Somogyi (1976). The church inserted into the landscape is a cast stone reproduction of the ancient lodge of Laugier: a bare triangular prism made of monolithic concrete. Its ridge breaks up like a shell, and in order to let light into the tetrahedron of the sanctuary it rises high at the apse, which closes the longitudinal nave. At this point the encounter of the

rough concrete contours of the two triangles inserted into each other is much more dramatic and sensual than in the church in Hyvinkää, Finland (1961) by Aarno Ruusuvuori, which can be considered the immediate precursor of the Hungarian building. In Hyvinkää, pyramids of equilateral and right triangle sections are in constellation. The ‘sacral tent’ became a uniform composition together with the steep pitched roof of the belfry and with the vestry, which is closely articulated by light stripes on its sides and top. The undivided appearance of this heroic complex provided an answer to the dichotomy that – according to the original design concept – can be clearly and recognizably seen separating the organic surroundings and the abstraction of architecture up today ^{/46/}. In international liturgical architecture, the Metropolitana Cathedral in Brasília designed by Niemeyer (1958 – 1960) presented a determinant example for seizing the concept of architecture as a space-art covered with plastically formable or repeatable shell-structure elements ^{/47/}. The unifying of the structure and the shell immediately led to the metaphysical contrast of the material (built) and immaterial (encircled, spatial) elements of the building; and this contrast involved the possibility for a transcendental interpretation of the construction. Beyond the mentioned Finnish example, both the church designed by Paul Posenenske for Hassenrot in Germany (1964 – 1966) and the Evangelical Church of Jesus Christ in Kevelaer (1962 – 1963) designed by H. Duncker belong to this trend and are aligned more closely to Hollóháza ^{/48/}.

In Pécs-Postavölgy, the church of József Getto was built slightly later, in 1981. Here, the natural-contextual attitude of the building foreran its time and formed a special transition between the modern concept of architecture in an antagonistic relation to nature and the topographical approach which is already present in the chapel of Le Corbusier at Ronchamp (1950 – 1955). The change is forecasted by the church by László Csaba in Hodász (1977) as well; here the building follows the motion of the congregation with its entrance rising in a wedge shape in order to emphasize the introitus. In Postavölgy, the structure sits on the slope of a valley running south, where it follows the upward-climbing ‘Stations of the

Cross' forming a spiral. The outline of the building creates a spiral around the vertical axis of the centre of gravity with interfering triangles instead of curves; following the curve of the access road it rises up to become a belfry. From the direction of the valley, the composition has a closed appearance that becomes increasingly more open as it is approached; in the end, it opens up with a wide gate split at a slant. This motion is also continued in the interior: the liturgical axis turns away at 60° from the entering direction, and the twisting shape of the tower room opening from the opposite gallery is also adjusted to the motion. The spiral makes the wall relief, which starts from the exterior, also part of the interior, where the inner space is marked out with secondary bordering elements of airy steel and glass. In the ceiling, the thin reinforced concrete rib-grid of hexagonal cells reflects the grids of the layout and the horizontal basic structure of the building. At the point of the gallery, this grid is broken in a basilica style, thus western light can enter the eastern-facing sanctuary. The building organically continues the geological formation of the valley ridge: this visual closure holds the congregation together, and while the glass surfaces let in the sight of the foliage of the surrounding vegetation, the sky and the light, the form closes off the irrational coincidences at the same time ^{/49/}. This complex but uniform composition is completed with the mordant treated timber furniture, the assisting arts that appear in the geometric 'wooden grid' of the altar as well as in the icons of the gallery parapet illustrating the days of Creation.

The adaptation of the structural grid, which interprets the plastically formed monolithic mass of the church at Postavölgy, is indicative of the industrial-constructivist spirit of the eighties. The church architecture of István Szabó presents a boundary point in the history of architecture; and in Hungary, the purely constructivist structure-construction, which is manifested in the Platonic solids, is able to carry any liturgical character only up to this point. The churches built for the Reformed congregation of Budapest Külső-Kelenföld (1978 – 1983) and of Dunaújváros (previously Dunapentele) (1982 – 1985) are at the same time the self-representations of the Hungarian steel industry of the period ^{/50/}. The church of Kelenföld forms a hexagonal prism

turned at a slant to the south, while the building in Dunapentele makes an incomplete octahedron on its vertices. The load-bearing structure of these geometric solids is made up of a steel rod frame consisting of tetrahedrons, octahedrons and hexagons organized in a graphite crystal grid, and this frame supports a glass and steel cover. They act as crystal houses directing the eye toward the sun: they are the constructivist hymns of the culminating sun. However, despite their heroic character, these examples are the extremes on the time-diagram of Hungarian church architecture.

In the form of curving or amorphous white spaces, the plastic style is renewed in the liturgical architecture of István Lengyel. His works create a special transition between the dynamism of Corbusier and the postmodern architecture that reinterprets the historical formal treasury and the formulae of space. The white Church of St László in Borbánya by Ferenc Bán ^{/51/} (1983) with cells on a symmetrical plan, can be listed in this group, but the re-found Plasticism becomes vivid especially in case of Lengyel's Adventist Church in Debrecen (1994) and the Reformed church in

István Szabó: Reformed
congregation church, 1978
– 1983, Budapest-Kelenföld

István Szabó:
Kostol reformovanej
kongregácie, 1978 – 1983,
Budapešť-Kelenföld



Photo Foto: Vilmos Katona

István Lengyel: Adventist church, 1994, Debrecen

István Lengyel:
Adventistický kostol,
1994, Debrecin



Photo Foto: Vilmos Katona

Debrecen-Tócós kert (1997) both built after the regime change ^{/52/}. The Calvinist church is located in the south-western suburb of Debrecen and was named after the former Tócsó brook. This residential area of prefabricated apartment blocks is characterised by the alternation of high slab blocks in one single line and courtyard gardens encircled by the buildings. On one of these courtyards planted with vegetation, an urban square was created as an extension of the eastern road bordering the residential zone. The church was placed in the middle of this square with the hope of generating a start for the natural development of community life. The geometry directly follows this central position.

The spatial pattern consists of concentric circles – having a common eastern axis – that are marked out by a belfry-gate that is slightly moved from the axis of symmetry. This layout solution is another post in the row of attempts to synthesize the central and longitudinal space systems. The tower – placed at the top of the axis – proved to be appropriate for re-coordinating the urban square,

which had previously lost its point of relevation. For this reason, the church shows some correspondence with the Church of Gustav-Adolf in Berlin by Otto Bartning ^{/53/} (1932 – 1934), though its tower marks out the real focal point of the building, which opens, fan-like: namely the pulpit instead of the entrance. Although the ‘ark-space’ of Lengyel’s church, encircled with a gallery, has a circular layout, the stressed entrance and the pulpit make it doubly-axial. The openings cut out from the walls are inserted into a varied composition of vertical slits and small windows in a clever interplay of scale. The mass of the church, which rises up behind the wall-fence created through the interplay of lights, is staggered in a hierarchical arrangement. Circular segments first start then vanish, drawing the same cycle up to the slant-cut top of the cylinders, where the structure is closed with a skylight that runs along the total length of the ceiling. This light-orientation becomes a dominant element of the space, where the unity of the symmetrical axis is contrasted with the complexity of the circular layout pattern. The liturgical space is

the sphere of transition between these two geometric extremes. The metamorphosis can be easily followed on the pure, white walls and then on the roof structure.

Though after the regime change, with the growing enthusiasm in church constructions the palette of the architects became varied as well, the modernism of clear form, comprehensibility and simplicity can be connected especially to the formal calming of the very recent years in Hungarian church architecture. Good examples of this tendency are the Church of the Thirteen Piarist Martyrs (Tizenhárom Piarista Vértanú) in Szeged^{154/} (1999 – 2000) designed by János Golda and Attila Madzin as well as the Filiale Church of Kisboldogasszony in Szászberek by Gábor and Péter Gereben (2000 – 2003). While the former's disciplined mass, two-nave layout and light-swept grandiose void, articulated with slender pillars, all aim to evoke the traditional liturgical space organization and the solemnity of the church itself; in the case of the latter, the white lime walls cut a more 'secular' form out of the contour of the surrounding countryside. The chalk-white mass hides an in-

terior that is divided in the middle. Its northern part forms a regular cube and a smaller double wing is attached to it outside, covered with a slanting roof. This division also results in a vivid separation in the interior. A stressed ridge appears between the roofs of the higher and smaller masses, functioning as the load-bearing beam of both roof parts sloping to the middle. The beam follows the oblique angle of the outer wing's eaves, so that the height of the interior seems to be growing in the direction of the apse. The wooden roof composition rises elegantly towards the top of the wall edges, from where the light flows freely into the inner space. The horizon-light arriving from the wall edges is counterbalanced by the vertical southern stripes of the articulated apse as they paint the canvas-white end walls with intense daylight. The reason for the break in the apse is the pillar wall standing in the central axis; and this pillar has a pair in the form of a wall-section that ends in a belfry at the main gate. These two walls support the previously mentioned axis-beam carrying the load of the roof. The flooring is similar to the material of the wall, the homogeneity of which is disturbed



Photo Foto: Vilmos Katona

István Lengyel:
Calvinist church, 1997,
Debrecen–Tócsóskert

István Lengyel:
kalvinsky kostol, 1997,
Debrecín–Tócsóskert

only by the light parapet structure of the gallery. On the outer side of the small altar-pedestal, there is the baptismary font, on the inner counterpoint of which the pulpit can be found. The composition is completed with the smaller mass of the vestry. The side window-stripes of the apse expose the Madonna of Pál Molnár-C. (app. 1933), the font and the altar table with light, and with respect to the whole composition the altar keeps its traditional centrality.

Conclusions

Hungarian ecclesial architecture of the 20th century clearly reflects European historical progress and architectural tendencies. The modern spirit of design generally required an overcoming of historicism's externalized ideals and certainties, making use of the liberating opportunities allowed by technology, introducing them as philosophical, aesthetical and economical values. Concurrent tracks of modernism, though, tended to charac-

terize alternative approaches differentiated by how closely they were related either to liturgical traditions, or to representative or industrial goals.

Modern liturgical architecture of the examined period in Hungary was determined by three parallel interpretations of the modern tradition: the Italian-rooted Roman School, the German-oriented modernism, and the effects of the post-war forms of plasticism and industrial constructivism after 1945. In ecclesial architecture, parallel to the Italian Novecento and the Metaphysical Movement, the Roman School appeared to be the most significant Hungarian architectural and art campaign between the world wars, which involved Roman Academy scholars and a community of associated design masters. One of the movement's lead architectural objectives was to modernize the liturgical tradition by implementing a common iconographic programme of the independent Hungarian State and the Catholic Church. Among the most memorable architects Gyula Rimanóczy, Aladár and Bertalan Árkay, Károly Weichinger, Iván Kotsis sr. and Nándor Körmendy must be mentioned. Their most characteristic stylistic features were both the symmetrical or symmetry-based longitudinal configuration of space originating from the Paleo-Christian basilicas of Rome, and the shared use of raw concrete structure and figural art.

Eminent works of an international workshop parallel with the Roman School, mirroring Dutch, Scandinavian and mostly German influence, were instead built for Protestant communities. The basis of this German orientation was the contemporary German ecclesial architecture of that time with special regard to the architectural developments of the Protestant Berlin (Otto Bartning, Fritz Höger), and the Catholic liturgical movements reforming the Church throughout Germany (Dominikus Böhm, Rudolf Schwarz, Romano Guardini). The most prominent masters of this era were József Borsos and Pál Szontágh, whose architecture is marked by a compact reinterpretation of medieval liturgical space configurations (central plans, Westwerk), by remodelling classicist spatial paragons with modern shaping inspired by industrial rationalism, and using brick as a building material reminiscent of traditional manufacturing. This orientation reappeared in Hungarian ecclesial architecture after the political change of 1990

János Golda – Attila Madzin: Church of the Thirteen Piarist Martyrs, 1999 – 2000, Szeged

János Golda – Attila Madzin: Kostol trinástich zbožných mučeníkov, 1999 – 2000, Szeged



Photo Foto: Zorán Vukoszávlyev

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Both of the considerably traditionalist tendencies were opposed primarily by modern plasticism, appearing as an international influence of expressive modernists like Oscar Niemeyer, Eero Saarinen, Aarno Ruusovuori or in some aspects Le Corbusier after the Second World War. As a limited 'side effect', industrial constructivism rose and evolved during the 1980s. The former, applying elemental spatial concepts and geometric ideas, attempted to use the spatial freedom allowed by concrete shells, the latter designing platonic solids out of structural steel frames. Heroic forming and economic implementation were primary aspects in both cases. Among the most well-known designers, the significance of László Csaba, József Getto and István Szabó is crucial, but a specific view of plasticism experiencing a post-communist revival also continues in the church architecture of Ferenc Bán and István Lengyel. The calmly shaped tendency of modernism meeting again with liturgical tradition shows up in the latest several works of János Golda, or Gábor and Péter Gereben.



Photo Foto: Vilmos Katona

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