

1-2 Designs for church at Ruski Krstur. Lorenz Ladner. 1779. From G. Kelényi. "Az Építészeti Igazgatóságok . . .", article cited in note 6.

# Architecture of the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in the Habsburg Monarchy ca. 1770–1914

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The complex ethnic composition of the Habsburg monarchy (the hereditary lands of the Habsburgs and the Kingdom of Hungary), embracing the territories inhabited by Moldavians, Wallachians, Serbians, Ruthenians, and Greeks, compelled its authorities to evolve a specific policy towards various factions of the Eastern Church. The emperors ruling in the 18<sup>th</sup> century resolutely rejected the Counter-Reformation concept of imposing on all their subjects the Roman Catholic religion as a crucial factor in the unification of the empire. Consequently, they began to support the Greek Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches with considerable consistency, prompted by Enlightenment ideas of religious tolerance and by an awareness of the hazards engendered by the marginalization of immense numbers of believers who belonged to those religious communities. The time of Leopold I (1658–1705) saw the commencement of a gradual abolition of the regulations restricting the rights of the “Greek religion,” while under Charles VI (1711–1740) some measures were taken intending to rid it of the label of the poor “peasant Church.” To this end various state-controlled funds were raised that were to compensate Eastern Church institutions for the paucity of their endowment. These funds were used for, among other things, the education of priests, salaries paid to clergymen, and for the building of Greek Catholic churches. Naturally the attitude of the Catholic Austrian rulers towards the Ruthenians in Upper Hungary was most benevolent, considering that in 1646 this people recognized the Pope’s authority and since then had been called Greek Catholics. Maria Theresa (1745–1780) in particular was the patroness of this religious community; she equalized the rights of the two Catholic rites, founded the Ruthenian Collegium Barbareum in Vienna, and began to organize an efficient system of financing the construction of Greek Catholic churches.<sup>1</sup>

In 1772 the Habsburg monarchy annexed a substantial part of the Ruthenian lands of the Polish Commonwealth, calling the thus-acquired province Galicia. Within the confines of Galicia there were two large Uniate eparchies: the

Eparchy of Lviv and the Eparchy of Przemyśl, together with two million believers of Ruthenian nationality, who almost instantly profited from the empress’s beneficial policy. In 1774 Maria Theresa ordered that the Galician Uniates be called Greek Catholics, began to support this community financially, and demanded that the “Galicians” be enrolled at the Collegium Barbareum.<sup>2</sup>

The new regulations of religious life in the Habsburg monarchy, introduced by the emperor Joseph II (1765–1790) about 1780, were of great importance for the improvement of the economic situation of the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church in Upper Hungary and Galicia. By order of the ruler the majority of monasteries and chapters were suppressed and their property sold by auction, and large quantities of church valuables confiscated. With the resources thus acquired the so-called religious funds were set up to become the main instrument of the state’s religious policy, carried out in all its provinces.<sup>3</sup> These funds were used for, among other purposes, reducing a disproportion in the funding between the Roman and the Greek Catholic Church. As Father Władysław Chotkowski pointedly observed, “there existed two religious funds in Galicia, one Roman Catholic and the other Greek Catholic, but they were merged into one and the needs of the Uniate Church and the Roman Catholic Church were supplied from one fund. Thus the Uniate Church fattened on the Roman Catholic religious fund.”<sup>4</sup>

An immense proportion of the religious funds was allocated for the support of church building, particularly for the erection of parish churches in villages and small towns in the state demesne, but also for repairs of the cathedrals and seminary buildings that came under the monarch’s patronage. In the time of Maria Theresa and in the early years of Joseph II’s reign designs for such *fabricae* were made by the Viennese *Generalbaudirektion*, which prepared model church plans as well as hundreds of designs of individual churches to be erected all over the Habsburg monarchy. This gigantic task had to be performed by a special department with about a dozen posts for builders. The majority of these



architects had served in the *Direktion* for many as draughtsmen and assistants. As a result of such experience they copied the established spatial patterns of churches and the stylistic formulas elaborated by the architects working at the Habsburg court around the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. They reduced to a handful of patterns the designs of Franz Anton Hillebrandt, who managed the Viennese *Direktion* towards the end of Maria Theresa's reign and under Joseph II. Those patterns did not undergo any substantial modifications; the forms of a few details were perfunctorily adjusted to the current "fashions" in architecture.<sup>5</sup>

An epigone's attitude was adopted both by the author of model designs for "Theresan" Greek Catholic churches, Lorenz Ladner, and by other builders employed at the *Direktion* who made designs of Greek Catholic churches towards the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> and in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The role of a model plan for Uniate church architecture in Upper Hungary and in Galicia was played by the design of a church at Ruski Krstur in Croatia (Figs. 1–2), made by Ladner in 1779. This was a small aisleless temple with a rather shallow sanctuary terminating with an apse and flanked by rectangular annexes for sacristies. Its modest mass was to be enriched by a tower surmounting the front elevation, while the austere architectural decoration of the structure was limited to the frame articulation of the walls of the interior and the elevations, following the tradition of "the reduced Baroque."<sup>6</sup>

It is easy to observe that the model Greek Catholic church as conceived by Ladner copied forms characteristic of small Roman Catholic parish churches (*Landspfarrkirche*) built in central Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It would also be a vain effort to try to find in it any attempts to refer to the architectural tradition of the Eastern Church, apart from the introduction of the icon-screen, separating the nave from the sanctuary. The principal reason for this state of affairs was first and foremost the state authorities' strictly pragmatic approach to church form, combined with their conviction that a rigid typology for the architectural forms of churches of various denominations would permit the reduction of expenditure on their designs and estimates and speed official architects' work. An excellent manifestation of such an approach to church building issues can be found, for example, in a textbook of architecture, *Der Praktische Baubeamte* (1800), whose author, Fortunat Koller, maintained that Christian churches could be divided into small, large, and medium-sized, ignoring the differences between churches of various denominations. In accordance with his assumption, he presented model designs of "irenic" churches, consciously avoiding the use of the forms that would assign these structures to a particular confession.<sup>7</sup>

The number of *fabricae* of Greek Catholic churches, financed out of the state's budget, grew rapidly towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; consequently, the Viennese building office was unable to prepare designs for all those undertakings. The task of designing Greek Catholic churches was therefore put on the shoulders of architects from the land building offices in Košice and Lviv, and sometimes it was also entrusted to district builders.<sup>8</sup> The competence of those provincial architects was frequently rather low and the range of their duties wide,<sup>9</sup> for which reasons they did not particularly exert their inventiveness, but contented themselves with adapting typical designs to the number of parishioners and the size of a building site. As a result Ladner's pattern was repeated for several dozen years in the designs of scores of Uniate churches (Fig. 3) and many a time only slightly modified, above all by attempts to update its stylistic forms, for instance, by the introduction of Gothicizing ogival openings and pyramidal spires. Only in very few designs of Greek Catholic churches was an attempt made to refer to the architectural tradition of the Eastern Church—by the erection of apsidioles—called *krilosy*—at the side walls of the nave (Fig. 4).<sup>10</sup>

However, it can be said with certainty that the Greek Catholic churches built from the religious funds were striking in the monotony of their architectural solutions and that they looked exactly like, or almost like, their neighbors – Roman Catholic churches. Thus the benevolent policy of the Austrian emperors bore fruit on the one hand in the form of a remarkable increase in the number of quite impressive masonry Greek Catholic temples, but on the other led to a total Occidentalization of Ruthenian Uniate church architecture and to the disappearance from it of its confessional specificity.

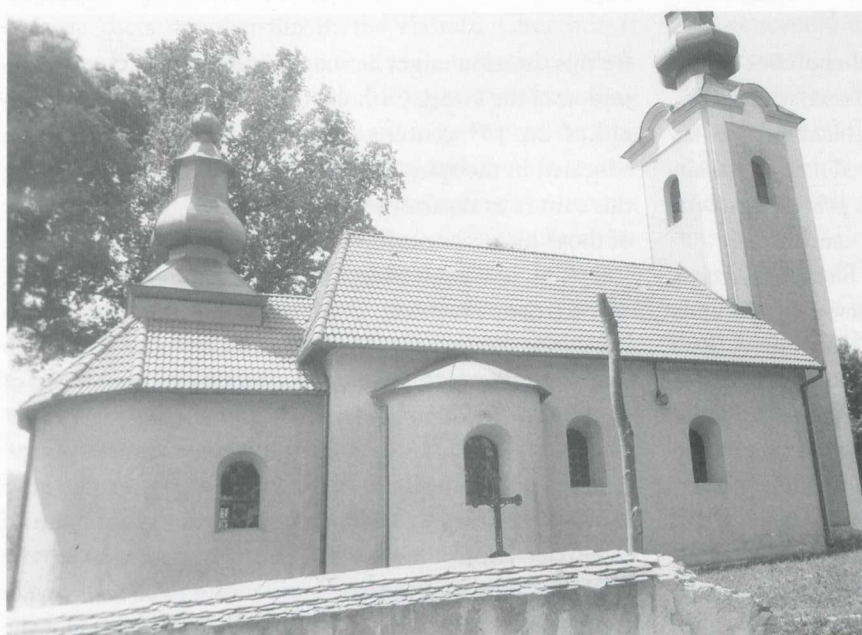
According to the law operative in the Habsburg monarchy, private landowners, who were patrons of the parishes on their estates, enjoyed considerable autonomy regarding the form of churches built there.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, many of those patrons used typical plans for the Uniate churches founded by them, in fact frequently commissioning their adaptation from official architects. The main reasons for such a state of affairs appear to have been economic. The use of ready-made patterns allowed considerable savings in the preparation of designs,<sup>12</sup> and relatively simple typical plans could be realized by mediocre building workshops which were maintained in the dominions chiefly for the purpose of erecting outbuildings of purely utilitarian forms.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it is no wonder that in some dominions one can find several identical Greek Catholic churches, frequently built in a not very skilful manner.<sup>14</sup> It also cannot be ruled out that the use of typical designs for these





3 Parish church. Pielnia near Sanok. 1805  
(Photo: Witalis Wolny).

4 St Paraskevia's Church. Svidnik, before 1800  
(Photo: Piotr Krasny).



churches was a kind of servile declaration through strict imitation of the structures ordered by the state authorities.

The landed property in Galicia was owned almost exclusively by Poles and that in Upper Hungary by Hungarians. The vast majority of those patrons were members of the Roman Catholic Church, only very few of them being Protestants. Thus, when founding Uniate churches, they built them for an alien denomination, whose East Christian tradition they frequently did not understand, and sometimes even regarded with contempt.<sup>15</sup> It is no wonder then that the overwhelming majority of those landowners

did not take pains to introduce into the Uniate church architecture on their estates at least some modest elements that would indicate the Greek Catholic character of these structures. Particularly worth noting are therefore those few Uniate churches on the private estates in Galicia in which attempts were made to give them the forms legibly referring to traditional Greek Catholic church building. Some such structures, for instance, were based on a cross-domed plan, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries considered in the Polish Commonwealth to be an architectural solution characteristic of Eastern Church temples.<sup>16</sup> Relatively close to this central-





5 Basilian Church. Hošiv. Moser. 1834–1842.  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> century wood engraving.

izing plan were the spatial dispositions of churches with a rotund domed nave, widespread in the Classicist ecclesiastical architecture of Central Europe. Thus it surely was no accident that such a spatial pattern occurred now and again in the Greek Catholic churches erected on private estates in Galicia in the first thirty years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup>

The circular plan was also applied to Basilian churches in Galicia, which were built by the monks with the funds derived from the monastic estates and from contributions made by the faithful.<sup>18</sup> In the impressive Basilian pilgrimage church at Hošiv (Fig. 5) it was even attempted to definitely bring this plan closer to the Uniate church tradition by adding four small rectangular annexes to the lofty domed rotunda, whereby the plan of the building could be regarded as cruciform.<sup>19</sup> However, not all Greek Catholic clergymen attached much importance to the preservation of the East Christian specificity of Uniate church building. Many of them rather laid more emphasis on giving Ruthenian churches as grand a form as possible in order to remove from their communities the label of the poor “peasant Church”. Greek Catholic bishops gratefully accepted from the state authorities the large churches taken away from the Latin convents during the Josephine reforms, at the same time not demanding any adaptation of those edifices to the needs of the Byzantine rite. Such churches even functioned as Greek Catholic cathedrals in Przemyśl, Užhorod, and Prešov, and the bishops undertaking their repairs took pains to give them most sumptuous forms, and especially to provide their facades and interiors with lavish decoration, rather than to give them a more Greek Catholic character<sup>20</sup>. The reasons

for this situation might be sought in the strong Occidentalization of the Greek Catholic Church elites, on the threshold of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, consisting largely of clergymen educated in the spirit of Latin culture and often regarding this culture as superior to the East Christian heritage. Most of those hierarchs readily engaged in the realization of the Josephine reforms,<sup>21</sup> accepting the Enlightenment concept of the strictly pragmatic treatment of church form,<sup>22</sup> which led to the disappearance of the consciousness of the rich symbolism that was attributed to the architectural forms of the House of God in the Eastern Church.

The reforms undertaken in the Habsburg monarchy after the 1848 “Springtime of Nations” led to the abolition of the strict control imposed by state authorities on the Catholic Church, the latter—according to the concordat concluded between the emperor Francis Joseph I and the Holy See in 1855 – in principle gaining full freedom as regards the erection and form of churches. Many such enterprises were aided by state funds, but the reception of such subsidies no longer entailed the obligation to implement the plans made by official architects.<sup>23</sup> The enfranchisement of the peasants carried out in the Habsburg monarchy during the “Springtime of Nations” period radically changed property relations in village parishes, which soon resulted in a revision of the patrons’ duties. It was decided that patrons would be obliged to cover no more than one-sixth of the costs of construction of a church, while the remaining funds would have to be raised among the parishioners.<sup>24</sup> Hence the principal role in organizing



and financing the building of churches began to be played by parish committees that as a rule now exercised control over the forms of newly-erected churches.<sup>25</sup>

Thus the Ruthenians of Galicia and Upper Hungary gained an essential influence over the form of Greek Catholic churches. A key role in this respect was undoubtedly played by the priests, who for many decades to come were to be the only fairly well educated members of the "peasant Church". In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the majority of those clergymen freed themselves of their fascination with Latin culture and were increasingly determined in their claims for actual recognition of the equal dignity of East- and West-Christian tradition in the Catholic Church.<sup>26</sup> These efforts gained the acceptance of the Holy See, and particularly of Pope Leo XIII, who toward the close of the century published an encyclical entitled – significantly enough—*Orientalium dignitas*.<sup>27</sup> The Greek Catholic priests were also the first "wakeners" of national awareness in the Ruthenians, when they tried to enlarge their membership in the Eastern Church.<sup>28</sup> It should not be surprising then that while formulating their views on the forms of Greek Catholic churches, they emphasized on the one hand the need to go back to the East Christian roots of Uniate ecclesiastical architecture and on the other desired that these structures manifest the distinct cultural character of the Ruthenian people.<sup>29</sup> An attempt at explaining such an attitude was made in 1880 by an anonymous clerical publicist, writing for the Galician periodical "Dilo": "let no one tell me that in the edifice consecrated to God there is no room for purely national traditions. It is exactly here that these traditions should manifest themselves and appeal with all the might of their sanctity to the hearts of the believers and of those still searching."<sup>30</sup>

It was very difficult to meet such postulates because an immense proportion of the structures built in the Middle Ages, "the golden epoch in the history of the Ruthenian people", had been destroyed during the Tartar invasion of Ruthenia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century or they had fallen into ruin in the following centuries.<sup>31</sup> Nor had the Ruthenians' "national traditions" in church architecture been studied by art historians until as late as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when they began to investigate old Greek Catholic church architecture in Galicia.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, nothing remained for the constructors of Ruthenian Greek Catholic churches but to make use of attempts at reviving traditional Uniate architecture in other European countries and to adapt the solutions elaborated there, adding to them, at most, certain elements that could be associated with the architecture of old Ruthenia.

Consequently, they became particularly interested in

the forms of Neo-Byzantine churches built from the 1840s by Theophil von Hansen in Athens and later in various towns of the Habsburg monarchy. On the basis of his studies of Greek medieval architecture Von Hansen concluded that the principal components of the Neo-Byzantine stylistic mantle should first and foremost be arcaded friezes, umbrella domes, and multi-mullioned windows. At the same time, however, he inlaid his structures with motifs evidently borrowed from west European medieval architecture, such as pseudo-Romanesque porticos, biforate windows, and small stumpy columns along with pseudo-Gothic buttresses, gables, and pinnacles.<sup>33</sup> Despite such insertions Hansen's Neo-Byzantinism was enthusiastically accepted by the Greeks<sup>34</sup> and Serbians<sup>35</sup> as a style that excellently recaptured the architectural tradition of the Eastern Church.

Also the Greek Catholics in Upper Hungary soon began to draw from the forms characteristic of this stylistic tendency, but used them in a very selective way. They usually continued to build oblong aisleless churches with a tower attached to the facade, repeating the pattern worked out long before by Lorenz Ladner. Nevertheless, they decorated those edifices exclusively with Romanesque-like portals and multi-mullioned windows and crowned the elevations with arcaded friezes.<sup>36</sup> Only the exceptionally impressive Uniate church in Košice (Fig. 6), intended as a co-cathedral of the eparchy of Prešov,<sup>37</sup> harked back to the composition of the facade of Hansen's New Metropolitan Cathedral in Athens, its front elevation being flanked by characteristic low and narrow towers and its central field filled with a monumental portico.<sup>38</sup> It may therefore be stated that changes in the designs of Upper Hungarian Uniate churches were rather superficial; nevertheless, owing to their Neo-Byzantine decorative details these structures fairly clearly differed from the neighboring Catholic churches and could be unmistakably associated with the Eastern Church.

The Ruthenians in Galicia chose an entirely different way to establish the confessionary and national identity of their ecclesiastical architecture. For a long time they were not interested in Hansen's Neo-Byzantinism, aiming above all to restore to Greek Catholic churches their traditional spatial dispositions which met the requirements of Byzantine liturgy. Such a tendency was revealed as far back as 1850 on the occasion of the remodelling of the former Trinitarian church in Lviv into the Greek Catholic Church of the Transfiguration. The plans drawn up by Anton Frech provided not only for the repairs and embellishment of the ruined church, but also for addition to it of three domes, evidently referring to those of the nearby Late Renaissance





6 Co-cathedral in Košice. Wilhelm Kolatsek, Ludwig Schmidt. 1882–1898 (Photo: Piotr Krasny).

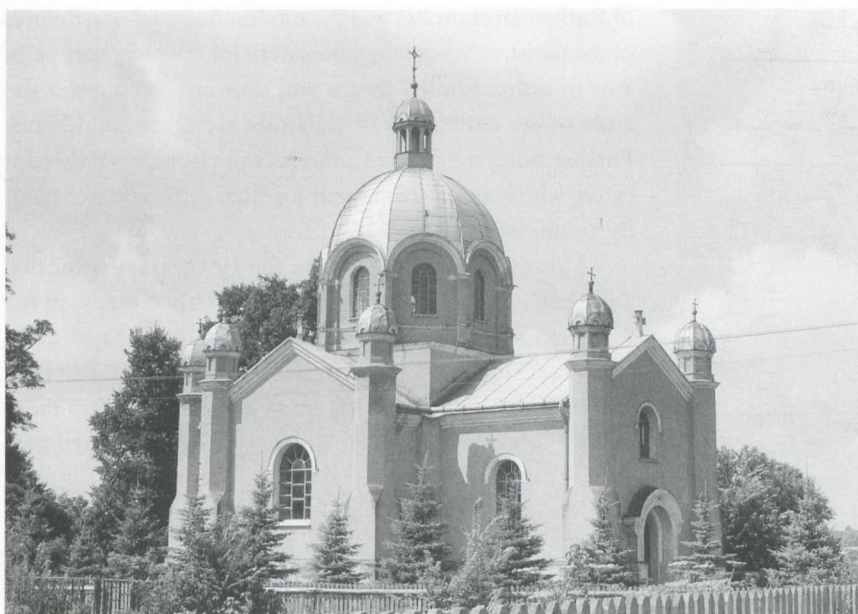


7 Parish church. Błonie in Przemyśl. 1863–1864 (Photo: Piotr Jamski).

Wallachian Church and to the pattern of a “church surmounted by three towers”, very popular in Ruthenian religious architecture in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>39</sup> These designs were never implemented, but very soon the pattern of a tripartite church with three domes appeared in the Marian Uniate Church in Błonie in Przemyśl (1863–1864), designed – as can be read in the building documentation – “the way the Ruthenians do it,”<sup>40</sup> (Fig. 7) and in many other large masonry churches. In addition, numerous grand Greek Catholic temples were built on a cross-domed plan, which was attractively realized, for example, in St Michael’s Church at Kolomyia (1855).<sup>41</sup> By about 1880 the Ruthenians in Galicia had generally acknowledged that “when designing a Greek Catholic church, it is necessary to retain what is in accordance with church regulations and with the history of the (Eastern) Church, that is, the specific division of the plan and a dome. The necessity to single out the place in which the Divine Service is performed and to separate the congregation according to sex entails the need to divide the church into three parts, while the relationship between

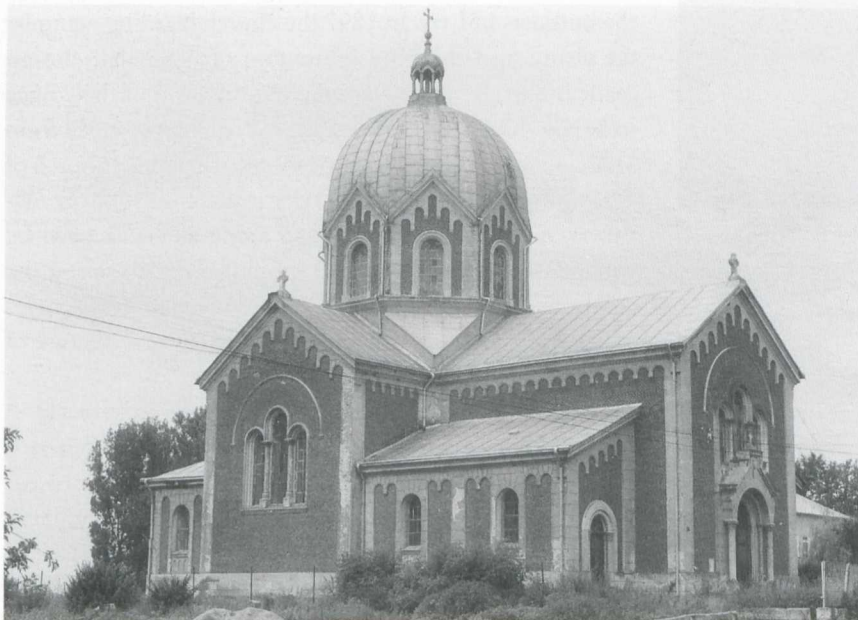
the Greek Catholic rite and the East is expressed by a dome which, albeit with time assuming various forms, has always surmounted Ruthenian Uniate churches and crowned them as it had the temples in the Byzantine Empire.<sup>42</sup> Such principles of designing Uniate churches were recognized as obligatory in the Galician Greek Catholic Church at the Synod in Lviv in 1891.<sup>43</sup>

However, until as late as the 1880s the classicizing, frequently strongly simplified, architectural motifs continued to be applied to Galician Greek Catholic churches, which in principle did not stylistically differ from the forms of the churches built from official designs. The first Galician architects to adopt Hansen’s Neo-Byzantine mantle for Greek Catholic churches were Jan Łapiński and Sylwester Hawryśhkevych,<sup>44</sup> but it was Vasyl Nahirnyi who best understood the exceptional utility of this stylistic convention for underscoring the confessional identity of Ruthenian Uniate churches. In about 1883 he began to make designs that consistently combined the traditional Ruthenian spatial dispositions (cross-domed and tripartite with



8 Parish church. Kuryłówka. Vasyl Nahirnyi. 1895 (Photo: Piotr Krasny).

9 Parish church. Lubliniec. Vasyl Nahirnyi. 1898 (Photo: Piotr Krasny).



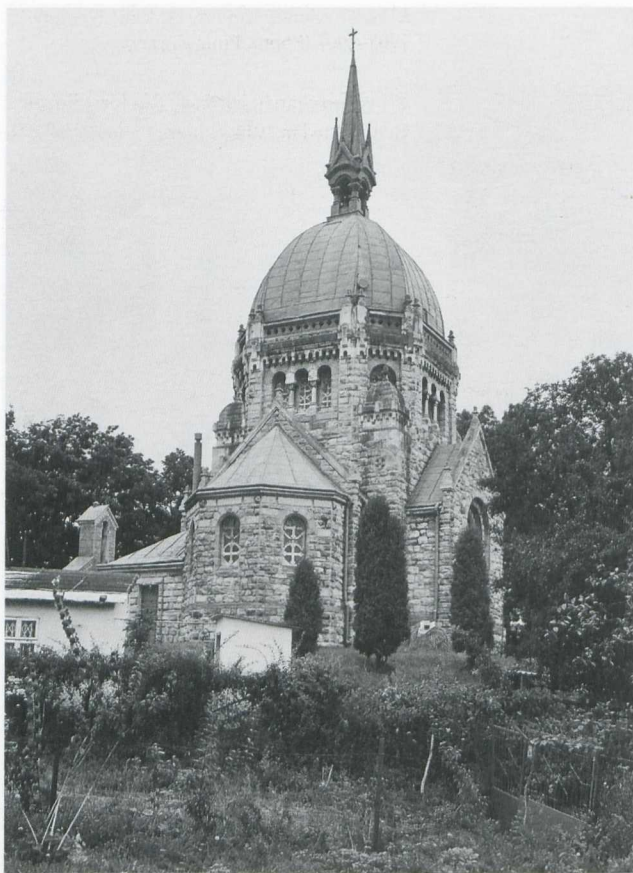
three domes) and Neo-Byzantine architectural forms, in particular readily borrowing the motifs of umbrella dome, portico, multi-mullioned windows, and arcaded friezes (Fig. 8. 9). Nahirnyi's concept of Uniate church architecture was fully accepted by the Greek Catholic metropolitan of Lviv, Cardinal Sylvestr Sembratovyč, resulting in dozens of commissions that the architect began to receive from parish committees. He managed to dominate totally Uniate church building in Galicia, raising more than two hundred churches which the local inhabitants began to regard as a model solution to the problem of the form of an Eastern Church temple. Other Ruthenian and Polish designers of

Uniate churches could not help but repeat Nahirnyi's patterns in order to comply with the investors' requirements.<sup>45</sup>

The obvious result of this state of affairs was a very high degree of uniformity displayed by Greek Catholic church forms in Galicia, permitting their easy identification even by those knowing nothing about architectural theory. By erecting such edifices the Ruthenians could as it were annex the architectural landscape of the eastern part of Galicia, thereby manifesting that they were the most numerous national group in that territory.<sup>46</sup>

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Ruthenians in Upper Hungary did not venture equally ostentatious "archi-





10 Parish church. Zniessinie. Władysław Halicki. from 1897 (Photo: Stanisław Michta).

tectural demonstrations,” probably in fear of a harsh reaction from the Hungarian authorities, at that time carrying out a policy of brutal Hungarianization of national minorities.<sup>47</sup> It seems, however, that under the influence of the “Galician” experience they came to the conclusion that Greek Catholic churches should be transformed so as to be distinguishable as a general architectural form. The period after 1900 saw the construction in the eparchy of Presov of centrally-planned Uniate churches surmounted by monumental domes, while in the localities close to the frontier with Galicia even cross-domed structures began to appear,<sup>48</sup> evidently referring to the patterns elaborated by Nahirnyi.

Vasyl Nahirnyi was not fully satisfied with his output, admitting that his structures had turned out to be very schematic, repeating the same spatial solutions, and that the forms of detail in them were rather monotonous and poor in expression. Similar, or perhaps even stronger, objections might be raised about the Uniate church architecture of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Upper Hungary. Nonetheless, we must not forget that what essentially affected the appearance

of Ruthenian churches was the modest financial possibilities of the parishes, whose members were for the most part peasants of rather limited means and thus unable to cover the costs of the realization of elaborate architectural designs. Furthermore, the Greek Catholics were usually poorly educated, which surely accounted for their faint sense of quality architectural work.<sup>49</sup>

However, the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a marked improvement in the income of the farmers in the Habsburg monarchy, and an increasing number of Ruthenians received sound education and attained a fairly high social standing.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, some parishes could try more ambitious building undertakings, while the most enlightened Ruthenians observed that the Historicizing forms of Neo-Byzantine churches no longer corresponded with the Early Modernistic “vogues” in architecture obtaining in the Habsburg monarchy. The effects of such changes in attitude can be excellently illustrated by the history of the erection of a Uniate church in the settlement of Zniessinie on the outskirts of Lviv. In 1897 the church building committee abandoned the implementation of Nahirnyi’s design made in the late 1880s, considering the form of the edifice to be too “hackneyed”. New plans were commissioned from Władysław Halicki, who proposed a cross-domed church of a picturesquely composed slender mass (Fig. 10).<sup>51</sup> Its elevations were faced with broken stone and enlivened by gigantic but at the same time simplified details, using the solutions characteristic of the “picturesque” tendencies which became manifest around 1900 in the architecture of the countries within the Habsburg monarchy.<sup>52</sup>

The Uniate church building committee at Čemerné in Upper Hungary (Fig. 11) showed even more discrimination as to the current stylistic “vogues”, ordering plans of the church from Ödön Lechner himself, the most prominent designer of Early Modernistic architecture in Hungary. When designing this edifice he tried to relate it to the tradition of East Christian church architecture, giving its nave the form of an octagon surmounted by a monumental dome hidden in a conical spire and using window openings that resembled Neo-Byzantine multi-mullioned windows. At the same time, however, the Čemerné church was given a modern character, through the soft, “sculpturesque” modelling of the mass and the consistent geometrization of architectural detail – the salient features of Lechner’s best works.<sup>53</sup>

Another formula of modernization of the Uniate church form was applied to the cross-domed temple at Jakubany (Fig. 12), consecrated in 1911, in whose mass numerous sharp edges were accentuated and the dome was hidden inside an elaborate crystalline structure. Its designer, Ján Jozef Bobula, additionally introduced Neo-Byzantine





11 Parish church. Čemerné. Ödön Lechner. 1905–1907 (Photo: Piotr Krasny).

12 Parish church. Jakubany. Ján Jozef Bobula. Consecrated in 1911. (Photo: Piotr Krasny)



details in a rather inconsistent stylization, interpreting in a picturesque manner the forms of portals and at the same time reducing biforate and multi-mullioned windows to rows of small, extremely slender, arched windows.<sup>54</sup>

The majority of Galician Ruthenians approached the innovatory quest in the field of Uniate church building with a far greater reserve, believing Nahirnyi's spatial and stylistic solutions to be the most legible expression of "the Ruthenian spirit" in art. Hence younger architects had to content themselves with cautious modifications of these solutions. The eastern part of the Basilian Uniate church at Žovkva, extended according to a design by Edgar Kováts (Fig. 13),<sup>55</sup> harked back to the traditional cruciform plan,

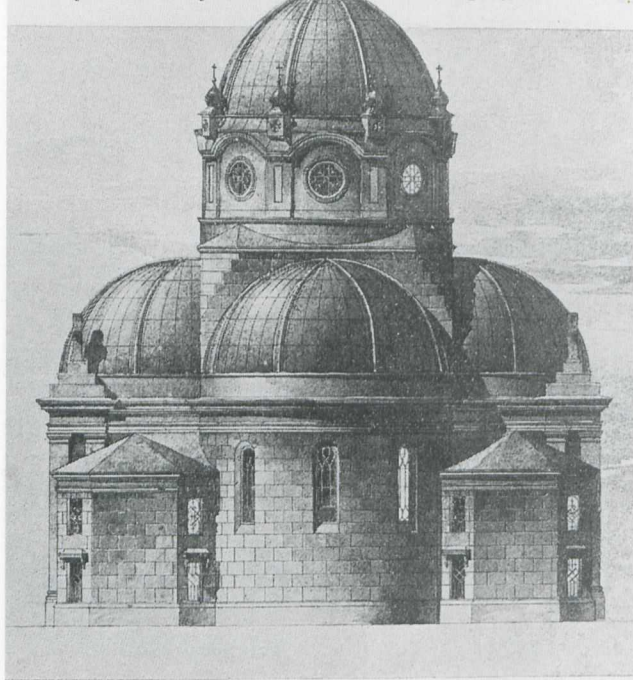
with emphasis on a monumental dome—at that time, as we know, considered to be an architectural element best expressing the close relationship between the Ruthenian church architecture and the Byzantine tradition. A novelty against the background of the contemporary Uniate church building in Galicia were the forms of a mantle put by Kováts upon the old and the new part of the church at Žovkva, evidently recalling the tectonic, strongly geometrized and simplified adaptation of classical motifs, so characteristic of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Viennese works of Otto Wagner.<sup>56</sup>

Likewise, when extending the Transfiguration Church in Jarosław (Fig. 14),<sup>57</sup> the author of the remodeling, Mieczysław Dobrzański, made a point of accentuating the



omisyj, czuwających nad  
e jednak w takich razach  
zony architekt, przejęty  
by kierował robotami  
lność.  
pującą rezolucję:  
należy we wszystkich

Czuwajcie jak najtroski  
cie go jak możecie naj  
nia. Uważajcie te jego  
cie straż jako przy bra  
klamrami to, co się roz  
się nachyliło; nie bójce  
dzeń; lepiej chodzić o k



13 Design. Basilian church, Žovkva. Edgar Kováts. 1901–1906. From *Architekt* (Kraków). Vol. 2. 1901.

mass of the edifice with a huge umbrella dome, while the new mantle of the building was composed of stylized Neo-Byzantine forms. Nevertheless, he subjected the new portions of the Jarosław church to considerable “tectonic” stylization, thereby imitating the modern manner for the interpretation of historical forms that had been elaborated by Wagner and architects from his school.<sup>58</sup> The impression of the austerity of such forms was mitigated by smaller details modeled in turn in a “soft”, picturesque manner. The application of such solutions permitted easy identification of the Jarosław edifice as an Eastern Church temple, which – in Mieczysław Orłowicz’s opinion—was at the same time “an original structure, monumental in character, comparing favorably with hundreds of conventional Galician Uniate churches, far from beautiful.”<sup>59</sup>

It was probably due to the favorable reception of Dobrzański’s stylistic solutions that the constructors of an imposing Greek Catholic church at Surochów near Jarosław (Fig. 15)<sup>60</sup> made a yet more radical attempt to modernize the conventional designs of Galician Uniate church archi-



14 The Transfiguration Church, Jarosław. Mieczysław Dobrzański. 1902–1907. (Photo: Piotr Krasny).

tecture. Although in the general plan of the edifice they faithfully repeated the established pattern of a tripartite church covered by three domes, its mass was distinguished by a very clear geometrical composition and by a reduction in architectural decoration to plain molded surrounds and cornices. For all these radical simplifications the “atmosphere” of the Surochów church retained a legible reflection of Byzantinism, thus proving the possibility of creating a kind of architecture that would be definitely modern but at the same time rooted in the tradition of Ruthenian Greek Catholic church building.

The Upper Hungarian and Galician attempts to work out a formula of “modern-Byzantine” style successfully joined a broad current in Central European architecture, whose chief postulate was to unite Modernistic concepts and regionalism. This important tendency, represented by, among others, the works of Joseph Hoffmann, Ödön Lechner, Károly Kós, Jan Kotěra, Dusan Jurkovič, and Josip Plečnik, was based on the assumption that an architect had the right to draw on “an entire repository of tradition”;





15 Parish church. Surochów. 1912–1914.  
(Photo: Marek Walczak).

however, he should not copy historical solutions but modify them in an individual manner adapted to the rather broadly defined requirements of modernity.<sup>61</sup> Following such assumptions, specific formulas of Hungarian, Czech, Slovakian, Polish, or Slovenian Early Modernism were worked out, so it seemed that by employing them it would be possible to create Ruthenian Modernism<sup>62</sup> as a new conception of the Greek Catholic church style.

However, those interesting attempts were interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War and the ensuing breakup of the Habsburg monarchy, which made the Ruthenians (calling themselves more and more frequently Ukrainians) seek their place in the communities of the Polish and Czechoslovak Republics. One of the elements of this quest was further efforts aimed at elaborating a modern formula of Uniate church form that would clearly manifest both the confessional membership and the nationality of the church goers.<sup>63</sup> Although the quest sometimes took a different course than it had under the Habsburgs, the very fact of the extremely long persistence of the idea of a national style in Ruthenian, or Ukrainian, religious art indicates how important to its recent history the 19<sup>th</sup> century heritage has been.

## Notes

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48. Lukáčová et al. work cited in note 1. 157–158. Székely. Mesároš. work cited in note 1. 70–71. Hric. Šturák. work cited in note 1. 34–35, 81.

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