

Anita Kunikowska

THE JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY

Two Orthodox Churches (the Old and the New) of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Kalisz

Orthodox churches in Kalisz have been the subject of strictly historical studies, yet so far no broader context has been outlined for their architecture. They have been categorised as Byzantine or associated with the Romanesque style, or even with Roman-Catholic (!) Baroque architecture.

The architecture of the Orthodox churches in Kalisz has been analysed as an aside to discussions on local minorities or on the functioning of the Orthodox Church on Polish territories during the period of partitions.¹ The *Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego* notes that “Kalisz has two Catholic parish churches, an Orthodox church, an Evangelical church (formerly a Jesuit church), and a synagogue”.² The text most probably mentions the first (“old”) Orthodox Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. The catalogue of monuments in Poland (*Katalog Zabytków Sztuki w Polsce*) only states that “the Orthodox church built in the years 1928–32 [houses] an icon of the Theotokos of Tichvin [painted] on wood, most likely originating from the

1 Cf. I. Barańska, *Architektura Kalisza w dobie Królestwa Kongresowego* [Architecture of Kalisz in the period of the Congress Kingdom], Kalisz 2002; *Dzieje Kalisza* [The history of Kalisz], ed. W. Rusiński, Poznań 1977; W. Kościelniak, *Zabytki architektury Kalisza* [Architectural monuments of Kalisz], Kalisz 1987; idem, K. Walczak, *Kronika miasta Kalisza* [The Kalisz chronicle], Kalisz 1989; S. Małyszko, *Zabytkowe cmentarze przy Rogatce w Kaliszu* [Historical cemeteries at the tollbooth in Kalisz], Kalisz 2003; E. Polanowski, *W dawnym Kaliszu: szkice z życia miasta 1850–1914* [In old Kalisz; sketches of town life 1850–1914], Poznań 1979; S. Przygodzki, *Kalisz wielokulturowy* [Multicultural Kalisz], Kalisz 2012; Archbishop Szymon, “230-lecie parafii i 75-lecie świętych apostołów Piotra i Pawła w Kaliszu” [The 230th anniversary of the parish and the 75th anniversary of St. Apostles Peter and Paul in Kalisz], *Wiadomości PAKP* 2004, 178, no. 9, p. 10; *Kalisz – miasto otwarte: mniejszości narodowe i religijne w dziejach Kalisza i ziemi kaliskiej* [Kalisz: an open city. National and religious minorities in the history of Kalisz and its region], eds. K. Walczak, E. Andrysiak, Kalisz 2006.

2 *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich* [Geographical dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and other Slavonic lands], eds. F. Sulimierski, B. Chlebowski, W. Walewski, vol. 3, Warsaw 1882, p. 685.

Moscow school", dated to the early 17th century. An illustration of this work of art appears in the catalogue.³ But this note refers to the second ("new") church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. The edifice itself was not deemed a monument worth cataloguing, thus the publication does not include its description, nor does it mention the Orthodox church built in the 1870s, even though the use of the former drill hall at the cadet corps is noted: "erected in 1825, subsequently used as an Orthodox church, then as an officers' mess hall".⁴

The first attempt at defining the stylistic affiliation of the Orthodox churches in Kalisz can be found in the *Sites and Monuments Record Card* of the "new" Orthodox church in Kalisz that was completed in 1993 by Ewa Andrzejewska and Dorota Rutkowska. The document is currently in the archive of the Kalisz branch of the Provincial Heritage Monuments Protection Office. The origins of the style of the "old" Orthodox church in Kalisz are also mentioned in Paulina Cynalewska-Kuczma's doctoral dissertation on the architecture of the 19th-century Orthodox churches.⁵ An attempt at retracing the history of Orthodox structures in Kalisz was made by Dominika Płócienniczak,⁶ whereas Piotr Zubowski provided a broader context for this discussion by describing the situation of Orthodox churches in the Łódź region during the interwar period.⁷

The history of Orthodox Christians in Kalisz and their first churches

Until the mid-18th century, the number of Orthodox Christians in Kalisz was marginal. It is assumed that the local parish was established by Greek immigrants who had arrived in the Commonwealth of Poland in the 1750s from the territory of present-day Macedonia. Initially, the Orthodox community gathered in a private chapel in one of the tenements on the south side of the town square. In 1818, when the city was already under Russian administration, the authorities handed over the buildings in Św. Stanisława Street (formerly belonging to the monastic order of the

3 *Katalog Zabytków Sztuki w Polsce* [Catalogue of historical monuments in Poland], eds. T. Ruszczyńska, A. Sławska, vol. 5: *Województwo poznańskie* [Poznań voivodeship], issue 6: *Powiat kaliski* [Kalisz county], Warsaw 1960, p. 38.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

5 See P. Cynalewska-Kuczma, *Architektura cerkiewna Królestwa Polskiego narzędziem integracji z Imperium Rosyjskim* [Orthodox church architecture in the Kingdom of Poland as a tool for the integration with the Russian Empire], Poznań 2004, p. 94.

6 Cf. D. Płócienniczak, "Budynki cerkiewne Kalisza w XIX i XX w." [Orthodox churches in Kalisz in the 19th and 20th century], *Zeszyty Kaliskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauki*, no. 12: *W kręgu kaliskich badań nad sztuką i kulturą artystyczną*, Kalisz 2011, pp. 40–61.

7 Cf. P. Zubowski, *Cerkwie prawosławne Łodzi i regionu łódzkiego w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym (1918–1939)* [Orthodox churches in Łódź and its region in the interwar period (1918–1939)], Białystok, 2014; the author was drawing on an article by D. Płócienniczak and did not consult the original documents from the Kalisz archive.

Franciscan Sisters) to the Orthodox parish. The church there was converted into the Orthodox Temple of Saint Athanasius, which remained in use until the 1830s.⁸ Afterwards, services were held in the repurposed weapons' hall at the local cadet corps.⁹ A vestibule with an octagonal tower was added to the western side of the building. The garrison chapel in Kalisz, currently at 6 Łazienna Street, served as the parish church between the 1830s and 1918, when Poland regained its independence. It functioned as the Regiment Orthodox Church of Saint George.¹⁰

After the failed November Uprising (1831) the Orthodox community in Kalisz steadily expanded, accommodating members of the Russian administration, both civil and military. As a result of the administrative reform that was introduced in 1867, the city became the capital of a governorate and received new territorial limits:

The Kalisz governorate lies in the west of the Kingdom of Poland, with the Warsaw governorate to the north and east, the Piotrków governorate to the east and south, its north-western reaches neighbouring with Silesia and the Grand Duchy of Posen [...] It is divided into 8 counties, 142 communes, 3 Orthodox parishes [...].¹¹

The number of officials and military personnel increased when Kalisz regained its status as the capital of a governorate. In 1882 there were 769 Orthodox believers living in the governorate; they constituted ca. 16% of the entire population.¹² At the turn of the century the community in Kalisz itself was significantly larger – in 1893 Orthodox Christians constituted 3% of the city's population, by 1909 this figure had increased to ca. 10% and on the eve of war to almost 17%.¹³ The capital of the Kalisz governorate was inhabited by an ever increasing number of tsarist officials; the city also served as a garrison for numerous Russian units guarding the western border of the Romanov empire.¹⁴

The 19th-century Orthodox Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Kalisz

In the 1870s a decision was taken to erect a masonry Orthodox church, mainly for Christians of Greek origin (Fig. 1).¹⁵ The idea came from the head of county administration, Pyotr Dmitrievich Snaksaryev, who in 1874 had purchased a suitable plot of land, paying for it from state funds. The plot was located on the corner of

8 For more on edifices taken over from the Franciscan Sisters see I. Barańska, op. cit.

9 See Przygodzki, op. cit., pp. 125–126.

10 Cf. Płócienniczak, op. cit., p. 45.

11 *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego...*, p. 693.

12 Ibid., p. 696.

13 Cf. J. Janczak, "Stosunki ludnościowe" [Population ratios], in: *Dzieje Kalisza...*, pp. 332, 337; Przygodzki, op. cit., p. 108.

14 Ibid.

15 Cf. Archbishop Szymon, op. cit.

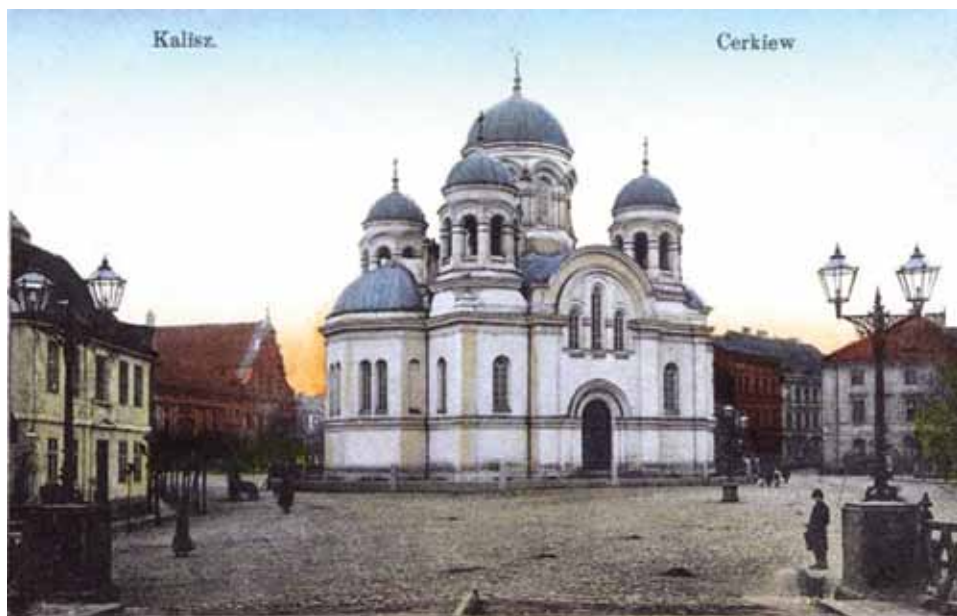


Fig. 1. Postcard with the “old” Orthodox church (from the collection of K. Sokoł and A. Sosna: <http://www.chram.com.pl/sobor-sw-sw-apostolow-piotra-i-pawla/>)

Warszawska Street (now Zamkowa Street) and Panny Marii Street (now Jan Paweł II Square). Construction work began in 1875, again financed from a state fund (one allocated to the erection of Orthodox churches throughout the Russian Empire). The new Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul was consecrated in 1877 by Warsaw archpriest Leontius in the presence of the general governor of Warsaw, Paweł Kotzebue.¹⁶

The Orthodox church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (1877–1919) – architecture

Built on the plan of a Greek cross inscribed in a square with a polygonal sanctuary (Fig. 2), the church was covered with five domes (the so-called *pyatiglavye*, Russian: *пятиглавие*; *пятиглавый храм*; *пятиглавая композиция*, an arrangement of four smaller domes at the corners of the square and the largest one in the centre of

¹⁶ Cf. Płócienniczak, op. cit., pp 47–48; Cynalewska-Kuczma, op. cit., p. 94; Czyżewski, op. cit., p. 323; the event was not noted in the governorate news in 1877; Yuriy R. Savelyev also dates the church to 1877 (Ю. Р. Савельев, *Византийский стиль в архитектуре России*, Санкт-Петербург 2005; idem, *Искусство историзма и государственный заказ*, Москва 2008, p. 148).

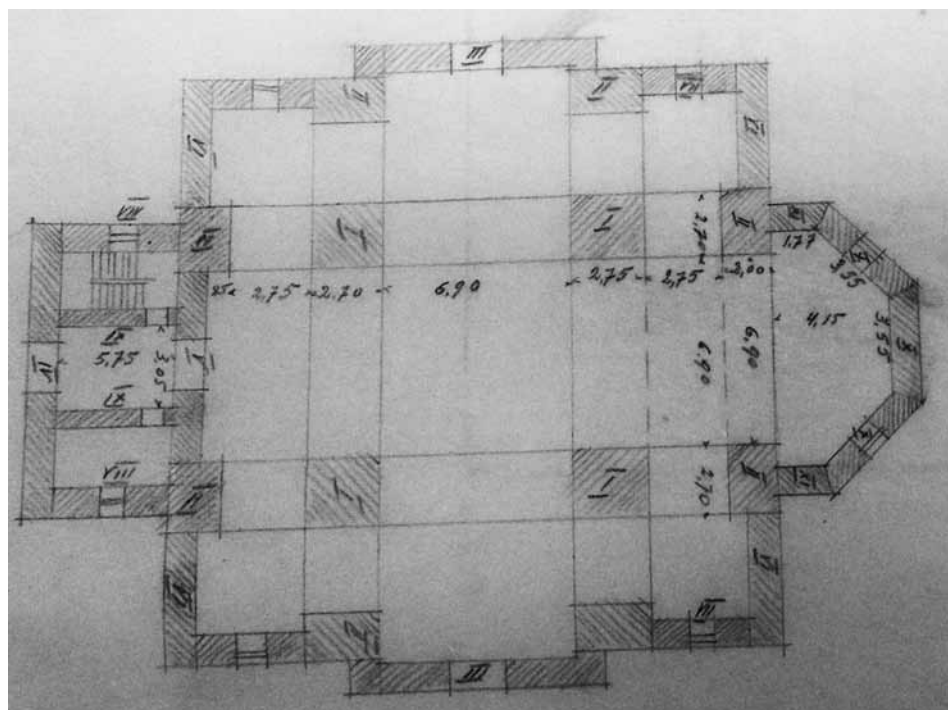


Fig. 2. Design plans for the “old” Orthodox church – floor plan (Kalisz, the State Archive, Kalisz city records, sign. no. 2878, p. 138)

the cross). All were semi-spherical in cross-section and sat on drums pierced with arched windows. The edifice had two doorways, one in the front façade, the other in one arm of the cross (below a monumental arch). It was decorated with a frieze of diamond-like facets and pilasters with decorative capitals. The decoration on the drums consisted of semi-circular bands and a frieze of blind arches (Fig. 1).

Architectural solutions characteristic of Greek Byzantine architecture, such as semi-spherical domes resting on drums and windows featuring decorative arches, were combined with features known from Russian architecture, such as the square floor plan with a Greek cross and five domes. This model originated from the theories of Konstantin Andreyevich Thon, who claimed that in the distant past the “Holy Rus” was a place where features of Byzantine art had merged with the local architectural tradition, thus resulting in the emergence of an original Russo-Byzantine type of Orthodox churches. The characteristic features of this form included a cuboid shape, a Greek cross floor plan and a clearly distinguishable dome above the intersection of the arms of the cross surrounded by four smaller domes to create the so-called *pyatiglavye* (Russian: *пятиглавие*).¹⁷ According to Cynalewska-Kuczma,

¹⁷ Cf. B. Dąb-Kalinowska, “Świadomość narodowa a historyzm w Rosji. Interpretacje Soboru Zaśnięcia Marii na Kremlu Aristotele Fioravantiego” [National awareness and historicism in

such a floor plan, external shape and decoration stemmed from Kiev architecture of the 11th century.¹⁸ Yuriy R. Savelyev emphasises that this was one of the first Russian Orthodox churches in the governorships of the Kingdom of Poland commissioned by the Ministry of War to imitate Byzantine architecture.¹⁹

Arguments used in the discussion over the fate of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Kalisz in the interwar period

When Poland regained its independence, real estate belonging to Orthodox communities (in the case of Kalisz this included the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul and the parish buildings in Niecała Street) became the property of the Polish military authorities.²⁰ Initially, the Orthodox church was converted into a Roman-Catholic one (1919), yet ultimately a decision was taken to destroy it.²¹ The construction files of the Orthodox church pertaining to its conversion into a garrison church and its eventual demolition contain letters that reflect the general attitude towards Orthodox architecture and the needs of the local community that were prevalent at the time.²² Orthodox churches were purposefully closed down so that they would not become a place of propagating anti-Polish sentiments among the minority groups.²³ This was usually the first step towards demolition which, in turn, was explained by the fact that a given building was not in use.²⁴

The interwar discussion regarding the fate of the Orthodox church in Kalisz revolved around four main groups of arguments for its destruction. First, the need to dismantle the building was justified by its low artistic quality, as evidenced, for example, by a letter written by the president of Kalisz to the solicitor Piotr Engelhardt, dated 10 July 1919:

In February this year the City Council decreed that the Orthodox church in Św. Józef Square in Kalisz be dismantled. In this matter the Magistrate turned to the Ministry of Culture and Art to offer its opinion from the artistic point of view.

Russia. Interpretations of Aristotele Fioravanti's cathedral of the Dormition at the Kremlin], *Ikonotheka*, 1996, no. 11, p. 59; P. Krasny, *Architektura cerkiewna na ziemiach ruskich Rzeczypospolitej 1596–1914* [Orthodox church architecture in the Ruthenian lands of the Commonwealth 1596–1914], Cracow 2003, p. 315.

18 Cynalewska-Kuczma, op. cit., loc. cit.

19 See Савельев, *Византийский стиль...*, p. 105.

20 See Przygodzki, op. cit., p. 110.

21 Cf. Płocienniczak, op. cit., p. 48; K. Sokoł, A. Sosna, *Cerkwie w centralnej Polsce 1815–1915* [Orthodox churches in central Poland 1815–1915], Białystok 2011, p. 50.

22 The State Archive in Kalisz, Kalisz city records, signature no. 4315.

23 See M. Papierzyńska-Turek, *Między tradycją a rzeczywistością. Państwo wobec prawosławia 1918–1939* [Between tradition and reality. The state vs. the Orthodox Church 1918–1939], Warsaw 1989, p. 325.

24 Ibid., pp. 323–377.

The Ministry has notified the Magistrate that, having considered the photographic images of the Orthodox church in question, they have come to the conclusion that the edifice lacks any artistic value and its appearance is contrary to the character of architecture in the lands of Poland, which makes the Ministry offer no objection to the notion that this building be dismantled.²⁵

The church was deemed entirely alien to the local tradition; yet the principles of evaluation remain very unclear. The phrasing of the letter seems to suggest that the verdict was not supported by any thorough stylistic analysis, i.e. the personnel of the Ministry of Culture and Art simply passed their judgement. The architecture of the Kalisz church was observed through the lens of the politics of the Second Republic of Poland, which were aimed at eradicating all traces of the Russian “invaders”. Notes to the urban plan of Konstytucji Square in Kalisz also present the Orthodox church as an alien and undesirable element in the city’s fabric. A document pertaining to the “issue of the disposal of the Orthodox church” states that:

[...] In debating the issue of the exit of Grodzka Street, it must also be taken into consideration that it is not in line with the times to refrain from extending it directly, since the curve of Warszawska Street was designed during the occupation with the sole purpose of directing the traffic away from the Orthodox church, so that the view from the street would open to the square (presently Konstytucji Square) and not the Orthodox church. [...] the existing building, its architectural style alien to the city and the surrounding architectural complexes, is an eyesore and a cause of vexation to the people.²⁶

The rhetoric of this passage clearly illustrates the policy applied in the Second Republic towards the “mementoes” of the partitions. Orthodox churches were portrayed as an element that was incongruous with the local architectural landscape. Similar argumentation also appears in a letter written by the president of Kalisz on 2 April 1926, addressed to the Minister of Public Works in Warsaw:

In Konstytucji Square in Kalisz there stands an edifice of the Orthodox church which lacks any artistic value and is, in its appearance, contrary to the character of architecture in the lands of Poland. [It is] a blemish on the face of the city and a reminder of the Russian yoke.²⁷

Like many other Orthodox churches at the time, the Kalisz temple was regarded as a symbol of the partitions, the architecture of the “other”. Artistic quality was determined according to the associations that were evoked by a given structure. The Orthodox church in Kalisz was an eyesore inasmuch as it reminded the city’s inhabitants of the times of subjugation. The church was not perceived as an example of 19th-century historicism but as a symbol of tsardom.

The second argument used to justify the need for the church’s demolition was its poor state of preservation, as the ruined structure was a direct hazard to the

25 The State Archive in Kalisz, Kalisz city records, signature no. 4315, pp. 15–16.

26 Ibid., pp. 122–123.

27 Ibid., pp. 127–128.

city's inhabitants. One example of such reasoning comes from a report that was made after an inspection conducted on 19 August 1922. The committee, "having thoroughly and carefully examined the former Orthodox church in Kalisz on 9 August 1922, established that the state of dilapidation of the dome roofing, cornices, external layers of plaster, flooring, windows and suchlike elements constitutes a safety hazard".²⁸ Some years later, on 8 January 1926, a delegation sent by the Ministry of Public Works (i.e. Kalisz county architect, engineer Albert Nestrypek, and his deputy, technician A. Czyżewski) and the Magistrate of the City of Kalisz (i.e. engineer K. Laskowski and his deputy, engineer architect J. Lipski) described the state of the unwanted edifice as follows:

1. The roof above the main dome continues to lose its metal covering owing to atmospheric phenomena and is increasingly leaking, as is the roof above the naves. / 2. The fissures in the vaults over the left aisle and the presbytery have grown significantly, and blocks of brick falling from such a height damage the marble floor, which is why, to prevent further losses, the Committee deems it necessary to remove the flooring and store it in a safe location. / 3. Water is pouring down the external walls, stripping the walls of their plaster covering. Sections of weathered brick are visible.²⁹

The letter by the president of Kalisz that was written on 2 April 1926 uses the allegedly lamentable state of the Orthodox church as another argument for its swift destruction:

The said Orthodox church has stood empty for a number of years and the Committees have deemed it dilapidated and a hazard to the city's inhabitants. The edifice is an eyesore on the city square and interferes with the course of Warszawska Street. Due to this state of affairs, having considered that dismantling the Orthodox church is contingent on the decisions of the central government, since the edifice is state property, during a meeting on 12 March 1923 the City Council of Kalisz unanimously decreed to apply to the relevant authorities for a swifter demolition of the said Orthodox church, which obstructs the view of the harmonious structures of Warszawska Street.³⁰

When the demolition works commenced, it soon became apparent that the reports were inaccurate in their descriptions of the state of the building. On 10 October 1928 Józef Kical, the master mason in charge of the demolition, wrote to the Magistrate of Kalisz in the following manner:

I kindly inform that works on the demolition of the Orthodox church have been dissatisfactory to me. To be exact, the domes, vaults and pillars proved to have been constructed using a very strong cement mortar. The cleaning of bricks also posed much difficulty due to the overly strong mortar [...] I ask that you put my request under your kind consideration and assign a sum which the Magistrate sees fit, so that the demolition works can be completed, without any personal gain on my part [...].³¹

28 Ibid., p. 46.

29 Ibid., pp. 113–114.

30 Ibid., pp. 127–128.

31 Ibid., pp. 284–285.

It appears, therefore, that despite the visible neglect the Orthodox church was not yet in a state that would indicate the need for an immediate demolition (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Photograph of the “old” Orthodox church (Kalisz, the State Archive, Witold Wardęski Legacy, sign. no. 47)

The third argument used to obtain the Ministry’s approval lay in the plan to hire unemployed inhabitants of the city in the demolition works. An official letter dated 23 February 1926 even states that removal of the Orthodox church would enable city planners to restore the original layout of the square and to remodel the locale to fit the actual needs of the Kalisz population:

The square layout that will emerge after the elimination of the Orthodox church and the rerouting of the adjacent street so that the planned Post Office building stands in line with the houses of Warszawska and Marjańska Streets is suitable for a postal establishment, owing to its location. This solution will, to some extent, open up the possibility of returning the square to its original state from before when the Orthodox church was erected and the characteristic colonnade at the exit of Warszawska and Marjańska Streets was demolished. [...] Seeing the above solution as the issue of the new Post Office in Kalisz as the most appropriate, the District Office – the Regional Department of Public Works – appeals to the Ministry for a favourable decision [...] owing to offering employment to those out of work who will be the first to be hired in the demolition of the Orthodox church.³²

32 Ibid., pp. 125–126.

The letter from the city's president to the Minister of Public Works in Warsaw, written less than two months later, displays full support for the idea to remodel the square. Wishing to obtain the Ministry's consent to commence demolition works, the president presented his view mainly as a method of alleviating unemployment in Kalisz:

[...] In recent years the issue has assumed a more realistic form in the proposal to use the space that would open up after the demolition of the Orthodox church to erect an edifice for postal and telegraph services. The lack of such a building is deeply felt in Kalisz, yet it is not certain when this project can be completed, while works could provide job opportunities for several dozen unemployed citizens.

The Orthodox church's demolition was to serve as a kind of catharsis for the inhabitants of Kalisz, offering them the possibility to rebuild the state they had regained, to cleanse the city of unwanted "enemy architecture" and to engage in honest work for the national authorities. It should be noted that this occurred before the great economic crisis (1929–1935), thus unemployment rates were not a pressing concern in the Republic of Poland.

The fourth group of arguments comprises attestations that the Orthodox community was not in the least interested in repossessing the building. Intriguingly, many letters present the prospective works on removal of the "eyesore" as a very urgent matter. The most emphatic of all the appeals to commence the demolition can be found in the 1926 letter from the city president, which was already cited several times above:

[...] I permit myself to turn to the Ministry with a heartfelt plea to have the kindness to order the former Orthodox church in Kalisz to be demolished as swiftly as possible. The issue is of profound importance here in the city [...] Resolving the matter favourably will therefore be met with general approval and will calm public opinion. [...]

On the other hand, I feel obliged to report to the Ministry that the Orthodox community in Kalisz now amounts to circa 400 persons, who lay no claim to their former church, as they would not be able to maintain it. They are indifferent to the issue also due to the fact that they have regained a sizable parish house / the former abodes of the priests and the church attendants /, in which they have arranged a chapel that offers an entirely sufficient substitute for the church edifice.³³

It is possible that in 1926 the Orthodox community in Kalisz finally abandoned their endeavours to reclaim their temple, as these were slow-going and did not bring about the desired results. The letter from the Ministry of Religion and Public Enlightenment to the Łódź voivode (Warsaw, 17 January 1921) emphasises that "the inhabitants of Kalisz following the Orthodox creed have, in these past months, made attempts to reclaim the local Orthodox temple for their use".³⁴ In the years that followed the community appealed for the creation of a suitable place of

³³ Ibid., pp. 127–128.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

worship, as evidenced by a letter by the government board of the Orthodox parish in Kalisz to the city magistrate, written on 25 January 1921:

owing to the local authorities having requisitioned the parish Church of Peter and Paul as well as the parish house, the so-called parsonage, the parish members have no possibility of holding services on every Sunday and on holidays since the departure of the occupying German forces. Consequently, the parish members have pleaded with the reverend pastor Wende to arrange a provisional chapel in the Protestant school for such a period as is needed [...] The governing board of the Orthodox parish is thus extending a kind request to the magistrate of Kalisz to grant permission to hold a weekly service every Sunday at the Protestant school in Niecała Street.³⁵

In response to this appeal, a chapel in Niecała Street was opened. It was to serve as a temporary solution to the pressing problem.³⁶ Nevertheless, attempts were still being made to present the issue in such a manner that the monumental Orthodox church would appear as a redundant edifice disturbing the architectural harmony of the urban landscape, or even as a burden to the inhabitants of Kalisz, even those of the Orthodox faith. The letter written by the city's president to the Ministry of Religion and Public Enlightenment on 16 March 1927 may serve as an example:

The governing board [...] of the Orthodox parish makes no attempts to reclaim the former church because, owing to its dilapidated state, the parish would be unable to restore it and maintain it with its funds. At the same time, however, the same board requests to receive the material obtained during the demolition works so that it can be used in the construction of an Orthodox chapel with a capacity of 500 persons, to be erected on the plot at 1 Niecała Street, which is the sole property of the Orthodox parish. The Orthodox community now owns a very elegant chapel seating 120, located in the parish house on the said plot, yet the place is slightly too small and the Magistrate is actually willing to provide financial support for the project to build a new, larger chapel in that location in order to advance the removal of the desolate, decaying and disfiguring edifice of the former church [...].³⁷

Similar claims may be found in a letter from the Kalisz starost to the voivode of Łódź, dated 12 April 1927:

According to the oral testimony of the president of Kalisz [...] neither the local Orthodox parish amounting to circa 450 souls nor the government of the said parish is raising any objections to the demolition of the Orthodox church, as it is in possession of a chapel at 1 Niecała Street, which is entirely sufficient for their religious needs.³⁸

This allegedly indifferent attitude towards the fate of the church was explained by a lack of financial resources. In reality, however, the Orthodox inhabitants of the re-established Polish state made efforts to secure government subsidies to restore their

35 Ibid., p. 35.

36 Ibid., p. 38.

37 Ibid., pp. 163–164.

38 Ibid., p. 176.

churches.³⁹ Late in the 1920s, the Minister of Religion and Public Enlightenment received a letter from Dionizy, the metropolitan bishop of the Orthodox Church in Poland, discussing both the preservation and restoration of the church in Kalisz as an important place of worship for the Orthodox denizens of the city. A passage from this document (dated 3 March 1928) may serve as the conclusion to the analysis of the heated discussion on the fate of the church in Kalisz:

The dismantling of the Orthodox church is, in itself, such a sad eventuality that the Church Authority may only agree to it under certain circumstances: if the necessity of the demolition is indisputably proven from the perspective of public interest and a replacement is offered to satisfy the spiritual needs of the Orthodox community. The fact that the Orthodox church in Kalisz is partially ruined and in bad condition, while its furnishings have been appropriated by third persons, can only lead to the necessity of bringing it to order using state funds earmarked for the needs of the Orthodox church [...] I may give my consent to the demolition of the church only if there is an actual possibility for the Orthodox people in Kalisz and its vicinity to satisfy their spiritual needs.⁴⁰

It is difficult to ascertain whether the city authorities managed to provide a satisfactory place of worship for all Orthodox inhabitants of Kalisz and its vicinity. It remains a fact that the members of the local parish were unable to negotiate restoration of the church financed from state funds allocated to the “needs of the Orthodox Church” or to save their temple from the “sad eventuality”.⁴¹ The old church was dismantled in 1928. By then, the iconostasis and the side chapels had already been removed. The building materials obtained from the dismantling of the church were used to build a new one, which has survived to the present day and functions as the parish church.⁴² The building was designed by Michał Zenowicz; its plans were approved on 26 September 1928 and construction was concluded in 1930.⁴³ The works were supervised by Albert Nestrypke, one of the architects who had supported the idea to demolish the old Church of the Holy Apostles.⁴⁴ This new church is still in existence and is looked after by state conservators; on 3 February 1994 it was added to the list of monuments.⁴⁵

39 Cf. Papierzyńska-Turek, op. cit., p. 328.

40 The State Archive in Kalisz, Kalisz city records, signature no. 4315, pp. 254–255.

41 Ibid.

42 Cf. Płócienniczak, op. cit., pp. 55–56.

43 The State Archive in Kalisz, Kalisz city records, signature no. 2878, pp. 30–31.

44 The artistic legacy of the architect A. Nestrypke (mainly in the context of architecture in Łódź and Poznań) was discussed in more detail by J. Bruś-Kosińska in her doctoral dissertation submitted in 2012: J. Bruś, *Albert Nestrypke (1887–1977) – życie i twórczość kaliskiego inżyniera architekta, propagatora architektury modernistycznej* [Albert Nestrypke (1887–1977) – the life and oeuvre of an engineer architect from Kalisz, a promoter of modernist architecture], doctoral dissertation written at the Institute of Art History and the Faculty of Humanistic Sciences, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, under the supervision of Prof. Lechosław Lameński PhD. (habil.), Lublin 2012.

45 Cf. The National Heritage Board of Poland; Register of Monuments – the Greater Poland Voivodeship (20 April 2016).

The architecture of the “new” Orthodox church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Kalisz (1928)

The church has the floor plan of a Greek cross, with a substantially extended south-west axis. A tripartite vestibule is located on the western side and a rectangular naos is found in the central part of the building. On the eastern side the temple features a polygonal sanctuary. It also has a tower, rising above the vestibule in the western part. The tower has a quadrilateral base and an octagonal upper section. It is covered with a polyhedral pyramid roof accentuated with an onion-shaped dome. The dominant elements of its form are the tower and the nave covered with a square hip roof featuring a small octagonal tower with an onion dome. The façade is symmetrical, organised along a single axis, with a centrally located entrance (Figs. 4–5). Pilasters divide the elevation into several fields filled with arched windows. The initial design included an inscription, but it was changed to a floral decoration with blind arcades.

It is a tower church, and its architecture is characteristic of the Russian national style as inspired by old-Russian buildings. The tradition of erecting such churches in Russia can be traced back to the Church of the Ascension in Kolomyenskoye (1530–1532) on the outskirts of Moscow. As was mentioned above, the nave section is accentuated by an octagonal tower crowned with an onion dome. This solution may frequently be seen in Orthodox churches which were constructed during the period of the partitions. The decoration on the façade also seems fairly standard and features an arcade frieze (on the nave and on the western wall) and floral motifs (stylised scrolls on pilaster capitals, rosettes above the pilasters, and a foliate frieze on the apse). The decoration is modest, which is a nod to both old-Russian buildings and the style of Russian church architecture, blending historicism with modernism. The tendency is all the more noticeable given the fact that the elevation features two shades of beige (with the details in a lighter tone), which accentuate the monumental silhouette (Fig. 6).

Ewa Andrzejewska and Dorota Rutkowska associate the style of the Kalisz orthodox church with architecture inspired by the Romanesque style. The registry note includes the phrase: “A building in pseudo-Romanesque form”. Dominika Płócienniczak seems to follow this line of reasoning, stating that “the form of the Orthodox church refers to the neo-Romanesque style”.⁴⁶ The architecture of the church also bears resemblance to the so-called round-arch style (*Rundbogenstil*), which drew inspiration from Byzantine, early Christian and Romanesque art as well as from the Quattrocento. The style is Western in provenance and stems from creative inspiration from the works of previous epochs.⁴⁷ Its characteristic features include the use of an arcaded frieze pierced with windows. In this respect, the church

⁴⁶ Cf. Płócienniczak, op. cit., p. 58; the author presents this statement with no footnote.

⁴⁷ Cf. M. J. Lewis, *Rundbogenstil*, in: *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. J. Turner, vol. 27, London–New York 1996, pp. 334–336.

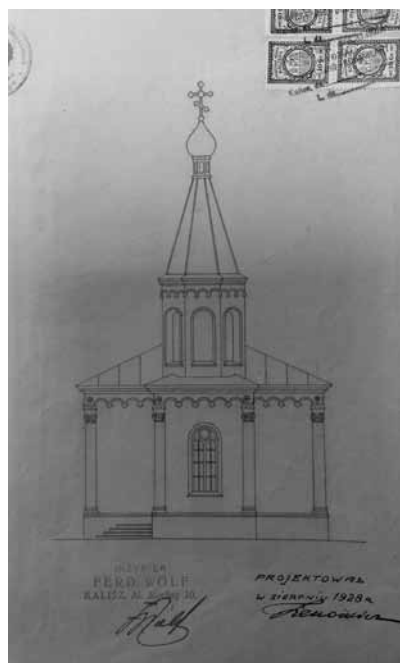


Fig. 4. Design of the “new” Orthodox church – façade (Kalisz, the State Archive, Kalisz city records, sign. no. 2878, p. 144)

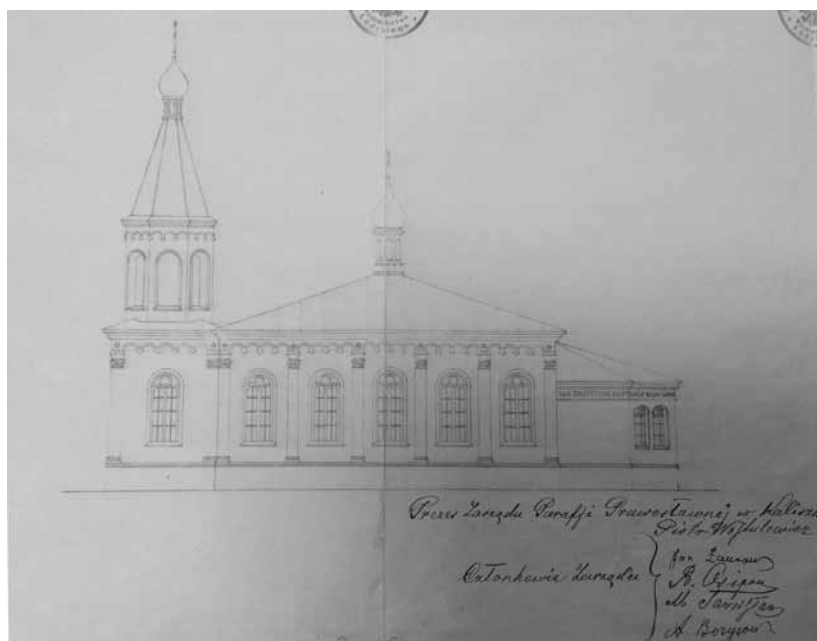


Fig. 5. Design of the “new” Orthodox church – side elevation (Kalisz, the State Archive, Kalisz city records, sign. no. 2878, p. 145)



Fig. 6. Orthodox Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Kalisz (a contemporary view of the “new” building; photo by Anita Kunikowska)

in question does indeed repeat certain elements that are typical of “Romanesque” or “pseudo-Romanesque” art. Piotr Zubowski, in turn, categorises the building as “referring to Roman-Catholic Baroque architecture” and notes that it does not seem associated with “the ecclesiastical architecture of Russia”.⁴⁸ His hypothesis would be difficult to defend, even if we invoked the architecture of the Occidentalisation period (which Zubowski, incidentally, fails to do). The above analysis clearly indicates that the church is typically Russian in form and follows the academic strand of the neo-Byzantine style which originates from the works of K. A. Thon. It is therefore highly surprising that, at a time when Orthodox churches were razed to the ground en masse (as symbols of the despised tsarist government), the authorities of the newly re-established Polish state authorised the erection of a building that was representative of the national Russian style.

Remarks on revivalist Orthodox churches on Polish territory and their fate in the interwar period

Regrettably, the number of Orthodox churches in Poland that were demolished (particularly in the interwar period) exceeds that of the surviving ones. In the Kalisz governorate alone, almost all Russian places of worship were destroyed; the only

48 Cf. Zubowski, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

one that is still in existence is the garrison church in Kalisz.⁴⁹ The aim was thus to eliminate all Russian Orthodox churches regardless of their style or architectural value. This fate befell, for instance, the neo-Byzantine churches of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in Łęczyca and of St. Seraphim in Sieradz, as well as the neo-Russian churches of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in Słupca, the Holy Mary Mother of God Church in Wieluń and the Holy Trinity Church in Konin.⁵⁰ It should be emphasised that the demolished temples were often very small, serving only the local communities, such as the already mentioned church in Sieradz, which could seat ca. 300, or the one in Słupsk, with a maximum capacity of 350 worshippers.⁵¹

The Kalisz governorate is hardly an exception in this respect, as Orthodox churches were being dismantled throughout the entire territory of the Second Republic since they were regarded to be a tangible reminder of Russian rule. Between 1919 and 1939, the government of the re-established Polish state brought the Orthodox churches under its control on the basis of temporary legislation. These were rooted in two legal acts: the decree of the Chief of State dated 16 December 1918 on the compulsory administration of property formerly owned by the Orthodox Church (and others) and the so-called “lex Żeligowski”, which was an ordinance

49 In the interwar period the edifice was used as a Centre for Culture and the Arts; the tower and the decoration of the façade were not removed, which makes the original form of the building entirely discernible even today.

50 The source material on the architecture and history of these churches is very scarce. Documents from the governorate office of Kalisz dated to 1867–1914 (now held at the State Archive in Łódź) do not contain the architectural plans of the Orthodox churches erected in the administrative region. The archives are incomplete – they are estimated to contain only 30% percent of the documents produced by the government of the Kalisz governorate (See C. Ohryzko-Włodarska, “Archiwum Państwowe miasta Łodzi i Województwa Łódzkiego” [City of Łódź and Łódź Voivodeship State Archive], in: *Dzieje Poznania i województwa poznańskiego: informator o materiałach archiwalnych* [The history of Poznań and Poznań Voivodeship: information on archival records], ed. C. Skopowski, Warsaw–Łódź 1972, p. 726). The surviving files include correspondence on the erection of the Orthodox churches in Kalisz (signature no. 2310) and in Sieradz (signature no. 3935, 4195), the transfer of property ownership in Konin (signature no. 1200), as well as the allotment of a municipally owned plot to erect the Orthodox church in Łęczyca (signature no. 4195) and in Wieluń (signature no. 3695). Documents related to the demolition of the Orthodox churches are much more numerous; such files can be found in the archives in Łęczyca (Łęczyca city records, signature no. 439 and 484), Sieradz (Sieradz city records, signature no. 127) and Kalisz (Kalisz city records, signature no. 4315). The architecture and style of the Orthodox churches in the Kalisz governorate may only be inferred from picture postcards, e.g. the collection of Kirił Sokoł and Aleksander Sosna, published in Sokoł, Sosna, op. cit., pp. 71, 119, 123, 156, 57 (the page numbers refer to the churches mentioned in the main body of this article, in the order in which they appear here; the book is the second edition of the album: K. Sokoł, A. Sosna, *Kopuły nad Wisłą. Prawosławne cerkwie w centralnej Polsce w latach 1815–1915* [Onion domes by the Vistula. Orthodox churches in central Poland in the years 1815–1915], Moscow 2003). The collection is also available in digital form; it is constantly being expanded and popularised through the website: *Prawosławne cerkwie na starych pocztówkach* [Orthodox churches in old postcards] <http://www.chram.com.pl/>. The picture postcards presented there come from the archives of local museums.

51 See Sokoł, Sosna, op. cit., p. 123.

issued by the Commissioner General of the Civil Administration of the Eastern Lands on 22 October 1919. The 1918 decree stipulated that the government had the right to appropriate Orthodox churches abandoned by those communities that had chosen to participate in the mass exodus (Russian: беженство) to Russia. In accordance with the 1919 legislation, "all temples of the Greek-Russian faith" that had been either erected where Roman-Catholic ones had once stood or adapted from them were to be surrendered to the Roman-Catholic church authorities.⁵² The two ordinances became the legal basis for many bills, including the order that Orthodox parishes were to close down their unused churches and leave the keys at the police station.⁵³ In practice, however, the authorities of the Second Republic seized even those churches that had from the very beginning of their existence served only the needs of the local Orthodox people, who became national minorities after the end of the First World War. This policy was justified by the wish to extend state protection to the gradually decaying church edifices. *De facto*, most of them were converted into Roman Catholic churches; the remaining ones were dismantled or remained permanently closed. The decisions were justified by the alleged poor artistic quality of the edifices, their inconsistency with the local architectural tradition and unfortunate political connotations.⁵⁴ Research conducted so far suggests that initiatives to eliminate Orthodox churches intensified in the years 1918–1924, 1929–1934 and 1937–1938, with the greatest number of temples of considerable artistic and historical significance being demolished just before the outbreak of the Second World War.⁵⁵

To recapitulate, throughout the interwar period the Polish authorities strove to integrate the population of Poland under the wing of the Roman Catholic church, which is why the Orthodox architecture of the partition period was sentenced to a ruthless annihilation. The Polish government worked towards the aim of breaking all political and cultural ties with national minorities of Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian origin. Initially, attempts were made to make it more difficult for the Orthodox communities to use their places of worship. Such methods were facilitated by the structural disorganisation of the Orthodox church and the process of transporting church furnishings to the East, which was associated with the

52 The Journal of Laws of the Polish Republic 1918, no. 21, item 67; The Official Journal of the Civil Administration of the Eastern Lands 1919, no. 25, item 256 (quoted after Papierzyńska-Turek, op. cit., pp. 324–325).

53 This regulation was issued by the Ministry of Religious Creeds and Public Enlightenment in 1919 (eadem, p. 325).

54 See P. Paszkiewicz, "Spór o cerkwie prawosławne w II Rzeczypospolitej. „Odmoskwianie” czy „polonizacja”?" [The debate on Orthodox churches in the Second Republic. 'De-Muscovited' or 'Polonised'?), in: *Nacjonalizm w sztuce i historii sztuki 1789–1950* [Nationalism in art and art history 1789–1950], eds. D. Konstantynow, R. Piaseczny, P. Paszkiewicz, Warsaw 1998, pp. 228–229.

55 Por. Ibid., p. 228–232; Papierzyńska-Turek, op. cit., pp. 331–377; the scale of Orthodox church destruction in the late 1930s is best illustrated by the collection of photographs: *Akcja burzenia cerkwi na Chełmszczyźnie i Południowym Podlasiu* [Systematic demolition of Orthodox churches in the Chełm region and southern Podlachia], available at <http://cerkiew1938.pl/>.

withdrawal of the Russian army from Polish territory, starting in 1914.⁵⁶ The media often presented the need to cleanse the urban space from symbols of the partitions as a national issue, even against the actual wishes of the local residents. The fact that a portion of the society was against the demolition of Russian churches is evident, for instance, from the public discussion regarding the destruction of the Orthodox church in Saski Square in Warsaw.⁵⁷

It may therefore be hypothesised that the conversion into Catholic churches was what saved many Orthodox edifices from complete devastation. Orthodox buildings utilised as storage spaces in the interwar period became dilapidated, as was the case, for example, with the Church of St. George the Victorious in Suwałki (demolished in the 1960s).⁵⁸ Churches converted into state institutional buildings were substantially transformed, e.g. the Orthodox Church of Our Lady of the Sign Icon in Końskie (1903) was to become an old people's home,⁵⁹ whereas the Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in Sierpc (1894–1897) was converted into a district court in 1926–1928 and lost its tower and all its domes. The existing building was enlarged, the decoration, which was Russian in provenance, was painted over and replaced with ornaments imitating the Doric style.⁶⁰ Thus the form of the edifice was altered so much that its original function became almost indiscernible.

As has already been mentioned, most of the existing Orthodox churches survived the difficult period only because they had been converted into Roman Catholic ones. This shift in function did not result in any significant changes in the appearance of the buildings.⁶¹ Their interiors were adapted to a different liturgy,

56 Cf. A. Mironowicz, *Kościół prawosławny na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku* [The Orthodox Church in the territories of Poland in the 19th and 20th century], Białystok 2005, pp. 84, 125–129.

57 Cf. A. Haska, *Rozebrać czy zostawić? Sobór pod wezwaniem św. Aleksandra Newskiego a Pałac Kultury* [To demolish or to let it stand? The Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral vs. the Palace of Culture], in: *Pałac Kultury i Nauki: między ideologią a masową wyobraźnią* [The Palace of Culture: between ideology and collective imagination], eds. Z. Grębecka, J. Sadowski, Cracow 2007, pp. 51–58.

58 See Sokoł, Sosna, op. cit., p. 133.

59 Existing documents include a structure alteration plan made by a Radom-based architect, Kazimierz Prokulski, in February 1927 (Kielce, the State Archive, assemblage 21/460/4, signature no. 9). It was never implemented; the Orthodox church was torn down in the 1930s.

60 See T. Kowalski, *Śladami rosyjskiego garnizonu* [Following the Russian garrison], Sierpc 2013, p. 135.

61 In some cases, architectural interference in the form of the churches, although substantial, did not alter the appearance of the temples to any significant degree, simply because they constituted a new variation on the original features. One example here is the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (1896–1909) that was converted into a Roman Catholic church (of Our Lady of Częstochowa) in Augustów. The decoration, Russian in provenance, was left intact. The *kokoshnik*-shaped arched panel now features a crucifix. The dome, apparently associated with the tsarist government, was removed in the interwar period. Another change was made in the 1980s: “a modernist-style tower was erected above the entrance” (Sokoł, Sosna, op. cit., p. 36). The characteristic tented roof of the tower above the *prytvor* (vestibule) of the Orthodox church was therefore removed and replaced with a very similar polygonal roof (sic!)

and the only elements of the exterior that were removed were the domes and the Orthodox crosses. The buildings were adjusted to fit their new function, but the neo-Byzantine architecture remained almost intact, even though contemporaneous experts almost invariably described the style as alien to the local architectural tradition, which was associated with the tsarist government and as marring the urban landscape. The circle of “experts on architecture” passing judgement on the Russian Orthodox churches included the presidents of many Polish cities. The most emphatic comment is found in a letter from the president of Sosnowiec to the chief conservator of the Częstochowa region regarding the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas in Sosnowiec: “Its style, very Byzantine indeed, mars the city greatly, robbing it of its domestic charm. The Orthodox church ought to be removed without delay as a symbol of tyranny and violence done to our country”.⁶² “Domestic” was a term that was frequently invoked in the interwar period by Polish architects working towards establishing a national style that would legitimise the restored Polish state.⁶³ This letter also mentions the fact that the inhabitants of Sosnowiec voluntarily donated their funds for the erection of this temple; nevertheless, the president of Sosnowiec argued that the church, as a *pars pro toto* of Byzantine revivalist architecture in its Russian version, was at variance with Polish national art (the picturesque domestic style). From a purely artistic point of view, this “antistyle” of the Russian temples is an example of historicism in 19th-century church architecture. Thus far, the style has not been clearly defined in academic literature – it has been described in such terms as Byzantine (from the Russian византийский), pseudo-Byzantine, Russian, synodal, official, neo-Byzantine, post-Byzantine and meta-Byzantine. In Polish literature, the style is most often associated with the fact that, as the national style of Russia, it became a political tool of the Romanovs.⁶⁴

The periodisation of Russian revivalist church architecture has been analysed by a number of scholars, e.g. by Boris Kirikov, Evgenya M. Kishkinova and Yuriy R. Savelyev.⁶⁵ For the purposes of this article it is sufficient to apply the following

in a slightly modernised form. Now the original function of the edifice is evident not only due to the decoration on the elevation but also due to the characteristic tower above the façade, whose shape mirrors the earlier form of the vestibule.

62 Kielce, the State Archive, assemblage UWK WKZ, signature no. 21747.

63 For more on the domestic style and its equivalent in lay architecture – the manor-house style – as well as other variants of Polish national architecture, see K. Stefański, *Polska architektura sakralna w poszukiwaniu stylu narodowego* [Polish church architecture in search of national style], Łódź 2002.

64 Cf. P. Paszkiewicz, *W służbie Imperium Rosyjskiego 1721–1917. Funkcje i treści ideowe rosyjskiej architektury sakralnej na zachodnich rubieżach Cesarstwa i poza jego granicami* [In the service of the Russian Empire 1721–1917. Functions and ideological messages of Russian ecclesiastical architecture in the western borderlands of the Empire and outside its borders], Warsaw 1999; Cynalewska-Kuczma, op. cit.

65 Cf. A. Biertasz, “Rosyjski styl narodowy w architekturze cerkiewnej okolic Petersburga (połowa XIX – początek XX wieku)” [Russian national style in ecclesiastical architecture of the St. Petersburg region (the middle of the 19th century – early 20th century)], in: *Nacjonalizm*

classification: until the 1830s the dominant architectural style was Palladian neo-Classicism of model designs by K. A. Thon. Since the 1880s, two variants of national architecture developed side by side: the Academic style (inspired by Thon) and the anti-Academic one (inspired by I. P. Ropet and hence called *ropetovshchina*). The latter was characterised by opulent decoration and multiple references to the 17th-century architecture of Moscow and Jaroslav. The style of the late 19th and early 20th century combined eclecticism with modernism. The architecture in the westernmost reaches of the Russian Empire essentially followed the same trends.

The appearance of Orthodox churches in Kalisz resulted from the needs of the local community, i.e. the Macedonian diaspora. Only later did the development of such architecture become associated with Russification of the western regions of the empire. The church that deliberately referred to the Byzantine style of architecture was built precisely at that time. Kalisz was one of the westernmost cities in the Russian domain and fulfilled important administrative functions throughout the 19th century – first as the capital of one of the voivodeships in the Kingdom of Poland (1816–1837), then as the capital of the Kalisz governorate (1837–1844 and 1867–1918). The fact that the city had a railway connection was also significant – the line built in 1900–1902 ran from Kalisz to Warsaw, thus making it a part of the Warsaw–Vienna network.⁶⁶

The first Orthodox Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Kalisz was built on a plot of land purchased from private owners – a married couple by the name of Nerger. The magistrate had bought the land with an existing building (which was subsequently demolished) for the sum of 13 900 roubles. The church, which replaced the house known as “Under the Pillars”,⁶⁷ was mainly built for the garrison stationed in the governorate capital. It stood near a Roman Catholic church, in an open square, i.e. in accordance with the principles of spatial planning that were followed at that time.⁶⁸ Thus the history of the edifice had nothing to do with Latin liturgy; yet despite this fact it was taken over and converted into a Roman Catholic church as early as in 1919. In later years it was shut down and stood empty. The extant letters from the interwar period indicate that demolition of the temple was lobbied for mainly by the municipal authorities. Their initiative was injurious to the local people of the Orthodox faith, but the Orthodox minority

w sztuce i historii sztuki 1789–1950, op. cit., pp. 157–170; Dąb-Kalinowska, op. cit., pp. 49–63; P. Krasny, “Е. М. Кишкинова, “Византийское возрождение” в архитектуре России Середина XIX – начало XX века, Санкт-Петербург 2007, 256 p., 204 fig.; Ю.Р. Савельев, Пемербурская школа „византийского стиля” в Российской империи, in: Санкт-Петербург и архитектура России, ed. И. А. Бондаренко, Комкнига, Москва 2007, pp. 445–448, 17 fig.”, in: *Modus: Prace z historii sztuki*, ed. W. Bałus, vol. 8–9, Cracow 2009, pp. 322–334; Савельев, *Византийский стиль...*; idem, *Искусство историзма ...*, Москва 2008.

66 Cf. Płócienniczak, op. cit., pp. 40–62; M. Bandurka, *Zmiany administracyjne i terytorialne ziem województwa łódzkiego w XIX i XX wieku* [Administrative and territorial transformations of the Łódź voivodeship territory in the 19th and 20th century], Warsaw 1974, p. 45.

67 Kalisz, the State Archive, Kalisz city records, signature no. 4315, pp. 127–128.

68 See Савельев, *Византийский стиль...*, loc. cit.

did not, however, resort to actions such as those undertaken in the Lublin region, where people protested by holding services in front of the closed churches, wrote numerous petitions or even spread news of miracles happening in the temple and forced its doors open.⁶⁹

In 1928 there were nearly 200 unused Orthodox churches in Poland.⁷⁰ The issue of closing the one in Kalisz is therefore not an isolated case; however, the erection of a new Orthodox church does seem remarkable. In the interwar period very few temples of the Orthodox faith were built due to the policy of consolidating the state under the aegis of the Roman Catholic Church. The government of the Second Republic was reluctant to issue permits to build chapels, let alone to finance the erection of new churches.⁷¹ It may be argued that the new Orthodox churches were to be built as a means of compensation for the destruction of the existing houses of prayer. This hypothesis may be illustrated by two examples from two different regions of Poland – the Orthodox church in Baranowicze (in the east of the Second Republic) and the church in Sosnowiec (on the western borders of the former Russian partition).

The Orthodox church in Baranowicze was consecrated in 1908 and was destroyed in a fire that broke out in unexplained circumstances on 19 April 1921. The locals made ardent efforts towards rebuilding it and even acquired state funding for the purpose. The new church was consecrated in the late 1920s. It housed the surviving mosaics from the dismantled Orthodox church in Saski Square and icons from other temples stored in the Orthodox church in the Praga district of Warsaw.⁷² The fact that the state agreed to co-fund the construction became the principal argument against the theory that the government of the Second Republic was unfavourably disposed towards people of the Orthodox creed.⁷³

The Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in Sosnowiec (1901–1906), in turn, was renovated in the years 1935–1936. Further works, aimed, for example, at changing the architectural style of the domes, were planned to commence in 1937. However, on 21 May 1938 the City Council in Sosnowiec ordered the temple's demolition, a notion that had been lobbied for in 1920 by the president of Sosnowiec, who wrote that it "ought to be removed without delay as a symbol of tyranny and violence done to our country".⁷⁴ The building was torn down in 1938, with considerable effort. The destruction of the domes required the use of dynamite, for which the municipal authorities had to take a loan amounting to 25,000 zloty.⁷⁵ The dismantling of the church was protested against not only by the

69 See Papierzyńska-Turek, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 328.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 329.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 328; A. Radziukiewicz, "Fragmenty świetności" [Pieces of glory], *Przegląd Prawosławny*, January 2003, no. 1(211), http://www.przeglądprawoslawny.pl/articles.php?id_n=283&id=8 [accessed 30 October 2016].

73 See. Papierzyńska-Turek, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

74 Katowice, the State Archive, Sosnowiec city records, signature no. 2547, pp. 30–31.

75 Katowice, the State Archive, Sosnowiec city records, signature no. 4184, p. 572.

Orthodox community but also by a representative of the Roman Catholic church – the dean of Będzin, Father Franciszek Gola.⁷⁶ Late in 1938, the president of the city promised to allot a sum of 50,000 zloty for the construction of a new Orthodox church; the plot on which it was to be built was selected a year later.⁷⁷ The plans were interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War and abandoned after the war was over.⁷⁸

Conclusion

The example of the two Orthodox churches in Kalisz demonstrates the state of our knowledge regarding the (neo) Byzantine style in the interwar period. The neo-Byzantine temple in Kalisz was demolished and replaced by one that was typically Russian (or Russo-Byzantine) in style. In the light of the above analysis, the campaign to demolish the Orthodox church in Kalisz was a part of a larger process of cleansing the lands within the newly restored Polish state from elements that were “alien” to national Polish architecture. The decision to build a new church, taken at a time when Orthodox temples and small parish churches were being torn down, remains truly remarkable, particularly since the style of the edifice referred to Russian historicism. This could indicate that either the style was not identified correctly or that it was a conscious attempt to emphasise the Orthodox community’s affinity with Russian culture.

Translated by Julita Mastalerz

Abstract

The Kalisz Orthodox church from the 1870s (Fig. 1) was demolished in the interwar period and quickly replaced by a “new” Orthodox church by the same name (Fig. 6). The surviving official correspondence reveals a specific set of arguments for the dismantling of the “old” church, e.g. that it was becoming dilapidated, was a threat to public safety and constituted an alien addition to the architectural landscape of the city. The demolition of the Orthodox church was to provide jobs for the unemployed and to open up the possibility of erecting a post office in that spot. The municipal authorities convinced the Ministry of Culture and Art that the local Orthodox parish was not interested in reclaiming the church for their own needs, even though this was not the case. The community ultimately conceded to having the church dismantled but demanded that a new temple be erected as compensation.

76 Cf. M. Dziewiatkowski, *Dziedzictwo diaspory. Monografia parafii prawosławnej w Sosnowcu* [Heritage of the diaspora. Monograph of the Orthodox parish in Sosnowiec], Sosnowiec 2010, p. 39.

77 Katowice, the State Archive, Sosnowiec city records, signature no. 4184, p. 29.

78 See Dziewiatowski, op. cit., p. 40.

The example of Kalisz aptly illustrates the attitude the authorities of the Second Republic of Poland had towards Russian Orthodox churches that had been erected in the partition period. The situation mirrored the controversies around the fate of the Orthodox church in Saski Square in Warsaw, if in a more provincial environment. The architectural style of the “new” Orthodox church in Kalisz puzzles many authors – the building, clearly representative of Russian historicism, is associated with *Rundbogenstil* and Latin- and Occidental-style Orthodox churches, which were spared by the interwar Polish authorities who wished to convert Orthodox citizens to Catholicism within the framework of the so-called neo-Union.