

To the methodology of church research in Hungary

– contributions to the typology of 18th century protestant church architecture

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Abstract

Over the past three decades, the Department for History of Architecture and of Monument Preservation has elaborated architectural surveys of monuments on different scales, from settlements to small-scale historic architectural objects, to train students and to provide research material for larger monument preservation measures. One of the scholarly leaders of this activity was Tamás Guzsik (1947-2002), who published several scientific articles on the methodology of village church research in Hungary, focusing on medieval architecture. By commemorating and evaluating his scientific heritage as a school founding scholar, the paper presents the conceptual opportunities and the extension of some of his principles in a Lutheran church survey programme involving the whole country. The results of this survey can be classified into a typology, which contributes to a better understanding of late Baroque architecture in Hungary and to the typology of Protestant church architecture.

Keywords

Architectural survey • Protestant church architecture • Lutheran church architecture

1 Introduction

Survey has always played a tremendously important role in the research of architectural monuments.

Over the last three decades, the Department for History of Architecture and of Monuments has initiated architectural surveys of monuments of different scales, from settlements to small-scale historic architectural objects, to train students and provide research material for larger monument preservation measures [19]. The survey method for education and research purposes in Hungary has been elaborated by Gyula Hajnóczy [16] and later comprehensively extended by Gy. Istvánfi [20] [21]. Complete settlements of various sizes have been recorded in the period from 1980 to 1994 with the participation of the students of the Faculty of Architecture of Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) and with the staff of the Department for History of Architecture and of Monuments. These settlements (with the year of the survey) are Kalocsa (1980), Baja (1981), Gyula (1982), Zalaegerszeg (1983), Kőszeg (1984), Gyöngyös (1985), Sárospatak (1986), Kaposvár (1987), Siklós (1988), Keszthely (1989), Szigetvár (1990), Szécsény (1991), Nyíregyháza (1992), Tata (1993), Tállya (1993), Szepsi (1993, 1994), Komárom (1994), Dunaföldvár (1994), Gönc (1994), Bonyhád (1994), Majos (1994). After a brief pause in 1995 following the re-organisation of the educational system of the Faculty, new survey campaigns began from 1996, generally with limited participation but with a more definite focus on specific building research issues.

The research on Hungarian medieval village churches – and the management of the significant surveys in the countryside – had been led by Tamás Guzsik (1947-2002) professor of the department, who had published several scientific articles on the methodology of these researches. He considered architectural history education as his main profession; his audience rewarded his excellence by honouring his lectures, and in 1996, he was also awarded the Ybl prize. That his university lecture notes are being regularly published and raising new questions also shows his approach-shaping teacher qualities. His most important research area was the architectural history of the

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medieval period. His research results put the architecture of the Paulite and Cistercian orders in Hungary into a new light. After his thorough research on the historical architecture of Armenia, he was able to redefine its role in the history of European architecture. Following wide-ranging research on the architecture of the Middle Ages, he drew up the system that explains and evaluates the historical sacral spaces according to their liturgical functions. The subject “Function analysis of the sacral spaces” displays and analyses the architecture of the past two thousand years according to the change of the sacral functions. His monument topography research is also outstanding, presenting new approaches from a methodological viewpoint.

During 2012, on the anniversary of would have been his 65th birthday and his death 10 years ago, a conference was commemorated to him. His former students and pupils of his workshop, now being researchers in the field of architectural history and monument preservation, have re-evaluated his scientific works and presented the results of their actual research. This paper also wishes to join the author to the wide circle of pupils who regard Professor Guzsik as a school founding scholar. In this article – while trying to enlist the most significant methodological points of his research practice on medieval churches – the conceptual opportunities to apply and extend some of his principles in the Lutheran church survey programme led by the author are also presented. As a master researcher, he played a key role in developing the department to one of the leading research workshops of rural church architecture in Hungary [31] [20] [21].

2 Research methodology principles of village churches

2.1 Topography researches versus typology

In the case of standing architectural monuments that can be perceived physically, it is possible to follow historical analysis and to establish a typology or morphology of the subject. In contrast, the relevance of topography research as a complex method lies in the localisation of the lost, invisible monuments or of those, which are believed to have disappeared; this is explicitly relevant to Hungarian village churches and monasteries of orders settled in or outside of settlements. Tamás Guzsik explained in various publications that the success of the application of the method depends on the marking out and the correct designation of the appropriate spatial and chronological borders [9, p. 195].

The legitimacy of the topography method in the research on medieval village churches and monasteries depends on the criteria applied within the time and space limitation of the study. Its effectiveness depends mainly on the delimitation aspects of the area, the available data and not least, the results of research from neighbouring disciplines [10] [11] [12]. As the result of research involving several counties in Hungary, it is possible to sketch the early architectural character of the only monastic order founded in Hungary, the Pauline Order [13].

According to the research of Guzsik, the method yielded sometimes interesting results that were inevitably re-thought and corrected by later researchers. For example, according to the already established monument topography of Somogy County, neither a Pauline church or monastery could be found in the investigated area. After having reconstructed the church visitations of Paul, Bishop of Veszprém in 1263 and of Gergely Gyöngyösi in 1520 using topographic methods, and taking into consideration parallel research results using the methodology of history and archaeology, he shed light on the contradictions and finally unfolded the results of the topographical research by confirming the presence of these types of Paulite church [6] [12].

2.2 The sources of research and the related disciplines of architectural history; the nature of architectural history research focusing on village churches

The typological or morphological approach of a building type that exists in standing structures can be achieved by a historical analysis and by the survey of the existing matter so as to establish a typology or morphology of the subject. The research results of the disciplines related to architectural history – especially history, archaeology and art history – constitute an indispensable requirement to fulfil the research tasks, moreover, the related technological research methods with their accurate laboratory background, as well as building or technology related historical approaches, can complete the building archaeology research procedure [7]. The documentary methods of archaeological research applied to existing buildings, especially evaluating their physical structures in a historic context and elaborated by the German “Bauforschung” method, play a growing role in recent architectural history research on rural churches [15] [17] [23] [29] [34].

Topographical and typological approaches can also be characterized and differentiated according to their focus and function in the research procedure. While the topographical research approach contributes mainly to the “linear” or “horizontal” exploration of architectural history, typological or morphological approaches assume a kind of summary, and in this way, they represent a “vertical” research methodology [7]. Horizontal or linear, in this approach, represent the investigated building in its geographical and historical context, while vertical, by contrast, is the exploration of the subject in a wider context using the methods of theoretical and comparative approaches.

2.3 A special aspect: orientation of medieval churches and axis correction

A distinctive research method for the explanation of orientation and the relatively often occurring axis correction of medieval church buildings has been elaborated by Guzsik [5]. From the records and evaluation of nearly one thousand medieval

churches, the equinoctial, solstitial and nominal – that is according to the feast day of the patronage (patron saint) – orientation of churches has been analysed. From the diversity of data, often biased to the theoretical values of orientation, he argues that the mechanical comparison of the measured and calculated values will, in every case, be examined in the context of other influencing circumstances e.g. calendar correction, the modified shape of the horizon, the patronage and the peculiar architectural context of the site. Its methodology shows that in addition to the primary role of the orientation of churches, there is further symbolic content of secondary importance closely relating to the church. [5, p. 212]. Axis orientation and correction primarily played a decisive role in the building of churches in the Middle Ages; its role in the early modern period of Baroque Catholic churches has been considered unimportant, and by the Protestants, it is almost entirely omitted. However, in the 19th century church architecture of both Catholics and Protestants, it again came to the fore.

2.4 The aspects of the development of architectural space within the Christian liturgy

The role of the approach from the point of view of function - or, as Guzsik often explained, from the “technology” of churches - appears as an utmost significant point in the analysis of historical architecture of religious buildings, churches and temples. Even by the scale of the issue, covering some 1500 years, the richness and depth of historic studies are enormous; however, the handbook-like comprehensive summarizing approaches showing the special aspects of architecture on the basis of functionalist analysis of the space and consequently with its formation, are relatively rare in proportion to the issue. Guzsik’s church research methodology organically involved these evaluation criteria, and in parallel, it has been developed as a university course for architecture students [14]. His methodology of evaluating the architectural shape of ground plans and spaces of sacral buildings from different denominations appears as one of the main branches of his school-founding activity. The benefits of this method can also be used for the re-design of church interiors – i.e. the Catholic sacral spaces following the principles of the Second Vatican Council – thus it also offered a useful knowledge base for designers [30].

3 Contributions to the typology of 18th century Protestant church architecture in Hungary:

The survey of Lutheran churches

The methodological principles of Guzsik’s research on medieval churches offered the possibility of its application and a good basis from which to establish the concept of a special field for a comprehensive research on Hungarian Lutheran church architecture. In the period from 1995 to 2009, an almost complete survey of the Lutheran churches in Hungary took place [26].

3.1 The aim and methodology of the survey

The main objectives of the comprehensive survey on Lutheran churches in Hungary were to carry out basic research that contributes to a thorough evaluation of Hungarian Protestant church architecture as a special area of the Hungarian history of architecture and art history. This issue is dominated by the building boom of the two decades after 1781, the Patent of Toleration of Joseph II, when a large number of churches were erected during a period of religious tolerance in Hungarian church history. Consequently, the methods used in the research on medieval churches had to be adapted to a specific theme of the early modern period that shows a truly exceptional stream of ideas from European culture. Similarly, it offered a typology of churches, built typically in the last decades of the 18th century that contributes to the exploration of late Baroque rural Protestant church architecture in Hungary. An objective of the research was also to complete a primary decay diagnosis, assessed during the survey programme, and give advice to users of the buildings for maintenance or for further actions. The survey thus helped to perform the direct basic tasks of monument preservation [26].

The concept for the methodology of the work was set up on preliminary archival research, and later, primarily utilised fieldwork based on the application of modern building survey methods and the establishment of a database. The survey and research of interior furniture and ecclesiastical works of art also had to be carried out as it had not been thoroughly researched previously. By assessing their condition, their conservation-based management and their display for museology purposes had to be determined. This part of the survey was arranged by Laszlo Bela Harmati, director of the Lutheran Museum in Hungary. Some results of his research have been summarized in a PhD thesis on late Baroque pulpit-altars, painted altarpieces and painted galleries in Transdanubia [18]. The elaboration of the work, first completed in West Hungary and then extended to the eastern counties, resulted in photo documentation with data sheets, and architectural surveys of over 200 churches together with the participation of close to 300 students of architecture. The drawings, first elaborated on tracing paper, were completed from mid-2000 only with CAD programmes.

3.2 Results - the typology of the surveyed churches

The majority of the surveyed buildings were built in the last decades of the 18th century after the Patent of Toleration (1781). A considerable number of Lutheran churches were built in the towards the end of the 19th and after the turn of the 20th century. As it is not possible within the scope of this paper to present the whole output of the survey, it is reasonable to focus on the period after the Patent of Toleration. This was, on one hand, a result of the development of protestant space formation, which also included European tendencies, and on the other, it constituted basic solutions for the evolution of the building activity after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867.

One of the decisive characteristics for a well-established typology of Protestant churches is the historic periodization, which is all the more problematic as the issue cannot be discussed individually in Hungarian architectural history, especially not apart from Hungarian churches. However, exploring the particular character of Lutheran churches, the most appropriate context is determined by a chronology bound to ecclesiastically important historic events. The suggested subdivision to chief historical events shows parallels with the general chronology of architectural history. The first period is limited by the occupation of Buda by the Ottoman Empire in 1541, and the Diet of Sopron in 1681 that set out the articles XXV-XXVI on religion and of public worship. The second period could be from 1681 until the Patent of Toleration of Joseph II in 1781. The third – shortest but one of the most important periods – is from 1781 to the early decades of the 19th century. The overlapping and very complex fourth period of the 19th century begins in 1800 with Neoclassicism and is broken by the 1848 revolution. The fifth period of Romanticism after the revolution continued with different tendencies of historicism to the turn and the early decades of the 20th century. The last historic period between the wars showed contradictory tendencies between revival styles and modern architecture.

The types of the churches built after the Patent of Toleration

To put the issue into context, some important characteristic features of church architecture have to be mentioned regarding the period lasting from the Patent of Toleration (1781) to the beginning of the 19th century, from classicizing late Baroque to Neoclassicism. After a long period of repression, the Patent authorized the non-Catholic congregations to build a towerless “oratory” (Bethaus in German, as the house of worship) in the middle of a building plot apart from the street and without direct access from there. An necessary condition was to prove that at least one hundred Lutheran families lived in the settlement. In 1786, the prohibition of tower building was abolished and from 1788, a main entrance from the street was also

allowed. By the end of the 1780s, the obligatory name as “oratory” could also be omitted. According to the documentation of Elemér Mályusz, from October 1782 to May 1784, there were 141 cases of Lutherans receiving permission for freedom of worship and church building. This number increased to 218 by the end of 1787 [28].

The typological groupings of the surveyed churches can be set up according to the number of measured plans; however, their origin and the explanation of the space system in context requires the involvement and a certain knowledge of the relating disciplines, first of all ecclesiastical and architectural history. It should be underlined that many researchers have worked on the typological categorization of the issue. The history of this research begins with the first typology produced by Friedrich in 1944, which established a system of Italian, German, Huguenot and centrally planned types joining the structures to important buildings like the Gesú or Charenton [3]. After researching and analysing the Protestant churches on the Great Hungarian Plain, Bibó has evaluated, in a historical and structural context, the use of the longitudinal arrangement [1]. Winkler has drawn up the architectural history of the main churches of Western Transdanubia [32]. The typological analysis, after forty years of research into Protestant church architecture in Hungary, has been elaborated by Bibó in 1984-85 [2]. According to this summary, apart from Upper Hungary where the centrally arranged spaces are typical, in all other regions the longitudinal square (oblongum) type dominates. Among the longitudinal churches, one typical group in Western Hungary can be characterized with a towerless arrangement while the other main type of church in the Great Hungarian Plain built with a tower, show Calvinist influence in a modified interior arrangement to the middle of one of the longitudinal walls.

This typology was followed by Winkler in 1992, who added a refined analysis of the main urban churches and extended the scope of investigations from the late medieval to the 20th century [33].

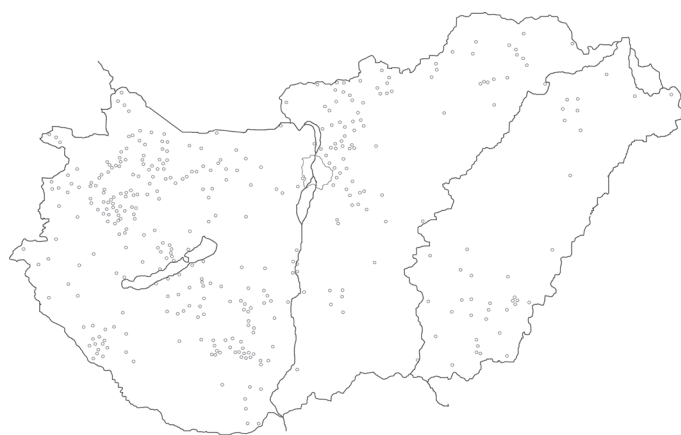


Fig. 1. The map of Hungary showing the surveyed churches

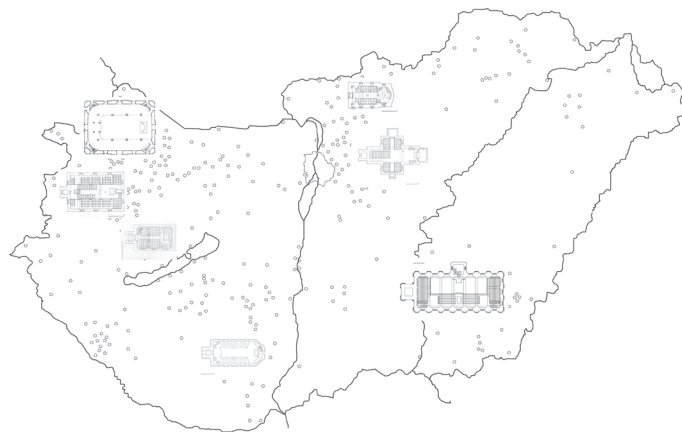


Fig. 2. The typology – showing the surveyed churches and the characteristic layout types on the map of Hungary

The majority of West-Transdanubian churches follow the layout traditions of the former Lutheran church of Bratislava (Pozsony, Preßburg) built in 1638, later confiscated and given in 1672 to the Jesuit order. This late Renaissance building, built for the representation of Lutheran citizens in the capital, formed a hall church with strong reminiscences to the interior arrangement of French Huguenot oratories like the Temple of Charenton [25]. Restrictive measures were taken and announced by Cardinal Péter Pázmány and the President of the Chamber of Hungary, Pál Pálffy, opposing the exterior shape of the building. Palatine Miklós Esterházy gave the permit for building on condition that it would be built without a tower or a semicircular apse, nor with rounded or archivolted openings, and its original name had to be “oratory”. The longitudinally arranged interior quasi divided into three naves with galleries arranged around it, and the altar joined with the pulpit and placed in the centre of one of the oblong quadrangular layout, resulted in a basic church plan that essentially determined the West-Hungarian Lutheran churches in the late 18th century. The newly built church of Pozsony/Bratislava of 1776 and the Sopron church (built in 1782-83) follow the same system; they are covered with domical vaults and surrounded by two tiers of galleries in the interior. The congregations of West-Hungarian villages had to reduce the costs of construction; therefore, they left out vaults and thus they simplified the structure. The wooden pillars, headers and girders of the gallery also served as support for the slab structure of the whole building to create a similar three-naved but not vaulted space system.

The layout type of the “main churches” researched and analysed by Winkler, that is the Lutheran churches of the towns in different regions of the country – for example Sopron, Kőszeg, Szarvas, Békéscsaba, Nyíregyháza – can also be originated from this building type [33]. In contrast to the village churches covered mainly with flat ceilings, the monumental interior of these main churches is emphasized by the use of vaults and the giant pilaster or column orders supporting the tiers of surrounding galleries.

The South-Transdanubian Lutheran church type was influenced by the “standard designs” – more specifically by its longitudinal version – ordered by the Treasury for rural Catholic congregations and adapted to local conditions by guild masters or master builders of the landlord. The central tower of the main facade, the arrangement of the bays covered by domical vaults, the polygonal or semi-circular apse appear similar to the standard plans while the lack of the chancel arch and the superimposed series of windows fitted to the levels of interior galleries on the side facades differ from the standard. The similarities between the outward appearance of Protestant and Catholic rural churches has been also facilitated by the common activity of local and anonym master builders. Inside, the nave is split by the side gallery and the organ-gallery. The central position of the pulpit-altar gives the apse a more unified

image. The pillars of the galleries do not run up to the ceiling. Almost every example of Tolna and Baranya County belong to this group. This layout was not just applied in the period right after the Patent of Toleration but remained dominant even in the 19th century [22].

The group of churches of Veszprém County, North-West of Lake Balaton, represent an intermediate type between Western-Hungarian and South-Transdanubian traditions of the late 18th century. The main characteristics of this group are oblong shaped ground plans with a longitudinal layout, definite straight ends and often covered with domical vaults; a reduced gallery, which is mainly an organ-gallery, covers the entrance, sometimes edging a little forward by the sidewalls yet leaving the larger part of the interior space undivided.

The group of Lutheran churches typical of the Great Hungarian Plain have an oblong ground plan, with a longitudinal nave and a central tower on the narrow side. Inside there is the liturgical centre at the middle of either longitudinal wall, reflecting the effects of Calvinist church architecture. This type of Protestant church was first researched by Bibó [1]. These transversally oriented interiors hint at the historical process of how medieval churches, originally built for Catholic liturgical purposes, had been transformed in the sense of a reformed Calvinist liturgy. In this tendency, the pulpit – originally placed into or close to the longitudinal nave of the medieval church – became the dominant space forming element after the reformation.

The group of churches occurring in Nógrád County follow, parallel with the South-Transdanubian church type, the standard designs of the late 18th century. In contrast, with this version, the similarity with the sample solution is almost complete: the central tower marking the entrance of the elongated space; the nave and the narrower chancel divided by a chancel arch, with the reduced gallery as an organ-loft over the main entrance. The only differentiated speciality is the frequently occurring unified nave covered by a coved vault with panel, hung onto the wooden construction of the roof framework.

Centrally planned cruciform churches are typical of historic Upper Hungary (now Slovakia), although they appear sporadically in different places, e.g. around Pest in the congregations where Slovak worshippers are in the majority. This group can be historically attributed to the oldest cross plan Protestant churches in Upper Hungary built on the “articular sites”. One of their main common characteristic features is the use of the Greek-cross plan, or its modified version, covered with wooden tunnel and groin vaults and surrounded by one or two tiers of galleries. [27]

4 Conclusion

The systematic research of Lutheran churches in Hungary resulted in the identification of new regional types such as the groups of South-Transdanubia, Veszprem and Nógrád. The results presented in this summary are essentially following some

principles of Guzsik's research methodology, although specific approaches have been elaborated that focus on the functional modifications of the protestant interior. This enhanced system gives an opportunity to complete the whole typology to its historical extent, which will be the task for the near future. The theme cannot be detailed here due to the narrow limits of the paper; we can only mention that these types of ground plans were key solutions in the early neoclassicism of the 19th century. The impact of the classical revival on the rural Lutheran

church appeared mainly in the outward shape while the space formation followed 18th century tendencies. Pioneering neo-classical works, however, have been erected among the main churches of the towns, and the central arrangement in the second half of the 19th century came to the fore once again. [24] The tradition of the longitudinal arrangement with a central tower on the facade of Lutheran churches still played a role in the 20th century, and we can also recognise its effects in some contemporary designs [23].

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