

Reconstruction of Pustý Kostol (Deserted Church) Ruin in Veľká Čalomija

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Abstract

In 2005 a group of enthusiasts from Veľká Čalomija, a little village in Southern Slovakia decided to initiate preservation of dilapidated ruin of abandoned church from the Middle Ages lying on natural hillock outside of current area covered by buildings. In cooperation with municipal authority and with support of the Slovak Ministry of Culture it was done the first stage of archeological survey under guidance of Václav Hanuliak in 2007. Survey brought new information and started long process of further surveys and projection works that resulted to ruin conservation and following approval of the building in 2014. The article represents a process and determinants having impact on concept of architectonic restoration and final realization. The issue touches not only on the methodology of restoration ruined architecture, but also on the issues of museum exhibits in the open air.

Keywords

Reconstruction of church; Middle Ages; Restoration ruin; Survey; Conservation of heritage; Veľká Čalomija.

1. Introduction. History of Conservation Surveys of Pustý Kostol Location near Veľká Čalomija

Veľká Čalomija is for Slovak archeologists on a map not an unknown place. In village cadaster there are several archeological locations with important findings from prehistory up to the high Middle Ages. Most of findings come from ground collections or they were discovered during construction works in the village. Among the most important findings there is bronze aquamanile that is the only one that was founded in the area of current Slovakia. This cult vessel served during Christian liturgy to ceremonial washing of priest`s hands before celebration of Eucharist. Term consists of two words originated from Latin. aqua - water and manus - hand. On events connected to the finding we have only brief information: In 1947 during agricultural works on a hill near the church it was found cult vessel – akvamanile (Balaša, 1957, p. 498, Balaša, 1963, p. 20).

According to Š. Holčík this artefact was made on an area of the Central Europe at the end of the 13th century (Holčík, 1981, P. 131). According to M. Slivka this finding is an import form Rhineland and he categorizes it into the half of the 13th century (Slivka, 1999, p. 31). It is certain that aquamanile was not found in the area of Pustý kostol (Deserted church) accidentally and it is directly related to sacral district of the church with cemetery. There is written source of the church

origin form 1231 (Balaša, 1963, p. 21) when the village is mentioned as "Ecccelesia de Chalamya", while founder of the church was allegedly "Comes de Egyhazas de Chalomija" known as "frater Lamberti Eposcopi Agriensis" from the family Hunt Pázmányi. The first reliable mention of the village comes from 1244 (Antolov, 2003, p. 2). The church was used from its origin up to the half of the 19th century when after breakdown of the roof part it was repaired no more and worships ran in the chapel build up in 1845 in the centre of the village.

The church that lies on an elevation over the village was left abandoned and gradually dilapidated (Figure 1,2). In 1879 F. Kubinyi presented report on wreck state of the building to the Hungarian temporary monument commission. Another visitation was made in 1879 by architect I. Steindl who elaborated for monument commission detailed report on the state of the church (Steidl, 1879), (Figure 3). Material Could be found in Archive of Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic. E. Križanová in 1960 elaborated basic conservation survey of the village (Križanová, 1960) and she included also ruin of Pustý kostol. Architect M. Križan has made on the location basic pinpoint of church nave, at that time western façade and side walls were still standing (Križan, 1960). Eastern part of disposition – presbytery chevet – was under ruins of debris and so he drew it with polygonal closing supposing that church has its origin in the 14th century. This information was also taken over by the Register of historic monuments in Slovakia III (Collective, 1969, p. 367). In further years no one dealt with dilapidating ruin in a professional way.



Figure 1: Church in ruins from west, year 2009. Photo: B. Polomová



Figure 2: Church in ruins from north, year 2009. Photo: B. Polomová

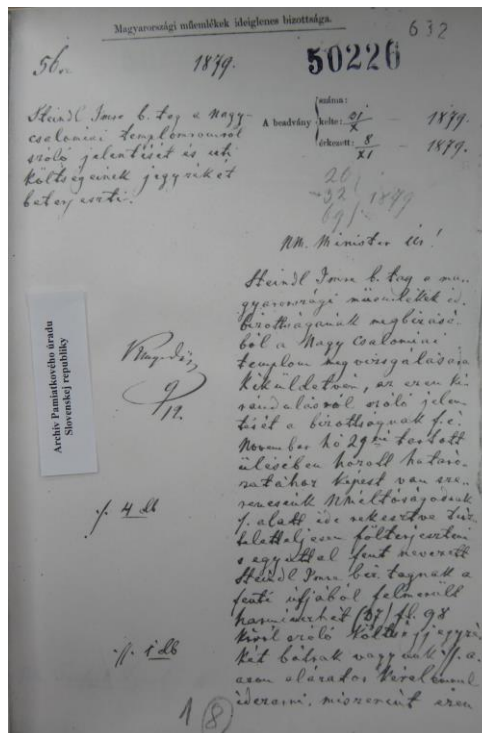


Figure 3: Description of the church from I. Steindl. Source: Archive PÚ SR

Before beginning of the first stage of archeological survey in 2007 (Hanuljak & Botoš, 2007) the location was covered by dense vegetation that considerably obstructed beginnings of work. When unwanted verdure and full grown trees were removed archeologists under leadership of V. Hanuljak made surface survey, in the interior of the object aimed especially at removal of destructive ruins. The survey uncovered overall building disposition that had been since its origin several times rebuilt and annexed. The survey stipulated origin of the church to half of the 13th century and specified 3 stages of the Middle Ages (Early Romanesque, Late Romanesque and gothic (Hanuljak & Botoš, 2007, pp 29-30). Second stage of the survey in 2008 was aimed at deep test pits effort to date origin of the church more precisely (Hanuljak & Kos, 2008). Survey in the text detail described situations, material and found segments but not individual periods of the church. It was graphically marked on the layout drawing in the following way: in the first period – Romanesque that is dated to the half of the 13th century it was

build up church with simple disposition of rectangular nave and horseshoe apse. Nave of church has ground plan of irregular with dimensions 7.8 m on northern side and 8.3 m on southern side with maximal width 6.3 m. Apse had horseshoe-shape with width 6.2 m and depth 3.85 m. According to the text it was walled from bricks burnt in a high quality with high content of chaff and other organic matter.

Characteristics of brick material belong to crucial factors in style phases and questions connected with middle ages brick are topic of several studies (Oriško, 2009, Žuffová, 2022). Outer sheet of the apse was walled from fitted quarry stone, here were included also brick-stone foundations of altar mensa. In the second period – post-romanesque it was destructed southern wall of the nave and new one, walled from stone, was moved to the south and by this step the nave was widened by about 1.4 m. In the third period it was added to the west façade gothic nave (while the original western wall was demolished) and crypt was made. In the fourth, late gothic period it was added sacristy to the apse from northern side. In the fifth – baroque period it was added entrance hall to the southern portal of the church. Findings of skeletons near church apse confirmed burying on this place even in the 12th century. Authors described individual characteristics of masonry in the part 8. *Zhodnotenie výsledkov archeologického výskumu (Evaluation of archeological research)* and in the drawing of ground floor of the building.

According to results of archeological survey and recommendations of archeological committee M. Šimkovic and M. Matejka made architectonic and historic survey on the church during 2009 (Šimkovic & Matejka, 2009). The survey brought new facts that changed building periods of surveys headed by V. Hanuliak in the following way (Figure 4):

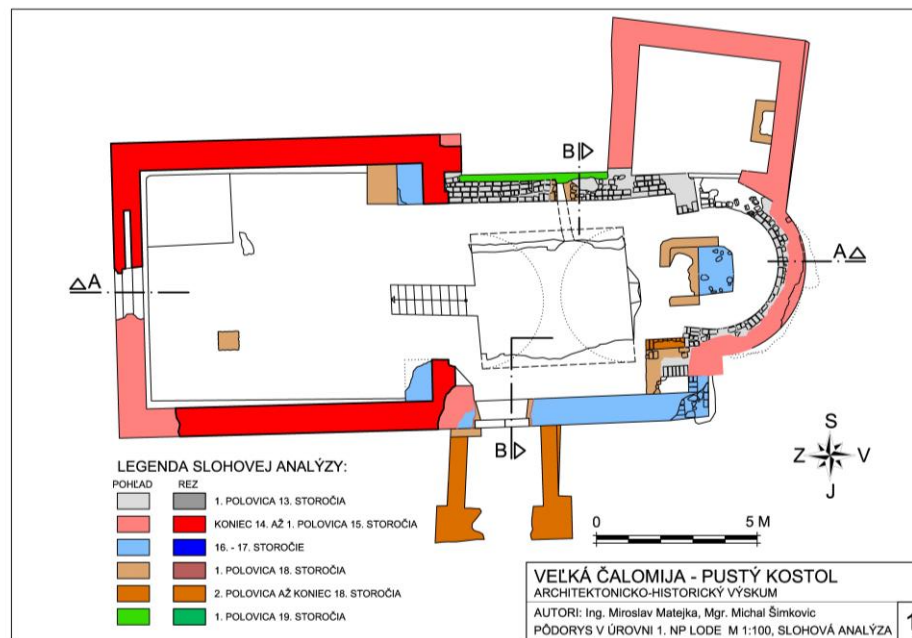


Figure 4: Analysys of historical development. Source: Šimkovic & Matejka, 2009, drawing No. 1

1. Romanesque building period, 1st half of the 13th century: it was built up one nave church with apse of horseshoe ground plan oriented in west-east direction. Outer dimensions were: 6.5 m wide, 8.3 m long and outer diameter 5.5 m. Apse is connected to the flat ceiling without triumphal arch. As a building material there were also used bricks burnt in a high quality with content of chaff. Fundamental masonry was made of fragments and damaged bricks without proper binding, connected by mortar. Interior and exterior of the church were coated by thin layer of plaster with whitewash coat. Remains of pilaster from corner enable us to presuppose that such pilasters were also on other corners. Place of entry and number of windows are not known. It is not possible to specify if the church had gallery.

2. Gothic building period – end of the 14th – beginning of the 15th centuries: original brick church was symmetrically widened by added rectangular nave with exterior dimensions 9.2 m w., 11 m l. with walls 87 to 90 cm thick. Total length of the object was 21.5 m. As building material it was used quarry stones and bricks from disassembled western wall of the Romanesque church. Corners were connected with big, smoothly worked blocks. Facades were coated by rough plaster with uneven scratched surface. Entry to nave was through western portal, from which only threshold was preserved. Nave was illuminated probably by 4 windows. Western wall of the nave ended with by high triangular shield with slotted window. Eastern wall of the nave was connected to the nave of the Romanesque church with **triumphal** arch. According to older reports in the interior there were mural paintings. To the nave and apse of the original church it was added sacristy with dimensions 4.8m x 6 m x 5.3 m. It was probably vaulted by cross vault by pear-shaped ribs with apex stone. Masonry of the arch was probably constructed from bricks with content of chaff and finger **grooves**. Sacristy was illuminated by window on its eastern side. Masonry of sacristy walls was made of quarry stone. On the exterior of masonry of sacristy and church it was a plinth.
3. Renaissance building period –about 16th to 17th centuries: building of the eastern part of the southern wall of the nave that replaced original wall of brick church in a way that its outer edge corresponds with edge of gothic nave. The church in this period burnt down. As a building material it was used quarry stone combined with fragments of chaff bricks.
4. Baroque building period, 1st half - end of the 18th ct. Original gothic entry portal was replaced by portal that stood together with façade up to the beginning of 1990-ies. It could not be excluded that it originally connected apse with sacristy. In southern renaissance wall of the church it was built up second entry into nave, it was preserved shape doorsill. In western part of the nave it was probably constructed wooden gallery with columns built of masonry. Floor level of gothic nave was lowered so around it arose offset of fundamental masonry. This adaptation required construction of stairway step in front of side altar in NE corner of the nave. Nave floor was paved with bricks, areas under gallery with quarry stone and bricks. Into nave of older church it was located crypt with dimensions 4.8 m x 4.2 m with barrel vault with niche of illuminating body with ventilation airhole in northern wall. Entry into crypt led through one arm brick stairway. In the floor it was opening with stone kerb covered probably by stone slabs. Floor of apse was elevated by stairway step. Nave interior was plastered with white coat. Rest of Romanesque wall in SE corner of the church was enclosed with a wall. Older altar refectory was built around by brick stairway step from three sides. Altar table was added to the eastern side of sacristy. Interior was plastered and coated by white color with dark grey plinth.
5. Late baroque building period, 2nd half - end of the 18th ct. lower parts of stone-brick masonry of southern entrance hall (size 4.2 x 3.6. m) have been preserved. In the middle of the southern wall there is probably vaulted entry, on sides probably reinforced by support pillars. Front wall of the hall could be ended by triangle shield. Because of thin side walls it was covered by a wood ceiling.
6. Building period 1st half of the 19th ct. The only remains of this building period is adaptation of plinth part of masonry of the Romanesque church northern part. Damaged outer face of brick masonry was dismantled and then replaced by stone masonry. By it was also walled up ventilation airhole of a crypt.

New, currently the latest information on church design as taken by discovery of graphic images of the church that were made during his visitation of the church by I. Steindl in 1879 (Csáky, 2013, p. 193, Csáky 2016). In his sketches he pictured state of church ruin only ten years after religious services finished there (Figure 5). The building had a roof only above the apse of the presbytery. From the three drawings and ground plan of the church we learn that gothic nave was illuminated by two windows (on a southern side by three vertical), one longitudinal window with pointed arch in the space of gallery with one circle window with sloped jamb over the place of altar in the southeastern corner of the nave. Romanesque nave with baroque hall was illuminated by two windows with semicircular end. Into nave it was entered through southern entry with late gothic saddle shaped portal with distinctive profiling what could indicate that southern part of the nave was rebuilt even at the end of the 15th ct. and not about the year of 1730 that is presented by M. Šimkovic and M. Matejka (1 Šimkovic & Matejka, 2009, p. 23). It is possible that the wall was bricked in the late Romanesque period as it was supposed by

archeological survey and portal was embedded into southern entry during gothic restoration. Remains of stone jambs were not found during survey, despite the fact that its existence is proved besides historical image also by newly founded historic photos of ruin from 1940 (Csáky, 2013, p. 194). Other new information got from drawings is plastic decoration of apse exterior by sticking out piedroits that confirm assumption of authors of architectonic-historical survey (Šimkovic & Matejka, 2009, pp. 23-24).

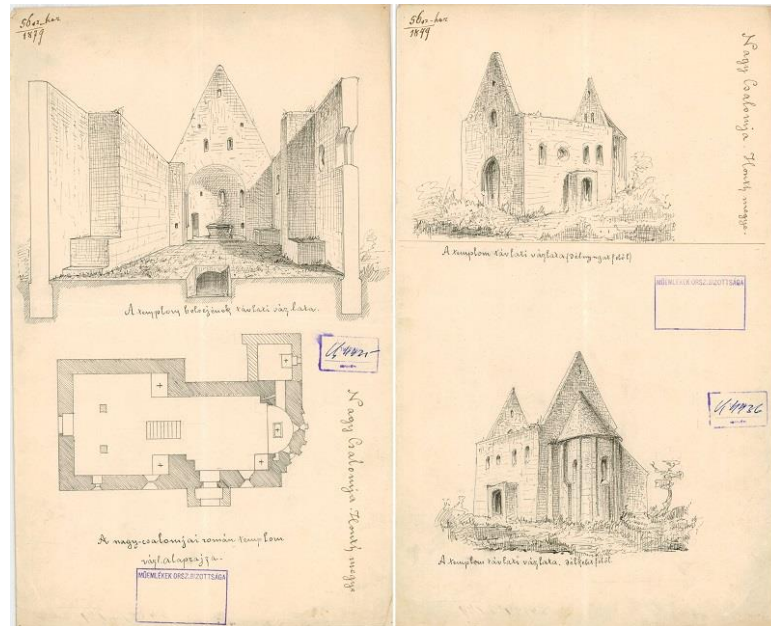


Figure 5: Deserted church – drawings from I. Steindl, 1879. Source: Csáky (2016)

Under abovementioned facts it could be stated that the closest shape analogy of the church in Veľká Čalomija is perished brick Romanesque church in Pincina in Temetodomb location that lies in the distance of 65 km. It is a simple brick one nave church with apse and added sacristy from the Middle Ages. Semicircular apse was remained only in a form of negative print. The oldest horizon of burial specified date of church building to turn of 12th and 13th centuries. Church in Pincina was founded during rescue survey in 1981-84 by V. Furmánek and I. Tóthová (Furmánek & Tóthová, 1983) and efforts for its architectonic presentation failed because of restitutions in 1989. We could await more form analogies what makes need for individual summary of zone context.

2. Determinants of Veľká Čalomija Church Reconstruction Plan

After finishing of archeological survey in 2008 municipality asked then the Department of renewal of architectonic heritage from Faculty of architecture STU in Bratislava to elaborate architectonic study on presentation of church torso. Team of authors (Polomová-Botek-Pauliny) initiated abovementioned architectonic-historic survey and static assessment of the ruin (Kohút, 2009) and the same year it elaborated with students of FAD STU in Bratislava several variants of possible presentation of perished church. They began with creating of 3D model of a hypothetic reconstruction of advancing construction development of the object. The object was digitallly surveyed in 2008 by M. Bábik and I. Viest, drawn by R. Gutten. Drafts - working studies were used to verify various methodic procedures during renewal of perished church and selection of such a solution with which conservation authority, municipality and public could identify. According to outputs from the whole process of pre-design planning authors specified basic determinants of conservation draft of the object.

Determining precondition of competent protection and renewal of concrete historic work is its objective knowing and definition of all types of cultural-historic values that create its content (Gregor, 2000, p. 17). That is valid not only in the case of preserved building but also on ruin relics. Here are valid specific methodologic-theoretical principles taking into account various use of the ruin in its preserved state and extent of tolerable interventions resulting besides conservation

and consolidation especially from partial revoke of important substance-space relations. Renewal of torso has its specific solutions that take into account not only its construction-technical state but also presentation of its values and task in complex visual context of respective place (Chovancová, 2014). In objects that are ruins it is of course necessary to use information of archeological survey and take into account archeological interpretation (Štefanovičová, 2000, p. 46).



Figure 6: Church during archeological research, 2009. Photo: P. Pauliny

Cultural-historical values, range of their preservation and possibilities of presentation of perished value phenomena considerably influenced selection of reconstruction methods. Even though whole area of a western gable wall of a gothic nave with entry portal lasted until 1992 when damaged bigger part has fallen down and only torso remain, other masonry degraded roughly in level of top from the age of object decline (Figure 6). Complex expression of a church has lost its last identification element of sacral architecture and it remained visible only rest of walls vanished in natural vegetation. Gradual removal of debris ramparts uncovered new findings – apse with remains of altar table, southern hall, sacristy, remains of gallery, tomb in Romanesque nave, brick floor in the whole church area (Figure 7,8), number of stone architectonic elements. Despite the fact object was in ruins its compact state of its Middle Ages disposition and existence of fragments above-ground parts of masonry was preserved and extraordinary valuable. Their extent required fast solution of reconstruction that would prevent their further damage.



Figure 7: Finding of the tomb in the nave, 2009. Photo: P. Pauliny



Figure 8: Finding of the aps with remains of altar table, 2009. Source: <https://apsida.sk/c/578/velka-calomija>

It was clearly seen also terrain of a hillside – as a possible trace of fenced surroundings of Middle Ages object. In today situation value potential complements also connection to neighbour perished modern cemetery where we can find stone stele from the 19th century. It should also be mentioned country context as a value. On historic maps we have documented communication of the 1st Military Survey mapping from 1783 between Pustý kostol (church) and village of Veľká Čalomija and Malá Čalomija (about 4 km). Church on a hillock had been used for a longer time by both villages. Newer information are from the 2nd Military Survey from 1839 and 1854 with a cross near the road that has been standing there even today. The church is designated on the plan as “Allerheiligen” (All Saints), that is its original consecration (**Figure 9**).

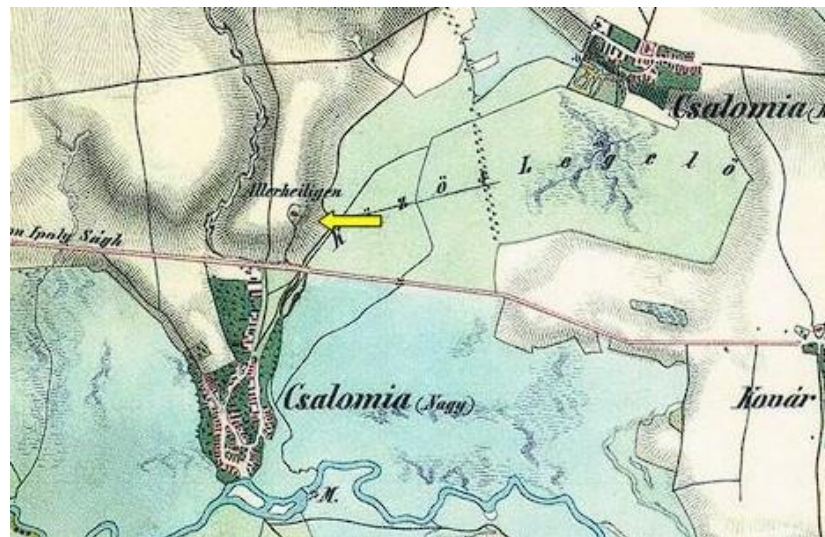


Figure 9: Church marked during the 2nd Military Survey, 1854. Source: Šimkovic & Matejka, 2009, Photo No. 1. Original in Archive PÚ SR

Extent of a knowledge of construction-historic development of the object was the determining factor in defining possible additions of perished parts of the building. During reconstruction of the monument knowledge of values (conservation survey) and creative interpretation (architectonic project) complement each other (Kvasnicová, 2006, p. 267). According to rate of torso used depend not only rate of intervention but also chosen methodology (Botek, 2025, p. 25). In the

time of project documentation elaboration it was neither known drawing of the building from 1879 nor photo documentation from 1940-ies and so during reconstruction of the original state those who elaborated information could only use exact proofs resulting from conservation surveys and from archive materials, especially photo documentation. The first known photo was picture of a church from 1931 where it could be seen ruin from southwestern side (**Figure 10**). Despite the fact that photo has not good quality it could be relatively clearly defined southern façade with a gable wall of the church and also eastern gable over triumphal arch. On photos from the half of the 20th century that were published in an elaborate by E. Križanová (1960) eastern gable exists no more but western gable wall was very well documented from both sides (**Figure 11**). Further exact facts were presented, by archeological survey thanks to which it could be identified extent and form of western gallery, floor parts and height levels, location and form of entry into crypt, location of private altar in sacristy (Hanuljak & Botoš, 2007, Hanuljak & Kos, 2008). Extent of preservation and low knowledge of historic phenomenon of individual parts of building had influence on selection between preferred style reconstruction methods and trace reconstruction of perished parts.



Figure 10: Church in the year 1935. Source: Archive of the municipality Velká Čalomija



Figure 11: Church in the year 1960. Source: Križanová, 1960, Photo 6. Photo: Ruttkayová

Building and technical state of ruin is one of limiting factors of renewal plan (Makýš, 2000). It was investigated in the abovementioned static opinion of Dipl. Ing. Kohút (2009). According to it the most endangered part of the object are remains of above ground masonry of western façade in two places disrupted by two vertical cracks. Possibilities of conception intervention change (Pauliny, 2017, p. 7) according to the degree of damage from ordinary wear to critical condition. In efforts to prevent further destruction statics proposed masonry filling of façade in two stages. Works of first stage preserved ruins look of incomplete façade with anastylosis of entry portal, in the opposite the second stage accepted variant of the whole facade reconstruction according to the requirements of architectonic-historic survey and goal of authors of the restoration. The goal of works was to reach space solidity of masonry fillings of western façade so it would be connected to preserved parts of northern and southern wall of gothic nave. Tops of stone masonry recommended author of opinion to stabilize by pointing and to build at least 30 cm of masonry above. Similar process was proposed also on brickwork of Romanesque church by building masonry above and sufficient hydrophobization with the longest possible effectiveness. Independent part of static security was reconstruction of brick vault of a grave in the space of Romanesque nave and also of its technical covering with regard on a new space presentation in exterior.

Architectural study of restoration was made by collective Botek, Pauliny, Polomová (2010a). It was necessary to assess new practical use of the location especially under requirements of village as a main investor. From the point of urban-historic values ruin of the church in Veľká Čalomija is the last relic of original Middle Ages country structure (independent church was located between both settlements). Object belonged to the group of smaller rural churches and served to a community that reached its highest demographic boom just in the Middle Ages. Its capacity was sufficient also later in modern times. When speaking about concentration of monuments in the village, it is the only preserved monument from the Middle ages proving settlement of this place since the 12th century. Because of that appropriate restoration of the church and location was priority for the village. From the point of presentation there are parts – church with surroundings, old cemetery, road to the location. Looking for a new function it was thought about use for the needs of cultural tourism, religious cult (e.g. to annual celebration of church patrons, to serve during sacrament of marriage) and of various public occasions. When looking for restoration plan it was necessary to think also of solutions that would be resistant to influence of climate but also vandalism (Pauliny, 2017, p. 13).

Financial demands of reconstruction works are always limiting especially on extent and professional demands on interventions. In the case of Pustý kostol ruin and relatively modest financial capabilities of investor the final budget of reconstruction was not as limiting as it is usual in other cases of conservation.

Selected method of reconstruction. According to thorough analysis of potential of respective area and church ruin as well as limiting factors of reconstruction plan, authors of architectonic study decided for method – ruin reconstruction with prevailing use of conservation of preserved masonry and their necessary addition and addition of selected perished elements through form of stylized trace (Figure 12, 13). Similar models of rehabilitation of destroyed sacral architecture can be seen in several medieval ruined churches in Hungary. The example of the church in Ecsér - Kővágóörs by Lake Balaton has a repaired western facade and an indicated architectural shape of the fallen tower and roof. The work was preceded by professional archival research. (Figure 13, Balays, 2022). The emphasis on the western wall, perceived as an architectural element, can also be seen in the restoration of the ruin, today called Pusztatemplom, in the extinct village of Somogyvámos (Figure 14, Joó, 2024, Farkas, 2024). For newly walled constructions were used original bricks and original stone from the object that were put aside during surveys on a disposal site about 10 m from the object. Fragments of architectonic elements that were not used for anastylosis, were after realization put into crypt. It was considered that a new floor of interior would be of bricks but because of financial reasons it was done only as compacted ceramic broken parts of brick colour. In principle it could be stated that ruin reconstruction with partial addition and possibility of limited function is not reconstruction of object that exists independently on surroundings and natural context but it is by its way exhibit in nature. In such sense its reconstruction is close to type of “museums under open air” (Tišliar et al., 2025). Much help was done by 3D modeling, as it will be usually used by planning of reconstructions of ruins (Česnek et al., 2022).



Figure 12: Design of construction modifications. Red – added masonry. Source: Botek, Pauliny, Polomová, 2010a, drawing A 04, detail. Drawn by P. Pauliny, T. Sabin

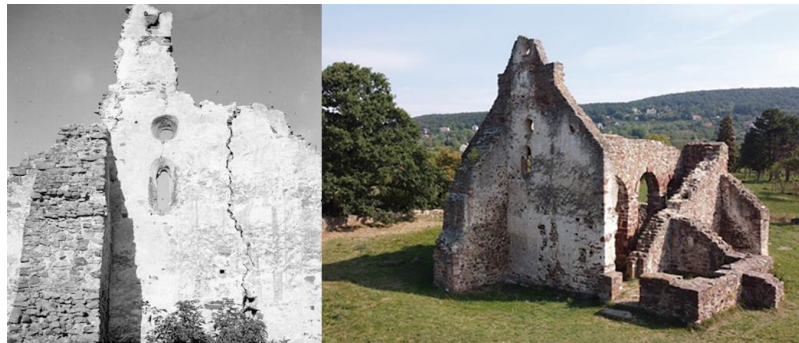


Figure 13: Church in Ecsér – Kővágóórs (Hu). On the left is the state from 1940, on the right is the overall picture of the ruins after the last renovation from 2000. Source: Balays, 2022



Figure 14: Pusztatemplom/Somogyvámos (Hu). The modification of the western wall clearly interprets the original architectural shape. The cross sign in the negative of the masonry is added. Before and after restoration. Sources. Left: Joó, 2024. Right: Farkas, 2024



Figure 15: Visualization from east. Source: Botek, Pauliny, Polomová, 2010a, drawing A 08, det2010bl. Drawn by P. Pauliny, T. Sabin

3. Architectural solution

Architectural solution has been designed detailed in the next stage also by collective Botek, Pauliny, Polomová (2010b). The object has three reconstructed floors:

Underground floor: it was proposed full renewal of partly preserved crypt form what meant to vault original space by a new brick vault and to renew original access through reconstructed brick steps. Interior space is ventilated through preserved opening in the northern part of the church. Crypt is not accessible for public it serves as lapidary.

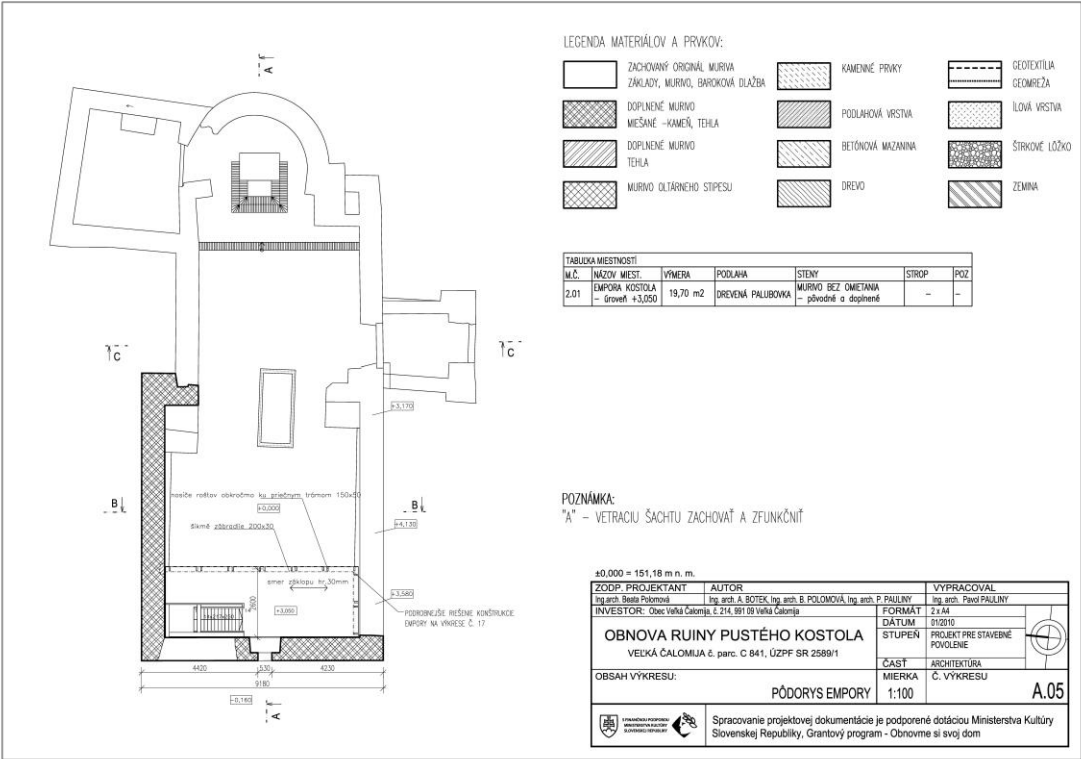


Figure 16: 1st above ground floor with technical solutions. Source: Botek, Pauliny, Polomová, 2010b, drawing A04. Drawn by P. Pauliny

1st above ground floor (Figure 16): here preserved modern floor was left on place and covered by protective layer about 25 cm thick on newly specified profile grade of a ground floor. It does not respect Middle Ages profile grade as it was not possible but new floor was selected only in two levels so that it respect also baroque location of altar and symbolic division of nave and presbytery while step is in the place of original baroque step. In altar part it was built up on a trace of baroque altar foundations new stone altar. Its study verified altitudinal arrangement in a way that it could be typologically possible to serve mass in actual way. In space of sacristy it was added by trace former altar located near wall which walls have been preserved in part. Presentation of baroque altar steps around main altar in nave is in original ground floor trace outlined by bricks position.

2nd above ground floor: for more active presentation of the object (view from above to the nave and presbytery, Figure 17) it was proposed wood gallery by method of indication that was from point of construction and size determined by existing niches in preserved walls (from them it was derived also height of gallery) and foundations openings in floor.



Figure 17: Vizualisation - view from gallery. Source: Botek, Pauliny, Polomová, 2010a, drawing A 09, detail. Drawn by P. Pauliny, T. Sabin

Consolidation and filling of constructions. Projected reconstruction with filling of western gable facade wall to its look from 30ies (Figure 18). It is a reconstruction of form with indication of original materials and composition of walls as well as surface of top (blended wall with dominance of stone, brick work in upper part and flatly laid brick top of wall that is hydrophobized). Recommended way of lying is artistic and handmade attitude. Stone portal was proposed to be renewed by anastylosis method (repeated building of fallen elements) with maximal use of found fragments what demanded conservation attitude. Tops of existing stone masonry were added (about 1 to 2 lines) on lime mortar - with protection cover about 1.5 year because of maturing filling mortar. Height of top is filled in minimal rate; from southern side it should not exceed level of windows' sills as their shape and height were not known at the time of project. In part of apse it reaches height about 45 cm above proposed floor. In sacristy part it keeps preserved heights. Consolidation of Romanesque brick wall demanded individual attitude. In the project we mentioned unambiguous reconstruction by professional conservation in artistic and handmade attitude. We recommend to verify technology before realization because of similar experience if these latitudes.



Figure 18: Main view of church after renovation, 2014. Photo: B. Polomová

4. Identification of signs during restoration of sacral architecture fragments

Plan of reconstruction was elaborated in three phases: architectonic studies of variants for building permit and realization project under valid legislation of Law on fund for monuments and Building law of SR. Sense of such longer process especially during first phase was to find renewed and or/new architecture of the object. We could name it process of finding such a form – face that interprets as “church” and not a “ruin” with true testimony. After cleaning up the area looked like perished architecture but its ‘witnessing characteristic as “Sacrum” remained unfinished. Because of that it was defined at finishing of verifying studies as acceptable arrangement – conservation of ruin with adding of necessary signs and characteristics of the “church”. Renewal of sacral architecture has higher demands on realization not only in the sense of preservation substance but also of “holiness” (Polomová, 2010).

In principle it was:

- a) complementation of the whole western façade of gable wall with axis portal as main and visible sign of sacral architecture from immediate proximity as well as from views from landscape
- b) unified interior floor with trace of original colors that defines and simultaneously distinguishes sacral interior from sacral exterior, in our case low grass in area of refugium (Figure 19).
- c) construction of an altar on the original place of a baroque altar
- d) “embedding” of axis view from nave into apse by trace of retable, in our case in exterior by Christian sign of cross.
- e) construction of gallery as a typical sign of rural churches on our area.
- f) surroundings adaptations define sacral district as of middle ages and so possible connection that is to be confirmed in future by archeological survey of surroundings (church- cemetery-refugium fortification) and simultaneously take into account later country context – nearby perished modern cemetery today in forest with existing tomb stones, original access roads from both Čalomijas, responding to task of spiritual place (road to church, road to elevated important place, way to spiritual reality). It should be realized that considerable part of conservation and visual values brings also emotive effect of torso buildings – from romantic perception up to thoughts about original form of building (Štetina, 2021, p. 42).



Figure 19: Interior floor with stone covered entrance to the tomb. Source: <https://apsida.sk/c/578/velka-calomija>

5. Draft of liturgical equipment and new stone elements

In sanctuary there is basis of original altar. To emphasize main altar situation we proposed directly at its place and on original space new substance understood as trace reconstruction. It is full cube of podium on which it is placed stone altar plate with ochre grey color and resistant against meteorological conditions (Figure 20, 21). We proposed the plate originally in the full substance in several variants. Use of quarry stone from original masonry of object, without plastering – this variant was realized - or technique of gabion baskets (stones laid evenly in a dry way in rod metal construction) or by making a podium and plate from stone block (blocks). Every of abovementioned variants would enable artistic elaboration as well as composition of artistic accent with sacral themes. Side altar is situated in adjoining space of sacristy near wall. It was preserved of masonry in shape of moderate trapezoid with inner hole. It was selected trace reconstruction of original substance: podium in size of preserved hole is narrower as original dimension. Altar plate corresponds with extent of preserved podium. Through height it is expressed hierarchic position against main altar – upper plate is laid lower that plate of main altar. Plate of a crypt is laid into level of a new floor. Around it was lined up stone frame from original preserved artefacts. It is tuff frame with groove to mount a plate. Plate consists of two pieces that are not of the same length because of better entry into crypt. In corners they have circle openings for inserting rod for lifting.

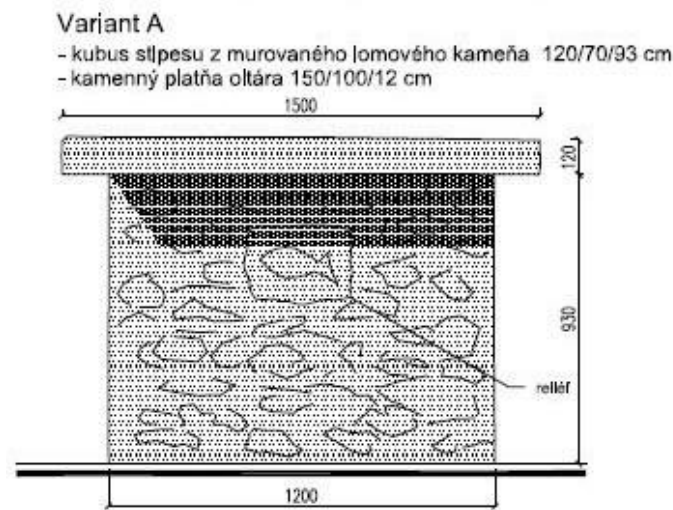


Figure 20: Variant of design of the altar. Source: Botek, Polomová, Pauliny, 2010a, drawing A09, detail. Author: A. Botek



Figure 21: Realized altar, 2014. Photo: B. Polomová

6. Realization of reconstruction

Execution project according to preceding documentation degree elaborated by Ing. arch. J. Sálus. Reconstruction works on renewal of church ruin began in 2012 while at first static stabilization and conservation of existing over-ground masonry was realized and extension of western church gable was finished. In second phase in 2013 it was renewed vault of baroque crypt, access stairway and covering plate together with newly projected floor layers that overlaid originally conserved brick grooves. In the last phase in 2014 it was realized trace reconstruction of perished wooden gallery, main altar and sacristy space. Final realization diverted from execution project only a little, especially in conservation of torso of Romanesque brickwork. Problem of preservation and selection of way how to present original is illustrated especially by Romanesque brickwork, preserved as torso of static failures (Kohút 2009). Because of that the project for building permission referred only to technological and artistic-historic conservation techniques with the goal to present original as preserved masonry without plaster. Result of intervention does not meet proposed stabilization (even though technologically demanding), probably of financial reasons. Result visually prefers tracing of brickwork also by brickwork, that overlays original of Romanesque wall construction left in depth (Figure 22).



Figure 22: Realized renovation of the church from south, 2014. Photo: B. Polomová

7. Conclusions

- a) Verifying studies and realization confirmed by active use by local community and tourists proved that renewal of perished village church must have signs of sacral architecture that could be perceived as sacral architecture also by general public. The goal is support of social relation "our church". Making up signs and symbols is always concrete in a form and range in every location. Reconstruction should reflect original urbanistic situation that co-creates local identity, here literally "pustý (lonely) church".
- b) Rate of a new architectonic-construction intervention is searching of balance between preserved building substance and need of a new function: here creating possibilities between museum exposition and cult. Simply said "passive" vs "active" monument. Active moves requirements of presentation for sacral function to search its minimal expression of signs. According to agreed stages finance and time are supporting factors.
- c) It is justified methodic question if in our case use "clear" style reconstruction that clearly offers preserved, predominantly Middle Ages architecture of the ruin or restore also known elements of further periods (predominantly baroque, gallery and altar, southern classic hall). According to requirements on function it was decided that it is a contribution to present these cultural layers and so they will be built up as reversible. In our case also choice of floor level in presbytery - barrier free area around altar with tracing of baroque steps - corresponds to new use. Reconstruction plan works with factual findings not with romantic visions about sleek ruin.
- d) Realization of reconstruction should keep testimony qualities of preserved original. In our case we speak about factually preserved details on stone segments that are to be restored in the future and currently they are stored on a place. Also about need to keep fragment of Romanesque masonry, in this point realization was different from the project. In such a case there is important quality documentation- measures and photos that were made in our case - of still uncovered original. For scientific research it is today necessary also to use methods of 3D scanning that will significantly better document original in its space conditions without regard on following way of reconstruction.
- e) If mover of a reconstruction is municipality to confirm its historic identity, preference of regular professional process (without regard how long phases have to last) is a proper example (home and foreign surveys- variants- study – execution project – realization – maintenance). Contribution to regional Slovak-Hungarian tourism in cross-border village is visible even now.
- f) Generally it could be stated that reconstruction of the church was fundamental but not the last task. To sacral place it belong original urbanistic and landscape context. It is also to be revived. We think on connections in environment and their secondary investigation – ruin neighbourhood, cemetery, specific morphology of nearby terrain, original and new roads to the village. Also composition context – clearance of nearby typical (out of operation) waterworks tower from panorama of a hillock. Identity of a "Pustý kostol (church)" as a cultural place reaches in a place and space certainly further than its ruin with closest surroundings. In this sense it is mentioned reconstruction by its effect close to the "museum in nature" even if these forms today are going through turning period (Janoštinová, 2019, p. 14) when from static witnesses of the past become holder of possibilities for other activities or interactions.

Sacral architecture is important and inseparable part of our cultural heritage. In its development it offers continuity, subordinated to development trends of individual periods of historic styles, partial liturgical needs and basic expressing symbolism. In church the architecture reaches its possible peak and so it organically becomes a part of historic process of the whole structural engineering (Hanus, 1995). Existence of sacral object through centuries also means that on its form successively participated various layers of historic-style development as a result of, often more, interventions into older substance. Knowledge of historical measurements also helps in the reconstruction of non-preserved elements of any historical architecture (Kráľová & Krušínský, 2025, p. 512). Sacral object preserved as a torso does not mean it stops to be a holder of values. In the opposite – ruin architecture is an important phenomenon of cultural identity and local memory perception. And that is why its reconstruction and putting into operation is an important task in this process.

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Author Contributions

A.B. designed the study. **B.P.** collected the data and provided texts documentation and photo documentation. **P.P.** provided architectural study documentation. All authors performed the data analysis and contributed to data interpretation. All authors contributed to manuscript writing. All authors critically reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Disclosure of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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