

## *VOX TEMPORIS VOX DEI: Catholic ecclesiastical art in Hungary between the two world wars examined via the Church's provisions and press releases*

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**ABSTRACT:** Over the last few decades, intense efforts have been made to research 20<sup>th</sup> century Central and Eastern European, particularly Hungarian, sacred architecture. In this era, sacred constructions appeared to be significant identity shaping power for the churches. The interwar period is characterized by the spread of modern architectural principles, symbolism, and liturgical and structural issues. Joint examination of these aspects clearly reveals that the international expansion of modern architecture, the liturgical movement, and the strengthening of communal aspirations allowed continuous architectural experimentation, leading to the creation of new church-building principles. This research aims to address these changes not only by examining the architecture but also by considering the new churches built in the era in combination with the architecture-related aspects of papal and episcopal provisions, synods' decisions, and discussions in the Catholic and architectural press. Specifically, the research investigates how the official ecclesiastical position shifted from rejection of the principles and practice of modern architecture to promotion of modern art. This paper examines the delicate balance characterizing the policy of the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church in the interwar period, focusing on modern and neo-styles and the liturgical renewal.

**KEYWORDS:** modern, sacred architecture, liturgy, Hungary, interwar period.

### **STATUS OF THE DEVELOPER: THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HUNGARY BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS**

In Hungary, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to a number of changes within the Roman Catholic Church. After World War I, the hardships of the Hungarian Soviet Republic period were increased by the difficulties caused by the Treaty of Trianon and subsequent years (Beke 2009). The borders defined in Trianon necessitated changes in the governance structure of the Hungarian Catholic Church; 13 of the dioceses were completely placed outside of Hungary,

and others were partially out of the borders (Gergely 1997). In spite of this, with regard to the construction of churches, World War I and its effects led to the strengthening of the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary. After the Treaty of Trianon was signed, *Christian and national exhortation* became part of the zeitgeist and had an influence on ecclesiastical art. The Catholic Renaissance in that era was accompanied by an increase in church art since the establishment of new parishes, construction of new churches, and reconstruction or renovation of old churches offered numerous opportunities for architects and artists (Gergely 1997). The problem with ecclesiastical art was predicted by priest and art historian Tibor Gerevich (1920): “*If we want to create true Hungarian ecclesiastical art, we must revive the traditions of our old art and, by restoring national continuity, we should integrate new developments into these traditions. Our ecclesiastical art should also be a national one*” (Gerevich 1920). It was difficult for modern art trends to gain a foothold in ecclesiastical art in the 1930s, partly because, as pointed out by contemporary journals, public opinion was that church building should not be an opportunity for abstract and unproven art experimentation (Gerevich 1920). By the 1930s, a special pluralism emerged in new ecclesiastical art. In this process, important roles were played on the one hand by the so-called neo-styles reviving traditions such as art nouveau, which was still present, national and historic tendencies, and art deco and on the other hand by the appearance and gradual expansion of progressive (i.e., modern) art (Baku 2016).<sup>1</sup>

### CHURCH PRESS AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

In addition to its active participation in legislation (Gergely 1997), the political activity and power of the Roman Catholic Church was manifested in the organization of national events, jubilee years, and propaganda programs intended to engage the masses, such as the Szent Imre (Saint Emeric) Year<sup>2</sup> (May 18, 1930–May 3, 1931), Szent István (Saint Stephen) Year, Eucharistic Congress (1938), participation in the Arte Sacra exhibitions (Padova 1932,<sup>3</sup> Rome 1934),<sup>4</sup> National Ecclesiastical Art Exhibitions (1926, 1941),<sup>5</sup> Szent László (Saint Ladislaus) Year (1942),<sup>6</sup> or Boldog Margit (Blessed Margaret of Hungary) Memorial Year (1942). In the context of ecclesiastical architecture—in this case, church architecture—it is extremely important to interpret these events as distinguished points that are clearly related to ecclesiastical construction—the official representation of the Church.<sup>7</sup> In particular, events of international interest, such as the Eucharistic Congress and Arte Sacra exhibitions in Italy, were significant because they highlighted ecclesiastical art and placed Central European and Hungarian art in an international context. Ensuring publicity for the Church in the post-war period was extremely important, and these national and international events dramatically increased the role of the Church. The Church aimed to strengthen communities of the faithful and adapt to church architecture movements and modern art trends that arose in response to social issues and changing circumstance following World War I. The emergence and spread of modern ecclesiastical art was greatly supported by the Church through Pope Pius XI, who paid special attention to patronizing and caring for ecclesiastical art and preserving monuments. For this purpose, he created regulations, which naturally affected the Hungarian Catholic Church and its art (Gerevich 1927). However, it was not simple for modern ecclesiastical art to gain widespread acceptance.

<sup>1</sup> A brief overview of modern ecclesiastical architecture in the interwar period and trends in ecclesiastical architectural after World War II is presented by Vukoszávlyev (2010).

<sup>2</sup> For more on this subject, see Bizzer (2007).

<sup>3</sup> I. Arte Sacra Rome, 1925; II. Arte Sacra Rome, 1934.

<sup>4</sup> International Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition, Padova, 1932.

<sup>5</sup> Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition at the National Salon, 1926. For more on this, see Bizzer (2007, 160).

<sup>6</sup> This is the anniversary of the canonization of Saint Ladislaus, Oradea.

<sup>7</sup> The construction of more than 30 new churches and chapels was connected to the St. Stephen Year, and more than 10 were connected to the St. Emeric Year.

## THE CONTEXT OF ECCLESIASTICAL ART

Ecclesiastical art's place in and relationship to the Catholic Church is fundamentally determined by the fact that the Church considers it an applied art that is subject to liturgical and pastoral considerations and "is meant not to rule, but to serve the Church" (Décsei 1934, 32). According to literature of the period, "it would be a big mistake to believe that the main purpose of church art patronage is to open its doors to the arts" (Somogyi 1927, 7). Antal Somogyi, who was responsible for the prebend of Győr and supported modern ecclesiastical art, wrote several theoretical works on new ecclesiastical art. In the interwar period, both the Church and ecclesiastical art were affected partly by the change in art's form language and partly by the social transformations and the shock caused by World War I. Even this tradition-based, hierarchical institution could not avoid the spread of modern art; it had to respond in some way to current art trends. The most notable response can be seen in church architecture. In addition to the form and layout of these new churches, the artwork placed inside them, which featured strict iconography, indicate that churches are a place to encounter God and thus was intended for function, not aesthetic pleasure (Baku and Csíky 2012). According to Augustine of Hippo, "Pulchrum est splendor ordinis,"<sup>8</sup> or a perfect artwork (in this case, the structure, form, and interior of a church), should express completeness and materialize an artistic idea (Somogyi 1927, 14). However, this is naturally affected by the current period and society; "the art of the Church cannot be left behind the art of the age" (Baku and Csíky 2012, 286–287). The Catholic press in the interwar period, just like the architectural press, dealt with the changes in style and taste caused by changing social conditions and the issue of modern styles versus neo-styles. Since church art is subordinate rather than self-destined (Jajczay 1938), it can never be separated from tradition and liturgy because its goal has not changed; rather, its content is expressed in a new way (Jajczay 1938). The emergence and spread of new ecclesiastical art—including fine art, applied arts, and architecture—were long processes aided by two members of the Church, Antal Somogyi and János Jajczay, who actively opposed those who said that the Church had already found the most suitable artistic style.

Both the desire for renewal and the development of a conscious, propagable form of ecclesiastical art motivated the foundation of the Hungarian Academy in Rome<sup>9</sup> and the principles of its scholarship system, under which artists could create unified, tradition-based contemporary church art in Hungary. By its nature, the process of renewal could not be simple; the Catholic Church, the Catholic press, the faithful, and architects and artists had different views, as did representatives of the institutes established to incentivize implementation of the papal order, including the National Council of Ecclesiastical Art (Országos Egyházművészeti Tanács, OET) and the Central Ecclesiastical Art Office (Központi Egyházművészeti Hivatal, KEH).<sup>10</sup>

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND PROVISIONS

Through the liturgical and pastoral aspects of the hierarchical and centralized structure of the Catholic Church, (canon) laws, papal and episcopal manifestations, and synodic decisions determined how sacred spaces could and should be designed and what artworks could be placed in them. Between the two world wars, the principles and practices of modern architecture and fine art were increasingly gaining ground within the Catholic Church in

<sup>8</sup> Translated into English, "Beauty is the radiation of the inner order of things."

<sup>9</sup> For more on this topic, see Szűcs (1987).

<sup>10</sup> For more information on the establishment and operation of these institutions, see Baku and Csíky (2012), Bizzler (2003), and Szűcs (1987).

Hungary. While conducting this research,<sup>11</sup> we reviewed the provisions that influenced the ecclesiastical architecture of the era in some way.

The Code of Canon Law (*Codex Iuris Canonici*, or CIC) was completed in 1917 and came into force the following year. According to this code, a church could only be built with the written permission of the local ordinary (i.e., the diocese leader). The ordinary had to ensure – if necessary, by listening to the advice of specialists – that the forms aligned with Christian tradition and the rules for ecclesiastical art were applied when constructing or renovating churches. For example, churches made of wood, iron, or metal could not be consecrated, only blessed, and new saints' pictures could be placed in churches and other sacred places only with the permission of the ordinary. When choosing the material and form of ecclesiastical equipment, liturgical regulations, ecclesiastical traditions, and the rules for ecclesiastical art had to be taken into account.<sup>12</sup> Thus, diocesans played a decisive role in determining what aligned with the traditions and rules for ecclesiastical art, although they could consult with experts. Traditions were exemplified by ecclesiastical works; historical sacred buildings presented the rules of ecclesiastical art. Because the provisions for architecture were not precisely recorded, individuals adopted different interpretations of the rules, and the bishop's taste played a significant role in determining which artworks would represent the new style. Wood and metal were considered secondary materials, and churches made from them were regarded as temporary. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was a clear obstacle to the spread of new trends (Baku and Csíky 2012), as it restricted the use of new building materials (e.g., reinforced concrete) in church architecture.

Between 1920 and 1944, 13 diocesan synods (*synodus dioecisana*) were held in Hungary. These synods were separated from both universal and national synods. They concerned institutional contact between the bishop and clergy, sacrament, worship, religious life, and the construction of churches, and they were intended to raise awareness of the Church's official position in these topics. Prior to 1919, synods were rarely held, but the territorial rearrangement<sup>13</sup> and new challenges following World War I favored the organization of synods. Additionally, they were required by the CIC (Canon No. 356) (Mózessy 2016).<sup>14</sup>

At the beginning of the period (1920-1944), the dioceses could implement the CIC, which was not subject to the territorial divisions caused by the Treaty of Trianon. It was challenging for every diocese to harmonize their operations based on former customary laws with a

<sup>11</sup> In memory of Dr. Balázs Csíky, a brilliant researcher and expert on this subject, I continue and expand upon our joint research and co-operation.

<sup>12</sup> *Codex Iuris Canonici Pii X Pontificis Maximi iussu digestus Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus. Acta Apostolicae Sedis* Vol. 9, Pars II (1917), Can. 1162. § 1., Can. 1164. § 1., Can. 1165. § 4., Can. 1279. § 1., Can. 1296. § 3. (Baku and Csíky 2012).

<sup>13</sup> According to the Treaty of Trianon, after World War I, Hungary lost about two-thirds of its territory and population.

<sup>14</sup> The following diocese synods were held in this period:

1921: Vác, Á. István Hanauer diocesan

1923: Veszprém, Nándor Rott diocesan

1924: Székesfehérvár, Ottokár Prohászka diocesan

1927: Szombathely, Count János Mikes diocesan

1928: Kalocsa, Count Gyula Zichy archbishop

1930: Vác, István Hanauer Á. diocesan

1932: Eger, Lajos Szmrecsányi archbishop

1934: Székesfehérvár, Lajos Shvoy diocesan

1935: Győr, István Breyer diocesan

1936: Pécs, Ferenc Virág diocesan

1940: Pannonhalma, Krizosztom Kelemen archabbot

1941: Esztergom, Jusztinián Serédi cardinal archbishop

1942: Eger, Lajos Szmrecsányi archbishop (Gergely 1997).

Another was planned for 1944: Székesfehérvár (Mózessy 2016, 15).

collection of universal laws (Mózessy 2016). In many respects, the synods built on each other; the Synod of Vác was the pioneer on which the Synod of Veszprém was based, and the Synod of Székesfehérvár was built on both (Mózessy 2016).

The first synods dealt with the conditions for building churches and ecclesiastical art in a very limited manner (i.e., just as much as necessary), and questions about style or architectural issues are almost completely missing from the minutes. In line with the CIC, these synods regulated church and bell consecration, and in the case of construction or restoration of a church, they handled the preliminary plan and budget<sup>15</sup> and aimed for legal harmonization. The CIC did not—and could not—answer questions about the construction of churches. Therefore, the synods dealt with church construction and ecclesiastical art only if it was a requirement in an article of the CIC. Subsequent synods placed much more emphasis on these issues. Of these, we emphasize the Esztergom Archdiocese Synod, held in 1941, which made detailed decisions regarding rules for churches, chapels, and altars.<sup>16</sup> For example, it ruled that not only construction, extension, transformation, and restoration of churches but also selection of an architect and announcement of a design contest required the bishop's permission. The synod listed the criteria for new constructions, pointing out that aesthetics and expediency should be taken into account. The location, articulation, decoration, and furnishing of churches as well as aspects of renovation were regulated:

*Recently – quite rightly – a lot of emphasis is placed on appropriateness: on proper siting of the building, on space articulation corresponding to the intended purpose, on the place of the altar, the Communion bench, the pulpit, the baptismal font, the confessional, the benches, and the sacristy, on good acoustics, capacities, or the possibility of heating [...]. The church should be built in the parish area, on a centrally located, groundwater-free, higher lying and preferably open land. Its sanctuary best looks east. The main altar and the pulpit, as the central places of public worship, should be well visible from every part of the church. (Az esztergomi főegyházmegyei zsinat 1941, 78)<sup>17</sup>*

The 1941 synod was the first to consider the use of new building materials desirable because of their

*beneficial properties [...] The possibilities offered by new building materials have given rise to new stylistic searches in contrast to historic building styles. This often led to extravagances and resulted in works that did not take into account the sacred nature of the church. Though it would be a completely wrong intention to instruct contemporary architects to follow historical styles and to restrict their artistic-creative talents: yet the traditions of the Church, and the sober and graceful solution highlighting the sacred character of the church should be strictly respected. (Az esztergomi főegyházmegyei zsinat 1941, 79)<sup>18</sup>*

This is almost a summary of the Holy See's position, but there are some differences. For example, the Church sought to create and maintain a delicate balance between openness to new trends and unconditional respect for traditions. This attitude excluded certain trends in ecclesiastical art, to which Pope Pius XI referred during his speech at the opening of the new Vatican Gallery on October 27, 1932, but supported others. At the same time, these conditions were met by works created in the style or spirit of the so-called Hungarian School in Rome (Baku and Csíky 2012).

<sup>15</sup> "127. §. The plans and budget of building and restoration of the church should be presented to the diocesan authority in one copy in advance" (Mózessy 2016, 125). This was a decision made during the 1924 synod in Székesfehérvár (Chapter X) regarding the Church and its furniture.

<sup>16</sup> There were sections on churches (III/C-1), chapels (III/C-2), and altars (III/C-3, 77-84) (Az esztergomi főegyházmegyei zsinat 1941).

<sup>17</sup> See 204 §.

<sup>18</sup> See the Synod of Esztergom's sections on churches (Az esztergomi főegyházmegyei zsinat 1941, 77–82).

## ROLE OF THE OET AND KEH

The 1941 synod regulated the design of new churches, expansion of existing buildings, and transformation of monuments, emphasizing that the design of churches could only be trusted to “*excellent Catholic architects.*” (*Az esztergomi főegyházmegyei zsinat 1941*) In addition, the archdiocese’s authority could instruct central and ecclesiastical art committees to revise their plans and follow a certain procedure for permanent furniture or painting of a church. Thus, the decisions of the Synod of the Archdiocese of Esztergom made preliminary assessment of plans mandatory. Institutions created to make judgments regarding plans, partly in consultation with the papal regulation and official ecclesiastical position, played a significant role in studying the interwar era, especially issues concerning the modern (or, for sake of simplicity, conservative) style and new ecclesiastical art. A separate section of this paper discusses the establishment and function of these institutions, which have been researched but not fully explored to date. The primary role of this research is to examine the extraordinarily diverse history of Catholic institutions.

In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a need for a central organization in Hungary to manage ecclesiastical art and support and control contemporary artists. One advocate of such an organization was the Benedictine monk Henrik Fieber, who served as the Ecclesiastical Art Referent of the Ministry of Culture from 1911–1920. In 1922, Flóris Kühár outlined a plan for an institution of secular and ecclesiastical specialists that could be organized by dioceses and operated as an association after the German model. However, such an organization was not established until much later in response to external pressure (Bizzer 2007). In addition to the CIC and synods’ decisions, a document exemplifying this external pressure was a decree given by Pope Pius XI to bishops in Italy (Reg. No. 34215), which was included in a letter to Pietro Gasparri, the Cardinal Secretary of State, dated September 1, 1924.<sup>19</sup> According to this decree, in addition to the *Holy See Secretariat of State*, Rome was tasked with organizing the Central Papal Ecclesiastical Art Commission of Italy, and bishops were to establish ecclesiastical art committees in their own dioceses. The aim was to protect and enhance the Church’s artistic heritage, church buildings, liturgical equipment, dresses, and paintings. The central committee was responsible for carrying out administrative, supervisory, and propaganda tasks and coordinating the activities of diocesan committees. The diocesan committees were tasked with inventing art objects, setting up diocese museums, reviewing plans for new or renovated church buildings and decorations, and developing the artistic culture and taste of the diocese through books, lectures, and courses. The diocesan committees had to annually report to the Central Committee and ask for advice on major works or controversial issues. In connection with the letter to the Cardinal Secretary of State, detailed policies and guidelines were developed for the diocesan ecclesiastical committees (Baku and Csíky 2012). In the autumn of 1926, the competent authority of the Holy See was asked whether it would be useful to establish ecclesiastical committees in Hungary. The Sacred *Congregation of Rites* replied that ordinaries should arrange for the establishment of diocesan or inter-diocesan ecclesiastical committees in their own dioceses. However, by the time the nuncio received the Vatican’s answer, the Hungarian Bishops’ Conference had already discussed the issue and made a decision (Baku and Csíky 2012).<sup>20</sup> At a meeting held on October 8, 1926, the Papal Order of 1924 was discussed, and it was determined that a national ecclesiastical council would be established in Hungary. It was also decided that students of the Central Seminary should be

<sup>19</sup> The original text is published in the following: Vismara Missiroli, Maria. 1993. *Codice dei beni culturali di interesse religioso. I. Normativa Canonica*. Milan: Giuffrè. The Hungarian translation was published in diocese circulars at the end of 1929; see *Circulares litterae dioecesanæ anno 1929. ad clericum Archidioecesis Strigoniensis dimissæ*. Typis Gustavi Buzárovits. Strigonii 1929 (Baku and Csíky 2012, 289). Circular VII is attached without page numbers. See also MTA MK MDK-C-I-19/1-5.

<sup>20</sup> Archives of the Archbishopry, Esztergom (hereafter: EPL) Cat. D/c, 3291/1929. (3178/1930. basic number) Cesare Orsenigo Nuncio’s letter to Prince-Archbishop János Csernoch, Budapest, November 8, 1926.

obliged to attend art history lectures at the University of Budapest (Gergely 1984). Practically, this decision was a semblance of action; it procrastinated the establishment of ecclesiastical committees since only a formal national committee was set up, yet it had no rights, and neither its duties nor its powers were determined. Prince-Archbishop János Csernoch asked the members of the episcopacy for proposals for the committee members. In June 1927, six months after the decision to create the council, he appointed members.<sup>21</sup> He asked the President of the National Catholic Association to notify them and convene them for the inaugural meeting, at which the committee's organizational rules would be determined.<sup>22</sup> About two months later, however, the prince-archbishop died. His successor, Jusztinián Serédi, assumed his office in January 1928 and started substantive work in February. As he reviewed cases, he asked the President of the National Catholic Association to send him the organizational rules of the committee (Baku and Csíky 2012).<sup>23</sup> These rules were also discussed at the 1928 Spring Bishops' Conference. Here, the new prince-archbishop stated that the establishment of the National Ecclesiastical Art Committee was an important interest. Lajos Shvoy, who was appointed the Diocesan of Székesfehérvár in the place of Ottokár Prohászka in the summer of 1927, was asked to take action on the matter and make proposals for the committee<sup>24</sup> (Beke 1992) because the National Catholic Association had done nothing so far. Shvoy presented his proposal for the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Art Committee at the 1928 October Bishops' Conference. Then, it was sent to all ordinaries (Baku and Csíky 2012; Beke 1992).<sup>25</sup>

At this time, architects are also urged the establishment of an organization to review the design of ecclesiastical works, especially churches. However, they expected this from the government, not the episcopacy. In the autumn of 1928, proposals for the Department of Architecture at the Hungarian Literary and Art Congress, which were discussed by the Hungarian Association of Engineers and Architects, stipulated that the Congress should ask the Minister of Culture to require the plans for all ecclesiastical art to be presented in advance to the National Hungarian Fine Arts Society, the ecclesiastical art administrator of the Ministry of Culture (at that time, Tibor Gerevich), or to a newly established body. In addition, they wanted the Minister of Culture to ask the prince-archbishop and the leaders of other churches to recommend that this body demand the "*compulsory attention*" of the ecclesiastical authorities within their jurisdiction (Baku and Csíky 2012, 299).<sup>26</sup> The proposal was introduced by Gáspár Fábrián, an architect who was frequently employed to create ecclesiastical art. He was so familiar with the ecclesiastical art field that the Pope had given him the Order of St. Gregory the Great and he was received by Pope Pius XI for the intercession of Jusztinián Serédi (Fábrián 1928).

Historical research on the establishment of institutions sometimes overestimates the influence of the often-quoted Papal Order of 1924. The minutes of a conference of the Hungarian Catholic Bishops reveal that a decision regarding the formation of the council was made two years after decree entered into force (Gergely 1984). In spite of many hindrances, at the bishopric meeting held on March 3, 1930, six years after the encyclical, Jusztinián Serédi finally appointed the president and members of the OET and the leadership of the KEH, which facilitated the work of the Council (Gergely 1984). The diocesan committees were formed at the same time.<sup>27</sup> The prince-archbishop entrusted management of the KEH to Dr. Ottó

<sup>21</sup> Ottó Szőnyi, Tibor Gerevich, and Antal Lepold were members of this committee.

<sup>22</sup> EPL Cat. D/c, 3687/1926. (3178/1930. basic number) Csernoch's letter to the Presidency of the National Catholic Association, Esztergom, June 7, 1927.

<sup>23</sup> EPL Cat. D/c, 541/1928. (3178/1930. basic number) Serédi's letter to the Presidency of the National Catholic Association, Esztergom, February 27, 1928.

<sup>24</sup> EPL Cat. D/c, 541/1928. (3178/1930. basic number) Serédi's letter to Shvoy, Esztergom, March 24, 1928.

<sup>25</sup> These sources amend and supplement the findings of the literature so far (cf. Bizzer 2007, 166).

<sup>26</sup> See *Építő Ipar – Építő Művészet* (1928), Vol. 52, Issue 15–16, 161.

<sup>27</sup> Nemzeti Újság 1930; MTA MK MDK-C-I-19/3

Szónyi<sup>28</sup> and appointed Dr. Tibor Gerevich<sup>29</sup> as the executive vice president of the OET. The work of the KEH was assisted by architect Lóránt Szabó, who provided secretarial services.<sup>30</sup> Szónyi tried to select ecclesiastical artists, while Gerevich selected secular artists who, shared contradicting artistic principles. This conscious pursuit of diversity is much more emphasized in later committee work thanks to the elected members, and the Church's constantly changing position on modern styles and new ecclesiastical art is clear in the evaluations issued by the KEH.

In June 1940, the OET's Department of Architecture was formed. Its members included conservative architects as well as architects and liturgists who supported modern ecclesiastical art and architecture.<sup>31</sup> The latter led to a clear shift towards acceptance of modern ecclesiastical art and representation in this department since they played an important role, even at institutional level.

The equilibrium policy that informed the operation of OET and KEH is clearly reflected in the decisions of the Synod of the Archdiocese of Esztergom from November 11–12, 1941, which were published in 1942. Examination of the minutes of prior meetings of the KEH and OET (when, in principle, they were obliged to judge ecclesiastical art) reveals that the initiative mandating judgement was not a clear success for new constructions; only a small number of the plans for new churches, transformations, or placement of new artworks were submitted to the Evaluating Office. Nevertheless, the operations of both the OET and KEH strongly influenced the ecclesiastical art of the period; they officially reviewed ecclesiastical art at all levels, from the announcement of design contests to approval of the final plans. The style of churches in individual dioceses and their adoption of or resistance to new ecclesiastical art often reflected the taste of the members of the diocesan ecclesiastical art committees and the bishop.<sup>32</sup>

### **MIXTURE OF STYLES: SHOULD NEW ECCLESIASTICAL ART BE MODERN OR CONSERVATIVE?**

*"Seemingly, two camps stand against each other: the moderns and the conservatives." (Magyar 1928, 180)<sup>33</sup>  
"Without style, we do not even know God, 'with style' even the devil is a welcome visitor." (Bogyay 1935, 10)<sup>34</sup>*

The best example of stylistic pluralism in the interwar period is a design competition committee's report on a controversial church building:

*Because in this collection we find Roman pantheons, and four plans of medieval style, as seen in the textbooks of the last century. There are also two works in Renaissance style, five in Baroque style and the same number of Classicist ones. Some of the designs are in search of a Hungarian*

<sup>28</sup> He was a priest, art historian, archeologist, and administrator of the National Committee of the Monuments at that time. His research activities were significant.

<sup>29</sup> He was an art historian, professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, curator of the Hungarian Academy in Rome, president of the National Committee of the Monuments, and permanent secretary of the International Art History Congress.

<sup>30</sup> MTA MK MDK-C-I-19/4.1-2

<sup>31</sup> Members included Gyula Wálder, Gáspár Fábrián, Károly Csányi, Lajos Friedrich, Ödön Szerényi, György Balogh, Géza Say, Károly Huszty, Bertalan Árkay, and Antal Somogyi. See the minutes from June 28, 1940, Budapest. Jusztinián Serédi appointed the members of the OET and the committees, as shown in file no. 8567/1939. MTA MK MDK-C-I-19/4.1-2.

<sup>32</sup> István Bizzer also pointed out that the judgments of the KEH were often subject to the personal taste and approach to history of the director or, sometimes, the secretary. Ottó Szónyi came from a background involving protection of monuments and historicism and therefore did not always have a sufficient understanding of modern forms of artistic expression (Bizzer 2003).

<sup>33</sup> Magyar 1928, 180–183.

<sup>34</sup> Bogyay 1935, 10.



*construction style. There are plans that experiment with specific mixtures of styles, placing Renaissance dome on a medieval base; there is one plan which inserts the design forms of oriental constructions into the Roman appearance. Other plans go in the footsteps of a recent design competition, there are modern attempts with glass and clinker bricks, and there are two or three, which mainly focus on simplicity. (Szmrecsányi 1929, 1)<sup>35</sup>*

As the customer did not specify a particular style, both the artists participating in the design contest for the Prohászka Ottokár Memorial Church in Székesfehérvár and the Church expressed their desire for the renewal of Catholic church architecture, although they had different ideas about how this should be done.<sup>36</sup> This design contest and all the submitted plans can be regarded as one of the first visible, spectacular appearances of the opposition—which can be simplified to a debate between modernism and conservatism—that had been present in the press much earlier, 403.

After World War I, the historicizing trend continued with repetition and constant variation of old styles, which sometimes involved an amalgam of stylistic elements. At the end of the 1920s, it seemed as though only old styles would be suitable for new Christian churches (Markovics 1930), even though Henrik Fieber, a priest, art historian, and supporter of modern church art (Elek 1920), had anticipated the need to change architecture and, in particular, ecclesiastical architecture in 1913: *“Are there any perspectives for a new style to be born? Is the new style suitable for the service of the Church?”* (Markovics 1930, 403-404).<sup>37</sup>

The pronounced social transformations at the end of the 1920s, including changes in living conditions and lifestyle norms, led to calls for modern ecclesiastical art, answering Fieber’s first question. Regarding the second question, the historical style and classical architectural forms gradually lost definition. The new style, which has a simple and true form language, determines the outer shape of a building based on its inner purpose (i.e., form elements are based on structural elements). Additionally, the new style was not intended to undermine tradition. For these reasons, the new style was deemed suitable by the Church (Markovics 1930). As a result of these changes, Antal Somogyi (1927), the canon of Győr and a committed supporter of modern church art, laid down a basic principle for ecclesiastical art: *“the art of the church cannot lag behind the art of age [...] It must therefore speak to modern times in today’s language - in the field of art as well. By supporting a second-class, outdated art, it would be a fatal mistake to give the impression as though it could not keep up and did not have the power to become the center of strength and the crystallization axis of the spirit of today’s man”* (59–60). Furthermore, Somogyi justified the need for a new style by arguing that all prior art styles had presented solutions to the problems of their time, but they could not answer present questions. This way of thinking was opposed by those who argued that *“old truth has already found its classical expression in the great styles of Christian art”* (Somogyi 1927, 61). In other words, it is unnecessary to find new styles because the old, conservative style of ecclesiastical art (and, of course, architecture) has been proven. This way of thinking was mostly associated with the revival of neo-styles, which often opposed the use of modern materials such as concrete, reinforced concrete, or framed structures (Baku and Csíky 2012). Although these styles, almost without exception, were evident in 1920s ecclesiastical architecture, they slowly declined during and after the 1930s in favor of progressive, modern styles. According to the literature, buildings referencing medieval styles, even those with modern structures and simple forms, did not indicate a real search for new styles or a solution to the general uncertainty regarding form (Pamer 2001). However, we think that, from a modern point of view, these buildings represent an important stage in church architecture. In fact, they are of great significance as they are part of a transitional style using modern materials and structures, even though neo-styles

<sup>35</sup> Szmrecsányi 1929, 1.

<sup>36</sup> See Baku (2012), Baku and Vető (2012), Baku and Csíky (2012).

<sup>37</sup> He originally stated this in *Korszerű egyházi művészet* (Modern Ecclesiastical Art).

are essentially conservative. In the architecture of the 1920s, adherents to medieval styles did not serve as counterpoles to neo-Baroque architects; rather, they progressed in parallel (but independently) and, ultimately, both opposed Modernism. For example, according to János Jajczay, the decade's interest in the Baroque style set out from its expressionism, with which it shares a belief in "*expression as something above all*" (Jajczay 1931, 99). While searching for an ecclesiastical art style for the post-war era, the Church wanted to return to periods in which it had flourished, according to Miklós Szmrecsányi, who later served as the chairman of the Ecclesiastical Art Committee of Eger (Szmrecsányi 1926). Szmrecsányi highlighted the inappropriateness of copying historical styles and creating within the style prescribed by the customer, suggesting the inherent difficulties associated with ecclesiastical architecture: when a church must be built, modern considerations cannot be avoided, but one must adhere to tradition; the "*church cannot be an experimental station*" (*Magyar Egyházművészeti Kiállítás 1926*, 8). However, the fact that the preface to the catalog for the 1926 Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition in the National Salon highlighted modern ecclesiastical art reflected the official position of the Church indicates that this type of art was valuable and in demand, even if the members of the organizing committee were university professors (Dezső Hüttl, Gyula Wälder), heavily employed architects of the era (Gáspár Fábián), and members of the government (Róbert K. Kertész). This marked a definite shift in the debate between modern and historical styles (which, according to the author, was due to World War I) (*Magyar Egyházművészeti Kiállítás 1926*). The importance of this exhibition was stressed by Elemér Radisics: "*The first and active manifestation of a deliberately outlined program, which – we hope – will have a similar effect to that of a stone thrown into the smooth surface of a silent lake*" (*Magyar Egyházművészeti Kiállítás 1926*, 13).<sup>38</sup> Referring to the CIC, Szmrecsányi said that legal regulation of the construction of churches is a step forward. However, this is doubtful from the point of view of new materials. Citing the other objectives of the Pope, he mentioned scientific art history education, which was referred to in Kuno Klebelsberg's exhibition opening speech (Radisics 1927) and Decree No. 34215 as positive examples of harmonization that respect both traditions and new styles. In this way, Rome served as a direct model for the Hungarian School in Rome.<sup>39</sup>

According to an exhaustive<sup>40</sup> review of the art- and architecture-related articles published in the architectural and Catholic press in the interwar period, one of the earliest articles on modern ecclesiastical art was Antal Somogyi's *Vallás és modern művészet* (Religion and Modern Art), published in 1927. Although they primarily looked at the construction of modern housing, many papers dealt with modern architecture. Apart from a few exceptions, within the field of ecclesiastical art, modern church designs (propagated by Somogyi) and modern ecclesiastical art were not discussed until the 1930s. However, some modern churches were built in the 1920s; for example, Aladár Árkay's Church of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus* was built in 1928 in Győr-Gyárvaros, and Árkay and Bertalan's Votive Memorial Church of Mohács began construction in 1929.

Virgil Bierbauer (Borbíró) (1928), editor-in-chief of the internationally known journal *Tér és Forma* (Space and Form), complained about the necessity of new architecture, as well as the

<sup>38</sup> *Magyar Egyházművészeti Kiállítás 1926*, 13.

<sup>39</sup> Several artists who later attended the Hungarian School in Rome appeared in the exhibition, including Vilmos Aba-Novák, Sándor Basilides, Ferenc Dex (later Deéd), Henrik Heintz, Kálmán Istókovits, Ernő Jeges, József Miklós, Pál Molnár C., and Károly Patkó.

<sup>40</sup> A full overview of the Catholic press in the interwar period is not within the scope of this research. However, a significant proportion of articles specifically related to architecture and art are collected in the form of a repertoire to create a framework for independent research. Initially, this research was to be conducted in collaboration with Dr. Balázs Csiky. Now that I must work alone to complete the research in his memory, I have expanded the bibliography and summarized the results in this chapter. During the research, I was supported by a UNKP-17 grant, which allowed me to examine the topic in detail. The section concerning the debate between modernism and conservatism is based on approximately 150 publications from the era, some of which are included in the bibliography.

lack of disputes, discussion forums, and publicity. Although there were both supporters and opponents of new ecclesiastical art in the Church, the establishment of OET and KEH was a clear reaction from an ecclesiastical point of view. This coincided with the appearance of modern church architecture in Hungary, which existed in contrast to Protestant churches. Although the discourse on modern ecclesiastical art dates back to Somogyi's 1927 article, the debate about modern church architecture began when the press discussed the first modern Roman Catholic church in Hungary, the Church of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, which was constructed in Városmajor<sup>41</sup>, Budapest, and designed by Aladár and Bertalan Árkay. The construction of this church, ecclesiastical institutions' reaction to it, and the debate it spurred—which ultimately led to the recognition of new ecclesiastical art (Markovics 1939)—can be considered a true milestone in ecclesiastical art history. From this point of view, it is exciting to examine which preconceptions the author (Somogyi) could rely on when no example of modernism (in the current sense) was present in Hungary at that time. The architectural exhibition, which was organized to coincide with the XII International Architectural Congress (1930) and featured many church buildings, had an important role. Aladár Árkay, Gyula Rimánóczy, and Károly Weichinger participated on behalf of Hungary, and German, Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish, and French plans were exhibited. The exhibition represented the Church's official position on ecclesiastical architecture, since it was realized with the help of the Vatican. It highlighted outstanding works in the international modern church architecture movement;<sup>42</sup> in particular, the Hungarian exhibits presented examples of early modern and eclectic architecture (Háy 1930). On January 16, 1931 in Budapest (Papp 2012), lectures on modern church architecture were given by Richard Hoffmann, prelate and chief conservator of the Bavarian monumental office, and Albert Bosslet, an architect whose works were presented in *Tér és Forma* not long before (B.T. 1930).<sup>43</sup> Subsequently, Bierbauer (1931), commenting on a book about Bosslet's church designs in *Tér és Forma*, called the architect ideologically conservative. However, he still professed his great appreciation for the architect's insistence on liturgy and tradition, use of modern structures (e.g., a hinged reinforced concrete arch), and designs that integrated characteristics of the urban environment and landscape, and he recommended Bosslet to those intending to build churches in Hungary (Bierbauer 1931). These moments, which are all connected, indicate the strong interest in renewing ecclesiastical art in the interwar era and show which ideas were novel in 1931.

Pope Pius XI's speech on October 27, 1932, at the opening of the new Vatican Gallery provided important guidelines for ecclesiastical art. He criticized new ecclesiastical works that, in his view, caricature or even desecrate the sacred, which cannot be justified by the novelty or rational nature of the works. The Pope called these works, which he said represented a lack of necessary professional qualification, patience, conscientiousness, and novelty and looked like simple-minded medieval representations, "*blatantly ugly*" (Baku and Csíky 2012). He emphasized that the most important aspect of sacred art is the idea that a house of God is a house of prayer. Without this, ecclesiastical art is neither sacred nor rational. In fact, it is amoral if denies that the ultimate reason for its existence is the perfecting of morality. The Pope drew attention to the fact that, according to the Church's Code, bishops were responsible for keeping such art away from churches and enabling "*good and healthy progress*" that takes tradition into account.<sup>44</sup> He condemned expressionist and primitivist works, the promotion of

<sup>41</sup> The issue is discussed in detail by Szűcs (1977).

<sup>42</sup> These works include the following: "Germany: L. Ruff: *Archbishop's Seminar and Church, Bamberg*; H. Herkommer: *Frauenfriedenskirche, Frankfurt*; O. Kurt: *Sebastiankirche, München*; E. Fahrenkamp: *St. Maria Kirche, Mülheim*; H. Strunk and J. Wentzler: *Catholic church winning a competition in Belgrade*; G. Bestelmeyer: *Friedenskirche, Nürnberg*; M. Kurz: *Katholische Pfarrkirche, Bamberg*; A. Bosslet: *Kirche der Marianhilfer Mission*; A. Muesmann: *neue kath. Pfarrkirche, Hamburg*; W. Jost: *Schwäbische Dorfkirche (reform), Evangelische Kirche Wohltorf bei Hamburg*" (Markovics 1931, 115).

<sup>43</sup> May this abbreviation stand for Tamás Bogyay, but more research needed to clarify it.

<sup>44</sup> Part of this speech is published in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Vol. 24 (1932, 355–357). The quotes presented here are from Baku and Csíky (2012). Longer quotes from the speech are presented by Décsi (1934, 34–38).

artistic freedom that contradicts religion, and the lack of moral content. In Hungary, opponents of works following new artistic trends—particularly the Városmajor Church and wall frescos in Jászszentandrás—used this speech to support their position (Baku and Csíky 2012).

Another important work in the modernism versus conservatism debate was Somogyi's (1933) *A modern katolikus művészet* (Modern Catholic Art), which mainly focused on architecture. The book's was intended to help the faithful understand, and thus accept, modern ecclesiastical art. According to the preface, the book that had been completed two years earlier was published when modern ecclesiastical architecture reached a turning point in terms of legitimacy with the Városmajor Church.

After the construction of this church, there were years of debate within the press and the public regarding its new, difficult-to-interpret style. Tamás Bogyay (1935) expressed issues concerning acceptance in *Magyar Kultúra* (Hungarian Culture): *"Without style, we do not even know God, 'with style' even the devil is a welcome visitor. But this style, the artistic form was the most problematic, the most uncertain one even a hundred years ago and it is nowadays too. [...] The analysis of pros and cons only highlights stronger that the particular relationship between modern church building and the Catholic congregation is not really the question of religion but that of artistic taste as a social phenomenon"* (10). Those who believed in a conservative approach to art were characterized by their

*dislike to the unusual, novel solution that does not conform to their image of the church; the phenomenon well-known from the latest history of art is repeated word to word: the instinctive conservatism of sober citizens, who build on the consistency of social and economic factors and dislike adventures, opposes any 'modernity' or 'revolutionary thing'. They speak of a new direction, where there are only diversifying ambitions, while confuse concepts and fight with dead -isms. [...] They cannot oppose the deepest, real reasons of their own civic conservatism to modernity, so they call the tradition to help. But this is not the clear tradition of the dogmas and morality of the Catholic Church that have been crystallized over thousands of years, but rather a heterogeneous mass of patterns and motifs in which only the 'historical' mood of the past is common, being [...] far from today's life and from every novelty* (Bogyay 1935, 10–11).

The article also highlights the dual role of tradition as a value that is generally prized by the Church:

*The way in which many Catholics today understand the concept of tradition and the past, is not the active reality-experience of the contemporaries, nor a productive experience stimulating action, but the passive, reality-leaving, artistic intuition of modern man. [...] referring to the tradition of moods, they are fighting against everything not corresponding to their aesthetic judgment provided with such great rights by Romanticism. And how this negative conservatism does not rely on the essence or the content-based tradition, but on the familiarity of the always-seen forms is well shown by the fact that it does not even bother to raise voices against any fake-sentimental, practically unusable Neo-Roman and Neo-Gothic churches with iconographic and material absurdities, built by people knowing Catholicism only by repute.* (Bogyay 1935, 11)

According to Bogyay (1935), *"This trend cannot get rid of traditional schemes which are slightly getting content-less"* (11). Tradition can be interpreted as a reason for rejection of changes (Markovics 1931), even if supporters of modern church architecture believe that modern ecclesiastical art is a tradition itself (Markovics 1939) and tradition implies modernity (Markovics 1931). This is true for both style and floor plan design, which partly foreshadows the issue of central floor plans as expressions of a community's spirit. Although the Church's provisions indicated the direction of church planning, churches' style—which is an artistic, not ecclesiastical, question according to Pope Pius XI (Markovics 1939)—typically reflected the

taste of the bishops who ordered the construction, which could be further refined by the OET, KEH, or, sometimes, the patron.

In 1934, the debate between modernism and conservatism decreased. This may be due to the success of the 1934 *Mostra internazionale d'arte sacra*<sup>45</sup> (International Exhibition of Ecclesiastical Art) held in Rome, which was organized by supporters of the new style, including scholars at the Hungarian School in Rome, and caused a sensation (Bizzer 2007). This exhibition was possible because, after the 1926 exhibition, there was a strong demand for annual exhibitions of ecclesiastical art. Comparisons of Hungarian and international art were missed during the Eucharistic World Congress.<sup>46</sup> The first presentation of modern Hungarian ecclesiastical art occurred in 1941 at the Hungarian Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition, which was held in the National Salon.<sup>47</sup> The interior of the exhibition was designed by Bertalan Árkay. In his speech about theory at the exhibition, the prince-archbishop emphasized that the exhibition intended to present Hungarian Catholic art and prove that more modern styles were accepted (Serédi 1941). This showed the Church's new stance on modern ecclesiastical art. Unlike the 1926 exhibition, some designs illustrating modern ecclesiastical architecture could be shown at the 1941 exhibition. However, by the time the trend adopted by the Hungarian School in Rome was accepted, the number of orders for such art decreased due to the war and economic circumstances (Baku and Csíky 2012).

It is important to note that the album of works at the 1941 exhibition (*Mai magyar egyházművészet*, or Contemporary Hungarian Church Art) by János Jajczay in 1938, emphasized architecture. In addition to several plans proposed the KEH Secretary Lajos Goszleth, the designs of Iván Kotsis, Jenő Kismarty-Lechner, Sr., Jenő Kismarty-Lechner, Jr., and László Irsy Irsik were exhibited. However, these were not the best examples of modern architecture based on their reception both today and when they were built. Despite this, Jajczay's catalog provides a clear, uniform picture of new ecclesiastical art, and his book include the architects who made the most outstanding works of the period: Nándor Körmendy, Gyula Rimanóczy, Károly Weichinger, Bertalan Árkay, and Aladár Árkay.

## A NEW CHURCH IS BORN

The appearance of the modern church, which was legitimized in the press and by the Church, was described by Jajczay (1938) as follows:

*The construction of the house of God naturally starts from the liturgy, it is Christ-centric and thus not primarily a technical issue. The destiny, the rite, and the liturgy must leave their sign on the design. [...] The historic, formless church has long been a thing of the past. Today's church is not romantic, has no artificial obscurity and does not make the tradition profane. It serves not the past but the present. It satisfies needs. It is not misleading, and thus does not show, for example, that it was built in the time of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. [...] It is sober and honest, because if it is brick, it shows brick and not a forged rustic appearance. If it is concrete, its geometry is firm and does not lie to be marble. In addition to sobriety and honesty, it is also simple, just as the Sacred Father, XI. Pius demands. [...] Simplicity is primarily for psychological reasons. Our whole age is longing for this. The pure large form, the smooth surface, the monumentality expands the soul. With its large surface, today's church architecture expresses a concentrated power. The new church building is in the service of the purpose inside and outside, and can achieve this goal if it makes us feel that religious power is working in it. [...] As long as buffets, portals,*

<sup>45</sup> See also Balás-Piri (1934), Bogyay (1934), and Gerevich (1934).

<sup>46</sup> "Unfortunately, at the expense of Hungarian culture, the Eucharistic World Congress was held without a Hungarian ecclesiastical exhibition" (Markovics 1940, 55).

<sup>47</sup> Catalogue of the Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition (1941).

*cafeterias and factories were built in modern style, most people only smiled, but the new church aroused revulsion. They are considered to be incomprehensible, they are regarded as misplaced experiments and called the subordinate servant of the technique. But Hungarian progressive art stands to fight. In particular, the successes of the Hungarian ecclesiastical exhibitions facilitated the position of innovators. After the exhibition in Padua and Rome, the Hungarian audience has also noted the works. The Hungarian ecclesiastical artists were creating in the knowledge of the greatness of their task and also their responsibility. Their works are free from excessive extremities. Knowledge about the materials, the ability to express the essence, and the meaningful form gave them the deserved recognition. Today's Hungarian ecclesiastical art wishes to be a successor of the past, far from being as revolutionary as the Romanticists, the Gothicizers, and the pseudo-traditionalists who are only conservatives in the externalities. In the liturgically practical and aesthetically impeccable works of Hungarian ecclesiastical artists there lives the religious idea behind the form. And about what people, who have been recently dealing with ecclesiastical art, did not have the slightest idea: our new ecclesiastical artists have created harmony between fine arts. The unified concept of respect dominates their work. (23)*

Jajczay addresses issues regarding the new trend in ecclesiastical art that the Hungarian art press and Catholic periodicals discussed at the end of the 1920s. These include issues about the relationship between the liturgy and ecclesiastical art, functionality, the ancient unity of the arts (architecture, sculpture, painting, and applied arts), the need to restore unity, applied art, modernity, materials, and style. These issues were also debated by ecclesiastical experts who supported new trends. For example, Antal Somogyi separated the liturgy and ecclesiastical art, while the chairman of the KEH emphasized their unity (Baku and Csíky 2012). In a KEH report, Ottó Szőnyi pointed out that “[i]f the religious personality, the knowledge of liturgy and the artistic preparedness are united, great results can be achieved even at low cost. This is also the secret of the question of modernity in ecclesiastical aspects. Our goal is to achieve this modernity: the ecclesiastical art based on the traditions and liturgy of our church, emerging from the Catholic soul, and rising to the sky from the depths of faith.” (Szőnyi 1936)<sup>48</sup>

From the 1930s onwards, an increasing number of modern churches were built in Hungary and the ecclesiastical press continuously discussed new Hungarian ecclesiastical art and its exhibition abroad. The press also addressed the opinions of those who did not appreciate the modern trend in ecclesiastical art, exhibiting impartiality. The functionalist efforts supported by members of the clergy, including Antal Somogyi and János Jajczay, made it possible (although only partially) for a new direction to unfold and supported modern art in churches. A review of synod decisions and Papal and bishopric provisions showed that the press hosted a substantive debate, to which the Catholic press could contribute on behalf of the Church.<sup>49</sup> Pope Pius XI quickly recognized the role of the press,<sup>50</sup> which became more and more important not only in church politics but also ecclesiastical art; in fact, it had a visible effect on the acceptance of modern ecclesiastical art. At the legislative level, there was a strong shift from the 1917–1918 provisions of the CIC, which required new churches to avoid using new building materials, to the decision of the 1941 synod to allow the use of new building materials such as reinforced concrete. These provisions were complemented by the establishment of OET and KEH, which served as authorities, commenting on new works and advising architects so that new churches were corrected at the planning stage. Unfortunately, the offices did not meet

<sup>48</sup> Ottó Szőnyi, KEH report IV (1936.01.01-12.31.) MTA MK MDK-C-I-19/18.1-12. Jajczay (1933) addressed cheapness, noting in an article that the construction of the church on Lehel Square in Budapest cost eight times as much as the new Városmajor Church, even though each has the same number of seats.

<sup>49</sup> According to paragraph 91 of the Synod of the Diocese of Székesfehérvár, “One of the most important tasks of pastorate is the promotion of Catholic press and the destruction of destructive press products” (Gergely 1997, 219).

<sup>50</sup> László Rónay published Dr. Tihamér Tóth's speech to the press at the Veszprém Cathedral with the title “A sajtó szerepe az Isten országában” (The role of the press in the Kingdom of God) (Rónay 1995, 26).

the demands, mostly due to the fact that an attempt to make review mandatory failed. The implementation of the aforementioned provisions and the conflicting arguments appearing in Catholic periodicals clearly indicate that the Church sought to balance openness to new trends and unconditional respect for traditions (Baku 2016), constantly keeping the liturgy in mind. In practice, this meant that some styles that were judged to inadequately respect the sacred were excluded and others were supported.

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EPL CAT. D/c, 3687/1926. (3178/1930. basic number) Csernoch's letter to the President of the National Catholic Association, Esztergom, June 7, 1927