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# **Green Color of the Facades of Orthodox Churches of the Podlaskie Voivodeship in the Context of Sacred Architecture and Theology**

**Zielony kolor fasad cerkwi województwa  
podlaskiego w świetle teologii i architektury  
sakralnej**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to present interdisciplinarily the connection between architecture and theology. The research was conducted using manuscript sources (inventory cards of architectural and construction monuments from the collections of the Provincial Monument Protection Office in Białystok), printed materials, as well as subject literature and internet sources. Photographic inventories of the sacred objects were carried out, as well as conversations with clergymen. The aim of the research was to verify the hypothesis that theology has a significant impact on shaping the architecture of Orthodox churches. Symbolism in the architecture of churches encompasses many aspects, including the color scheme of the facades. The Podlaskie Voivodeship has the largest number of Orthodox churches in Poland. These areas are associated with wooden architecture due to the easy availability of raw materials. The attribute of wooden Orthodox churches in this area is the variety of colors on their facades.

Colors have a rich theological symbolism that is often associated with the cult of saints. It is particularly visible in icons. The study covered seven green churches in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, in the towns of Anusin, Koźliki, Narew, Pasyнки, Trześcianka, and Tyniewiczze Duże. Among the studied objects, one is currently green, and the others had this feature in the past. The temples were described in terms of dating, plan shape, and facade color occurrence. The research showed a connection between the green color of the facade and its theological symbolism. An architect of an ideal temple analogous to those included in the study should combine the art of aesthetic design with the principles of theology. The synergy of architecture and theology is necessary in such objects, and thanks to it, they are beautiful.

**Keywords:** architecture, Orthodox church, green color, theology, symbolism

### Abstrakt

Celem artykułu jest interdyscyplinarne ukazanie związku architektury z teologią. Do badań wykorzystano źródła rękopiśmienne (karty inwentarzowe zabytków architektury i budownictwa ze zbiorów Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Ochrony Zabytków w Białymstoku), materiały drukowane, literaturę przedmiotu oraz źródła internetowe. Dokonano również inwentaryzacji fotograficznej obiektów sakralnych oraz przeprowadzono rozmowy z duchownymi. Celem badań była weryfikacja hipotezy mówiącej o istotnym wpływie teologii na kształtowanie architektury cerkwi. Symbolika w architekturze kościołów prawosławnych obejmuje wiele aspektów, w tym także kolorystykę fasad. W województwie podlaskim znajduje się największa liczba cerkwi w Polsce. Tereny te cechują się z architekturą drewnianą ze względu na łatwą dostępność surowców. Cechą charakterystyczną drewnianych cerkwi na tym terenie jest różnorodność kolorystyczna ich fasad. Kolory mają bogatą symbolikę teologiczną, która często kojarzona jest z kultem świętych. Jest to szczególnie widoczne w ikonach. Badaniem objęto siedem zielonych kościołów na terenie województwa podlaskiego, w miejscowościach Anusin, Koźliki, Narew, Pasyнки, Trześcianka i Tyniewiczze Duże. Spośród badanych obiektów jeden jest obecnie zielony, a pozostałe były w tym kolorze w przeszłości. Świątynie opisano pod kątem datowania, kształtu planu budowli i kolorystyki elewacji. Badania wykazały związek pomiędzy zielonym kolorem elewacji a jej symboliką teologiczną. Architekt idealnej świątyni na wzór budowli uwzględnionych w opracowaniu powinien łączyć sztukę projektowania estetycznego z zasadami teologii. W takich obiektach konieczna jest synergia architektury i teologii, która decyduje o ich pięknie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** architektura, cerkiew, kolor zielony, teologia, symbolika

## Introduction

The superficial beauty of architecture depends on subjective perception of aesthetics. However, the symbolic depth of its beauty can be defined precisely and in a multifaceted way. One of the external features of a building, visible at first impression, is the color of its facade. In secular objects, it is most often associated with the aesthetics represented by their designer. In the case of churches, especially Orthodox ones, the choice of facade color may be dependent on theology, symbolism and have a significant impact on the design process and the shaping of architectural beauty.

A particular area of interest is the Podlaskie Voivodeship region, where the largest number of Orthodox churches in Poland can be found. In this administrative area, there are two dioceses of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church: the Białystok-Gdańsk and the Warsaw-Bielsk dioceses, where 72 wooden temples with facades in various colors can be found. These colors are blue, brown, green, white, and beige. Their colors sometimes changed over the years. One of the colors encountered is green, which is the focus of this publication. Contemplating possible reasons for the use of this color, theological connections of green with the Holy Spirit and different variants of religious symbolism of this color can be found in written sources and the teachings of the church. We will focus on the influence of theology and symbolism on the shaping the architecture of the wooden Orthodox churches in the Podlaskie Voivodeship.

## Beauty Hidden in Symbolism

From the very beginning, the Church has sought to express the symbolic meaning of the temple in its architecture and artistic message.<sup>1</sup> This reflects the Church's aspiration to replicate the vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Patriarch Germanos I said: "The temple is the earthly heaven, and in those blue spaces, God dwells and walks, confirming the above theory".<sup>3</sup> The Church Fathers consider God's beauty to be a fundamental biblical and theological idea, so the beauty of the world has

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1 Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the icon*, vol. II, trans. Anthony Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992), 223.

2 Paul Evdokimov, *Sztuka ikony. Teologia piękna*, tł. Maria Żurowska (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Księży Marianów, 2003), 125–126.

3 PG 98, 384.

its continuation in the transcendent reality – beautiful and good.<sup>4</sup> The temple is to be Heaven on Earth, so it must be beautiful and express the teachings of the Church in a beautiful way. This is achieved through its decor, furnishings, and icons, which express theology through the symbolism of numbers, shapes, and colors.<sup>5</sup> Symbols bring us closer to God and His divinity, facilitate communication with Him and His beauty. The language of symbols presents us with a range of implications that require understanding of their ideas, beyond their literal meaning. Symbols use motifs from the surrounding world, without a visible connection to the content expressed by them. They express a different, often ambivalent reality. The secrets of the symbolic language can be understood only by opening the mind and allowing it to enter the transcendent reality in which it manifests itself.<sup>6</sup> It can be inferred that many meanings of a given symbol arise simultaneously.

The theologian Father Sergius Bulgakov emphasized that *Orthodoxy, especially in Byzantium and Russia, received the gift of seeing the beauty of the spiritual world.*<sup>7</sup> In the temple, two natures combine – physical and spiritual. We experience the first through our senses, and the second through symbols.<sup>8</sup> In the Orthodox church, icons are an essential element of connecting with the heavenly world, and the complexity of their beauty is expressed in the symbolism of signs, shapes, and colors. Colors are not only an aesthetic decoration but also open a mystical path to the spiritual world. The iconographer writing icons uses various colors and the so-called *asystka* – these are linear strokes of paint with varying intensity of the brightness of a given color, creating the impression of a delicate grid that shows joy and lightness.<sup>9</sup> Just as iconographers use different shades of a given color, in this work, we will understand all shades of green from dark green to the green of vegetation, to light green.

Despite the inseparable synergy of the beauty of theology, its symbolism, and architecture in sacred objects, theologians focus on theological and symbolic aspects, while architects focus on the aesthetics

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4 Evdokimov, *Sztuka ikony*, 29.

5 Henryk Paprocki, *Prawosławie w Polsce* (Olszanica: Bosz, 2008), 205–209.

6 John Baldock, *Symbolika chrześcijańska*, tł. Jerzy Moderski (Poznań: Dom wydawniczy „Rebis”, 1994), 19–26.

7 Siergiej Bułgakow, *Prawosławie: zarys nauki Kościoła Prawosławnego*, tł. Henryk Paprocki (Białystok: Orthdruk, 1992), 146.

8 Anna Radziukiewicz, „Cerkiew – okręt płynący ku wschodowi, czyli kilka uwag o architekturze”, w: *Prawosławie w Polsce* (Białystok: Arka, 2000), 211–226.

9 Michel Quenot, *Ikona. Okno ku wieczności*, tł. ks. Henryk Paprocki (Białystok: Orthdruk, 1997), 7–8, 93–96.

of buildings. In science, there is a lack of interdisciplinary studies that connect these disciplines. The conducted research aims to show the influence of theology and theological symbolism on shaping the architecture of green Orthodox churches in the Podlaskie Voivodeship.

## Theology and the Symbolism of the Color Green

Theology is primarily based on the Holy Scripture, where green has been present from the very beginning in the rich, green vegetation of the Divine Garden of Eden, where the first humans, Adam and Eve, lived.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the color green is undoubtedly associated with paradise. Various shades of green are the colors of the plant kingdom, which dies every autumn and wakes up in spring, when the Easter holiday is celebrated. Here, we can see not only the rebirth of nature but also the spiritual awakening of the faithful of the Church during the Easter holiday. Thus, the color green signifies blossoming and spiritual awakening, but it is also associated with hope and eternal life in various sources.<sup>11</sup> As a symbol of spiritual rebirth, this color is associated with prophets and John the Evangelist, as well as with the announcement of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

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10 Gavin Evans, *Historia kolorów. Tajemniczy świat barw*, tł. Władysław Jeżewski (Warszawa: Bellona, 2019), 100–101.

11 Irina Jazykova, *Świat ikony*, tł. ks. Henryk Paprocki (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Księży Marianów, 2003), 88–103.

12 Quenot, *Ikona. Okno ku wieczności*, 101.



Figure 1. Icon of the Holy Trinity, author: Andrei Rublev; on the right, an angel – the Holy Spirit

The best reflection of religious symbolism is the icon. In essence, everything in the icon has its deeper meaning, not only the subject matter but also the color and form.<sup>13</sup> Icons are called theology in colors because iconographers create them according to detailed guidelines from the teachings of the Church Fathers.<sup>14</sup> It is worth mentioning the model that is the icon of the Holy Trinity, written by the monk Andrei Rublev in 1425 (Fig. 1).<sup>15</sup> On the right side of the icon, there is an angel dressed in blue-green robes. This is the third person of the Holy Trinity – the Holy Spirit. He was sent to people as a Comforter. According to the Creed, the Holy Spirit comes from the Father and testifies about Him. The connection between God and His heavenly nature with the color blue is visible when the covenant is concluded, when Moses and his people on Mount Sinai saw *the God of Israel, and under His feet was something like a pavement of blue sapphire, as blue as the sky itself*.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the blue of the Angel-the Holy Spirit's robes symbolizes His divine origin, while green

13 Bułgakow, *Prawosławie: zarys nauki Kościoła Prawosławnego*, 155–160.

14 Quenot, *Ikona. Okno ku wieczności*, 48, 58–62.

15 Evdokimov, *Sztuka ikony. Teologia piękna*, 203–214.

16 Wj 24, 10.

represents the hope and comfort given by God to people. Iconographers, acknowledging the Church's lack of tolerance for their artistic fantasies, took old icons as their models.<sup>17</sup> In this way, they were perpetuated and have survived to this day.<sup>18</sup>

The green robe of the symbol of the Holy Spirit in Rublev's icon may have an influence on the connection in the Orthodox Church between holidays associated with the Holy Spirit – the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles (Pentecost, commonly called Green Holidays), the Day of the Holy Spirit – and the color green. Clergy wear green liturgical vestments on these days. Similarly, this is the case on Palm Sunday.<sup>19</sup> During these festive days, green accents are visible inside the church: decorative tablecloths, vegetation. After conducting research, it was noticed that some of the participants in the services on these holidays wear green in their attire. In the Orthodox Church, specific holidays are traditionally associated with particular colors, reflected in liturgical vestments and church decor.

In iconography, martyrs and other saints such as St. Panteleimon, St. Anthony of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, St. Matrona of Moscow, St. John of Vilnius, St. Luke the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist, and Saints Cosmas and Damian are depicted wearing green or part-green clothing. It can be inferred that the symbolism of the green garments refers to the aforementioned themes of hope, spirituality, and eternal life.

## The Podlaskie Voivodeship as the Cradle of Orthodox Wooden Churches

Due to the limited space of the article, we will only present a brief historical outline of wooden sacred architecture in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, explaining the relevance of the topic.

The Podlasie region is associated with its multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious nature.<sup>20</sup> For centuries, Poles, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Tatars, and Jews lived here in close proximity, practicing extremely

17 Leonid Uspienski, *Teologia ikony*, tł. M. Żurowska (Poznań: W drodze, 1993), 137.

18 Jarosław Charkiewicz, *Najświętsza Bogarodzico zbaw nas* (Warszawa: Warszawska Metropolia Prawosławna, 2015), 57.

19 *Настольная книга священнослужителя*, t. 4 (Moskwa: Издание Московской Патриархии, 1983), 148–149.

20 Jerzy Uścińowicz, „O przenikaniu wartości w architekturze sakralnej pogranicza”, w: *Architektura kultur lokalnych pogranicza. Pogranicze Polski, Litwy, Białorusi i Ukrainy*, red. Jerzy Uścińowicz (Białystok: Politechnika Białostocka 2006), 247–264.



different religions. In no other region of Poland will we find catholic churches, Orthodox churches, synagogues, and mosques located so close to each other. This cultural and religious wealth significantly influenced the form of wooden architecture found in this region of Poland.<sup>21</sup>

The Podlaskie Voivodeship has the largest number of Orthodox believers, which accounts for approximately 85% of all followers of this faith in Poland.<sup>22</sup> The research focuses on the administrative areas of the Podlaskie Voivodeship, but in the context of the high number of Orthodox believers, we must also mention the Lemko region located on the northern side of the Carpathians,<sup>23</sup> near Rzeszów, Gorlice, and Przemyśl, where the largest concentration of Lemkos in Poland exists.<sup>24</sup> They are distinguished by a strong sense of national identity.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, it is the Podlaskie Voivodeship that is home to the largest number of followers of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

The northeastern Poland region was a place where in the mid-19th century, almost only wooden buildings could be found. Around 1930, in the town of Narew, all buildings were made of wood, except for one well-known example of a masonry object, which was the St. Lawrence chapel on the ecumenical cemetery.<sup>26</sup> Wooden architecture was the only widespread type of construction in rural areas until World War II.<sup>27</sup> This is not surprising because wood was easily accessible here due to the abundance

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21 Elżbieta Marciniuszyn, Piotr Marciniuszyn, Kamila Kłosek, Marta Kordys-Tomaszewska (red.), *Architektura drewniana* (Warszawa: Carta Blanca, 2009), 164–183.

22 Anna Radziukiewicz (red.), Marek Dolecki (fot.), *Prawosławie w Polsce* (Białystok: Arka, 2000), 5.

23 Marek A. Koproński, *Łemkowie losy zaginionego narodu* (Zakrzewo: Wydawnictwo Replika, 2016), 9–11.

24 Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Wyznania religijne w Polsce 2015–2018*, 2020, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/inne-opracowania/wyznania-religijne/wyznania-religijne-w-polsce-20152018,5,2.html> (dostęp: 08.12.2022).

25 Koproński, *Łemkowie losy zaginionego narodu*, 7.

26 Iwona Górńska, Joanna Kotyńska Stetkiewicz, Krzysztof Kulesza, Aneta Kułak, Agnieszka Ołdytowska, Grzegorz Ryżewski, „Drewniana architektura Podlasia jako desygnat tożsamości kulturowej, religijnej i etnicznej obszaru pogranicza”, w: *Monument. Studia i materiały krajowego ośrodka badań i dokumentacji zabytków*, nr 2, red. Tadeusz Morysiński (Warszawa: Krajowy Ośrodek Badań i Dokumentacji Zabytków, 2005), 115–165.

27 Janusz Maraśkiewicz, Aleksander Baszkow, *Drewniana architektura północnej części Euroregionu Bug* (Biała Podlaska: Białkopodlaskie Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Regionalnego, 2006), 7.



of forests<sup>28</sup> and much cheaper than brick or stone.<sup>29</sup> There was also significant availability of experienced carpenters who combined the national and local building techniques for the needs of sacred architecture. The masters eagerly combined urban patterns and guild craftsmanship. On the other hand, foreign patterns did not work too well, which allowed wooden architecture to maintain its national and regional character for the longest time. Carpenters passed on building styles and decorations from generation to generation. In this way, characteristic features of objects in a given area at a specific time were shaped.<sup>30</sup>



Figure 2. A view of the exposed log structure of the cemetery church of St. Onuphrius in Stryki, March 2023, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko

Most of the buildings were constructed using the log construction technique, also known as the cordwood method (Fig. 2). Properly prepared logs and edge-boards were stacked on top of each other and joined at the corners using notches, creating what is called a “corner”. In this type of construction, the length of the walls was limited by the available length of the beam, which resulted in a high demand for materials. This is why buildings constructed using the log construction method were mostly built in areas abundant in forests. Therefore, this type of building

28 Marian Pokropek, Andrzej Gozdan (il.), *Budownictwo ludowe w Polsce* (Warszawa: LSW, 1976), 85–86.

29 Piotr Krasny, „*Maluczko, a nie ujrzycie mnie... (J 16, 16)*. Uwagi o stanie zachowania drewnianych cerkwi na ziemiach wschodnich dawnej Rzeczypospolitej i znaczeniu materiałów ikonograficznych w badaniach nad architekturą cerkiewną”, w: *Cerkwie drewniane dawnej Galicji Wschodniej*, t. 1, red. Wojciech Walanus (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas, 2012), 9–27.

30 Ignacy Tłoczek, *Polskie budownictwo drewniane* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1980), 24–25, 136–138.

was most commonly found in the green Podlasie region, where they were built for the longest time.<sup>31</sup>

In light of the above, green Orthodox churches built using wooden construction and finishing techniques have been subjected to research. Based on them, we will analyze the synergy between architecture and theology.

## The Research on Green Orthodox Churches in the Landscape of Podlaskie Voivodeship

This chapter will present wooden Orthodox churches in Podlaskie Voivodeship with green facades, both present and past. Research work among the collection of registration cards of the Provincial Office for the Protection of Monuments in Białystok was carried out from October 2022 to April 2023. Photographic inventories of the objects were also conducted in March and April 2023.

The buildings included in the study will be presented in alphabetical order by the town in which they are located. For each object, the years of construction and any renovations, the shape of the plan, and the presence of green in the facades will be provided.

Orthodox churches are characterized by a three-division interior. In order of entry, they are: the vestibule (a place for catechumens and penitents), the nave (a space for the faithful), and the sanctuary (intended for the clergy).<sup>32</sup> This division is also visible in the external form of most of the analyzed objects. All the surveyed churches were built in a log construction and are oriented, which means that the sanctuary is located on the eastern side. Any exceptions to these rules will be highlighted in the study.

In alphabetical order, the first town is Anusin, which includes a complex of two objects: the parish church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian and the nearby cemetery church of St. John the Baptist. The objects belong to the parish in Telatycze. The parish temple was built in 1903 on a longitudinal-central plan. Originally, the object had facades finished with oiled wood, then in 2002, the formwork was painted green (Fig. 3a), and from 2009 to 2011, an external renovation was carried out, during which the formwork

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31 Marciniszyn, *Architektura drewniana*, 7–8.

32 Ryszard Brykowski, *Drewniana architektura cerkiewna na koronnych ziemiach Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Opieki Nad Zabytkami, 1995), 19–22.

was returned to the original finish in the color of dark wood (Fig. 3b).<sup>33</sup> The cemetery church was built in 1938. The chapel had a green formwork finish until its renovation in 2013 (Fig. 4a), when a board finish in a dark wood color was used (Fig. 4b).<sup>34</sup> It can be concluded that efforts were made to ensure that both churches matched each other in terms of color.



Figure 3. A view of the parish church of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Anusin: a) 08/10/2003, author: Aneta Kułak, Iwona Górską, Grzegorz Ryzewski (source: heritage registration card A-13); b) March 2023, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko



Figure 4. A view of the cemetery church of Saint John the Baptist's Beheading in Anusin: a) before renovation in 2013, author: km\_nida (source: <http://www.polskaniezwykla.pl/web/gallery/photo,237044.html>, access: 3rd May 2023); b) March 2023, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko

33 Karta ewidencyjna zabytków architektury i budownictwa, rejestr zabytków nr A-13 z dn. 24.11.2000 r.

34 Dane z ksiąg parafialnych parafii w Telatyczach, rozmowa z proboszczem ks. Cezarym Nowickim z dnia 21.03.2023 r.

The next object examined is the filial church of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker in Koźliki belonging to the parish of Klejniki. This church was built as a Uniate church in 1793 in Klejniki cemetery in a polygonal plan. After 1864, it was moved to Koźliki as a filial church of the Orthodox parish in Klejniki. The elevations of the church were finished with green boarding before the renovation in 2013–2016 (Fig. 5a), and after the renovation until now, the church is painted blue (Fig. 5b).<sup>35</sup>



Figure 5. A view of the St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker Orthodox Church in Koźliki: a) before renovation in 2019, author: Grzegorz Kossakowski (source: <http://www.ciekawepodlasie.pl/opis/303,Cerkiew+prawos%C5%82awna+fil.+p.w.+%C5%9Bw.+Miko%C5%82aja+z+1793+r.htm>, access: 5th May 2023); b) March 2023, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko



Figure 6. A view of the parish church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Narew: a) before renovation in 2019, author: unknown (source: <https://www.portals.narew.gmina.pl/parafie/98-parafia-prawoslawna-w-narwi>, access: 2nd May 2023); b) March 2023, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko.

35 Karta ewidencyjna zabytków architektury i budownictwa, rejestr zabytków nr 674 z dn. 30.12.1987 r.



The next object studied is the parish church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Narew built in 1881–1885 in a Latin cross plan. The church was significantly damaged in a fire that occurred in 1990, and part of the church's documentation was also burned. The elevations were originally finished with blue-painted boarding. In the 20th and 21st centuries, the church was painted green (Fig. 6a) until it was renovated in 2019, when its original blue color was restored (Fig. 6b).<sup>36</sup>

The next object examined is the parish church of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist in Pasyнки, built in 1892 on a Greek cross plan. During the examination, a record was found on the heritage card from May 1981 regarding the green color of the elevations' boarding, but unfortunately, the photographic documentation from that period is black and white (Fig. 7a), and the information could not be verified from other sources. Currently, the church is painted blue (Fig. 7b).<sup>37</sup>

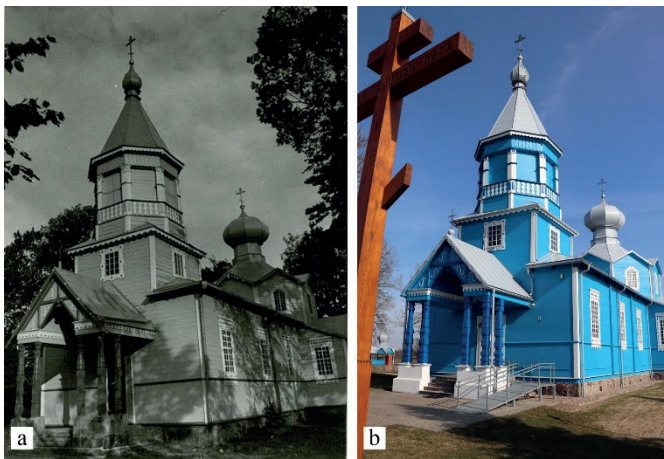


Figure 7. A view of the parish church of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist in Pasyнки: a) May 1981, author: Małgorzata Litwin (source: monument registration card A-36); b) March 2023, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko

Another temple undergoing research is the parish church of St. Archangel Michael in Trześcianka, built in the years 1864–1867 in a rectangular

36 Jacek Żabicki, *Leksykon zabytków architektury Mazowsza i Podlasia* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Arkady, 2010), 351; Karta ewidencyjna zabytków architektury i budownictwa, rejestr zabytków nr A-746 z dn. 31.12.1990 r.; Rozmowa telefoniczna z proboszczem parafii w Narwi, ks. Michałem Dudiczem z dn. 15.03.2023 r.

37 Karta ewidencyjna zabytków architektury i budownictwa, rejestr zabytków nr A-36 z dn. 12.01.1993 r.

shape.<sup>38</sup> The object was renovated several times – after 1945, the exterior was renewed. The elevation formwork was repainted from brown (Fig. 8a) to green during the renovation in 2015. Currently, the object is still green and has details in white color (Fig. 8b). The present parish priest in Trześcianka – Father Marek Wasilewski – says that “the inhabitants of the village treat St. Anthony of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra as their patron saint, and an additional parish holiday related to the cult of this saint is celebrated here”. In the iconography, St. Anthony of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra is depicted in a green robe, which is why the church was painted in that color.<sup>39</sup>



Figure 8. A view of the parish church of St. Michael the Archangel in Trześcianka: a) before renovation in 2015, author: Grzegorz Kossakowski (source: [http://www.ciekawepodlasie.pl/info.htm#306/pl/p/cerkiew\\_par.\\_p.w.\\_sw.\\_michala\\_archaniola\\_z\\_1864\\_r.](http://www.ciekawepodlasie.pl/info.htm#306/pl/p/cerkiew_par._p.w._sw._michala_archaniola_z_1864_r.), access: 5th May 2023); b) March 2023, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko

The last discussed object will be the parish church of St. Apostle and Evangelist Luke in Tyniewiczze Duże. The present temple was rebuilt in the shape of a rectangle between 1944 and 1948 after being burned down earlier. The object underwent numerous color changes: in May 2001, the elevations were finished with formwork in blue color (Fig. 9a),<sup>40</sup> then

38 Karta ewidencyjna zabytków architektury i budownictwa, rejestr zabytków nr 784 z dn. 09.03.1994 r.

39 Rozmowa z proboszczem parafii w Trześciance, ks. Michałem Wasilewskim z dn. 19.03.2023 r.

40 Karta ewidencyjna zabytków architektury i budownictwa, rejestr zabytków nr A-25 z dn. 14.09.2001 r.

after renovations between 2006–2009, in green (Fig. 9b),<sup>41</sup> and currently the church is in a light beige color (Fig. 9c).

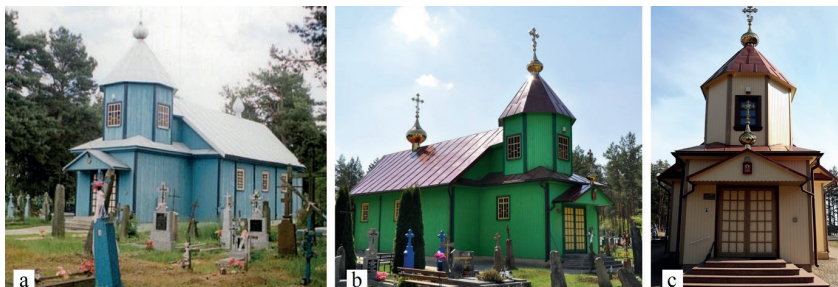


Figure 9. A view of the parish church of St. Apostle and Evangelist Luke in Tyniewiczze Duże: a) May 2001, author: Dariusz Stankiewicz (source: monument registration card No. A-25); b) after renovation in 2006–2009, author: unknown (source: <https://www.portals.narew.gmina.pl/solectwa-i-soltysi/91-tyniecicze-duze>, access: 5th May 2023); c) March 2023, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko

During the research and photographic inventory of wooden churches in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, the presence of green accents in their finishing was noticed. In the facades of the parish church of St. Archangel Michael in Bielsk Podlaski, the decorative window and door frames are green. The church of St. Onuphrius in Stryki has a green roof, as well as the monastic complex of the Skete of St. Anthony and Theodosius of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra in Odrynki. Green finishing of the fence and roof of the cemetery church of St. John the Theologian in Odrynki was also observed, as well as the occurrence of green crosses on tombstones in the cemetery in Tyniewiczze Duże.

41 Załącznik do uchwały nr XXXIII/198/10 Rady Gminy Narew z dn. 28 czerwca 2010 roku, *Plan odnowy miejscowości na lata 2010–2017 Tyniewiczze Duże* (Gmina Narew, kwiecień 2010), 18–19.



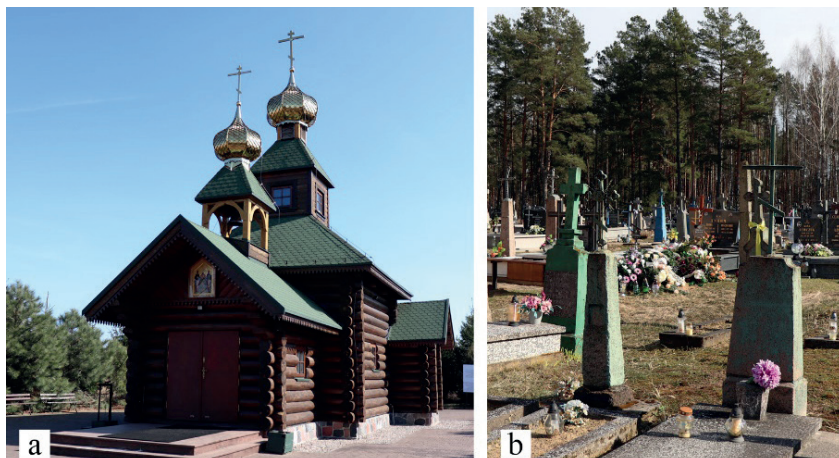


Figure 10. Examples of green accents in the Orthodox parish areas of Podlaskie Voivodeship: a) green roofs of the Church of the Protection of the Mother of God in the Monastic Complex of St. Antony and Theodosius of Kiev-Pechersk in Odrynki; b) green grave crosses in the cemetery in Tyniewiczze Duże; March 2023, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko

## Conclusions and summary

Out of the 72 Orthodox churches located in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, 7 have had or currently have green facades. This makes them a fairly sizable group, almost 10% (Fig.11). Among them are 4 parish churches, 2 cemetery churches, and 1 filial church. Currently, only 1 building has a green color, while the other objects had this feature in the past.

As indicated in the article, the genesis of the color of the church facades is related to the figures of their patrons, i.e. martyrs and saints, or the Holy Spirit. This is due to the necessity of combining theology with architecture when designing Orthodox churches.

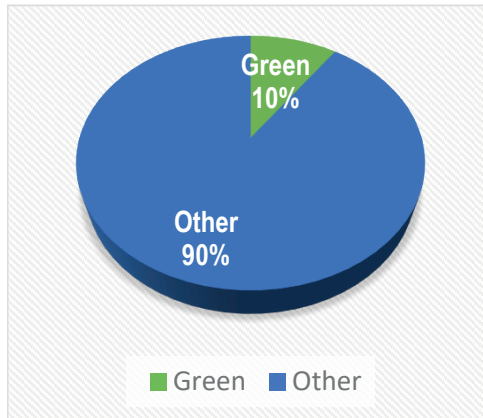


Figure 11. The number of green facades in relation to the number of all wooden Orthodox churches in the Podlaskie Voivodship, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko.

Analyzing the iconographic representations of the patrons of the objects studied in the article, it was noticed 5 churches with the cult of saints whose robes in the icons have parts in green, these are: Sts. Cosmas and Damian, St. John the Baptist, St. Anthony of Kiev-Pechersk, and St. Luke the Evangelist and Apostle. It is clear that the influence of the iconographic image of the saint on the color of the church facades concerns 71.4% of the surveyed objects (Fig. 12).

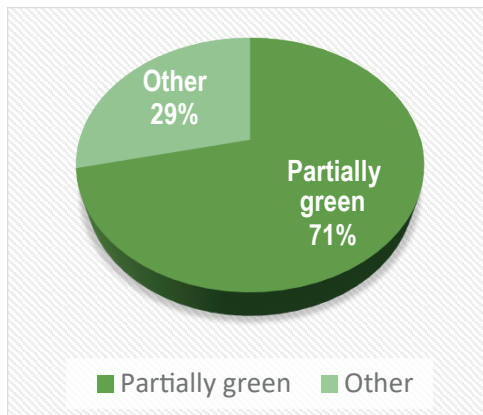


Figure 12. The colors of the robes of the saints cultivated in the objects being developed, author: Katarzyna Woszczenko

It was noted that when designing Orthodox churches, both in the past and in the future, the architect must combine the art of good architectural design with the principles of theology in order to achieve a perfect effect.

Thanks to this synergy of architecture and theology, the green, wooden Orthodox churches of the Podlaskie Voivodeship are beautiful.

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