

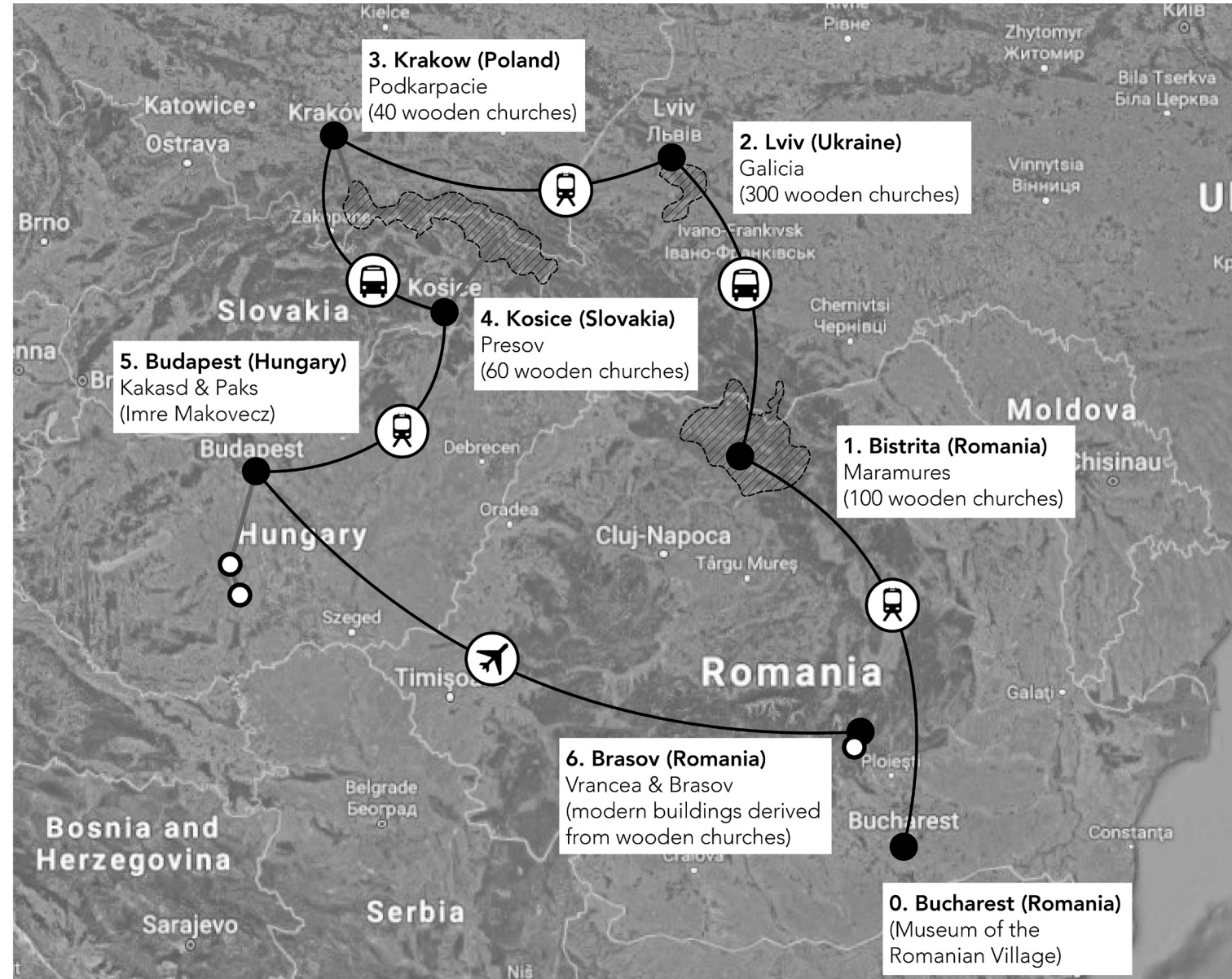
ORTHODOX SACRED SPACE IN THE RURAL IMAGINATION

A STUDY OF WOODEN CHURCHES IN THE CARPATHIAN REGION

Reacting to the Catholic Austro-Hungarian prohibition of constructing Christian Orthodox churches in masonry, Eastern European rural carpenters in the 17th century deployed their ingenuity to invent what is today both a form of vernacular architecture and a building typology: *the wooden Orthodox church*. While wooden churches are common throughout Eastern Europe, they have received very little academic attention compared, for instance, to their Catholic counterparts, the medieval Norwegian stave churches. Today, interest in the architecture of Orthodox wooden churches is gaining momentum as fears of losing traditional crafts are increasing. In addition to the 20th c. Hungarian architect Imre Makovecz' efforts to formalize vernacular features found in wooden churches (Fig. 11-12), a few contemporary projects in Eastern Europe attempt to emulate, in particular, the curvilinear, shingle-covered roof geometries of the wooden churches (Fig. 13-14). However, no comprehensive documentation of Orthodox wooden churches exists to this day and previous academic efforts have focused on identifying 'national' vernaculars through the study of wooden churches. Instead, **"Orthodox Sacred Space" will attempt to document (in plan, section, photography) and subsequently to put forward a catalogue of Christian Orthodox Wooden Churches in the Carpathian Region** constructed mainly between the 15th – 19th c.

Spread along the Carpathian Mountains, from Transylvania (Romania) to Presov (Slovakia), wooden churches, though built in remote mountain villages, bear striking similarities with one another. At a programmatic level, they negotiate in plan between two rooms - "the sacred" and "the profane" – commonly offset by an exterior colonnade. In their physical manifestation, the churches impress in the shear size and height of their roofs. In relationship to the single storey volume of the church proper, the roof's shear size is only softened by its curvilinear geometric form and by its shingle materiality that lends it grain. A church section (Fig. 1) reveals both the typical Orthodox obscure interior with few apertures and the fact that the interior space proper is a 1-2 storey room. In this sense, the volume above the sacred and profane rooms is filled with wooden structure that supports the grand roof. Given the softly monumental massing of the typical church, the architectural experience is not limited to the building itself, but responds to the physical features of the surrounding mountainous landscape from whose valleys the church tower rises.

The travel proposal follows the Carpathian Mountains through Romania, Ukraine, Poland and Slovakia, travelled across by train (to regional capitals), by car/bike (to relevant villages) and by foot (to the churches). The following key regions with high concentrations of wooden church traditions will be visited: Maramures (Romania), Galicia (Ukraine), Presov (Slovakia) and Podkarpacie (Poland). Considering contemporary interest in traditional woodworking techniques, the research will end with visits to Central Hungary to investigate the reinterpretation of traditional wood and shingle construction in Imre Makovecz' shingle covered modernism and to a series of mountain lodgings, museums and refuges in Vrancea-Rasnov (Romania), all built in the last two decades borrowing wood construction techniques invented in the vernacular wooden churches.



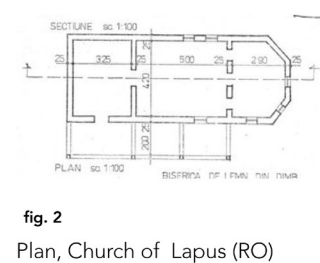
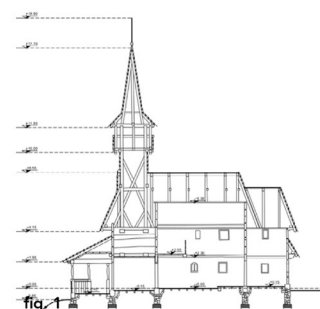
ITINERARY

Romania	Days 1-9
maramures	
Ukraine	Days 10 – 13
galicia	
Poland	Days 14 - 19
orawka	
Slovakia	Days 20 - 24
bodruzal	
Hungary	Days 25 - 27
kakasd & paks	
Romania	Days 28 – 30
rasnov & vrancea	

BUDGET

Airfare	\$2,000
Train/Bus Costs	\$1,800
Bike Rental	\$500
Accommodation	\$3,300 (\$110 per day)
Food	\$1,500 (\$50 per day)
Admissions Fees (relevant for some Church buildings)	\$200
Contingency	\$700

Wooden Churches



1. Romania (17th - 19th c.)



2. Ukraine (11th c. -)



3. Poland (15th - 16th c.)



4. Slovakia (16th - 18th c.)



5. Hungary (20th c.) Imre Makovecz



6. Romania (21st c.) B. Stefan, E. Tugui

