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## **LIBESKIND'S MUSEUM IN BERLIN AS A TOPPLED TOWER**

### **Abstract**

In the article the author will attempt to interpret the architectural structure of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, designed in 1989 by Daniel Libeskind. The context of deliberations presented here will rely on a broadly understood idea of tower, an entity identical with the Judaic as well as Christian vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem. However, the key to the metaphor is the assumption that the structure symbolizes a toppled tower, which in its turn is a meaningful analogy to the concepts derived from the issues of the Holocaust.

### **Key words**

Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, theory of architecture, the Holocaust

In 1988 the Berlin government organized a contest for the best project of the Jewish Museum commemorating 2000 years of German-Jewish history. Daniel Libeskind beat as many as 160 architects from all around the world to win this competition. The opening of this politically significant federal museum marked the 330<sup>th</sup> anniversary of creating the Jewish commune in Berlin<sup>1</sup>. Ten years after the announcement of the best project the empty building was opened for the public and although nothing was displayed in its rooms, the museum was visited by 350 000 people.

Libeskind's architectonic concept, called "Between the lines"<sup>2</sup> by the artist himself, involved dividing the museum into two parts. He planned to convert the Kollegienhaus, an old baroque building from the time of Frederic William I (1713-1740)<sup>3</sup>, as well as to build a new steel construction next to it. The baroque mansion, located in the Lindenstrasse street in Kreuzberg, is a stone, two-level and two-wing building with a courtyard, topped with a mansard roof<sup>4</sup>. The actual museum is connected with the Kollegienhaus by an underground tunnel. It is an irregular and angular steel building composed of cubic structures. It has been erected on a zig-zag plan and is covered with a flat roof<sup>5</sup>.

This spatial, shiny and zinc-plated form constitutes a multilayered reference to the mystical concept of Jerusalem equated with the symbolism of the tower, or rather its metaphorical depiction<sup>6</sup>. What is more, it seems that

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<sup>1</sup> The architect was born to a Jewish family in 1946, in Łódź. Most of his ancestors died in World War II. In 1957 he emigrated to Israel and started music studies in Tel Aviv. Besides that he developed interests in mathematics and painting. In 1960, after moving to New York he started architecture studies at the Cooper Union School of Architecture. See: D. Libeskind, S. Crichton, *Breaking Ground: Adventures in Life and Architecture*, New York 2004; D. Libeskind, *Przełom: Przygody w życiu i architekturze (Autobiografia)*, transl. M. Zawadka, Warszawa 2008.

<sup>2</sup> D. Libeskind, *Between the Lines*, [in:] K. Feireiss (ed.), *Daniel Libeskind: Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department*, Berlin 1992, pp. 57-59. The same text under the same title but with some minor changes was published also in: D. Libeskind, A.P.A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix: Architecture and Writings*, Munich-New York 1997, p. 34 and in: D. Libeskind, *Daniel Libeskind: The Space of Encounter*, New York 2000, pp. 38-45. See also: D. Libeskind, *Between the Lines* (Opening speech, Berlin 1999), [in:] D. Libeskind, A.P.A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>3</sup> See: Daniel Libeskind: *Extension*; H. Stolzenberg, *The Jewish Museum Berlin. Can a Jewish Museum NOT be a Holocaust Memorial?*, Bloomington 2003.

<sup>4</sup> The architect turned the interior of the palace into a space with ticket offices, a cloakroom, bookstore, conference room and restaurant.

<sup>5</sup> This dynamic and expressive building consists of four floors that, instead of regular museum rooms, feature zig-zag spaces, with long and narrow windows located in the walls.

<sup>6</sup> The so called Jerusalem Tower should be clearly distinguished from the Babel Tower. The former strives for a harmonious relation between man and God, whereas the latter symbolizes rivalry with God. Moreover, the Tower of David (the Sulejman's minaret located next to the Jaffo gate) is not connected with the Temple either. See also: term "tower" – Hebr. *migdal* in: E. Frankel, B. Platkin *Teutsch, Jewish Symbols, Jerusalem 1992*, pp.180-181.

the building used to be a tower that has been toppled, as the title suggests (fig. 1). This assumption requires certain complex issues to be explained, such as, the Judaist and Christian visions of the Heavenly (New) Jerusalem, the idea of the Temple, the theory of architecture of synagogues nad gothic cathedrals, iconology and the tradition of the Avant-garde as well as the utopian vision of the city and the historical German-Jewish relations. The extensive analysis that will follow is necessary for presenting how deeply the Libeskind's project is rooted in the European tradition.

Over the centuries, in many Christian, theological and cabalist texts as well as in the theory of architecture, the Temple was a universal symbol that, as Helen Rosenau writes, "lost its original location and uniform religious concepts or theoretical interpretations"<sup>7</sup>. A key basis for a number of traditional "visual" interpretations of the Temple as a vertical axis is included in a fragment of *Exodus Rabba* 33 that says "everything God has created in Haeven He has also created on earth". According to Bianca Kühnel this fragment refers to the vision of two juxtaposed temples – an earthly one as well as heavenly, both of them being connected with a bright, mystical ray or vertical axis<sup>8</sup>. Also Psalm 78:69 says: "There he built his sanctuary as high as the heavens"<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, the Apocalypse of St. John presents a vision of the New Jerusalem being "as pure as transparent glass" (21:21), however in 21:22, John writes "I saw no temple therein". It means that "God's presence symbolized by the Temple expands onto the whole God's city"<sup>10</sup>, which is confirmed by the Old Testament (Za 14,20; J 4,21; Is 54,11-17; Ez 40,2; 48,30-35)<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, the idea of the Jerusalem Temple (equated with the whole city) refers – in the entire European history – to the universal discourse rather than to some historical reconstruction. It is a structural vision; a fantasy that is very

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<sup>7</sup> H. Rosenau, *Vision of the Temple. The Image of the Temple of Jerusalem in Judaism and Christianity*, London 1979, p. 7. A brilliant analysis of the multiplicity of meanings of Jerusalem is found in the publication entitled *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem In Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, ed. B. Kühnel, *Journal of the Center for Jewish Art* 23-24, 1997-98, consisting of 53 independent studies. See: eadem, *Introduction. The Use and Abuse of Jerusalem*, *ibidem*, pp. XIX-XXXVII. See also: *Jerozolima w kulturze europejskiej*, eds. P. Paszkiewicz, T. Zadrożny, Warszawa 1997.

<sup>8</sup> B. Kühnel, *From the Earthly to the Heavenly Jerusalem*, Freiburg 1984, pp. 46-47. Moreover, it should be pointed out that this duality can be also found in the word Jerusalem itself (*Ir sza lim – jerushalaim*), which is a plural form.

<sup>9</sup> T. Brzegowy, *Wybranie Jerozolimy w świetle Psalmów*, *Review of Biblical Literature* 43.3-4, 1990, p. 94.

<sup>10</sup> *Biblia Tysiąclecia*, footnote for 21:22. The Apocalypse of St. John 21:1 21:22.

<sup>11</sup> This fragment of John 21,22 is also interpreted by means of references to the Old Testament by H. Rosenau, *Vision*, p. 7 and B. Kühnel, *From the Earthly*, pp. 46-47.

inspiring for theological, historical, literary, artistic and architectonic traditions<sup>12</sup>.

During the Exodus from Egypt through the desert, the Jews were guided by a pillar of clouds by day and a pillar of fire (light) at night<sup>13</sup>. These two seemingly different forms of a vertical medium refer to the idea of aura and God's intercession which, as Robert Lewandowski writes, ancient Israelites understood in a tangible and concrete way, that is, as a light and brightness participating in the primeval light of God (Ex. 1, 3, Is. 60,19-20, Psalm 84, 11-12, Malachias 3,19-20)<sup>14</sup>. This aura is also identified with God's grace, or *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence of God), which settled among the cherubs on the Ark and in the Jerusalem Temple, becoming a mystical connector between heaven and earth on the Temple Mount<sup>15</sup>. This motif of a shaft of light identified by the Egyptian tradition with a vertical form of an obelisk, or a symbol of a sunray<sup>16</sup>, is also taken up in the European artistic tradition, e.g., by William West in his very suggestive painting "Israelites passing through the Wilderness" from 1845<sup>17</sup> (fig. 2).

At this point it is worth mentioning that Libeskind stated that what constituted one of the main inspirations for his project was the book "Hassidic Tales of the Holocaust" by the Holocaust survivor Yaffa Eliach. In her work she describes how while being transported in 1944 she saw a white line in the sky which she considered to be a sign of Providence. Libeskind refers to this story saying "this line of light was some kind of an impossible miracle –

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<sup>12</sup> Architectonic concepts of the Temple refer to: I Book of Kings 6:2, 3,20; Exodus. 25:9; I Chronicle 17:12, 28:11 and II Book of Samuel 7:5, 13. Apart from the elongated, horizontal plan that shows the direction from the entrance to the Holy of Holies in the history of architecture, in the Roman, Byzantine, Renaissance, Baroque and other traditions, we can find churches built on a central plan – inspired by the Temple. Such a central perspective of the Temple is also present in the Jewish (descriptive) tradition and – as Rosenau points out – is even more popular than the longitudinal arrangement. H. Rosenau, *Vision*, p. 13, 65-70.

<sup>13</sup> Exodus. 13,21-22.

<sup>14</sup> R. Lewandowski. *Wizja kosmosu w architekturze i wyposażeniu Świątyni*, [in:] P. Paszkiewicz, T. Zadrożny (eds.), *Jerozolima*, p. 378, 385.

<sup>15</sup> "The Jerusalem Tower symbolically represents the Shechina, the Godly presence", I. Dokukhan, *Beyond the Holy City: Symbolic Interpretations in the Avant-Garde Urban Utopia, The Real and Ideal Jerusalem In Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, *Journal of the Center for Jewish Art* 23-24, 1997-98, p. 569 (565-574). See also: B. Kühnel, *From the Earthly*, pp. 40-41, 46-47.

<sup>16</sup> *Słownik cywilizacji egipskiej*, ed. G. Rachet, transl. J. Śliwa, Katowice 1994, pp. 244-246.

<sup>17</sup> See eg.: F. Greenacre, *From Bristol to the Sea: Artists, the Avon Gorge and Bristol Harbour*, Bristol 2005, pp. 96-97.

a white, shining line of hope"<sup>18</sup>. He describes this story as an important inspiration also in his Autobiography, in the chapter entitled "The light".

The meaning of this woman's vision was vague and mysterious but it had such a big power of transformation that I decided to include it in the project (...). Light is the measure of all things. It is absolute, irreversible, complete, mathematical and eternal (...)<sup>19</sup>.

According to Gershom Scholem, light is a "primal matter coming from the glow of the Divine coat of the heavens" which has no form or shape<sup>20</sup>. In the Jewish tradition light, called *orah* (or *or*) – is also associated with the word *Moriah* ("chosen by Yahveh"), that is, with the hill in Jerusalem from which God took some soil to create Adam and on which Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac. This is the hill on which Solomon erected the Temple<sup>21</sup>. The aim of the Temple's structure (as well as of the "tent of meeting") was to incorporate the light into a mystical or symbolic perspective<sup>22</sup>. The Jerusalem Temple in the Jewish theology is identified not only with Mount Moriah but also the nearby Mount Zion and the whole city.<sup>23</sup> According to Tadeusz Brzegowy:

Jerusalem (especially in the Psalterium theology) is the center of the universe around which the whole reality has been created in the form of concentric circles. This center is created by God's Presence on Mount

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<sup>18</sup> Yaffa Eliach said later that it could have been a very prosaic occurrence such as a trail behind a plane or clouds, nevertheless, she considered it to be a sign telling her that she would survive. After: D. Libeskind, Trauma, [in:] Sh. Hornstein, F. Jacobowitz (eds.), Image and Remembrance. Representation and the Holocaust, Bloomington-Indianapolis 2003, pp. 44, 58.

<sup>19</sup> D. Libeskind, Przełom, pp. 48-49. This ray of light "borrowed" from Y. Eliach's description was included in the project in the form of a vertical opening in the so called Holocaust tower, adjacent to the building. Libeskind refers to the mystical concept of light also in: Line of Fire. Exhibition Installation Geneva, 1988, [in:] D. Libeskind, A.P.A. Belloli, Radix-Madrix, p. 119 and in: Line of Fire, 1-2, Geneva-Milan 1988.

<sup>20</sup> G. Scholem, Judaizm. Parę głównych pojęć, transl. J. Zychowicz, Kraków 1991, p. 80; Kabała i jej symbolika, transl. R. Wojnakowski, Kraków 1996, p. 14; Mistycyzm żydowski i jego główne kierunki, transl. I. Kania, introduction M. Galas, Warszawa 1997, p. 274.

<sup>21</sup> Rabbi Hiyya claimed that Abraham wanted to offer Isaac up as a sacrifice in the exact place where the light was coming out from the ground and this is where he built a stone altar. What is more, rabbi Jannai in a conversation with rabbi Hiyya says that it is connected with the word *yirah* (referring to light) [city of God] – denoting both the light as well as the religious part. Genesis Rabbah, 55:7. See also: Midrash Tanhumah, 1-2, ed. S. Buber, Vilna 1891; reprint: Jerusalem, VaYerah 45, 1964. See also the term "Jerozolima" in: A. Unterman, Encyklopedia tradycji i legend żydowskich, transl. O. Zienkiewicz, Warszawa 1994, p. 128.

<sup>22</sup> M. Sicker, Judaism, Nationalism and the Land of Israel, San Francisco-Oxford 1992, p. 47, footnote 26, 27.

<sup>23</sup> An interesting study of this concept can be found in the catalogue of the exhibition Towards the Eternal Center. Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple, organized by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (New York, March 5-June 27, 1996). Curators: Sharon Liberman Mintz and Elka Deitsch.

Zion. His radiating presence is personal and dynamic and sanctifies everything that comes into contact with it<sup>24</sup>.

Such a structure of this sacred place evokes also its verticality, hence the mystical expression “Jerusalem Tower”. Helen Rosenau calls this phenomenon “the effect of the Tower” or simply the Tower of the Temple<sup>25</sup>.

According to Solomon’s prayer (I Book of Kings 8,44-48 and 38) Temple Mount is a channel through which prayers reach the heavens regardless of the geographical location where they are being said<sup>26</sup>. The Jews dispersed in the Diaspora viewed Jerusalem as a mystical city, an object of nostalgia and desire, a place of future restitution, with the earthly synagogues being its temporary substitute<sup>27</sup>. Church and municipal law prohibited the Jews from building synagogues that would be higher than church steeples and town hall buildings. However in Ashkenazi synagogues, during prayers a long stick was put through the roof high above it, which was associated with the Book of Kings 8,44-48 and 38 and with Wisdom of Sirach 22:18 (“Pales set on an high place will never stand against the wind: so a fearful heart in the imagination of a fool cannot stand against any fear”)<sup>28</sup>. This activity evoked the most abstract and fundamental depiction of the Holy City contained in its verticality – an axis symbolically connecting the heavenly and earthy worlds<sup>29</sup>. What is more, this move was suppose to resemble the pillar of light that led the Jews through the desert when Moses was hesitating and could be traced to a Hasidic tale that says: “a prayer goes through the skies”<sup>30</sup>. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the Emancipation movement and the changing status of the Jews in Europe, as well as financial capabilities of Jewish communes, synagogues

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<sup>24</sup> According to the poems from the Old Testament, Zion is synonymous with Jerusalem (Is 37,32; Ps 147.12). T. Brzegowy, *Wybranie Jerozolimy*, p. 43. 103. See also: M. Gruna-Sulisz, *Świątynia Jerozolimka jako kosmogoniczne centrum i model wszechświata*, [in:] P. Paszkiewicz, T. Zadrożny (eds.), *Jerozolima*, p. 357-375.

<sup>25</sup> H. Rosenau, *Vision*, pp. 14, 38-40, 42. See also: J. Kotz, *Mobilne i amobilne manifestacje wertykalizmu*, *Architectus* 1-2 (21-22), 2007, pp. 67-75.

<sup>26</sup> R. Ousterhout, *Flexible Geography and Transportable Topography*, *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem In Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, *Journal of the Center for Jewish Art* 23-24, 1997-98, IX, *Jerusalem Elsewhere*, pp. 393-404.

<sup>27</sup> According to the Prophecy of Ezechiel (11:16) the synagogue should be understood as a “little sanctuary” (Hebr. *mikdash me’at*, literally “little temple” – as stated by Jakub Wujek). See: E. Bergman, term “Synagoga”, [in:] J. Tomaszewski, A. Żbikowski (eds.), *Żydzi w Polsce. Dzieje i kultura*. Leksykon, Warszawa 2001, p. 461.

<sup>28</sup> Polish wooden synagogues, on the inner part of the vaults, featured an illusion of perspective, which seems to refer to the same idea. See: *Żydzi w Polsce*, p. 467.

<sup>29</sup> H. Rosenau, *Vision*, p. 66.

<sup>30</sup> M. Buber, *Opowieści Chasydów*, transl. P. Hertz, Poznań 1986, p. 103.

became huge, with their symbolism clearly referring to the axis reaching the heaven<sup>31</sup>. Mole Antonelliana (1889) in Turin constitutes a great example of this mode, with its specific spire reaching high above the city<sup>32</sup> (fig. 3). Also in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, synagogues in Europe gradually adopted the Moorish style<sup>33</sup>, whose characteristic feature is a usually golden dome located in the center of the plan<sup>34</sup>. Such a form, evoking a vertical orientation, was meant to be understood as a transformation of the light coming down from the sky into the surrounding horizontal sphere and as a reflection of the earthly world in heaven<sup>35</sup>. What is more, in Berlin there is a synagogue located in the Oranienburgerstrasse, that was built in 1866 by Eduard Knoblauch and August Stüler. It also features a golden dome located high above in the central part, topped with the Star of David<sup>36</sup> (fig. 4). Two isosceles triangle overlapping each other forming the Star of David refer both to this dual meaning of Jerusalem as well as to the harmonious connection between the heavenly and earthly worlds<sup>37</sup>.

In an analogy to the Tower, what should be mentioned here are besamins (havdalah spice boxes) – ritual dishes designed for storing fragrant substances and used in the Havdalah ceremony marking the symbolic end of Sabbath<sup>38</sup>. Originally they were made of glass but in the 13<sup>th</sup> century they acquired

<sup>31</sup> C.H. Krinsky, *Synagogue of Europe. Architecture, History, Meaning*, New York 1985, pp. 5-10; H.A. Meek, *The Synagogue*, London 1995, p. 28, 36-57.

<sup>32</sup> According to the original project the building was supposed to be lower, however during the construction the architect convinced the commune to make it taller. Because of that the project exceeded the budget and the building was taken over by the city and converted into Museo Risorgimento. C.H. Krinsky, *Synagogue*, pp. 374-377; H.A. Meek, *The Synagogue*, pp. 202-204.

<sup>33</sup> See: E. Bergman, *Nurt mauretański w architekturze synagog Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w XIX i na początku XX wieku*, Warszawa 2004.

<sup>34</sup> The dome on the rock from the 9<sup>th</sup> century is an important reference here. H. Rosenau, *Vision*, p. 14, 65-70.

<sup>35</sup> Rav Levi explained that the way in which people arrange windows in their houses depends on the fact that the windowframe gets narrower towards the outside so that more light can get inside. However, the Temple's windows were narrowing towards the inside so that the light could symbolically go outside from within the Temple. Pesikta de-Rab Kahana, Piska 21:5, transl. W.G. Braude, I.J. Kapstein, Philadelphia 1975, p. 341; see also: *Midrash Tanhumah*. After: M. Sicker, *Judaism*, p. 47, footnote 26, 27.

<sup>36</sup> Two smaller towers are situated on the sides. They allude to the pillars located in front of the Jerusalem Temple (Jachin and Boaz). C.H. Krinsky, *Synagogue*, pp. 265-270; H.A. Meek, *The Synagogue*, pp. 192-194.

<sup>37</sup> See: A. Eder, *The Star of David. An Ancient Symbol of Integration*, Jerusalem 1987, pp. 50-55, 70-73; G.S. Oegema, *The History of the Shield of David. The Birth of a Symbol*, Frankfurt am Main 1996, pp. 81-92.

<sup>38</sup> See: M. Narkiss, *Origins of the spice box*, *Journal of Jewish Art*, 8, 1981, pp. 28-41; M. Gold Koolik, *The Tower-Shape Tradition in Havdalah Spice Boxes*, [in:] *Tower of Spices*, exhibition catalogue: Chaya Benjamin, Israel Museum, Jerusalem 1982, pp. 7-15; Sh. Spero, *Tower of Spice*,

the shape of a tower made of precious metals that reflected light and referred to the vertical orientation of the Temple and to Jerusalem<sup>39</sup>. As Franz Landsberger, Mordechai Narkiss and others point out, the most common shape these dishes have is a gothic tower or monstrance. Landsberger sets forth a thesis in this context, according to which: if the vertical outline of a gothic cathedral symbolizes the Temple (Jerusalem Tower) then architectonic forms, including the besamine, (e.g., the Old New Syngagogue in Prague) refer to the gothic style through this analogy to the Temple and Jerusalem<sup>40</sup>. What is more, in the European tradition Jerusalem and the Temple are presented as gothic structures, which is visible in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century miniatures by Jean Foucquet for “Antiquities of the Jews” composed by Flavius Josephus<sup>41</sup>.

According to Wilhelm Schlink, the tendency to equate the gothic architecture with the “Heavenly Jerusalem” was initiated in the German and Austrian cultures at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Hans Sedlmayr in his book “Die Entstehung der Kathedrale”, finished in the interwar period but published in 1950<sup>42</sup>. Sedlmayr claimed the cultural crisis distanced people from God and caused common chaos. The only remedy was to be found in restitution of the idea of the cathedral, which would connect human existence with the heavenly sphere<sup>43</sup>. Sedlmayr’s identification of the cathedral with

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Tower of Salvation: An Inquiry into the Logic of Explanation (Book Review), *Journal of Jewish Art* 15, 1989, pp. 116-118. See also: the term “Spicebox”, [in:] E. Frankel, B. Platkin Teutsch, *Jewish Symbols*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>39</sup> In Havdallah blessings the following words are said “the God of Jacob is our fortress” (Is. 12,1 and 12,2-3). The symbolical justification for such a form is also found in many biblical verses: 2 Book of Samuel. 22,51 (“He is the tower of salvation for his king”); Covenant 18,10 and Proverbs 18,13, 51; 61,4 (“The name of the Lord is a fortified tower”). See also: Proverbs 3,9; 4,6,12; 116,13; Ester 8,6.

<sup>40</sup> F. Landsberger, *A History of Jewish Art*, Cincinnati 1946, pp. 10-11.

<sup>41</sup> *Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris*. See: P. Durrieu, *Les Antiquités Judaïques et le peintre Jehan Foucquet*, Paris 1908; G.T. Cox, *Jehan Foucquet, Native of Tours*, London 1931.

<sup>42</sup> H. Sedlmayr, *Die Entstehung der Kathedrale (The Origins of the Cathedral)*, Zurich 1950. Wilhelm Schlink, in the article *The Gothic Cathedral as Heavenly Jerusalem: A Fiction in German Art History* fiercely criticizes Sedlmayr’s hypotheses accusing him of identifying the abstract vision with the physical structure of the building. Nevertheless, as Schlink admits, this concept was present in works of other theoreticians, art historians, artists, etc. *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem In Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, *Journal of the Center for Jewish Art* 23-24, 1997-98, p. 275, 277.

<sup>43</sup> Such a postulate, according to Schlink, was derived by Sedlmayr from an influential book by Wilhelm Worringer, *Formproblem der Gotik*, published in 1911, analyzing this problem through an anthropological perspective. Worringer’s interests and analyses focused around the so called Gotiker (a gothic man), who in the 13<sup>th</sup> century turned the “chaotic ecstasy into a systematized (but also fanciful) form”, that is the gothic construction. However, the modern Gotiker, according to the author, is an interpreter of cathedrals, a figure that is open to a mystical experience described with the term *Erlebniss [Erleben]*. W. Schlink, *The Gothic*, p. 278.



the Heavenly Jerusalem – a neo-romantic vision of a marriage between heaven and earth (excluding however the sculpture iconography) – is, according to Schlink, the result of the expressionist and avant-garde influences present at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They also viewed it as a design composed of vertical lines and crystal-like light<sup>44</sup>. In expressionist and avant-garde traditions, an identical vision is present in sketches, plans and idealistic drawing designs by artists such as Bruno and Max Taut, Walter Gropius, Lyonel Feininger (fig. 5), or in publications by Adolf Behne and primarily Paul Scheerbat<sup>45</sup>. In the book “The New Life: The Architectural Apocalypse”, published in 1902, Scheerbat describes a fantastic vision of glass walls of a “utopian city” that reach the sky. Igor Doukhan identifies this vision directly with the cabalist idea of Jerusalem touching the “Throne of God’s grace”<sup>46</sup>. In another publication, “Glasarchitektur” (Berlin 1914) – which exerted a huge influence on the avant-garde as well as Sedlmayr – Scheerbat defines the glass construction as a sacred and mystical substance that causes the earthly world to dematerialize<sup>47</sup>.

On the other hand, one of the first realization of this kind of German avant-garde was The Glass Pavilion built in 1914 and designed by Bruno Taut<sup>48</sup>, which in the literature of the topic is often compared with Libeskind’s building<sup>49</sup> (fig. 6). It is a fourteen-angle tower topped with a dome that is covered with glass trapezoids. Such a composition – in accordance with the cabalist and Talmud perception – also creates an illusion of light reflexes, viewed as a connection between heaven and earth, and is based on the idea of a vertical axis alluding to the mystical Jerusalem. It expresses the harmony between the horizontal space of the profane and the vertical sphere of the

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<sup>44</sup> Sedlmayr often uses the term “crystal and glass” to refer to the above-mentioned Apocalypse of St. John 21:11,18. According to Sedlmayr this is Ganzheitsanalyse (holistic analysis). After: W. Schlink, *The Gothic*, pp. 275, 277, 280-282.

<sup>45</sup> See for example: W. Pehnt, *Die Architektur des Expressionismus* (“Der Geist der Gotik”), Stuttgart 1973. The idea of glass architecture is deeply rooted in the Russian avant-garde (Vladimir Tatlin, Kazimierz Malewicz, Ivan Leonidov, El Lissitzky and others). See: I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, pp. 569-570.

<sup>46</sup> I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, p. 565. The author in this interpretation cites G. Scholem as an authority. *Zur Kabbala und ihrer Symbolik*, Frankfurt am Main 1989.

<sup>47</sup> See: I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, p. 565; W. Schlink, *The Gothic*, p. 277.

<sup>48</sup> Books by P. Scheerbat constituted an important inspiration for B. Taut. I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, pp. 566-67. See also: B. Taut, *Die Stadtkrone*, Jena 1919; W. Schlink, *The Gothic*, p. 277.

<sup>49</sup> See for example: P. Chametzky, *Rebuilding the Nation: Norman Forster’s ‘Reichstag’ Renovation and Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum Berlin*, *Centropa. A Journal of Central European Architecture and Related Arts*, 1, 3, 2001, pp. 245-264.

sacred<sup>50</sup>. Inside the building, Taut designed a cascade fontaine referring to the myth according to which the Jerusalem Temple covers an opening in the ground that leads to underground waters<sup>51</sup>. Taut's architectonic metaphor became an inspiration for Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's skyscraper located in the Friedrichstrasse street in Berlin (fig. 7) which Libeskind mentions in "City Edge, Berlin"<sup>52</sup>. The intention of van der Rohe was to create "a play of reflections on the building's surface in order to overcome its monotony and make it dematerialize"<sup>53</sup>. Thus, the building was supposed to appear to be rising to the sky, defying gravity, but was also meant to become a vertical axis linking heaven and earth<sup>54</sup>. The avant-garde's message was the belief that by means of the architectonic axis, the world can achieve perfection and harmony<sup>55</sup>. This utopian tower, as Doukhan writes, became a fundamental symbol of the urban center<sup>56</sup>, with the visual topography (of Berlin in this case) being unified with the image of the New Jerusalem<sup>57</sup>. For the Berlin Jews, the me-

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<sup>50</sup> "This composition had connotations of the sacral vertical of the ideal Jerusalem, as it was interpreted in Cabbalistic and Talmudic perspectives in which Jerusalem comes into being like an axis, which germinates from underground and tries to reach Heavens". I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, p. 567.

<sup>51</sup> This is an architectonic allegory of victory over chaos represented by untamed waters. F. Burrows, *Some cosmological Patterns in Babilonian Religion*, [in:] S.H. Hooke (ed.), *The Labyrinth*, New York 1935, ff. 50, after: I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, p. 567.

<sup>52</sup> D. Libeskind, *City Edge*, p. 18, 25.

<sup>53</sup> After: I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, p. 567, 569.

<sup>54</sup> The horizontal plan of the building was shaped into a three-leaf flower, which refers to the medieval painting depicting the world with Jerusalem in the center of the world map by Heinrich Bunting in *Itinerarium Sacrae Scripture* from 1581. Jerusalem is located in the center as a circle with three leaves symbolizing Europe, Asia and Africa, surrounded by the oceans. I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, p. 567, 569 and G. Ankori, *Behind the Walls: The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Contemporary Palestinian Art*, *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem In Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, ed. B. Kühnel, *Journal of the Center for Jewish Art* 23-24, 1997-98, p. 576.

<sup>55</sup> Avant-garde artists believed that thanks to the transcendental axis the earthly world could achieve harmony and perfection. Being intent on creating this new ideal space, the avant-garde uses the idea of the axis-tower as a key for this creation and as the visual focal point for the avant-garde "Apocalypse". I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, p. 574.

<sup>56</sup> The most abstract and fundamental of the Holy City's symbolic representations involves its being an axis, vertically connecting the heavenly and earthly worlds, and thus being a space of correlation between world energies. I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, pp. 565-7.

<sup>57</sup> The symbolic and utopian image of the holy city merged with a transcendental image of the future and the heavenly Jerusalem and with its earthly and futuristic "prototype". I. Doukhan points at the structural similarity of the archetypal form of Jerusalem and its modernist vision, referring to the intertextual perspective of Michael Riffaterre. According to M. Riffaterre the intertextual perception is directed not at the "lexical" dependency and influence but at the structural similarities of the text and intertext. This structural likeness denotes the basic semantic resemblance. M. Riffaterre, *Semiotique intertextuelle: l'interpretant*, *Revue d'Esthetique* 1-2, 1972, p. 132, after: I. Doukhan, *Beyond*, p. 565.

tropolis was synonymous with this new and common belief in the possibility of achieving the state of perfect social harmony through architecture and art<sup>58</sup>. Thus, the notion of a cathedral – an obvious allusion to the Temple – becomes for the avant-garde a universal symbol, that includes elements of mysticism, idealism, utopia and the Messianic faith in restitution<sup>59</sup>. “Cathedral of the future”, as Martin Gropius wrote in his manifesto, should be a “crystal symbol of the new religion”<sup>60</sup>.

The theory of the avant-garde as well as the German expressionism, including the complex ideological foundations, is very often referred to by Libeskind<sup>61</sup>. He writes in his biography that:

crystals are among the most perfect creations of nature (...) and are often included in my projects (...), [they] absorb light and reflect it at the same time. They are viewed as complicated forms with many sides (...). I could talk about them for hours. They are a wonder to me. (...) Architecture is also crystalline. It's governed by rules of geometry<sup>62</sup>.

Obviously, Libeskind's museum is not made of glass, however its surface is covered with silvery, zined metal that generates the shiny effect across the whole structure. Thanks to that the building acquires features that can be subject to the same kind of interpretation as described above<sup>63</sup>. So the reflexivity of Taut's tower, synagogue domes and van der Rohe's skyscraper as well as Libeskind's museum are direct, symbolic equivalents of the Jerusalem Tower. Although the message they convey is the same, the Jewish museum's building is arranged horizontally. A bird's eye view reveals the shape of a toppled and crushed tower (fig. 1). The original and essential meaning of the building, that is its verticality, has been destroyed and turned into a hori-

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<sup>58</sup> See for example: L. Dawson, *Berlin Morphology*, *Architectural Review* 1180, 1995, pp. 54-55; *Berlin Metropolis: Jews and the New Culture 1890-1918*, ed. E. Bilski, Berkeley 1999; M. Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, New Haven 1996; A. Elon, *The Pity of It All: A History of the Jews in Germany, 1743-1933*, New York 2002; R.I. Cohen, *Urban Visibility and Biblical Visions: Jewish Culture in Western and Central Europe in Modern Age*, [in:] D. Biale (ed.), *Cultures of the Jews. A New History*, New York 2002, pp. 731-796.

<sup>59</sup> W. Schlink, *The Gothic*, pp. 277-278.

<sup>60</sup> U.M. Schneede, *Die 20-er Jahre. Manifeste und Dokumente deutscher Künstler*, Cologne 1979, p. 165.

<sup>61</sup> D. Libeskind, *Between the Lines*, [in:] K. Feireiss (ed.), *Daniel Libeskind*, p. 59; (A published conversation between Libeskind and J. Derrida, [in:] D. Libeskind, A.P.A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix*, p. 113). See also: D. Libeskind, *Hamage to El Lissitzky* [in:] idem, *Daniel Libeskind: The Space*, p. 76.

<sup>62</sup> D. Libeskind, *Przełom*, p. 176.

<sup>63</sup> This material is also closely connected with the history of Berlin architecture. See: H. Stolzenberg, *The Jewish Museum*, p. 6.

zontal arrangement. It could be said that this is a kind of mingling of the profane with the sacred.

At this point it should be emphasized that one of the basic requirements that the participants of the contest for the Museum design had to meet in their projects was a reference to *Shoah*, with the opening of the museum meant to mark the 330<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishing the Jewish commune in Berlin. So this “mystic, shiny axis” the construction of which took almost three and half centuries, has been toppled and smashed during The Night of Broken Glass (*Kristallnacht*)<sup>64</sup>.

Only in this light do Libeskind’s words seem clear. He said that “the history of the Berlin Jews is closely intertwined with the history of Modernism (the avant-garde), but is also connected with a certain breakdown in history”<sup>65</sup>. This mode of interpretation is also confirmed by Vera Bendt, who writes that “this cut up zig-zag structure symbolizes the shattered backbone of the Jewish community”<sup>66</sup>. Moreover, Bendt’s interpretation discussed by James E. Young who perceives the building as the culminating point of the Jewish history of Berlin<sup>67</sup>.

Libeskind’s museum is a complex, spatial architectonic structure that might be viewed as a suggestive metaphore of destruction<sup>68</sup>, evoking both emotional engagement and theoretical reflections<sup>69</sup>. This toppled tower synonymous with destruction is an imaginary figure, a universal concept. In this

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<sup>64</sup> *Kristallnacht: The Unleashing of the Holocaust*, eds. A. Read, D. Fisher, New York 1989; H. Schultheis, *Die Reichskristallnacht in Deutschland nach Augenzeugenberichten*, Bad Neustädter Beiträge zur Geschichte und Heimatkunde Frankens 3, Bad Neustadt a. d. Saale 1985.

<sup>65</sup> D. Libeskind, *Between the Lines*, [in:] K. Feireiss (ed.), Daniel Libeskind, p. 59. Such a comparison of Libeskind’s project and the avant-garde is also made by Anthony Vidler who mentions such names as: Tatlin, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, Kandinsky. A. Vidler, *Warped Space. Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, Cambridge 2000, p. 237.

<sup>66</sup> V. Bendt, *The Model of Integration*, [in:] K. Feireiss (ed.), Daniel Libeskind, s. 29.

<sup>67</sup> J.E. Young, *At Memory’s Edge. After-Image of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, New Haven-London 2000, p. 165, footnote 27.

<sup>68</sup> As J.E. Young writes: “Libeskind’s projects are more like the sketches of the museum’s ruins; a house whose wings have been broken and reshaped by the jolt of genocide”. J.E. Young, *At Memory’s*, p. 163.

<sup>69</sup> In the methodological matter, apart from the above-mentioned publication by A. Vidler, *Warped Space – I refer to: N. Ellin, Shelter from the Storm or Form Follows Fear and Vice Versa*, [in:] eadem (ed.), *Architecture of Fear*, New York 1995, pp. 13-45; D. Preziosi, *Modernity Again: The Museum as Tromp l’oeil*, [in:] P. Brunette, D. Wills (eds.), *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts. Art, Media, Architecture*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 141-150; M. Wigley, *The Domestication of the House: Deconstruction after Architecture*, [in:] ibidem, pp. 203-227; A. Benjamin, *Present Hope. Philosophy, Architecture, Judaism*, London-New York 1997 (5: *The Architecture of Hope: Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum*), pp. 103-118.

context, Libeskind's design seems to be related with the the Hebrew word *churban* (destruction)<sup>70</sup>, which describes the demolition of the first and the second Jerusalem (586 BC and 70 AD). The term *churban* refers to the unusual structure of the building, that looks like a toppled tower. According to Ignaz Maybaum<sup>71</sup>, the Holocaust – viewed as a significant factor influencing the modern times – should be called “the third *churban*” since it denotes “destruction that closes one epoch and opens another”<sup>72</sup>. Thus, expanding on Maybaum's thought, it is a kind of demolition present in the contemporary philosophy, art and architecture that gives the hope of restitution, in the Jewish tradition called as *tikkun olam*, meaning “repairing the world”<sup>73</sup>.

This multifaceted metaphore contained in the building's architecture is also present in modern art that deals with the Shoah-related issues<sup>74</sup>. Thus, in analogy to Libeskind's broken structure, it is worth mentioning an oil painting from 1966 entitled “Flying Spice Box” by an Israeli artist Yosl Bergner (fig. 8). Bergner's besamin (spice box) floating above a destroyed city, according to Avram Kampf symbolizes the fallen society<sup>75</sup>. It looks like a “detached tower” drifting in search of an adequate space among the debris, which clearly alludes to the concept of *Shoah* and *tikkun olam*, found in the shape

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<sup>70</sup> Also spelled *hurban* which in modern Hebrew means “ruin”. See: E. Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English*, Jerusalem 1987, p. 230.

<sup>71</sup> Ignaz Maybaum (1897-1976) was a rabbi coming from Vienna. He was active in the 1920s and 30s in Bingen, Frankfurt and Berlin. See: Ignaz Maybaum: A Reader, ed. N. de Lange, New York 2001; D. Cohn-Sherbok, Ignaz Maybaum, [in] idem (ed.), *Fifty Key Jewish Thinkers*, London 1997, pp. 90-91.

<sup>72</sup> I. Maybaum, *The Face of God After Auschwitz*, Amsterdam 1965, p. 32. Quote after: S. Schreiner, *Żydowska myśl teologiczna po Oświęcimiu*, [in:] M. Dziwisz (ed.), *Judaizm, Biblioteka Pisma literacko-artystycznego*, Kraków 1989, p. 215 (212-223). See also: I. Maybaum, *Man and Catastrophe. Sermons preached at the refugees' services of the United Synagogue*, London 1941; S.T. Katz, *Faith after the Holocaust: Four Approaches*, *Encyclopaedia Judaica Year Book 1975/1976*, pp. 92-105; E. Fackenheim, *The Human Condition after Auschwitz*, [in:] J. Neusner (ed.), *Understanding Jewish Theology*, New York 1973, pp. 165-175; E. Wiesel, *An Outline of Modern Jewish Theology*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 153-162.

<sup>73</sup> See for example: E.N. Dorff, *The Way into Tikkun Olam*, Woodstock 2005; *Tikkun Olam: Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law*, eds. D. Schatz, Ch.I. Waxman, N.J. Diament, Northvale 1997; M. Baigel, *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust*, New Brunswick and London 1997 (4: *Tikkun Olam*), pp. 51-58; idem, *Social Concern and Tikkun Olam in Jewish American Art*, *Ars Judaica. The Bar-Ilan Journal of Jewish Art* 8, 2012, pp. 55-80.

<sup>74</sup> See for example: Z. Amishai-Maisels, *Depiction and Interpretation: The Influence of the Holocaust on the Visual Arts*, New York 1993; *After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art – exhibition catalogue, ed. M. Bohm-Duchen, Sunderland 1995; *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auschwitz*, ed. E. Sicher, Urbana 1990; E. Jedlińska, *Sztuka po Holocauście*, Łódź 2001.

<sup>75</sup> A. Kampf, *Chagal to Kitaj. Jewish Experience in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art*, London 1990, p. 88.

of the museum. In this light, it can be said that Bergner's and Libeskind's work are iconically parallel.

In the original project, Libeskind intended the museum's walls to be tilted across the whole length of the building at the inclination of about 20 degrees<sup>76</sup> (figs. 9, 10). The walls were supposed to lean eastwards<sup>77</sup>, which suggestively turns the building towards Jerusalem – a practice similar to the one locating the Torah ark on the synagogue wall that is facing Jerusalem<sup>78</sup> or within the so called *mizrah*, an ornamental wall plaque and Hebrew word meaning “east”<sup>79</sup>. The original idea of the architect, as James E. Young suggests, stems from the desire to break down the building's structure<sup>80</sup>. Libeskind describes his architectonic projects in terms of a “decomposition”, which Anthony Vidler calls a “fragmentary imitation”<sup>81</sup>. Young continues Vidler's thought and says that instead of evoking a rescue, salvation or redemption by being a solid and unshaken whole, the building's form presents a break or disturbance, that requires the utopian repairing – *tikkun olam*<sup>82</sup>. Ewa Domańska describes Libeskind's project as an infinite, fragmented, atomized, broken building that resembles ruins and highlights the lack of concordance between the function and the form<sup>83</sup>. This makes the design anti-redemptive, unable to erase sins. Instead the building strengthens the memory of the events that cannot be domesticated, forgotten or redeemed<sup>84</sup>. Against the jury's expectations of the design to “medically interfere” with the city's space, Libeskind paradoxically leaves it irreparable. His structure represents

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<sup>76</sup> However, the high costs of this conception prevented it from being realized, as the architect writes in his Autobiography, pp. 66-67. See also: D. Libeskind, *Between the Lines*, [in:] K. Feireiss (ed.), *Daniel Libeskind*, p. 58.

<sup>77</sup> R. Bothe, *The Berlin Museum and its Extension*, [in:] K. Feireiss (ed.), *Daniel Libeskind*, p. 35.

<sup>78</sup> The Torah ark is a place (a kind of alcove or cabinet) for storing Torah rolls in the synagogue.

<sup>79</sup> Such a concept can be found in another project by Libeskind, that is, the *Synagogue/Jewish Community Center in Duisburg*, that the architect refers to by writing that the building is “looking towards the East, towards the light of Jerusalem”. D. Libeskind, *The Aleph Before the Beit. Jewish Community Center and the Synagogue, Duisburg*, [in:] D. Libeskind, A.P.A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix*, p. 98.

<sup>80</sup> J.E. Young, *Daniel Libeskind's New Jewish Architecture*, [in:] C. Wolf (ed.), *Daniel Libeskind and the Contemporary Jewish Museum: New Jewish Architecture from Berlin to San Francisco*, San Francisco 2008, p. 49.

<sup>81</sup> A. Vidler, *The architectural uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, Cambridge 1992, p. 70.

<sup>82</sup> J.E. Young, *At Memory's*, p. 182.

<sup>83</sup> E. Domańska, “Niechaj umarli grzebią żywych”. *Monumentalna przeciw-Historia Daniela Libeskinda*, *Teksty drugie* 102, 2004, p. 90 (78-102). See also: N. Stead, *The Ruins of History: Allegories of Destruction in Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum* [online]. *Open Museum Journal* 2, 2000 [access: 2009-07-15]. Available at: <<http://hosting.collectionsaustralia.net/omj/vol2/stead.html>>.

<sup>84</sup> E. Domańska, “Niechaj umarli”, pp. 90-92.

something destroyed and something destructive, that leaves a “damaged” within the city’s landscape<sup>85</sup>. Nevertheless, one of the judges, an architect Josef Paul Kleihaus, deemed the project “irresistably adequate for the task”<sup>86</sup>. The critics believed the project to be a complete work, a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerke* which does not need any justification of its presence. It is, as Young states, “a devastated site that could now enshrine its broken forms”<sup>87</sup>, and at the same time is “an architectonic form of a lament, materialized state of experiencing melancholy”<sup>88</sup>.

According to Kurt W. Forster, Libeskind’s shattered structure makes us realize that the original idea of the city viewed as a shelter built around a Temple, gave way in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the notion of the Temple’s destruction<sup>89</sup>. In this context, Forster compares Libeskind’s construction to etchings by Giovanni Battista Piranesi from 1745-1750, explaining that:

There are hardly any buildings, with the exception of the “Carceri d’Invenzione” by Piranesi, which bear this double burden of representing both actual buildings and mental structures, and which therefore have to submit to being measured by both standards: the durability of their ideas and the imaginative faculty of their design<sup>90</sup>.

Moreover, Peter Chametzky refers to Forster’s comparison and confirms the adequacy of this juxtaposition of Libeskind’s building and “Carceri”<sup>91</sup>. The main inspiration for the works included in “Carceri” (1760) and “Della Magnificenza ed Architettura de’ Romani” (1761) was, according to Lola Kantor Kazovsky, a publication by Juan Battista Villalpando entitled “In Ezechielem Explanationes et Apparatus Urbis ac Templi Hierosolimitani, Commentariis et Imaginibus Illustratus” (1596-1605) that constituted an imaginary architectonic reconstruction of the Solomon’s Temple<sup>92</sup>. According to the

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<sup>85</sup> After: J.E. Young, *At Memory’s*, p. 170.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 163.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 170. Moreover, Young suggests a comparison between this structure to the Western Wall in Jerusalem – the remains of the demolished Temple, which is a clear analogy to the concept of the toppled tower in Berlin. J.E Young, *Daniel Libeskind’s*, p. 57.

<sup>89</sup> K.W. Forster, *Monstrum Mirabile et Audax*, [in:] K. Feireiss (ed.), *Daniel Libeskind*, p. 17.

<sup>90</sup> *Idem*, *Mildew Green is the House of Forgetting*, [in:] D. Libeskind, A.P.A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix*, p. 7 (the title of this chapter is a fragment of Paul Celan’s poetry, *Gedichte in Zwei Banden*, Frankfurt am Main 1975, I, p. 22).

<sup>91</sup> P. Chametzky, *Rebuilding the Nation*, p. 258.

<sup>92</sup> L. Kantor Kazovsky, *Piranesi and Villalpando: The Concept of the Temple in European Architectural Theory, The Real and Ideal Jerusalem In Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, *Journal of the Center for Jewish Art* 23-24, 1997-98, p. 226-244.

theories of that time – which from today’s perspective seem contentious – Greek architectonic orders were considered an ideal that could be traced back to the Biblical texts, that is, “instructions” given by God<sup>93</sup>. Thus, they are architectonic presentations, as Piranesi wanted, *per via di congettura*<sup>94</sup>, that is, created by assumption and based on imagination, fantasy and interpretation<sup>95</sup>. The word *congettura* (meaning “conjecture”), as Kazovsky stresses further, is defined as “judgement based on circumstances that do not have a direct connection with the subject of the judgement”, which makes them something opposite to experience<sup>96</sup>.

This motif, in turn, leads back to the idea of the cathedral as well as the German term *Raum* meaning “space”<sup>97</sup>. According to Hans Jantzen the word *Raum* has a double meaning; on the one hand it refers to the organized space within the building, but on the other it denotes a specific experience or optical impression that makes the viewer’s perception go beyond the specified structure<sup>98</sup>. So, according to Hansen, “the space of the Gothic cathedral is the symbol of spacelessness”<sup>99</sup>. In this context, what constitutes a very suggestive comparison is a painting by Caspar David Friedrich “The Abbey in the Oakwood”<sup>100</sup> from 1810 presenting ruins of a gothic building where a window is all that remained. This window could be seen as blurring the difference

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<sup>93</sup> Writing of Josephus, who described the Jachin and Boaz pillars as Corinthian, were also an important source. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 15.11.5 (414). After: L. Kantor Kazowski, Piranesi, pp. 233, 243.

<sup>94</sup> G.B. Piranesi, *Della Magnificenza*, p. cxi (by means of conjectures). After: L. Kantor Kazowski, Piranesi, p. 234.

<sup>95</sup> The author explains the word “textology” as an analysis of various texts concerning the object itself – the Jerusalem Temple in this case, that in her opinion constitutes one of the main tools of contemporary humanistic studies. L. Kantor Kazowski, Piranesi, p. 278.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 244.

<sup>97</sup> According to W. Schlink, the 20<sup>th</sup>-century approach to Gothic has its roots in the idea of chaos. This is why the Gothic architecture can’t be described by means of rational criteria or logic derived from the analysis of composition. The only correct way to perceive it is individual experience, “amorphic impression” *Erlebnis [Erleben]* (experience), allowing to “capture” the cathedral as a whole, that is, to “experience” it in a mystical vision rather than through a rational discourse. W. Schlink, *The Gothic*, p. 278.

<sup>98</sup> As Schlink writes after Jantzen, light, the illuminative character of the Gothic walls, huge windows and stained-glasses are key aspects in this experiencing (*Erleben*) – H. Jantzen, *Über den gotischen Kirchenraum und andere Aufsätze*, Berlin 1951, pp. 7-20. After: W. Schlink, *The Gothic*, p. 279.

<sup>99</sup> *Der Raum der gotischen Katedrale ist das Symbol eines Raumlosen*. After: W. Schlink, *The Gothic*, p. 279.

<sup>100</sup> See: T.J. Żuchowski, *Między naturą, a historią. Malarstwo Caspara Davida Friedricha*, Szczecin 1993; *idem*, *Patriotyczne mity i toposy. Malarstwo niemieckie 1800-1848*, Poznań 1991.



between the inside and the outside and merging these opposing concepts into one.

In analogy to Libeskind's museum, the aspect of space is also undertaken by Anthony Vidler who, after Schindler, uses the term *Raum*, which ideally reflects the postulate of conscious reinterpretation of how spatial perception<sup>101</sup>. Vidler says that Libeskind "creates architecture which simply does not build space or its shape, instead, quite literally, he builds outside of the space"<sup>102</sup>. By experiencing the "sprawled" building and its complicated interior, as Vidler says, we find ourselves in a phenomenological world, perfectly suitable for Hedegger and Sartre. We don't feel at home because of the broken lines, torn and dangerously tilted walls, empty rooms as well as hidden entrances and exits<sup>103</sup>. Such a structure consisting of deformed interiors is the result of the metaphorical "shattering" of the whole outer structure understood as toppling of the tower. It is, as Vidler continues, falling into and experiencing the *uncanny* as well as enduring the dangerous instrumentality of the building that shakes senses and the body<sup>104</sup>. Thus, this symbolic concept of a demolished temple refers to a specific state of mind and a humanistic condition, understood as the effect of a toppled tower.

In relation to the above-mentioned words by Maybaum, who claimed that *churban* is a destruction that brings an end to the old era and starts a new one, it should be said that according to Libeskind, the museum marks a specific "zero point" – the beginning of the new German-Jewish history<sup>105</sup>. Also Alois Martin Muller in his analysis of Libeskind's projects mentions the tenth Muse, that is, "the Zero Time Muse" – the Muse without history<sup>106</sup>. Such interpretations are confirmed by Bernhard Schneider who writes that we "have undoubtedly reached the end of history and we are starting from point zero"<sup>107</sup>. What is more, the above-quoted Forster connects Libeskind's project

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<sup>101</sup> A. Vidler, *Warped Space*, p. 237 (Building in Empty Spaces. Daniel Libeskind and the Post-spatial Void).

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 238.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>105</sup> D. Libeskind, *Out of Line*, [in:] D. Libeskind, A.P.A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix*, p. 26. See also: N. Isenberg, *Reading "Between the Lines"*. Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum and the Shattered Symbiosis, [in:] L. Morris, J. Zipes (eds.), *Unlikely History. The Changing German-Jewish Symbiosis*, New York 2002, pp. 155-179.

<sup>106</sup> A.M. Muller, *Daniel Libeskind's Muses*, [in:] D. Libeskind, A.P.A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix*, p. 116.

<sup>107</sup> B. Schneider, *Daniel Libeskind's Architecture in the Context of Urban Space*, [in:] D. Libeskind, A.P.A. Belloli, *Radix-Matrix*, p. 126.

with Shoah-related questions: “how was the inconceivable possible?”<sup>108</sup> The thesis set forth by Forester is also taken up by Chametzky, who reformulates it so that it says “how can this construction that was impossible to be built exist and function?”<sup>109</sup> He answers the question using words by Young, who claims that this architectonic structure should be viewed as a process, not an object<sup>110</sup>. Thus, this broken and deformed structure is closely connected with the complex process called *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, that is, coming to terms with the past and the issue of memory<sup>111</sup>.

### **Artur Kameczycki** **MUZEUUM LIBESKINDA W BERLINIE JAKO WIEŻA, KTÓRA RUNĘŁA**

#### **Streszczenie**

Koncepcja Daniela Libeskinda realizacji Muzeum Żydowskiego w Berlinie jest projektem, który wygrał w konkursie zorganizowanym przez rząd niemiecki w 1988 r. Pomysł architekta został uznany za najciekawszy, przedłożono go do realizacji i w 10 lat później gmach otwarto dla publiczności. Budowla ta wzniesiona została na „zygzakowatym” planie, a jej forma zewnętrzna jawi się jako zestawiona z kubicznych brył, nieregularna, kanciasta, blaszana konstrukcja o płaskim dachu. Taka struktura przestrzenna i forma świetlistej, cynkowej budowli odwołuje się – na wielu płaszczyznach znaczeniowych – do mistycznej koncepcji Jeruzalem, utożsamianego z symboliką wieży, tj. jej wyobrażeniem metaforycznym. Niemniej jednak – jak sugeruje powyższy tytuł – jest to wieża przewrócona. Przyjęcie takiego założenia wymaga jednak naświetlenia wielu złożonych kwestii z zakresu zarówno judaistycznej, jak i chrześcijańskiej wizji Niebiańskiej Jerozolimy (Nowego Jeruzalem), idei Świątyni, teorii architektury (synagog i katedr gotyckich), ikonologii oraz tradycji Awangardy, a także utopijnej wizji miasta i historycznych relacji niemiecko-żydowskich. To obszernie objaśnienie jest niezbędne dla ukazania, jak głęboko w architektonicznej tradycji europejskiej ugruntowuje się projekt Libeskinda.

<sup>108</sup> K. Forster, *Mildew Green*, p. 7.

<sup>109</sup> P. Chametzky, *Rebuilding the Nation*, p. 258.

<sup>110</sup> J.E. Young, *At Memory's*, p. 163; P. Chametzky, *Rebuilding the Nation*, p. 261.

<sup>111</sup> Another important study of this topic can be found in the book edited by Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska, *Pamięć Zbiorowa i kulturowa. Współczesna perspektywa niemiecka*, Kraków 2009 (esp. Wprowadzenie, p. 7-38).



Fig. 1. Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin. Bird's eye view [online]. E-architect [access: 2014-02-14]. Available at: <[http://www.e-architect.co.uk/images/jpgs/berlin/juedisches\\_museum\\_cguenterschneider\\_3.jpg](http://www.e-architect.co.uk/images/jpgs/berlin/juedisches_museum_cguenterschneider_3.jpg)>



Fig. 2. William West, Israelites passing through the Wilderness, oil painting, 1845.  
Source: H.A. MEEK, *The Synagogue*, London 1995, p. 28



Fig. 3. The Mole Antonelliana in Turin, 1889, by Alessandro Antonelli.  
Source: H.A. Meek, *The Synagogue*, London 1995, p. 203



Fig. 4. Synagogue in the Oranienburger Straße, Berlin, 1866 by Eduard Knoblach and August Stüler. Source: *Neue Synagoge* [online]. Wikipedia [access: 2014-04-26].  
Available at: <[https://de..org/wiki/Neue\\_Synagoge\\_\(Berlin\)](https://de..org/wiki/Neue_Synagoge_(Berlin))>

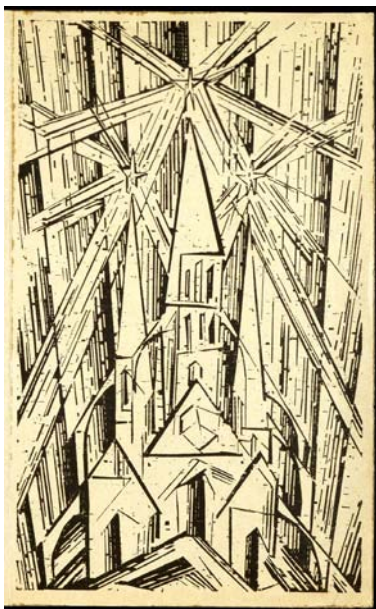


Fig. 5. Lionel Feininger, Cathedral, Bauhaus-Program, Drawing, 1919. Source: *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem In Jewish*, ed. B. Kühnel, *Christian and Islamic Art, Journal of the Center for Jewish Art* 1997-98, 23-24, p. 278



Fig. 6a. Bruno Taut, The Pavilion of Glass Industry at the Werkbund Exhibition, 1914. Source: *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem In Jewish*, ed. B. Kühnel, *Christian and Islamic Art, Journal of the Center for Jewish Art* 1997-98, 23-24, p. 567

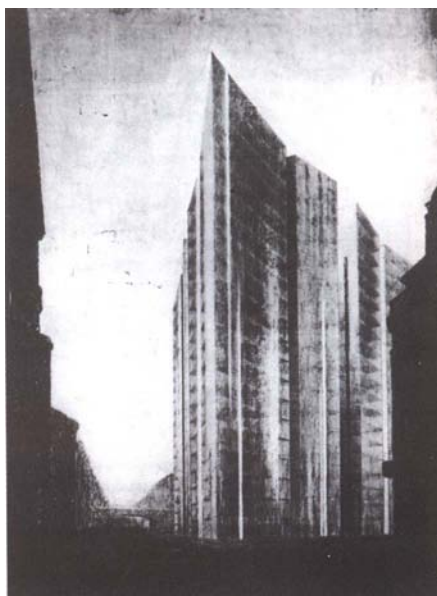


Fig. 6b. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, design for skyscraper, Friedrichstrasse, Berlin, 1919 (Bauhaus Archives, III/338). Source: *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem In Jewish*, ed. B. Kühnel, Christian and Islamic Art, Journal of the Center for Jewish Art 1997-98, 23-24, p. 568

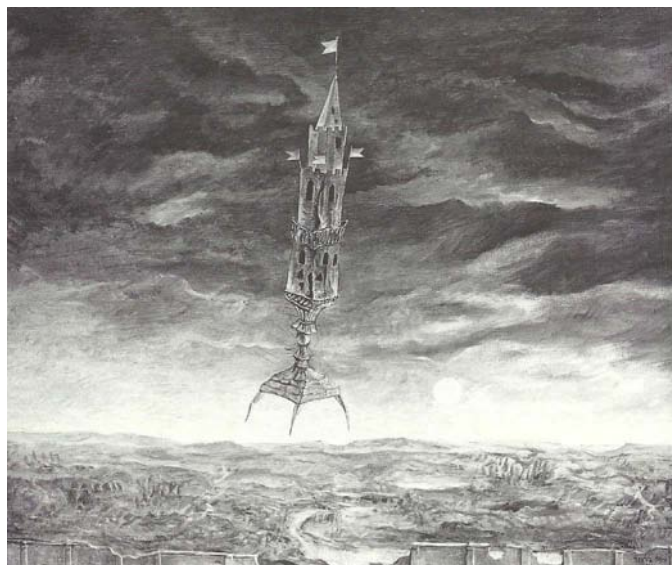


Fig. 7. Yosel Bergner, *Flying Spice Box*, oil painting, 1966 (Museum of Art, Ein Harod). Source: A. Kampf, *Chagall to Kitaj. Jewish Experience in 20th Century Art*, London 1990, p. 88



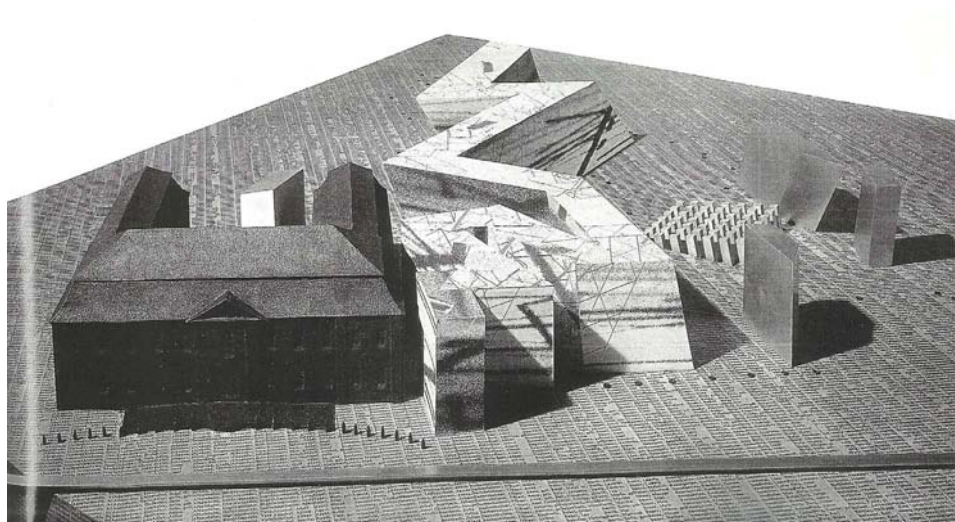
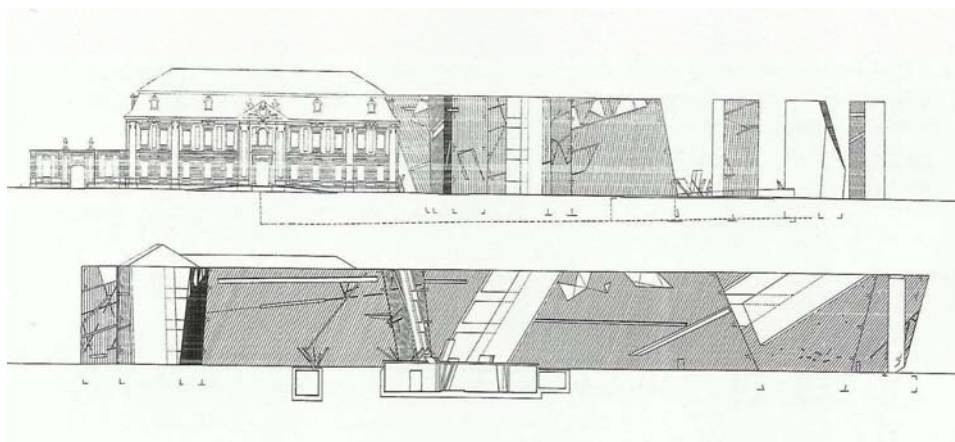


Fig. 8a and 8b. Vertical section and model of the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind.  
Source: *Free Spirit in Architecture* (Omnibus volume), ed. A. Papadakis, London 1992,  
pp. 184-185

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