

The Investigation of Churches “Under the Bells” and the Churches-belfries in the Russian Architecture of the Late 17th — Early 18th Century: Traditions and Innovations (Preliminary Ideas)*

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Abstract—The following article is devoted to a fascinating period in Moscow architecture — the years under the reign of Peter the Great. The architectural style of this period is commonly referred to as “Naryshkin” style. Among the monuments of the Naryshkin style, the important place belongs to the churches “under the bells” and the churches-belfries. The best examples of the Moscow sacred architecture around 1700 demonstrate these types. The profound study of the churches “under the bells” and the churches-belfries in the Russian architecture of the late 17th - early 18th century, investigation of the origins of their composition and the interaction of traditions and innovations, as well as the attempt to highlight different typology options give us a chance to take a fresh look at the problem of the formation of the Naryshkin style.

Keywords—*Russian sacred architecture; traditional and innovative types; churches “under the bells”*

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of the formation of new volumetric compositions in the Russian church architecture of the late 17th – early 18th century has been of interest to Russian art historians for over a century. The new architectural style, traditionally called Naryshkin style, which appeared in the capital's monuments at the very beginning of the 1680s, existed for about three decades, leaving a bright trace in the architectural appearance of the capital and its surroundings. Among the monuments of this stylistic direction, a significant place is occupied by the churches “under the bells”, in which the bell tier is located directly above the

premises of the church, as well as belfries with churches in the lower and middle tiers. In contrast to the churches “under the bells”, sometimes referred to as churches “under the belfries”, it is not the church that plays the main role there, but namely the belfry so, this type is not independent. Usually, such monuments are parts of the architectural ensemble. It is important to note that many recognized masterpieces of Naryshkin style are the churches “under the bells”. Among them are the churches of the Intercession at Fili, the Trinity church in Troitse-Lykovo, the church of the Savior in Ubory, etc. Among the best churches-belfries there are the famous belfries of Novodevichy nunnery and Vysokopetrovsky monastery.

A number of publications of Russian specialists are devoted to the study of churches “under the bells” and belfries in ancient Russian architecture. The most complete among them is the article by W. W. Kawelmacher, in which the author examines in detail various versions of the belfries and churches of the “under the bells” group in the old Russian period [1]. V. N. Podklyuchnikov, who thoroughly studied the three above-mentioned patrimonial churches “under the bells” of the late 17th century, suggested putting such structures into a separate architectural type. In its formation, the researcher saw the development of authentic national traditions [2].

When researching the architecture of Naryshkin style, the emphasis is usually put on the study of a new volumetric “octagon on a cube” solution, the appearance of centric petal and three-partite compositions and a new system of decoration. The decoration of the Naryshkin style is associated with the influence of the Polish Renaissance [3]. An important attempt to trace the new and the traditional elements in the formation of the main types of Naryshkin style belongs to the O. I. Braitseva [4]. The method of monument classification by volumetric compositions with an emphasis on differences in the nature of top sections was

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actively used by V. I. Pluzhnikov [5]. At the same time, the study of churches "under the bells" and churches-belfries in Russian architecture in the late 17th – early 18th century was not the subject of special research. Foreign specialists in church architecture did not raise the issues of studying this topic in their works.

Despite the good degree of study of individual monuments of Russian church architecture of the late 17th-early 18th century, relating to the "under the bells" composition, and churches-belfries, nowadays, there are no separate scientific studies, which would have revealed the most complete range of such buildings erected in the capital and the surrounding area in the era of Naryshkin style. Neither there is a detailed systematization and classification of the compositional variants of such buildings. Monuments which have been introduced into scientific circulation long time ago are not investigated, in particular, from the point of view of the specific location of the bell tier, the design of the internal staircase leading to the belfry. There is also no comparative analysis of the designs of the run to the bell tier in different monuments. In addition there is no analysis of subsequent bell tier usage, etc. Experts have not expressed any doubt about the traditional character of these schemes and their direct connection with the period of ancient Russian architecture.

A separate study of the churches "under the bells" and the churches-belfries in the Russian architecture of the late 17th – early 18th century; the search for the sources of the appearance of the "under the bells" compositional type in this period; the study of different variants of the typology, and identification of the interaction mechanisms of traditions and innovations in the formation of new spatial solutions provide a fresh look at the problem of the formation of the Naryshkin style in general. In this paper, we will try to present our preliminary thoughts on this topic.

II. THE CHURCHES "UNDER THE BELLS"

It is believed that innovative centric and three-partite compositions came to the Russian soil from Ukrainian architecture (from five- and three-dome churches). I. L. Buseva-Davydova specified monument of Ukrainian architecture — St. Nicholas Cathedral in Nizhyn (1667). According to the researcher, this five-domed cathedral with four exedras served as a direct model for the church of the Resurrection in Presnya, the construction of which Tsar Fedor Alekseevich began in 1681 and which was not completed, as well as for the Great Cathedral of Donskoy monastery, the construction of which started at the expense of Princess Catherine Alekseevna in 1684, but has lasted until 1698 [6]. At the same time, in the church monuments of the Ukrainian lands, we do not meet the "under the bells" compositions. Experts a priori associate the emergence of these types on the Russian soil in the era of the formation of a new style with local architectural tradition. The first example of a pier-type belfry and at the same time the church "under the bells" in Moscow architecture is the church of St. Ivan of the Ladder on the Cathedral square of the Moscow Kremlin (1329). It was a slender octagon, with a church at the ground level and a bell tier at the top had a tier of

kokoshniks at the top and ended with a cupola. This composition is considered to be unique for Europe. W. W. Kawelmacher associated its origin with Armenian prototypes, in particular, with the belfry in Haghpat (1245) [7].

As an example of the composition of the church "under the bells", in Moscow architecture, preserved to this day, experts usually indicate the church of the Holy Spirit of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius (1476) [8]. However, such a rapid fascination of the noble feudals with the construction of churches, crowned with belfries, requires additional explanation and suggests not only an appeal to their tradition but also another, external source of borrowing architectural forms.

The tetraconch churches, surmounted by belfries, are known in Western European medieval architecture. A. I. Nekrasov cited the chapel of the Holy Cross in Montmajour (France, 12th century) as an example of the centric construction with four exedras [9]. However, in our opinion, in order to identify the prototypes of Russian churches "under the bell" in the era of Naryshkin style we should pay attention to the Western European church buildings of a closer time. We meet the combination of a cross-shaped plan and a bell tier in a crossing in the Dutch architecture of the 17th century. These are the two protestant churches of Amsterdam, built in the shape of a Greek cross in the style of the national revival — the Noorderkerk (Northern church), built by Hendrick and Piter de Keyser in the years 1620-1623 and another one closer in time to Naryshkin churches — the Oosterkerk (Eastern church) in Amsterdam (1669-1671), built by Daniël Stalpaert and Adriaan Dortsman. A famous craftsman Peter Hemony installed the bells of the Oosterkerk. The church in Renswoude (Utrecht), erected in the years 1639-1641 by Jacob van Kampen also belongs to this type. The ideas of the centric cruciform church were also embodied in Germany. M. N. Mikishatiev who studied the problem of the formation and development of the type of Protestant church in the architecture of Holland and Germany, cited the parish church in Brandenburg Neustadt (1673-1696) as a similar example. The researcher believes that this type came to Germany from Holland [10]. The architecture of the Amsterdam churches could be known to Russian nobility by Dutch engravings depicting various buildings. Such prints and albums have been used by Russian craftsmen, and there are a number of confirmations of this practice. M. N. Mikishatiev proved that for the construction of the Utochya tower of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius two compositions from an album of architect Pieter Post were used [11]. The version about the formation of the "under the bells" composition in the Russian architecture of Naryshkin style under the influence of the architecture of Amsterdam Protestant churches requires a separate in-depth study.

At the same time, the churches of the "under the bells" type in the Russian architecture of the turn of 17th-18th centuries are extremely diverse in their volumetric design. Let us turn to the best works of this composition, erected in the patrimony of noble feudal lords. The church of the Intercession at Fili (1690-1693) (see "Fig. 1") is a two-story building on a four-partite base; the church of the Trinity in

Troitse-Lykovo (1690-1695) (see "Fig. 2") has a three-partite composition; the Church of the Sign of the Icon of the Mother of God at the court of Sheremetyev (the beginning of the 1690-s) (see "Fig. 3") inherits the traditional composition with a three-partite altar in the East and a rectangular refectory in the West; the church of the Savior in Ubory (1694-1697) (see "Fig. 4") it is placed on the twelve-partite base, and the church of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Uzkoie (1698) — the most Pro-Ukrainian of the listed, has a belfry in one of the lateral heads, etc. Practically each of the listed churches "under the bells" was repeated in a number of patrimonial monuments of the end of 17th - the beginning of 18th century.

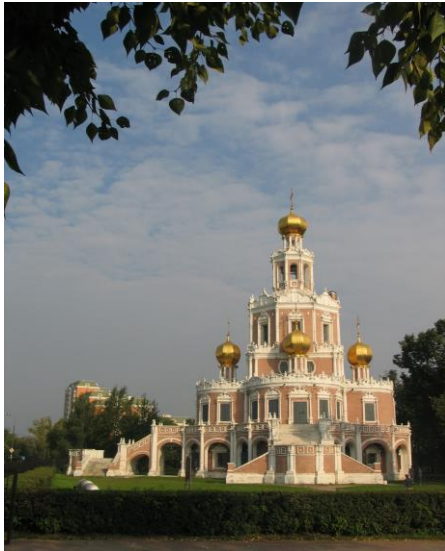


Fig. 1. The church of the Intercession at Fili, 1690-1693.

^a Commissioned by boyar L. K. Naryshkin.

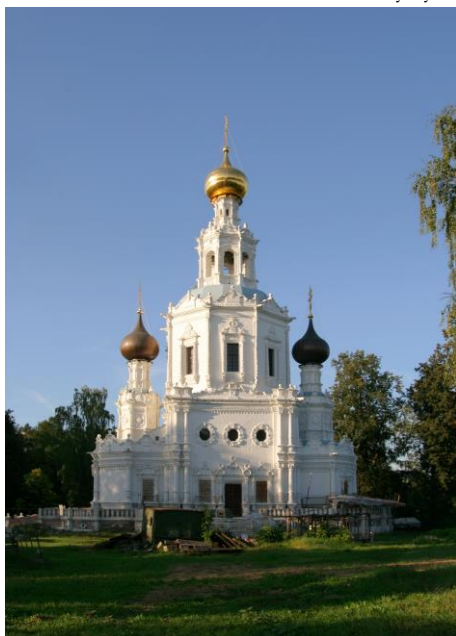


Fig. 2. The Trinity church in Troitse-Lykovo, 1690-1695.

^a Commissioned by boyar M. K. Naryshkin.

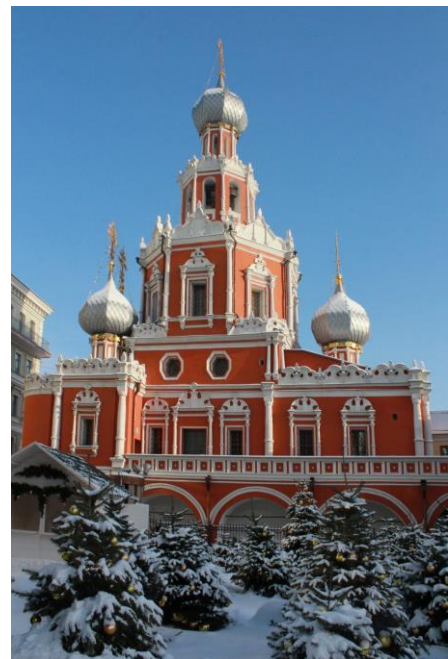


Fig. 3. The Church of the Sign of the Icon of the Mother of God at the court of Sheremetyev in the early 1690s.

^a Commissioned by L. K. Naryshkin.

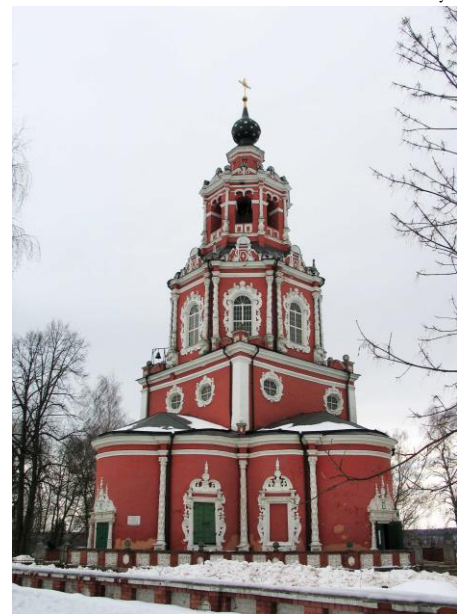


Fig. 4. The church of the Savior in Ubory, 1694-1697.

^a Commissioned by boyar P.V. Sheremetev.

III. THE CHURCHES-BELFRIES

Two famous belfries of Naryshkin style, with churches in one or two levels — the belfries of famous Novodevichy nunnery and Vysokopetrovsky monastery differ in their composition. The first of them – the belfry of Novodevichy nunnery (1689-1690) (see "Fig. 5") is a stand-alone tower-shaped structure with an octagonal plan with the church of the St. Barlaam and Joasaph in the first and St. John the

Theologian in the second tier. The bells were placed on the open third and fifth tiers.

The architecture of the belfry of Novodevichy nunnery ascends to the image of the belfry of Ivan the Great with the church of St. Ivan of the Ladder, built in 1505-1509 by the Italian architect Bon Fryazin on the place of the first Russian church "under the bells", which was discussed above. During the reign of Tsar Boris Godunov, in 1600, the architect Fyodor Kon added another tier to the belfry. The lower tier of the church-belfry of Novodevichy nunnery is surrounded by a gallery on the arcades, forming a kind of a pedestal and resembling a similar composition of the church-belfry of the Crucifixion in the Alexander Sloboda (1510; 1570-s) [12]. As in the case of the above-mentioned churches "under the bells" the church-belfry of Novodevichy nunnery is decorated with a magnificent white stone decor, a distinctive and easily recognizable feature of the monuments of Naryshkin style.

We see a direct repetition of the image of the belfry of Novodevichy nunnery in a separate belfry of the Yaroslavl church of St. John the Baptist in Tolchkov, built at the turn of the 17th-18th centuries, as noted by many authors. At the same time, the Yaroslavl monument serves only as a belfry, not being a church. M. N. Mikishatiev drew attention to the similarity of the volumetric composition of the belfry of the church of the Baptist in Tolchkov and the Montelbaanstoren tower in Amsterdam (late 16th-17th century) [13]. There is the similarity also with the belfry of Novodevichy nunnery. In particular, attention is drawn to the decorative details of the fourth, blind tier of the belfry, which housed the weight-driven mechanism of the clock. The second level of openings of this tier is represented by the small round windows with original frames in the form of torus forming two circles, different in size. Such decoration is absent in the architecture of the belfry of Ivan the Great. The form of these rosettes is reminiscent of the clock faces seen, particularly in the middle tier of the four facades of the Montelbaanstoren tower. Thus, in the volumetric composition of the church-belfry of Novodevichy nunnery, we can observe a simultaneous orientation to the tradition and external borrowing of forms, a combination of tradition and innovation.

The second monument of this group is the gate belfry of Vysokopetrovsky monastery with the church of the Intercession (1690-1694) (see "Fig. 6"). Like other buildings of this time, it is often perceived by experts as more modest and even archaic in relation to the belfry of Novodevichy nunnery [14]. At the same time, in fact, it is a key monument in the formation of the type of gate church-belfry, so common in monastic ensembles of Modern times.

The lower tier is a pedestal, cut through with the three-partite arch of the gate. The second tier is the church of the Intercession, surrounded by an open gallery-promenade. Above them, there are two octagons of the belfry, which are a single volume, cut through with two levels of openings. An entrance to the belfry was possible through a narrow spiral staircase in the North-Western corner in the church of the Intercession. The lower tier resembles the front gates in the royal residences of Kolomenskoye, Izmailov and

Novodevichy nunnery. The idea of the church-belfry, so important for Naryshkin style, found the perfect embodiment there resting on the gates and connecting the idea of the gate church and the church-belfry. The very type of the gate church-belfry has only a few examples before the construction of Vysokopetrovsky monastery like the gate church of Gurias, Samonas, and Abibus with a tent completion and a clock at the church of the Nativity in Yaroslavl, built in the middle of the XVII century. At the same time, the construction evokes distant associations with the Spasskaya tower of the Moscow Kremlin, which is also erected over the holy gate and has an open tier of bells at the top. It is known that from 1703 to the end of the 18th century there was a German clock on the belfry of Vysokopetrovsky monastery. Apparently, at the end of the 17th century, there was a visual connection between the two towers.

It is believed that the belfry of Vysokopetrovsky monastery served as a model for the belfry of Pafnutevo-Borovsky monastery. It is interesting that the volumetric solution of the gate church-belfry of Vysokopetrovsky monastery was in this case used for the belfry, which was the part of the older monastery refectory complex with the church of the Nativity of Christ (1511). The influence of the monument can be seen in the belfries of the city churches erected at the turn of the 17th-18th centuries (for example, in the belfry of the Moscow church of all Saints on Kulishki). As in the case of the appeal to the image of the church-belfry of Novodevichy nunnery, when borrowing the composition of the gate church-belfry of Vysokopetrovsky monastery, only the volumetric composition is reproduced, and the idea of the gate church-belfry is omitted.

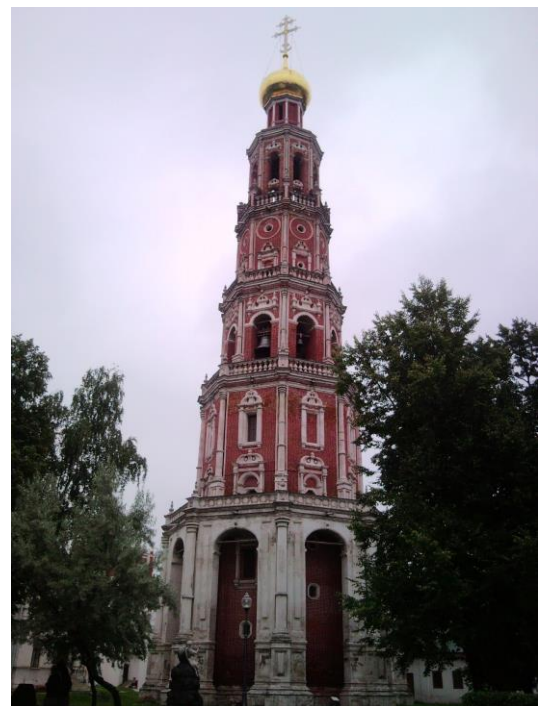


Fig. 5. The belfry of Novodevichy nunnery, 1689-1690.

a. Commissioned by Princess Sophia Alekseevna.

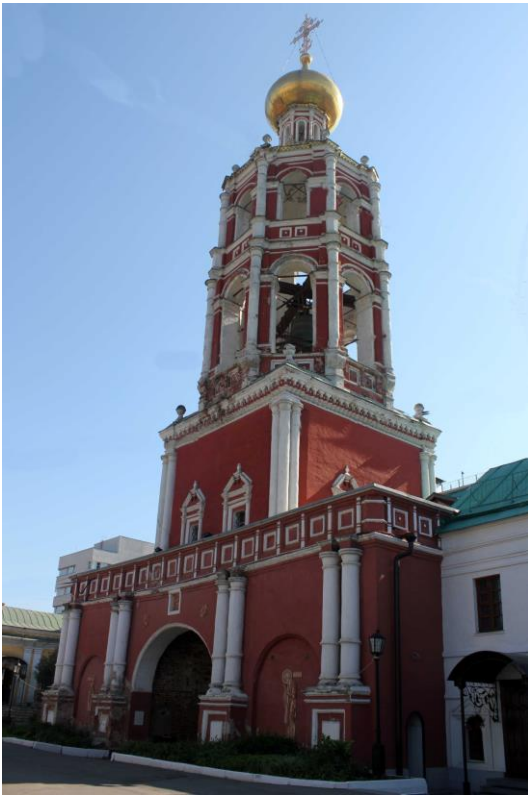


Fig. 6. The gate belfry of Vysokopetrovsky monastery with the church of the Intercession, 1690-1694.

^a Commissioned by Tsar Peter Alekseevich.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study of the emergence and further development of the “under the bells” composition, popular in the patrimonial architecture of Moscow and Moscow region in the late 17th – early 18th century, various options for its use, is integrated into the range of studies on the problems of the formation of volumetric compositions of Naryshkin style as a whole. From the time of the creation of the first church “under the bells” — the church of St. Ivan of the Ladder in the Moscow Kremlin — to the period of the reign of Tsar Peter The Great which is of interest to us, this idea has passed a three-hundred-year path, embodied in a number of different compositional structures. It is important to note that each considered monument of Naryshkin style is individual and, in fact, is a unique product of its time. All buildings were built at the expense of representatives of the Royal family and their entourage – the Moscow nobility. In both of the main variants (both in the churches “under the bells”, and in the churches-belfries) the main characteristics of the spatial composition, characteristic of Naryshkin style (centricity, verticality, tiered structure, etc.) remain, and most of the monuments have magnificent white-stone decor.

Considering the church “under the bell” as a separate architectural type, we come to the conclusion that its appearance, on the one hand, is associated with the imminent development of this type in ancient church architecture for a long period. On the other hand, the images of Dutch

churches — the Northern and the Eastern churches of Amsterdam, which might have been familiar to Russian customers and the masters from the Dutch architectural prints (albums) have influenced the active construction of churches “under the bells” in the estates of noble lords at the turn of 17th-18th centuries. Having appeared initially in the composition together with the tetraconch, tiers of bells in Russian churches of Naryshkin style were also used in combination with the twelve-partite base, and in the churches with a three-partite composition, and in the church buildings of the traditional scheme (with a three-partite altar in the East and a rectangular apse in the West). The two most important churches-belfries, erected in the period of interest to us – the belfries of Vysokopetrovsky monastery and Novodevichy nunnery, on the one hand, also focus on the construction of the Moscow Kremlin. The belfry of Novodevichy nunnery is focused on the image of the belfry of Ivan the Great. At the same time, in its appearance once again, we guess Dutch elements and find the similarity with the image of the tower Montelbaanstoren in Amsterdam. The belfry of Vysokopetrovsky monastery partly reproduces the volumes of the Spasskaya tower of the Moscow Kremlin. Meanwhile, this monument lays the Foundation to a new Russian architecture type of the gate church-belfry. Further in-depth study of churches “under the bells” and church-belfries will allow a new look at the problem of the “traditionality” and “innovation” in the Russian church architecture of the late 17th - early 18th century.

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