

The Struggle for the Historicity of Research Methods in 1960s-1980s and the Role of “*Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo*” Periodical Issues in Studying Russian Medieval Architecture

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Abstract—Thanks to the complex approach to the shaping of issues of the periodical collection of articles, the architecture was regularly included into the general context of the Old Russian art, which provided to observe the synchronization of processes connecting various forms of the art of Medieval Rus’. For many years, “*Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo*” (Old Russian Art) periodical collection of articles has served the idea of transforming the history of the Old Russian architecture into an academic discipline, free from myth-making and authors’ subjectivity.

Keywords—*Old Russian architecture; wooden constructions; research methods; Italian architects; shaping the forms; princely order*

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of studying the Old Russian architecture in the Soviet period could be described as a sequence of changing periods — tragic or, conversely, more or less free from ideological dictate. It’s rising in 1920s, accompanied with a diversity of approaches and topics, gave way to the almost complete barring of the Old Russian topics in the mid-1930s. However, disappearance of collections of articles, ban for book publication was not total. Since the mid-1930s, research of the Old Russian architecture has been centered in the specially organized Academy of Architecture and the Union of Architects which had publications of their own. The latest manifestations of the freedom and diversity of opinions were presented in the collection of articles “Russian Architecture” in 1940 [1].

II. THE CONCEPT OF AUTOCHTHONOUS DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN ARCHITECTURE IN THE POSTWAR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL LITERATURE

The patriotic rise during the WWII and after it returned the history of the Old Russian architecture into a broad social landscape. But that process was connected with the severe national and patriotic regulation not of the approaches only, but of the very tones of discussions. In 1940s-1950s,

researchers had to change the evaluation of phenomena which had been the subject of the considerations free from bias. Thinking on the changes in their conclusions, we should take into account the influence of the case of A. I. Nekrasov, obviously the most prominent figure in the historical-architectural research field in 1920s-1930s, at the community of researchers [2] [3]. His considerations on the connections of the Old Russian art with the surrounding world, hid doubts on the existence of direct links between stone and wooden architecture were not only rejected, but put under derision. His tragic fate forced many researchers to forget their own conceptions and thoughts, previously published. The post-war period was characterized with rising of the restorative activity, which existed on the academic basis and supposed the fundamental studying of monuments. A new (for the Soviet period) gender of publication of monument was shaped: it was based on its new interpretation with archival and field research. But in the second half of 1950s~early 1960s, the Old Russian topics was again under barring. An anti-religious campaign unleashed by N. S. Khrushchev, affected also the restoration and research spheres. Only the reconstruction of that non-thaw atmosphere, engulfing the history the medieval, i.e. ecclesiastic architecture, may give us a chance to understand the real significance of the foundation of the periodical publication on the ecclesiastic history of Old Rus’. For the history of the Old Russian architecture is was an outstanding event, because, for the first time, a regularly published collection of article appeared, where there was a place for research works on the topics of ecclesiastic medieval architecture.

Let us recall, what conceptions of the history of the Old Russian architecture dominated in 1960s~early 1970s. There was a version of a direct evolutionary line in architecture — the origin of all complicated forms from the most primitive ones, and decorative elements from constructive ones. As it was in 1940s-1950s, the conventional was a theory of the development of the Old Russian architecture, which was returned after the WWII, but shaped as early as in the mid-

19th century. Its postulates could be easily found on the pages of the general surveys; it was supposed to believe that, first of all, those forms of stone architecture accepted from Byzantium had been transformed in Rus' under the influence of wooden architecture. Secondly, in the late 15th century, Italians brought something new to Moscow only in the field of construction technology, showing local masters better ways to produce bricks and lime, as well as techniques of stonemasonry and bricklaying. Thirdly, Russian architects, equipped with new technical knowledge, turned to that art which they knew the best, and which had been flourishing for centuries, i.e. the experience of building of wood. It gave them a possibility to introduce Russian forms into the ecclesiastic architecture, not deviating from the basics of the Byzantine style. The post-war atmosphere simplified those conceptions, shaped as early as in 1830s and 1850s, and made them even more vulgar and schematic.

III. THE STRUGGLE FOR A HISTORICIST APPROACH TO THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE IN THE 1960S-1980S

Random or not, the first issue of the new periodical collection of articles contained a non-published article by A. I. Nekrasov, whose views were hardly criticized in the early 1960s [4]. It was commented by P. N. Maximov [5], a disciple of D. P. Sukhov, i.e. a person who also personified the pre-revolutionary tradition of the history of architecture. Noteworthy, after that issue, P. N. Maximov has been never published in the "Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo"; later, he published his works in the "Arkhitekturnoe Nasledstvo" (Architectural Heritage) only, may be because of the difference in approaches with the new periodical collection on articles. So, in vol. of 1968, on the art of Pskov, there were two articles on the work of Pskovan masters in Moscow, written by G. I. Vzdornov [6] and M. A. Ilyin [7]. They became participants of a hidden polemic with P. N. Maximov, who made an attempt to disprove a traditional reading of chronicles about those Pskovan masters in his article, published in "Arkhitekturnoe Nasledstvo" [8].

Despite of a limited quantity of articles on the Old Russian architecture in the first issues, a specific of "Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo" became tangible as early as in the late 1960s. Those years, the Sector of the Old Russian art and its periodical got the central position and attracted a new generation of researchers. That circle included also architects-restorers, specialists of the All-Russian Industrial Research-Restorative Enterprise, who directly shaped new historical and architectural material. Mostly disciples of P. N. Maximov, they found the adequate research milieu at that Sector. Among them, we should mention, first of all, B. L. Altschuller and S. S. Podyapolsky. There was a quite vast circle of historians of architecture with various approaches to material, to possibilities of its interpretation, but unified with their longing for analytical consideration on the Old Russian architecture.

In 1960s, the first volumes of the "General History of Architecture" were published, including the third and the sixth ones — on the medieval Russian architecture, written from the point of view characteristic for the post-war tradition, also fixed in the "History of Russian Art", edited

by I. E. Grabar. There was a conventional postulate about the pre-Mongolian architecture of the 11th century: "In stone Old Russian churches the influence of traditions of wooden architecture was manifested, first of all, in the specific of the artistic image and, particularly, in the composition of buildings" [9]. Several years later, in 1972, an article by A. I. Komech was published, it was on the role of the princely order in the construction of the Holy Wisdom (St. Sophia) Cathedral in Kiev [10]. Instead of the well-known formulas about the influence of the earlier oak Holy Wisdom Church "of 13 heads" at the composition of the Kievan cathedral, and its similarity with pagan tumuli, the author argued for the fact, that all forms of the stone building were excellently known to Greek masters. Komech explained the peculiarity of its composition with the princely preference for solemn and well lit upper gallery; and that conception re-actualized considerations by A. I. Nekrasov on the role of the princely order in the cathedrals of Kiev and Chernigov, made by him in 1936 [11].

Some other articles of the periodical, issued in the late 1960s and early 1970s, also revived and developed ideas formulated by A. I. Nekrasov, N. I. Brunov, and other researchers at the period of comparatively free-thinking in 1920s and early 1930s. Just at that periodical a radical turn at the interpretation of the origin of the stone tented roof has been done.

In 1977, in "Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo", M. A. Ilyin published an article [12], where he resolved to break with the hypothesis of copying forms of wooden architecture at the construction of churches with tented roofs; he published a special research on the phenomenon of the first Russian tented roof church in Kolomenskoe. First of all, he indicated with all certainty at the sketchiness of the Zabelin's conception and at the obvious retard of historical-architectural research about Old Rus' in comparison with West European material. He rejected the outdated views and tried to explain the obvious things: the central composition of the church in Kolomenskoe was made with tools absolutely different from those used at construction of wooden tented roof churches. He returned to analysis of the carcass structure, a system of supporting columns, which accented the vertical composition. On his opinion, through the carcass structure architects were longing to reveal "a stone vertical, instead of wooden horizontal, laying structure" [13].

In 1970s, a new stage of studying the activity of Italian masters in Russian of the late 15th-early 16th centuries was started. A key step was made in the thesis by V. A. Bulkin in 1975; he shown for the first time, that the Dormition and the Archangel Cathedrals were both regular and direct sources of Italianisms in the architecture of all the 16th century [14]. In the following year, a unique and radically new in topic issue of "Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo" was published: it was declared as "Foreign Connections". Now, it is difficult to evaluate the measure of novelty and audacity of that publication. It was started with the program article by S. S. Podyapolsky, who — for the first time — disproved the opinion on Italian masters as decorators only, who brought some ornamental and technical elements only. A comparison of the space and

constructive scheme of the Archangel Cathedral with the Venetian churches of the late 15th~16th centuries demonstrated their close typological affinity. It was proved, that the space organization of the cathedral, the order decoration of its interior and facades completely corresponded to the main line of development of the Venetian architecture. The author not only interpreted the cathedral as an integral part of Venetian architecture, but he also put an important and principal question of the more broad scale of activity of Italian masters in Russia. Those constructions which had been conventionally taken for the local versions of Italian buildings could be considered as those made by common Italian architects, who had different school than the leading masters, such as Bon Fryazin, Aristotle Fioravanti, and both Alevises [15]. That article stimulated a transformation of the very image of limits of Italian heritage on the Russian soil, and its variety.

The same issue contained an article by W. P. Vygolov — the first fundamental research of architectural ceramics of the late 15th~early 16th centuries, considered in the context of the European tradition. A certain group of tiles of the early 16th century was connected with a direct influence of some elements of the Renaissance ornamentation. Vygolov accented the inclusion of Rus' into the general processes, engulfing Northern Germany, Baltic, Polish, and Lithuanian lands, where they extensively used Maiolica and terracotta in the façade decoration [16]. Balkan sources of ornamentation of the “belts” of early Moscow churches were also shown in the article by M. A. Ilyin, who stressed once more paradoxes and primitiveness of its explanation with wooden carving [17].

In 1975, a new periodical was founded — “Restavratsiya i issledovaniya pamiatnikov Kul'tury” (Restoration and Studying of the Monuments of Culture), published by the All-Russian Industrial Research-Restorative Enterprise. That collection of articles became the main place of publications of research works on one monument. Architectural articles in “Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo” were mainly setting problems by the moment, but the level of reasoning and analysis were the same — and it protected from pseudo-research speculations. Just the opposite, since the second half of 1970s, after the death of P. N. Maximov, “Arkhitekturnoe Nasledstvo” was filled with articles of openly myth-making content. At the edge of 1970s~1980s, a separation between the research personnel of the All-Russian Industrial Research-Restorative Enterprise and the State Institute for Art — from one side, and that one from the Scientific Research Institute of Theory and History of Architecture and Urban Planning — from the other side, became more obvious, and that difference could be seen in the publications of that period.

Architectural articles in the “Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo” were more considered from the point of view of the analysis of connections between shaping the forms and the mentality of the epoch. One of the serious examples of such academic research was an article by S. S. Podyapolsky (1989) on the role of the churches of the Holy Trinity Monastery as sacred models for the further monastic building, including that one in the White Lake Region [18]. Thus, the continuity of the

monastic tradition of St Sergius of Radonezh was manifested itself in the shaping of new cloisters.

IV. CONCLUSION

Thanks to the complex approach to composing certain issues of the periodical, the architecture was regularly included into a general context of the Old Russian art, and that allowed observing synchronic processes of various forms of art of the Old Rus'. During all the existence of “Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo”, it served the idea of transformation of the history of the Old Russian architecture into the academic discipline, free of myth-making and authors' subjectivity. In general, 1970s-1980s were the years of a radical turn which liberated architectural studies of tendentious and formal schemes of the previous epoch. And the central role in the process was played by the “Drevnerusskoe Iskusstvo” collection of articles, through the efforts of its editors and authors.

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