

Evolutionary Attitude Towards the Preservation of the National Architectural Heritage: the concept of Time Cycles

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the patterns in the change of attitude towards the national architectural heritage in the XX - early XXI centuries. The interconnection of processes in the theory and practice of restoration with the attitude towards the preservation of historical architecture at the governmental and public levels is observed. The most specific periods in the change of attitude towards heritage due to the general political situation in the country are noted. Time cycles are distinguished. Those cycles are characterized by the change in the approach towards heritage from awareness of its unique value to its depreciation and destruction. The findings are visualized in the form of a graph showing the evolution of the attitude towards the preservation of the national architectural heritage from the perspective of the concept of time cycles.

Keywords: cultural heritage, scientific restoration, the theory of time cycles

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of the architectural restoration theory and practice is largely determined by the attitude towards cultural heritage in various periods of the country's life. The role of the time factor in assessing objects of cultural heritage is explained by the theory of time cycles in the cultural-historical process, developed at the turn of the XIX and XX centuries. The theory describes patterns of change in styles at certain equal time intervals. B.M. Matveev applies this theory to determine the historical and cultural significance of monuments at various periods [1]. The mechanism of the evolution of national restoration theory and practice in connection with the professional and general cultural motivation is analyzed concerning the vast factual material of A.S. Schenkov. The researcher notices the turns of a certain evolutionary spiral and presents a complex overview of the social consciousness evolution, in particular in its relation to cultural heritage [2]. The theory of time cycles is applicable when observing the evolution of the relationship of the State and society to the preservation of the national heritage during the XX - early XXI centuries.

II. ATTITUDE TOWARDS ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY (PRE-WAR PERIOD)

At the beginning of the XX century, despite the absence of Russian legislation on the protection of "antiquities", the repair, construction, and restoration work on ancient sites has been regulated by a legal procedure. During the first post-revolutionary years, there has been a weakening of all state systems notable, which also affected the sphere of the protection of monuments. The main idea for preserving heritage was to turn those objects into museum sites. The enormous number of unique buildings that were left without owners has become an acute problem, which required new mechanisms for the protection of those monuments. The early years of the Soviet State were marked by issuing a number of laws aimed at preserving the artistic heritage of the past. At the same time, one can note the absence of a clear organizational structure typical of these years and the excessive diversity of newly created and transformed institutions at various levels of administrative management. By 1919, the protection of architectural monuments in the

USSR had received governmental support for the first time.

In connection with the massive alienation of monuments, the authorities faced the task of ensuring their control. A significant document was the 1918 Decree "On the Registration, and Protection of the Monuments of Art and Antiquities Owned by Individuals, Societies and Institutions", which provided state registration of valuable monuments. This period can be called an "inertial one": the funds for the protection and restoration of monuments continued to be allocated centrally, for specific landmark monuments of a large scale, such as Moscow Kremlin [3]. By 1920 – 1921, the financing had been reduced to insignificant amounts, and the monument preservation work had been reduced mainly to maintenance repairs. The increasingly widespread activity was the registration of destructible buildings. Restoration work was carried out fragmentarily at only a few sites.

From the mid-1920s to the 1930s, the period of negative attitude to heritage has followed. It was expressed in the mass demolition of monuments, the policy of the "elimination of churches", and deprivation of their traditional look and functions. Since the late 1920s, the idea of a socialist city has begun to develop actively. It was accompanied by an increase in the nihilist spirit. On the basis of the idea of socialist-type city development, urban centers were reconstructed with the destruction of entire ensembles of religious buildings.

Another milestone in the fight against traditional architecture was the defeat of rural culture associated with the process of collectivization. The authority of monumental protection decrees fell. There was a paradigm shift in the official attitude towards heritage – the end of the "museum period" and the onset of the development of new State mythology [4]. The change in the country's course towards depreciating historical heritage and activities for its conservation, especially the provincial heritage, became apparent. The reorganization began with the partial abolition of the monument protection committees; activities in this area found more compromise with the State, showing respect to the authorities.

During this period, the restoration of the monuments has been reduced to an even lesser extent. The demolition of the monuments of XVII – XVIII centuries took place in Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Vologda, Vladimir, near Pskov, as well as Kashin and Rostov. Alongside with mass demolition of religious buildings, the destruction of civil buildings comprising the features of Russian traditional architecture occurred, so estates of the Classicism period were ruined. Restoration works were a rare exception in the early 1930s. The restoration approaches were dominated by a decisive appeal to holistic restorations striving to return

the original look to the monuments. It was largely due to the focus on seeking the understanding and acceptance of the unprofessional majority and government officials.

By the end of the 1930s, due to the worsening of the international political situation, attitude to the monuments of the past has begun to change markedly. Prerequisites for the strengthening of patriotic moods have appeared. The peak of the negative attitude towards the monuments had passed, and their partial rehabilitation took place in the new system of ideological art [5]. The changes that took place within the framework of the State course on heritage protection have been also reflected in the field of architecture: the understanding of the value of architectural experience and tradition arose. The attitude towards vernacular architecture also changed. The organization of the protection of monuments took place with noticeable regional differences: from inertia and hostility in peripheral regions to conscious maintenance of heritage as part of the national culture.

III. ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PRESERVATION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE XX CENTURY (THE POST-WAR PERIOD)

In the post-war period, the State faced the urgent task of taking measures to save monuments damaged during wartime from their mass disappearance. The need to take urgent measures in relation to survived heritage served as a powerful impetus for the development of the State system for the protection and restoration of architectural monuments in the country. From the first war years, the work on the examination and register of monuments in the liberated territories has begun. In 1942, the Commission on the Registration and Protection of Art Monuments was created. An important event was a creation in 1944 of the Main Directorate for the Protection of Monuments (GUOP) that led all the work on architectural monuments protection in the country. In 1944 a draft law on protection and conservation of architectural monuments in the areas of destruction in the RSFSR, the Ukrainian SSR, and Belarusian SSR has been developed. Thus, during the war years, the protection of monuments acquired the status of a nationwide affair.

From 1944 to 1946 a number of significant governmental decrees and projects have been developed: a draft all-Union law on the protection of monuments; Resolutions on the protection and restoration of architectural monuments of Novgorod, Pskov, Vladimir; as well as the resolutions on regarding the preservation of the monuments of Moscow and the region, and other regulatory documents. In 1947, a decree of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR "On the Protection of the Monuments of Architecture" was

issued, and in 1948 a decree “On Measures for Improving the Protection of Cultural Monuments” followed. In 1949, the Committee on Architecture approved the Instruction on the procedure for recording, registration, maintenance, and restoration of architectural monuments, which are under State protection. The release of these documents was a step, after which the registration of monuments in the country took on a unified professional form.

In that difficult period, an extensive system of scientific restoration, the production associations across the country began to emerge. In a number of cities, special design and restoration workshops have been created (as in Novgorod, Pskov, Leningrad, Vladimir). Preparations have been made for new restoration workshops in Kostroma, Vologda, Gorky, Yaroslavl, Ryazan, Kazan, Molotov, as well as in the Union republics. Since 1950, the work of restoration workshops has begun a generally positive shift associated with a significant increase in public funding. The organizational structure of the bodies for the protection and restoration of monuments that developed in the process of complex and long-term transformations has continued to function throughout the 1950s - 1960s.

The second half of the 1940s became a turning point in the activities of the country's restoration system: the accumulated experience allowed specialists to move on to solving fundamental issues in the field of protection and full restoration [6]. The restoration work at prestigious ensembles like the Moscow Kremlin and the monuments of Novgorod was actively supported by the government initiatives. In 1947, repair and restoration works were carried out on 911 monuments (with 283 of them being of all-Union significance); in 1949, the number of monuments at work increased to 1139 objects. The practice of restoration work focused on the restoration of iconic objects in such a form that they have had before the war-time destruction. This approach dictated the priority of holistic restorations supported by State policy and budget allocations. At the same time, there were examples of fragmentary restorations but only in those cases when they were able to give a complete and clear image of the monument. An important task was the issues of urban planning.

From the mid-1950s to the 1960s against the background of anti-religious policy, another round of intensification of negative trends in relation to the national heritage has followed. This was accompanied by the removal of many monuments from the State protection list, and a sharp reduction of funds allocated for restoration down to 50%. During 1959-1961 about 60% of the monasteries that existed in 1958 have been closed; by 1966, about 35% of Orthodox churches have been abandoned. The problem of the extinction of “unpromising” villages with traditional culture and the

destruction of architectural monuments in them (in the Russian North during the 1950s and 1960s, almost 60% of villages have been abandoned) arose.

To a large extent, the attitude towards the cultural heritage was influenced by a change in the figurative focus of Soviet architecture, the development of industrial housing construction, and a ban on decorative “embellishment”. The structure of historical buildings was destroyed, and the principles of complete demolition of historical sites with preservation of specific houses-monuments were established. Pronounced negativity in relation to the constructions of the past was formed both among professional architects and among significant social groups. The desire to minimize economic costs led to an increase in the share of conservation work, and fragmented restoration works in the total volume of restoration activities. Decisions that eroded the original semantics of religious buildings have been encouraged during such fragmented restoration works. From 1965-1966 a turning point towards “rehabilitation” of cultural heritage has occurred. Some changes took place after the issue of the decree of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR “On the State and Measures to Improve the Protection of Monuments of History and Culture in the RSFSR” (1966). It stated the need for a targeted allocation of budget funds for restoration. An important event was the creation of the State Inspectorate for the Protection of Monuments. The focus was proclaimed on the preservation of cultural significance of the monuments, on their museum display, primarily in the framework of tourist routes.

The situation with the foreign policy in the 1970s – 1980s have been characterized by the expansion of contacts with the West. A significant role was played by processes and social movements related to the search for national identity. The 1970s have been associated with the beginning of the church revival, interest in the Orthodox tradition, and ancient Russian art. Rural culture began to appear as a bastion of national traditions and authenticity. The role of public organizations intensified, and its requirements for the protection of heritage started to be taken into account by the official authorities.

1976 was marked by the adoption of the first all-Union law on the protection of cultural monuments in Russian history. The need to develop the guidelines of restoration techniques was emphasized by the current legislation. The consequence of the change in attitude towards heritage was the increase in the number of revealed architectural monuments in the 1970s and 1980s. This fact reflected a reaction to the systematic mass demolition of old buildings in Moscow and regions. In the organization of the restoration work, there was a tendency to enlarge workshops by combining design and manufacturing sectors. There

was a process of centralization of the restoration forces. The activity of the voluntary mass public organization “All-Russian Society for the Protection of Monuments of History and Culture” (VOOPIK) gained particular importance. It was a unique experience in the development of voluntary restoration practices [7].

The period of the 1970s - 1980s marked the time of the notable successes in the heritage restoration and conservation spheres. The volume of restoration work and mastered budget funding has increased significantly. Both unique monuments and objects of cultural heritage, located within the structure of the ordinary historical city, have been restored. The work with monuments in those years has become more complex. The regional features of restoration schools have been leveled, and they began to use the full range of restoration approaches. Moreover, the main method was to combine the trends of holistic and fragmented restoration. There was a desire to give the monuments modern use, consistent with the original purpose.

IV. ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PRESERVATION OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AT THE END OF THE XX – THE BEGINNING OF THE XXI CENTURIES

The period of the 1990s - 2000s is associated with fundamental socio-political changes that affected the monument preservation practice and restoration system that has been developed over the past decades. The division of State ownership into federal and municipal one followed. In the conditions of market relations, privatization of historical and cultural monuments began, the monuments became private property. Against the backdrop of general spiritual upsurge, the transfer of religious buildings to religious organizations followed. In these conditions, the problem of legislative support for the preservation of cultural heritage objects was acutely felt, considering contemporary economic conditions.

The centralized system of specialized scientific and restoration production workshops has been eliminated: a network of private restoration enterprises appeared instead. The determining factor was the development of private financing systems for heritage conservation. This process led to a shift in the priority of restoration works to the adaptation of cultural heritage objects for modern use. New techniques have been introduced to the architectural and restoration practice like the reconstruction of lost buildings, “facadeism” - the restoration of the historical front facade of a building

with the complete or partial transformation of its internal structure. By the end of the 1990s, the “prototyping” of monuments and objects of historical development - when objects of the urban environment were deliberately destroyed in order to be recreated with the help of new materials has become widespread.

Since 2002 to the present time, legal support for the protection of national cultural heritage has been regulated by the Federal Law “On Objects of Cultural Heritage (Monuments of History and Culture) of the Peoples of the Russian Federation”. Despite the fact that the law gives an undoubted positive impetus to restoration activities, nowadays, the normative legal field for monument preservation reveals a number of gaps. A conflict between the tasks of preserving the monument and the priority of the private interests of the owner is still apparent. The restoration activities of the late XX - the early XXI centuries show that practice in this area is contrary to those principles and conservation methods that were relevant in the XX century. Today, the urgent task is the development of legal and methodological support for restoration that meets its basic principles and expands the possibilities in modern conditions [8].

The Graph of the Attitude Evolution Towards the Problem of Preserving Architectural Heritage in the 20th – early 21st Centuries.

Thus, in the history of the development of architectural monuments restoration practice in the XX - early XXI centuries, the periods of different attitudes towards heritage are distinctly traced. It happens due to the general political situation in the country. These periods, or time cycles, are characterized by a change in the approach from the recognition of the unique value of the heritage and the need to preserve to its polar depreciation and destruction. These processes have acquired particular intensity in the Soviet period (from 1917 to the end of the 1980s) when the general attitude towards the monuments has been directly determined by ideological motives. In the years when the national principles of culture contradicted State-supported ideology, the heritage was persecuted. During periods of State or national patriotism, the protection and promotion of heritage have come to the fore.

These analytical findings have been visualized in the form of a graph that shows the evolution of the attitude towards the preservation of the national architectural heritage from the perspective of the time cycles concept (Fig. 1).

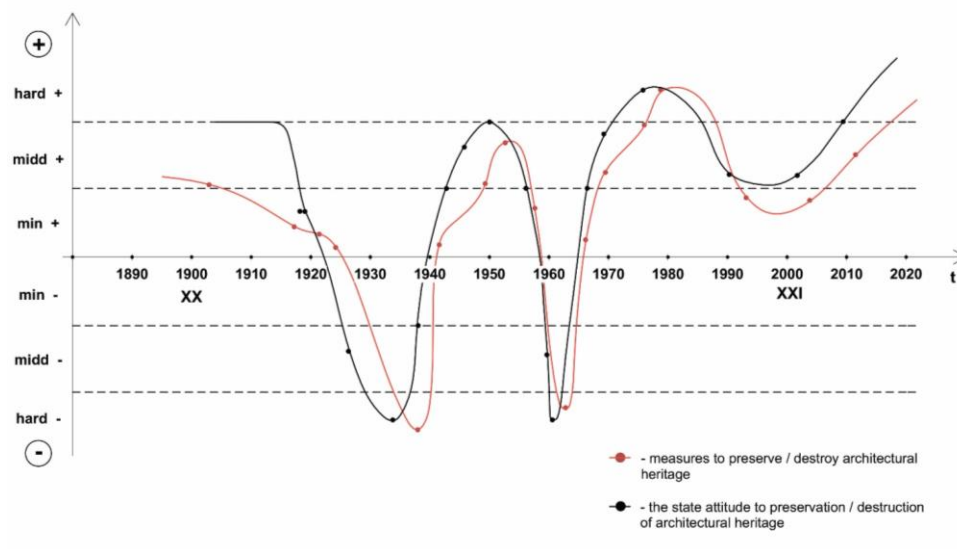


Fig. 1. The schedule of the evolution of the attitude to the architectural heritage preservation issue in the XX – early XXI centuries.

The graph illustrates the main turning points that occurred in the XX century and has been related to the changes in the ideological vector of the State, economic policy, military upheavals as well as the global situation. The frequency of changing between the positive and negative attitudes towards the problem of heritage with the points of maximum rise or decline is revealed. The graph allows us to trace the mechanism of the relationship between evolutionary processes in national restoration theory and practice, and attitude towards conservation of Russian architectural heritage at the State (ideological) and public level. The leading role of ideological motivation in the field of heritage is clearly illustrated at the turn of the XXI century. It preceded and set this or that direction to the processes of the conservation and restoration of monuments throughout the XX century. The analysis allows us to highlight the positive trends that determine the likely vector of the development in the sphere of heritage preservation and restoration in the future.

V. CONCLUSION

Today, positive dynamics are visible in relation to historical and cultural heritage at the State and public levels. The preservation of cultural heritage is the basis of national self-identification as well as the preservation of individual regions, cities, historical settlements identity. An important role is played by international principles in the field of the protection of monuments, cultural landscapes, and historical ensembles of cities. The preservation of cultural heritage is regarded as a necessary component of urban development and the creation of a comfortable urban environment in the XXI century.

The integral approach is based on the desire to preserve the figurative individuality of the monument and its original features by traditional methods of scientific restoration. At the same time, today the status of restoration practice is ambiguous despite more than a century and a half of its history, which began to develop from the middle of the XIX century entering its “golden” period in the second half of the XX century when the foundations of modern scientific preservation of architectural and urban monuments have been laid. There is a need for further understanding of existing experience and development of successive approaches to preserving the heritage, developing basic principles of restoration, and emphasizing their importance in modern conditions [9].

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