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Traditions of Classicism in the European Architecture of the XX Century

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Abstract. Analysing the architectural theory and practice of the XX century, many researchers focus on currents and directions, united by the name "modern". The beginning of this approach was put by Manifesto of Futurism (Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, 1909), which proclaimed the need for each generation to create his own living environment. This type of thinking was characteristic of most architects of the XX century, who created "new traditions". In parallel, artistic trends developed, based on regionalism, the traditions of neoclassicism or historicism. The variety of the phenomena of architecture of the XX century can be placed between two poles. The first pole defines "The spirit of time" (Zeitgeist), i.e. caused by the needs of our time social, technical, aesthetic and other problems, realized in theory and practice in the corresponding architectural forms. Toward another pole, architectural solutions gravitate due to the search for the Ideal of Architecture, Hegel's "perfect being," not related to time and the cause of its emergence. One of the options for such searches was the use of classic forms. An analysis of the use of the traditions of classicism in the architecture of the XX century is devoted to this publication.

1. Introduction

At the turn of XX-XXI centuries, architecture is characterized by a variety of methods and design techniques. Architects solve the problems of creating the living environment of modern society while preserving the specifics of the local cultural landscape. There is a conflict between historical memory and the accelerating course of time, between the information deletion of spatial and cultural boundaries and the search for national identity. At the same time in the theory of architecture, interest in the historical heritage of the preceding century does not fade.

Analysing the architectural theory and practice of the XX century, many researchers focus on currents and directions, united by the name "modern". The beginning of this approach was put by Manifesto of Futurism (Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, 1909), which proclaimed the need for each generation to create his own living environment. This type of thinking was characteristic of most architects of the XX century, who created "new traditions". In parallel, artistic trends developed, based on regionalism, the traditions of neoclassicism or historicism.

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2. Appeal to the classical heritage in the XX century. The first wave of classicism

The architecture of the XX century occupies a special place in the development of world architecture. Compared with the previous centuries, architectural styles throughout this century succeeded each other with unprecedented rapidity. Experiments in the field of architectural stylistics, form-building, typology, designs led to the creation of bright works, the emergence of architects, conducting searches in various directions. However, it can be noted, that in these searches invariably preserved both specific elements of the order structure and the basic laws of its construction. The clear rationalism of classic forms and the ability to express general ideas were used by architects throughout the XX century. They were an expression of culture, defined by the words of I.V. Zholtovsky: "Classic is the highest wisdom. Everything that is wise is classic" [1, p.130].

The "first wave" of neoclassicism (A. Ikonnikov) arose in the early XX century [2, p.323]. For example, in Russia in the modern era the creative quest of "neoclassicist architects" was characterized by an active rethinking of the classical heritage and giving it a bright emotional color (Figure 1).



Figure 1. I.A. Fomin. The project of the Museum of the Patriotic War of 1812 in Moscow (1910)

And vice versa, the modern style acquired rational features of the order architecture of classicism (Figure 2).

In pre-Revolutionary Russia neoclassicism developed into an independent school, which included a number of well-known architects (I.A. Fomin, O.R. Munts, M.H. Dubinsky, S.S. Serafimov, N.A. Spirin, A.I. Dmitriev, A.V. Shchuser, I.V. Zholtovsky, V.A. Shchuko, F.I. Lidval and others). A number of European countries also created a number of works that had a great influence on the emergence of a "second wave" of appealing to the classical heritage and at the same time embodying new constructive solutions.

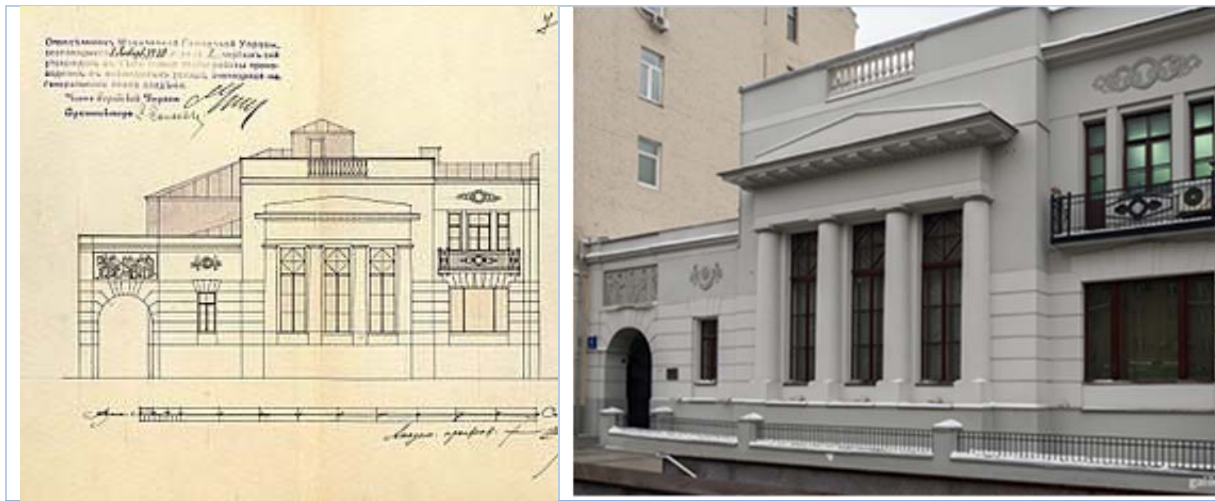


Figure 2. F.O. Shehtel. Own house in Moscow (1910)

Despite the fact that Adolf Loos (1870-1933) is rightly considered as one of the leading representatives of the "modern movement", his early construction "The trading house on Michaelplatz in Vienna can be attributed to the examples of "simplistic neoclassicism" of the early XX century (Figure 3).



Figure 3. A. Loos. Loos House in Vienna. 1909-1911

Rationalist Auguste Perret (1874-1954) was one of the first to develop the problem of using a reinforced concrete frame as the structural basis of a modern structure. The combination of such a structure with the formative methods of French rationalistic classicism led to the formation of the direction of "reinforced concrete classicism" (Ikonnikov) (Figure 4) [2, p.352].



Figure 4. A. Perret. Theatre of the Champs Élysées in Paris (1912-1913)

A peculiar version of the "first wave" of appeal to the classicist tradition was created by German architects. The architects of Germany in the first decades of the XX century considered that monumentality was an important feature of architecture (P. Behrens, G. Tessenov, P. Bonatz, F. Schumacher, V. Kreuz) (Figure 5). Order forms were also used in public buildings in Scandinavia (Figure 6).



Figure 5. P. Behrens. The building of the German Embassy in St. Petersburg (1911-1913)



Figure 6. I. Siren. The Parliament Building in Helsinki (1920)

3. "The Second Wave of Classicism" in the Architecture of the XX Twentieth Century

The "second wave" of European neoclassicism was distinguished from the first one by a close relationship with politics and official culture. Architecture became an expression of official mythology, expressed in emphatically monumental volumes and Order forms. Practically the same methods of using the architectural Order in the 1930s as totalitarian and democratic regimes demonstrate the ambiguity of the semantics of Order systems (Figure 7, 8).



Figure 7. a) A. Perret National Furniture Store, Paris (1930-1935)

b) I. Langbard. The building of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk (1935-1939)



Figure 8. I. Zholtovsky. House on Mokhovaya Street, Moscow (1932-1934)

In general, it should be noted that in the pre-war period in many European countries a similar desire to combine the principles of shaping classic architecture with new public tasks is dominant. Despite the differences in political systems, the architecture of totalitarian states has gone the general way of mastering the classical heritage from using a significant number of recognizable "quotes" to the time-honoured own monumental architectural forms (Figure 9).

The processes that took place in European architecture were interrupted by the Second World War. In the post-war years, architectural revival in different countries was already in the changed situation. In Western Europe a decade and a half dominated the rationalist architecture. In the USSR and the countries of the socialist camp, the forms of classicism were the symbol of a new life [3, p.282]. In the post-war period the main streets of the restored Soviet cities were significantly rebuilt in the forms of neoclassicism (and from the beginning of the 1950-s in the forms of "Stalin's Empire"). In comparison with the pre-war period, the tendency for increased monumentality was further developed. Classical forms became the expression of "socialist culture" (Figure 10).



Figure 9. a) P. Mezzanotte. Stock Exchange Building, Milan (1928)

b) J. Guerrini, E. La Padula, M. Romano. Palace of Italian Civilization, Rome (1935-1943)



Figure 10. "Stalin's Empire" in the post-war construction. Fragment of Nezavisimosti Avenue, Minsk (1948)

4. Traditions of classicism in the architecture of postmodernism

The reason for the new appeal to the traditions of classicism in Europe since the 1970's was the ideology of postmodernism. Its representatives tried to return to the architecture the lost imagination and

traditional figurative associations, best embodied in order forms. The theorist of postmodernism Charles Jenks revealed its "double code" as a combination of the latest technical achievements and historical tradition [4]. Aldo Rossi in the book "Architecture of the city" (1966) ("L'architettura della città") claimed, that all the cities remember their past, which is expressed through monuments of architecture [5] Therefore, the use of traditional elements (including classic elements) can be a means of expressing the ideas of modernity Rossi's buildings of the 1980's reflect the desire to write modern buildings in the historic urban environment and restore the "spirit of the place". Its rationally organized forms are closely connected with the local architectural culture.

In the 1970-1980s the neo-classical movement became widespread in Western Europe. An important role in this was played by the exposition of the Venice Biennial of 1980 under the slogan "The Presence of the Past" (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Hans Hollein. Facade for Strada Novissima, 1st International Architecture Exhibition, The Presence of the Past, 1980

It should be emphasized that in the last third of the XX century the classical tradition existed in two forms. The first considered classicism as an element of practical architectural experience, as a symbolic system, associated with a specific stage in the history of architecture. In the second - classicism was interpreted as an intellectual discipline, which is based on a system of eternal principles of composition and form formation. Assuming the possibility of reviving the language of classical architecture, postmodernism also assumed the freedom to interpret this language.

An example of the free treatment of the historical form is the building of the New State Gallery in Stuttgart (1977-1984) by James Fraser Stirling (Figure 12). The ironical appeal to the order elements is carried out in a free game with various architectural themes borrowed in history. Turning to the past has become an important feature of postmodernism, a reaction to the break with tradition of modernism. In history architects again saw the "catalog of role models", which makes it possible to use a huge number

of citations and interpretations. Architects were inspired not only by the possibility of dialogue with the past, but also by the rich spectrum of spectacular forms and their influences. The idea of "openness to traditions" gave wide formative opportunities. However, it was not about the revival of styles and forms of the past, but about the free game of associations, the use of traditional symbols of styles in the modern context, the use of a ready metaphorical potential for their own semantic purposes. The result of this synthesis in each case was a new quality in the tense space, created by the clash of the past and the present, *sacrum* and *profanum*. An example is the late buildings of Aldo Rossi. In them he applied both elements of classical Orders and entire facades of the "classic mansion" (Schützenstraße quarter in Berlin) (Figure 13)



Figure 12. D.F. Stirling. New State Gallery, Stuttgart (1977-1984)



Figure 13. A. Rossi. Quarter Schützenstraße, Berlin (1994-1998)

Architects - postmodernists tried to return to the architecture the lost fantasy and traditional figurative associations, best embodied in order forms. In the last third of the XX century order forms were also used for housing architecture (Figure 14).

In the 1980-90's there appeared a so-called "new classicism" style (neurbanism in town planning), which became a phenomenon of modern architecture. The theoretical basis of the "new classicism" was

created by Leon Krier, who in his publications called for a return to the quarterly building of cities and the use of an architectural order [6].

In the late 1980s L. Krier designed the general plan of the town of Poundbury in Dorset (England), the obligatory condition for the construction of which was observance of historical traditions in planning decisions, archetypes, images, applied building and finishing materials (Figure 15).



Figure 14. Ricardo Bofill and "Tallier de Architecture" "Theatre" in the inhabited complex «Space of Abraxas» in Marne-la-Vallee, Paris, 1978–1983

In the late of the XX century from the ironic, grotesque reproduction of order compositions (distortion of scale and size ratios; violation of tectonics of construction, color harmony, sphere of application of classical imagery) architects went to the use of sufficiently "clean" order forms. Techniques of classical architecture are used in their creations by K. Terry, J. Blatto, R. Adam, A. Grinberg and others.

Further "self-development" of the process of style formation led to the fact that neoclassicism as an influential and widespread artistic phenomenon still coexists with the latest architectural trends.



Figure 15. L.Krier. Fragment of building, Poundbury. The project - the end of the 1980s. Beginning of construction - 1993

5. Conclusions

The interaction of traditional heritage and progress represents one of the most important problems of architecture. This is due to the specificity of architecture as a socially significant art, closely related to public issues, problems of economics and ecology. The brief analytical review of the experience of using the classical tradition in the European architecture of the XX century showed that the "eternal principles of architecture" persisted throughout the century, having survived the "two waves" of their revival. Postmodernism used the classical heritage as a ready-made, organized system, the return to which was carried out at a new level. The architectural Order was treated as a sign of high culture. At the turn of XX-XXI centuries in the practice there were examples of the use of sufficiently accurate quotations and motives of the historical tradition. Architectural theory seeks to replace the "double code" of architecture of postmodernism with a direct continuation of the classic tradition. And along with the modernist philosophy of "renewal" the idea of continuity in the development of the architectural language is preserved.

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