

Architectural and Artistic Design of Wooden Iconostases in New and Restored Temples

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Abstract. During various periods of the modern Russian history, religious architecture was viewed from different angles - at first, as a valuable fragment of a culture that had gone into oblivion, later - as a living tradition sprouting from ancient roots to the present and requiring reunification with it. Therefore, despite the obvious elaboration of the topic, the appeal to it does not lose its relevance turning in different facets of its aspects. The iconostasis is the most important architectural element of the church interior, a small likeness of the temple of heaven and earth. The planned destruction of iconostases in the Soviet era, violation of traditions, connections, continuity, lack of basic information on design, construction and technology of their production makes the study of wooden iconostases and the principles of their restoration and re-creation relevant and important for both theorists and practitioners of architecture, as well as restoration workshops. When reconstructing the monuments of the temple architecture, the architectural style is not always observed, therefore, an architectural and artistic appearance of a monument is violated. Besides, during the monument reconstruction the traditional features of the region in which the temple was located are not taken into account. This factor is the most important one because each region has its own traditional school of iconostases manufacturing and temples building. This article presents the results of the study on the design of the wooden iconostasis of the Church of the Intercession of the Virgin on the lower floor of the Savior's Transfiguration Temple (1894), in the NizhneSinyachikha Museum Reserve taking into account regional peculiarities.

1. Introduction

A significant contribution to the development of the theoretical and methodological foundations for the construction of the Russian wooden iconostasis was made by the works of A.G. Melnik, I.E. Grabar, L.A. Uspensky, I.L. Buseva-Davydova, N.N. Sperovsky, N.V. Levin, S.V. Filatov, D.K. Trenev, N.N. Sobolev, V.M. Sorokaty, O.V. Lelekova, I.A. Iliin, E.S. Smirnov, E.A. Gordienko, N.K. Nikolsky, P.A. Florensky, V.N. Lazarev, L.V. Betin, N.I. Troitsky, L.A. Shchennikov and others. A major contribution to the study of the carvings of iconostases of the 17th century was made by N.N. Sobolev. On the basis of his work, the corresponding texts were written in later multivolume editions on the history of Russian art. In 1963, a brief study of the history of the Russian iconostasis of L.A. Uspensky, who supplemented the work of N.N. Sperovsky. The essay on the development of carving and architectural composition of the iconostases of the 17th-19th centuries on example of the collection of the Museum "Kolomenskoye" was made by T.V. Levin [1-23]. But, unfortunately,



purposeful theoretical works on the design of constructive and decorative wooden elements of the iconostasis could not be found.

In the accumulated form all the listed sources and scientific works are of undoubted value, they form the original base, lay the tradition of studying the artistic problems of the Orthodox temple construction. But in order for the evolution of Orthodox religious architecture in this region to be recreated in all its integrity and features, great efforts are still needed.

2. Main part

Traditions in the church art in Russia have developed from ancient times. From the moment of Peter's coming to power, the decline begins, which continues until the reign of Alexander III. It was during this period that we again see a return to the true church style in the construction of temples. Therefore, the culmination of the development of church art - architecture, painting and church utensils - is the 17th century. It should serve as an example for architects and masters in the construction of iconostases. As far as we know, the great Vasnetsov adhered to this belief and followed it "fanatically", as contemporary artists expressed it.

It cannot be said that the works of Russian architects and painters of the 17th century were not subject to further improvement; but it was in this century that the organic development of those forms of painting and architecture that were inspired by the reverence (religious enthusiasm) of the Orthodox church-general feeling and general church thought was suppressed. The same forms were also nationally Russian, but not in the sense that people imposed their worldly imprint on the Christian idea, as it was in the Western world - but that the Russian heart, as has already been seen by contemporary artists, managed to translate in paint, wood and stone, that holy sentiment of a reconciled submissive emotion that was given to the Christians of the East only at the higher levels of spiritual life and, therefore, could not so widely affect the works of their art.

So, the 17th century of our history should be an example in church painting, architecture and, especially, with regard to the interior decoration of churches. In this area of art, Orthodox Russian architects, following traditions, worked tirelessly on the construction of iconostases, which, unfortunately, has not yet been adopted by modern church construction, although it tries to be ecclesiastical.

Iconostases since the time of Peter the Great, and especially since the beginning of the 19th century, have gradually acquired features characteristic of churches. Catholicism is a religion that does not attach much importance to sacred images, but prefers huge frames with decorations around them. Entering any church, we will see that the throne appears before us in the form of St. Petersburg iconostasis measuring 6-8 m², sometimes more, but the image in it, as a rule, is only one - about -1.5 m²; And around it - 1,2,3 frames, in the form of a pair of columns, on each side. Above is a crown in large wooden gilded rays, on the side - wooden tiaras, drums with Roman numerals, denoting the commandments of Moses. Then the attributes of the episcopal rank, shields with monograms, and all this around one small image.

The same variety of ornaments in the Rococo style is represented by Russian 19th century iconostasis. Their close resemblance to the church and the retreat from the Orthodox style is that they do not lie across the entire temple, but occupy only the central part of the eastern side of the church. On the right and left of them they have 2 empty corners (the Cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, the Temple of the Savior in Moscow) or they give way to special iconostasis limits that can be seen almost in all the large churches of the 19th and the end of the 18th century or supplement themselves with special, of a different style, iconostases like "false" limits (the Church of the Resurrection on the Blood and many others).

However, the first distinguishing feature of the proper orthodox iconostasis is that it is located from the northern wall of the church building to the southern one. If there are lateral altars, then they are placed in the eastern apses of the building. In the iconostasis, instead of some icons, doors or arches are installed, leading to a new church with its iconostasis and altar. In this respect, St. Isaac's Cathedral preserved Orthodox traditions.

So, the iconostasis should be located in length from wall to wall. And in the height? In ancient times, according to tradition, there were low iconostases and some modern builders still follow this tradition. But in this case, why build a temple in the style of the 17th century, whose interior is designed for the high Russian iconostasis? Temples made in the style of Alexei Mikhailovich (father of Peter the Great), are long temples with a low western part, with a low altar, but a very high well in the center. They are designed specifically for the five-tier iconostasis. Heavy but impressive 16th century temples, for example, the Assumption Cathedral of the Sergius Lavra, the Temple of the Sign in Novgorod (17th century), the Church of the Assumption in the Tikhvin Monastery (16th century). They have non-circular Byzantine outlines, with a large number of right angles and rectangular surfaces, cannot be completely satisfied with one wall painting, which, according to the masters, could replace the absence or low size of the iconostasis in Byzantine round buildings, for example, St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev [24].

Russian architects did not immediately decide to close the painting of the mountain site with the iconostasis, because it was a pity to hide such beauty, so the iconostasis of the Trinity Cathedral of the Sergius Lavra or Novgorod's Sophia reaches two thirds or three quarters of the temple. However, the art of creating iconostasis continued to develop, and in the 17th century reached an indescribable beauty. For the people standing in the church, the iconostasis replaced the altar painting. Ancient iconostasis is simply a shifted series of icons. The iconostasis of the later period, 16-17 centuries, is a miracle of art in itself, and not in vain do the Russians consider them to be the best decoration of the temple and compare the temples among themselves in the beauty of the iconostases.

Classic iconostasis of the 17th century, while preserving the main property of the ancient Orthodox church, represented only by icons, i.e. sacred images (and not unprincipled ornamentation - furniture like rococo churches), introduce into the church beauty a special idea of artistic combination of these images with each other. The so-called body of the iconostasis is extremely simple: in the direction in breadth it represents a complete monotony of frames or divisions between icons; the direction from the bottom up requires a small variety and, moreover, not so much in the very position of the frames, as in the form of holy icons, icon boards. The lower row is made up of especially revered large icons of different widths; the second series - holidays - low and wide; the third row is the apostles in full height, narrow and tall; the fourth row is the belt images of the prophets, separated from above by pairs, but only to half [25,26].

An important feature is the norms for the design of wooden iconostases:

- width of the royal gates - 1,42 m.
- height of the royal gates - 2.49m.
- width of the northern and southern gates - 0.89 m.
- height of the northern and southern gates - 2.13 m.
- distance from the royal gates to the throne - 1.78 m.
- throne 1,07m., height - 0,8m.
- distance from the throne to the altarpiece - 1.07 m.
- height of the altar image from the floor - 1,07 m.
- altar - 0.9 x 0.9 m. height 0.8m.

The partitions themselves, or the body of the iconostasis should not be wider than 18cm. If we remove the icons from it, we get the most ordinary stencil, but when you insert sacred images, you cannot tear your eyes from this wonderful whole. Such an iconostasis is the ladder of Jacob, according to which not only the holy angels ascend and descend, but the whole triumphant church [27].

Thus, recreating and building new temples, try to put large multi-tier iconostases in even rows, without complicating them with excessive decorative carvings, so that they are adorned with holy icons.

3. Conclusion

In connection with the foregoing, the author of the article developed a project to recreate the iconostasis of the Church of the Intercession of the Virgin of the lower floor of the Savior-

Transfiguration Temple (1894), the village of Nizhnyaya Sinyachikha, and the Alapayevsky district of the Sverdlovsk Region (Figure 1). This Temple is part of the Nizhnyaya Sinyachikha Museum-Reserve.

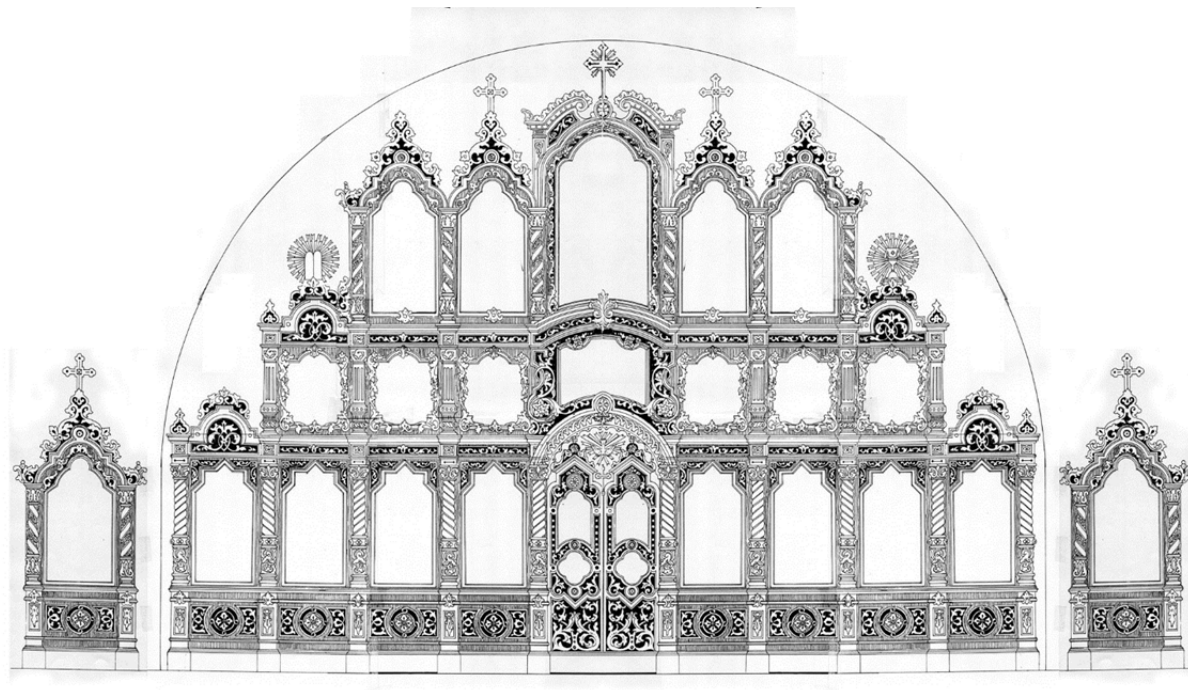


Figure 1. Outline project for the reconstruction of the wooden iconostasis of the Church of the Intercession of the Virgin of the Lower Floor of the Savior-Transfiguration Temple (1894), the village of Nizhnyaya Sinyachikha, Alapayevsky District, Sverdlovsk Region.

The outline project was submitted to the Russian Academy of Architecture and Construction Sciences, where it was reviewed and approved by the vice-president of RAACS, Doctor of Architecture, Professor V.N. Belousov. Having become acquainted, he concluded that the project "... is carried out at a high professional level, taking into account the architectural and artistic features of the Orthodox church building ..."

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