

THE INFLUENCE OF BRITISH CULTURE UPON THE FORMATION OF ODESSA'S AND CRIMEA'S ARCHITECTURAL-ART HERITAGE

Pismak, Yuri (*Odessa State Academy of Building and Architecture, Ukraine*)

Formation of Odessa's, Crimea's and all Southern Region of the Ukraine, architectural appearance in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century was influenced by different architectural European schools. Especially in this article is noted British influence. Consequently it seems proper to consider this process in the retrospect of the European development as a whole.

An interesting unit for studying the above mentioned process is Count Vorontsov's Palace in Odessa. Apart from its architectural and historical value it is an object of heritage, as it is connected to the name of a person of European rank and European fame.

Field-Marshal General Michail Semenovitch Vorontsov (1782-1856) hero of the 1812 War, was Governor-General of Novorossiyskaya Province, and later Vicegerent of the Caucasus.

The project of the Palace presented by architect F. Boffo was approved by the Odessa Building Committee in 1824. In 1828 the Vorontsovs (Michail Semenovitch and his spouse Elisabeth Ksaverievna, born Branitskaya) moved into their new residence in Odessa, and in 1829 all construction works on the site were over.

In his research paper [1] Professor V. I. Selinov touches upon the problem of stylistic influences depicted in the architecture of this edifice. He categorically objects to the opinion of Vorontsov's contemporary, N. N. Murzakevitch, who frequented the Palace, and who wrote in his memoirs that it was the English architecture that influenced the architecture of the Palace, he stressed - "the English manner".

"Vorontsov's Palace is evidently in Alexander Empire style in its local interpretation." [1] (V. I. Selinov)

Doctor Edward Morton who on M. S. Vorontsov's invitation travelled from England to St. Petersburg at the end of 1827 and from Petersburg accompanied Vorontsov to Odessa at the beginning of 1828, remarked in his memoirs [2] that the Vorontsov's Palace in Odessa was grand and, what is not common occurrence in the homes of Russian nobility - is the furniture in which they were styled. Most of it was brought from England.

An art historian L. N. Timofeev by virtue of comparative research suggested that the author of the original Vorontsov's Palace in Odessa project is a renowned English architect Thomas Harrison (1744 - 1829), who worked in style of the late Classicism. The city architect Frans Boffo latter built the Palace after some alterations and on-site adjustment. This hypothesis is indirectly proved by M. S. Vorontsov himself in his request to Odessa Building Committee in 1822: "... thus I will soon submit for the Committee's approval the plan of buildings considered by me... "

We can conclude from the above mentioned citation that as far as in 1822 M. S. Vorontsov was already in possession of the Palace's project. According to some evidence, the architect Thomas Harrison, being on close terms with Semen Romanovitch Vorontsov - father of Michail Semenovitch, had completed some projects for Southern estates of the Vorontsovs. And it is quite possible that one of those could have been taken as a foundation for the further projection by F. Boffo.

Son of Russian ambassador M. S. Vorontsov lived in England till the age of 19, was very well brought up and educated. According to Leo Tolstoy, the former "was among top Russian officials, a person of European education unusual for those times". Considering that information, his "Western bent" and obsession with British culture seems natural.

As a later example of Vorontsov's trust and inclination to British architects, we can take up the story of planning and construction of the famous Palace in Alupka (Crimean Southern coast).

Alupka was appropriated by M. S. Vorontsov, appointed Governor-General of Novorossia and Bessarabia a year before, in 1824. The first stones of the Palace were laid in March 1830 and it was planned to be built according to a project signed by Odessa city architect F. Boffo. But in 1831 M. S. Vorontsov while in England, directs to halt the construction. And exactly after a year an absolutely different project of a palace comprising traits of English castles of Tudor epoch and those of Muslim architecture, was worked out by a famous English architect Edward Blore (1787-1879) in accordance with views and plans of Alupka in drawings. This synthesis of Western and Eastern traditions in architecture surprisingly matched Crimean Southern coast landscape. Undoubtedly Crimea, since time immemorial, is an interface of different cultures.

Under the guidance of Blore's pupil, architect William Hunt, Alupka Palace was built and completed in 1848. Quite distant Britain and Northern coast of Black Sea. What could there be in common between the "Misty Albion" on one side and the "Sunny Tavrida" and all the Northern coast of Black Sea on the other? Yet let us recollect that British national poet George Gordon Byron in his poem "Don Juan" depicted capture of Ismail fortress. He featured as heroes Suvorov, de Ribas, Lanjeron and Potemkin.

Thus having submerged into the problem of exploration of mutual permeation and influence of cultures we do not view so alien and categorically contradictions between Professor V. I. Selinov and his opponent from the past - N. N. Murzakevitch. To all appearances "English influence" could have been direct (personal affliction of the client), and indirect via architectural vogue prevailing in Northern capital.

F. Brullov wrote in 1829 to his brother architect A. Brullov (1798-1877): "Everything that is Gothic is in vogue in Petersburg. A small palace in Gothic style was built for empress Alexandra Fedorovna in Peterhoff, a farm in Tsarskoe Selo (Tsar Village), now Count Pototsky has built a Gothic dining-room equipped with Gothic furniture, and the rest of nobility are trying to follow the Gothic, and striving for the Gothic". "The great vogue for all Gothic" sprang up in St. Petersburg under the spell of Walter Scott's (1771-1832) historic novels.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the author and supervisor of Walter Scott private estate's construction not far from Edinburgh - the Abbotsford Castle, is none other than Edward Blore himself (in co-operation with William Atkins). Working for the writer in previous years (while the serial "Scotch antiquities" was being issued at the start of 19th century). Blore after the construction of Abbotsford Castle had been completed (ca 1816) became one of the writer's closest friends.

Having expanded our range of research in time, we can view the Odessa Vorontsov's Palace at a different angle. There comes an understanding that it is, if one can put it that way, kind of go-between link of the classicism epoch domination and the architecture of distinctly romantic trend, within the latter ecclesism was conceived.

Romantic tendencies in architecture came at the time when energetic development of Black Sea coast of Russian Empire was in full swing. And the first off-shoots of these tendencies are evident in architecture of Odessa Vorontsov's Palace. There, where Professor V. I. Selinov could only see "Alexander Empire style in local guise..." and mighty influence of Empire Petersburg, striving to express idea of "austerity and grandeur" in monumental constructions at the beginning of 19th century, there were already beaming radiance stained-glass panels of 16th century, and the exquisitely curved ceiling of the "Turkish room" caught one's imagination, the black marble slabs taken as trophies in Varna shone with ligature gold.

Holding forth on "sprouting" of romantic tendencies still within the framework of classicist buildings, it is prudent to mention Vorontsov's suburban house in "Salgirka" park, near Simpheropol, erected by architect Philip Elson in 1827.

Seemingly under the impression of Vorontsov's Alupka Palace, Brzhezovsky's Palace (Shakh's Palace. 1848-1851) was built to the project of a renowned Odessa architect Felix Gonsiorovski in 2 Nadezhdinskaya (Gogol) street in Odessa. Apart from Tudor style, these two

palaces are related yet by the fact that they both are situated on the Black Sea coast. Facades of this Palace remind the same of a distinguished monument of architecture, historically connected with the names of British monarchs -the Hampton Court Palace.

Hampton Court Palace was recognised as the acme of the English palace architecture. Splendid ensemble sprawling on the bank of the Thames river near London was initiated in 1514.

As an example of interpenetration and reciprocal enrichment of British and our Black Sea regional cultures one can cite following dates:

William Valkote (1874-1943) was born in Lustdorff a settlement near Odessa into a family of businessman, an Englishman Frank Valkote. He was educated in France and at Petersburg Academy of Arts. Creative life of this architect began under the influence of A. Bernardazzi an architect from Odessa, who built quite a lot in the city. In Moscow W. Valkote made his name by building the "Metropole" hotel and other buildings. He possessed an unusual endowment of a graphic artist and also designed furniture. In ceramics he was pupil and follower of M. Vrubel.

In 1906 due to his wife's illness he had to leave for Britain. In Britain W. Valkote became popular as an artist and an architect.

The famous sculptor academician B. Edwards (1860-1924), an Englishman by origin, is an Odessite by birth. In 1890 he was awarded a gold medal at the Paris World Exhibition.

In our days, it goes without saying: the problem of salvation of the city centre, its protection zone, is growing more and more acute every day. And living here we witness with anguish the dilapidation and decay of the city's heritage, left over by the distinguished architects of the past. To my mind the part a restorer-architect can play, is becoming more and more important. It's vital to restore the former fame of the city by saving the decaying and restoring the destroyed monuments. This is undoubtedly a complex task. Still there is hope, even in this knotty period in the history of our country... that monuments of architecture will be preserved. Ukraine has at present not so many, for example palace-park preserves, palace-museums. Odessa is a unique city, here we have (so far) intact centre built in 19th century. Cultural heritage of the city is a source not only of beauty but assets too. Organization of museums and restoration, with profitable international "cultural" tourism as a backdrop, is one of the ways to finance preservation of our historic heritage. So, the restored Vorontsov's Palace as a palace-museum could become not only a link in this network, but also a centre of attraction (all the more that it is within walking distance from the Sea Terminal). Works of art from the vaults of Odessa Museum of Western and Oriental Art and/or Odessa Museum of Art could find their place in its halls relevant to the epoch and interior. The proceeds of foreign tourism would allow for maintenance of this architectural monument.

Livadia and Alupka museum-palaces are visited by more than 700,000 tourists annually. Most of these are foreign tourists from cruise liners which regularly call at our harbour. According to statistic of late 80s Odessa was visited by around 100,000 foreigners annually.

And today, 82 years later after they were written, the words of Professor V. Selinov:"... The Vorontsov's Palace, no matter how much time and events have ruined it, ... even now is a valuable monument ... of Empire building of a far gone ... epoch. For Odessa ... , it represents an exceptional artistic and historic importance, which should be maintained and preserved in view of looming destruction" [1].

Conclusions

- Formation of Odessa's and Crimea's architectural-art heritage at the end of 18th – beginning of 20th century was influenced by British culture.

- Some explorers suggested that the author of the original project of Vorontsov's Palace in Odessa is a renowned English architect Thomas Harrison (1744-1829).

• An outstanding British architect Edward Blore (1787-1879) is the main author of project of Vorontsov's Palace in Alupka (the Crimea, 1830-1848). In the opinion of many researchers the Vorontsov's Palace in Alupka is the best of Edward Blore's works.

Анотація

Формування архітектурної спадщини на теренах, що сьогодні є Південними регіонами сучасної України наприкінці XVIII – початку XX ст. відбувалося під значним впливом низки архітектурних шкіл Європи. Особливої уваги заслуговують британські впливи. Саме у той період, що розглядається, Велика Британія виступає на світовій арені як “світова держава”, крупніша колоніальна імперія, що мала вплив на різні сфери життя у багатьох країнах.

References

1. Selinov, V. I. :Vorontsov's Palace as a cultural heritage monument of Odessa. Odessa, 1929.
2. Morton, Edward. Travels in Russia and a Residence at St Petersburg and Odessa in the Years 1827-1829. London, 1830.
3. Anglo-Russian Relations in the Eighteenth Century: Exhibition Devised and Catalogue Completed by Anthony Cross/ Norwich, 1977, 59 p.
4. Brett, Charles. Alupka Palace / Country Life, July 25, 2002, pp. 74-79.
5. Brett, Charles. Towers of Crim Tartary. English and Scottish architects and craftsmen in the Crimea, 1762 – 1853. Shaun Tyas Donington, 2005, 154 p.
6. Colvin, Howard. A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840, John Murray, London, 1978.
7. Howard, Jeremy; Kuznetsov, Sergey. Scottish architects in tsarist Russia. Charles Cameron and Adam Menelaws // History today (Volume 46 (2)) February 1996.
8. Madariaga I. de. Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great. London, 1981.
9. Rhinelander, Anthony I.H. Prince Michael Vorontsov, Viceroy to the Tsar. Montreal and Kingston. Canada. 1990.
10. Shvidkovsky, D. The Empress and the Architect. New Haven and London, 1996.
11. The modest genius. An exhibition of drawings and works of Thomas Harrison. – Chester, 1977.
12. Pismak, Yuri. The influence of British artistic and aesthetic traditions upon the architecture of monuments in Odessa and Crimea // Regional Contact, No 12, 1997. Journal for exchange of experiences and ideas on regionalism and co-operation in Europe /Copenhagen, Denmark – Maribor, Slovenia. 374 p., pp.283-287.