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SECULAR BYSANTISM BYZANTINESQUE IN EUROPEAN CIVIL ARCHITECTURE OF LATE XIX – FIRST HALF OF XX CENTURY

Evgeniya Mihaylovna Kishkinova*

Rostov State University of Civil Engineering, 162 Sotsialisticheskaya St., Rostov-on-Dov, 344022, Russia

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Abstract

Byzantinesque in architecture, as a rule, is strongly associated with temple architecture monuments. In fact, most buildings of that style are temples, as well as medieval monuments, the study of which became the basis for Byzantine historicism. Nevertheless, secular byzantism, together with the temple byzantism, is a significant and valuable page of architecture's history of a number of European countries. The monuments studied in this article allow drawing a conclusion on the specifics of prerequisites and results of applying to Byzantium's heritage in the civil architecture of Western and Eastern Europe.

Keywords: byzantinesque, civil architecture, historicism, rationalism

1. Introduction

Byzantinesque is known as a school in romanticism architecture, art nouveau, art deco and even functionalism. As a rule, secular buildings of that school are perceived in the shade of temple architecture. Such an approach has enough reasons for the history of the Russian architecture. Civil buildings of Byzantinesque are rather little here and often are not so much stylistically justified as temples. Among the examples, in most of which Byzantinesque loans are widely compared with other styles, there are the Tbilisi Opera Theater (1878-1896, V.A. Shreter), Tretiakovs' house in Moscow (1871-1875, A.S. Kaminskiy), I.N. Geyer's charity house in Moscow (1899, L.N. Kekushev) as well as the projects of the History Museum (1875, L.V. Dal). In the civil interior, the examples of Byzantinesque are Morozov's house in Odintsovo near Moscow (1892, F.O. Shekhtel) and the Byzantium Hall of the History Museum (1875, V.O. Shervud). However, in the architecture of other countries such monuments are wider represented – in particular, because that Byzantinesque in a few of

*E-mail: KEM0022@yandex.ru

them was existing longer than in Russia – up to World War II. This article is devoted to finding the specifics of Byzantinesque elements in civil buildings of various European architecture schools.

2. Literature review

Byzantinesque monuments are well studied using the materials of the XIXth – early XXth century, mainly in Christian Orthodox countries. They were studied in Russian architecture in monographs as: *Byzantinesque in Russian Architecture* by Y.R. Saveliev [1] and *Byzantinesque Renaissance in Russian Architecture of Middle XIX – Early XX Century* by Y.M. Kishkinova [2], while Byzantinesque was studied by A.V. Ikonnikov [3], Y.I. Kirichenko [4], Y.A. Borisova [5]. A number of issues was covered in works by A.L. Punin [6], V.G. Lisovskiy [7], V.S. Goryunov [8]. Byzantinesque line within the search of the national style of Bulgarian architecture was paid attention to by M. Koeva [9-11] and P. Yokimov *Secession and Bulgarian Architecture* [12].

Serbian Byzantinesque was studied, in particular, in the works of M. Jovanovic [13] and – most widely – A. Kadievic [14]. In the Romanian historiography, monographs by M. Ene *Neoromanesque Architecture in Bucharest* [15], R. Nemteanu *Neoromanesque – One of the Regional European Styles* [16] and *Neoromanesque Villa* [17], as well as the book by K. Popescu *National Romanian style – Nation's Building via Architecture. 1881-1945* [18] should be mentioned, and in the Greek historiography – the monograph of M. Charalampos [19].

In Western Europe, the first examples are the book of J. Bullen *Byzantium Rediscovered* [20] and by the same author the article *Byzantium and Modernism* [21]. Studying Byzantinesque in Western European architecture exemplified by Germany, France and England, the author pays much attention to the theoretical works of J. Ruskin and W. Morris. Also, the monographs devoted to C. Hansen were published by A. Papanicolau-Christensen [22] and I. Haugsted [23]. Besides, for the studied topic of great interest are the materials covered in Y.R. Saveliev's article *Neobyzantinesque in Foreign Architecture. Stages of Evolution* [http://niitag.ru/konferenciya-lichnost-epoxa-stil-programma/], in articles by A.A. Smurygina devoted to T. von Hansen and Serbian architecture [24; www.confcontact.com/20110531/sa_kishkin.htm], in books by K. Brace *Portrait of Bristol* [25] and by M. Zalesskaya *Bavaria King's Castles* [26], as well as the materials devoted to the architecture of Vienna gasometers [www.wiener-gasometer.at/en/history]. As seen from the brief literature review above, the secular Byzantinesque has not been studied separately and generally yet, allowing for finding its specifics in some or other architectural tradition.

3. Byzantinesque in civil architecture of Christian Orthodox countries of Eastern and Southern Europe

Byzantinesque in Serbian civil architecture is formed later than in church architecture (only since late XIX century) and is manifested mainly in decorative details. Those details are, as a rule, borrowed from the medieval church architecture and combined – more or less successfully – with the contemporary composition/planning methods. The earliest examples of Byzantinesque façade elements are Saint Sava's house in Belgrade (1889-1890, I. Ilkic), and the buildings of Court and Seminary designed by V. Nicolic (1891-1904) in Sremska Karlovice and Bishop's house in Novy Sad (1901).

The greatest contribution into the national style in Serbian secular architecture before 1914 was made by B. Tanazevic, who managed to create a convincing symbiosis of modern, Byzantinesque and Serbian (Moravian) motives, escaping from church architecture. The example is the L-shaped in plain view monumental building of Central Telephone Station in Kosovo Street, Belgrade (1905-1908). Similar solutions were used by Tanazevic in the façades of the Ministry of Education building in Belgrade (1912-1913). Of great interest is the pavilion of Serbian Kingdom at Torino exhibition by the same author (1911) and a non-realized project – Municipal house in Kragujevac (1911) designed as a bright example of secular architecture combining modern, medieval Byzantinesque, Serbian architecture and Baroque.

P. Popovic used less modern examples in his design, basing upon the heritage of the Moravian school, exemplified by the District Administration building in Vranie (1908). Combination of modern and classic motives with Byzantinesque and Serbian elements in residential architecture may be seen in the works of Ivan Novakovic, mainly in Belgrade buildings, like the three-floor house of J. Babic in Prince Milos Street (1910). Classic reminiscences are seen in façade solution of the Gymnasium building in Cacak (1910-1928), under D. Maslac's project.

After the creation in 1918 of Kingdom of Serbians, Croatians and Slovenians, construction activity enhanced, especially in civil architecture. In the politics and culture of that time, French orientation is observed, simultaneously with the striving for national identity. Pan-Slavism ideals revival in culture, arts and sports was expressed, in particular, in the establishment of the sport patriotic club *Falcon*. First, *Falcon* community was created in Czechia in 1863, then in other Slavic areas of Austro-Hungary. The establishment of that organization was, in essence, the act of self-arrangement of Czechs, Slovenians, Serbians and others under the threat of germanization of the said nations. The form of the said self-arrangement was the system of moral and physical education of the young people. The founder of *Falcon* club was the Czech writer Miroslav Tyrs (1832-1884). Although the movement was non-political officially, it was a major carrier and distributor of Czech nationalism and Pan-Slavism. Serbians and other south Slavic nations accepted with enthusiasm the idea of Pan-Slavic *Falcon* entity. In Serbia and then in Yugoslavia, *Falcon* got the wide state support. King

Alexander I Karageorgievic was the honour chairman of South Slavic *Falcon*. The movement was strongly supported by government, and office houses of *Falcon* were opened all over the country, mainly compliant with the national tradition in architecture.

In *Matica* house for *Falcon* in Belgrade M. Korunovic made the main façade clearly monumental. Two lower floors were interpreted as the basement, three next floors were united with huge order pilasters supporting arcs with fitted round windows while the upper floor in the central risalit with many arched windows was solved as attic. The attic finishing pediment with an arched niche decorated with Saint George's bas-relief accentuated the vertical axis of the composition and ended with falcon's nest sculpture. Sitting birds' figures decorated the attic floor, enriching the building silhouette. Falcon's image should be above the portal. Sculptures of medieval warriors with falcons were supposed to be placed at pilasters base as well. Archivolts are richly decorated with reliefs. The building constructed between 1929 and1935 (its completion was assisted by N. Krasnov) greatly differs from the design project, it is less impressionable and poorer in decorations. Its façades combine late modern, neoclassicism (traditionally called academism in Serbian historiography) with elements of Serbian and Byzantinesque. The most significant work of M. Korunovic is the building of the Ministry of Post and Telegraph in Belgrade (1926-1930). Impressive plasticity and silhouette of extended façades are determined by corner pilaster sides of the building forming tower-shape volumes with triangles in attic part. The original volumetric composition is added with coloristic contrast. Byzantinesque arc motives, Serbian bended cornices and guilloche, rhythm of window apertures close to modern, classic basement, friso and cornice are re-thought by the author in expressionism view. Expressionism features were also observed in non-realized projects of Yugoslavia's pavilion for the Philadelphia exhibition (1924-1925, P. and B. Crstic brothers) and the Army House in Belgrade (1929, B. Marinkovic).

The considered building and projects allow to conclude that in secular architecture of Serbia Byzantinesque was widely used, and especially its interaction with modern, art deco, functionalism and expressionism is seen most brightly.

Byzantinesque in Bulgaria was as well used not only in church architecture but in secular, although not so widely. It is exemplified by the Central Market Hall, the Central Mineral Baths and the Synodic Chamber in Sofia. It might seem that, as distinct from church architecture where Byzantinesque determines planning, volumetric and special solutions and décor, in secular buildings its influence should be limited to the façade decoration area. However, architects would try to use dominating Byzantinesque general composition of façade and sometimes building silhouette and interior solutions.

The Central Market Hall (1909-1911, N. Torbov) is a single-floor building divided like a basilica into three paces with upper lighting. Thin interior pillars are made of pig iron, side paces are two-step. Building façades are stone-faced. Their rhythm is ruled by large arched windows. Their U-shaped archivolts close

to Islamic architecture are based on columns with heads decorated by Byzantium ornament with tiny arcature under cornice. The Central Mineral baths building (now – the Historical Museum of Sofia; 1905-1910, P. Momchilov and Y. Milanov) has a single-floor. The façade plasticity is determined by risalits in the centre and in the corners, ended with domes. Those domes on wide low drums finished with arcature underline the Byzantinesque character of the building. Red and white brick-stone façades added with reliefs and majolica friso reminding monuments by Tyrnov and Nesebr stress the national romantic nature.

The Arts Academy project by A. Mitov and the National renaissance Museum by A. Torniov were not realized.

Byzantinesque in Greek secular architecture went on the road different from Byzantinesque in church art of building. While keeping the Byzantium's heritage in church architecture in maximally original view has been an object of special attention, in civil art of building Byzantinesque has actively changed under the influence of art deco. It may be acknowledged, for instance, by Thessaloniki monuments: the Longo House (so called Red House), L. Gennari, 1926), the Bosphorus house (1922, A. Paikos), the Mediteranne Hotel (1924, D. Marinos), the Thessaloniki Club (1925, S. Angelos). Thessaloniki downtown ensemble designed by the French architect E. Erbar dates 1917 and is fully Byzantinesque. Aristotle square and street arranged on the basis of classicism city planning principles is formed by buildings styled as academic Byzantinesque. Byzantinesque features include first floor arcades, shapes of window apertures, decorative elements. Such are the buildings enchasing the square: Electra Palace Hotel (1962, F. Vokos, A. Konstantinidis, J. Triandafilidis), Olympion Cinema (1949, M. Jacquet) and others. Erbar's thoughts were realized only after World War II. It is obvious that line symmetry, spatial scope, pageantry, rhythmical arcades, plastered façades, decorative details of that ensemble are matching the Soviet architecture of the first post-war decade. In this article it is not made an objective to find Byzantinesque reminiscences in the featured conglomerate of quotations and allusions called Stalin Empire, as that is a task for a separate research and in this context we will consider two examples only.

The first one is the Stalin Museum in Gori (1949-1955, A.G. Kurdiani). Despite the visual demonstrativeness, the Byzantinesque origin supplemented with medieval Georgian motives is seen behind Venetian sources, creating almost postmodernist multiple associations. The second example is the railway station building in Kishinev (1948, A.V. Schusev, L.M. Chuprin). In that case, the Byzantinesque component is synthesized with Romanian motives, typical for Neoromanesque.

Neoromanesque is the national style in Romania's architecture, and in secular buildings it is characterized by organic interaction of the Byzantinesque component with borrowings from the national medieval heritage and folk architecture with dominating form-making typical for historicism, art nouveau and art deco. It should be noted that Neoromanesque is one of the brightest and original pages in the heritage of Romanian architecture and many monuments

are part of the golden fund. This style's history is divided into three stages: early – since 1886, when under I. Minku's project Lohovari house was built, before 1906 (the exhibition in that year was devoted to 40 years' anniversary of King Carole I's ruling and 1800 years' anniversary since Dacia invasion by Rome was a great stimulus for searching national style); mature (1906 – late 1920's, i.e., extinction of art deco) and late (late 1920's – 1947, when the national style experienced great impact of the contemporary architecture). Meantime, a great prerequisite for Neoromanesque design, especially under the well-manifested Byzantinesque line, was the return of Transylvania in Romania in 1918, where building of Christian Orthodox churches was a clear view of state unity. Thus, the actuality of applying to traditions was connected in Romania not only with self-identity strive but also with the need to ensure state unification of the country differing from the national and confessional point of view. Secular Neoromanesque buildings in Romania are numerous and diverse. They include administrative, educational, museum buildings, private houses and villas. Bright examples are, in particular, the Ministry of Public Works building in Bucharest (1910, P. Antonescu), the Architecture Faculty (now the University of Architecture and City Planning, 1912-1927, G. Cherkez), the Geology Museum (1906-1908, V. Stefanescu) and the Rural Museum (1912-1941, N. Gika-Budeshti), D. Ionescu's house (1925, T. Sokolescu). In spatial and volumetric compositions of private houses, modern and art deco principles are used, balconies and galleries – 'foisors' and 'prispe' – are the typical features of the folk architecture, arched windows and columns keep Byzantinesque nature and abundant decorative elements are borrowed from the rich ornamental heritage of building art of the turn of XVII – XVIII centuries (so called Brincoveanu style).

In the late XIX – early XX century, Byzantinesque elements are used in the design of exhibition pavilions. Such are the pavilions built for the 1900 World's Fair in Paris by Serbia (M. Kapetanovic, M. Ruvidic, A. Bodri), Greece (L. Man) and Romania (J. Formige), resembling medieval temples, above mentioned Yugoslavia's pavilion project for the Philadelphia exhibition (1924-1925, P. and B. Crtsic brothers). It is interesting that the lost Trocadero Palace built in Paris for the 1878 World's Fair (G. Daviou) also combined Moorish and Byzantinesque features.

4. Byzantinesque in secular architecture of Western Europe

Coming to the architecture of Western Europe it should be noted that in Christian Orthodox countries, as shown above, administrative, museum, exhibition, trade and residential buildings were created in Byzantinesque style, while in Western Europe Byzantinesque was manifested in the industrial architecture as well.

Surely, the most famous secular building in Western Europe with Byzantinesque interior is the Neusweinstein Castle in Germany built by the order of Ludwig II Bavarian in 1869-1886 and designed by E. Ridel and G. von Dolman. The nucleus of the complex's western part is the castle with two high

towers and the nucleus of the castle is the double-height Throne room occupying the third and fourth floors. Its interior was designed by an Austrian architect J. Hofman, the paintings were made by W. Kolmsberger and W. Hausschild. The sample was All Saints Church in Munich and Santa Sophia. Basilica-type hall extended from the south to the north surrounded with lofts is finished with apse-like perch with symbolic throne on elevation with marble stairs. It should evidence the religious link of king and God and praise of divine mercy. Ceiling is painted with blue starry sky and sunbeams imitates dome vault. Two-step loft arcades resembling Santa Sophia include artificial porphyry columns in the lower and artificial lapis-lazuli columns in the upper step, supplemented by marble caps. The hall is perceived as a sacral space expressing the idea of unlimited king's power and praising king as the intermediary between God and world.

If the Throne room of Neusweinstein is functionally close to a temple, the below monuments are rather far from it. The use of Byzantinesque in industrial construction was explained, first of all, by construction material features – brick, being rather long-living, cheap and not requiring plastering. Varying brickwork, Byzantinesque stripes effect could be reached, transferring elements of Roman or Renaissance style. Those schools became dominating in the industrial architecture of historicism.

Such an example may be Vienna gasometers built in 1896-1899 by a German engineer Schimming in Zimmering suburb. Each of the four gasometers was a huge moving cylindrical steel structure in brick tower of 65 m in diameter and 67 m high covered with a slightly sloping dome. In non-operating state, cylinders were put in each other and sunk in a pool. As the storage was filled with gas, the cylinder would emerge, and under the pressure of delivered gas, lower diameter sections would move up. Thus, each Vienna gasometer contained about 90,000 cubic meters of lighting gas and ensured continuous pressure. Gasometers were out of operation in 1940's. However, the originality of the decorative solution contributed to the preservation of buildings and assigning new functions in early XXI century. Towers' façades are red bricks with stripes of yellow sandstone. The lower tier is a base, the second is with single arched windows and the third is with bi-fore windows united with lesenes and narrow vertical windows above which there is a tier of small archways. Inter-tier cornice separates the attic part where arched windows are grouped by five and divided by lesenes extensions. A parapet finishes the building. Two upper tiers of windows and the parapet are a sort of crown diademing the gasometer. Abundance of arched windows, first of all, bi-fore windows and stripy brickwork especially colourful in the base make gasometers closer to the Byzantium's tradition. Similar gasometers, more modest in finishing, were built in Stockholm in 1893.

A bright page of Byzantinesque in industrial architecture is Bristol, England. Among the numerous monuments of industrial *Bristol Byzantinesque* (the term was introduced by J. Summerson [25, p. 78]) the most impressive is the grain storehouse used as an office. It was built in 1869 and designed by A.

Ponton and U. Wenn Gof. Simple prismatic volume of the seven-floor building impresses with the rich decoration of the main façade using red and dark blue bricks and light sandstone. Lower basement tier includes three large archways slight ogival. Higher, the façade is structured by huge floor-by-floor lesenes dividing the plane into five vertical parts. Their metric row is supplemented with the complex rhythm of horizontal divisions formed by window apertures, decreasing in size as they move up, and insertions of laced brickwork. Different windows – round, semi-circular, rectangular, rectangular with rounded corners, arched bi-fores – are supplemented with stripy dripstones and archivolts. The upper floor is an arcade with double columns, crowned with friso of denticles, and above the cornice supported by a stepped console there is a parapet of bicorn scallops. In 1862, the building of the Bristol Wagon and Carriage Works was constructed, designed by the architect, arts scholar and designer A.W. Goodwin. Its monumental three-floor façade faced with natural stones is formed by archways – large in the lower floor and smaller in the upper, supplemented by stripy archivolts. Gardener's warehouse building (1865, W. Jingel) may also be mentioned. Archways grouped by three cut the façade of the modest tar storehouse building, rectangular in plane and covered by gable roof (1863, unknown author). Bristol Byzantinesque monuments include two buildings of timber storehouses (1865-1867, J. Foster; 1865, W. Jingel), tenement building on King Street (1870, unknown author). Among storehouse buildings, bright façade facing of yellow and red bricks containing flat arches, pilasters, stripy archivolts and keeled dripstones inspired by the Moorish architecture make Robinson's storehouse of special interest (1874, W. Jingel). Calston Hall in Bristol had another designation – concert hall built in 1861-1867 and designed by J. Foster and J. Wood. Two-floor demonstratively ceremonial façade of that building seems *a jour* because its lower tier is an order arch and in the upper tier stripy archivolts of arched windows are supported by double columns with Byzantinesque caps.

As it is known, the creative and teaching activity of T. von Hansen who worked mainly in Austro-Hungary contributed to the establishment of Byzantinesque in architectures of a few countries, including Bulgaria and Serbia. Byzantinesque features are seen not only in churches but in some secular buildings of C. and T. von Hansen brothers. Such are the municipal hospital building in Copenhagen combining Roman and Byzantinesque elements (1859-1863, C. von Hansen) and disabled persons home building in Lvov (1855-1863, T. von Hansen), ordered and funded by the Austrian emperor Franz Joseph.

Later, in the late XIX – the first triad of XX century, Byzantinesque motives were almost not used in the Western European architecture, as since the early modern period, Byzantinesque heritage has been associated mainly with the spiritual rise and sacral space, having no relation to the industrial architecture. Almost the only example of a secular building, yet having some sacral function, may be Beethoven House project designed by P. Berlage for Dutch city Blumendal.

5. Conclusion

The above examples evidence the wide range of formal and compositional and decorative features of Byzantinesque, its flexibility and variability, organic combination of motives and borrowings from other styles and national cultures, ability to meet the time challenge, using the achievements of art deco or expressionism – like in the past, when medieval Byzantium's architecture was changing and gaining original features under the cultural context of the areas under the influence of Byzantium. In Christian Orthodox countries of the Eastern and Southern Europe, Byzantinesque in civil building art was an integral part of architectural expression of national self-identity's pathos and acknowledgment of own medieval heritage's significance. In that view it was widely used in public houses, exhibition pavilions, private houses and villas design. A common feature of secular Byzantinesque for those countries is the more free interpretation of Byzantinesque sources compared to church architecture, more active interaction of Byzantinesque elements with form-making methods typical for the leading architectural schools of the first half of the XXth century. In Western Europe's architecture, secular Byzantinesque acts as a manifestation of rationalism which explains its wide use in industrial architecture, limited to the XIX century only, as distinct from Christian Orthodox countries.

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