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Historicism in the architecture of Lviv: tendency across centuries



Fig. 1. The Bandinelli house in Market Square 2 (around 1593)



Fig. 2. The Black house in Market Square 4

Development of theoretical conceptualization of the phenomena and events in the history of architecture frequently leads to reevaluation of their importance, a more precise definition or even their complete transformation. An example of this is the fate of the term “historicism” that relatively recently got implanted in the Ukrainian scientific use. Only in 1990s has it finally “forced out” the traditional eclecticism from our architectural science and

outlined the period of development of architecture of the 2nd half of the 19th century. However, formation of the new views on the problem of historicism as the fundamental world outlook category opens up absolutely new perspectives for the research. The term “historicism” used in this article is not the name of a concrete trend in the practice of architecture of a certain period but a tendency that goes through many periods of development of architecture. Historicism is interpreted as a direction of creative thinking fed on historical consciousness. The author relies on the definition of historicism suggested by N. Pevzner:

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Fig. 3. The Boim Chapel in Cathedral Square
(A. Boemer, 1609–1616)



Fig. 4. The ensemble of the Assumption Church (1591–1629)

Historicism is a trend in which study and application of history is more important than discovery and development of a new system, new forms of its time [3, p. 271].

It becomes clear in such a context that historicism as a characteristic feature of many architectural epochs for the appeal to historical memory through historical prototypes was the foundation of creative thinking of architects. This article analyzes principal stages of development of architecture of Lviv in the 17–19th centuries from the standpoint of representation of historicism in architecture.

The stage of development of architecture of Lviv for the first time connected with historical thinking began after the tragic event – a great fire of 1527. The city devastated to the foundations was rebuilt in the new style – the Renaissance. The architects invited from Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, France brought to the Ukrainian architecture their experience of the west-European Renaissance – the epoch whose very name demonstrated a desire to synthesize the new values appealing to the heritage of the past. New understanding of history and the new place of man in history as its maker gave rise in the day of the Renaissance to the wave of retrospectives.

Architectural Renaissance arrived in Lviv with some delay, having brought with it the stylized pluralism of the late Italian Renaissance. At that time, the Italian Renaissance has come over the apex of its development in the works of D. Bramante, after which there was nothing else left except trying to modify again and again the familiar themes or disclaim the achieved. The latter alternative al-

lowed to respond to the new aesthetic needs and opened up the way to the development of numerous stylistic tendencies. Two lines among the lines of style creation were clearly defined. One was based on the assumption of the end in itself of art and its own values. The word “manner” became the key notion. The other line suggested a new interpretation of the classical theme in synthesis with the local achievements of architecture of the previous epochs [6, p. 15–18].

The classical order in compositions of mannerists that had acquired a symbolical meaning – a projection on the structure of human measure – had already become an ordinary canonized foundation. However, above all deviation from the standard was filled with important meaningful content, as this signified domination of personal over the ideal, i.e. anthropomorphism of the order acquired individual characteristics as a peculiar analog of individuality of each human [2]. The nearest to its Roman prototypes appeared to be the Bandinelli house in Market Square 2 built in around 1593 (Fig. 1). The architecture of the small building interprets the forms of Farneze palazzo supplementing them with lush decor and sculpture. Composition of the façade includes the anthropomorphic element – order, but in a somewhat reduced form: smooth plastered walls of the three-storied building are divided by belts and decorated Doric friezes, corner rustic joints became the only vertical elements [5, pp. 27, 106].

The Black house in Market Square 4 (Fig. 2) offers a different interpretation of the palazzo theme. The façade is devoid of the order decoration, yet its division upwardly



Fig. 5. The Hausner house in prospect Svobody 1–3
(1810–1811, 1829–1822)



Fig. 6. The Piller house in Vynnychenka street 8
(F. Tomek, 1839)

is subordinate to triplicity that originates from the classical order tradition. Proportions of the façade are reduced to the rational system on the basis of multiple ratios and elemental contours of diamond rustics. The forms of the building are not a direct replica of some classical examples, but bear the spirit of a Florentine palazzo of Quattrocento period [5, pp. 27, 107].

The Boim Chapel in Cathedral Square built, probably, by A. Boemer in 1609–1616 is one of the pearls of Lviv Renaissance, the peak of its mannerist searches (Fig. 3). Historicism in architecture of the chapel definitely departed from representation of the ideal and presented a dynamic, multidimensional sight. The architect built composition of the façade on dramatic effects. Behind their overworked building up, one can trace position of the craftsmen intended not only for understanding the plot and for empathy but also for capturing the viewer with mastery and technical perfection [1, pp. 96–97].

The new interpretation of classical themes in combination with ancient Rus traditions started the tendency that has preserved its topicality till present day: it is the search for the Ukrainian style, its differentiation in the stream of general European styles. This tendency has shown itself most powerfully the in religious architecture, whose typology has always been closely connected with the canon. The apex of the synthesis of the European and national became the ensemble of the Assumption Church (1591–1629) (Fig. 4). Architecture of the church has organically combined the traditional volumetric-spatial type of the Ukrainian three-domed temple and the late-Renaissance

aesthetics. The order has retained its importance that connected it with the myth of antiquity. Its proportions and details were rather precise, yet their tectonic content had been changed: the order transformed into a motif of decoration of the plane. Volumetric-spatial design of the Chapel of the Three Saints – the crypt of the Korniyak family in Lviv – reminds of the triple-crib wooden Carpathian churches. The chapel was built in 1578–1591 by A. Pidlisnyy and P. Krasovskyy [5, pp. 27, 91–92].

The new stage of architectural development of the city closely connected with recapitulation of the lessons of history began in the end of the 18th century and was predetermined by political events when Lviv was granted the status of the capital of the newly established province of the Austrian monarchy in 1772 [7]. Historicism was imported to Lviv from Austria in the form of the “second classicism” (or neoclassicism) that developed in Europe in the period between 1760 and 1830. The special feature of the “second classicism” became the keynote appeal to the indigenous local sources that distinguished the national school within the general boundaries of the style system of classicism [6, pp. 63–65; 4].

Adaptation of classical forms to the local context (of both, city planning and creative potential context) had led to the development of the phenomenon – of the type of a Lviv city building squeezed into the ordinary built-up neighborhoods but lavishly decorated. The plane of the front façade on the level of the second and third floors came to be the center of focusing of the order and lavish sculptural decoration. The order compositions were com-



Fig. 7. The Palace of Roman Catholic Archbishops in Vynnychenka street (J. Salzman, 1846–1847)



Fig. 8. The Polytechnical School (J. Zachariewicz, 1872–1876)

bined with forthright combinations of the “Renaissance classicism” and brought in even greater pluralism into rather decanonized classical pattern. The Hausner house in prospect Svobody 1–3 (1810–1811, 1829–1822) (Fig. 5) and the Piller house in Vynnychenka street 8 (F. Tomek, 1839) (Fig. 6) became the best examples of this [4; 10].

Romantic outlook on life reached Lviv in the 1920s: the romantic Neo-Gothic appeared in Lviv to express the ideas of individualism and romanticism. The trend of romantic Neo-Gothic envisaged a free use and synthesizing of the “Gothic” forms for the establishment of the new image that had been characteristic of the early romantic

phase of the European Neo-Gothic. Neo-Gothic existed in the outskirts of development of Lviv architecture of the 1930s, though it appeared to be a specific “enzyme” that accelerated the process of collapse of the classical system [10].

The building that demonstrated the final downfall of classicism in architecture of Lviv became the Palace of Roman Catholic Archbishops in Vynnychenka Street (J. Salzman, 1846–1847) (Fig. 7). This is where the Renaissance, Classical and Romanesque motifs were mixed up in a motley collection. The system of classicism was irrevocably shaken, but a new system came to replace it



Fig. 9. The building of the Seym of Galicia (J. Gochberger, 1877–1881)



Fig. 10. The Potocki's Palace (L. d'Overnier, 1888–1890)

whose ideological inspirer appeared to be the romantic outlook on life. Total historicism of thinking that legitimized the appeal to the heritage of all previous architectural periods and infinitely expanded the range of sources for interpretations appeared to be the fundamental characteristic of the new system [1, p. 211].

Decentralization of the Empire in 1867 shifted the reigns of governing Galicia from Vienna to Lviv, and starting from 1869 Lviv became the capital of the autonomous province of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. One of the most important strategic guidelines of the Polish administration in Galicia was to prove absolute ability of the region to resolve independently any issues without any patronage on the part of Vienna administration. Architecture under such conditions became one of the tools for validation of such policy, and the status of Lviv as

the capital city determined the representative character of development of the city [7; 9].

Starting from the 1850s, historicism unstoppably continued to win its positions in the architecture of Lviv, and in 1870-1880s reached its peak in the construction of public buildings that have become symbols of both, the city and the epoch in general. One of such projects was the building of the Polytechnical School (1872–1876) designed by J. Zachariewicz – a graduate of Vienna Polytechnic (Fig. 8). This was the first large-scale implementation of the concepts of the Viennese Neo-Renaissance in Galicia. Spatial composition and decor of the façades rests on the balanced Renaissance-Classical variations [8].

The Seym of Galicia (J. Gochberger, 1877–1881) (Fig. 9) was conceived as the building-symbol. The pretentious architecture of the building formed as a result of



Fig. 11. The building of the City Theater (Z. Gorgolewski, 1897–1900)

a large international contest was to become not just a tribute to fashion, but a metaphor of prosperity and well-being of the autonomous province of Galicia: historicism in the architecture of Sejm stepped forward as a part of the official ideology. Its façade is amazing with resplendence and diversity of architectural-compositional and interesting techniques. The central axis is accentuated by the loggia-*risalita* that develops the theme of “Michelangelian” large order [1, pp. 271–273; 4].

The 2nd half of the 19th century put forward the need for construction in the “splendid and refined” style. The “Second Empire style” associated with the fashion that was formed in France during the rule of Napoleon III corresponded with the need. It was readily used in house-building and, especially, in palace construction. The Potocki’s Palace (1888–1890) was erected by J. Cybulski and L.-B. Ramult from the design of the Frenchman (!) L. d’Overnier (Fig. 10). The architect has rationally elaborated volumetric-spatial structure of the building proceeding from the classical experience and the new functional requirements. Façades are decorated with the features of “Frenchness”: tall French roofs with *lucarne* windows that complete the central and side *risalitas*, massive chimneys, rustic pilasters [1, pp. 362–363].

The apex of the epoch of architecture of choice and the project that has logically completed one of the most brilliant periods of Lviv architecture became the building of the City Theater (Z. Gorgolewski, 1897–1900) (Fig. 11). The theater occupied the key location in the ensemble of the newly created avenue of the city and became the main plastic accent of the promenade boulevard finally determining it as the city center. The author of the project openly followed the type of the Opera in Paris that has become the paradigm of theater building for centuries. However, Z. Gorgolewski managed to find a reasonable accommodation between the ostentatious splendor of the

opera building and clarity of the composition pattern reduced to the classical hierarchy and logical subordination of meanings [1, pp. 311–313].

Another form of self-expression of the period of the 2nd half of the 19th century was the variant of medieval architecture, first of all, Gothic architecture. Philosophical-symbolical world outlook of the 2nd half of the 19th century linked the Neo-Gothic architecture with the revival of ideas of Catholicism. The first of the large implementations of the romantic trend was the convent and the Roman-Catholic Church of the Franciscans (1877–1889) designed by J. Zachariewicz (Fig. 12). Modest decor of the façades rests on the design of elements from the style glossary of Early Gothic and Romanesque architecture. Volumetric-spatial and stylistic pattern of this structure became the landmark for further development of Roman-Catholic construction in Lviv and were repeated in various interpretations [1, p. 305; 12].

Aspirations to national consolidation and strengthening of self-consciousness of the nations gained momentum in the 2nd half of the 19th century in many countries. This was associated with the national-romantic versions of historicism in architecture that accentuated the specific character of the national past. The scrappy architecture of the national Industrial exhibition of 1896 visualized for the first time the beginnings of the searches for the Ukrainian style in Galicia. They were declared in the projects designed by J. Zachariewicz: the *boykys*’ church in which exhibits of the ethnographic pavilion were displayed and the Ukrainian pavilion that had the shape of the traditional homestead structure [8].

Under the circumstances of division of Poland by the neighboring states, it was of special importance how to deal with the issue of national singularity of the Polish culture. Awareness of cultural and political revival was connected with re-conceptualization of the heritage of

folk construction and the rise of patriotic sentiments was manifested in architecture through the formation of “Zakopane style” whose ideological inspirer was Stanisław Witkiewicz. S. Witkiewicz tried to attach to the “Zakopane style” a social meaning: it had to serve the goals of consolidation of the Polish nation, “make possible for the upper classes to return home on the one hand and to merge with common people into a true monolithic nation on the other hand” [11]. Representations of historicism in the 2nd half of the 19th century became exceptionally multidimensional and multilingual.

Thus, architecture that can be defined as historicism manifested through the principle of choice of the prototype for the new creative work and through the principle of synthesis of the elements from different architectural primary sources appeared for the first time in Lviv in the 17th century. An important feature of such architecture is symbolism of the use of a specific prototype. Architectural heritage of Lviv of Renaissance period created a model of use of historical heritage: from precise reproduction of a historical prototype to re-combination and deliberate departure from the canon.

The next stage of representation of historicism in the architecture of Lviv is connected with the “second classicism”. Architecture of Lviv of the late 17th – first half of the 19th century represented a typical European variant of the “second classicism” marked by the traits of pluralism and the opportunity of choice: the principle of choice of the style dominated over loyalty to the “epoch’s style” opening the road to its undisguised culmination in the 2nd half of the 19th century. This is when historicism for the first time came forward as an effective means of not only cultural (as in the day of Renaissance), but also ideological expansion symbolizing first of all political and administrative appurtenance of Lviv to the Austrian monarchy.

Expansion of historicism in the 2nd half of the 19th century in architecture of Lviv was determined by further political and cultural integration in the European context. Historicism at that time came forward as the means of legitimization of the Habsburg rule, and starting from the 1870s as a part of the official ideology of authorities of the autonomous province. The main feature of the 2nd half



Fig. 12. The convent and the Roman-Catholic Church of the Franciscans (J. Zachariewicz, 1877–1889)

of the 19th century was the total historicism of thought that was reflected in architecture in the form of boundless stylistic pluralism. The style of a building was selected depending on the associations it caused which gave an architectural project special meanings. National-romantic idea that facilitated national consolidation became especially remarkable among the various representations of historicism in the 2nd half of the 19th century.

Further development of historicism was continued in the architecture of the city in the interwar period, under the totalitarian regime and in the architecture of post-Soviet Lviv.

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Historyzm w architekturze Lwowa

W artykule podjęto temat historyzmu w architekturze, który jest traktowany nie jako nazwa konkretnego kierunku w architekturze, ale jako skierowanie myślenia twórczego, które żywi się świadomością historyczną. Na przykładzie architektury Lwowa pokazano, jak system form związanych z wydarzeniami i doświadczaniem historii stale służy do tworzenia nowych języków formalnych, wyrażających treści specyficzne dla swojej epoki. Problem wykorzystania tradycji do rozwiązywania „zadań współczesnych“ architektury został prześledzony od epoki

Renesansu do początku XXI wieku. W niniejszym kontekście staje się zrozumiałe, że historyzm we Lwowie jest właściwy epokom Renesansu, klasycyzmu; możemy także spostrzec go zarówno w modernizmie, w wariacjach neoklasycystycznych reżimu totalitarnego, jak i we współczesnej architekturze, dlatego że podstawą myślenia twórczego architektów było i jest odwołanie do pamięci historycznej przez prototypy historyczne.

Key words: Lviv, historicism

Słowa kluczowe: Lwów, historyzm