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THE COSTUME OF OLD ARCHITECTURE OF OLD CITIES AND ITS CONTEMPORARY MODIFICATIONS

KOSTIUM DAWNEJ ARCHITEKTURY STARYCH MIAST I JEJ WSPÓŁCZESNE MODYFIKACJE

Abstract

For centuries, urban transformations as well as the compositional and formal transformations shaped the architecture of old towns. The modifications resulted from the changing conditions and continued the structural and artistic achievements of previous eras until the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The opposite concepts were taken up in the 20th century in search of solutions for the changing economic and social conditions, the technological conditions, and the growing population in large industrial centers. The extensive reconstruction was also undertaken in the areas of old towns (after war damage and planned modernization of the old substance). The ideas of improving communication and a proper natural sunlight of the apartments were connected with reconstruction and construction of new houses. The context of historical centers was changed. Nowadays, the reference to the conservation doctrine is changed, accepting the exact reconstructions of the dominant features and the reconstruction of fragments of the urban systems of old towns. The restored façade compositions from the period of historicism are also an element of the reconstructed identity of the ruined old centers. The façade compositions were not undertaken in the 20th century due to the underestimated qualities of the neo-style architecture.

Keywords: old town buildings, historical architecture, eclectic design, eclectic costume

Streszczenie

Przemiany urbanistyczne i przekształcenia kompozycyjno-formalne przez stulecia kształtowały architekturę starych miast. Modyfikacje wynikały ze zmieniających się uwarunkowań i stanowiły do XIX/XX w. kontynuację osiągnięć poprzednich epok. Przeciwnie koncepcje podjęto w XX w. – poszukując rozwiązań dla zmieniających się warunków, wzrastającej liczby ludności w ośrodkach przemysłowych i metropoliach. Rozległe przebudowy podjęto także na obszarach starych miast po zniszczeniach wojennych i ich modernizacji. Idee usprawnienia komunikacji, właściwego nasłonecznienia mieszkań wiązały się z przebudową i wznoszeniem nowych domów; zmieniono kontekst historycznych centrów. Współcześnie zmianie ulega odniesienie do doktryny konserwatorskiej, akceptujące wierne rekonstrukcje dominant i odtwarzanie fragmentów układów urbanistycznych starych miast. Przywracane kompozycje elewacji z epoki historyzmu stanowią również element odbudowywanej tożsamości zrujnowanych dawnych ośrodków, niepodejmowane jednak w XX w. ze względu na niedocenianie walorów neostylowej architektury.

Słowa kluczowe: zabudowa zespołów staromiejskich, architektura historyczna, kostium eklektyczny

1. INTRODUCTION

The creative act, in which an architectural work is created, goes beyond historical and craft knowledge. Its core is to confront the questions of the era. At the moment of its creation, architecture is connected in a special way with the present. It reflects the spirit of its inventors, but also provides its own answers to current questions through its functional form and appearance, its relationship with other works of architecture and its relationship with the place[...].

Peter Zumthor¹

The history of architecture discusses the complex processes of shaping ancient urban complexes, the location of medieval cities, the concept of modern urban planning, the layout of factory centers during the industrial revolution, the modernization of old spatial systems and the creation of perspectives for contemporary metropolises. The analysis of the dependence of geographical conditions, availability of building materials, technical inventions and technology development on structural solutions, modification of building types, building composition and determination of spatial structures was made. The evolution of stylistic directions and formation of canons in art was reflected in the most outstanding architectural achievements of the past centuries.

It is important to determine the characteristics of contemporary architecture, realized within the former urban centers, and to expose – after a century of degrading transformations – the illegible elements of layout, structure of ownership divisions and compositional values of old town houses. In the context of considerations about the values of the historical cities and valuable old buildings, the most important issue is the shaping of contemporary architecture, which meets the criteria of utility, standard and applied infrastructure solutions (adequate to the era of developed technologies) – as well as the artistic values, the aesthetic attractiveness and the tradition of the Old Town complex in its original form.

2. ARCHITECTURAL TRADITION

The original principles of organization of urbanized spaces and innovative concepts of development – on which projects in other cities were developed – reflect individual achievements of the most outstanding creators of old and contemporary architecture. The scientific studies have made a comprehensive timeframe of architectural directions, systematization of the most outstanding achievements and presentation of individuality, which had the greatest impact on the art of space shaping.

Due to the distance of centuries, which caused destruction and transformation of the original urban systems, transformation of the old architecture and change of the landscape context, the exposition of historical buildings in comparison with the contemporary development of urban centers and metropolises has a different perspective from the perception of the former inhabitants. The historical buildings, distinguished in terms of monumental composition, formal and artistic values, and individualization in the landscape of old cities are assessed today by means of an idealized image of the old architectural achievements, organizational, technological and artistic possibilities of the time. The preserved objects or their fragments

¹ P. Zumthor, *Myślenie architektury*, first Polish edition, translated by Artur Kożuch, Karakter, Kraków 2010, pp. 23–24.

belong to a small part of the old architecture, a large part of which was erected over decades and centuries, with stages of modification and improvement of its structure. The permanence of those objects reflected the investor's position in the military, political-social, economic and cultural hierarchy and serve his successors in subsequent generations.

3. CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The complex panorama of artistic trends and directions is a testimony to the search for optimal solutions that reflect the potential of location conditions, construction time, level of development and user status. In the organization of urbanized complexes and the realization of individual buildings, the aim was to achieve harmony, shaping the aspects of beauty and aesthetic values. The opposite concepts were prepared as radical solutions, focused on the satisfaction of immediate needs, subordinated to rationalization and economics. The care for appearance and layout was characterized by representative objects and spatial assumptions, requiring considerable financial outlays – erected for the elite. The utilitarian functions were located in the buildings for the construction of which material means were allocated adequate to the significance of the systems at that time. Rationalization and economic conditions dominated investments in contemporary cities, whose scale of increasing area and number of inhabitants (and the projected increase in size, also different examples of economic downturn and degradation) require the definition of constructive planning and investment perspectives.

To our times, the largest construction projects have survived, usually implemented with considerable outlays and resources, with an unlimited (if necessary) number of people, within a short time necessary to achieve the intended effect. The passage of time caused changes in the original appearance – not known in the original design versions. The lapse of time, destruction, transformation by subsequent users (also coming from different cultures), influenced the undertaking of multilateral conservation efforts for the exposition of historic buildings in the landscape of contemporary cities. The scope of conservation programs includes restoration of historical architecture, restyling, modification of compositions and functions – deviating from the original message. The rationale for the reconstruction and idealization within the decapitalized complexes and facilities, the idealization in restoring old forms and details, as well as stylistic “embellishments” depends (to a large extent) on the expectations of city authorities and investors – related to overstated plans for the development of the “tourist industry,” which constitutes a significant part of the income of old urban centers.²

4. TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE OLD ARCHITECTURE

In the landscape of Europe's historic cities, the greatest architectural achievements from the following stylistic periods were exposed. Original constructions in the Middle Ages were subjected for centuries to the process of reconstruction and adaptation to changing

² B. Rymaszewski, *Zbieżności i rozbieżności interesów indywidualnych i ogólnych w procesach rewaloryzacji zespołów staromiejskich* [in:] *Strategie rewaloryzacji miast w Polsce i w innych krajach = Restoration of cities in Poland and other countries: strategies and policies*, Proceedings of the Conference organised by the Architecture and City Planning Division and Restoration of Historic Monuments of the Architecture & City Planning Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, 15 April 1998, Ośrodek Ochrony Zabytkowego Krajobrazu, Warszawa 2000, pp. 44–46.

utility, technological and aesthetic needs. The dominant features of castles, churches and town halls reflect Gothic forms, preserved in a small part on the facades of tenement houses. Monumental buildings were erected with the use of structures and materials planned to be maintained for centuries – the changes largely included their fragments or visual zone, without affecting the internal structure. The bourgeois houses were replaced by new constructions after destruction or decapitalization; the reconstruction of the facades was the largest range of architectural transformations – a characteristic example is the reconstruction of the tenement houses with Baroque facades at 7 and 8 Rynek Sienny in Szczecin, where superstructure with storey's finished with a single-pitched roof required (contrary to previous plans) the erection of walls from the level of Gothic foundations, developed in the typical for the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries trend of the Neo-Renaissance and eclectic compilation. The reconstructed Baroque facades of the tenement houses of Rynek Sienny 4, 7 and 8 are now the showcase of the Podzamcze reconstructed after 1989. They also illustrate the stages of transformation of the buildings within the parcels designated in the period of medieval location and modification of later cadastral plans – during the reconstruction in the 20th century, it was decided to restore the appearance of the magnificent solids reflecting the period of splendor of the city after the war damage. The justification for the reconstruction of modern forms was also related to the preserved archival photographs. The appearance of Gothic houses is unknown.³

Within the old towns the biggest changes were realized in the 19th and early 20th century. A significant part of the bourgeoisie facades was modernized using costumes of classical architectural styles – neo-style and compiled compositions. A specific idealization of Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo and neoclassical compositions was made, which in many old centers dominated the landscape of old town architecture. The frontages of the streets and squares of the former cities present a kaleidoscope of ancient compositions, which reflects the scale of reconstruction of the former centers during the industrial revolution (including Berlin, Cracow, Lviv, Paris, Madrid, Szczecin, Vienna).

The exquisite costume of the historical architecture and the formal and artistic richness reflected the aspirations of the investors, a status resulting from economic development. The European concepts of shaping urban systems and architecture in the 19th and early 20th centuries had a significant impact on the projects carried out by representatives of European administrations and emigrants born and educated on the Old Continent (cities of South and North America, colonial buildings in Asia and Africa). The historical forms, composed as a kind of curtain, were defined at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries affecting the architectural panorama of old and new European cities and new centers influenced by Western culture. In the regions of the Middle and Far East, Africa, Latin America, Australia – exotic to the European canon of architecture based to the greatest extent on the heritage of the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome, medieval and modern – the assimilation of forms took place through the search for mutual artistic and ideological relations. Furthermore, it was not permanently assimilated in areas with an established identity, where organizational and technical discoveries were a source for economic development, creating the distinctiveness of traditions and nations.

³ M. Słomiński, E.G. Wilgocki, *Szczecińskie Podzamcze. Staromiejska dzielnica nadodrzańska i jej odbudowa – kwartały XIV i XVI*, Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa "Podzamcze", Szczecin 1998.

5. RESTORATION IDEAS IN 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

A significant scope of works restoring the original appearance of the monumental buildings was realized during the period of shaping conservation doctrines in the 19th century.⁴ In Cologne and Italian cities, the main facades of churches and cathedrals (not completed in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance) were completed. The mentioned facades were realized as a continuation of the original forms and compositions or on the basis of new projects that were selected from the works of international architectural competitions⁵ (including the Cathedral of Florence, Cologne and Milan, Santa Croce Church in Florence). In France, after the barbaric destruction of the revolutionary period, construction work was undertaken on a large scale to restore the proper structure of old complexes and compositions of the most valuable monuments (Eugene Emanuel Villet-le-Duc initiated the study of old architecture, conducting research on their history, construction and composition – scientific publications influenced the formation of the theory of architecture and conservation of monuments in the 19th century).⁶

The culmination of the conservation works, during the restoration of the cathedral in Plock, was the development of the front elevation, whose original medieval and modern compositions were not known from archival materials (the Romanesque temple was thoroughly rebuilt during the Renaissance, the towers threatened with collapse and the front wall was strengthened in non-harmonized forms of Neoclassicism). Successfully carrying out extensive construction work to secure and reconstruct the structure of the priceless monument to Polish history, Stefan Szyller proposed a composition of the new façade in neutral ceramic forms, referring to Gothic architecture in Poland and the construction tradition of Mazovia (1900–1903); the architect, after receiving the news of the Venetian campaign's collapse, without visiting the site of the catastrophe and before announcing an expert opinion stating its causes, pointed out the use of material and structural inconsistencies during subsequent transformations – the same was stated during the restoration of the cathedral in Plock.

In Venice, the appearance of one of the symbols of the city was reconstructed – the campaign in St. Mark's Square, which in 1902 was destroyed by the wear and tear of the stone building and the ceramic material of its unique construction. The unsatisfactory effects of the concepts presented by the famous architects prompted the authorities to reconstruct it in its old form, using identical material and the reinforced "ferroconcrete" (as they were then called) constructional solutions (1903–1912). The competition projects, in accordance with the spirit of *fin de siècle* – the apogee of shaping architecture in reference to classical styles and their eclectic compilations – presented an interpretation of traditional solutions, continuing the process of formation of unique local structural and artistic solutions, according to their original ideological assumptions. The "neo-historical" proposals presented in many versions – also the bold ideas of building a new bell tower in a different location (Piazzetta dei Leoncini) to "unveil" the

⁴ D. Kłosek-Kozłowska, *Ochrona wartości kulturowych miast a urbanistyka*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Warszawskiej, Warszawa 2007.

⁵ S. Cipriani et al., *Due granduchi tre re e una facciata. Opera di santa Maria del Fiore di Firenze. Mostra per il primo centenario dello scoprimento della facciata*, Alinea Editrice, Firenze 1987.

⁶ M. Arszyski, *Idea – pamięć – troska. Rola zabytków w przestrzeni społecznej i formy działań na rzecz ich zachowania od starożytności do połowy XX wieku*, Muzeum Zamkowe w Malborku, Malbork 2007; A. Kadłuczka, *Ochrona dziedzictwa architektury i urbanistyki. Doktryny, teoria, praktyka*, Wydawnictwa Politechniki Krakowskiej, Kraków 2018.

magnificent façade of St. Mark's Basilica – proved difficult to accept by the Venice administration and its community. A unique version of modernity (in accordance with the spirit of the times) was proposed by Otto Wagner who designed an elegant and multicolored composition of the Art Nouveau tower.⁷ The visionary concepts that Hendrik Petrus Berlage, T. Garnier, A. Perret, among others, created in those years were not fixed in common consciousness and it was not possible at that time to come up with proposals for a radically different architectural-constructional concept for the new campaign. In the 20th century, the contrast and emphasis in the compositions of the time of their realization were the dominant rule for contemporary architectural realizations, which were adjacent to historical buildings, erected on the plots of old houses or constituted the reconstruction of old town complexes.

6. RECONSTRUCTIONS OF OLD TOWN COMPLEXES

The reconstructions of old towns were undertaken in many European cities after World War I. Among the most famous are the reconstructions of urban systems and the dominant ones in Belgian Ypres, French Arras, cities of East Prussia, Kazimierz Dolny and Kalisz in Poland.⁸ After the destruction of wars and the ruination of culturally valuable urban centers, an important scope of work on the economic reconstruction of the Old Continent was the restoration of social expectations, which also included the reconstruction of ruined historical complexes and monuments of former glory. In the cities of the Second Polish Republic extensive investments were made to rebuild cultural and national identity.

The reconstruction of the Old Town complexes after World War II, along with the restoration of their layout and appearance of the most valuable buildings, was associated with the transformation of decapitalized Old Town structures, overcrowded with buildings during the period of industrial expansion at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In many ruined centers of the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, and Italy a modern image of the old town centers was formed. The social and political circumstances connected with the regaining of independence by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the political changes in the united Germany (1989/1990), the economic situation, the increase in prosperity, the possibility of meeting social expectations – all these factors led to the process of restoring the historical appearance and reconstructing selected buildings – generally not accepted in the 20th century by the circles of conservators, architects, art historians (allowing, according to the conservator's doctrine, exceptional and justified examples of reconstruction). The best-known restoration projects in the historical shape of complexes and individual buildings were undertaken in Berlin, Potsdam, Frankfurt am Main, Hildesheim, Lübeck, Elbląg, and Szczecin.⁹

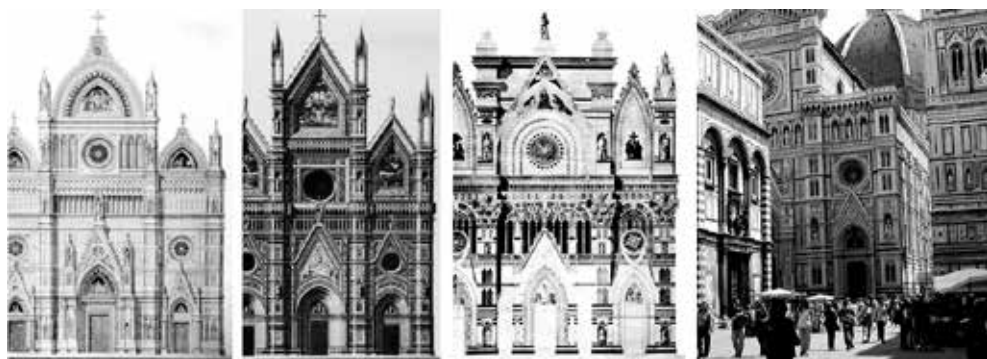
⁷ *Il campanile di San Marco. Il crollo e la ricostruzione (14 luglio 1902–25 aprile 1912)*, Palazzo Ducale, Sala dello Scrutinio, Venezia, 14 luglio-25 aprile 1912, Silvana Editoriale, Milano 1992; Jokilehto J., *A History of Architectural Conservation. Part Three*, PhD thesis, University of York, 1986, pp. 344–355.

⁸ I. Barańska, M. Górczyński (eds.), *Odbudowy i modernizacje miast historycznych w pierwszej połowie dwudziestego wieku w Europie. Naród – polityka – społeczeństwo*, Kaliskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, Kalisz 2016.

⁹ P. Fiuk, *Architektura miasta odbudowanego. Wybrane przykłady: Elbląg, Głogów, Kołobrzeg, Szczecin na tle historycznym*, Wydawnictwo Uczelniane Zachodniopomorskiego Uniwersytetu Technologicznego w Szczecinie, Szczecin 2017.

7. SUMMARY

The cubist¹⁰ scheme of town development dominated after 1945 and was connected with the reconstruction of the economy after the war damage. The search for new technologies, the rationalization of the construction process, and the pursuit of efficient use of resources became, in view of the enormous scale of needs, a condition for the proper use of development prospects in the new era. The priority was to restore the activity of the destroyed industry, rebuild the ruined building substance, and increase the population. Based on the modernist ideas of the interwar period, the realization of modern urban complexes was undertaken, as well as the construction of new residential and factory centers. The reconstruction of the bombed in large part cities without reflecting the contemporary requirements of the former cities was also carried out. The modernist and radical concepts were realized in many city centers (Hamburg, Rotterdam), which developed as the most important centers of modern industry. A few were rebuilt with the restoration of the historical layout, exceptionally reconstructing ruined historical architecture (Münster, Warsaw). The character of the former landscape of many historical layouts was obliterated, due to a radical ideological reference to tradition. Using modern technologies, original solutions were created¹¹ as well as disarming changes in the old town landscape. Due to the unsatisfactory “face” of the historical centers, in the period of economic, political and social prosperity there was a return to the trend of the 19th century – the restoration of the destroyed old-town buildings with the idealization of their former appearance.



Ill. 1. Florence, competition façade designs from the nineteenth century and the current state, which is a continuation of the composition of the side elevations and medieval architecture of the campanile, [in:] S. Ciprianietal, *Due granduchi...* (fragments), [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piazza_del_Duomo_\(Firenze\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piazza_del_Duomo_(Firenze))

¹⁰ J. Wujek, *Mity i utopie architektury XX wieku*, Arkady, Warszawa 1986, p. 62.

¹¹ “There is no single, authentic concrete architecture. The dichotomies inherent in concrete allow for the most diverse but also the most contradictory interpretations of the ‘essence’ of this material. The duality of the concrete matter allows the creation of works of varied and sometimes extreme aesthetics. Among the many manifestations of concrete, there is also one that can be called rational” in: A. Mielnik, *O racjonalnym obliczu betonu*, Pretekst, 2018, no. 8, pp. 87–92.



III. 2. Szczecin Rynek Sienny 7 and 8, the photo of the 19th century Baroque facades, rebuilt in early 20th century, restored after 1989, [in:] archives CHTA WPUT, archives National Museum in Szczecin (fragments), author's photography



III. 3. Kołobrzeg. Architecture on the same plots at the beginning of the 20th century, in the 1970s and nowadays: after demolition of the old town houses, a commercial house was built, whose reinforced concrete structure was adopted for the function of a production plant, transformed into a shopping center, [in:] <https://miastokolobrzeg.pl> (online 14.08.2020, fragments), author's photography

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