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CATHERINE THE GREAT: THE ARCHITECTURAL BIOGRAPHY

Summary: The paper deals with the problem of architectural agenda of Russian empress Catherine the Great. The keen interest of the empress was to create an ideal world full of images of great civilizations of the past particularly of Roman empire. At the same time she thought of the buildings created in the days of her reign as “future antiquity”. It was necessary for her to impart properties of a classical ideal to her actions and structures. Taking

Catherine II was not simply a rich, pleasant or even brilliant client; she can be considered a client absolutely exclusive in the history of architecture. She did not possess any extremely refined taste or pathetic art intuition; she was upset, when money or materials were stolen too impudently. Her chief virtue was her special understanding of time which the Empress expressed in many structures throughout all her reign. Fortunately, she herself explained her attitude to the interlacing of images of the past, the present and the future which the architects realized in the appearance of her residences.

On the 5th of June, 1779 Catherine II wrote to baron Melchior von Grimm about the discovery in Rome mosaics which had been «an ornament of the boudoir of the late [Roman — D. Sh.] Emperor Claudius» and ordered «make so that they will be obtained [...] they can be placed in my apartment which [...] in two thousand years will be carried from here by the order of the Emperor of China or any other silly tyrant owing most of the world [...] 225 gold coins for the floor of the boudoir, intended to serve three such [...] persons as [Emperor] Claudius, me and the future Emperor of China or some-

herself mentally off from the present at the distance of two thousand years, the empress created a point of view so outstripping the contemporary epoch that the latter in a retrospective approached classics and was equated to antiquity.

Key words: Architectural history, Russian classicism, Catherine the Great, Charles Cameron, the epoch of Enlightenment

one of the same kind, during four thousand years, in no way it is impossible to consider as a frightening expense»¹. Fragments of the Roman mosaic were bought; they can be seen even now in the Evening Hall of Tsarskoe Selo, built by Giacomo Quarenghi.

It is not the motives of her thinking connected with classicism, with its habitual comparison of the classic antiquity with the present, expressed in a great number of architectural treatises of that epoch that appear the most amazing thing in the words of the Empress, but aspiration to see features of the future, transferring into it objects and images of the remote past. At the same time, she thought of the buildings created in the days of her reign as “the future antiquity”. It was necessary for her to impart properties of a classical ideal to her actions and structures. Taking herself mentally off from the present at the distance of two thousand years, the Empress created a point of view so outstripping the contemporary epoch that the latter in a retrospective approached classics and was

1. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo russkogo istoricheskogo obschestva*, v. XXIII, St. Petersburg, 1878, p. 20 (*Сборник Императорского русского исторического общества*, т. XXIII, с. 20).

equated to antiquity. Such an opinion about the historical time in architecture Catherine II formed by no means at once. For this purpose experience of “liberation” of time, destruction of interdictions of history moving in one direction was required. Her extraordinary destiny, decades of expectation of the throne, filled with reading books about the ancient and dreams of the future, dramatic events of her life when she herself changed history, transformed her into an unusual client of architectural sense of palaces and parks.

Princess Sophie Friederike Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst-Dornburg, known as Catherine II, was born on the 2nd of May, 1729, and spent her childhood in the Baltic city of Stettin (modern Polish Szczecin) where her father Prince Christian August served as the governor of the Prussian king. He had to act as the governor because of his poverty though he himself was a sovereign, enjoying full rights but his state was very small: about ten kilometers in length and even less in width. Stettin of that time did not make pleasant architectural impressions upon the young princess.

Actually, she was amused by trips to her native Anhalt where numerous relatives competed in creating small palaces in the spirit of rococo and the Chinese pavilions. Especially she was interested by the richest of her cousins Leopold Friedrich Franz of Anhalt-Dessau. It was from him, that she got the passion for landscape garden with various follies and Palladian villas in British taste, as well as the view on the problem of territory does not matter the scale it had. His state was transformed into “Gartenreich” — “Garden Kingdom” where beautification covered absolutely everything² One of great German romanticists Ernst Theodor Hoffmann imagined the dukedom as follows: “[...] This small country, with its green fragrant groves, blossoming meadows, and noisy streams [...] became similar to a fine garden whose inhabitants as if walked in it for their own delight, not knowing about distressing burden of the life» and not feeling the course of time [...] Enlightenment has been introduced, that is it was ordered “to cultivate potatoes, to improve rural schools, to plant acacias and poplars [...] to construct highways and to vaccinate against smallpox³. All this was done by Catherine II in Russia,

2. F. Reil, *Leopold Friedrich Franz, Herzog und Fürst von Anhalt-Dessau*, Dessau, 1845; A. Rode, *Beschreibung der Fürstlichen Anhalt-Dessaunischen landhausen und garten*, Dessau, 1976.

3. Е.Т.М. Hoffman, *Sochineniya*, Moscow, 1980, p. 76 (Гофман Э.Т.М. *Сочинения*, Москва, 1980, с. 76).

and, above all, at the time of the transformation of the tremendous empire she kept her attitude to it, at least, from the outer side, as to such an eternally improved “Garden Kingdom”.

Catherine II characterized her reign in the letter to her permanent correspondent the ambassador of Saxe-Gotha to Paris Baron Friedrich von Grimm «[...] It is a kingdom of Fine Arts [...] Raphael, the Baths of Titus [...] gardens of Tsarskoe Selo and wonderful buildings of Prince Potemkin [...] they all took their places next to legislomania [...] There is such a disease called legislomania [i. e. a passion to compose legislations], the Empress is hipped on it [...] earlier she composed principles only [...] now everything that steers to superior occupies her [...]»⁴. The image of the kingdom of Fine Arts, where passion for composing legislation rules, is essential for understanding Catherine’s reformation of Russia. There is a legend that once during a game Catherine II was to complete the phrase which one of her nobles began. «Mes chateaux en Espagne [...]», wrote he. «[...] They are not there, and I build on something to them every day [...]», completed the Empress.

During Catherine II’s reign general boundary survey, which changed the system of using of the territory of the European part of the country, was set; not only the capital cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow were re-planned, but also regular plans for about 400 settlements were made out — for all administrative centers of Russia. The Commission for Roads changed traffic network of the Empire. Exemption from state service for nobles instilled another character into rural living and provided blossom of Russian estate culture, i. e. construction of tens of thousands country estates with manor houses and parks. During Catherine’s epoch both towns and the countryside changed radically.

Her ideas were being realized a research of the most contemporary methods of “actuation of every concern”, as they said at that time, took place. Conscious and systematic choosing of those elements which formed new organization and image of the country was conducted. And in this regard a concurrent appeal to the experience of many European countries was made. Novelty and interest in the latest discoveries of European architectural and engineering cultures were the major criterion of desirability of borrowing one or other achievement.

4. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshestva* (*Сборник Императорского русского исторического общества*), v. XXIII, St. Petersburg, 1878, p. 99.



Ill. 1. Oranienbaum. Chinese palace. Architect Antonio Rinaldi. 1762-1768.

As the result the period under Catherine II became the epoch of the strongest international links in the history of Russian architecture.

Catherine II made Classicism the official and overall style of architecture of Russian Empire. Classical ideal was a measure of civilization and improvement, an instrument drawing Modernity nearer to Antiquity. The Empress organized a wide net of agents her to trace not only political but also art events throughout Europe. Besides Russian masters were to begin studies in St. Petersburg and then had to continue learning abroad; the Imperial Academy of Arts was to control it. Nevertheless, masters invited from different European countries were of greater importance in the development of Russian architecture.

It was Antonio Rinaldi who realized the ideas of Catherine II at the beginning of her reign⁵. He was born in 1709 and studied in Napoli under Luigi Vanvitelli⁶. In 1754 Rinaldi became the architect

of the successor to the Russian throne Grand Duke Pyotr Fyodorovich, the future Emperor Peter III. From this position, he was switched over to his spouse, who after the coup and her husband's strange death became Empress Catherine the Great. According to her conception the largest in Russia Rococo ensemble appeared in 1762–1774 in Oranienbaum on the Baltic sea 40 miles from St. Petersburg⁷.

The Empress's palace in Oranienbaum, called the Chinese, resembled in its exterior decoration style King Frederick the Great's Palace in the park Sans Souci in Potsdam, especially before adding of the second story already in XIX century. The fact is quite explainable — not only Peter III's tastes but Catherine's ones at the beginning of her reign corresponded to the preferences of King Frederick the Great, the unquestionable leader among German monarchs of the Enlightenment. In the Chinese Palace by Antonio Rinaldi, as well as in the work by Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff in Sans Souci ensemble, the style

7. D. Kjučarianc, *Khudogestvennie pamiatniki goroda Lomonosova (Художественные памятники города Ломоносова)*, Leningrad, Strojdat, 1985; A. Rinaldi, *Pianta ed elevazione delle Fabbriche esistente nel nuovo giardino di Oranienbaum*, Roma, Palgriarini, 1796.

“balanced” on the edge of Rococo and Classicism, the latter prevailing in the exterior and the first — in the interiors in chinoiserie fashion and in the park pavilions with exotic touches. The character of the palace facades seems to be a compromise between half-Baroque and half-Classical grand monumentality by Luigi Vanvitelli, inculcated into Antonio Rinaldi during his studies in Napoli, and ornamentality of tiny forms of the master's Russian structures.

Rinaldi's works in Oranienbaum covered the whole phase of the development of Russian art between the Baroque of Elisabeth I's epoch and Catherine's Classicism. With them the Rococo brief life in the capital almost became exhausted. Though Classicism prevailed soon, the playful principle inherent from the Rococo didn't vanish. In many successive constructions of Catherine II in Antique, Gothic and Chinese styles the Rococo appeared as if it “spoke up” its “unsaid words”. «In the next world when I meet Caesar and Alexander and other old friends I will [...] search out Confucius [...] I would like to intellectualize with him», wrote Catherine II to Grimm⁸.

At the turn of 1760s and 1770s the greatest Chinese ensemble was under the construction in another Imperial residence Tzarskoe Selo outside of St. Petersburg⁹. Architects of different nationalities took part in its development. They were firstly Italian Antonio Rinaldi, Germans Georg Velten and Johann Gerhard, Russians Vasiliy, Ilya, Pyotr Neelov and then Briton Charles Cameron.

Anyone approaching Tzarskoe Selo from St. Petersburg was to pass an arch of Great Chinese Caprice. He was met by a “rocky hill” pierced with a gateway topped with a summer house in the form of a Chinese joss-house. To the left, vividly painted and set up with dragons, a Chinese village opened, originally conceived by Rinaldi. If the traveler didn't turn steps to the palace but rounded the park, a Chinese town appeared to his view built by Rinaldi according to the French engraving which depicted the similar amusing settlement in the Imperial Park of Continual Spring near Beijing. The conception was so that everyone arriving to Tzarskoe Selo was to pass through an unprecedented “world of caprice” where everything was not as in daily life, and then only he approached the palace. The Enlightenment in Russian architecture began with a play, with creating intriguing and exciting environ-

8. D. Kjučarianc, *Antonio Rinaldi*, cit., p. 9.

9. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshestva*, v. XXIII, 1878, p. 119.

ment¹⁰. Firstly the Empress wanted to captivate feelings by the variety of artistic possibilities and only then to turn to the mind.

It's essentially that it was Antonio Rinaldi who began creating the triumphal space with its classical soul in Tzarskoe Selo along with “the world” of Oriental Caprice. The Orlov Gate in the style of the Roman Arch of Titus, the classical rostral Column, the Crimea Column and the Kagul Obelisk, all erected by the master during the 1770s, disclosed the antique theme as contemporary “speaking” art, glorifying the reign of the enlightened Empress and her army's victory over “barbarians”. The column, which erected Rinaldi to honor of the Russian fleet's victory over the Ottoman one in the battle of Chesme, resembled the monument commemorating Lord Grenville's sea battles in English Park Stowe. It seems to be pointed to the master by the Empress as a model for his monument erected in the center of the Great Pond. The pond used to play the role of the Mediterranean or the Black Sea in various allegories according to interrelations with the monuments dedicated to one or another victory. The commissioner's role was defining in choosing models for the monuments as for the style of the wing, i. e. Zubovsky Block, erected for her private lodging with Georg Velten; their stylistic characteristics testify unquestionably the advent of Classicism in Russia. In front of it Quarenghi will built the Concert hall and the Kitchen-Ruin underlining the taste for Antiquity.

Emergence of new architecture began as early as the closing years of Empress Elisabeth I. The initiative originated from her lover Ivan Shuvalov and was interlinked with his interest in French art. With his efforts the Moscow University was established, and in 1757 he inclined the Empress to establish the Academy of Arts in Moscow. Shuvalov commissioned a design of an appropriate building to Jacques-François Blondel. Meanwhile the Empress decided that the Academy of Arts had to be in St. Petersburg. Russian architect Alexander Kokorinov was assigned to adjust Blondel's drawing to the new site.

10. A. Petrov, *Gorod Pushkin (Город Пушкин)*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1977; M. Korshunova, *Arhitekt Georg Velten (Архитектор Юрий Фельтен)*, Leningrad, Lenisdat, 1982, catalogue (каталог), pp. 16, 19, 21; D. Kucharianz, *Rinaldi (Ринальди)*, cit., pp. 103–105; D. Shvidkovsky, *Le mythe occidental de l'Orient dans l'architecture et les jardins Russes de l'époque des Lumières*, in S. Karp, L. Wolff, eds., *Le Mirage Russe. Le mythe Russe en Occident des Lumières*, Paris, Ferny-Voltaire Centre international d'étude du 18. siècle, 2001, pp. 57–69.

Shuvalov decided it was necessary to invite a French architect to St. Petersburg. He succeeded in persuading Jacques-François Blondel's cousin Jean-Baptiste Michel Vallin de la Mothe, 30 years old, to come to Russia. The latter had just graduated with brilliant success from the French Academy in Rome¹¹. Not only Blondel but also Jacques-Germain Soufflot recommended him to the Russian court, which was the evidence that the young man had a high reputation amongst the Parisian architects. He was to take part in constructing the first building for the Academy of Arts and to become its first professor of Architecture. Shuvalov considered rightly that before following the European fashion it was necessary to qualify those who would realize the new artistic conceptions. He wrote: «We don't have beaux arts since there is no a single [...] skillful artist; the reason is that the young [...] people proceed to the studies without any base neither in foreign languages nor in basis of [...] sciences essentially urgent for arts»¹².

Shuvalov was sent with honor to a travelling abroad and one of close to the Empress men Ivan Betskoiy was appointed as the President of the Academy of Arts. On June 28, 1765 a foundation stone of the Academy building was laid stately according to the plan developed by Kokorinov and de la Mothe including the main façade which was Blondel's design modified by de la Mothe. The edifice had to "claim the direction" for forming new architecture in Russia according to the Empress's conception. The building of the Academy of Arts on Vasilevsky Island in St. Petersburg is like a huge rectangle 140 m long and 125 m in width, comprising the main state building overlooking the Neva River and other parts intended for classrooms. A circular block surrounding the circular yard is inscribed in its middle. The façade with the front to the Neva embankment possesses a typical for Blondel's school composition of building with rusticated base, the upper floors united by a great order, avant-corps at the corners and the projecting central part emphasized with a cupola. The dissemblance between the structure and Blondel's design are considerable. De la Mothe and Kokorinov employed more "modern" for those times variant of

11. V. Shuisky, *Jean Batist Vallin de la Moth (Жан Батист Валлен-Деламот in Zodtchie Sankt-Peterburga (Зодчие Санкт-Петербурга. XVIII век)*, St. Peterburg. Petropolis, 1997, pp. 325–379.

12. I. Grabar, *Historiarusskogoiskusstva (История русского искусства)*, v. III, Moscow, Knebel, 1912, pp. 272–273.



Ill. 2. St. Peterburg. The building of the Academy of Arts. Architect Jean Battist Vallin de la Motte. 1764-1788.

Classicism. Here the desire for geometricity and for interaction of big masses is more noticeable and it is more perceived in the plan. It is especially emblematic that where Blondel offered the Corinthian order, the more severe Roman Doric order was used. The cupola was also shaped more laconically.

Other great buildings by de la Mothe were located in Nevskiy Prospect, the main avenue of the city. The shopping arcade, which was designed in 1759 but construction of which was delayed, and the catholic church of St. Catherine, laid to his design in 1763, revealed the new character of the buildings carried in the forms of Classicism. Next to the Winter palace in 1764–1775 he laid up the Small Hermitage. Its façade opens onto the Neva and has survived as the architect conceived it with a great Ionic colonnade and pronouncedly state high basement level. The building of the Hermitage disposed from the Neva, was built by the other architect who played noticeable role in generation of Russian Classicism — by Georg Velten¹³. He worked on when de la Mothe left Russia for his hometown of Angoulême.

13. M. Korshunova, *Velten (Фельтен)*, Lenisdat, 1988.

Georg Velten was born in St. Petersburg. He was a son of the German chief-cook of Peter the Great, studied in Stuttgart and Berlin, and when he returned he worked with Bartolomeo Rastrelli. At the beginning of the Twentieth century Igor Grabar wrote that Velten's creative work was «fine, without shadows [...] light, graceful, but not monumental; it was the art of morning dawn, of the first ray of emerging day» of classical Petersburg¹⁴. Among his buildings, mostly of 1770s, there are the Throne Hall in the Great Palace in Peterhof, the renowned lattice of the Summer Garden, several churches in St. Petersburg.

The influence of French Classicism grew in Russia architecture. It was caused not only by de la Mothe's work but by return of the first graduates of the Academy of Arts who had continued their education abroad. In 1765 Vasily Bazhenov, who studied under Charles de Wailly in Paris, returned to St. Petersburg as well¹⁵. After his triumphant completion of training and the success of his designs at all the contests, he visited Italy where he was granted the degree of the professor of the Academy of Saint Luke and the membership of the Academy of Bologna. In 1767 Bazhenov was sent to Moscow to prepare a reconstruction design of the Moscow Kremlin, we will reprise later¹⁶.

In 1768 another architect Ivan Starov, who studied as well under Charles de Wailly in Paris, came back to Moscow¹⁷. First the young architect didn't receive any prestigious commissions. He was appointed to the Commission responsible for planning provincial towns¹⁸. Only in the early 1770s when he built palaces for illegitimate son of Catherine and Count Orlov and thus became personally known to the Empress, he was commissioned with an important design in St. Petersburg.

14. I. Grabar, *Historia (История)*, cit., v. III, p. 312.

15. N. Romanov, *ZapadnieuchiteliaVajenova (Западные учителя Баженова)*, in *Akademia arhitektury (Академия архитектуры)*, Moscow, *Isdatelstvo Akademii Arhitektury*, 1939, n. 2, pp. 17–22; A. Mihailov, *Vajenov (Баженов)*, Moscow, Strojisdats, 1951, pp. 19–31; M. Mosser, D. Rabreau, *Charles de Wailly. Peintre, architecte dans l'Europe des Lumieres*, (Catalogue de l'exposition, Paris, Caisse nationale des monuments historiques et des sites, 1979 : L. Hauteceur, *L'architecture classique à Saint-Pétersbourg à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, 1912.

16. Mihailov, cit., 1951, pp. 49–71; V. Zgura, *Problemy i pamiatniki, svyazannie s V. I. Vajenovom (Проблемы и памятники, связанные с В. И. Баженовым)*, Moscow, Goslitisdat, 1929.

17. N. Belehov, A. Petrov, *Ivan Starov (Иван Старов)*, Moscow, Strojisdats, 1950, pp. 20–21; D. Kucharianz, *Ivan Starov (Иван Старов)*, Leningrad, Lenisdat, 1982, pp. 7–17.

18. N. Belehov, A. Petrov, *Ivan Starov*, cit., pp. 67–81.

In 1775 he was assigned to raise up a new cathedral of Saint Alexander Nevsky Lavra, at that time the residence of St. Petersburg and Novgorod Metropolitan Gavriil, the chief of the Russian Church. It was a major structure which was to be an example of new religious architecture. Starov created a type of a church associated little with the Orthodox tradition. He followed the concept of an ideal temple recognized in the theory of French Classical architecture by 1760s as the result of the works of Abbots Jean-Louis de Cordemoy and Mark-Antoine Laugier¹⁹.

Starov erected a cathedral with a Latin cross in plan and with two belfries on the west façade, a wide transept, a cupola and semicircular choir. Complete circular order played a significant role in Starov's works. The west façade possessed the monumental Tuscan portico. The dome with a colonnade resembled the design of the Church of St. Geneviève in Paris by Jacques-Germain Soufflot. In the interior the architect presented a compromise solution in respect of the controversy between the French theorists upon preference of columns or pillars in religious architecture, which was known to him due to studying under de Wailly. New appearance of Moscow was of special role in the program of reforms by Catherine the Great. Denis Diderot speaking to the Empress insisted on locating the capital in the center of the state. He didn't like St. Petersburg's location definitely: «A state with its capital placed at the edge of the country looks like an animal with its heart on the top of its little finger [...]»²⁰ Diderot advised: «It will be natural for Your Majesty to have a Great Palace in Moscow»²¹. She agreed with the idea, but her intentions were passing on. She wanted a palace introducing the image of her "enlightened" Russia.

The gigantic complex, if had it be completed, would have become the greatest European classical construction to replace the Kremlin. Only the ancient cathedrals, symbols of Russian history and Orthodoxy, would have been preserved. In the place of the walls a grand monumental setting of new buildings would have originated, built in the most modern for that epoch style. The language that the architecture "spoke" was cooperation of the past

19. W. Herrmann, *Laugier and Eighteenth Century French Theory*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1985, pp. 68–90.

20. D. Diderot, *Sobranie sochineniy (Собрание сочинений)*, v. X, Moscow (Москва), Academia, 1947, p. 193.

21. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshestva*, cit., v. XXIII, p. 20.



Ill. 3. Design of the Pavilion of Minerva in Tsarskoye selo. Architect. Charles de Wailly. 1770s.

and the future — quite in the spirit of the French classical Theory. From Roland Fréart de Chambray to Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand ideas allowing realization of the parallels between Antiquity and Modernity appeared there in it²².

Bazhenov's design was the concentration of ideas for Moscow's monumental centre carried off in classical forms. On one of the obelisks, built in honor of the palace's laying, he inscribed the lines «What was Greece during the Antiquity and what Rome could have generated that is what the Kremlin wants to house in its grandeur...»²³. The territory of the Kremlin was considered by him as a huge triangular structure. He built up the sides of the triangular along their borders. High walls of the classical buildings rose up on the Kremlin Hill, and a "historical" perspective revealed itself from Red Square, that was the view on the retained part of the walls and ancient cathedrals. Bazhenov created opposition of the new classical style and picturesque ancient buildings which were located in recess. Megalomania, characteristic of the designs submitted to the French Acad-

emy Architectural Prize of 1770s, is anticipated in his conceptions. Though in Bazhenov's design reminiscences of the Baroque are felt in greater degree. He employs curved dynamic forceful forms and imparts panoramas with spectacular perspective. Alas, the construction was slow and stopped when only foundations were executed. The already demolished parts of the Kremlin were ordered to be restored.

Catherine II wrote to Baron Grimm in 1778 that she «would prefer two Italians as they already had Frenchmen there, who were too qualified [...]»²⁴. The demand to send "Italians" marked the change in orientations of the Russian court's architectural agenda. First of all it concerned the aspiration for greater authenticity of applied antique patterns and for direct inserting, if possible, of archeological fragments into buildings under construction²⁵.

The aspiration for originality and concreteness of antique ideal generated the desire to appeal to architects acquainted with Roman monuments since birth or due to long time spending in Rome. The Empress's agents started seeking such specialists.

22. W. Herrmann, *Laugier and Eighteenth Century*, cit., pp. 68–90.

23. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshestva*, cit., v. XXIII, p. 18.

24. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshestva*, cit., v. XXIII, p. 20.

25. D. Shvidkovsky, *The Empress and the Architect*. London, Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 41–57.



Ill. 4. Design of the cathedral of St. Sophia in Tsarskoye selo. Architect Charles Cameron. Beginning of 1780s.

Johann Friedrich Reiffenstein and Anton Raphael Mengs, prominent men in Roman artistic society of that time, took part in the process. The Empress wrote, «[...]the sweetest Mengs [...] had conducted negotiations for two architects in the way suitable for congress peace talks [...]»²⁶. And then she added «I am hipped on Mr. Cameron, a man of Scottish persuasion [...] a mighty great draughtsman educated on antique monuments, famous due to the book on baths of Ancient Rome [...]»²⁷.

The first of the architects of the new generation who came into Russian art of building at the turn of the 1770s and 1780s was Charles Cameron. Catherine II constantly emphasized Cameron's relations not with British but with Italian architecture, to be precise with international Roman society of architects, artists and researchers of antique monuments. «I have one more man besides Quarenghi and Trombara, named Cameron, who spent many years studying architecture in Rome [...]», insisted the Empress²⁸. She thought that Cameron was a Jacobite noble and was brought up at the Pretender to

26. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshestva*, cit., v. XXIII, p. 156.

27. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshestva*, cit., v. XXIII, p. 120.

28. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshestva*, cit., v. XXIII, p. 157.

British throne court, which was hosted by villa Albani in Rome. Nevertheless she wasn't willing to take a clean break with French classical traditions and in particular with its Roman roots. Speaking about Charles Cameron she wrote that her architect, «involved in building at Tsarskoe Selo [...], was full of reverence for Clérisseau»²⁹. The Empress bought more than thousand views of Rome and its suburbs from Charles-Louis Clérisseau who had lived a number of decades in Italy and had become a "cicerone" not only for Russian aristocracy but for English and American men of education, as Robert Adam and Thomas Jefferson³⁰.

The Empress appealed to three sources of authentic, as it seemed to her, interpretation of antique architectural heritage. And all three originated from Rome. Quarenghi represented the Italian tradition, Clérisseau — the French school in Rome, and Cameron — British, the latter, to be precise, played a role of "Roman Scottish" from amongst the number of devotees of the British throne pretender Prince Charles Stuart while they lived in the Villa Albani in Rome. If you add close relations with German con-

29. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshestva*, cit., v. XXIII, p. 157.

30. C. Cameron, *The Bath of the Romans*, London, G. Scott, 1772; D. Shvidkovsky, *The Empress and the Architect*. London, Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 41–117.

noisseurs of antiquity Mengs and Reiffenstein who lived in the Eternal City and were successors of late Winckelmann, then appears a visuality of meeting of different sources in Russia which caused European Classicism development in 1780s.

Charles Cameron's life history belongs to a number of adventurous biographies of the 18th century. It took researchers several decades to find out who he was in sober fact. At long last the architect turned to be the son of a building contractor in London who was allied and probably was tied as a mason with the Camerons, aristocratic family from Lohiel. He was a pupil of a major builder and an extraordinary theorist of architecture Isaac Ware who succeeded the task of the great British amateur architect Lord Burlington, who collected in Vicenza and Venice and preserved the graphical heritage of Andrea Palladio. Lord Burlington's work at publishing the measurements of the Roman thermae by Palladio was finished by Charles Cameron in his fundamental book on the Baths of Rome³¹ It came out in 1772 and attracted Catherine II's attention to Cameron.

First of all, it is necessary to say about Charles Cameron as a creator of architectural characters of inner spaces in the style of archeological classicism; especially about the halls of the Catherine's Palace in Tzarskoe Selo. It was Quarenghi who told Catherine II that designed by Cameron «rooms were [...] as oversight as peculiar»³² The alphabet of Cameron's interior architectural language was based on the master's searching study of Roman decoration. Before his arrival in Rome Cameron had designed in his drawings of antique vases, dishes, censers not only classical works; in those Baroque features interweaved with Rococo ones, but the most integral was "the effect of enlivening" of depicted items. The working on the book on the Baths of Rome revealed other features of his interpenetration into historical legacy — clearness, structural properties, and strict logic, all formed the image of equilibrated world of art.

Combination of these features appeared clearly in the interiors of the Catherine Palace. The master could employ this or that pattern, found by him in a Roman interior, in such a way that it became well-becoming in a room of new function, scale and character. And it was not rarely that a certain motif

became able to seize all the interior. In his works Cameron introduced items that didn't exist in antique buildings: porcelain and Chinese lacquer, Russian semiprecious stones, parquetry enlaced with wood and silk wall covering.

Countess Varvara Golovina recalled changes of 1780s in appearance of the apartments of Catherine II in the palace in Tsarskoe Selo: «the first hall in this new edifice was decorated with painting [...] then followed the next which ceilings and walls which were adorned with azure stone and the floor was [...] by half of mahogany, by half of mother-of-pearl [...] Then [...] was a hall faced with Chinese lacquer. On the left there was a bedroom [...] very beautiful, and on an extended view to all sides...»³³

In 1780s Charles Cameron, aspired to revive images of Rome within precise accuracy, built an ensemble in Tsarskoe Selo; it was composed of thermae Cold Baths with upper state part, i. e. Agate Rooms, promenade gallery called after Cameron and a ramp to which the triumphal way through the Park from the triumphal Orlov Gates led. It was the first reconstruction of antique structure in Russia. Cameron as an archeologist and connoisseur of Roman antiquities achieved fidelity in many details. It was since Cameron's thermae that archeological Classicism began development in Russian architecture.

Just next to the gardens of Tzarskoye Selo Charles Cameron built an ideal town called Sophia according to the German name of the Empress. There was a classic cathedral of St. Sophia in the center and another church, built by Quarenghi, which served as mausoleum for her most beloved favorite Alexander Lanskoj, who died young.

Still in his art another, not less important, architectural theme manifested itself in Russia, that is following of the ideas of Andrea Palladio. The Palace in Pavlovsk is the first example of Palladian mansion in Russia. Cameron contradistinguished the sumptuous central block, topped with a cupola above the central hall as in Villa Capra, to plain wings and light colonnade, which led to them. The scheme of such mansion-palace surrounded with landscaped grounds expanded throughout Russia.

Giacomo Quarenghi not only erected a great variety of public and private residences, but became one of the brightest persons in St. Petersburg as well. One of his contemporaries recollected, not without humour, that Quarenghi often walked the

streets visiting many buildings of his and «everyone knew him by the huge bluish bulb that the Nature had fixed on his face instead of a nose»³⁴. Giacomo Quarenghi was born in the neighborhoods of Bergamo in 1744. He began his studies under painter Raphael Mengs and latter enrolled in the workshop of Stefano Pozzi who had distinguished himself by the treatise on perspective and remained magnificent and tireless drawer who left inestimable graphic heritage. Then he decided to devote himself to architecture and for some time he worked in Rome with Vincenzo Brenna who came to Russia after him; but most of the time he devoted to individual studying of antique monuments. In 1780 after Mengs's recommendations and by virtue of Grimm and Reiffenstein the young architect arrived in St. Petersburg along with another Italian master Giacomo Trombara. It's most likely that here again Quarenghi's drawings were the excellent recommendations for him. If Trombara had to work mainly in the provinces, Quarenghi was appointed to the Imperial office at once. The truth is that during his first years in Russia he failed to compete with Cameron till the Empress assured herself of the Englishman's impracticality. Then Quarenghi with his precision and attention to civil engineering began to have credibility from the Empress.

His views on architectonics had developed to the full by the age of 36 when he appeared in St. Petersburg. Giacomo Quarenghi was a certain admirer of Antonio Palladio and he based his consideration of architecture on the approach formulated in Palladio's Four Books of Architecture: «You would never believe how the book impressed me [...] Since then I was thinking only about how to study the numerous monuments [...] in Rome, on the examples of them good and superb methods a one could learn [...]»³⁵. Despite this statement Quarenghi was not among those masters coming to Rome at that period, such as brothers Adams, Vincenzo Brenna, Charles Cameron, Charles Clériseau and many others,

those who wished to use motifs found in classical ruins, so that to "enliven" antique artistic effects literally. Quarenghi relied on compositional method as he understood it from Palladio's works. Only then he included the motifs found in antique monuments into created by him rationalistic compositional structure which was more strict than that of the great master of Vicenza.

When he arrived in Russia Quarenghi went ahead with building Palladian estate for the Empress with a landscape park round it in the neighborhoods of St. Petersburg. It was an ensemble of the English Palace in Peterhof which was begun in 1779. (fig. 1) The name of the complex itself suggests its relation with fashion for landscape gardens as the palace originally was to be located in «newly created English garden»³⁶ James Meader, a British gardener who entered Russian service in 1779, worked along with Giacomo Quarenghi at creating this landscape park³⁷.

Probably the Empress suggested the young Italian architect to use her cousin Duke Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau's palace in Wörlitz built by Friedrich von Erdmannsdorff as an example. At any rate the similarity of the two buildings is considerable. Furthermore, both the Duke and his architect were conceived admirers of Palladio.

Immediately in the first work of the master in Russia appeared the features that would be present in all his works through all his practice. The English Palace, like most of his buildings, is distinguished by precise layout, simplicity and chastity of composition, and monumentality of forms which was achieved by creating imposing slightly massive proportions and using colonnades to smooth wall planes.

The architect gained especial sympathy of the Empress by 1783 when she approved the design of the Hermitage theatre in St. Petersburg created by Quarenghi. It was set with its façade lengthwise the Neva thus enlarging the Empress's residence along the Palace embankment. Its auditorium was arranged similarly to the Teatro Olimpico by Palladio in Vicenza. The façade was also filled with Palladian motifs. Still here they compose an artistic image of quite different character than the one seen in the previous buildings. Igor Grabar wrote that in this theatre design Quarenghi «had created architecture of

31. *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva*, cit., v. XXIII, p. 119.

32. A. Petrov, *Gorod Pushkin*, cit., 1977, p. 71.

33. V. Golovina, *Zapiski (Zanucku)*, St. Peterburg, Petropolis, 1900, p. 131.

34. G. Grimm, *Quarenghi (Кваренги)*, Leningrad, 1962, p. 23.; *La cultura architettonica italiana in Russia da Caterina II a Alessandro I*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Ascona, Centro Stefano Franscini, 7–8 aprile 2000; Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 20–21 aprile 2001), a cura di P. Angelini, N. Navone, L. Tedeschi, Mendrisio, Mendrisio academy press, 2008; P. Angelini, T. Manfredi, *ad vocem Giacomo Quarenghi*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, lxxxv, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2016, pp. 794–801.

35. F. Vigel, *Zapiski (Zanucku)*, v. I, Moscow (Москва) Кзыр, 1928, p. 181.

36. E. Glezer, *Architekturniy ansambl Angliyskogo parka (Архитектурный ансамбль Английского парка)*, Leningrad, Strojizdat, 1979, p. 10; A. Cross, *Russian Gardens*, in *Garden History* 2001, p. 16., «Garden History», 19, 2001, 1, pp. 12–20.

37. A. Cross, *Russian Gardens*, cit., p. 14.

irreproachably chaste style and at the same time... picturesque»³⁸.

The Empress appreciated Quarenghi's talent in full. She wrote to Grimm: «Quarenghi creates delightful things for us: the city through is already filled with his structures; he is erecting a bank, exchange, crowds of stores, shops and private houses and his buildings are as good that couldn't be better»³⁹. In fact, the Italian artist was the most popular in Petersburg at that moment. Among Quarenghi's buildings in Moscow, the Gostiny Dvor in Kitai-Gorod stands out. It belongs to the most outstanding works by the Italian master. The latter decided to use the unified dominant architectural method for the grand complex. In his design he surrounded the entire quarter with two-tiered order arcade of colossal corinthian order with a through passage behind the columns and two-storied shops arranging oval inner court, which he intended to decorate with equally grand corinthian pilasters.

Catherine II commissioned the architect to build a palace for her elder grandson the future Emperor Alexander I in 1792 and the architect managed to finish it by 1796 in the life time of the Empress. In comparison with other buildings by the master, the Alexander's Palace has though clear, but incomparably more complicated structure. His most effective part is the central open gallery consisting of two rows of giant corinthian columns set apart from each other and crowned with balustrade. At the sides, it is flanked with projecting avant-corps which have huge gate arches as equally big as the gallery's orders.

Quarenghi worked a long while in Russia. After Catherine II's death his practice didn't cease. He worked both under Paul I and Alexander I. The Maltese church was built up in 1798–1800, the Cavalry Manege in 1800–1804, the colonnade of the Anichkov Palace in 1803–1805 and the design for the Narva Triumphal Arch refers to 1814. He died in 1817, outliving most of his contemporary famous architects.

In 1784 the Empress conceived to build up one more new palace outside of St. Petersburg on the Neva thirty kilometers up the river. Its name includes watertight symbolism binding this grand assemble with "Alexander's theme". The new enormous pal-

ace was called Pella, in the same way as the capital of ancient Macedonia. Here, as Catherine the Great had dreamed, a palace for her grandson Alexander's reign was to be constructed, for "new Alexander the Great of Macedonia". Stately, rationalistic and in emphatically classical style, the ensembles corresponded with the image of the future Alexander's Empire, as Catherine II pictured it to herself. Decorating was delayed till her death⁴⁰.

Unfortunately, Pella hasn't survived; practically all her pictures disappeared or were destroyed. We can judge the architecture of the ensemble mainly through the drawing on the hand fan which probably belonged to Catherine II⁴¹. However, no doubt, Pella remains one of the greatest undertakings of Russian classical architecture of the late 18th century, comparable in its grandeur only with the Kremlin Palace by Bazhenov. Pella is the greatest achievement of Starov; in spite of the fact that the palace is undeservingly forgotten in the history of European classical architecture. In its scale and it is comparable with the famous concept of rebuilding of Versailles by Boullée⁴².

The composition of Pella's ensemble was a complex, although rational one. The main structure with a grand elongate hall in the middle fronted the Neva. Long colonnades stretched from the main structure and drew onto twenty-four blocks of equal size. Catherine II wrote: "[...] all my country palaces are only huts in comparison with Pella, which is being erected like Phoenix"⁴³. The reference to Phoenix by the Empress is of particular interest; it reveals the Empress's intention. The palace destined for new Alexander was assimilated to the Arabian bird which dies and revives to a new life. Catherine the Great hoped that the grandson she had brought up would continue to implement her conceptions.

Grand Duke Paul seemed to see the significance of all these buildings. As soon as Catherine the Great died and her grandson didn't decide to execute the deceased's will and to remove his father from power, the Emperor Paul I ordered to demolish Pella by the root. The new Emperor used the stones of knocked-down Pella for building his fortified residence in St. Petersburg — the Mikhailovsky Castle — upon the design of his favorite master Vincenzo Brenna.

40. N. Belehov, A. Petrov, *Ivan Starov*, cit., p. 145.

41. N. Belehov, A. Petrov, *Ivan Starov*, cit., p. 98.

42. J.-M. Perouse de Montclos, *Boullée*, Paris, Menges, 1994, pp. 102–104.

43. N. Belehov, A. Petrov, *Ivan Starov*, cit., p. 111.

Russian Classicism with its scope of undertakings appeared to be not so much realization of the theory of creating architecture in Antique style, but expression of a kind of believe in improvements

for new life and vision of the future through the ideal of the Antiquity, which was embodied in Russian buildings of the epoch of Catherine II's Enlightenment.

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