

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Arch. Georgi Nikolov Georgiev,
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Subject: PhD Thesis for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional field 5.7. "Architecture, construction and geodesy", Doctoral program "Theory and History of Architecture"

with candidate arch. Mitko Anatoliev Mitkov, doctoral student at the Architecture Department of the New Bulgarian University.

Topic: "Contribution to the architecture of Bulgaria between the two world wars. Selected Etudes Vasiliev-Tsolov"

Academic supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Arch. Zarko Uzunov

The review was prepared on the basis of order No. 3-PK-276 dated 11.07.2023 of the Rector of the NBU, by which I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation work of Arch. Mitko Anatoliev Mitkov, as with the decision of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury I have been selected as a reviewer for the contest.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, an exposition in two chapters, a summary and conclusions, a bibliography with 32 sources and a list of the author's publications in a total volume of 102 pages. An important part of the work is an Appendix in a volume of 33 pages.

Significance of the research problem

The significance of the researched problem is determined by the lack of sufficiently in-depth research on the development of architecture in Bulgaria in the period between the two world wars. On the other hand, it is a period that is the object of increasing interest from specialists from various fields of scientific research, due to the turbulent socio-political climate in Europe and the related intensive development of architecture and the arts. Bulgaria does not remain distant from these processes, as the period between the two world wars was a time of emergence and consolidation of the work of a number of names in Bulgarian art. In terms of architecture, in this period in Bulgaria, many iconic residential and public / state buildings arose in the growing Bulgarian cities that form the specific character of Bulgarian modernism. They

were designed by architects graduated from Western European universities (mainly in Germany) .

In this context, the work of arch. Mitko Anatoliev sets himself the task of exploring the creativity of the architectural tandem Vasiliev - Tsolov, who are one of the leading architects in Bulgaria in the period under consideration. The author's ambition is to overcome the existing fragmentation and one-sidedness in the research on the work of the two architects - on the one hand, the purely biographical approach, and on the other - the analysis of their particular buildings and design concepts. Arch. Anatoliev sets himself the task of examining their work in its entirety in the context of the era of modernistic trends between the two world wars. Taking into account that the task thus set is of high difficulty, I consider that it has been fulfilled through the dissertation presented by Arch. Anatoliev to a significant extent.

Aims and objectives of the dissertation

The aim of the dissertation is to study the creative work of the Vasiliev-Tsolov architectural bureau, taking into account the European and national context.

The tasks that the dissertation sets are:

- to find comprehensive source information about the tandem's public buildings investigated in the research;
- to find as many sources as possible focused on the personality of the two architects;
- an analysis of the cultural context, between the two world wars, within which Vasiliev-Tsolov's work developed;
- to clarify the leading schemes and principles of design for the objects analyzed in the dissertation;
- to formulate generally valid conclusions based on the analysis;
- to formulate the author's thesis regarding the importance, manner and ideas in the design of the two architects;
- to determine, as far as possible, the contribution of each of the two architects from the tandem within the specific projects.

Structure of the dissertation

In Chapter I. of the dissertation "General theoretical patterns" the author examines at the beginning the concepts of "architectural system" and "common architectural process" . In the section "Bulgarian lands - border cultural area" the author of the dissertation makes an interesting analysis of cultural interactions as a function of geopolitical processes taking place

in historical time. In the section "Academic thinking and practice" analyzes the impact of academic education and architectural tradition on the projects of the Vasiliev-Tsolov tandem. In the section "The classics , tradition and innovation", the author analyzes the achievements of the classics as a masterful synthesis of tradition and innovation .

In Chapter II . of the dissertation "Analyses of selected works from the work of the architecture bureau Vasiliev - Tsolov", the cultural context of the period is appropriately considered at the beginning, as a factor determining the nature of the work of the tandem Vasiliev - Tsolov. In the section "The tandem - one whole in two parts", the author of the dissertation reviews the existing specialized and popular studies of the works and biographies of the two architects, interpreting and supplementing the materials published so far with his own author's studies. The importance of the period of architectural training abroad for the formation of their aesthetic and philosophical views is emphasized. In the section "Tandem Vasiliev - Tsolov" the beginning of the joint work of the two architects is examined. In the following sections of Chapter II . significant works of the tandem "Vasilov - Tsolov" selected by the author are analyzed - the church "Sveta Nedelya, Sofia", community center in the town of Oryahovo, community center in the town of Vratsa; Bulgarian National Bank, Sofia, Sofia University Library, Sofia, National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius, Sofia. Of interest are the graphic information collected by the author (plans, sketches, drawings) of the designed buildings, as well as the presented hypotheses for their formation.

In summary and conclusions at the end of the dissertation, arch. M. Anatoliev presents the results of his work:

The main functional-aesthetic principles of form creation in the work of the tandem Vasiliev – Tsolov are presented:

"The functional and spatial scheme ... with the same typology typical of the classics, with a central, clearly emphasized expressed axis, which is opposed by transverse or parallel, subordinate secondary axes, which are sometimes also communicatively expressed. In all functional chart analyses, we will find the following elements:

- a central, clearly expressed functional axis;
- colonnade and pedestal space;
- a vestibule, playing the role of a distribution lobby, from which the internal communication of the spatial scheme unfolds;
- stairs for vertical communication always opposed transversely to the main axis, with another one passing through the vestibule.
- main room that gathers visitors and is the center of the idea ;

- a Cell , or a place that is not for visitors, but is a symbolic element."

While developing his dissertation, arch. Mitko Anatoliev shows a high degree of knowledge of the chosen topic, which is based on the search for new sources, as well as on careful research and comparison of already known ones.

The most important contributions of the dissertation include:

1. The analysis of the role of the architectural education of Vasiliev and Tsolov, received abroad, as well as the cultural context between the two world wars, for the formation of their philosophical-aesthetic principles, within which the work of the Vasiliev-Tsolov tandem developed;
2. The proposed original analyzes by the author of the dissertation of functional-planning and volumetric-spatial schemes of public buildings from the work of the tandem Vasiliev - Tsolov.
3. The author's collected graphic information (plans, sketches, drawings) of the designed buildings, part of which has not been published so far.
4. The appendix to the dissertation as additional graphic and photographic information about the projects analyzed in the dissertation.

Significance of the dissertation and application opportunities

The dissertation work was developed independently and professionally, the topic was examined by focusing on certain objects from the work of the researched architectural tandem. The qualities of the dissertation work provide opportunities for its use at different levels - in the process of teaching architecture students, to help researchers of the development of Bulgarian architecture as a result of the interaction of European modernity and national tradition and, in a wider context, of the Bulgarian social and cultural life within the turbulent period between the two world wars. The chosen topic of the dissertation work and the successful findings in its development are a successful basis for publishing a monograph after appropriate revision, refinement of the texts and addition of the bibliography and illustrative materials.

The author of the dissertation has four independent publications - all in Bulgarian, which satisfies the regulatory requirements. In addition, the doctoral student presents a report on the topic of the dissertation at the international jubilee conference at NBU "100 years of Bauhaus" (November 2019) . The author's abstract presents the scientific research reliably and meets the

regulatory requirements. It adequately presents the content, the main statements, the achieved results and the scientific contributions of the dissertation work.

Conclusion

In my capacity as a member of the Scientific Jury and a reviewer of the dissertation work, I give a positive assessment to the work presented by Arch. Mitko Anatoliev Mitkov dissertation work : "Contribution to the architecture of Bulgaria between the two world wars. Selected Etudes Vasiliev-Tsolov". While developing his dissertation, arch. Mitko Anatoliev shows a high degree of knowledge of the chosen topic, which is based on the search for new sources, as well as on careful research and comparison of already known ones. It is developed independently, with original author's positions and in the necessary context important for the development the modern Bulgarian architectural science topic. The dissertation contains results that represent a contribution to research on the development of Bulgarian architecture in the period between the two world wars of the last century. The dissertation meets all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the regulations to it and the normative documents of the New Bulgarian University in this area.

Given the above, I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award arch. Mitko Anatoliev Mitkov the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional direction 5.7."Architecture, construction and geodesy", Doctoral program "Theory and History of Architecture".

19 of October 2023

Sofia

Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Arch. Georgi Georgiev