

R E C E N S I O N

from

Corresponding member of the BAS, Prof. D.Sc. arch. ATANAS KOVACHEV

Head of the Department "Architecture and Urban Studies",

at Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", Varna

REGARDING:

The dissertation work of arch. MITKO ANATOLIEV MITKOV for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in scientific specialty (doctoral program) "Theory and History of Architecture", professional direction 5.7. Architecture, Construction and Geodesy, Department of Architecture, New Bulgarian University, Sofia.

The review is presented in my capacity as:

- member of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order N 3-PH-276 of 11.07.2023 of the rector of the New Bulgarian University (NBU), Sofia, on the basis of art. 14, para. 3 of the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) of the NBU, decision of the Faculty Council of the Master's Faculty from meeting N 10 of 20.06.2023 and report of the Dean of the Master's Faculty;
- reviewer for the competition with the decision of the Scientific Jury from its first meeting, held on 08/04/2023.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation on the topic: "CONTRIBUTION TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF BULGARIA BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS. SELECTED STUDIES VASILYOV - TSOLOV" for the award of the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR" in the scientific specialty (PhD program) "Theory and History of Architecture" from the professional direction 5.7 "Architecture, construction and geodesy", developed in the Department " Architecture" of the New Bulgarian University, Sofia includes: Introduction, 2 Chapters, Summary and Conclusions, Bibliography and a list of the dissertation's publications with a volume of 102 pages and Appendices with a volume of 32 pages - or a general main text and Appendices with a volume of 134 pages with a repetition of the Bibliography. It contains 32 sources, of which 30 are in Cyrillic and 2 are in Latin.

In the INTRODUCTION, the choice of topic and its relevance are justified, the subject and the object of research are parameterized, the purpose of the scientific research is

stated, the research questions are asked, and the tasks to be solved are set. Analyzing certain examples of the "Vasilyov-Tsolov" architectural bureau, the work examines the architecture of the Third Bulgarian Kingdom in the period between the two world wars - the first decades of the 20th century.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH is related to the need for a more in-depth study of architecture in Bulgaria from the period between the two world wars, which is of interest to specialists from various fields of science and art. The lack of sufficiently in-depth research on the subject is largely due to the relative proximity of the period to modern conditions – a greater historical distance in time is needed to expect objective assessments and conclusions.

In order to choose the work of the "Vasilyov-Tsolov" architectural studio as the subject of a dissertation research, a certain courage is required, because it should be noted that the two great masters - Ivan Vassilyov and Dimitar Tsolov are one of the few Bulgarian architects, for whom developed and published monographs with authors: Iskra Dandalova for Dimitar Tsolov and Nedelcho Paskalev for Ivan Vasilyov. These are Monographs, shedding light on the life path and significant design creativity, and one of the few (perhaps the only) architectural bureau (a phenomenon in Bulgarian architecture and our contribution to European and world culture and architecture for the time between the two world wars), whose equal participants for having the honor of being the object and subject of research in independent monographic architectural studies and publications.

OBJECT OF RESEARCH mainly selected public buildings, designed in the spirit of "renewed classics" by architectural bureau "Vasilyov - Tsolov", which on the one hand are distinguished by their utilitarian function, which they should perform flawlessly, and on the other hand side are buildings with a certain semiotic focus. They represent the highest achievements in the practice of the two architects and mark certain turning points in the development of Bulgarian architecture in the period between the two world wars.

THE SUBJECT OF RESEARCH is the functional schemes, stylistics and urban planning in solving the architectural tasks of the tandem "Vasilyov - Tsolov", carried out in the understanding of culture as a network of connections and taking into account the historical, geographical and cultural features of the considered period (between the two world wars - the 1920s - 1940s).

THE PURPOSE OF THE WORK is:

- research of some significant achievements in the creativity of architectural bureau "Vasilyov - Tsolov", taking into account the set of various humanitarian factors forming the architectural creativity;
- analyzing the degree of influence of modern currents in the Bulgarian public architecture created by them.

The work, based on the formulated GOAL, sets and states the following research TASKS:

- To find the necessary source information for the public buildings of the "Vasilyov - Tsolov" tandem identified in the research;
- To find as many sources as possible focused on the personality of the two architects;
- To analyze the inherited cultural context affecting the period between the two world wars within the geographical cultural area;
- To clarify the leading schemes and principles of design for each one of the sites;
- To formulate generally valid conclusions based on the analysis;
- To formulate the author's thesis regarding the significance, manner and techniques in the design of the two architects;
- To determine, as far as possible, the contribution of each of the two architects within the specific projects.

SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH.

The paper covers selected examples of public buildings in the work of the architectural bureau "Vasilyov - Tsolov". The study is limited to selected examples that are generally accepted by the architectural guild as peaks in the work of the Vasilyov-Tsolov tandem, comparing them with the inherited culture in the geographical cultural area of today's territory of Bulgaria, exploring the connections that formed the late revival and post-liberation layer and the influence of the German lands

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

In CHAPTER I. GENERAL THEORETICAL REGULATIONS, he consistently considers:

- The concepts of "architectural system" and "general architectural process";
- Bulgarian lands - border cultural area;
- Academic thinking and practice;
- The classics, tradition and innovation.

CHAPTER II. ANALYSIS OF SELECTED WORKS FROM THE ART-ARCHITECTURAL BUREAU "VASYLOV - TSOLOV" is a targeted and problem-based analysis and is dedicated to the assessment of problems related to:

- Cultural context of the period;

- The tandem - one whole in two parts (arch. Ivan Vasilyov, prof. arch. Dimitar Tsolov, the tandem "Vasilyov - Tsolov");
- Selected works of the tandem "Vasilyov - Tsolov". Analyzes (Saint Nedelya Church, Sofia; Oryahovo Community Center; Vratsa Community Center; Bulgarian National Bank, Sofia; Sofia University Library, Sofia; St. Cyril and Methodius National Library, Sofia).

In the CONCLUSION, the achieved results are synthesized - summaries and conclusions, which in practice represent the contributing part of the dissertation work. In it, only public buildings are affected, "which to a certain extent have become emblems of the classical architecture of this period." Residential buildings are not the object and subject of the study.

Undoubtedly, the tandem "Vasilyov - Tsolov" leaves a significant mark in Bulgarian architecture. The study reveals the similarities and differences of "the two artists who devoted their lives to the construction and giving importance of key buildings to the development of architecture of this period".

The dissertation comes to the conclusion that "The functional and spatial scheme in the mentioned examples has the same typology typical of the classics, with a central, clearly emphasized and expressed axis, which is opposed by transverse or parallel, subordinate secondary axes, which sometimes they are also communicatively expressed".

In the analyzes of the functional schemes of the selected and studied examples, the author states the following main elements:

- 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 across the main axis, with another one running through the vestibule.
- Main room that gathers visitors and is the center of the idea, etc.;

Of interest is the APPENDIX of the dissertation work, which contains an analysis and assessment of functional-plan and volumetric-spatial schemes from the works of the two architects – Vasilyov and Tsolov. These are valuable materials for the history and theory of Bulgarian architecture from the analyzed period and are a basis for future research.

PUBLICATION EVALUATION. 4 publications have been made on the subject of the dissertation work - and all 4 are in Bulgarian. The publications are independent and

reflect questions and problems from the dissertation work. They were published in the period 2019-2020.

The posts are:

1. Anatoliev, M. (2019) The Unforgettable. The Vasilyov-Tsolov tandem, INSPIRO magazine, ISSN/ISBN 1313/4329, issue 53, December 2019: 61-64
2. Anatoliev, M. (2020) Some public buildings of architectural bureau "Vasilyov - Tsolov", magazine Sledva, ISSN/ISBN 1311/9060, May/June issue 41 2020: 104-110
3. Anatoliev, M. (2019) Unforgettable Belkovski - Danchov, magazine INSPIRO, ISSN/ISBN 1313/4329, issue 56, June 2020: 58-61
4. Anatoliev, M. (2021) Zograf: The Unforgettable Architectural Bureau Yordanov - Ovcharov, INSPIRO magazine, ISSN/ISBN 1313/4329, issue 63, December 2021:

The publications are in editions registered at the National Center for Information and Documentation (NACID).

The author has participated in an international scientific conference with 1 report on the topic of the dissertation: This is:

1. Anatoliev, M. (2019) The development of Bulgarian architecture between the two world wars, design bureau "Vasilyov - Tsolov". Report in the Block "Bauhaus Export" (Bauhaus and Bulgaria), delivered at the international conference "The Century of BAUHAUS, jubilee international conference 100 years "Bauhaus", November 11, 2019. NBU Sofia.

ABSTRACT. It is composed according to the requirements and reflects the main parts of the dissertation, which makes it possible to outline the achieved results, formulated as "Conclusions", which I accept.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did you choose for research and study the architectural tandem "VASILYOV - TSOLOV" in the presence of other architectural bureaus, mainly with two and less often with three equal participants, who also created iconic works in Bulgarian architecture - benchmarks in the urban planning structure of Sofia and other cities in our country - and which have not yet aroused the interest and attention of researchers? While for arch. Ivan Vasilyov and art.-cor. Prof. Arch. Dimitar Tsolov has published articles and books.

CRITICAL NOTES

1. My main critical note concerns the lack of clearly stated and formulated CONTRIBUTIONS of the dissertation work and their differentiation into scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied (or scientific-practical) contributions, which is a

common practice in the development of a classical in its structure and thesis content – ie. the most important element of a dissertation is the author's contributions that the reviewer did not find in the work. It is likely that the dissertation student considers that the conclusions to the paper fulfill the role of contributions. I object to such a setup and consider that the work should have ended with motivated and defensible contributions. This distinguishes a dissertation from studies, an article or other scientific work, although in them too we look for the contributing moment without specifically stating it, while for the dissertation this is mandatory. It is the contributions that determine to the greatest extent the meaning, qualities and applicability and significance of the dissertation work for the theory and practice of the problem under consideration.

2. It is desirable that the RESEARCH METHODS that the dissertation student uses in the work and thanks to which he fulfills the set goals and tasks, and defends the received and formulated conclusions, should be more accurately and clearly marked and stated in the dissertation.

3. The specified BIBLIOGRAPHY to the work is rather modest. Regarding the researched problem, related to the creative path of two great architects (Ivan Vasilyov and Dimitar Tsolov), who left vivid and emblematic works in Bulgarian architecture, there are publications that have remained, probably out of sight and attention of the dissertation student. These publications are related to the 120th anniversary of the birth of Art.-Cor. Prof. Arch. Dimitar Tsolov. They were published in the journal Architecture, 2016, N 4, pp. 23-35 (the leading architectural journal in our country) and in the Journal of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2016, N 5, pp. 63-76 (one of the leading journals of BAS). It is proper for the dissertation student to know and analyze them, accepting or opposing the opinions and assessments expressed in the publications. I would probably be more critical in a different situation. In Bulgaria, there are also publications by other authors dedicated to the personality and work of these and other great architects, marked in the dissertation work, which are also not commented on. I mean publications of arch. Yordan Tangerov, Prof. Ph.D. arch. Blagovest Valkov, Assoc. Dr. Arch. Dobrina Zheleva - Martins Viana, referring to the work of art.-cor. Prof. Arch. Stancho Belkovski, arch. Georgi Ovcharov and other famous names lived and worked in the studied period.

The mentioned critical remarks do not detract from the qualities of the dissertation work, but the reviewer believes that a young researcher-scientist should know in depth sources related to the object and subject of his research, even more so when it comes to Bulgarian authors and editions in Bulgaria. This applies with the same force to the reviewers, who, accepting to review a scientific work, must know the problem to a sufficiently high degree.

Your reviewer allows to note that the mentioned notes are aimed in good faith not only at the doctoral student, but also at the specialists and scientific units that supervised, examined, evaluated and guided the dissertation work to public defense, because the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic Bulgaria (ZRASRB), effective since 2010, defines the degree "Doctor" as an "educational and scientific degree", i.e. the doctoral student "learns and is trained", and not only as a "scientist",

as was the case under the Law on Scientific Degrees and Scientific Titles (ZNSNZ), which operated in Bulgaria until 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. I recommend the dissertation work of arch. MITKO ANATOLIEV MIT-KOV, after the necessary finishing and refinement, to be published as a self-standing monograph in Bulgarian and, if possible, in a foreign language. Such a Monograph would benefit a wide range of researchers from various scientific fields, related to the history in general and more specifically to the history of Bulgarian architecture and the role of prominent artists of architecture from the beginning of the 1920s to the end of the 1950s century in Bulgaria, who worked more actively from the 20s to the end of the 30s of the 20th century, rightly considered the "golden years of Bulgarian architecture" - the time during which bright architectural works were created, which even today, almost a century after their creation, they continue to be emblematic of the functional-plan, volume-spatial and silhouette composition of Sofia and other cities in the country.

2. I recommend arch. MITKO ANATOLIEV MITKOV to increase his publication activity by developing and publishing scientific studies and articles in our country (registered in NACID) and especially abroad (in refereed and indexed in world databases publications with scientific review and in publications with " Impact Factor"), which will enable international citation of his research, conclusions and proposals and will establish him as a scientist in the field in which he works - the history and theory of Bulgarian architecture.

3. I recommend arch. MITKO ANATOLIEV MITKOV to expand the topic of his dissertation work in the future by analyzing a little researched or almost unexplored issue in our theory, related to a comparison of the role and place in Bulgarian architecture of other architectural bureaus, and more specifically with the participation of Vasilyov and Tsolov before they came together in a common architectural bureau - namely the "Vasilyov - Belkovski" architectural bureau. Such an angle would illuminate even more brightly and powerfully the role of arch. Ivan Vasilyov, to appreciate his contribution to the two architectural bureaus. Art.-cor. Prof. Arch. Stancho Belkovski is an exceptional name in Bulgarian architecture as a designer-implementer and teacher-pedagogue, who has become a legend in architectural education in our country. They are filling the ranks of the students of great Bulgarian architects who knew them, and we will irretrievably lose the opportunity to obtain valuable information from the sources.

CONCLUSION

The qualification of arch. MITKO ANATOLIEV MITKOV his previous work allows me to draw the conclusion that a qualitative and useful dissertation for theory and practice has been developed, and the author shows with this work that he can analyze, diagnose and synthesize problems, formulating conclusions and proposals in the area under consideration.

The above gives me reason to evaluate the dissertation work of arch. MITKO ANATOLIEV MITKOV for independently developed and completed.

The basic requirements of the currently effective Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZVASRB) (SG No. 38 of 21.05.2010 and subsequent amendments and additions), the Regulations to it and the normative documents of the New Bulgarian University, Sofia.

In my capacity as a member of the Scientific Jury and a reviewer of the dissertation work, I give my positive assessment and vote "FOR" awarding the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR" to arch. MITKO ANATO-LIEV MITKOV in scientific specialty (PhD program) "Theory and History of Architecture", professional direction, 5.7. Architecture, construction and geodesy.

.....
(Corresponding member of BAS, Prof. Dr. Arch. Athanas KOVACHEV)

Sofia, 04.10.2023