

## Monumental Sculpture in the Semantic Structure of a Provincial Russian City

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### Abstract

*The rapidly growing cultural globalization, while strengthening the foundations of totalitarianism in social management, reveals the effect of losing the already not very bright identity of 'an ordinary' (and sometimes also 'historically young') provincial Russian city, even if this city has a significant name in history. This process is objective, natural, and needs to be understood. Understanding its basis is a necessary condition for managing its flow.*

*Urban monumental sculpture is an important area that can be explored to aid this understanding.*

*The subject of research is the historical evolution of the monumental and sculptural decoration of 'the capital of the Kuban Cossacks: Ekaterinodar/Krasnodar. The purpose of the study is to understand the processes that determine the historical variability of the 'soul of the city', i.e. the most important indicator of its identity.*

*The analysis shows that the essential basis of the process is the combination of the determining aspects of the 'spirit of citizens' and the 'spirit of the city administration'. In different historical periods, the juxtaposition of opposites changed. If the relative unity of 'administrative spirit of the city' and 'elements of the aggregate of the souls of the citizens is typical for the beginning of the city history, if the Soviet historical period is typical of the severe suppression of administrative-command management of manifestations of 'soul of people, the XXI century is characterized by the eclectic*

*parallelism of opposite worlds. One of the worlds is filled with the 'spirit of the empty official pomposity', while the other shows the 'lightheadedness eclectic incarnation of sentiment'. Spontaneously, in such conditions, the identity of the city and the spirit of the historical center of culture of the Kuban Cossacks can no longer be restored. The development trend of the 'soul of the city', which is involved in the active processes of economic and cultural globalization, does not contain any other way of forming a 'Cossack identity', except through the artificial creation of its simulacrum.*

**Key-words:** City Spirit, Monumental Sculpture, Perestroika, Simulacrum, Semantic Structure of the City, Artistic Image.

## **1. Introduction**

A provincial city in Russia at the beginning of the XXI century (such as Krasnodar) can be a strange sight today: the city is relatively young. The city does not yet have a large history that goes back centuries. There is no way to show the 'ruins of the architecture of the distant past', thus compensating for the 'emptiness' of the present. On the other hand, there is a claim to identity: the breadbasket of Russia, the historical center of the Kuban Cossacks and ethno-cultural and geographical region of the North Caucasus. However, even here, worthy artifacts of historical memory are not enough. Everything is presented rather chaotically ahead, without an unconditional single core. The city doesn't have any real identity, except for eclecticism.

It is true: in the conditions of urbanization and dissolving the self of national humanity in the cosmopolitan cultural globalization, the identity factor becomes of fundamental importance. Society quickly atomizes, loses its internal unity, and gradually turns into a population that is more bound together by formal administrative ties rather than from the foundations of its own soul and the experience of 'business need'. These are actually processes of identity disintegration.

However, mankind does not want to disappear in the variety of cultural forms and, therefore, with peculiar determination seeks to 'look at themselves', to see themselves not identical to 'cosmopolitan de-identify', but that national/local identity.

This is not accidental. This is the specificity of the historical epoch [1]. The postmodern age, in which the former 'desired icon of the future' has faded, or even died altogether, only the present and the very special past that happily connects 'the day lived' with the day today really remains. More and more people feel not as native inhabitants of this planet, but as 'tourists' who visit it temporarily and therefore want to capture impressions.

Identity, as a rule, is not directed to the future, the search for identity. First of all, it establishes the necessary matrix-like connection between the past and the present, between what 'I want' and

what really exists. Folk soul, opening tourist interest in its identity, has found a need to assess the existence, however, not accordingly relative to the ideal of the future-to-be, but, appropriately, to the matrix principle of an opening in reality, already known.

It is important that the present indicates that it is adequate to the ideal matrix that is superimposed on this present and in which this present is 'driven' to establish identity.

However, why do they drive a certain presence of real structures of existence into the matrix of what he existence coarsens, turns into a more or less standard pattern with initially externally set parameters and system connections? Why roughen and simplify the existence that does not become enriched and more versatile, spiritually deeper and more alive because of our structuring it externally? A definite answer to this question is given by the ideology of postmodernism: the 'matrix of identity' taken from the historical past is a picture of the idealized, improved, corrected, but not a 'real future', it is only a 'simulacrum of the desired existence'. It acquires its special vitality because the real future 'glows with emptiness' awakening 'the need for a fairy tale' [2,1].

The answer is to point out a special interest that desires to fit the obscure variety into a standardized scheme, a structure that would make the vague subject 'pseudo-rational and understandable'.

Such situation is not at all far-fetched or artificial. This is the modern world.

... It is enough to pay attention to what today represents the 'pearls' of the culture of the historical past of mankind, such as Vienna, Rome, Paris, and St. Petersburg.

Let's put a simple question: what is the identity of these centers of world culture today? As soon as this question is put, it seems that the answer to it is not at all simple. Not only because the modern city is a multi-layered spiritual and cultural education, in which every historical period has left its touch; but, above all, our present is that the dissonance of eclectic multi-culturality emerges and gains its power between the city and its inhabitants. It is killing living unity of the spiritual core, even in such centres of world culture, the identity of which is beyond doubt.

The point here is not only that the artifacts of the historical past and modern times are mixed together in the modern city, but the fact that the so-called 'ethno-forming idea of the city's soul' has been corrupted. Often, modern cities cease to unite its inhabitants.

At the very least, the people who live in the city today are not the people who should have lived in order for the city to remain the same as before. This is very often a highly mobile population: they do not just live in the city, but 'make the city', really form its 'soul', forcing it to be exactly like this, and not different.

On the other hand, the appearance of the city and the real projection of its 'soul' is also seriously and thoroughly influenced by what seems to be a formal factor: the policy of the city authorities. It means the way the power structures (the city's bureaucratic superstructure) that rule the city position it. After all, the real face of the city depends on the policy of the city authorities, which today more and more find themselves the center of stability in the instability of the urban environment, and not only on the citizens. Citizens (especially if it is the existing population that is rapidly changes the demographic flows) sometimes just don't care what is happening in the city. As conditional 'guest performers', these people use what is in the city and do not require anything else. If it is something present, these passing migration flows are not satisfied. Then people simply leave the city without much regret, changing their jobs, place of residence, friends and acquaintances. The age of superficial culture, 'on-line spirituality', the age of consumerism and expectations of creative initiatives from 'someone else'... It is quite natural that when the 'other' is city authorities who formalize the city for themselves, the identity of the one of the authorities. But what about the city, the people living in it, those who are still here permanently?

Finally, a modern city is often is open to the 'pure' tourism industry. The wider the migration flows in the world, the easier it is to satisfy the need to see the world, the more powerful and multi-faceted the tourism flows are. When tourists arrive in a city, they need not only to see the city life, get acquainted with its inhabitants, monuments of antiquity and modernity, but, above all, to satisfy the need for an 'unsatisfied ideal', to find a 'myth'. The city, in this sense is a 'fairy tale come to life' and, if for some reason it is not this 'myth', the tourists simply do not want to visit this city. As a result, the spirit of 'greyness triumphs, it possesses not only the tourists, but also the ordinary citizens, stimulating the need leave the city in search of a better life.

It comes out that the creation of the simulacrum of the 'city spirit' that would make them believe in 'inauthentic authenticity' and the 'the liveliness of the dead;', 'natural character of the artificial' is a task that is important not only in the theoretical realm, but no less in practical implementation. The man of the modern world needs the 'authentic' more than ever before. In search for the authentic, he wants it 'ready-made', quite in the manner of a 'primitive hunter' who comes to the forest and takes the game not thinking about the need of the hare to grow up before it becomes the prey, he doesn't think of what the hare thinks of the hunter. For the primitive hunter, the hunted animal is a 'gift from the gods' who love him and send him the prey.

Without any regard to the city making an 'anti-myth' (the mythological simulacrum creating the appearance of the city's reality), the city's identity, even if it still exists in some 'archaeological remains, would completely die. What can become from the city, the historical buildings of which are

simply demolished today for 'instant' practical uselessness, and they build the necessary iconically faceless 'boxes', giving birth to an eclectic architectural interlace; if the rapidly changing population brings a new ethno-cultural background, unable to gain a foothold, since the city lacks demographic, racial, ethnic and other stability... Perhaps this city has some industry, work, some opportunity to spend some free time. However, what is the 'sign' of the city describing its 'soul', if the past is gone forever without concern for its preservation, and the future glows with faceless gray of the entropy of everyday life of future without future?

This is especially true not for the few cities that have already won their historical glory and learned to preserve themselves, but for those that are numerous and that today face a corrosive impersonality multiplied by time, a crisis of loss, and an already weak identity. The grey cities, even with a big and eventful history, not impersonal geography, and interesting population, however, as the cultural periphery not showing any kind of special identity' are forced to search themselves and find themselves this identity, when today the survival depends on this identity. It is a really urgent problem for humanity involved in the vortex of globalization.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The object of research is the identity of the provincial landscape of a city without a particularly significant way of entering the world history. It is about the ordinary cities that have missed the opportunity to find their special image and even now do not particularly care for finding it.

However, faced with the fact that the population is moving away from the conditions of spiritual impersonality of the landscape, creating problems to solve including economic urban problems, such cities try to solve the problem of their identity.

The subject of the research is the special role of monumental sculpture in ensuring the national identity of the city. The subject location of the study is Krasnodar, Russia.

The aim of the research is to show that monumental sculpture is a real expression of the 'soul' of the city, to show that the contradictory nature of the monumental and sculptural decoration of the city expresses a contradiction at the level of the spiritual foundation of the latter.

The problem of the research is to reveal the source of the situation, in which a city claiming to be the historical center of the Kuban Cossacks is unable to resolve it otherwise than being as a simulacrum of its identity.

The methodological foundations of the research are empirical observations, comparative historical analyses, and the use of idealization and modeling tools. It is believed that the results of the

work can be useful not only for specialists, but also for everyone who is interested in the problems of urban landscape identity.

In the search for an answer and a solution to the problem, the study relied on fundamental research of the symbolic simulacrum reality carried out by J. Baudrillard [2], for special research in monumental arts and aesthetic design of the urban environment by F. Boardman [3], V. G. Vil'kitskaya [4], M. V. Dutsev [5], A. O. Kotlomanova [6], V. S. Speransky [7], A. Spivak [8], V. S. Turchin [9], J. Wall and A. Hale [10], D. Xiaoling, and K. Quin [11]. The provisions and conclusions of the works of N. B. Akoeva [12], Yu. L. Ban'kovskaya [13], V. V. Ermonskaya [14], A. Kounce [15], V. V. Novoselskaya [16], E. E. Kasatkina [17], K. M. Higgins [18], D. Pauley [19] were of particular significance. In clarifying the specific features of the monumental sculpture of the Soviet historical period in connection with the art of perestroika, the works of I. Kozlov [20], T. B. Malinina [21], A. Tseplyaev [22], N. V. Shalaeva [23], and O. A. Shvidkovsky were emphasized [24].

### **3. Results**

The result of the research is conclusion that the historical fate of a provincial city today significantly depends on how much the city administration with the help of the population have interest in the glory of the city, how they together take care to create a mythological simulacrum of the urban landscape. Such a simulacrum is necessary because urban architecture without 'their own outstanding image' do not have future. A person in a world that is becoming and has already become global needs to live not only where there is money and work, but also where there is a landscape that they respect. That is why faceless cities lose these competitions to those who care about their image.

An important tool in ensuring the unique image of the city is its monumental and sculptural design.

### **4. Discussion**

In this research, the city is understood as objectified in a special territorial-objective way, a generic social subject. It is a subject, the spiritual foundation of which is connected both with the system of administrative-political relations that governs the city and with the mosaic of spirituality of its human population.

What is the sense of the city? Ordinary consciousness, trying to answer this question in a popular way, quite naturally expresses something similar to the statement that 'the real semantic basis

of the city is the people living in this city [25], because they, in fact, make the city what it is. The city here is an ethno-cultural phenomenon, a living human population, which in these specific historical conditions fills the urban landscape.

The other position looks slightly different. On its scale, it is no longer the element of the self-determining human population that comes to the fore, for which the city is, first of all, its 'own, native, sensually necessary', but anti-stichic self-organization. It is the way people live, and the life landscape they choose for themselves essentially depends not so much on the people themselves but on the system basis of their city-organized life [26].

The way the opposites of total and aggregate-civil subjects of the city are paired depends on many factors. They include the variety from the specificity of the way of organizing urban life, how the generic subject of the city is focused to see its own totality in the 'spirit of the city', to the liberty of self-determination of the population. This problem is not groundless, because, according to researchers, 'monumental art cannot develop normally in the absence of a strict system of rules and restrictions, ... [since] only in a situation of competent control over the artistic process can obtain creative results that can be objectively evaluated professionally' [6, p.440].

The problem of combining the living-human and social principles for the essence of a modern city is fundamental. The city, as a generic subject, 'wants' (aspires) to become the 'master of the citizens', but 'citizens-citizens' do not always agree to this status. All this finds its expression in the way in which the internally dialectically-contradictory 'soul of the city' manifests itself in its monumental-sculptural-architectural decoration.

A monumental sculpture is like a sign of the identity of the urban landscape, by which the subject designates himself and manifests what it has been spiritually in the historical past, is in the present and is going to become in the future. The signs in a monumental sculpture makes the observer not only learn about commemorative events and acts of the history of the city, but understand the very 'soul' of the latter and values of its existence.

From this point of view, it is of some interest to consider how the 'soul' of the center of one of the most significant regions of the South of the Russian Federation - Krasnodar, - has been transformed over the past centuries.

The history of Ekaterinodar-Krasnodar from the point of view of monumental monuments, reveals three historical epochs that are fundamentally important for the consciousness of spiritual identity. First, it is the initial period that reveals the features of a certain internal focused on the manifestations of the state status of the Kuban Cossacks, spiritual integrity fixed by the corresponding monumental artifacts. This period covers the time from the actual appearance of the city up to the

historical time of the revolution that turned tsarist Russia into the USSR and the Cossack Kuban into the Krasnodar territory.

There are relatively few monuments presenting historical existence of the city preserved today, and it is significant that they are mostly restored after destruction. Among the latter is the name of the city Ekaterinodar, which has forever disappeared into the depths of historical memory. It has spiritually fixed the connection between the birth of the administrative center of Cossack territory with the Imperial policy of St. Petersburg, as well as several other monuments of the same orientation. Among them is a monument dedicated to the Charter to the Kuban Cossacks from Empress Catherine the Great, which allowed recent relocation to the land of the Kuban and economic development of the latter; monumental Arch erected in honor of the expected arrival of Emperor Alexander III, etc.

The result of the October (1917) revolution meant not only the end of autocratic Russia, but also the change of socio-economic formations that took place on this territory; it was a radical transformation of the soul of the Kuban region, which now lost the status of Cossack (which is the sovereign spirit of the Cossack class) and turned into one of the territorial regions of the new Soviet socialist state.

The spirit of the Soviet historical time is the 'etching' of everything that somehow turns out to be the connection of Kuban with the policy of the Russian autocracy [23]. The city changed its name from Ekaterinodar in Krasnodar, almost all city streets were renamed, the monuments were demolished if they somehow could reveal Kuban as the Cossack land, and connect the city of Krasnodar with the history of the Kuban Cossacks.

The new monumentalism in its orientation to the central government and official ideology it seems almost now different from the traditional monumentalism of the tsarist era. The content of monuments that perpetuate the heroes of the new historical time has been transformed, but not the method of symbolic presentation of the latter. As in the tsarist era, Soviet monumental monuments inform first of all about what is adequate to the system of power, the generic social subject.

At the same time, the fundamental difference also reveals itself. The Cossacks, after all, were grateful to the central government for the granted fertile land. This significantly feeds the national spirit of pro-autocratic monumentalism in the art of pre-revolutionary historical times. In the conditions of the USSR, the situation turned out to be exactly the opposite. The policy of decossackization and forced proletarianization<sup>6</sup> forced collectivization objectively (i.e., regardless of what the newspapers of the Soviet historical time wrote and the leaders of the Soviet and party authorities reported in their official reports) did not set up the population of the region to

unconditionally support the spirit of proletarian power. This is expressed in the fact that the monumental artistic creativity of the Soviet historical period breaks away from the people, reveals a one-sided expression of the ideological spirit of the generic social subject and, to a much lesser extent, the actual soul of the people. The parties that form the spiritual foundation of the 'subject city' lose syncretism.

In the scale of the manifestations of monumental self-imprinting, the difference between the new historical epoch and the times of autocracy was, therefore, very significant.

If its 'tsarism' the Kuban Cossacks showed quite initiative - by themselves, not responding to planned recommendations 'above', in the Soviet historical time most monumental artifacts arose in accordance with the plan of ideological work and aimed not so much to capture the moment and specificity of events, but the foundations of social order. This transformation actually lowered the artist to the level of a master accomplice and directly affected the pieces of monumental art that emerged in Soviet historical times, which began to show features of stereotypical one-face and abstract formalism.

Because of its formally commissioned nature, the monumental art of the Soviet historical period is quite clearly divided into genres. These are:

- Monuments to general events of modern Soviet history, among which the central place was occupied by memorials with abstract heroes-images and 'eternal lights' dedicated to the events of the October (1917) revolution and the events of the Great Patriotic War.
- Monuments, portrait sculptures, memorial plaques etc. dedicated to the heroes of the new historical time: leaders of the revolution, military leaders, honorary citizens and those who made a particularly significant contribution to politics, economy, science, and culture of the Soviet era.
- Perpetuation of the memory of the historical past of the people and the state, which included, in addition to certain measures of security and museum character, the construction of new ones, as a rule not by the will of artists, but in a planned manner. No monument in the Soviet historical period could be created and installed outside the permissive policy of the state, which regulated not the artistic merits of artifacts, but the ideological and educational orientation of the latter, their ability to form the consciousness of the population.

The monumental art in the Soviet Union acquires a frankly didactically-educational view: a significant role is played by the approved Marxist understanding of human nature, which was only

seen as 'socially generated', educated like computer programs by socialization 'installed' in a living human organism - a carrier of the essence.

With this understanding of the essence of a man, a Soviet man was considered as an avatar of a social kind. It is quite natural that any artistic realism, especially in monumental creativity, is turned into a kind of ideological edification. The specific feature of socialist realism is the emasculation of the living individual-human-personal spiritual principle from art.

Adequate to the concept of the social essence of man officially adopted in the USSR, the concept of an amateur creative human personality was unnatural to the actual essence that was on the side of the empirically normal living person. It absolutized only one of the sides in the foundations of the latter to the detriment of the reality of the whole. The concept of personality was interpreted not as an innate individual quality of a person with the god-likeness of a living being and only revealed in the conditions of social existence but mainly as the ability of the human individual to manifest the social race, to anticipate historical time and especially strongly embody the generic social consciousness and trends of historical development.

Because the official interpretation of the essence of man showed a trend of dehumanization, the most outstanding achievements especially in the sphere of spiritual culture in the Soviet period were created not in line but on the contrary: about human nature and about human beings. However, the monopolization of all parties of society in the direction of a single owner – a generic subject syncretized by the Communist party and the state - allowed to maintain the illusion of pseudo-organic unity of the citizen and the state. It found expression in the publications of the Basic law of the state, the structure of which described the citizen as a person.

To be fair, the official policy of the generic subject did not always reveal itself as a cliché ideology that imposed itself on the citizens. Although the Soviet era destroyed almost all pre-revolutionary monuments symbolizing the greatness of tsarist Russia and the role of the Kuban Cossacks in maintaining its sovereign foundations, it was this period, during which the memorial plaques about places of visit of non-proletarian but historically famous personalities (from the sphere of art too) were also installed in Krasnodar. For example, the houses where famous Russian composers and musicians once performed were memorialized: A.N. Scriabin, S.V. Rachmaninoff, L.V. Sobinov. Krasnodar music school was called in the name of N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov. However, these actions were more a concession to public opinion than a manifestation of the latter's political power.

The situation seems to change significantly during the collapse of the USSR along with the processes that revived the bourgeois socio-economic structure of perestroika. The state renounces its

obligations to form the ideological consciousness of citizens, abolishes censorship, and strives to make the city not only a place of residence for its citizens for its residents, but also a cozy one. This immediately finds its reflection in monumental art.

Significant events of perestroika in artistic monumentalism in Krasnodar are the restoration of monuments of Cossack antiquity that were destroyed in the USSR, as well as the mass construction of new ones that raise the layers of historical memory. Moreover, along with the so-called 'legal' monuments, in this period there were also 'illegal' ones installed by enthusiasts at their own risk. Such, for example, is the memorial Cross erected on the high bank of the Kuban near stanitsa Elizavetinskaya by the emigrated Kuban Cossacks in memory of the heroes of the White Guard movement under the command of I. G. Kornilov who died in the civil war in the battles of Ekaterinodar.

The circumstances of perestroika enliven the mosaic of culture in the mood of Krasnodar residents. Along with the restoration of monuments that were destroyed during the period of the CPSU's power, numerous new ones appeared. They often bore the shade of the most ordinary civil moods often on a completely domestic scale. For example, at the intersection of Krasnaya and Mira streets, there appeared a monument to 'doggies' that was immediately loved by Krasnodar residents. It was erected in response to the well-known assessment of Krasnodar in the words by VL. Mayakovsky 'doggie's capital'. On the Boulevard on Krasnaya street opposite to the entrance to the building of the Polytechnic University (KubSTU), there appeared a sculpture group dedicated to students reproducing a frame 'Shurik and Lidochka' from a popular Soviet movie. At the square at the intersection of Krasnaya and Gorky streets, a memorial is installed that embodies in the bronze the central element of the famous painting by I. Repin 'Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks to Sultan Mehmed IV of the Ottoman Empire'. There also appear the so-called departmental memorials. For example, on the territory of the Krasnodar State Institute of culture, along with the opening of the Cadet musical corps, a bust of a military officer and composer N. A. Romsky-Korsakov was installed.

At the same time, although people's initiative rapidly flows into the monumental artistic creativity along with perestroika, which brings the brightness of artistic eclecticism, the subject of perpetuation in which there are real heroes and celebrities of the historical past and modern times, and those who love the images of art, iconic stories, this does not yet lead to a radical overcoming of the spiritual gap that arose in the historical period of the USSR between the generic and aggregate-personal semantic levels of urban culture, but only encashed out the last one. The reasons for this situation are found not only in the individual shortcomings of the cultural management system, not in random circumstances of time and place, but at a fundamental level. The historical epoch that Russia

entered together with perestroika unfortunately reveals the inability of the generic subject of society to provide the type of democracy that the mass man (who supported perestroika) aspired to. Despite all the measures to democratize the political organization of society, initiatives in the field of freedom of speech and artistic creativity, a new syncretism of interests forming the spirit of the city of the opposite parties, it was not fully provided. The reason for this was not only the remnants of the USSR.

At first glance, the spirit of restored capitalism, no matter how specific its manifestations are, bringing the atmosphere of freedom of speech and private-entrepreneurial liberties, created the conditions to ensure that 'ice of alienation created in the USSR, the stiff relations between socio-totalitarian generic subject of the city and civil society of citizens, melted. However, this opinion is wrong. As a result of perestroika, not just capitalism was established in Russia, but oligarchic capitalism tending to the regime of social totalitarianism.

As a result, the awakened mass culture has not found a natural harmony with the culture of the social elite. Instead of the revival of syncretism, the parallelism of cultures was finally formed.

On the one hand, the eclectic diversity of the multi-vector palette of popular moods is expressed in the appearance of many 'unclear' sculptures and architectural structures that combine the features of anything in urban landscape. On the other hand, on the background of this eclecticism strict system of administrative structures and their typical artistic and sculptural attributes (e.g., in the monuments 'Cossacks – the founders of Kuban', the restored monument to Catherine II, group of memorial statues of outstanding figures of Russian history) grew and grew in its ostentatious monumentality.

The system of a monolith of administrative power turned itself into a grandiose memorial, the manifestations of which were not only the epic severity of the statues, but also cold arrogance between the social elite and the urban population.

If a layer of popular initiatives detects 'merry eclecticism', it is still adequate to spirituality of consumer capitalist society but in the postmodern manner, without the energy of faith in a social icon and idealization of the future [1], the layer of spirituality, which is adequate to entity-state, conservatively maintains the same tone that described this field of artistic creativity in a Soviet period and only deepens it. In other words, it is the same pompous formal epic manner, the symbolism of powerful system of state administration. The characters of monuments erected by the state are people–personifiers who affirm the idea of the greatness of the social order.

This trend does not reveal the harmony of the 'spirit of the city'; it impedes the city's search for its real 'face', and awakens thoughts about the need to change the current situation.

## 5. Conclusion

The semantic structure of the city is a media sphere that captures the city in a symbolic and informational way as a pseudo-living organism that has not only material and physical, but also spiritual properties. This media sphere is objectified universally, but one of the most open indicators that reveal its specifics is architectural and sculptural positioning. The specificity of monumental sculpture, which is on the border of art and decoration, has the most open ability to show the soul of the city, its quality as a generic subject.

The way a city manifests itself in architectural and sculptural decoration significantly depends not only on objective grounds such as the features of the natural and geographical landscape, preserved ancient urban development, traditional ethno-cultural life, the prevailing occupation of citizens, the presence of industry and stable contacts with the outside world, but also on subjective parameters. It is very important how residents treat the city they live in, and not just in an ordinary, superficially recorded attitude of 'love for the city' and the experience of self-inclusion in its history, but on a fundamental level. A city is not only a built-up facility, but a real generic subject, whose content is the conjunction of the aspects: city residents and city administration; at the level of subsystems, these aspects are ethno-national, religious-confessional, class, and strata types of differentiation. This is especially true for the so-called provincial urban centers, among which is the city of Krasnodar: the regional center of southern Russia.

The history of Krasnodar (previously – Ekaterinodar) dates back to a little more than three centuries. The city wasn't found spontaneously at the intersection of trade routes, but as an outpost on the southern borders of the Russian Empire. This fact was reflected not only in the architectural development of the urban environment but also in the spirit of the city, which received its monumental and sculptural objectification.

The first period of its existence as Ekaterinodar, the city is characterized by a clearly expressed positive-autocratic spirit of the monumental and architectural design. The Cossacks, who are grateful to the autocratic state for the land granted for development, quite naturally erect the symbols that represent the strength and power of the Russian state.

The second period in the history of the city is marked by Soviet power, despite the official policy of decossackization, does not externally change the system of artistic monumentalization set in the XIX century. However, the relative harmony of the spirit of power add-ins and mass urban population, typical of the autocratic attitudes of historical period, is not observed during this time.

Monumental art of the USSR is typical of one-sided expression of the spirit of Soviet power, almost ignoring the side of spirituality of the mass of citizens.

The one-sided positioning of the spirit of the city by means of monumental sculpture established in the Soviet era was significantly overcome in the post-Soviet perestroika. However, liberalization in manifestations of spiritual interests did not lead to a new harmonious unity but on the contrary revealed a sharp polarization of the sides. The monumental and sculptural sphere was filled with an eclectic mix of pathetically pro-administrative and rather frivolous folk layers. It was found that the city has almost lost the experience of its original identity.

Despite the desire of the city authorities to restore the former spirit of Ekaterinodar expressed in the restoration of monuments destroyed during the Soviet era and renaming many streets in the city, the residents of Krasnodar did not support the authorities in its desire to return the city its original name. Krasnodar has never become Ekaterinodar.

The new population that has almost no ethnic or vital relation to the Kuban Cossacks did not support the idea of returning the lost identity. The crisis of the soul of the city openly revealed itself. Moreover, the development processes of the regional center only continued to worsen the crisis.

Meanwhile, besides the idea of identity, the city finds it difficult to develop itself as a spiritually unified, non-eclectic entity. Moreover, the lack of identity not only has a negative impact on the formation of the 'local pride' of the population of the center of the South Russian region, but also turns out to be a significantly negative impulse in the development of tourism. As a result, the city that historically became the center of the Kuban Cossacks finds itself unable to successfully position itself as such. It is difficult to find the ability to position itself as a center respective to the specifics of the North Caucasus region without being a typical Russian city. The eclecticism is triumphant now.

Without acquiring a new identity, this eclecticism cannot be overcome. Spontaneously, in the conditions of increasing processes of global integration, the transformation of the city into a 'passageway' of demographic flows, a new identity may not even appear.

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