Regional tradition in the architectural culture of Nizhneye Povolzhye (by the example of the Volgograd region)

V Serebryanaya, Yu Kolshev

Department of architecture and urban development, Volgograd State Technical University, 1, Academicicheskaya street, Volgograd 400074, Russia

E-mail: tango7412@gmail.com

Abstract. The article considers issues connected with the co-existence and intensive cultural interaction of indigenous population and migrants, nomadic and settled population, as well as spreading of the world’s religions in the Volgograd region. The territory of the examined region enjoys a great cultural heritage connected with a unique history and traditions and many creeds. The most significant objects of historical and cultural heritage of the Volgograd region are highlighted in the article, with their characteristic features given. The problem of the architectural heritage preservation has been touched upon, too. It is regarded not only as an aggregate of objects which need to be preserved physically, but also as an essential factor of mutual understanding of peoples in the contemporary restless world. In many respects the deciding point for preserving architectural heritage is the level of knowledge about the culture of a certain region, which directly promotes solving a problem of inter-confidence between peoples. Today it is possible to solve the problem of strengthening interethnic peace and interfaith harmony through acquaintance with the culture and traditions of the non-settlement of the region. That is why the issues under consideration in the article seem vital under present conditions.

1. Introduction

Russia is the largest multiethnic state in the world. One of the extraordinarily varied in its ethnic structure regions in Russia, with the presence of different national cultures is Volgograd region, situated in Nizhneye Povolzhye. A special cultural area has formed in this region, on the territory of the Volgograd region in particular. In the course of several ages different ethnic groups have been co-existing here. The geographical location of the region was of special importance in the formation of poly-ethnic and poly-confessional social environment. Since the beginning of time water and land ways going through these territories have been providing links of East and West. This is also connected with the intense colonization of boundless steppe expanses of the Russian South, the banks of the rivers Volga and Don. Here some tribes were replaced by others, and a long process of developing these lands proceeded. The adaptation to co-existence under new terms was far from easy. Some conflicts could evolve from economic and military reasons, but ethnic conflicts did not happen. By the middle of the 19th century separate ethnic groups and communities quite peacefully lived in Nizhneye Povolzhye.

In the 13th century to the territory between the Volga and Don came Tatars. In the 16th century Russian people in the service started to get estates and private properties. In the 17th century here appeared Kalmyks. At the end of the 17th – beginning of the 18th centuries the first Ukrainians
resettled in this region. For the sake of southern Russia developing the empress Catherine II called immigrants from Germany. Her decree of the 19th of March 1764 determined the places for settlement.

The traditions, culture, way of life, and religion of these peoples left a special mark on the development of architecture and, in particular, on the construction of religious buildings. A unique situation formed on the inhabited territory, which lies in the fact that all the world religions live in harmony here. A striking example is one of the most significant cultural centers of the Volgograd region - the City of Volgograd (the former chief town of the county Tsaritsyn).

2. Review

Owing to its historical conditions Tsaritsyn was various in the ethnic structure of its population, which influenced the religious architecture here. Besides Orthodox churches there were temples of Lutherans, Catholics, Mohammedans, Jews, and Armenians. Many churches were destroyed in the Soviet period [1]. The temples survived up to now take a prominent place in the architectural heritage of the city.

In 1897 there were 10 Orthodox churches in Tsaritsyn. The most ancient Orthodox temple in the city is John the Baptist’s Church. Initially the church was wooden (1614 - 1615), later rebuilt into a stone one [2, 3]. (figure 1).

In the religious architecture of Tsaritsyn John the Baptist’s Church is an early stage in the development of tier compositions. It is a type of building called “an octagon on the quadrangular”, which appeared in the Russian architecture in the 80-s of the 17th century. In the 30-s of the 20th century the church was destroyed and restored again in 1999.

The typological features of the Orthodox churches in Tsaritsyn of the period from the 18th to the beginning of the 20th centuries are varied. The main spread here, as well as on the territory of the whole region, had the following type design scheme: a temple with a well-designed axis and a developed refectory [4].

A special value in the architectural and town-planning heritage of the city represents the first German colony on the Volga, 28 versts from Tsaritsyn [5]. “Sarepta is one of the most charming parts of Povolzhye”. 14 September 1765 to this place came the first envoys of the …. from the town Hernhuter. As the result of three arrivals of Germans from this town in 1769 in Sarepta already lived 200 people. Catherine II by her decree of 11 February 1764 permitted Hernhuters “to practice their religion freely and swear an oath according their traditions” [6]. Arriving at the place of settlement the Germans first of all started building a temple and a school.

The stone church in Sarepta is the earliest on the Volga memorial of immigrants from Germany. It was founded in May 1771 and consecrated 3 September 1772. This stone small-sized building is of chamber type. Its architecture is simple and concise. In this construction the master combined features of civil and religious architecture (a town hall with a sharply pointed roof and a turret with a broach in
the centre of the temple ridge). What was the interior of the church is known from the description of one of the travelers who visited Sarepta in the 70-s of the 19th century: “The temple in Sarepta consists of one large quadrangular hall without any decoration, the walls are just whitewashed. On either side above there is a gallery and on the one of the walls there is a picture depicting the Crucifixion” [7]. In 1995-1996 the restoration of this church was accomplished by a group of architects: Klaus Richter (Germany), A.N. Epiphanov (Moscow), Jakob Ezau (Alma-Ata) (figure 2).

![Figure 2. Church in Sarepta, 1771. a - Church in Sarepta, 1771, b, c - after restoration in 1996.](image)

In the German colonies of Povolzhye an intense religious construction developed in the 19th century. In some churches of the Germans of Povolzhye one can see the implementation of esthetic ideals and architectural artistic forms of Gothic cathedrals, which is quite obvious in the architecture of the Lutheran church in Tsaritsyn [8]. (figure 3).

![Figure 3. Church of the end of the XIX century. Tsaritsyn. Photo of the beginning of the XX century. a - Church in Yelabuga, b, c - Church in Tsaritsyn, photo of the beginning of the XX century.](image)

A heritage of Jews has also survived in Tsaritsyn. Synagogues have always been the centre of concentration for a Jewish community life (and not only religious, but also social and cultural life). Two synagogues have been preserved up to nowadays [9].

The first building which gave home to a meeting house and “beit midrush in the Zatsaritsyn forstadt of Tsaritsyn was built in 1888.

The two-storied brick rectangular building by its architecture belongs to the dwelling houses typical for the Tsaritsyn of the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th centuries. The main façade has a rich décor. The light color of some parts of the facade heightens the picturesque look of the house: the girdles above the socle and between the storeys, the rustications and semi-pillars, the window frames. Inside the floors are divided by the longitudinal wall into a number of rooms. The decorative
detail – “David’s Star”- in the centre of the window casings on the second floor show that one day there was a synagogue in this building (figure 4).

In 2001 the building was returned to the Jewish community. A two-storied annex adjoining the north-western butt side of the house was constructed in 2005.

In 1897 the developing Jewish diaspora of Tsaritsyn numbered 893 people. It was not satisfied with the meeting-house in the town of that time neither from the point of view of quantity nor quality. The Jews applied for building of a big synagogue. In 1905 they made a request to the building department of Saratov province, with a project enclosed. The project required some correction, and it was approved only in 1906. The construction was accomplished in 1911. Now the synagogue housed from 1500 to 2000 people and it was built in the centre of the town not far from the Orthodox Transfiguration Church. During the time of its existence the scope composition of the building did not undergo significant changes. Only the top of the church with a six-corner star above the central nave and the turrets with similar tops at the corners of the façade, which are depicted in the archive drawing, were not preserved [10].

The rectangular building of red brick is divided into three naves: two aisles and the central nave which is bigger in size. There were galleries along the northern, southern and western walls of the main hall of the synagogue. At the Soviet time the inner planning was greatly disturbed. The galleries were joined by floors which divided the main space of the hall into two stories.

The synagogue architecture represents a combination of modernist style elements, and a traditional brick tracery, widely used in Tsaritsyn buildings. There are also some neo-Moresque style elements. The expressiveness of a construction is achieved by plenty of windows with rich decoration. In the lower tier of the eastern façade in place of the central window there is a symbol of the Judaic faith – a six-corner star. The interior of the synagogue was gaily decorated, but practically nothing of this rich interior has survived. Elements typical for modernist style prevail in the decorating of the interior. The moulded crocket on the frieze in the frame of the windows is complemented by moulded rosettes (figures 5, 6).
On the whole the synagogue is an interesting memorial of religious architecture in the Volgograd region. It is a work of highly professional architects. It was closed in 1929.

A small group of Poles also lived in Tsaritsyn of those times. In 1898 there were just 430 people. In 1899 a Polish church was erected here on their donations [11]. The architectural artistic image of the temple is close to the West European architecture. It is made in the manner of eclecticism (an appeal to Roman style). Perspective portals and a row of arches manifest this trend. Like Roman Catholic temples of Western Europe this Polish church is a basilica of a hall type which is reflected in the implementation of its main facade, which is significantly satiated in its architectural refinement (figure 7).

The Catholic temple was closed in 1935. After the war the building suffered severe destruction. In 1992 it was given to the Catholic community, and in 1995 restoration work was carried out here.

In the period of the Golden Horde prime the territory of the Volgograd region started to be actively inhabited by Tatars. The architecture of the capital Beljamen (archeologists name it “Vodyanskoegorodische”, it is located 60 km to the north of Volgograd) now is known by archeological dig. During the 16th- 18th centuries after Kazan and Astrakhan khanates joining the Russian state the migration of Tatars increased, which furthered the following process of their ethnic formation [12].

In Tsaritsyn Tatars settled on the river Tsaritsa in Zatsaritsynskii forstadt in the second half of the 18th century. In the second half of the 19th century with the development of Tsaritsyn some streets of this part of the town inhabited mainly merchants and petit bourgeois who had come from provinces of Povolzhie. That is how here arose the historical district Endovische-Tagany – a place of compact residence of Tatars in Tsaritsyn. In 1908 In Tsaritsyn lived 3040 Tatars.

The culture of the representative of Tatar ethnos in Povolzhie preserved its peculiarity, not loosing contact with its national culture. The mosques known to us in Volgograd region indicate that Islam deeply ingrained in the consciousness of Tatar society oriented it towards the culture of the Moslem
East. At the same time during the course of years one culture penetrated into the other one which invariably resulted in arriving new tendencies, including those in architecture. In the architecture of Tatars in Povolzhye their traditions joined achievements of the Russian architectural school. The mosques in Tsarytsyn manifested the fact. Then there were two mosques here.

The first cathedral mosque was erected in 1869 by request of merchant Bashir Nevmatula Amerkhanov. In December 1870 Saratov Province Administration accepted the application of Mohammedans and permitted to open the mosque. By the edict of the Senate in 1885 Tsaritsyn Mosque was renamed into the First Cathedral Tsaritsyn Mosque. It became a spiritual centre of Tatars in Tsaritsyn.

The mosque is designed in the traditional for the religious architecture of Pvolzhye layout – “a minaret on the roof”. In the East another type of mosques was built called“. The mosque in Tsaritsyn was a one-story log cabin of a small size. It had characteristic features of country buildings based on the same residential architecture that also existed in the Russian architecture, which gave the rise to the type of a closet church. The mosque was set in the centre of the roof. It was reasonable. It was linked with the building in construction, and more stable than a separately standing tall tower. The minaret was topped by a well-proportioned hipped roof, which visually increased its height. At the beginning of the 20th century the whole building, except the minaret, was covered by brick. Now in its architectural look came out elements of the Tsaritsyn brick architecture. Outwardly the mosque started to resemble Tsaritsyn constructions of the late 19th – early 20th centuries (figure 8).

In 1912 the second cathedral mosque and a madrasah were built in Zatsaritsynskii forstadt. The initiator again was Bashir Nevmatula Amerkhanov. The construction story lasted rather long – from 1907 till 1911. The project was adopted only in 1911 and signed by province engineer A. Klementyev [13]. The building of this mosque is very different from the first one. It was built of stone, two-storeyed, with an octahedral tall minaret and towers on the butt facades. The usage of forms of a minaret and towers in the scope of the mosque bring it closer to its ancient predecessors. This important trace of the Tatar religious architecture is to some extent softened in facades processing (the window casings bear the mark of eclecticism). Near the mosque there was a stone rectangular building of the madrasah.

Nowadays on the territory of Volgograd live 1144 Tatars. Some mosques were erected in the areas of their compact residence in the 2000-s. There, under the common roof representatives of different nationalities united by the Islam faith gather together. In the architecture of new mosques are visible features of the national architectural tradition.

In Volgograd region only two architectural Moslem memorials have survived: the wooden mosques in the Tatar villages Malye Chepurniki (1825) and Latoshinka (1910). (figure 9).
Armenian masters-bricklayers have also left their mark in Tsaritsyn. The first settlements of Armenians in Povolzhye refer to the 11th century. The flow of Armenians to Russia increased in the second half of the 16th century after Armenia’s joining Russia. At the beginning of the 17th century Armenians started to settle on the territory of Nizhneye Povolzhye. In 1717 Astrakhan became the centre of the newly formed Armenian Church Eparchy which united all the Armenian population in Russia. In the middle of the 19th century several tens of Armenian families resettled to Tsaritsyn from Rostov province (Nahichevan–on-the Don). Thus, a big Armenian community was gradually formed in Tsaritsyn.

Armenian, striving for preservation of their national traditions, native tongue, written language alongside with making comfortable homes for their families, built churches and schools. Among them there were famous manufacturers Serebryakovs (Artsatagortysyan), who with other patrons built the Armenian Church of Saint George the Enlightener behind the permanent way of Tsaritsyn’s railway in 1908.

In 1899 the Armenian society of Gregorian faith appealed to Tsaritsyn Town Duma with the request of building a meeting house with a parish school [14]. The plan of the ground and the project of the church were considered by provinces engineers during more than two and a half years. The plan and budget for the construction were finally drawn and approved in 1902 [15]. By the permission of Synod the erection of the church began in 1904, in 1908 the church was consecrated [16].

The Armenian Church of Saint George in tsaritsynis built of tufa according to the ancient traditions. Its composition and planning review three-apse cruciform temples of the Armenian religious architecture of the 7th -10th centuries.

We have examined peaceful interreligious and intercultural relations by the example of Tsaritsyn (Volgograd), but this peaceful trend is also typical for Volgograd redion as well as Povolzhye on the whole. For example, quite near, one might say “side by side” with the Tatar village of Malye Chepurniki with a mosque there is Russian village Dubovy Ovrag with Nikita Martyr’s Orthodox Temple. One of the main tools of co-existence of multifarious culture in the region is the inheritance

Figure 9. Mosques: in Chepurniki 1825, in Latoshinka 1910.

a - mosque in Chepurniki. Photo 1989, b, c - mosque in Chepurniki. Photo 2019, d, e - mosque in Latoshinka. Photo 1989, f - mosque in Latoshinka after restoration. Photo 2019.
of its values. In the region a great attention is paid to the problems of inheritance and popularization of national cultures [17]. For many years in Volgograd region the unique open-air museum “Staraya Sarepta has been carrying out this work. The museum is an oasis for five peoples: Russians, Germans, Kalmyks, Tatars, and Ukrainians. Meetings and personal contacts of people of different culture, religion and traditions take place here.

Figure 10. Armenian Church of St. Gregory. Tsaritsyn. 1904-1908. a - postcard from the beginning of the XX century, b, c - churches of Armenia: b - church of the monastery in Haghpat, X-XIII century, c - church in Artabuink, X-XI century.

3. Conclusions
The different peoples of Volgograd region on account of peculiarity of their settlement and practicing different faiths maintain friendly relations, because here the culture of mutual understanding have been forming for ages and long ago passed from the sphere of poly-ethnic relations to the field of interpersonal links, which often turn to be more important and valuable for people, even in comparison with political and economic problems. It is obvious by the example of architectural heritage, particularly religious architecture. In the temples of different confessions one can see the implementation of features of their own national architecture. On the whole the development of architecture on the territory of Volgograd region was realized by means of historical drawing together and artistic enrichment. The architecture of Nizhnye Povolzhye has organically come into the Russian building culture.

Nowadays under conditions of integration processes and globalization it is necessary to provide continuity and considerable attitude to cultural heritage: “Local and global, one’s own and someone else’s, and also common must exist – in certain proportions and combinations, in mutually acceptable, and then, moderate, without conflicts, unity” [18].

Many objects of architectural heritage in the region require protecting and restoring. This problem can be solved by mutual efforts of restorers, architects, local authorities, church, sponsors, and, of course, with an active assistance of national cultural organizations and the whole population not indifferent to the preservation of architectural heritage [19,20].

References
[1] GAVO F 2059 Op 2 State Archive of the Volgograd Region
[2] RGIA F 834 Op 3 D 3024 Russian State Historical Archive
[3] Materkin A V 1999 Church of St John the Baptist (Volgograd) p 176
[4] Serebryanaya V 2002 The religious architecture of Volgograd region (Volgograd) p 336
[5] Ya Dits 1997 The history of Germans-colonists of Povolzhye (Moscow: Gothic)
[6] Decree of Catherine II to of 11 February 1764 S-Petersburg 1764 The Fund of the open-air-museum “Staraya Sarepta” (Leningrad) pp 1–17
[7] Ovsyannikov L 1898 Geographical essays and pictures Essays and pictures of Povolzhye (Spb) 1 p 99
[8] Ryblova M A 1997 The traditional culture and confessionality of the Germans of Povolzhye
"Staraya Sarepta and the peoples of Povolzhye in the history of Russia The papers of the
conference II of Sarepta meetings Articals" (Volgograd)

[9] Lokotko A I 2002 The architecture of European synagogues (Minsk) p 156

[10] GASO F 656 Op 1 D 117 State Archive of the Saratov Region

[11] RGIA F 821 Op 125 D 2523; Op 131 D 209 Russian State Historical Archive

[12] Blokhin V 2003 Nizhnevolszhskie mosques of the Golden Horde: to the problem of architectural
traditions formation Nizhnevolszhskii archeological bulletin (Volgograd) 6

[13] GASO F 656 Op 1 D 1207 L 12 State Archive of the Saratov Region

[14] GASO F 25 Op 1 D 524 ob State Archive of the Saratov Region

[15] National Archive of Armenia F 52 Op 1 D 4293

[16] National Archive of Armenia F 52 of Astrakhan Eparchy AAZ

[17] Kleitman A L 2008 Ecclesiastical study of region of the south of Russia of the18th – early 20th
centuries (by the documents of Tsaritsyn and Kamyshin uyezds of Saratov province)
Scientific problems of humanitarian studies (Volgograd) 5 75–82

[18] Bondarenko I A 2013 Global goals of historical and architectural process Modern architecture
of the world (St Petersburg: Publ Nestor History) 3 p 440

[19] Serebryanaya V 2011 Architectural heritage of the country between the Volga and Don (to the
problem of studying and preservation) Urgent problems of architecture (Yerevan) pp 202–
208

[20] Serebryanaya V 2019 Analysis of risks and the strategy of mitigatingthreats to cultural heritage
in small historical towns in Russia Safeguarding the values of the European cultural heritage
(Athens) pp 177–187