Svitlana Linda

THE PHENOMENON OF THE "GREEK RENAISSANCE" IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF IMPERIAL ROME

Science Doctor, Professor, Head of Department of Architecture and Design,
Lviv Polytechnic National University, Lviv
e-mail: svitlana.m.linda@lpnu.ua
orcid: 0000-0001-6963-6101

Abstract. The article analyzes the phenomenon of borrowing forms of Greek architecture in the architecture of Ancient Rome of Emperor Hadrian's era (II century AD). This phenomenon is interpreted as the first representation of historicism in architecture – the use of elements of the former culture in actual project creativity to convey certain ideas and meanings. The article shows that the "Greek Renaissance" in the architecture of imperial Rome was an organic component of the general process of hellenophilism, characteristic of the general cultural development of that time.

Key words: "the Greek Renaissance", Emperor Hadrian, Ancient Rome, historicism.

Introduction

The situation of borrowing forms from other cultures and the possibility of free and decorative interpretation of these forms led to the development in the first and second centuries of a special phenomenon in the architecture of Ancient Rome – the "Greek Renaissance". The "Greek Renaissance" in Roman architecture meant bringing to it the traditions of Greek architecture, which, intertwined and created a wide range of aesthetic and artistic orientations.

The purpose of the article is to demonstrate the phenomenon of using forms of Greek architecture in the architecture of Ancient Rome as one of the first (known) representations of the phenomenon of historicism in architecture. Historicism in this article is not interpreted as a separate period of architecture development, which falls on the second half of the XIX century, and as a trend that goes through many stages in the history of architecture. And its characteristic feature is the involvement of past forms in the current project process.

Analysis of recent research and publications

The phenomenon of the "Greek Renaissance" in architecture has become an object of scientists' research a long time ago. In particular, the works of L. Menshykova (Menshykova, 1977), N. Brytova, M. Losev, N. Sydorova (Brytova, 1975), O. Yamshchykova (Yamshhykova, 1994), and S. Güven, C. Gonzalez-Longo and D. Theodossopoulos were devoted to this topic. In these works, the problems of the influence of Greek architecture on the development of the architecture of imperial Rome

were considered, individual objects and the principles of their formation were analyzed. However, borrowing from Greek architecture to the architecture of Ancient Rome has not yet been interpreted as the first manifestation of historicism in architecture.

Objective of the article

The appeal to the past of Greece in the era of imperial Rome was found in various spheres of cultural life: the literature of that time was called the "second sophistry", the painting was going through the Philistine phase, neoatticism reigned in sculpture, Greek names became fashionable, the former names of cities were restored, Greek measurement systems were used (Menshykova, 1977).

The phenomenon of the "Greek Renaissance" in architecture is associated with the active construction activity of Emperor Hadrian (117–138) – a person extremely ambiguous for his status and his time (Fig. 1). Hadrian is described as a skilled and peaceful politician who put an end to the aggressive policy of the Roman Empire and focused on strengthening and flourishing not only the mother country but also the provinces (Grant, 1998). He travelled a lot (Hadrian spent half of his twenty-one-year reign outside Rome), but in his travels, he pursued not only political goals but also satisfied his curiosity. "He was passionately fond of travelling; along with everything he read about in relation to various places in all lands, he wanted to get acquainted, to see with his own eyes", wrote Eli Spartian in the biography of Hadrian. He visited all the Roman provinces from Britain to Greece and Egypt. His worldview was not distinguished by integrity: rationalism was combined with magic, and his artistic preferences were intertwined with admiration for the cultures of conquered peoples. However, Greece came first. The Roman Emperor Hadrian was an ardent philellinist (Brytova, 1975). Hadrian sought to concentrate all the most educated people of his time near the throne, developing their interest in Greek culture. The fascination with Greece even led to the imitation of the appearance of Greek philosophers: Hadrian was the first among the Roman emperors to have a beard. It was the hellenophilic policy of the emperor that led to the consolidation of a new direction in Roman art, which was called the "Greek Renaissance" (Brytova, 1975).


Fig. 1. Sculptural figure of the Emperor Hadrian of Perge, 2ⁿᵈ century. Anatolian Archaeological Museum, Anatolia, Turkey Photo by S. Linda, 2021

Emperor Hadrian is known for building the Pantheon in Rome – the temple of all the gods (approximately year 125), one of the best monuments of Roman heritage (Fig. 2). In the architecture of the Pantheon, for the first time, the task was set and implemented – the creation of a monumental temple building, in the figurative structure of which the main role was to be played by the internal space. The pantheon is a huge rotunda topped by a grandiose cupola (the inner diameter of the cupola is 43.2 m). Externally, the temple is marked by emphasized simplicity, inside the gigantic size of the building combined with harmonious proportions and noble beauty create the effect of exceptional emotional impact (Kolpynskyj, 1982).

Fig. 2. Pantheon. The most famous building o f Emperor Hadrian, 125 AD, Rome, Italy. Photo by S. Linda, 2016
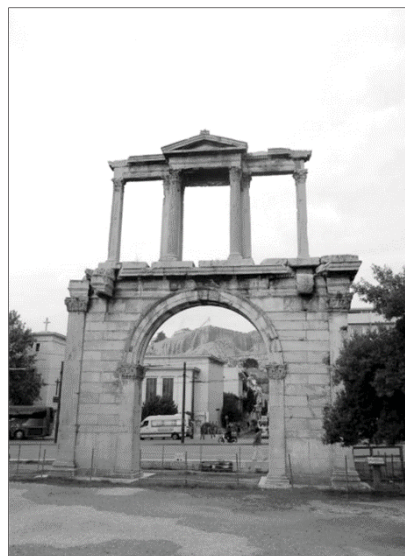
Fig. 3. Hadrian's Arch in Athens. An example of combining Roman (lower part) and Greek (upper part) architecture motifs in one building, 120 AD, Athens, Greece. Photo by S. Linda, 2019

All the other buildings of Hadrian were significantly different from the Pantheon – they had the first signs of the architecture of choice, the first manifestos of historicism in architecture, which consisted in combining current (Roman) architecture with the architecture of the past – with the heritage of other cultures. An example of this is one of the first buildings – Hadrian's Arch in Athens (120 p.). This is a two-tiered structure that combines a massive semicircular Roman arch with light through a Greek portico placed above it instead of an attic. Semantic ambiguity is already noticeable in the function of the arch itself: it was both a memorial arch and a gate that formed the entrance to Olympeion (Fig. 3). The arch divided Athens into two parts – the ancient city and the city of Roman times – and, at the same time, united it: on the side of the arch facing the Acropolis, there was an inscription "This is the city of Theseus", and on the other side was written "This is the city of Hadrian". The same duality is characteristic of the architectural solution of the Arch, where the lower, massive part is Roman combined with the upper one is Greek, light, which seems to "hang" over the base. The architecture of the arch reflects two polar ideas about time and space. In temporal terms, the arch seemed to connect two planes of existence – eternal and transitory. In spatial terms, it combined an ideal, unshakable space as a symbol of eternity (the lower part) and real, variable space (the upper part) (Yamshhykova, 1994).

The temple of Venus and Roma at the Roman Forum (136–137) was built according to the project of Emperor Hadrian himself and was supposed to symbolize the inviolability of imperial power (Fig. 4). This temple was not only one of the largest in Rome, but also one of the largest in the ancient world: its dimensions were 113×56 m, and its height reached 30 m (the dimensions of the platform were 145×120 m). Previously, this site was the huge lobby of the Golden House of Nero, which he built after the Great Fire of Rome in 64 AD. The place where the temple was built was especially important in terms of urban planning and symbolic aspects. The temple seemed to connect the old and new parts of the city, providing a visual symbolic connection between Capitol Hill and the Acropolis of Athens. Extremely interesting was the architectural design of the temple, which intertwined the traditions of Greek temple construction with Roman ones. The composition of the temple looked like a Greek peripter, which was placed in the centre of a stylish courtyard, genetically connected with the planning techniques of the Hellenistic era. Inside, the Temple consisted of two equivalent parts – semicircular cel-apsids, one of which was dedicated to the goddess Venus, and the second to Roma. A constructive solution was compiled: the temple was covered with a double-square roof, while the cells were covered with arches (Gonzalez-Longo C., 2011). These contradictions in the work of Hadrian's era have long been the subject of discussion among scientists. This was also due to the complexity of Hadrian's nature, the dichotomy of his policy as emperor and architect: "...on the one hand, he tried to express himself as an emperor from Rome, but on the other hand, he vigorously introduced innovations aimed at incorporating other countries into imperial possessions, which alienated him from Rome" (Güven, 1990).
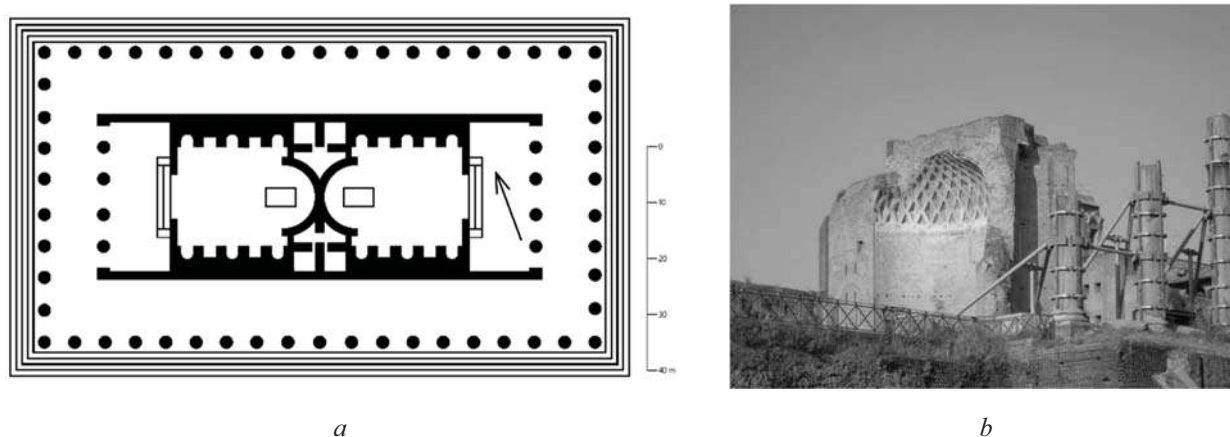

a   *b*

Fig. 4. The Temple of Venus and Roma at the Roman Forum.
One of the largest temples in the ancient world, 136 –137 AD, Rome, Italy.
a – plan, drawn by S. Linda; b – remains of a temple in the Roman Forum, photo by S. Linda, 2019

Hadrian's aesthetic views and aspirations were most fully embodied in the luxurious residence he built for himself in Tibur (today Tivoli) in the suburbs of Rome (118–134). It was a complex of interconnected and detached buildings that impressed Hadrian during his many travels. At the initiative of the emperor, experimenter architects built interesting structures, artistically using the roughness of the terrain, proving the technical perfection of brick-faced concrete structures (Grant, 1998). Ch. Jenks described the residence as "an early eclectic complex from all parts of the Roman Empire" because the grand complex was intertwined with motifs of Egyptian, Greek and Roman architecture (Dzhenks, 1985). It seems that the famous words of Emperor Hadrian: "I feel responsible for the beauty of the world" – were embodied in these architectural forms (Kolpynskyj, 1982).

On a huge space (120 hectares) there were picturesquely scattered buildings that reproduced the architectural monuments of Greece and Egypt. The residence is interesting primarily for its flowing spaces,

continuous changes in viewpoints. According to O. Yamshchikova's observation: "It is incomprehensible to have a constant sense of time, time duration as a form of manifestation of spatial extension, as the presence of an invisible, sensitive satellite. Indeed, space and time became the characters of the elegant theatrical performance which was the Hadrian's Villa. It is the performance because it is impossible to say it is static about that unusual game of space, and not the one that appears before the eye, but also the one that is meant, pulled together by the will of Hadrian in a single multi-coloured knot, each thread in which is the Academy, Poikile, Pritaney, Canope, Dikei – as a motif of a distant melody heard by Hadrian in his travels, as a sign-mark in the margins of his travel notes" (Yamshhy'kova, 1994).

One of the most famous buildings of the Hadrian's Villa, which at the same time became a symbol of innovation in design, is the Teatro Marittino (Marine Theater). The theatre was one of the first buildings built and became the "heart" of the complex, resembling a miniature residence, a "villa within a villa" surrounded by water and an ionic colonnade. Full of nobility and sadness was the building of the Antoneum, a kind of memorial dedicated to Hadrian's favourite – the young man Antinous, who tragically died in the Nile. The basis for the architectural imagination was Egyptian motifs. A semicircular portico, behind which the tomb of Antinous was located, decorated the solemn square. On the central axis was an obelisk (only one, although according to Egyptian custom there should have been two), flanked by two statues of Antinous in the form of the Egyptian god Osiris. Two Roman tetrastyle temples surrounded by canals (which symbolized the Nile) articulated the main entrance.

One of the most romantic complexes was Canope (Fig. 5). Canope was designed to resemble the ancient Egyptian settlement of Canopus near Alexandria (hence its name, now the area is called Abukir), where Antinous died. The centre of the complex, located on a narrow artificial site, was a reservoir measuring 119×18 m, surrounded by statues of Caryatids (copies of the statues of Jerechtheion) and silenes. The pool was completed with a richly decorated pavilion in the shape of an exedra, which was called the Serapeum (after the name of the Temple of Serapis, which was located in ancient Canopus).

Fig. 5. Canopus. A memoir of the ancient Egyptian settlement of Canopus near Alexandria in Egypt,
Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli near Rome, Italy. Photo by S. Linda, 2016

Structurally, the most complex object was the Piazza d'Or (Golden Square) – a large peristyle with a domed hall adjacent to it. The hall was covered by a hemispherical dome resting on a square base (Fig. 6). Between the main pillars on the sides of the square alternated curves of the "snake-like" colonnade, thanks to which the dome spaces of the hall were interpenetrated into each other. Subsequently, this technique was widely used by Italian Baroque masters – F. Borromini and G. Guarini (Kolpynskyj, 1982).

*Fig. 6. Remains of the Golden Square at Hadrian's Villa
in Tivoli near Rome, Italy. Photo by S. Linda, 2016*

Results and discussions

These examples demonstrate that the use of forms from another culture was normal practice for Roman architecture. Moreover, there are other examples in history, since the culture of Ancient Rome was not isolated and closed from the outside world. One of the signs of openness is the incorporation of achievements of other cultures, primarily conquered peoples, into its construction tradition. Such an example is the "egyptization" of the architecture of Ancient Rome. Since about the third century BC (during the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt), close economic and cultural relations between ancient Rome and Egypt have been established. In the year 31 BC, the Roman general Octavian (later Emperor Augustus), after winning the naval battle of Mark Antony and Cleopatra VII, "joined Egypt to the Roman people", as officially stated in his "Res Gestae" (Broadbent, 2012). Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire and was rediscovered by the Romans, who became interested in exotic art, mystical cults and mysterious rituals, and the period of "egyptomania" and "egyptization" of Roman culture began (Fig. 7). During the Imperial Period, active construction activities were carried out on the outskirts of the grandiose Roman Empire, so in the architecture and art of the provinces, you can find many examples of mixing different traditions and cultures (Fig. 8).

*Fig. 7. Temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Isis,
in Pompeii, I century AD, Italy. Photo by S. Linda, 2016*

*Fig. 8. Figure of Nika, a Roman goddess made in the
"hittite" manner, the Comagenic Kingdom, I century BC.
Archaeological Museum in Sanliurf, Turkey.
Photo by S. Linda, 2021*

However, there is a significant difference between the "egyptization" of Roman architecture and other examples of the "mixing" of various cultural traditions in the second century and the "Greek Renaissance". In the first case, the emergence of eclectic forms was a consequence of the natural mixing of "living" cultures that developed simultaneously, intertwined and formed new, interesting forms that reflected the features of all cultural environments. The "Greek Renaissance" was the introduction of forms of "dead "culture into the design practice, because about 600 years passed from the peak of ancient Greek architecture to the time of Hadrian. This is also associated with another problem that is not typical for "live mixing" – the choice of a prototype for actual creativity. The choice of a prototype was not a mechanical act but was filled with certain new meanings, such as Antoneum or Canopus in Hadrian's Villa.

Roman authors referred to their time as the time when their empire experienced a "brilliant old age". The keyword here is the word "old age", since old age is due to the impermanence, temporality of the phenomenon, and this already indicated the active inclusion of the temporal category in the static picture of the ancient mythologized understanding of history, which came into conflict with the central element of official ideology during the Empire – the idea of the greatness and eternity of Rome (again ambiguity). O. Yamshchikova considers that in relation to the Roman architecture of the second century, we can say that this is the embodiment of the charm of autumn extinction. The ageing world "remembers" the lost sincerity and freshness of perception, the desire to fill with energy and power the lifeless casts from past images, imbued with a childlike direct admiration for the beauty of the earthly world and reverence for its power (Brytova, 1975).

Conclusion

The phenomenon of the "Greek Renaissance" in the architecture of imperial Rome testified to a new practice for architecture – the situation of *conscious introducing motifs of a different cultural tradition into Roman architecture to* "*solve actual problems of architecture through the historical past*" (according to A. Ikonnikov), that is, the first representation of the phenomenon of historicism in architecture. Unlike other examples of the involvement of different cultures, which were also common in the architecture of imperial Rome, the "Greek Renaissance" was distinguished by the fact that the "former", "dead" culture was included in the process of incorporation. This created a completely new situation for architectural creativity– the situation of choosing an architectural prototype to repeat and mix different forms in one object. The process of choosing a prototype became a separate methodological task, where the prototype had to be justified and understood. From this aspect, the "Greek Renaissance" in the architecture of imperial Rome can be interpreted as a unique phenomenon that marked the beginning of the formation of the trend of historicism in architecture.

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Світлана Лінда

Доктор архітектури, професор, завідувач кафедри дизайну та основ архітектури
Національний університет "Львівська політехніка", Львів
e-mail: svitlana.m.linda@lpnu.ua
orcid: 0000-0001-6963-6101

ФЕНОМЕН "ГРЕЦЬКОГО ВІДРОДЖЕННЯ" В АРХІТЕКТУРІ ІМПЕРАТРСЬКОГО РИМУ

Анотація. Проаналізовано явище запозичення форм грецької архітектури у зодчестві Давнього Риму епохи імператора Адріана (II ст. н.е.). На прикладі таких об'єктів, як Арка Адріана в Афінах, храм Венери і Роми у Римі та вілли Адріана у Тіволі показано яким чином форми архітектури Давньої Греції впливали на формування специфічного еклектичного образу у будівництві епохи Адріана. Показано, що запозичення форм "зниклої" культури (на момент будівництва проаналізованих об'єктів минуло вже понад 600 років) були символічними. На підставі цього сформульований висновок про те, що феномен "грецького відродження" можна трактувати як одну з перших репрезентацій історизму в архітектурі: використання елементів колишньої культури в актуальній проектній творчості для передачі певних ідей та змістів. Наголошено на тому, що запозичення форм грецької культури у зодчестві Давнього Риму методологічно суттєво відрізняється від популярної у імператорські часи практики "єгиптоманії": змішання форм римської та єгипетської архітектури і мистецтва. Показано, що "грецьке відродження" в архітектури імператорського Риму було органічною складовою загального процесу еллінофільства, властивого для культурного розвитку того часу.

Ключові слова: "грецьке відродження", імператор Адріан, Давній Рим, історизм.