**Stylistic Specifics of the Historical Development of the Secession Era (The Experience of Poltava)**

**Specyfika stylistyczna zabudowy historycznej okresu secesji (na przykładzie Połtawy)**

**Keywords:** Poltava, historical development, style peculiar features, conservation and restoration, secession style

**Keywords:** Połtawa, zabudowa historyczna, główne cechy stylowe, ochrona i konserwacja, sececja

**Introduction**

The process of the spreading of style occurs in two ways. The first is the forcible introduction „from above” (Classicism, Empire style, the „Stalinist” style, etc.), the second way is the so-called „natural” way, by introducing „fresh” and thereby attractive ideas into professional circles.1

History testifies that the new style, if adopted by the community, spreads at a speed comparable with that of an epidemic. The so-called „historical style,” the style of Secession or „national romanticism” that arose in Vienna, Berlin, Paris for a decade (the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) spread on metropolitan and large cities throughout Europe and the world.

The international nature of the architecture of the Secession style, its similarity in the countries of Europe, Russia and Ukraine, as well as the fact of the simultaneous emergence and rapid spread of the new style, were explained by the relationships between political, economic and cultural processes in various countries at once, information and cultural exchanges between them, significantly accelerated due to the economical factors—trade relations between the countries, and scientific and technical aspects—the achievements of science and technology, which facilitated and accelerated information and transport links between the countries.2 This is the principal difference between the style of Secession and its predecessors, which were mostly formed in isolated territories, given the lack of fast transport links and systemic cultural exchanges. At the same time, the isolation of vast territories and the absence of systematic creative migrations defined the original nature of the styles of the past in each country. This is especially noticeable in the folk architecture and the Ukrainian Baroque schools (Fig. 1). The architects of St. Petersburg, Helsinki, Stockholm and other cities, taking up the basic ideas of the Secession style, created their own, very successful, interpretations, which had a tremendous impact on the evolution of the new style and gained followers in Ukraine—in Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv and Poltava.

The authoritative entrenchment of „international” architecture on the territory of Ukraine, which at
that time was a part of the Russian Empire, began with Classicism and Empire styles, and this is noticeable in the representative development of Poltava, but the „internationality” in architecture was widespread specifically from the end of the nineteenth century, that is from the period of the spread of the Secession style.

It is clear that the concept of style cannot be complete if we limit the study only to the famous sites of concentration of the well-known buildings. In this sense, the experience of Poltava is significant. There are several dozens of preserved buildings, which were not intended to become global architectural masterpieces but they create that unique, matchless charm, the „genius loci,” thanks to which Poltava is so attractive. The place-based ambience (genius loci), and one can add, the spirit of the time in Poltava is present like nowhere else. The architectural appearance of the city is represented by the well-known complex of the Kruhla (Round) Square with the Column of Glory in the center of the square, the Poltava Zemstvo building (provincial government) (Fig. 2), the Peasant Bank, or the Institute for Noble Young Ladies. However, it is not unique buildings that make up the architectural image of the city by themselves. It consists of hundreds

Fig. 1. The view of Poltava provincial government (zemstvo); archival photo from the collection of Yu. Ivashko.

Fig. 2. The Poltava Zemstvo building (provincial government) (The author of the drawing is student A. Myloserdnyi, project supervisor Yu. Ivashko)
of buildings belonging to the category of so-called „background” buildings. They are semantic vehicles, which determines the specific features of the local architectural and urban culture and color. Therefore, it is the study of these structures that is the key to understanding the place-based genius.

This is relevant for determining the ways of the harmonious development of the city. In no way we can neglect old buildings. We should study them in detail, since the architectural chronicle of old Poltava presents numerous structures from different eras—from the architecture of the period of the Cossacks and Classicism, through national romanticism and Art Nouveau, to „socialist realism” and „Khrushchev’s asceticism.”

**Style-specific features in the development of Poltava**

During the development of Poltava, various styles were formed in the urban development under the influence of political, economic and cultural factors. They are represented by unique stone churches and cathedrals of the Cossack period (the complex of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross Monastery, the Spasska (Savior) Church, the recreated Assumption Cathedral, outstanding structures of the period of Classicism of the first half of the nineteenth century, the sophisticated Empire style of the „imperial city of St. Petersburg” (buildings around the Kruhla (Round) Square—the house of the Governor-General, Petrovskiy Cadet Corps, provincial government offices, the Hall of the Nobility, the complex of buildings of the former Institute for Noble Young Ladies, where the main building and student campus of the Poltava National Technical Yuri Kondratiuk University is located now) and the background one-three-story manor development of the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The architecture of the Secession era is represented by unique buildings (the Poltava Zemstvo building (provincial government), the chapel of St. George the Victorious, the former Noble and Peasant Bank) and the ribbon building with Art Nouveau elements in separate details.

The rapid economic growth of Poltava since the second half of the nineteenth century led to the development of streets along „red lines,” the gradual changes in the layout of manor plots, the disappearance of low-rise mansions and gardens in the courtyards and the densification of built-up plots, often due to the adding of annexes on the sides of „frontal” buildings— „Glagols” (L-shaped buildings) with additional residential units for rent.

During this period, the bulk of the urban development of Poltava was inferior in its scale and formality to the monumental holistic ensemble development of the era of Classicism and Empire styles. As a rule, among the works of architecture of the Poltava Secession, few houses would not only form the front of the street development, but also be observed from observation points and affect the organization of the surrounding space.
For Poltava, the Secession did not become the dominant style as it has for Lviv, Kyiv and Kharkiv. But the idea of „faceted” Cossack Baroque in numerous religious buildings sounded much stronger in Poltava, and since the nineteenth century—the theme of imperial Classicism–Empire styles of a very high stylistic level (the best architects of St. Petersburg and Moscow were involved). The version of other (non-Ukrainian) varieties of the Secession style in Poltava is a particular variant of high-quality „provincial” Secession by local contractors, homeowners—doctors and entrepreneurs, in which there is a distinct regionalism in the form of the layering of other styles. Along with these buildings, there is an interesting illustration of pseudo-Gothic, which also affected the creation of stylistic peculiarities of the Art-Nouveau style of Poltava—a house at 40 Pushkin Street, which is a reduced modification of English pseudo-Gothic of the second half of the nineteenth century, linked with the famous Kyiv „Richard’s Castle” on St. Andrew’s Descent. Along with Ukrainian national romanticism, the Neo-Russian Art Nouveau style of the Noble and Peasant Bank (1911, architect O. Kobelev) also appeared in Poltava (Fig. 3).

The features of the origin and stylistic peculiarities of the Secession style in the ribbon buildings of Poltava

In the development of Poltava, one can distinguish about two dozen public, residential and religious buildings, which display the features and elements of Secession to a greater or lesser extent. Despite a less significant position compared to the earlier Baroque and Classicism–Empire styles, the regional variant of Poltava’s Secession enriched and diversified the streets of the city.

In the case of Poltava, it is quite difficult to apply the term „the Secession style,” as Secession is expressed here in interpretations of regional variations, and instead, it developed an expressive type of Ukrainian national romanticism, the so-called Ukrainian Art Nouveau, based on the modernization of folk-style forms and compositional techniques. Along with regional variations of the Secession style, Poltava presents options of so-called eclecticism with the Art Nouveau features, even featuring Gothic and Moorish motifs (Fig. 4).

Of the two dozen buildings of the Poltava Secession, the former Poltava provincial zemstvo and the chapel, designed by architect I. Kalbus in honor of the meeting of Poltava public with Emperor Nicholas II (1911–1914) are mentioned in academic literature and guides.

Poltava, as a center of the Ukrainian national romanticism (Ukrainian Art Nouveau), has formed the compositional and artistic-figurative features that distinguish it from other centers of national romanticism. It modernized the forms of Ukrainian folk architecture. The hip roofs, tile roofs, turrets, porches, pseudo-Baroque gables, trapezoidal openings of windows and doors, triangular windows, „opasannia” (structural

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Fig. 4. The Moorish style mansion on the street of the Paris Commune; The author of the drawing is student A. Myloserdnyi, project supervisor Yu. Ivashko.
addition—in the form of galleries on columns), folk style decor in majolica, wood and brick are used. Buildings in the style of Ukrainian national romanticism are marked by active dynamic silhouettes in symmetrical and asymmetric houses, with the presence of an accent or dominant element.

Unlike other local centers of Art Nouveau, where this style was reflected in several architectural modifications of the Art Nouveau era, Poltava represents a brightly concentrated center of one variety in architecture—Ukrainian national romanticism.9

In the architecture of Western Ukraine, Ukrainian national romanticism (Ukrainian Art Nouveau) spread at an early stage of Art Nouveau, in the Poltava region—at a late stage of Art Nouveau, that is inherent not only in public, but also residential architecture.

Conclusions

Historically, the formal and spatial composition of old upland buildings of Poltava was formed on a system of visual axes that had city-wide significance and were oriented towards the dominant elements of public and religious buildings. Later, with the appearance of additional planning axes of local significance in Poltava’s development, the formal and spatial composition of the old development of the historical part of the city became more diverse. Regular, symmetrical compositions were already not inherent in the development of the old regions of Poltava of the Art Nouveau era.

The study of the formal and spatial composition of Poltava’s development of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was carried out on the basis of an analysis of archival sources and field surveys of 2015-2016 by students of the second and third courses of the Poltava National Technical Yuriy Kondratiuk University (project supervisor Yu. Ivashko).

This scientific work is relevant, given the lack of dimensional drawings and certification for most buildings. We used the results of studies, surveys and archival photographs relating to the historical development of the Poltava metro station, provided by Dmytrenko, A.Yu.,10 Kuzmenko, T. Yu.,11 Nikolaenko, V.V.12 and Trehubov K. Yu.—the members of the staff of Poltava National Technical Yuriy Kondratiuk University.

Based on the compiled certification of buildings, it was proved that, unlike the earlier Classicism-Empire style, Secession did not have a city-forming significance in Poltava, but appeared as a style used in individual buildings and complexes (like the Poltava provincial zemstvo), and most often in the type of facade decor in ribbon buildings.

Based on the analysis of the compositional structure and decoration of facades and the layout of buildings, it was proved that, apart from buildings in the style of Ukrainian national romanticism, Secessionist buildings in Poltava represent a simplified regional version of the style with a noticeable touch of eclecticism. The complexity of the study of Secession style buildings in Poltava is associated with a lack of archival sources, the non-attribution of many structures and the distortion of their appearance as a result of numerous remodelling projects. The Secession era was distinguished by the simultaneous existence of several styles of architecture at once. An essential place among these styles is held by historicism and eclecticism with Art Nouveau features—the combination of components of different styles at once within the composition of a building’s massing and Art Nouveau decor. Pseudo-Gothic and “Eastern” pseudo-styles were characterized by an asymmetry and dynamism of the composition, but the historicism of the second half of the nineteenth century was deprived of these features, while Secession-era architecture had these peculiarities.

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Abstract

Style is a combination of signs, traits, peculiarities of a specific art form. The philosophy of style, which usually arises based on protest moods in society, precedes the appearance of formal methods of its image-bearing embodiment. The emergence of a new style in art (architecture) can occur and occurs unnoticed by society, and the roots of the new, which is always the result of the interaction of traditions and innovations, should be sought in the past.

In the process of the movement of the style from the center of its occurrence in space and time, the „influence zone“ expands, which is inevitably accompanied by the loss of its primary attributes and saturation with elements of local influences, due to the specifics of local mentality, building materials, architectural and design methods, local skills and qualifications masters.

This article deals with the development of the Secession style on the example of the architecture of the city of Poltava.

Streszczenie

Styl jest połączeniem cech formalnych charakterystycznych dla określonej formy sztuki. Filozofia stylu, która zwykle zostaje oparta na określonych postawach społecznych, poprzedza powstanie formalnych metod stylu. Pojawienie się nowego stylu w sztuce (architekturze) jest zazwyczaj niezauważane przez społeczeństwo, a jego korzenie, które zawsze wynikają z interakcji tradycji i innowacji, należy szukać w przeszłości.

W procesie przemieszczania się stylu z centrum występowania w przestrzeni i czasie jego „strefa wpływów“ rozszerza się, czemu nieuchronnie towarzyszą utrata pierwotnych atrybutów i nasycenie elementami wpływów lokalnych, ze względu na specyfikę lokalnej mentalności, materiałów budowlanych, metod architektonicznych i projektowych, lokalnych mistrzów, umiejętnościami i kwalifikacjami.

Niniejszy artykuł dotyczy rozwoju stylu secesji na przykładzie architektury miasta Połtawa.