
Parkhomenko, T.A. (2022). Cultural Heritage of the Russian Abroad – Russian Envoy to the world. *Culture and arts in the context of world cultural heritage. Klironomy*, 2 (5), 108-113. Ostrava: Tuculart Edition.

Пархоменко, Т.А. (2022). Культурное наследие русского зарубежья – посланник России в мире. *Culture and arts in the context of world cultural heritage. Klironomy*, 2 (5), 108-113. Ostrava: Tuculart Edition. (на англ.)

DOI: 10.47451/her2022-05-01

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Cultural Heritage of the Russian Abroad – Russian Envoy to the world

Abstract: The report examines the cultural heritage of the Russian diaspora from the viewpoint of a complex socio-cultural system that has been formed over a long historical period and includes objects of cultural heritage that are different in their composition, kinds, types and forms. Many of them are part of rossika – a vast array of foreign materials related to Russia (historical, socio-political, scientific, religious, literary and artistic), its authorship belonged to both foreigners and representatives of the Russian diaspora, who were engaged in diversified studies of the fatherland in a foreign land. All heritage objects are united by their involvement in Russia, by connection with its past and present, by transmission of the historical experience and cultural memory of the Russian people, as well as the preservation of the national and cultural self-identification of compatriots. It allows us to consider them as a historical and cultural phenomenon, which deserves a detailed description and study.

Keywords: Russia, Russian abroad, cultural heritage, monuments, architectural objects, archival and book rossika, museums, museum collections, necropolis.

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Культурное наследие русского зарубежья – посланник России в мире

Аннотация: В докладе рассматривается культурное наследие русского зарубежья с точки зрения сложной социокультурной системы, формировавшейся в течение длительного исторического времени и включающей разные по составу, типам, видам и формам объекты культурного наследия. Многие из них являются частью россики – обширного массива зарубежных материалов, связанных с Россией (исторических, общественно-политических, научных, религиозных, литературных, художественных), авторство которых принадлежало как иностранцам, так и представителям русского зарубежья, занимавшимся на чужбине разносторонними исследованиями отечества. Все объекты наследия объединены причастностью к России, связью с ее прошлым и настоящим, трансляцией исторического опыта и культурной памяти русского народа, а также сохранением национально-культурной самоидентификации соотечественников, что позволяет рассматривать их как историко-культурный феномен, достойный детального описания и изучения.

Ключевые слова: Россия, русское зарубежье, культурное наследие, памятники, архитектурные объекты, архивная и книжная россика, музеи, музейные коллекции, некрополь.

Introduction

Russia is famous for its cultural heritage. Its formation took place in close interaction with the cultures of other countries and nations both within the Russian state and beyond its borders – this formation is reflected in the numerous monuments of rossika and the Russian abroad. The substance of the monuments was determined by Russian identity, which attracted such great figures of world culture as the geographer Alexander von Humboldt, the writer Victor Hugo, the architect Jean-Baptiste Leblon, the artist Tannauer, the composer Claude Debussy. The image of Russia that they created is to a large extent still alive today – motley, contradictory, full of skepticism and amazement, stereotypes and mutually exclusive features. Even those who had never seen it willingly spoke and wrote about Russia, e.g., the German naturalist, philosopher, poet J. W. Goethe, who drew information about the Russian state and its people from the stories of diplomats, writers, scientists, artists, and just travelers.

A significant role “in the representation of Russia in the world was played by the Russian diaspora – it was a kind of outpost and mirror of Russia. Its cultural mission was twofold: on the one hand, it conducted a creative dialogue expanded in time and space with the nations of the world, and, on the other hand, it used the achievements and cultural wealth of mankind in the interests and benefit of Russia” (*Parkebomenko, 2019:309*). An amazing phenomenon of domestic and world culture, the Russian abroad has been evolving over the centuries, layer by layer, becoming, like a valuable rock formation, richer and more diverse. “What an interesting subject: *Russia is outside of Russia*,” the poet Apollon Maikov said it in 1869 to the writer Fyodor Dostoevsky who was at that date living and working abroad (*Ashimbaeva, 1984:81*). Nobel laureate in literature Ivan Bunin, poet, prose writer, playwright Vladimir Nabokov, academicians in the department of literature and language Dmitry Likhachev, Gerold Vzdornov and many others who defended the ideas of the historical relationship between the “mainland” and “island” parts of Russian culture, of their continuity and equivalence, wrote about the importance of studying Russian foreign heritage, the unique cultural baggage accumulated by compatriots outside of Russia.

The results of the study

The Russian diaspora was characterized by the versatility and diversity of commemoration – and thanks to these features it succeeded to preserve and develop outside of Russia the directions, which were forbidden in the homeland in certain periods: first, the monuments of revolutionary and religious resistance, then the culture of Imperial Russia, then underground art and dissident literature. “Russian foreigners”, the creative elite of the Russian diaspora, played an important role in this case. They turned it into a “cultural and social phenomenon” (*Pivovarov, 2011*), shaped the image of Russia in the world consciousness and left a noticeable mark on domestic and world culture: the poet Vasily Zhukovsky, the writer Ivan Turgenev, the painter Orest Kiprensky, the sculptor Paolo Trubetskoy, the biologist Ilya Mechnikov, the ethnographer Nikolai Miklukho-Maclay and others. Their works abroad created a large array of Russian cultural

heritage, which aroused and still arouses the deep interest of researchers in many foreign countries.

At the same time, a multifaceted complex of Russian studies was taking shape in the world – it consisted of foreign works of a historical, cultural, scientific, socio-political, religious, and artistic nature dedicated to Russia. Rossika is currently a major area of scientific knowledge, defined by exteriority – a set of foreign materials about Russia in its historical, geographical and cultural boundaries, formed mainly outside its borders, but associated with it by authorship or content, regardless of their language and nationality of the creator. An analysis of Russian studies makes it possible to trace what kind of understanding and idea of Russia developed in the world and how it developed, what images of national history and culture found a lodgment in the minds of mankind, what kind of policy of international relations and the so-called “politics of memory” were built on their basis. In a word, the entire complex system of trust, sympathies and antipathies to Russia. The history of Russia is the history of the emergence of mutual interest of countries and peoples in each other, the development of their integration and cooperation, especially in the field of science and culture, which is the most important factor in maintaining stability in the world.

The unique envoys of Russia on the international arena were the members of the Russian diaspora. They made a great contribution to the opening of Russia to the world, to the growth of interest in its past and present, the growth of its influence and authority. In science, literature, art, many representatives of Russian abroad have achieved brilliant results, suffice it to say that there are many memorial museums of Russian scientists, writers, artists in the world. For example, the museums of the founder of military field surgery Nikolai Pirogov in Bulgaria and Ukraine, the museum of the Nobel laureate in economics Vasily Leontiev in the capital of Japan, Tokyo, the literary museum “Chekhov Salon” in Badenweiler, Germany, the museum “Ivan Turgenev’s Dacha” (the Country House of Ivan Turgenev) in the French Bougival, the museum-apartment of Nikolai Gogol in Rome, the Leonid Pasternak Museum in Oxford, the Nicholas Roerich Museums in Calcutta, New York and Ulaanbaatar, the Marianna Verevkina Museum in Ascona, Switzerland, the Marc Chagall Museum in Nice, the David Burliuk Museum in New York and the Nikolai Fechin House Museum in American Taos. Finally, one cannot fail to mention the French Museum of the Countess de Segur, born Sophia Fedorovna Rostopchina, the daughter of the Moscow governor, who gained fame in France as a litterateur and children’s writer, whose works are still included in the school curriculum of the French Republic.

Some museums of the world are the custodians of the historical heritage of Russia and the Russian diaspora. So, in the Dutch Zaandam there is the House-Museum of Tsar Peter I, in the German city of Zerbst the Empress Catherine II Museum has been operating since 1995, in Switzerland there is the Museum of Generalissimo Alexander Suvorov, in Slovakia there is the Museum of Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov, in France there is the Museum of the Russian Diaspora, created in the crypt of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Nice on Nicholas II Street, and so on.

Many American museums also preserve the historical memory of Russia. For example, the Alexander Baranov Museum, which in 1790-1818 was the “chief ruler of Russian settlements in North America” and founded Fort Novo-Arkhangelsk in Alaska, which became the modern city of Sitka, and ordered the creation in California, the Russian fortress of Fort Ross. Currently in

the fortress, there is a historical park and a museum, which annually hold in California the “Cultural Heritage Day”, the “Fort Ross Festival” and the international conference “Russian-American Dialogue Fort Ross” (*Petrov, 1980*). Thanks to the efforts of the Russian diaspora in the United States, the Museum of Russian Heritage and the Gallery of Russian Art in New York, the Museum of Russian Culture in San Francisco, and the Museum of Russian Art in Minneapolis were also created.

Russian art collections reside in many national museums of the world: in the Austrian Albertina Museum in Vienna, the Argentine National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels, in the Petit Palais Museum of Contemporary Art in Geneva, in the Czech National Gallery in Prague and the Fine Arts Gallery in Ostrava, in the British Victoria and Albert Museum in London, which is currently hosting an art exhibition of two hundred works by the famous Saint Petersburg jeweler Carl Faberge, and others.

Separate unique works of Russians are kept in the Royal Collection of Great Britain - among which, e.g., there is a portrait of the young Peter I The Great, created in 1698 by Gottfried Kneller during the tsarist Great Russian Embassy. A picturesque portrait of the prominent Russian diplomat Pyotr Potemkin, created in 1681-1682 by the royal artist Juan Carreno de Miranda during his stay in Madrid, is exhibited in the Prado National Museum of Spain. Two paintings by Ivan Aivazovsky on the theme of American assistance to the Russian people in the fight against the famine of 1891-1892 hang in the American White House, and Aivazovsky's self-portrait is presented in the famous Italian Uffizi Gallery in Florence (its collection also includes works by Orest Kiprensky, Boris Kustodiev, Marc Chagall).

An interesting block of objects of Russian cultural heritage is represented by archival and library collections, collections of documents and materials from foreign Russia. The long, eventful history of the Russian diaspora has led to the formation of a large number of private, public, university archives and libraries in the world that store the funds of various Russian institutions abroad, as well as the personal funds of Russian politicians, scientists and culture (*Muromtseva, 2016*). Over time, many of them became part of foreign state archives (e.g., the State Archive of Bulgaria in Sofia or the Archive of the Italian province of Florence), of various multifunctional centers for the storage of historical memory (in particular, the International Institute for Social History of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Arts of the Netherlands (*Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis*), of various scientific, educational and cultural organizations.

Currently, the most informative and large collections of archival and printed rossika are located in the United States (Department of Archives of the University of Alaska, the Bakhmetev Archive of Columbia University, the Library of Congress, the Hoover Institute for War, Peace and Revolution of Stanford University) (*Petrov, 2001*), as well as in a number of European centers (Archive of Russian emigration of the Library of Contemporary International Documentation (BDIC) at the University of Paris X-Nanterre, the National Library of France in Paris, the Ivan Turgenev Russian Library in Paris, the Vyacheslav Ivanov Research Center in Rome, the Center “Christian Russia” (“Russia Cristiana”) in Seriata, the Ivan Myasoedov Foundation in Liechtenstein, the “Fedoroviana Pragensia” Foundation of the Museum of National Literature in Prague).

Of particular interest is the Russian foreign architectural heritage, some objects of which are even under the protection of foreign governments and have the status of a historical monument, such as the Holy Trinity Church of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in Buenos Aires, the Church of the Nativity and St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of the Western European Orthodox Diocese in Florence, the Orthodox Cathedral of Alexander Nevsky in Paris, the Baron Pavel von Derviz villa “Valrose” with a Gothic castle and a Russian wooden hut in Nice, the building of the old Russian diplomatic mission in the capital of South Korea, Seoul, and the Russian Fort Elizabeth in Hawaii in the USA.

But even if an architectural object does not have the protection status of a particular state, it still retains its historical and cultural significance, especially for a Russian person. For example, the Roman villa of Princess Zinaida Volkonskaya, where the creative elite of Russia and Europe gathered in 1830-1850 – Karl Bryullov, Nikolai Gogol, Mikhail Glinka, Alexander Ivanov, Stendhal, Walter Scott, Bertel Thorvaldsen, Gaetano Donizetti (*Bocharov & Glushakova, 1991*), or the Viennese palaces of Prince Dmitry Golitsyn and Earl Alexei Razumovsky, the Florentine villa of Pavel Demidov (San Donato), the Keriole castle in the French Concarneau, bought in the middle of the 19th century by Princess Zinaida Ivanovna Naryshkina-Yusupova. She rebuilt it to her taste, which is why the locals called the castle “a little Russian madness in Brittany”. On the roof of her castle, Naryshkina-Yusupova placed a sculpture of a bear looking towards Russia, and on the facade, she installed the coat of arms of the Naryshkins with an incomprehensible motto “Pri Toi” (“With her”), which, as many believe, means – with Tsarina Natalya Naryshkina – the mother of the Russian Tsar Peter I.

Finally, one cannot fail to mention the memorial plaques and monuments to Russian figures of science and culture, installed in different countries of the world, for example, in honor of the chemist Dmitry Mendeleev (in the UK), aircraft constructor Igor Sikorsky (in the USA), ethnographer Nikolai Miklukho-Maclay (in Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Guinea), physician Nikolai Pirogov (in Bulgaria, Estonia), academician Dmitry Likhachev (in Bulgaria), agrochemist and the founder of winemaking in California Andrei Chelishchev, whose name was even included in the “Culinary Hall of Fame of America”. Many monuments and memorial plaques in the world were set up to Russian writers – Ivan Bunin (in France), Nikolai Gogol (in Italy), Fyodor Dostoevsky (in Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia), Mikhail Lermontov (in China, Mexico), Alexander Pushkin (in Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Egypt, Italy, Canada, China, Nepal, Nicaragua, Serbia, the Philippines), Leo Tolstoy (in Hungary, USA, Philippines), Ivan Turgenev (in France), Fyodor Tyutchev (in Germany), Anton Chekhov (in Germany, France, Sri Lanka, Japan), as well as to artists, for example, the ballerina Anna Pavlova in London, Pyotr Tchaikovsky in Luxembourg, Sergei Diaghilev in the Principality of Monaco and France.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to say about the necropolis of Russia Abroad, which keeps the memory of many of its figures (*Parkhomenko, 2015*). Russian cemeteries and Russian sections of foreign cemeteries are found in Europe, Asia, North and South America, Australia and Africa (*Romanov, 2000*). Most of them have memorials, monuments, tombstones – local Orthodox communities, historical and local history societies, and school organizations take care of them. A number of Russian burial places abroad, which have historical and memorial significance for

Russia, are under the patronage of its government. These are the graves of famous figures at the Italian cemetery of Testaccio in Rome, at the cemeteries in Berlin, Baden-Baden and Wiesbaden, Germany, at the New Cemetery in Belgrade, at the Central Cemetery in Sofia, at the Russian cemeteries in the Turkish Gallipoli, at the Orthodox cemetery in Warsaw and at Olshansky Cemetery in Prague. In 2016, the Russian government included the entire Russian sector of the famous French Cemetery of Sainte-Genevieve-des-Bois, with 5,200 graves, into the list of historical and memorial burial places (Gresin, 2009).

At the same time, some objects of the historical and cultural heritage of the Russian abroad are currently in a neglected, sometimes destroyed state, in particular, the monuments of Russian church architecture in China, which were seriously damaged during the so-called “cultural revolution”. A number of objects of Russian cultural heritage, e.g., in the same China or Turkey, were destroyed, while some simply could not stand the test of time and natural disasters and left only a memory of themselves. However, nevertheless, most of the monuments of the Russian Abroad, thanks to the efforts and cares of their descendants, have survived to this day.

In general, the richness of Russian culture and the variety of forms of its representation in the world suggests that the Russian cultural space is not limited to Russia itself, but goes far beyond its borders. The value and significance of the cultural heritage of the Russian diaspora is determined by the historical, social, political, ethical and aesthetic context of the time of its formation and functioning, refracted in various artifacts of the objective world, which preserve and reflect the era that created them in all the diversity of its connections and relationships. The information potential of cultural heritage objects, scrupulously disclosed by experts, “resurrects” the past, gives it a new sound, incorporates it into the present and connects it with the future.

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