

УДК 711.4

ETHICAL, RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORIC CULTURAL MONUMENTS

I. Watkins¹, K. Tarasava²

Polotsk State University, Republic of Belarus¹

University of South Florida, USA²

e-mail: i.watkins@psu.by¹, ktarasava@usf.edu²

In this article authors consider the dilemma of whether or not to reconstruct architectural monuments in the context of recovering their religious and cultural meaning. The dilemma reaches beyond the question of whether to restore historic buildings. It becomes about preservation of cultural heritage. As the significance of historic monuments extends beyond their physical form, care and consideration must be taken on how to approach the restoration process to preserve the specific meaning of these monuments after the restoration. Here we discuss the historical, religious and philosophical context of creation and destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas. These considerations will be used as example on whether ancient architectural monument should or should not be restored.

Keywords: reconstruction, architectural monuments, restoration, restoration historical and cultural value, expediency.

ЭТИЧЕСКИЕ, РЕЛИГИОЗНЫЕ И ФИЛОСОФСКИЕ СООБРАЖЕНИЯ ПРИ РЕКОНСТРУКЦИИ ПАМЯТНИКОВ ИСТОРИИ И КУЛЬТУРЫ

И. Ваткинс¹, К. Тарасова²

Полоцкий государственный университет, Республика Беларусь¹

Университет Южной Флориды, США²

e-mail: i.watkins@psu.by¹, ktarasava@usf.edu²

В представленной статье авторы рассматривают вопросы реконструкции архитектурных памятников в контексте восстановления их историко-культурной ценности. Разрушение культурного наследия человечества в силу социальных или природных факторов происходит повсеместно, и соответственно дилемма восстанавливать их либо нет становится фокусным вопросом в каждом конкретном случае и требует комплексного подхода с точки зрения этической, религиозной и экономической целесообразности. Совокупный подход к решению аналогичных задач представлен на примере рассмотрения вопроса о целесообразности реставрации религиозных памятников в Бамианской долине.

Ключевые слова: реконструкция, архитектурные памятники, восстановление, реставрация, историко-культурная ценность, целесообразность.

Introduction Global destruction of cultural heritage is occurring worldwide and brings into focus the question of whether or not to reconstruct architectural monuments as a means of recovering their meaning. The 2001 demolition of the ancient Buddha statues in the Bam-

iyen Valley in Afghanistan foreshadowed a wave of deliberate desecration of the world's iconic cultural sites, including Palmyra and Aleppo in Syria [1]. Natural disasters and human activity are also destroying significant architectural sites, as happened during the 2015 earthquake in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, where hundreds of structures within the World Heritage Site have been affected.

Discussion The dilemma reaches beyond the question of whether to restore historic buildings. It becomes about preservation of cultural heritage. The Russian philologist Dmitry Likhachev accurately stated the essence of the problem: "A person who does not like to see old photos of his parents does not appreciate them, and if a person is indifferent to historical monuments, then he is indifferent to his country" [2; p. 209]. Architectural monuments help us to understand the history, promote respect for different traditions and help in cultivating national pride. As the significance of historic monuments extends beyond their physical form, care and consideration must be taken on how to approach the restoration process to preserve the cultural meaning of these monuments after the restoration.

These kinds of questions are especially important for future architects because of the grand scale of restoration work and consequently large costs involved in such projects. A lot of architectural objects that were once considered great cultural achievements were lost throughout history, and we only know about them from written sources where they were depicted in paintings or sculptural descriptions. Most of them were built to proclaim the power of ruling authorities or for religious purposes. Therefore, the pros and cons for decision making about the necessity of undertaking such projects must be considered by specialists who have expertise in multiple areas such as architecture, history, sociology, etc.

History suffers from near-sightedness. When we look at the historical and cultural heritage of humanity over the last few millennia, we tend to focus on what we lost relatively recently. For example, the idea to rebuild a copy of the Library of Alexandria or Pharos Lighthouse does not rise to the top of the agenda. But following the disruptions of the 20th century during World War II, when European masterpieces of architecture and art were destroyed, a powerful wave of reconstruction projects drove public attention to the immense value of cultural heritage of humanity as a whole. Some of the European cities like Dresden were literally rebuilt and reconstructed almost as a precise copy of how they looked before the war.

The restoration debate acquired a new meaning following a vandalizing event that occurred in the very start of 21st century in Afghanistan. European historians, anthropologists and humanitarian ambassadors initiated a prominent media campaign in the effort to bring attention to the destruction of the Buddha statues of Bamiyan. A group of Swiss architects developed a detailed plan as to how to restore the destroyed monument based on the 3D photogrammetric reconstruction [4; p. 10]. However, the same approach as was undertaken with post-war reconstruction of European cities was criticized as a culturally-insensitive attempt to impose western values and standards to restoration of a Buddhist cultural monument. Here we discuss the historical, religious and philosophical context of creation and destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas. These considerations will be used to inform an opinion on whether this ancient architectural monument should or should not be restored.

Architectural reconstruction became prominent in the nineteenth-century Western cultures, when the concept of historical monuments was created and awareness of a historic past was developed due to the rapid industrialization and detachment from past traditions [1]. Architects sought to replace missing parts of historic monuments as a means of restoring

them to their previous splendor. French Gothic Revival architect and theorist Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc's reconstruction of the walls of the historic fortified city of Carcassonne, France, is an example of such effort [3]. In the twentieth century, this trend was particularly strong in North America, where historical replicas served as living history museums, popular forms of presentation and interpretation of the past.

When it comes to religious and cultural monuments, however, the question of whether to restore them or not becomes more complicated. The destruction of UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Sites (WHS) in conflict zones is devastating and continues to spark heated debate on reconstruction. Communities who behold the cultural assets of WHS ascribe special meaning and value to these monuments. However, it may be difficult to retrieve the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), including authenticity and integrity after irreversible damage has been done. *'If a World Heritage property is destroyed and later reconstructed, could it still be recognized as World Heritage?'* is a critical question that was raised during a colloquium on 'Post-Trauma Reconstruction' held at ICOMOS Headquarters in March 2016 [7; p.74]. This question informs the approach to reconstruction practices and principles.

During the summit, the experts formulated a series of questions that included technical, historic, ethical and community considerations for setting up restoration guidelines [6]. Some of these questions are:

- 1) What is the quality of documentation and information that will serve for restoration?
- 2) What exactly should be recovered?
- 3) To what extent is reconstruction politically, financially and technically feasible?
- 4) Are the same construction materials and craft skills available? Should they, alone, be employed?
- 5) Should contemporary building codes, mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems and sustainability principles be employed to upgrade original designs?
- 6) Should the functions of the monuments remain the same?
- 7) How much space can be left for new functions and design creativity?
- 8) What are 'the limits of acceptable change'?
- 9) How can conflicting or competing interests and values be mediated? How can local, national and international visions be integrated?

These are all complex, multifaceted questions that require an open debate and input from the local communities, as well as academic and religious scholars. Here we will only investigate the religious and philosophical aspects of the debate to discuss whether the restoration of the Bamiyan Buddhas is warranted in the current historic and cultural context.

One of the stunning examples of monumental religious art are two giant Buddha statues in the Bamiyan Valley. The statues were unknown to most people until a tragic event brought attention of the media around the world to them in 2001. After Taliban militia threatened to destroy the ancient statues, international organizations such as UNESCO and ICOMOS displayed great effort in trying to preserve and then (after the statues were bombed) to restore them. A group of scientists at the ETH Zurich has proposed to perform a 3D computer reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas which can possibly serve for rebuilding the statues at their original site [5].

This proposal provokes ethical debate about whether the giant Buddhas should be restored. Because the statues belong to Asian cultural heritage, in deciding the fate of the Bamiyan Buddhas we must take into consideration the Buddhist perspective on the function and purpose

of visual art. Since Buddhism propagates anti-materialism, impermanence of all things, and describes the ultimate purpose of art as a means of gaining enlightenment, the reconstruction of Bamiyan Buddhas would go against the principles of Buddhism and should not be carried out.

In the Buddhist world art serves a different purpose than in Western society. Rather than being objects of admiration, works of art are meant to provide aid to meditation, to teach about the Buddhist doctrine, and ultimately to help the viewer attain enlightenment. To a Buddhist, ancient stupas with their carved reliefs, statues and images of Buddha or Boddhisattva, thangkas and mandalas possess a great spiritual value, while for a non-follower they do not have any significance besides their aesthetic qualities. Historically many pilgrims and merchant had travelled to witness the two colossal statues of Buddha in the Bamiyan valley, Afghanistan, situated on what is called the "Silk Road", a great trade route that for more than a thousand years connected China and Western Asia. Many Buddhist must have been inspired to make the pilgrimage to see these amazing statues. The site likely served as a religious instrument that promoted the spread of Buddhism.

But the Silk Road has been inactive for several centuries; the contemporary history of Afghanistan has been associated with politics of isolation and the country has been closed for tourists and pilgrims. The Bamiyan Buddhas have served their purpose during the period starting from the sixth century CE when they were built through the thirteenth century when the Silk Road stopped serving as a shipping route. After this they became largely forgotten.

The idea of impermanence being one of the three marks of existence is central to Buddhist doctrine. Everything in this world is in a constant state of flux and therefore attachment to things is the cause of suffering. This idea exemplifies a keen natural observation of the decline of all things, be it a human being or a stone sculpture.

Scientists working on the project to restore the statues determined that the niche in the cliff needs additional reinforcement or it will collapse in the next two hundred years due to natural decay. To take this further, in a million years the entire cliff will be reduced to dust. Is there a point in trying to go against the universal principle (known as the Second Law of Thermodynamics) that all things to fall into disorder? Buddhism more than any other philosophical concept embraces this principle: "Everything changes, nothing remains without change", as the Buddha himself proclaimed. Trying to preserve the statues in Bamiyan Valley is just a futile attempt to go against nature and against the Buddhist doctrine.

Closely related to the concept of impermanence is the idea of non-attachment to material things. "Attachment is the origin, the root of suffering; hence it is the cause of suffering," the Dalai Lama said in one of his lectures at Harvard in 1988 [8; p.45]. This idea of non-attachment to material things applies also to objects of art. In Buddhism the esoteric, or hidden, aspect of artwork is much more important than the exoteric, or visual. The Bamiyan Buddhas are thought to have once been lavishly decorated, with face masks that were painted gold and encrusted with rubies. In fact, precious metals and stones, rare and expensive paints and materials are often used in Buddhist art. This may seem contradictory to the Buddhist standpoint on materialism at first; however, the reason for using valued substances is that they are associated with prized spiritual qualities. Elaborate and expensive decoration was meant to add to the mystical power of the statues. Even more importantly, there must have been thousands of the rituals performed around the statues in the Bamiyan Valley that contributed to their sanctity.

Considering the respective weights of material and spiritual components of the Buddhist statues, an important question arises: If the statues were to be restored by the team of Swiss scientists in exact detail, would they still have the esoteric value of the original Bamiyan Buddhas that were carved out by hands of Buddhist monks and prayed to for more than a thousand years? And if not, is there a reason in restoring the statues that were thought to have no artistic value before they were destroyed? It seems like the attempt to reconstruct the statues is merely another challenge which demonstrates the extent of technical progress and an act of benevolence offered by the western civilization to preserve Eastern cultural artifacts.

In Buddhist philosophy, works of art, such as Bamiyan Buddhas, are material objects, which are, by definition, perishable. Therefore, attachment to transient things, such as objects of art, is futile and ultimately leads to suffering [9-10]. The meaning that they convey lies deep beneath layers of golden paint and masses of rock. It is the idea that is important and not the visual representation. Building copies of the Bamiyan Buddhas is not likely to assist those who seek spiritual enlightenment; the only institution that would benefit from this project is the tourist industry, producing tons of useless material artifacts with images of the restored Buddhas. Restoration of the Bamiyan Buddhas is contradictory to the teachings of Buddhism.

Conclusion. To make a decision about reconstruction of historical cultural monuments a lot of questions have to be raised and discussed. Summarized approach to reconstruction practices and principles must include technical, historic, ethical and community considerations for setting up restoration guidelines. Local, national and international visions on those problems should be considered as well.

REFERENCES

1. Cameron, Christina. 2017. Reconstruction: ChangingAttitudes, 2021, p.3-10 [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: <https://en.unesco.org/courier/july-september-2017/reconstruction-changing-attitudes>. – Дата доступа: 11.01.2021.
2. Лихачёв, Д.С. Письма о добром и прекрасном [Текст] / Д.С. Лихачёв. - Изд. 2-е, доп.- М. Дет. лит., 1988. - 238 с.: фотоил. -(Библиот. серия). - ISBN 5-08-001057-6.
3. Encyclopedia Britannica. "Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc | French Architect | Britannica," 2020 [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Eugene-Emmanuel-Viollet-le-Duc>. – Дата доступа: 11.01.2021.
4. Gruen, A., F. Remondino, and L. Zhang. 2003. "Image-Based Automated Reconstruction of the Great Buddha of Bamiyan, Afghanistan." In 2003 Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition Workshop, p. 13–13.
5. Gruen, A, F Remondino, and L Zhang. "The Reconstruction of the Great Buddha of Bamiyan, Afghanistan." (1): 7.
6. ICOMOS, 2016. Post-Trauma Reconstruction. Proceedings of the 1-day Colloquium at Icomos Headquarters, 4 March 2016. Volume 1 and 2. Conference Volume. ICOMOS International Secretariat, Charenton-le-Pont, France, 35p. ISBN 978-2-918086-09-3 (eng); 978-2-918086-09-1(fre)[Vol. 1], 978-2-918086-18-5[Vol. 2]. [Book]
7. Khalaf, Roha W. 2017. "A Viewpoint on the Reconstruction of Destroyed UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Sites." International Journal of Heritage Studies 23(3): 261–74.
8. Lama, XIV Dalai. The Dalai Lama at Harvard: lectures on the Buddhist path to peace. Snow Lion Publishing, 1988 p.45-46.

9. "Photogrammetric Reconstruction of the Great Buddha of Bamiyan, Afghanistan - Grün. The Photogrammetric Record - Wiley Online Library." [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.0031-868X.2004.00278.x>. – Дата доступа: 11.01.2021.
10. Valentine, Matt. "The Beginner's Guide to Letting Go and Becoming Enlightened Through Non-Attachment." Buddhaimonia, 2021, p.6-7 [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: <https://buddhaimonia.com/blog/let-go-find-peace>. – Дата доступа: 11.01.2021.

МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ

УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
«ПОЛОЦКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ»

**АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ
АРХИТЕКТУРЫ БЕЛОРУССКОГО ПОДВИНЬЯ
И СОПРЕДЕЛЬНЫХ РЕГИОНОВ**

Электронный сборник статей

МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ
НАУЧНО-ПРАКТИЧЕСКОЙ КОНФЕРЕНЦИИ
(Новополоцк, 26–27 ноября 2020 г.)

Новополоцк
Полоцкий государственный университет
2021

Об издании – 1, 2

1 – дополнительный экран – сведения об издании

УДК 72(082)

Редакционная коллегия:

Р. М. Платонова (председатель),

В. В. Васильева (отв. секретарь),

Л. М. Парфенова, Е. Д. Лазовский, В. Е. Овсейчик

АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ АРХИТЕКТУРЫ БЕЛОРУССКОГО ПОДВИНЬЯ И СОПРЕДЕЛЬНЫХ РЕГИОНОВ [Электронный ресурс] : электрон. сб. ст. Междунар. науч.-практ. конф., Новополоцк, 26–27 нояб. 2020 г. / Полоц. гос. ун-т ; редкол.: Р. М. Платонова [и др.]. – Новополоцк : Полоц. гос. ун-т, 2021. – 1 электрон. опт. диск (CD-R).

ISBN 978-985-531-734-1.

Представлены итоги исследований, освещающие проблемы истории архитектуры, градостроительства и искусства, современной архитектуры, дизайна и строительства, научно-методические проблемы преподавания архитектурных, дизайнерских и строительных дисциплин.

Предназначен для специалистов в области архитектуры и проектирования, преподавателей, аспирантов, магистрантов и студентов архитектурных, дизайнерских и строительных специальностей.

*Сборник включен в Государственный регистр информационного ресурса.
Регистрационное свидетельство № 3671815379 от 26.04.2018.*

211440, ул. Блохина, 29, г. Новополоцк, Беларусь
тел. 8 (0214) 59 95 11, e-mail: r.platonowa@psu.by; u.auseichyk@psu.by

№ госрегистрации 3671815379.

ISBN 978-985-531-734-1

©Полоцкий государственный университет, 2021

2 – дополнительный титульный экран – производственно-технические сведения

Для создания текстового электронного издания «Актуальные проблемы архитектуры Белорусского Подвинья и сопредельных регионов» использованы текстовый процессор Microsoft Word и программа Adobe Acrobat XI Pro для создания и просмотра электронных публикаций в формате PDF.

**АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ
АРХИТЕКТУРЫ БЕЛОРУССКОГО ПОДВИНЬЯ
И СОПРЕДЕЛЬНЫХ РЕГИОНОВ**

Электронный сборник статей

МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ
НАУЧНО-ПРАКТИЧЕСКОЙ КОНФЕРЕНЦИИ
(Новополоцк, 26–27 ноября 2020 г.)

Технический редактор *А. А. Прадидова*.
Компьютерная верстка *А. А. Прадидовой*.
Компьютерный дизайн обложки *Е. А. Балабуевой*.

Подписано к использованию 27.04.2021.
Объем издания: 11,4 Мб. Тираж 3 диска. Заказ 420.

Издатель и полиграфическое исполнение:
учреждение образования «Полоцкий государственный университет».

Свидетельство о государственной регистрации
издателя, изготовителя, распространителя печатных изданий
№ 1/305 от 22.04.2014.

ЛП № 02330/278 от 08.05.2014.

211440, ул. Блохина, 29,
г. Новополоцк,
Тел. 8 (0214) 59-95-41, 59-95-44
<http://www.psu.by>