

ARCHITECTURE DURING THE EPOCH OF PETER THE GREAT (1703-1725)

Galina P. Chudesova*

St Petersburg National Research University of Information Technology, Mechanics and Optics (ITMO University)
St Petersburg, Russia

Keywords: architecture, St Petersburg, maximaphily, Cabin of Peter the Great

1. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been increasing interest in the House of Romanov. An almost total absence of information on the life and activities of the members of this dynasty during the Soviet period led to an explosion of interest in this theme after the collapse of the USSR. In the post-Soviet period, a stream of literature about the Romanov dynasty flooded society, focusing on the architects of that time as creators of particular architectural monuments. As a result, during the translation of collective knowledge, information about the role of the monarchs in creating the architectural heritage of St. Petersburg is practically absent.

The present article offers an unusual way of looking at St Petersburg. This is the first in the series of articles entitled "Architectural Chronicle of St Petersburg", devoted to defining the contribution each monarch made to the development of the city.

The aspects relating to the formation of social memory in society and its implications for the future have been sufficiently studied in the historical and philosophical sense, therefore, the author of the paper has considered any scientific insights unnecessary. Of all the approaches scientists have taken in studying heritage, the author is closest to the informative approach proposed by Ya.K. Rebane and further developed by such scientists as V.A. Rebrin, V.A. Kolevator, V.V. Sieben, J.A. Levada, B.S. Ilizarov, V.A. Rozov, S.S. Mitrofanov and others, as well as to the approaches set forth in the works of T. Parsons, E.E. Gerasimenko, N.G. Samarin, Yu.M. Lotman and other authors in the field of museum studies.

The study was carried out by restoring the chronology of historical events through an examination of the documents related to the construction of specific architectural objects during the Petrine period. The biographical method employed made it possible to link these studies with the subjective side of Peter the Great's social life and the influence it had on decisions concerning the development of St Petersburg.

Within the framework of this article, social memory is presented as a kind of repository of objects of architectural heritage created by the great monarch. As carriers of social memory, artefacts in the form of maximum cards (MCs) from the author's collection are investigated, thus ensuring the storage and transfer of social experience as well as providing the possibility of using them in future activities.

* Corresponding author: tchudesova@yandex.ru

The first and almost exclusive attempt to define and describe the contribution of each member of the House of Romanov to the formation of St Petersburg was the fundamental work “Petersburg 1703–1917” (2001) by Felix Moiseevich Lourie [1]. Acquaintance with the tables from this work strengthened the belief of the author in the correctness of the chosen direction.

As artefacts in the research process, not only existing MCs were used, but also those created especially for this work with the author’s method [3], in order to cover the architectural heritage of Peter’s time more fully. Artefacts of maximaphily are always linked to a specific and exact date, ensuring documentary precision and temporal correspondence.

Social memory preserves the results of people’s activities, reproduces past experiences and incorporates it into modern life. On the basis of these results, each generation forms its own opinion about the past, which subsequently becomes public opinion for future generations.

2. Results

It can be said that St Petersburg was created by the Emperor **Peter the Great** (Petr Alexeyevich Romanov), and nobody would doubt the statement.

The city’s location determined its architectural foundations and largely influenced its development. St Petersburg is situated in the Neva River delta, near its inflow into the Gulf of Finland, with numerous tributaries and islands between them. 68 rivers, channels and streams cross the city in different directions, forming more than 40 islands throughout its broad territory (initially the city was built on 101 islands). Gradually, the bridges that were erected joined the separate islands into a single whole.

The initial period in the construction of St Petersburg was characterized by wooden and clay-walled architecture which, for obvious reasons, has not survived to the present. Peter the Great’s decree to stop erecting stone buildings in Russia and to carry all stones to St Petersburg so that they might be used for the newly built city contributed greatly to the construction of stone buildings. However, since the city was built on “mossy swampy river banks” (to quote the words of the Russian poet A. S. Pushkin), this fact did not considerably influence the general trend of wooden constructions.

The first buildings in St Petersburg were the Cabin of Peter the Great and the Peter and Paul Fortress. St Petersburg developed as a seaport around these two buildings, as well as towards the Baltic Sea.

2.1 The Cabin of Peter the Great

A small building – **the Cabin of Peter the Great** – is situated in the very centre of St Petersburg, on Petrovskaya Embankment, beyond the iron grillwork of the garden [2]. This modest building, created by unknown Russian craftsmen, occupies a unique place among the glorified palaces and architectural ensembles erected by the famous architects at the beginning of the 18th century. The Cabin of Peter the Great was the first wooden building in the city and the only one that has survived till the present day from that time. The history of this house reminds us of the important events in the life of the Russian State.

This small one-storeyed building with low ceilings made of polished pine-tree logs (12.7 x 5.7 m) was created in three days, in the period from May 24 to May 26, in 1703, for the special benefit of the Tsar. It stood on the bank of the Neva River which, at that

time, was close by. “The initial palace” (as it was called then) imitated a typical Swedish wooden house and was painted as if it were made of bricks. The Cabin of Peter the Great was the first civil construction since the foundation of St Petersburg.

Since the times of Peter the Great, it has been covered by a special casing, which houses “The Cabin of Peter the Great” memorial museum. The MC (Figure 1) is based on a postcard featuring a reproduction of the painting by L. F. Lagorio, “View of the Neva and Petropavlovskaya Embankment with the Cabin of Peter the Great. 1859”. It is possible to discern a stone building (by the architect R. I. Kuzmin) amid the trees, inside which the wooden house of Peter the Great is hidden. The subject of this MC was the Peter and Paul Fortress depicted on a definitive stamp (No. 195). The MC is cancelled on May 27, 2003, on the day St Petersburg was founded, with a special postmark: “300 years of St Petersburg”.



Figure 1. The Cabin of Peter the Great.

Experts were able to establish the details concerning the erection of this building to within a day. The Tsar arrived in St Petersburg on May 24 and on that very day the construction of his house started. The place was selected at the rear of the fortress, on the banks of the Neva, so that the water, as well as the surroundings and the bastions of the fortress could be seen from the windows. It took literally three days to erect this small wooden house.

On May 24, the Tsar ordered the trees to be cut down in this precise spot and to build a palace with them, “so that they would know in the future, what a desert this island was”.

On May 25, the Tsar ordered the trees to be made ready and to level the site on the Neva River, upstream and downstream, in order to set up tents and sheds for the Tsar’s court there.

On May 26, “the construction of the palace was completed”. Two big tents were placed near it made from splendid silk fabric brought from Persia, the floors were covered with carpets; other tents were placed nearby.

It is said that Peter the Great himself participated in the erection of this house. There were wooden sculptures on the roof featuring a cannon and two bombs with a “burning

fire". The walls were painted red to imitate bricks, so the house was given the name of "the red mansion". Up to the spring of 1704, the house remained the only civil building in the city, after which, construction of the houses for the court of Peter the Great started in the centre of the city.

There are three rooms in the Cabin of Peter the Great – the study, dining-room and bedroom; there is also a so-called *seni* (lobby); the windows are large and threefold. The walls are upholstered with canvas "in the Dutch manner". The Tsar's residence is notable for its small size and modest interior. Peter the Great liked small rooms and apertures, therefore the ceilings were only 2.5 m high, while the entrance door was even lower. Peter the Great lived in this "palace" from time to time from 1703 till 1708, when he visited the city of St Petersburg which was then being built. Seeing from the window only the virgin landscape untouched by humans – river, swamps and forest – Peter planned the new city and thought about what it would look like in the future. There was no stove or chimney in the house, therefore, it was possible to live there only in summer. The severe climate of St Petersburg had a devastating effect on the Cabin of Peter the Great over the years, so in 1723, the Tsar himself, understanding the great role the house had played in the history of the city at that period of time, ordered it to be surrounded with a protective gallery.

Unfortunately, no stamp depicting the Cabin of Peter the Great has yet been issued. Hence, a souvenir MC (SMC) on this subject arouses great interest [3]. The first protective gallery (by the architect D. Trezzini, 1723), erected by decree of Peter the Great, was later replaced with a stone casing. It is clearly visible on the SMC because of the absence of leaves, which hide it in summer. The prototype for the SMC was the postcard based on a photograph by V. Soboleva who photographed the casing on a winter morning. The casing is a stone building (by the architect R.I. Kuzmin, 1844), which hides the above-mentioned wooden Cabin of Peter the Great.

A stamp with the coat-of-arms and the inscription "Russian Post" is glued on a multi-coloured vignette depicting the windows of the Cabin of Peter the Great as seen from inside. The vignette is based on one of the children's drawings selected in the contest dedicated to the 200th anniversary of St Petersburg. The MC is cancelled on January 11, 2002 with the postmark "Happy New Year", which matches the winter landscape on the postcard. In spite of the fact that this MC is a souvenir one (i.e., it does not strictly comply with the requirements of maximaphily), it shows the reverential attitude of the citizens of St Petersburg toward the creator of the city and his creation.

The memorial museum "Cabin of Peter the Great", a Russian wonder known across the world, was opened in Leningrad (as St Petersburg was called then) in 1930. Not only the building itself, but also the exhibition on display inside the house, is of great interest. The room interiors have been reconstructed. Here one can see the furniture, everyday objects and tools which, according to popular belief, belonged to Peter the Great: his clothes, walking stick, a book on fortification (translation from the German), a table, chairs, an armchair and a bench made of pine wood. All these objects testify to the fact that Peter the Great led a modest, almost ascetic life. This could be interpreted as a wish to eliminate everything that could distract him from more important thoughts. In the lateral wing, which was built in 1890, the boat propelled by oars is exhibited which, as legend has it, was made by the Tsar himself. The photographic reproduction of the engraving created at the beginning of the 18th century (hanging between the windows) gives an idea of how the Cabin of Peter the Great and the entire Troitskaya Square (Trinity Square) looked more than 250 years ago.

2.2. The Peter and Paul Fortress

It was during this historical period that the construction of the fortress started. It is of special importance for St Petersburg and today is part of the cultural and historical centre of the city. Its powerful stone walls seem to rise from the water and the cathedral's spire piercing the sky makes the fortress perceptible from a distance. The view is unique and constitutes an inseparable part of the broad panorama of the Neva River.

Let us look at the history of this important landmark [4].

Russia was at war with Sweden (1700–1721) over lands that initially belonged to Russia and the access to the Baltic Sea, which was so important for the country. As a result of several victories, the Neva River banks were liberated throughout its entire length. The new task for the Russians was therefore to retain their position on the banks of the Neva and hold the recaptured lands. In order to prevent Swedish ships from entering from the sea, the erection of the fortress - *Sankt-Pieterburch* (nowadays called the Peter and Paul Fortress) – started, according to Peter the Great's plan, on the small island of Zayachy. The island is situated at the point where the river divides into two branches, which made it easier to defend. The MC (Figure 2) offers a panorama of the city. The subject of the postmark on this MC is the Spit of Vasilyevsky Island, a picture of which (a reproduction of a painting by K. P. Beggrov "View of the Neva River from the Peter and Paul Fortress") is presented on the stamp (No. 670) and on the postcard, which features a bird's eye view of Spit and the fortress. The MC was cancelled on March 15, 2001, with a first day of issue postmark. The cannons installed there could fire at the enemy ships in case they made an attempt to penetrate the territory of the city either through Bolshaya Neva or Malaya Neva.

The first stone building in the city, the Peter and Paul Fortress (by the architect Domenico Trezzini) occupies a special place there. The day the fortress was established, May 16 (May 27 N.S.) 1703, is regarded as the date of the foundation of the city, which was initially called *Sanktpieterburch*.



Figure 2. The panorama of Saint Petersburg.

Since the Peter and Paul Fortress is one of the main places of interest in the city and its symbol, many MCs featuring it were produced. As an example, a classical MC can be mentioned; it was created based on a photograph by A. Ryazantsev taken from the Spit of Vasilyevsky Island. The creation of this MC implied the use of the postage stamp (No. 746) featuring the Peter and Paul Cathedral and its weathervane – a gilded angel. The MC was cancelled with the corresponding jubilee postmark on the day of the 300th anniversary of St Petersburg.

Peter the Great took an active part in developing the project for the fortress. Its external contour was designed in keeping with the contours of the island in the form of an elongated hexagon with six protective bastions. The MC on this rare subject was created based on the same stamp and postcard featuring the photograph of the Peter and Paul Fortress taken from a helicopter (photographer Yu. Molodkovets). The MC was cancelled on April 25, 2002 with a jubilee postmark on the first day of issue of the postage stamp dedicated to the 300th anniversary of St Petersburg.

The construction works were supervised by Peter's closest assistants – Menshikov, Golovin, Zotov, Trubetskoy and Naryshkin. Five bastions were named in their honour. The sixth bastion was called *Gosudarev Bastion* ("The Tsar's Bastion") in honour of Peter the Great. The six bastions make a single whole with six curtain walls. There are 5 gates in the walls of the fortress - the Petrovskie (St Peter) Gate, Neva Gate, Vasilyevskie Gate, Nikolskie Gate and Kronverkskie Gate. Wooden artillery storehouses, various ministry buildings, the mint, the guardhouse and other edifices were also built on the territory of the fortress. In the course of time, they were all rebuilt in stone [5].

Figure 3 presents a classical MC based on a stamp (No. 746) cancelled on May 24, 2002, with a postmark dedicated to the 300th anniversary of St Petersburg, on the first day of issue. The fortress was named Peter and Paul only after a cathedral dedicated to the Saints Peter and Paul (by architect Domenico Trezzini) was built on its territory. The cathedral was named the Peter and Paul Cathedral and the name was extended to the whole fortress. In an MC dedicated to the cathedral, a definitive stamp (No.195) is used and is cancelled with a unique postmark, "Happy Millennium".



Figure 3. The Peter and Paul Fortress.

The Peter and Paul Cathedral is a three-level bell tower crowned with a gilded spire. A weathervane was later installed on the tip of the spire in the form of a winged angel figure, which became a talisman of “The Venice of the North”. The peculiarity of the cathedral consists in the fact that it is connected with the bell tower through internal rooms which is unusual for Orthodox churches. The Peter and Paul Cathedral became a sepulchre for the Russian Tsars of the House of Romanov, starting with Peter the Great and finishing with the family of the last Russian Emperor, Nicholas II.

The Peter and Paul Cathedral, which is 122.5 m high, is the vertical accent of the city, as well as being one of its symbols.

The Petrovskie Gate (by architect D. Trezzini, 1717–1718) functioned as the main entrance to the Peter and Paul Fortress. The gates are situated between the Gosudarev and Menshikov bastions in the Petrovskaya (Peter’s) curtain wall. This was the first triumphal arch to be constructed in the newly built city; it was dedicated to the liberation of the banks of the Neva River. The gates have survived to nowadays and are in good condition. On the top, there is a decorative bas-relief depicting “Simon the Magician defeated by the Apostle Peter” (allegory of the Russian victory over Sweden in the Great Northern war). Below the bas-relief is the sculpture of a black double-headed eagle with a shield on its breast (the coat-of-arms of the Russian Empire) portraying St George. The arch is flanked with niches housing statues of ancient goddesses – Bellona, the goddess of war in armor, and Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and handicrafts. The entire composition of the Petrovskie Gate symbolizes the inapproachability of the Peter and Paul Fortress and is perceived as a symbol of belief in the might of Russia. The uniqueness of the Petrovskie Gate lies in the fact that it is the only surviving example of a triumphal edifice from the early 18th century [5].

The Petrovskie Gate can be seen on an MC with the “Museum of the ‘Peter and Paul Fortress’”. The postcard, on which the MC is based, consists of three sections (“fields”): the Petrovskie Gate, the Nevskie Gate and three cannons, bearing witness to the fact that the fortress was built as a military outpost of the 18th century. One of the components of the MC is the stamp (No. 195) from the first definitive issue of the new Russia. The MC is cancelled with a special postmark “The Peter and Paul Fortress”, which was applied for a certain time in 101 post offices.

An MC on this subject was created, based on a postcard featuring a bird’s eye view of the Peter and Paul Cathedral and a stamp (No. 746) cancelled on May 15, 2011, with a postmark dedicated to the 300th anniversary of St Petersburg’s journalism, printing and publishing trades. The MC could be attributed to the category of classic MCs, since the image of the fortress can be found in all three components – postage stamp, postcard and postmark.

The collection of MCs includes items showing the fortress at different angles from the outside: from the Neva River, Crownwork, Troitskaya Square, Ioannovskiy Bridge and from other viewpoints. In addition, several other edifices situated on the territory of the fortress are shown, the majority of which have been transformed into museums.

An MC showing the fortress from the Spit of Vasilyevsky Island was created in 1950 based on a multicolour postcard and a monochrome USSR stamp (No. 1225) [6] cancelled in the post-war period with a calendar postmark on the day of St Petersburg’s foundation.

The MCs of the collection bear different postmarks. The basic postmark is “City Foundation Day”, with which stamp collectors can cancel their collectibles at the Main

Post Office. Furthermore, postmarks with the same motive, “The Peter and Paul Fortress”, but of different design, are to be found in various post offices outside the fortress and in the neighbouring city district.

A special place in the collection is occupied by MCs based on postcards with two fields (sections). It should be noted that this does not regard postcards with two different motives, since both sections feature the same object. It can either be two reproductions from the pictures showing the same site but painted at different times; or one of the fields can be occupied with a modern photograph. When referring to the author’s collection, they can be called “retro postcards”, or “two-section postcards with one motive”. Such postcards are nowadays sold in large numbers and one of them is used in an MC with a motive of “The Peter and Paul Fortress”, which was issued for the 300th anniversary of St Petersburg and cancelled on July 2, 2009 with a special postmark “Postal *troika*”. The postcard size (105 x 148 mm) meets the standard adopted by the Administration of the World Postal Union which states that the format of a postcard should be 9 x 14 or 10.5 x 15.0 cm. In the case of postcards consisting of two sections, such a size is obviously too small.

The first Russian carillon brought by Peter the Great from Holland in 1720, is installed on the bell tower of the Peter and Paul Cathedral. During the reign of Peter the Great it served as the only bell orchestra in Russia.

After a long period of silence, before the 300th anniversary of St Petersburg, the bell orchestra returned to the Peter and Paul Cathedral. The carillon had been created and was finally repaired (after many years) by specialists from Flanders. Three levels of ringing started to sound on September 15, 2001 in the historical fortress: of the bells, 22 are the bells of the Orthodox bell tower, 51 are the bells of a new carillon and 18 remained from the former pre-revolutionary carillon. It was in honour of this very event that two joint Russia-Belgium stamps were issued. The special postmark “Carillon. 15.05.2003. Joint Russia-Belgium issue” determined the place of the MC in the section “Saint Petersburg – the capital of Petrine reforms” in the author’s collection. The MC was created based on a stamp (No. 848) from this series.

At the back of the fortress, on the neighbouring Gorodovoy Island (nowadays, this is part of the historical city district, Petrogradskaya Side), Peter the Great ordered a city to be built. The wooden church of the Holy Trinity (Troitskaya church), which gave its name to the square and then to the bridge over the Neva River, was built there. It can be seen in the background of an MC dedicated to the museum, the “Cabin of Peter the Great” (see Figure 1). However, the church was later demolished. City life concentrated around Troitskaya Square: the harbor was formed, the stock exchange and the first *gostinyy dvor* (hotel) were opened, as well as a tavern, chancellery, typography, bookstore and many other city institutions necessary for the growing population.

To the East of the Petrogradskaya Side, beyond the Bolshaya Nevka river, the Vyborg Side district begins and was the suburb of St Petersburg in those days. The St Sampson Cathedral, one of the oldest architectural landmarks of the city, is also situated here. As a sign of gratitude to God for the great victory of the Russian Army over the Swedish troops in the battle of Poltava, Peter the Great ordered a wooden church to be erected in honour of St Sampson the Hospitable on the road to Vyborg, towards Sweden. It was on the day of this respected saint that the Poltava battle, the main battle of the Great Northern war, took place. Only a year passed from the laying down of the cathedral in 1709, till its sanctification. The location of

the church outside the city area enabled a cemetery to be situated near it, intended for both orthodox Christians and people of other confessions. Famous architects and sculptors who had created architectural masterpieces of the Northern capital, were buried here, including the architects D. Trezzini, J. B. Le Blond, G. I. Matarnovi, the sculptor C. B. Rastrelli and many others. Unfortunately, the cemetery has not survived.

Peter the Great himself developed the plan of the city, which is kept at the Museum of History of St Petersburg. According to the plan, the city has a three-ray structure composed of the main streets – Nevsky and Voznesensky Prospects and Gorokhovaya Street, outgoing from the centre, formed by the **Admiralty**. During the next 200 years, the ruling descendants of the House of Romanov adhered to this plan in constructing St Petersburg. All the main rules and principles concerning the building of the city were developed during the reign of Peter the Great, when it became a huge experimental construction area.

Peter wanted to create the business and trade centre of the capital in front of the Admiralty, on the Eastern cape of the island washed by the two arms of the Neva River and dividing it into the Bolshaya Neva and Malaya Neva. In the 1720s, the seaport was transferred to this location. Taking into account that the waters are shallow in this area, an artificial embankment with a semi-circular square was created here for mooring ships; it advanced the Spit of the Vasilyevsky Island 100 m into the Neva River and thus closer to the Peter and Paul Fortress.

The main traffic artery of the city, *Nevskaya pershppektiva* (Nevsky Prospect), begins from the Admiralty. Its length is rather impressive: more than 4 km. The prospect ends near the Saint Alexander Nevsky Monastery, which was being built at that time (later on, it would be called **Alexander Nevsky Lavra**). Both architectural masterpieces were named in honour of the patron saint of the city, Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky.

Svyato-Troitskaya (named after the Holy Trinity) Alexander Nevsky Lavra (by architect Domenico Trezzini, 1710–1724) was one of the first and greatest architectural ensembles of the 18th century. Domenico Trezzini, one of the first architects of St Petersburg, developed the project for the Nevsky Monastery and received the approval of Peter the Great, who selected its future position on the right bank of the Monastyrka river. The compositional centre of the ensemble is the Troitskiy Cathedral – the most important building of early Russian Classicism, one of the few religious edifices bearing the traits of this style. The cathedral with its powerful cupola and two symmetrical bell towers looks impressive and can be seen from far away from the banks of the Neva. Its project preconditioned the plan and the main compositional techniques of the would-be Alexander Nevsky Monastery which were followed by all subsequent builders of the cathedral. On August 30, 1724, the upper church was solemnly sanctified in honour of Alexander Nevsky in the presence of Peter the Great, and the sarcophagus with the relics of Alexander Yaroslavich was installed there. At the same time, Peter the Great, highly respecting Alexander Nevsky (Prince of Novgorod, Grand Prince of Kiev and Vladimir, the famous Russian war-lord), decided to establish an order in his honour. However, because of the Emperor's illness, the order was established only after his death, on May 21 (June 1 N.S.) 1725, by the Empress Catherine I. The Order of Saint Alexander Nevsky is the only decoration which has survived (with certain transformations) three centuries, without losing its high social status, until the present day.



Figure 4. The Alexander Nevsky Lavra.

The above explains the reason for using the Order of Saint Alexander Nevsky as an element of postmarking when creating the MC “Alexander Nevsky Lavra” (Figure 4). The stamp (No. 1673) featuring the Order was issued in 2013 as a part of the set of stamps “State Decorations of the Russian Federation”. The image of the order is included in the motive of the postcard with a reproduction of the watercolour “Alexander Nevsky Lavra” (I. A. Ivanov, 1990). There is a harmonious correlation between the two pictures, since they both bear the name of the great son of Russia – Alexander Nevsky. The MC was cancelled on April 7, 2013, the date of “birth” of the Svyato-Troitskaya Alexander Nevsky Lavra, with a jubilee postmark dedicated to its 300th anniversary.

Lavra is situated at the end of the *Nevskaya pershppektiva*, as the prospect used to be called, opposite the Admiralty. The prospect dates back to the time when the “Great perspective road” was built in 1713 on the left bank of the Neva River, through woods and swamps. The road led from the Novgorod road to the Admiralty Shipyards crossing the rivers – the tributaries forming the Neva delta. One of them was Fontanka (earlier called Bezmyanny Erik - “Nameless Channel” - then the Fontannaya river). The city boundary passed along it in the 18th century. The road was later extended as far as the newly built Alexander Nevsky Monastery and was paved. It became known as the *Bolshaya pershppektiva* (“Great Prospect”).

A bridge over the Fontanka River, naturally made of wood, was built for the delivery of construction-related cargoes to the Admiralty Shipyards. The outpost was situated there. Since construction of the bridge was conducted by colonel M. Anichkov, it was natural that the bridge was named after him – Anichkov Bridge.

The next obstacle the workers had to face when bringing construction materials to the site of the Admiralty Shipyards was the Krivusha river. A wooden bridge was therefore erected over the river in 1716.

The Admiralty, the Ministry of Naval Affairs, forms a connecting link between the

space of three central squares in St Petersburg: Senate Square, Saint Isaac's Square and Palace Square.

The Admiralty (derived from the word “Admiral”, from the Arab ‘king of the sea’) was initially conceived by Peter the Great as a dockyard and based on his own project; it was laid down on November 5, 1704. Here, the whole range of shipbuilding works was performed, from the preparation of the timber to the complete construction of a ship.

However, the Admiralty was conceived by Peter the Great not only as a dockyard, but also as a fortress on the left bank of the Neva. Therefore, it was surrounded with a rampart with bastions and a moat. The first building appeared here in 1711. It was a one-storey clay-walled house. It is during these works that a spire with a ship on its top was mounted above the gates. It was installed by the Dutch craftsman H. van Booles. The ship became one of the main symbols of St Petersburg. As time passed, many myths and legends were created around it. What ship was used as a prototype for the Admiralty ship is much disputed; it is supposed that the frigate *Oryol* could have been taken as a model. This ship was built in 1668, during the reign of the Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich and it was on this ship that the Russian naval flag was first raised.

Until the middle of the 18th century the space to the south of the Admiralty was called the Admiralty meadow, which is explicitly seen on the MC presented in Figure 5. The retro MC shows the Admiralty from the side of Nevskaya Pershppektiva (the engraving was made in the second half of the 18th century by an unknown artist after a drawing by M. I. Makhaev, 1748). The object of cancellation was the definitive stamp (No. 201), issued in 1995. It is cancelled by the regular postmark of the Main Post Office of St Petersburg.



Figure 5. The Admiralty.

At the same time, the right-bank territory of the Neva River was developed. In 1721, the building of the **Twelve Collegia** was laid down here with the direct participation of Peter the Great. It is presented on a retro MC (Figure 6). The building is situated at the Spit of Vasilyevsky Island (built by the architects Domenico Trezzini and Leonard Theodor Schwertfeger in 1722–1734). The building was intended for the highest bodies of

state power, so-called *collegia* or colleges (ministries) which, at that time, operated in a clay building situated in Troitskaya Square. The main administrative building should have embellished the main square of the city, which Peter planned to create at the Spit of Vasilyevsky Island. The building was later given to the University, while the main square was transferred to the Admiralty side. The retro MC was created based on a stamp (No. 3725, after a drawing by N. Vetko), issued in 1969 in honour of the 150th anniversary of the Leningrad State University. The postcard is a reproduction of a picture by Fyodor Alexeev (?), painted in oils after a drawing by M. I. Makhaev at the end of the 1740s. The front of the house faces the Mendeleev Line. It can be seen that the building consists of twelve identical (modular, as would be said today) sections according to the number of colleges (ministries). The MC is stamped with a Leningrad date stamp.

The building of the Twelve Collegia was erected in close vicinity to the **Kunstkamera** (by the architects G. I. Mattarnovi and N. F. Harbel, 1718–1734), the construction of which had started somewhat earlier. According to popular belief, the location for the new building was selected by Peter the Great in the would-be historical centre of St Petersburg, at the Spit of Vasilyevsky Island. The Tsar took a lively interest in the progress of the works and repeatedly urged on its completion. However, the construction of the building was not completed during his lifetime. By the beginning of 1725, only the walls had been built. The brickwork of the tower which crowned the building and the internal decoration were completed by the Academy only after the death of the Tsar-reformer.



Figure 6. The building of the Twelve Collegia.

The Cabinet of curiosities, as they used to call the Kunstkamera in those days, was intended to house the first national museum, library, Academy of sciences, anatomical theatre and astronomical observatory. It became the first museum in Russia to be opened to the public. Today, it is the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences. As one of the most complete and interesting museums in the world, it is still the most prominent among the museums of St Petersburg.

The building of the Kunstkamera is an outstanding example of Petrine baroque and the oldest museum building in St Petersburg. By a decree of Peter the Great, the mu-

seum was to be free of charge for visitors. Moreover, Peter believed it was necessary “to train and entertain enthusiasts instead of taking money from them”.

An MC on this subject was made back in 1957 based on a postage stamp (No. 1966), on which the building of the Petrovskaya (Petrine) *Kunstkamera* can be seen, as well as a portrait of the Russian genius, scientist, thinker and poet, M. V. Lomonosov, who worked there (Figure 7). The MC was cancelled on February 3, 1957 with a regular postmark of the Main Leningrad Post Office.



Figure 7. *The Kunstkamera.*

It was in the *Kunstkamera* building where the Russian Academy of Sciences founded by Peter the Great was located in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Academy became a cradle for dozens of modern Russian scientific and museum-type institutions, among which are the modern Russian Academy of Sciences, the Saint Petersburg State University, the Library of the Academy of Sciences and the Main Astronomical Observatory to mention but a few.

Creation of the Pulkovo Astronomical Observatory was preceded by the years of development of the exact sciences in Russia, initiated by Peter the Great. Immediately after he founded the Academy of Sciences in 1724, in 1725, the first Russian Astronomical Observatory was opened in Russia. According to his contemporaries, it was the best in Europe. Peter the Great clearly saw the importance of astronomical science in the geographical exploration of the huge Russian Empire and in the development of navigation sciences, which were so necessary to him in the execution of his conceived ideas.

Peter the Great paid great attention to landscape architecture. MCs dedicated to the **Summer Garden** are very interesting from the viewpoint of landscaping design evolution. The best landscape designers were invited from Europe in order to create this famous garden. From the very moment of its creation, the architect Jean-Baptiste Le Blond developed it as a so-called formal garden. Peter the Great took an active part in the development of the garden and also supervised it. The plan of the garden, drawn by the Emperor himself, has survived to the present day. The garden was set

up in 1704 and was later decorated with Italian sculptures. During the 1720s, the Swan channel was dug between the garden and the Field of Mars. A Retro MC (Figure 8) was made based on the reproduction of the painting by the unknown artist of “*The Summer Garden. The 1800s*”, kept in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, and a postage stamp (No. 854) featuring the alley of the Summer Garden decorated with Italian sculptures. The first summer residence of Peter the Great was built here, in the Summer Garden, while his Winter Palace was located in the present location of the building of the Hermitage Theatre.



Figure 8. *The Summer Garden.*

Here it is impossible to ignore the most luxurious and the most “capital-like” building of the newly built city – **Menshikov Palace** (by the architect Johann Gottfried Schädel, 1714–1727), built on the modern Univertsitetskaya Embankment that merges into the Spit of Vasilyevsky Island, which had to become the centre of the rapidly growing St Petersburg – a new port and fortress on the shores of the Baltic Sea and hereinafter the new capital of Russia. Peter the Great gave Vasilyevsky Island as a gift to Alexander Danilovich Menshikov, the first governor of St Petersburg. The owner selected a beautiful location for his palace: in the middle of the city, not far from the future trade centre and the main quay of St Petersburg – the Spit of Vasilyevsky Island. On the Neva River, near the palace, a pier was arranged so that small ships could be moored directly in front of the main gate. Menshikov Palace often served as a venue for diplomatic receptions and assemblies, balls and feasts, at which it was necessary to surprise foreign guests with the richness and European quality of the interior design [7]. The social status of the house owner obliged him to strive to gain a high level and demonstrate the modern achievements of Russian culture.

An MC on this subject (Figure 9) was created based on a stamp (No. 1971) issued in 1956 and dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the first St Petersburg theatre: it features the Cadet Corps (they once used the former Menshikov Palace) and the theatre as one of the motives. The MC was created based on the postcard with a picture of the Menshikov Palace (published by “Lenphotokhudozhnik publishers” in 1951). The

stamp was cancelled with a date stamp on August 30, 1957, commemorating August 30, 1756, when a decree of the Empress Elizabeth was issued on the establishment of the first state theatre in Russia.



Figure 9. The Menshikov Palace.

Alongside a small number of stone buildings, many wooden and clay-walled buildings were erected. As the territory was being converted into a city, one of the living quarters emerged on Gorodovoy island on the left bank of the Malaya Neva river. This place was called Mokrushy (from the Russian word *mokryy*, 'wet') since, as a result of floods, it was often covered by water. In the 1710s, in the first years of creating the new capital, a clay-walled church was built in Mokrushy. This church was a predecessor of the Prince St Vladimir's Cathedral. Church services started as early as 1717 in the presence of Peter the Great.

At the same time, the church of Saint Isaac the Dalmatian was erected. Its 150-year history started with the wooden church of 1710, where Peter the Great married Marta Skowrońska, the future Empress Catherine I. From that time onwards, many court architects contributed to the construction of the cathedral, including Antonio Rinaldi, Vincenzo Brenna and others.

Alongside the Orthodox churches, the architects created churches of other confessions. The first wooden Lutheran church of the Reformation appeared in 1710 and was intended for the Germans and the Dutch who lived in the vicinity and formed a rather large community at that time.

Thus, the central part of St Petersburg took shape during the reign of Peter the Great and the principles for its further development were elaborated at that time.

Nevertheless, the Tsar never forgot about the outskirts of the city.

As a ceremonial coastal residence, Peter the Great founded Peterhof. In August 1723, the gala opening of this kingdom of fountains (142 fountains and two cascades) took place. The centre of the composition was the Great Palace (by the architect

J. Braunstein, M. Zemtsov, Jean-Baptiste Le Blond, N. Michetti) with a series of fountains connected to the Gulf of Finland through a channel [4].

In this context, a retro MC (Figure 10) is of great interest. It was created based on a postage stamp (No. 627) from the series "Russia. The 20th century. Culture" issued on September 20, 2000. The stamp was dedicated to the reconstruction of Peterhof, a renowned item of cultural heritage. The stamp features the Great Palace, park and the Samson Fountain. The postcard used for the MC contained a reproduction of the watercolour by I. V. Cheskiy "View of the Great Cascade with the Samson Fountain and the Great Palace in Peterhof (1805–1806)". In the picture, in the centre of the Great Cascade, can be seen the Lower Grotto. Its external wall, lined with puff stone, is cut by five high arches with choke stones, decorated with golden mascarons. Two cascade stairs border the platform in front of the Lower Grotto. Seven steps in each of the staircases are decorated with gilded bas-reliefs, supports, streams of fountains and gilded sculptures alternating with vases. In the centre of the platform is the Basket fountain, the waters of which flow into the basin through three waterfall steps. The MC was cancelled on April 15, 2002 with a regular postmark of Petrodvorets (now Peterhof).

A separate MC dedicated to the main fountain in the cascade - the fountain representing "Samson tearing the mouth of the lion" - was created as a variant of the preceding MC based on the same stamp issued on September 20, 2000 and below the motto "Reconstruction of cultural heritage"; it was cancelled with the same postmark.

This section also gives information about Kronstadt, a peculiar architectural landmark from the Peter the Great epoch, since it was founded to protect the newly built city of St Petersburg and Peterhof (Peter's "paradise") from enemy attacks from the Baltic Sea.



Figure 10. Peterhof.

3. Findings

As the article shows, when founding the city, Peter the Great demonstrated far-sightedness to a much greater degree than other people. His ideas anticipated the appearance of the beauty that surrounds us today. The Tsar himself selected the location for the church, dockyard and fortress, pointed out the areas for construction works of top priority; he himself took measurements, drew plans with explanatory texts and considered architectural projects. With the aid of various talented architects, Peter the Great created the basis for the construction of St Petersburg and its marvellous architectural style. It is through this, that historical and architectural landmarks as objects of social memory acquire visible and dynamic expression.

4. Conclusions

The present article presents research and practical work in the field of St Petersburg studies. The subject of the research is the city of St Petersburg, the image of which was formed during the reign of the House of Romanov. The article contains a detailed description of the contribution made by Peter the Great to the formation of the image of St Petersburg. Maximaphily, a branch of philately involving the study of maximum cards, is used as a research method. The author's collection of maximum cards devoted to the architecture and sculpture of St Petersburg was the subject of these studies.

The analysis of groups of buildings, characteristic of a certain historical period, can correct social memory which has been deliberately distorted, consequently returning historical truth to people and aiding in the understanding of the role of a personality in this particular historical context.

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Biographical notes

Galina P. Chudesova is Doctor of Economics, professor at St Petersburg National Research University of Information Technology, Mechanics and Optics (ITMO University), member of the Russian Society of Philatelists and National Academy of Philately. Her research interests include system analysis, marketing and the architecture of St Petersburg. She is the author of more than 100 publications in these areas. Chudesova is a world-class collector and has created a unique maximaphilia collection in Russia. Individual pieces of the collection have been awarded silver medals at international exhibitions in Austria, Belgium, Thailand, Japan, Russia and other countries. Chudesova's papers on maximaphilia are published in Russian and foreign journals. She is the author of two books: "Petersburg in Maximaphilia" (2011) and "The House of Romanovs: Two Centuries Together" (2013) based on unique research and practical work in this area. The books have been highly decorated at international exhibitions in Indonesia, India, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, Finland and other countries.

Summary

The purpose of the study is to provide the historical truth about the role played by monarchs in the creation of St Petersburg in various historical periods. In this article, the specific period embraces the years 1703–1725. In addition, with the help of this article, the methodology for creating maximum cards as artefacts has been approved and has been able to cover an extensive historical period. The relevance of this study is explained by the revival of interest in viewing historical architectural monuments as objects of social memory and gaining a visible and dynamic expression over time.

The following research methods were used: information and data collection, which allowed the chronology of historical events to be reconstructed, the study of documents regarding the events associated with the erection of certain architectural objects; biographical research; methods of maximaphily, where the artefacts of the study are maximum cards created on the basis of the author's methodology.

The results of the research contribute to the revitalization of a newly emerging extended social memory, which releases fresh vigour into the culture of the nation, thus contributing to increasing interest on the part of the population towards re-evaluating historical events.

In founding St Petersburg, the Emperor Peter the Great created the outpost for Russia's development towards European culture, so that the process of transformation he had started would continue into the future.

Riassunto

Lo scopo del presente studio è quello di restituire alla gente la verità storica sul ruolo dei monarchi a San Pietroburgo in vari periodi storici. Questo studio interessa il periodo che abbraccia gli anni 1703-1725. È stata messa a punto la metodologia per la realizzazione di cartoline maximum che rappresentano manufatti riconducibili a un ampio periodo storico. La rilevanza dello studio è data dall'interesse suscitato dai monumenti storico-architettonici come oggetti della memoria sociale, espressione reale e dinamica nel tempo.

Sono stati utilizzate le seguenti fasi metodologiche: l'approccio informativo, che ha

permesso di ripristinare la cronologia degli eventi storici; lo studio dei documenti sugli eventi associati alla esecuzione di alcuni manufatti architettonici; il riscontro biografico; il metodo di maximafilia, per cui i manufatti oggetto dello studio sono cartoline maximum realizzate dell'autore.

I risultati della ricerca contribuiscono alla rivitalizzazione dell'attuale memoria storico-sociale emersa, che permette di fornire nuove informazioni sulla cultura della nazione, contribuendo all'aumento dell'interesse della popolazione per gli eventi di carattere storici.

Fondando San Pietroburgo, l'imperatore Pietro il Grande creò la preliminare fase di sviluppo della Russia verso la cultura europea affinché il processo di trasformazione iniziato potesse diventare irreversibile.