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## **Visualization of the Concept of State in the Architecture of the Moscow Cathedral of the Intercession on the Moat (1555–1561)**

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*The article presents the result of a philosophical and art criticism analysis of some elements of the Moscow Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat (1555–1561), also known as St. Basil's Cathedral. This analysis is part of a broader study related to the concept of state. According to the authors, the concept of state in modern Russian culture has origins in the ancient Russian history of the 16th century at the times of the first Russian Tsar Ivan the Terrible. To understand the basis of the modern Russian concept of state, the authors suggest turning to the analysis of representatives of the Old Russian art of the 16th century, the ideological content of which, one way or another, reveals this concept. The Moscow Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat was chosen as such a representative. The basic method of the research is philosophical and art criticism, developed and tested by Vladimir Zhukovsky in a number of theoretical and historical studies of art.*

*The main conclusion of the study is related to the identification of some aspects of the ancient Russian concept of state, including the following aspects: the Pusk state is a kingdom ruled by an autocratic king, the state arises under mutual observance of certain conditions by the tsar and the people; the state is able to exist when the king in public affairs is guided by the divine (Orthodox) law, acting as the only earthly co-ruler of God; the state arises when the people unanimously desire a conciliar unity, which means they are ready to fully submit to the decisions of the tsar, pray God to be granted a conciliar unity, sacrifice their own life for the good of the state; the state is a fundamentally hierarchical socio-centric unity in which there can be no equality between tsars, their attendants and subjects; the tsar possesses not only human nature, but is marked by the sign of God's choice; the conciliar unity of all people in the creation of the state whole is a divine gift for Ancient Rus; in ancient Russian culture, a person cannot help but want to become part of the state, since the state is understood as the only way for a Russian to achieve a relationship with God, a hope for the attainment of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

*Keywords: concept, state, ancient Russia, Ivan the Terrible, art, representation, the Intercession Cathedral on the moat.*

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## **Introduction**

Starting from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the problem of a man's true understanding of those cultural phenomena and concepts, among which he exists constantly, which he usually enjoys in everyday life, was identified. The general trend in various sciences (philosophy, culture studies, sociology, psychology, etc.), art and other spheres was revealed. It was aimed not at creating new concepts reflecting a qualitatively new modern understanding of the world, but at reconstructing the true meanings that are inherent in the long existing basic concepts for man, which have not lost their significance in modern times, but the meaning of which turned out to be lost. Thus, theoretical works and works of conceptual artists are aimed at reconstructing the meaning of art as a specific human activity; postmodern philosophers reconstruct the meaning of philosophy itself; linguists and culturologists combine the methods of their sciences to reconstruct such concepts as soul, friendship, home, etc.

The relevance of this study is related to the need to rethink the conceptual content of the concept of state in contemporary Russian culture. Such necessity is predetermined, firstly, by the fundamental position of modern linguoculturology, according to which the words used in written and oral speech determine the person's conscious attitude to the indicated phenomena. Secondly, the very form of the word 'state' is quite expressive and even preliminary considerations about the original origin of the word suggest that this is such a type of social order in which all powers of authority are concentrated in the hands of the ruler's or the sovereign's personality. Even such initial conclusions allow us to doubt that under the modern postulated democratic regime, the word 'state' is suitable for use in contemporary political and everyday discourse. There is a certain kind of disagreement between the original meaning of the word 'state' and the possibility of its use under contemporary completely different political and social conditions. Using this word in modern times, on the one hand, the person gives this word a different conceptual content, and on the other hand, the very designation of the social unity of Russian people by the word 'state' does not allow going beyond the understanding of the essence of this unity, formed in Ancient Russia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The need for the disclosure of the

conceptual content of the concept of state determines the relevance of the study of the contents of the ancient Russian concept of state to make it possible to understand the ways and means of modernizing this concept in modern Russian culture in future studies.

### **Review of scientific research**

The historical era of the creation of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat and the identity of the first Russian Tsar Ivan the Terrible (1530-1584), in the reign of whom this cathedral was created, has repeatedly attracted the attention of many modern researchers. Among the monographs and scholarly articles we can name the works by such authors as Isabel De Madariaga (2005), Robert Payne, Nikita Romanoff (2002), Boris Floria (2014), Anne Fine (2011), Maureen Perrie (2001, 2002), Andrei Pavlov (2014), Ian Gray (2016), Michael Cherniavsky (1968), and many others. The figure of Ivan the Terrible was one of the key in the historical concepts of the ancestors of Russian history, particularly Nikolai Karamzin (1766–1826), Sergei Soloviev (1820–1879), Vasily Klyuchevsky (1841–1911). The era and activities of Ivan the Terrible are often compared with the era and activities of Joseph Stalin (Perrie, 2001, Platt and Brandenberger, 1999, Thompson, 1977, Fitzpatrick, 2000, et other). These researchers note the great importance of the reign of Ivan the Terrible for the subsequent historical epochs of Russia and especially emphasize the similarity between Ivan the Terrible's world view and Stalinism, between the period of the reign of this tsar and the culminating moments of the Stalin era. In the context of this study, it is important that the archetypal character of Ivan the Terrible for Russian history (at least, for its Stalin period) has been stressed repeatedly. Modern historians of Russia are determined that the reign of Ivan the Terrible begins a special period of the Russian state, connected with the appearance of the first tsar on the Moscow royal throne (Martin, 2007, Yanov, 1981, Hosking, 2004, Hunt, 1993, et other).

Old Russian art is the space of relevant academic research. We can mention the following authors who systematized the main stages of the history of the art of Ancient Rus and described the most outstanding architectural monuments of this period: Giliarovskaia, N.V. (1943), Antonova, V.I., Mneva, N.E. (1963), Il'in, M.A. (1980), Vagner, G.K., Vladishevskaya, T.F. (1993), Lazarev, V.N. (2000), Zhukovskii, V.I. (2007) and many other art critics. The masterpiece of ancient Russian art of the 16<sup>th</sup> century – the Moscow Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat – was described and analyzed by such scientists as Giliarovskaia, N.V. (1943), Brunov, N.I. (1988), Batalov, A.L.,

Uspenskaia, L.S. (2004) and some other researchers. However, a detailed examination of this monument to analyze the concept of state has not been conducted so far.

### **Philosophical and art criticism of the monument**

The choice of the monument for the study of the concept of state, embodied through visual language, is predetermined by the fact that the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat is a special monument of ancient Russian architecture, which concentrates on visualizing the socio-centric religiosity of Ancient Rus of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, almost all researchers of the cathedral architecture (for example, Bondarenko, I.A. (1997), Snegirev, V.L. (1953) and others) indicate that the cathedral was called to express the idea of the Russian kingdom, to become a monument-symbol of the Russian state. In this case, philosophical and art criticism in the context of conceptual cultural research is aimed at understanding the originality of the Russian state as a cultural phenomenon. The study of the visual text will allow determining how the concept of state was interpreted in the ancient Russian culture of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

**Description.** The cathedral (Fig. 1) is a collection of nine brick churches on a single foundation on the principle of uniting of four small churches located at cardinal points (the Church of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem, the Church of Cyprian and Justina, the Trinity Church, the Church of Nikolai Velikoretsky) around the highest tent church of the Intercession of the Theotokos (of 60-meter height), and the four churches with the smallest diagonals in relation to the central volume (the Church of St. Gregory of Armenia, the Church of the Three Constantinopolitan Patriarchs Alexander, John and Pavel, the church of Alexander Svirsky and the church of Varlaam Khutynsky), united by a bypass gallery.

**Location of the cathedral.** The Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat was built on the Trade Square of Moscow, which was a new urban space formed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, “After the 1530s, it became possible to talk about the emergence of a new spatial center of Moscow, the scale of which turned out to be not a posad or a Kremlin one, but a citywide, statewide one, truly worthy of the ‘reigning city’, which Moscow of the 16<sup>th</sup> century turned into ... However, the new Trade Square also became an area of special significance, a square in front of the main entrance to the royal citadel of Moscow, the Kremlin wall concealed a sacred space behind itself. The square turned to this wall took over the name of Red for good reason later, it became the place of the Kremlin’s prestanding. The specificity of Moscow of the 16<sup>th</sup> century lies in the special



Fig. 1. The Cathedral of the Intercession on the Moat (Saint Basil's Cathedral)

allocation of the border between the two main parts of the city, in a special emphasis on the prestanding of China-town as the focus of the Posad world in front of the Kremlin, which was the seat of the tsar and the metropolitan” (Bondarenko, 1997: 35).

The Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat was really created at the key point of the city, namely at the meeting place of the sovereign and the people, whose combined relations form the state. The location of the cathedral on the Trade Square, specifically its location near the Execution Ground, from where the sovereigns addressed the people, where the most important state issues were covered, courts and executions took place, predetermined the essence of the architectural fixation of the spatial point of the city as a place of unification of Russian tsars and the Russian people. It can be

assumed that the very place where the cathedral was built consisted of the idea of presenting a model of the Russian state.

It should be added that the site of the cathedral was sacral, since it is connected with another event in the history of the Russian state: according to the legend, it was the place where the saints Peter and Alexei, who left the Kremlin, met Sergius of Radonezh and Varlaam Khutynsky to pray for the protection of Moscow from the invasion of the Tatar khan Mukhhammed-Girey. Thus, the construction site of the cathedral also presents the idea that the Russian state is protected by the prayers of saints about its well-being.

Thus, the construction site of the cathedral in itself is of great importance for understanding the essence of that state, which is modeled in a visual way. The state manifested in this place represents the unity of two opposite principles that are the sovereign and the people; the unity that can be achieved on the condition that the people are governed by the sovereign, the state is endowed with a sacred function of mediation between the sacral and the everyday worlds, between the divine and the human worlds; the state acts as a defender and guardian of the Russian land.

The cathedral was built in honor of the capture of Kazan by the Russian army on October 2, 1552. And this fact also serves as a historical material on the basis of which the cathedral was built. It is known that some of the churches that make up the cathedral whole are dedicated to saints whose memorial day was also the date of a significant event from the history of the siege of Kazan: the church of the three patriarchs and the church of Alexander Svirsky, whose memorial day is August 30, is dedicated to the defeat of the detachment of the Nogai prince Yapanchi; the erection of the church of Gregory the Armenian (September 30) is connected with the capture of the Arsk tower; the central church of the Intercession of the Theotokos (the feast of October 1) marks the beginning of the assault on Kazan, the church of Cyprian and Justina (the memorial day of these saints is on October 2) is compared with the date of the final victory of the Russian troops in Kazan. Thus, a victorious state is modeled, measuring the events of the present with the reference events of Christian history and the history of the Orthodox Church.

***Building material of the cathedral.*** It is known that St. Basil's Cathedral was reconstructed, architectural details and elements were attached to the cathedral for several centuries. In accordance with the objectives of the study, we will try to concentrate on the architectural appearance of the cathedral created in 1555–1562 to the extent that made it known of its original appearance. The cathedral was made of



a typical brick – it was a relatively new construction technique. The brickwork in the architectural work has the symbolism of the significance of the life of each individual person for the construction of the whole. In addition, the red color of the brick carries a strong symbolic coloring – on the one hand, red means beautiful, magnificent in the ancient Russian culture, on the other hand, the red color also symbolically represents human blood. Consequently, the cathedral models the ideal image of a state that cannot do without sacrificial bloodshed to achieve social integrity. The foundation, the socle and the row of profiling parts were made of white stone, which emphasized the constructive system of the temple, exhibited the construction that fixed the whole, created from bricks. From the point of view of modeling the concept of state through the visual image of the cathedral, it can be assumed that the technique of building the cathedral symbolized a specific unity of the people and the power, where the people act as a building material for organizing the rigid structure of power in the state.

***The symbolic significance of the individual architectural volumes of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat.***

The Church of the Intercession of the Theotokos is the center of the architectural composition (Fig. 2). In addition to the central location, the Church of the Intercession of the Theotokos is highlighted with the greatest height among other churches and a tent-like completion (in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the rest of the churches ended with bulbous heads). The tent roof of the church is defined by the fact that the 16<sup>th</sup> century was a period in the history of Russian architecture, when an original Old Russian architectural style was developed. In much the same way that Moscow claimed the title of “The Third Rome” in ideological terms, a unique architectural style was created in the architecture of Moscow. Before the cathedral was erected on the Trade Square, two churches had been erected in the vicinity of Moscow, namely in the village of Kolomenskoe and in the village of Dyakovo. Thus, the Cathedral of the Intercession of the Theotokos on the Trade Square became the presentation of a new specifically Russian architectural style to the world. The creation of the new architectural style is understood not only as a new stage in the history of art, but also as a visual fixation of a new Russian state. The origin of the tent in Russian architecture is associated with various facts; in the context of this study we mention that the tent traditionally overshadowed the throne of the Russian Tsar.

In the interior, the square of the church (64 m) is incommensurable with its height: a narrow inner space offers the only way for the believer to move – vertically, that is, into a space of the spiritual and the sublime, divorced from earthly existence. As a

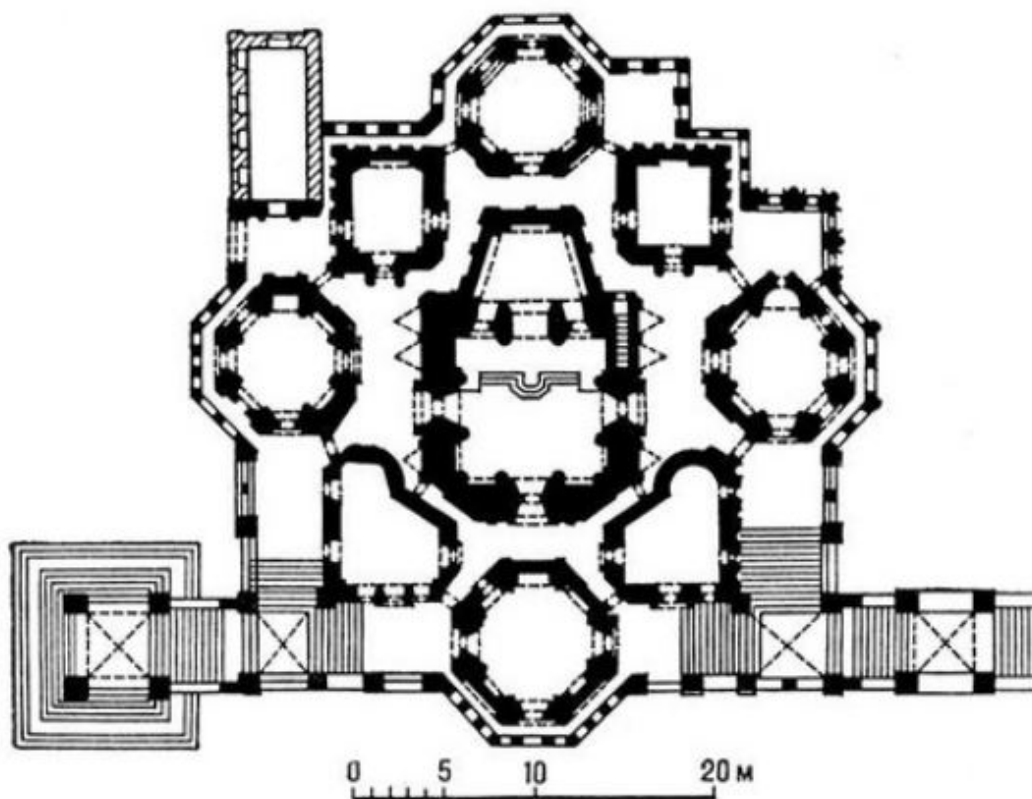


Fig. 2. Plan of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the Moat

result of the architectural program, the movement in the church can be carried out only speculatively, prayerfully.

The essence of the Church of the Intercession of the Theotokos in terms of visualizing the concept of state is as follows: the presentation of the center of the state, the king, who dominates and rises above the rest of the state, gathers around and subordinates the rest parts of the state. Besides, the Church of the Intercession of the Theotokos as part of the cathedral whole can be understood as a visualization of the most important essence of the Russian state, consisting in the necessity of applying all spiritual efforts, prayer calls to the people and the tsar to achieve divine patronage for the Russian state.

The Western Church of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem (the holiday falls on the last Sunday before Easter) is not directly related to the events of the Kazan campaign of the Russian troops – therefore, its inclusion in the architectural whole of the temple is due to other reasons. The Church of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem is the entrance church to the cathedral whole, it sets the understanding of the cathedral as a model of Jerusalem on earth that is the city of heaven, the ideal divine state. It is



known that one of the many names of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat was “The Jerusalem Temple”. The name was relevant in connection with the ritual action performed in front of the church, “As mentioned above, there used to be a procession from the Uspensky cathedral to the church of the Entrance to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday every year, in which the patriarch rode a donkey with the see and the gospel, and the tsars led the donkey on a leash” (Malinovskii, 2007: 187). Consequently, in the context of the whole, the church sets the ideal model for the beginning of the relationship between man and the cathedral, where man is offered to regard the cathedral as the heavenly Jerusalem, enter the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to some extent take on the role of Christ.

The Eastern Trinity Church was included in the cathedral whole, since earlier there was a wooden Trinity church with a chapel of Varlaam Khutynsky in the vicinity of the cathedral, dedicated to the defenders of Moscow. It is also known that the feast of the Trinity became especially revered exactly in Moscow Rus. The conceptual essence of the state at this level is revealed as a sacred function of the Russian state to accept the mission of the God-chosen people for the continuation of Orthodoxy on earth.

The Northern Church of Cyprian and Justina is dedicated to Christian martyrs and in the context of the whole emphasizes that a sociocentric unity (in particular, the state) needs martyrs. The Russian state cannot exist without righteous martyrs.

The southern church of Nikolai Velikoretsky is connected with the bringing of the icon of St. Niche the Wonderworker appeared miraculously on the Great River in the Vyatka region to Moscow on July 12, 1555. Therefore, the temple whole includes a festive understanding of the fact that God confirms with his gifts that the Russian land is chosen.

The four smallest churches in the diagonals of the main volume are dedicated to honoring the following events of Christian history: the struggle against the Arian, northern and iconoclastic heresies of the Constantinople patriarchs; the second (after Abraham in all Christian history) Trinity appearance to the Russian Reverend Alexander Svirsky; the baptism of the Gentiles by Gregory of Armenia; Varlaam Khutynsky as the founder of one of the Russian monasteries and in general the protective function of monasteries in the state.

***The essence of the composite grouping of the architectural volumes of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat.***

The Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat is a set of separate volumes grouped according to a certain principle. In this case, it is necessary to understand the principle

of uniting architectural volumes into a single whole for understanding the artistic image of the cathedral. The essence of uniting a great deal into a single whole in an architectural composition can be understood on the basis of the context of Old Russian architecture: even in the Hagia Sophia in Kiev, the hierarchical union of twelve heads around the central dome had the symbolic significance of collecting a multitude of ancient Russian lands into a single state whole. The principle of a centralized collection of Russian regions around Moscow is also presented in the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat. If the central volume in this case can be understood as a symbol of Moscow and a symbol of the sovereign-tsar, the churches gathered around the central volume act as areas of Russia subordinate to Moscow, and the Russian people, subordinate to the sovereign. Proceeding from the architectural composition, the catholicity of the Russian state is characterized by a fundamental hierarchy – this means that there cannot fundamentally be equal rights and equivalence between members of social unity in the Russian state, otherwise social unity will not be achieved. It is worth noting that the architecture of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat is instantly realized as a collection of a multitude in a single whole, and this shows that the architecture of the cathedral primarily presents the idea of Russian statehood as a whole, assembled from certain parts.

***Symbolism of the architectural composition of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat.***

As the chronicles indicate, the tsar order presupposed the erection of a church with eight thrones, but the Russian architects Barma and Postnik, in the name of geometrical correctness, erected the church with nine thrones. The architects put the largest pillar in the middle, which was completed with a high tent. A system of inscribed squares is the basis for the further construction of a complex multi-volume architectural form. The outline of a large outer square determined the position of the secondary thrones. Its corners have large pillars, while the corners of the inscribed square have smaller ones. All the main dimensions of the temple are connected with the dimensions of the sides of the four squares inscribed into each other, which determined the concept of the composition. There is a version according to which the geometrical formula of the building of the temple is connected with the icon-painting iconography *Christ in Majesty*, where Christ also appears sitting in the center of the intersecting rhombus and rectangle (Fig. 3). The interaction of icon-painting iconography and the architecture of Orthodox churches is traditional for Russian art. The iconography *Christ in Majesty* is connected with the representation of Jesus Christ in the image of the King of Kings



Fig. 3. The Icon of Andrei Rublev Christ in Majesty

and a formidable judge. *Christ in Majesty* shows the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of His power and glory, as the Lord of all the visible and invisible worlds, such as he appears at the end of time. The icon is directly related to the theme of the Last Judgment and the coming transformation of the universe.

Thus, the symbolism of the compositional formula of the cathedral, like the icon-painting scheme *Christ in Majesty* coupled with the symbolic reading of the central church as a visualization of the idea of the Russian kingdom, underscores the

understanding of the state in Rus as the earthly embodiment of the divine judgment of the Russian people in the sovereign power.

***Visualization of the concept of state in the architecture of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat.***

This stage of the study was designed to realize the task of reading the concept of state in a visual text. The conclusion, made as a result of philosophical and art criticism analysis, certainly cannot be considered exhaustive knowledge of the architectural monument itself, but it is focused solely on revealing the essence of the concept of state in ancient Russian culture. It is also important to say that although the idea of the state is not the only meaning of the architecture of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat, it is one of the most significant and relevant meanings of this architectural monument.

The architecture of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat in a concentrated form presents the essence of the Russian state. The Russian state can exist only in the presence of a single sovereign, to which the people are subordinate. The hierarchical structure of the state is a necessary condition for its existence. The Russian state is a conciliar state, and the task of every person is to exert maximum efforts to achieve the conciliar unity of Russian people. The conciliar unity of the state can be achieved on condition of the people's maximum spiritual aspiration to achieve this unity, physical efforts to achieve state unity are extremely limited. Spiritual striving for socio-centric (state) unity consists in the incessant prayer of the Russian people for the receipt of the state and readiness for the sacrificial giving of one's own life for the public good. A Russian person needs to pray for the acquisition of state unity, since this is the only way for a Russian person to go to heaven, to the city of God, to Jerusalem – only through state mediation. The unity of the Russian state is bequeathed and bestowed on the Russian people by God. God's chosenness of the Russian people, realized in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, precisely lies in the fact that the Russian people are capable of conciliar unity and conciliar relations with God. Thus, the only way for a Russian person to get into Heavenly Jerusalem is to fit into a conciliar state.

## **Conclusion**

The philosophical and art study of the Cathedral of the Intercession on the moat makes it possible to distinguish the following characteristics of the concept of state in the ancient Russian culture:

1. The Russian state is a kingdom ruled by an autocratic tsar.



2. The state arises with mutual observance of certain conditions by the tsar and the people. The state is able to exist when the tsar in state affairs is guided by the divine (Orthodox) law, acting as the only earthly co-ruler of God. The state arises when the people unanimously desire a conciliar unity: they are ready to fully submit to the decisions of the tsar; pray God that they will be granted a conciliar unity; sacrifice their own life for the good of the state.

3. The state is a fundamentally hierarchical socio-centric unity in which there can be no equality between tsars, their attendants and subjects. Obviously, this is because the tsar possesses not only human nature, but is also marked by the sign of God's choice.

4. The conciliar unity of all people in the creation of the state whole is a divine gift for Rus.

5. In ancient Russian culture, a person cannot help but desire to become part of the state whole, since the state is understood as the only way for a Russian to achieve a relationship with God, a hope for the attainment of the Kingdom of Heaven.

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## **Визуализация концепта «государство»**

### **в архитектуре московского собора**

### **Покрова на рву (1555–1561)**

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Россия, 660041, Красноярск, пр. Свободный, 79

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*В статье представлен результат философско-искусствоведческого анализа некоторых элементов московского собора Покрова на рву (1555–1561 годы), известного также как храм Василия Блаженного. Данный анализ является частью более обширного исследования, связанного с концептом «государство». По мнению авторов, концепт «государство» в современной российской культуре имеет истоки в древнерусской истории XVI века времен первого русского царя Иоанна IV Грозного. Для понимания основы современного российского концепта «государство» авторы предлагают обратиться к анализу репрезентантов древнерусского искусства XVI века, идейное содержание которых, так или иначе, раскрывает данный концепт. В качестве такого репрезентанта был выбран московский собор Покрова на рву. Основной метод исследования – философско-искусствоведческий анализ, разработанный и апробированный Владимиром Жуковским в ряде теоретических и исторических исследований искусства.*

*Главный вывод исследования связан с выявлением некоторых аспектов древнерусского концепта «государство», в том числе: русское государство – это царство, управляемое единовластным царем; государство возникает при взаимном соблюдении определенных условий царем и народом; государство способно существовать тогда,*

*когда царь в государственных делах руководствуется божественным (православным) законом, выступая в роли единственного земного со-правителя Бога; государство возникает тогда, когда народ единодушно желает соборного единения: готов полностью подчиняться решениям царя; молить Бога о том, чтобы ему было даровано соборное единство; готов принести собственную жизнь в жертву во благо государства; государство – принципиально иерархичное социоцентрическое единство, в котором не может быть равноправия между царями – приближенными царя и подданными; царь обладает не только человеческой природой, но и отмечен знаком богоизбранности; соборное единство всех людей в деле создания государственного целого является божественным даром для Руси; в древнерусской культуре человек не может не желать стать частью государственного целого, так как государство понимается как единственный путь достижения для русского человека отношений с Богом, надежда на обретение Царствия Небесного.*

*Ключевые слова: концепт, государство, Древняя Русь, Иоанн Грозный, искусство, ре-презентация, собор Покрова на рву.*

*Научная специальность: 24.00.00 – культурология.*

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