

Cultural landscape as the result of co-operation...

Marina Kuleshova , Sergey Pchyolkin
*Russian Research Institute for Cultural
and Natural Heritage, Moscow.*

Russian researchers have been employing the practice and methods of work according to the European Landscape Convention, widely informing the public about this Convention. The fundamental principles of European Landscape Convention are mainly implemented as follows: 1) regional planning and urban planning regulations and 2) heritage protection, i.e., the establishment of protected areas, identification of historical sites and establishment of landscape zones around cultural monuments.

One of the general problems for the most European Countries today is the fact that landscape management is associated with increasing bureaucracy. Mr. Terry O'Regan provides an impressive description of the current situation. We can see how the authorities complicate the decision-making process (landscape policy implementation) through an intricate and superfluous set of procedures. As the result, the objectives of landscape protection, management and planning are substituted by the procedures themselves. The bureaucratic institutions arrange their services so as to provide a continuous increase in the number of their services required. That raise barrier between the decision-making mechanism and involving the society in it.

Some outstanding landscapes are protected by the law, no development being allowed. However, sometimes the law does not work in a proper way. Injured or degraded landscapes become some kind of experimental grounds for management and planning. The most interesting are ordinary, everyday landscapes. Some of them will be classified as outstanding in future, others will be affected by globalization and some will obtain new features and will be classified according to the new preferences and new sets of values of future societies. The most important thing is to inform the contemporary society about the social functions, values and key characteristics of landscape, to render the society more responsible, being able and being allowed to take part in decisions-making.

The other important problem is the privatization of lands – the main landscape resource. It is most important for Russia, where private ownership traditions are not long enough; they have not been rooted or implemented in culture, and contrary to public interests. Having visited Budva surroundings (Montenegro) we could also see landscapes withdrawn from public use, wide commercial development of onshore areas, public access being limited to the most attractive areas in spite of high quality planning documentation, elaborated according to the European Landscape Convention directives.

In Heritage Institute we treat any landscape as guided by heritage methodology. In fact, we assess landscape values and informative potential of the area, varying with time. At the same time, we monitor changes in the landscape content and informative capacity, its deformation or enrichment, which depends upon landscape management. Landscape heritage is considered in terms of special localities of informative potential, consisting of tangible and intangible, movable and immovable, animate and inanimate, natural and cultural components with recognized valuable characteristics. Any landscape contains heritage or is heritage itself.

Heritage identification is a special activity performed by professional researchers. However landscape heritage is, or should be, the subject of active public reflection, debate, and discussion so that researchers can work in a proper way. The public should contribute to the broad process of landscape heritage identification, reflection, interpretation and adaptation to contemporary life. Otherwise, heritage study will involve narrow specialists only or even die as something unnecessary and atavistic. Unfortunately we constantly observe such intentions in our research practice.

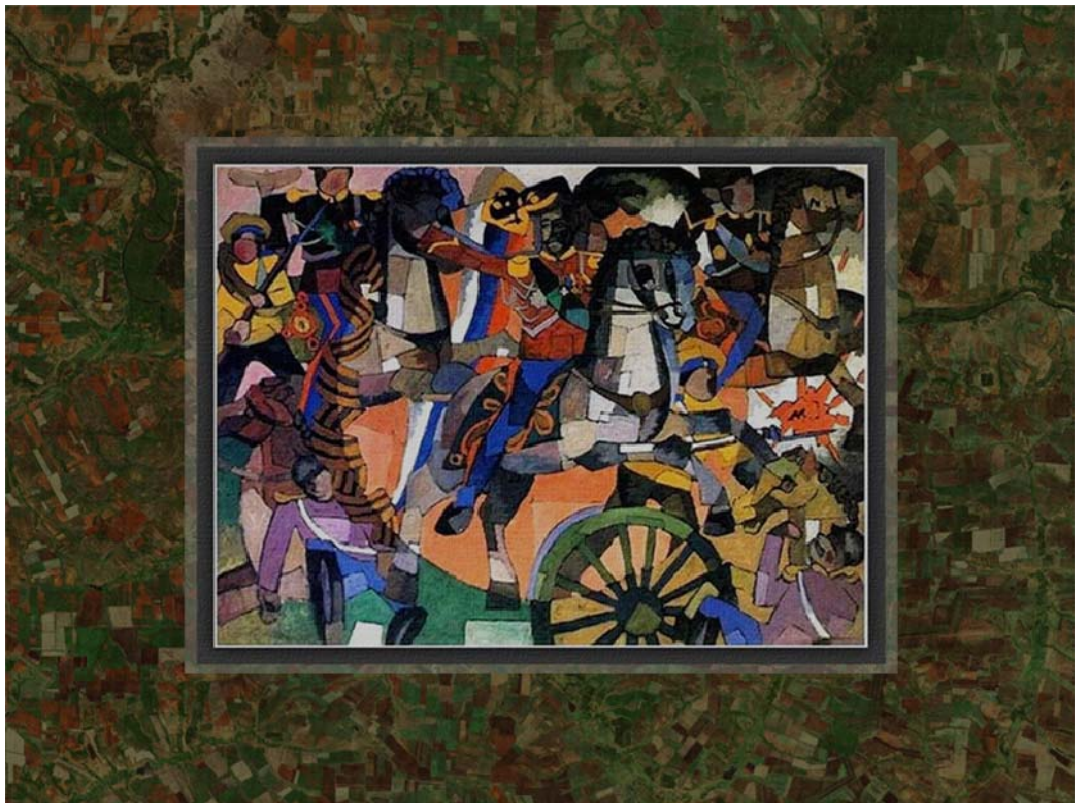
Such means of heritage protection as legislative regulations, establishment of protected areas, listing and inventorying heritage properties, regional planning tools, and grant programs are widely known. The above is preceded by identification and research of heritage sites, landscapes in particular. The Russian Research Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage employs various research methods and protected measures mentioned above. Dealing with landscape heritage, for example, it is important to influence the public perception of landscape and awareness by ideas and images including sounds, colors or odors - the essential features of any landscape. It is widely known that literature and poetry influence personal outlook in Russia to a much greater extent than other arts. Russian writers often use extensive landscape descriptions for the readers to better understand and feel their Motherland.

Researching fictional texts, travel essays and commentaries provide a correlation between the scientific aspects of heritage protection and the art image, the image that reflects the picture of the world. Therefore, we consider fiction as a component of the informative potential, content of the territories and even more. Works of fiction not only influence landscape development, but mostly determine it – that particularly applies to memorial landscapes of some state museum-reserves. Ideas, images, and landscape palimpsests do not operate directly like a town plan. They work differently, forming the attitudes of people who live in a particular landscape, visit it or gradually develop it.



**NOT BY THE PLOUGH IS OUR GLORIOUS EARTH FURROWED. . . .
OUR EARTH IS TURROWED BY HORSES' HOOTS.
AND SOWN IS OUR EARTH WITH THE HEADS OF COSSACKS.**

OLD COSSACK





**FAIR IS OUR QUIET DON WITH YOUNG WIDOWS. OUR FATHER,
THE QUIET DON, BLOSSOMS WITH ORPHANS.
AND THE WAVES OF THE QUIET DON ARE FILLED WITH FATHERS' AND MOTHERS' TEARS.**

SONG



It is clear, that the imagery is most effective in its original “feeding” landscape, the place where it was created and personified or the place where the author lived. As an illustration of such an approach, we offer one of the projects, elaborated by Yury Vedenin and Sergey Pchyolkin. It is devoted to the Cossack village Veshenskaya with its surroundings - literary, memorial, agricultural, residential landscape, outstanding and ordinary at the same time. It is the place where Mikhail Sholokhov wrote his outstanding novel “And Quiet Flows the Don”, which earned him Noble Prize in Literature.

Yu.Vedenin and S.Pchyolkin’s project includes text and plot analysis associated with the landscape. As M.Sholokhov in a number of cases used collective landscape images, the researchers sought close landscape analogs. They made photo fixation and picture verification of old and new photos. The text parts were put into the present day landscape multimedia context, taking into account its actuality and stylistics of images. Nowadays the landscape still bears the main features of the landscape Sholokhov described. It can be presented physically and by visualization. Audiovisual, documental and associative fields are combined into the dynamic construction which is difficult to express through static illustrations to the text (see it here <http://files.heritage-institute.ru/heritage/shgmpFILM/albm.swf>). Besides, each landscape element has its exact geographic coordinates. The purpose is to draw the public attention to this outstanding landscape.

The novel is considered to be as one of the most significant works of Russian realist literature in the 20th century. It depicts the landscape with people lives and struggles of Don Cossacks during the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and Russian Civil War. “And Quiet Flows the Don” is an epic picture of Russian life during a time of social crisis and examines it through political, military, romantic, and civilian lenses. The landscape keeps all these events in its traits and character. Moreover, its color range, the mosaic pattern, character traits are often concordant, forming a single rhythm with the pictures by the Russian Avant-garde painters. The Russian avant-garde is an art movement which originated when Sholokhov was writing his novel. The world outlook conflict is constantly present in the landscape determining the vector of its development. In the project concerned the world outlook conflict is visualized by the methods of art.

Today there is the state museum-reserve of Mikhail Sholokhov in Veshenskaya village, which contains several memorial places also in other villages and their surroundings. Thousands of people live in the area. Central settlements are under developing, others in the periphery zone are completely neglected and deserted. By means of this project, we are supposed to draw the attention of Museum-reserve staff to a new field of activity - not only preserving memorials, but also interpreting and exhibiting this outstanding literary landscape to the society. In this case, we do not exclude regional planning tools, protection heritage

methods, landscape maps and atlas composition. Vice versa, these methods are quite appropriate.

On the other hand, this project is destined for the locals in order to draw their attention to the value of landscape, its beauty and unique character. To motivate people who lives and works there to formulate their own attitude to the landscape through their own mini-projects in cooperation and with the support of Museum-reserve. It is productive to establish small agricultural enterprises and horse-breeding farms combined with tourist destinations as it is being done successfully in Belorussia. Other interesting areas of cooperation are making mental maps and tourist guides, studying and implementing self-organization activities, and Cossack cultural patterns actualization.

The project can also help in awareness-raising of the most active part of the society, who is developing landscape without clear view of its history and values. They should learn to love and take care of it and not only of their own property behind high fences. It is necessary to set up some of rules of proper use and “bon ton” in dealing with landscape, to determine the ethic background, remembering the common law for its management and planning.

This project has been completed, but not fully implemented. However we laid significant groundwork. The landscape is not only the site area for different properties and ownerships, but is the living organism with its rich historical palimpsest and informative potential. Its “good use” depends on its proper and adequate “reading”. Landscape management is not only about maps, plans, laws, rules and injunctions, but mostly about developing responsible and ethic attitude in the people towards the place where they live or stay.

The following sources were used for the illustrations above:

SATELLITE IMAGE Google Earth 2007

THREE FIGURES Pavel-Filonov 1913

RED FIGURE Kazemir Malevich 1928

LANDSCAPE PASSING Ivan Kliun 1914

OLD COSSAK SONG Mikhail Sholokhov “AND QUIET FLOWS THE DON”