On August 24, 1991, Ukraine declared its existence as an independent state. A death accompanied this birth. On December 8, 1991, the leaders of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine announced the dissolution of what remained of the Soviet Union; the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was no more. This unexpected and swift metamorphosis, while heralding a prolonged series of political, economic and social changes, found immediate expression in a struggle of signs. Resurrected and newly empowered, the blue-and-yellow flag and the trident (tryzub) of national sovereignty signaled the bankruptcy of the red and blue flag and the sickle and hammer of a supra-national Soviet identity (fig. 1).

In the summer of 2001 the young Ukrainian state celebrated its tenth anniversary. As on its first anniversary and every summer thereafter, in Kyiv, a military parade, gun-salutes, the display of flags, government delegations, oratory, festive concerts, banners, posters and fireworks marked the event. The ceremonial manifestation of sovereignty

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and identity gave voice to and sought to promote a sense of unity and pride among its celebrants. In form it harked back to the immediate past of Soviet practices, to the grand displays of virility and might that marked the annual commemorations of the October Revolution, May Day and other communist holidays. Military jets escorting the “Mriia,” the largest cargo airplane in the world, flew overhead and tanks and missiles rolled along the triumphant thoroughfare of Khreshchatyk in acclamation of Ukraine’s contributions to Soviet technical achievements, while elite units of armed forces parading the latest fashions in formal military attire asserted the new state’s military readiness. However, a novel array of symbols also festooned the familiar pageantry. Portraits of select Rus’ rulers,\(^2\) of Cossack hetmans,\(^3\) and of Mykhailo S. Hrushevs’kyi, the Head of the Central Council (Tsentr’na Rada) of the Ukrainian People’s Republic from 1917-18, decorated street banners, and outlined a relevant historical past for the recent political transformations that engendered the new state. Sculptural representations of a number of the same historical figures eventually will encircle the base of the “Monument to Independence,” unveiled for the anniversary in the re-christened Independence Square, the central public gathering space in the city, previously known as Red Square (fig. 2).\(^4\)

The newly erected monument supersedes a massive red granite portrait of striding Lenin (fig. 3), which was deemed to be of substandard artistic quality soon after the August 1991 declaration of independence. Perched atop a colossal marble column, a gilded winged female figure wearing a flowing embroidered shirt extends a victory wreath in her outstretched arms to those assembled in the square. During the anniversary spectacle this personification of Ukrainian sovereignty towered over the temporary pavilion from

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\(^2\) Such as Princess Ol’ha (r. 945-962), Prince Volodymyr (r. 980-1015), Iaroslav Mudryi (r. 1019-1054), and Prince Volodymyr Monomakh (r. 1113-1125).

\(^3\) Such as Bohdan Khmel’nicts’kyi (1648-1657), Petro Doroshenko (1665-1676), Ivan Mazepa (1687-1709), Ivan Skoropads’kyi (1708-1722), and Pylyp Orlyk (1709-1711).

\(^4\) The “Monument to Independence” was unveiled on August 23, 2002, before being completed.
which President Leonid Kuchma and other government, military, church and cultural leaders received the salutes of parading military and cultural formations. The public commemoration of sovereignty on August 24th of each year has become a tradition incorporating rituals and symbols, new and old, that contribute to the forging of collective identity in the new Ukrainian state. These commemorations evidence existing perceptions of national definition and speak of the relationship of the modern state to the past and its motivation for the future.

In his consideration of similar ceremonials and pageantry, the historian Eric Hobsbawm emphasized their invented nature, viewing the evoked continuity with a historical past as largely factitious.\textsuperscript{5}\cite{hobsbawm1983} He observed such modern traditions to be prescriptive with regard to practice, but vague in terms of social obligations and definitions, and invariably characterized by emotionally charged signs of a universal nature, such as the flag, the anthem and the emblem. Implied in this delineation of invented from established traditions is not only the less specific and less binding nature of the former, but also an apparent distinction between symbolic signs of group membership and actual objects produced by the group.\textsuperscript{6}\cite{hobsbawm1983} Correspondingly, Benedict Anderson, in his influential study \textit{Imagined Communities}, designated tombs of Unknown Soldiers as emblematic of the culture of nationalism due to both their modern (according to Anderson such tombs do not have “true precedents in earlier times”) and unspecified character.\textsuperscript{7}\cite{anderson1991} Anderson concluded that such generic, commemorative monuments


contribute to the power of national sentiment by transforming fatality into continuity and contingency into meaning.\textsuperscript{8}\textsuperscript{[8]}

Writing on the character and origin of the modern cult of monuments, art historian Alois Riegl regarded all commemorative monuments as “intentional” in their conception. Designed for the future to perpetuate the memory of certain moments, events, individuals, their deeds or fate, they are intended to be preserved and maintained. Commemorative monuments of one sort or another have always been and continue to be created. Style and form, as much as the subject matter of these monuments, contributes to their content and meaning as well as to their shifting interpretations.

According to Riegl, it is not the construction of “intentional” monuments that distinguishes the modern cult of monuments. Rather it is the preservation of objects and structures, including works of art and architecture, which originally served to satisfy the practical needs of their creators, that is a uniquely modern phenomenon. Riegl differentiated “commemorative” or “intentional” monuments from those he considered to be “unintentional” or “historical.” Not primarily designed as testimonials of a certain age for later centuries, “unintentional” monuments develop and transform, frequently at the expense of their original form, so as to endure meaningfully in the present. Authorship (even if unknown or collective), historical determinability, functional contingencies and the relative permanence of such works, in other words their specificity and age, link the past with the present. However once such works cease to function or are restricted in their further development, their preservation constitutes part of the modern effort to maintain the memory of a monumental past. The modern perception of these works, with all its subjective preferences, comes to shape their commemorative significance. Both “intentional” and “unintentional” monuments derive their power in the present as

symbols of perpetuity, however, the former anticipate the future from their inception, while the later progress into the future by receding into the past.⁹⁻⁹

Stressing the modernity of nations, Hobsbawm and Anderson necessarily focus their attention on recent modes of cultural representation. However, other scholars of the nation, for example Anthony D. Smith, poignantly remind us of the importance of the more durable elements of collective culture, such as monuments, buildings and tombs that form the historical landscape of the nation.¹⁰⁻¹⁰ Perhaps the best known such historical monument in Ukraine is the Cathedral of St. Sophia (Sobor Sv. Sofii) in Kyiv. Built in the first half of the eleventh century to serve as the seat of the Metropolitan of Kyiv, the cathedral originally followed a Middle Byzantine domed-cross plan and was crowned with thirteen rather low domes (fig. 4). Its present appearance dates largely to the seventeenth through early-eighteenth centuries when the cathedral was considerably remodeled (fig. 5). Ornate Cossack baroque forms and twenty-one helmet-shaped cupolas mask the original Byzantine structure, which, on the exterior, is revealed only in the small areas of exposed eleventh-century recessed brickwork largely restricted to the apses of the eastern façade (fig. 6). In the interior, however, much of the wall surface has been cleaned to reveal remains of eleventh-century mosaic and fresco decoration (fig. 7).¹¹⁻¹¹ Although in recent years the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and that of the Moscow Patriarchate have both tried to claim jurisdiction

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over the cathedral, it continues to function as a state museum. The celebration of the tenth anniversary of Ukraine’s independence began with a presidential visit to the cathedral, not to attend the liturgy of any one particular confession or denomination, but to recognize, despite innumerable differences, the continuity of the present Ukrainian nation with the past that the enduring associations with this monument profess.

The degree to which “unintentional” monuments factor into the formulation of national identity is perhaps best illustrated by the active recreation of destroyed historical structures ongoing in Ukraine today. On August 23, 2002, after emerging from the Cathedral of St. Sophia, President Kuchma proceeded across a short distance to the recently recreated Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes (Mykhailivs'kyi Zolotoverkhyy sobor) (fig. 8). This is the first of sixty monuments listed in “The Program and Procedures for the Recreation of Prominent Monuments of History and Culture of Ukraine” to be recreated. Developed in response to a presidential edict issued on December 9, 1995, the recreation program was adopted by a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on April 29, 1999. According to the text of the program not only must surviving historical and cultural monuments be preserved, but, in the aftermath of Ukraine’s declaration of independence, monuments recognized as masterpieces of architecture that occupied a unique place in the development of spirituality and culture in Ukraine and that have suffered or have been destroyed should be given special consideration for possible “restorational recreation.” To be regarded worthy for recreation a monument must either: 1) have significantly contributed to the development of culture, architecture, urban development, and art during a lasting historical period; 2) be directly connected to historical events, ideas or persons which or

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12[12] The Cathedral of St. Sophia was given the status of a museum in 1934.


who had a great impact on the course of national history, and the development of culture and art; 3) be the works of artistic genius; or 4) be notable creations of a lost culture or artistic style. A monument may be deemed appropriate for “restorational recreation” only if more than fifty percent of its surface structure has been lost and if sufficient documentation regarding its original appearance exists. In accordance with the international guidelines for architectural preservation the decree clearly prohibits reconstructions based on scholarly conjecture.\[15\] These restrictions aside, the monuments on the list vary widely in their state of preservation. Some such as the eighteenth-century palace of Hetman Rozumovs’kyi in Baturyn (fig. 9) can be restored and others such as the eleventh through nineteenth-century Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes in Kyiv of which only the foundations remain will require full recreation (fig. 10).

According to specialists nearly ten thousand architectural monuments of historical or cultural significance were destroyed in Ukraine in the twentieth century alone. An array of documentation exists for at least seven hundred of these monuments, and relatively complete records are available for one hundred and fifty. The text of the recreation program maintains that the historical and cultural diversity of the various regions of Ukraine prevents the formulation of set criteria for the selection of monuments for “restorational recreation.” Fifty-six religious, civic, and military monuments dating from the sixteenth through twentieth century comprise the list. Fifty-two of the monuments are located in the various oblasts’ (regions) of the country, three in the Crimean Autonomous Republic, and one, the chapel on the grave of the Cossack hetman Pavlo Doroshenko, in the Russian Federation. Among the fifty-six monuments are a

\[15\] See the numerous resolutions, recommendations and charters of such organizations as UNESCO and ICOMOS, for example: Athens Charter (1931); Venice Charter (1964); Paris UNESCO Recommendation (1972); European Charter of the Architectural Heritage (1975); Resolutions of the 5th General Assembly of ICOMOS (Moscow, 1976); Warsaw-Nairobi UNESCO Recommendation (1976); Declaration of Dresden (1982); Appelton Charter (1983); Washington Charter (1987); Lusanne Charter (1990).
notable number of sites associated with Ukrainian Cossack culture, as well as a few monuments identified with religious and ethnic minorities, including the Selim Mosque in Feodosia, the Roman Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist in Muzhieve, and the Golden Rose Synagogue in L'viv. At least on paper, recognition of the multiethnic identity of Ukraine’s population tempers nationalizing “restoration recreation” policies, and reflects Ukraine’s effort to model itself as a state of interethnic harmony with an inclusive civic identity.\[16\]

Aside from highlighting the Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes (fig. 11), the Dormition Cathedral of the Kyiv-Pechers'ka lavra (Uspens'kyi sobor Kyievo-Pechers'koi lavry) (fig. 12), and the Church of the Epiphany (Bohoiavelns'kyi sobor) of the Brats'kyi Monastery (fig. 13), all in Kyiv, as well as the Dormition Cathedral (Uspens'kyi sobor) in Poltava, the sixty designated monuments have not been prioritized and no set timetable exists for the completion of their recreation. This leaves ample room for further political, social and economic imperatives to make their imprint on a program that, while based on a nationally defined cultural landscape, is subject to the choices and preferences of current government and cultural leaders.\[17\] The close correlation between political and financial objectives and the “restorational recreation” projects has not been concealed; indeed a number of government officials have made their career on these constructions. Both President Leonid Kuchma, and Oleksander Omel'chenko, the mayor of the city of Kyiv, used their patronage of such projects to enhance their standings in recent re-election campaigns, and the same two agencies (the holding

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\[17\] On December 30, 1998, vice-prime minister Vitalii Smolii, a historian by profession, approved the list of fifty-six monuments destine for “restorational recreation.”
company “Kyivmis'kbud,” and the corporation “Ukrrestavratsiia”) have been commissioned to execute the projects without facing any serious competition.

So far the recreation efforts have focused on three monastic churches: the twelfth-century Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes in Kyiv, demolished in 1935 (fig. 11); the eleventh-century Dormition Cathedral of the Kyiv-Pechers'ka lavra, mined either by Soviet or German forces in 1941 (fig. 12); and the Cathedral of St. Volodymyr in Khersones, severely damaged in 1942 (fig. 14). While the text of the restoration program underscores the primary importance of the completion of the two monuments in Kyiv, political considerations prompted work on the cathedral in Khersones. In 1997, during a visit to the city of Sevastopol', Yuri Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow, announced that the cathedral of St. Volodymyr in Khersones would be rebuilt at Moscow’s expense. By 1998, the city of Kyiv appropriated Moscow’s initiative and undertook the recreation project.\[18]\[18\]

High profile recreation projects that serve to enhance the political authority or financial status of those in power are bound to receive priority, especially if there is no mechanism in place that dictates otherwise. Yet, in order for these projects to serve the needs of their patrons they must resonate with the population at large. If we dismiss the recreations as arbitrary constructs of the powerful select, we determine them to be ahistorical products of individuals whose identity stands independent of their cultural context. Moreover, we fail to recognize the degree to which the success of the recreations is dependent on the perceptions of the broader public. Similarly, if we discount the recreated monuments as mere replicas, or simply reject them as falsifications that alienate past architectural forms from their historic context, we neglect to explore the significance of the reproduced forms for their modern beholders and forfeit observing the interaction between the present and the past in contemporary Ukraine. Regardless of

their immediate motivation, quality, or aesthetic merit, the recreation projects evoke popular sentiment. Their forms effectively embody collective memories and experiences that underlie contemporary national identity in Ukraine.

When the Cabinet of Ministers approved “The Program and Procedures for the Recreation of Prominent Monuments of History and Culture of Ukraine” in April 1999, the recreated Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes had already been consecrated\footnote{The Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes was consecrated on November 21, 1998.} (fig. 8), and work on the Dormition Cathedral of the Kyiv-Pechers'ka lavra was well under way (fig. 15). Although the Dormition Cathedral was the second of the two churches to be recreated in independent Ukraine, the Soviet of Ministers of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was already considering its recreation in the early 1980s.

The Dormition cathedral was constructed between 1073 and 1078, and from the eleventh through the early-twentieth century it served as the main church of the oldest and most prestigious monastery in Ukraine, the Kyiv-Pechers'ka lavra. Numerous other churches, monastic structures, gardens, tombs of prominent patrons, and underground chapels and passageways comprised the monastic complex, which in 1926, was transformed into the Kyiv-Pechers'k Historical and Cultural Reserve, becoming one of Kyiv’s main tourist attractions. On November 3, 1941, the Dormition Cathedral was reduced to ruin following an explosion caused by mines. The Soviet army had just retreated from Kyiv, and German forces occupied the territory of the Kyiv-Pechers'ka lavra, therefore, both have been accused of the destruction.

southeast corner of the cathedral survived the 1941 explosion posing a dilemma for any recreation project (fig. 16). Furthermore, a thorough archeological survey of the cathedral site had never been conducted. It was soon discovered that underground caverns and landslides threatened the stability of existing structures and complicated construction on the site. The 1980s recreation project that was to rest on injection piles finally was abandoned when drilling on the site caused cracks in the foundations of surrounding structures and when unexcavated burials were disturbed.

The lack of consensus as to the period to which the Dormition Cathedral should be recreated also markedly contributed to the abandonment of the project. Soviet practices favored constructing a monument in the tenth through thirteenth-century style of Kyivan Rus' architecture, but many scholars and cultural activists argued that such a recreation would be purely conjectural and would disrupt the existing aesthetic of Kyiv-Pechers'ka lavra monastic complex largely comprised of seventeenth through nineteenth-century monastic structures.

Forms and images associated with the ‘golden age’ of Kyivan Rus' have long been favored on the territory of Ukraine. They were normalized as part of the common inheritance of the Slavic people of the Russian Empire already in the mid-nineteenth century. It was then that local monuments of the medieval past first came to be studied and preserved, and that the imperially supported Pan-Slavic movement propagated the use of Rus' and Byzantine sources in the creation of a contemporary, national, Orthodox art. Attempts were made to expose the medieval origins of surviving historical monuments, as in the case of the eleventh-century Cathedral of St. Sophia (figs. 5 and 6), and the twelfth-century Church of St. Cyril in Kyiv. Also, churches, such as the

Cathedral of St. Volodymyr in Kyiv and the Cathedral of St. Volodymyr in Khersones (fig. 14), were constructed and decorated in a Neo-Byzantine style.

Rather than renounce this preoccupation with medieval, religious monuments, the Soviet government identified the Kyivan Rus' polity as the cradle of all three Slavic nations and pursued a historical preservation policy that favored the restoration of medieval churches throughout Belarus, Russia and Ukraine to their conjectural tenth through thirteenth-century form (fig. 17, 18, and 19). While acknowledging perfunctory regional distinctions among architectural monuments scattered throughout the vast territory of the former principalities of medieval Rus', the Soviet restoration projects repeated visual ideals that endorsed a collective medieval identity and common origin for the three nations. Architectural accretions of later centuries were forgone to expose the medieval core of churches, thereby distancing the structures from the particularities of more recent contexts and withdrawing them into an idealized past. Most of these restored churches display some variant of a domed-cross plan with four converging barrel-vaults surmounted by a dome resting on piers. Constructed in brick and sometimes whitewashed, they are usually three-bay-wide and tri-apsidal. Recessed gables and pilasters articulate their façades. Moreover, the churches restored in the Soviet period were never intended to service religious congregations. They were whitewashed on the interior and left empty of any ecclesiastical furnishings. These architectural shells fashioned a seemingly seamless veneer of Orthodox Christianity throughout East Slavic lands that masked existing religious diversity. Lacking immediate associations with their cultural and social contexts they functioned as symbols of a common medieval origin but not of shared memories and experiences.²¹

²¹ The restored monuments were put to a variety of uses. Some were left empty, others were used as storage or office facilities, and still others were converted to museums.
While the Dormition Cathedral was founded in the eleventh century, it survived into the twentieth century in a Cossack baroque guise with nineteenth-century additions (fig. 12). Portals, pilasters, cornices, pediments, gables and volutes articulated its whitewashed façades that were further enlivened with sculpted stucco moldings. Characteristic of Cossack baroque churches constructed on the territory of Ukraine were the helmet-shaped domes positioned over elongated drums that adorned the roofline of the Dormition Cathedral. Jesuit influences on local Orthodox culture and the establishment of the Uniate Church contributed to the development of the Cossack baroque architectural style that found expression in late sixteenth- through eighteenth-century monuments built under the patronage of Cossack leaders. Ukrainian historiography traces the development of modern Ukrainian statehood from its origins in Kyivan Rus' to the development of the autonomous polity of the Cossack Host in the seventeenth-century. While Kyivan Rus' encompassed territories in present day Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, the polity of the Cossack Host fell largely within the boundaries of the modern Ukrainian state. Cossack baroque architectural forms, therefore, are readily recognized as symbols of a distinct Ukrainian identity.

While Soviet historians celebrated certain aspects of the Cossack movement, they repressed others. Thus, for example, the mid-seventeenth-century Cossack leader, hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyc'hyn (1648-1657) was lauded for his defense of Orthodoxy and for bringing Ukrainian lands into allegiance with Moscow, while his attempt at establishing autonomous rule was mollified. Soviet scholars also had little positive to say about the late-seventeenth-century hetman, Ivan Mazepa (1639-1709), who allied himself with King Charles XII of Sweden against Peter I of Russia, and was anathematized by the Russian Orthodox Church. Such treatment of the history of the Cossacks was in keeping

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with Soviet nationality policies, which propagated the selective development of national
cultural forms while mitigating their political and economic content, and which by the
early 1930s vigorously repressed any anti-Russian sentiments. 23[23] This approach
extended to monuments. When Stalin moved away from the policy of korenizatsiia
(‘nativization’) in favor of russification, the Western architectural motifs and Cossack
patronage of many of the baroque churches in Ukraine came to be viewed as “potentially
disruptive expressions of nationality.”24[24] In the eyes of the Soviet regime, their
association with religious repression and bourgeois nationalism justified their demolition.
Among the monuments destroyed in Kyiv during the 1930s were two seventeenth-
century churches founded by the Cossack hetman Ivan Mazepa: the Collegiate Church of
St. Nicholas, built in the 1690s and destroyed in 1934 (fig. 20), and the Church of the
Epiphany of the Brats'kyi Monastery, also built in the 1690s, but destroyed in 1935 (fig.
13).

The Soviet state did not exorcise Cossack cultural forms from the identity of the
Ukrainian people. Instead through selective borrowing, reinterpretation, reframing,
reconstruction, and even the development of new rituals and traditions, Cossack cultural
forms were legitimized and cultivated. Cossack dance troops were a frequent export
from the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic; they roused national sentiment while
simultaneously transforming the Cossacks from an unruly and belligerent army in search
of emancipation from authority to neatly synchronized groups of entertainers. Such
cultural forms found popular resonance because they reinforced already existing

23[23] On the institutionalization of national identities in the Soviet Union see: Ronald Grigor Suny, The
Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution , and the Collapse of the Soviet Union (Stanford: Stanford
University Press, 1993); Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State
Promoted Ethnic Particularism," Slavic Review 53, no. 2 (1994), pp. 441-452; and Rogers Brubaker,
Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge

24[24] I borrow this phrase from Rogers Brubaker, who uses it in a political context. Rogers Brubaker,
Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge
conceptions of a collective identity and a common past. Their institutionalization in Soviet Ukraine reinforced them as symbols of nationhood. In the post-Soviet period, these cultural forms were readily politicized and, today continue to inform Ukraine’s national identity. For example, a Presidential edict issued on January 4, 1995, called for the rebirth of historical, cultural and civic traditions of the Ukrainian Cossacks. It endorsed the research of Cossack culture, the publication of studies on the Cossack period, the preservation of Cossack sites and the collaboration of the army with the “Ukrainian Cossack movement” in the formation of individual border patrol units. It is the Ministry of Defense that sponsors activities associated with the Ukrainian Cossack movement. In its turn, the Cabinet of Ministers sanctioned the creation of the “Het'mank'ska stolicya” (Hetman capital) in the town of Baturyn in the Chernihiv region, nationalized and authorized the conservation and restoration of Cossack monuments in the city of Hlukhiv in the Sums'ka region, and approved plans to develop the national preserve “Khorytysia” in Zaporizhia.

Consecrated on August 24, 2000, the recreated Dormition cathedral of the Kyiv-Pechers'ka lavra is an approximate replica of the monument as it appeared prior to its destruction in 1941 (fig. 12 and 21). It rests on the original foundations of the lost


26[26] Presidential edict, no. 14/95 (04/01/1995).


31[31] The government restoration institute “Ukrproektrestavratsiia” generated the plans for the recreated cathedral. The project was headed by: O. A. Hrazhis, leading architect and project manager; A. A.
The cathedral and incorporates within its structure all walls that survived the 1941 explosion, including the seventeenth-century southwest corner (fig. 15). Periods of decline, natural disasters, as well as subsequent refurbishments, renovations and reconstruction of the Dormition Cathedral greatly altered, if not practically annihilated its eleventh-century core. However, on the east sanctuary apse of the recreated cathedral, small fragments of original eleventh-century brickwork as well as replicated eleventh-century brickwork can be seen (fig. 22). In the cathedral’s interior a small baptistery chapel has been rebuilt in the Kyivan Rus' style (fig. 23). Its architectural form and mosaic decoration are purely conjectural. The remainder of the cathedral is to be refurbished with copies of baroque and nineteenth-century painting and furnishing that formed part of interior décor of the sanctuary prior to its destruction.  

Resting on injection piles that have disturbed the poorly studied cultural strata, the recreated cathedral severely restricts any further archeological research. Moreover, the uninformed visitor to the cathedral will find it impossible to distinguish the actual surviving remains from the recreated structure. Ultimately, only the conviction that the significance of the recreated cathedral outweighs the value of the poorly preserved architectural remains can justify their loss.

While recreation of the Dormition Cathedral had been discussed in Soviet times, the topic of rebuilding the Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes was taboo. Its 1935 demolition had been part of an elaborate plan outlined by the Communist Party to replace the center of Kyiv’s medieval upper town with a new administrative complex (figs. 24 and 25).

Rozhkov and A. H. Antoniuk, engineers; V. F. Bobinina and S. K. Shtukov, architects; L. M. Kroshchenko and N. N. Perunova, art historians; and V. O. Kharlamov, archeologist.


In 1108-1113, Prince Sviatoslav, son of Prince Iaroslav the Wise, founded the Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes within the expanded boundaries of the medieval Kyiv. Housing princely burials and the relics of St. Barbara, richly decorated with mosaic on the interior, and adorned with golden domes on the exterior, by the mid-nineteenth century the cathedral came to serve as a terminus on the central monumental axis of the old city that was defined by the complex of the Cathedral of St. Sophia on its other end. Refurbished and greatly remodeled in the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, the Cathedral of St. Michael survived into the twentieth century in its Cossack baroque form with limited nineteenth-century additions. In the interior, large areas of twelfth-century mosaic decoration usually attributed to a joint workshop of Byzantine and Rus' artists still decorated the sanctuary area. Sheltering some of the few extant examples of this form of monumental art to survive from the medieval period in the world, the Cathedral of St. Michael was considered second in importance only to the Cathedral of St. Sophia among historical and cultural monuments in Ukraine.\[34\]

An architectural survey conducted from June to August 1934, however, detected only insignificant twelfth-century remains in the Cathedral of St. Michael and concluded that the seventeenth-century Cossack baroque structure was not worth preserving.\[35\] Experts from the Russian Academy of Arts in Leningrad removed exposed twelfth-century mosaics and frescoes from the cathedral walls and transferred them to museum collections (fig. 26).\[36\] Despite the protests of scholars and other cultural activists,


\[35\] The archaeologists F. Movchanivs'kyi and K. Goncharov submitted this evaluation report.

some of whom were arrested and lost their lives for voicing their opinions, the Cathedral of St. Michael was demolished in 1935 (fig. 27). The proposed Administrative Center was never constructed, and, until the 1998 recreation of the cathedral, the site remained unoccupied.

The destruction of the Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes forever changed the architectural landscape of Kyiv’s upper town. Considering the historical and cultural significance of the cathedral, as well as the strong national connotation this monument acquired as a result of its destruction in Soviet times, it is not surprising that it was the first to be recreated in Ukraine. The completed Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes attempts to replicate the Cossack baroque forms of its predecessor as they appeared in the 1930s. Notably, nineteenth-century additions that the architects of the recreation project considered disruptive to the overall baroque aesthetic of the structure were omitted in the recreation. In addition, in order to make evident the origin of the lost cathedral in the Kyivan Rus' period, on the exterior of the central apse recreated twelfth-century brickwork was inserted (fig. 28). This detail suggests that had the structure survived, it would have been preserved in a manner similar to Kyiv’s Cathedral of St. Sophia (fig. 7). This falsified architectural detail appears to be an attempt to enhance the realism and, therefore, the credibility and authority of the modern construction.

The need to establish continuity with the Kyivan Rus' period also influenced the recreation of the interior of the cathedral. Here due to lack of documentation, scholars

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37 Among the scholars who voiced their protest regarding the destruction of the cathedral were: Prof. Mykola Makarenko, arrested on April 26, 1934, deported to Kazan' on May 23, 1934, and executed October 28, 1942; Prof. Fedor Ernst, arrested in October, 1933, imprisoned for three years on May 29, 1934, and executed on October 28, 1942; and Prof. Stefan Taranushenko, arrested on October 14, 1933, and imprisoned on November 24, 1934.

38 The architectural studio of Iu. Losyts'kyi prepared preliminary architectural plans for the recreation of the Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes. The engineers, L. L. Kozachynskyi, H. P. Haiko and Iu. V. Kantur of “Kyievproukt” were responsible for the general construction plans.
and restorers were free to conjure up a decorative scheme that they felt met the specifications of their recreation project. Rather than opting for a baroque décor in keeping with the exterior, a mosaic and fresco program based on surviving Rus' and Byzantine monuments was adopted for the central core of the cathedral (fig. 29).³⁹³⁹ Again the assumption being that the interior of the Cathedral of St. Michael, had it survived, would have resembled that of Kyiv’s Cathedral of St. Sophia (fig. 8). In an ironic twist, the Cathedral of St. Michael, which was deemed unworthy of preservation in the 1930s because of its largely baroque structure and lack of medieval remains, has today been recreated in its baroque form, but with fabricated twelfth-century elements added to the interior and exterior of the structure.

The Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes was the first of the lost monuments to be recreated. Many scholars and public activists objected to the project labeling it as little more than architectural falsification. They questioned the validity of any undertaking that would irreparably damage original remains, regardless of their poor state of preservation, so as to replace them with a copy.⁴⁰⁴⁰ The hazards of attempting to revive the past in the present are vividly revealed in well-studied European nineteenth-century reconstruction and reproduction projects.⁴¹⁴¹ Recovery efforts following twentieth-century wartime devastation, however, have confirmed the psychological and

³⁹³⁹ For some of the proposals that were discussed for the decoration of the interior of the Cathedral of St. Michael, see: Iu. Losystskyi, “Do proektiv ozdoblennia inter’ieru,” Pan’iatyk Ukrainy 1 (1999), pp. 32-35; and Irma Tots’ka, “Prohrama mal’van’ inter’ieru Mykhailiv’s’koho soboru,” Pan’iatyk Ukrainy 1 (1999), pp. 25-31. A scholarly council composed of members of the National Committee for Urban Development and Architecture and the Kyiv City Administration approved the final scheme.


social need and benefits of restoration and reconstruction, especially following sudden unnatural losses.  

Preservation and restoration projects attempt to suspend time and maintain “authentic” traces or representations of the past in present contexts. They are signs of continuity. Preservation emphasizes the indexical and restoration the iconical nature of signs, and both derive their symbolic significance from their viewers. The recreated monuments in Kyiv can be described as “icons parading as indexes,” and as such they are even more dependent on their beholders for their meaning. They are in fact “intentional monuments” of “unintentional monuments” that memorialize the present interpretation of the past for the future. According to Yuri Losytskyi, the main architect for the Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes, his work consisted of “replacing a lost monument with a worthy copy and should be judged on its own aesthetic merit, as well as on its adherence to archeological and restoration criteria.”

Instead of scrutinizing the recently recreated cathedrals in Kyiv as architectural falsifications, perhaps there is more to be gained by considering the ground on which their interpretation as symbols of national identity rests. The recreated monuments construct new narratives of shared experiences by re-presenting and reusing architectural idioms familiar to their viewers from their cultural context. Rather than trying to meticulously recreate lost structures to a specific historical period of perceived national

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greatness, they celebrate the present reframing of Ukraine’s self-identity - one which sees its roots in the Kyivan Rus’ past, its development in the Cossack period, its definition in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and its institutionalization in the Soviet period.

The recreated cathedrals differ from their Soviet predecessors not only in the forms they choose to reproduce, but also in their projected use. They are intended to parallel the cognitive and social aspects of the lost structure in the present landscape of the city. To accomplish this jurisdiction of the recreated monuments has been conferred to the Church. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate services the Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes, while the Dormition Cathedral of the Kyiv-Pechers'ka lavra has been relinquished to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The recreated Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes has assumed a central role in the urban structure of modern Kyiv (figs. 30 and 31). Holiday, as well as daily, morning and evening services are open to the public. The cathedral structure complements other medieval monuments of the upper town and restores part of Kyiv’s lost golden-domed skyline. The new open space before the cathedral attracts pedestrians who linger on the cathedral grounds. This has become the chosen location for many state functions and celebrations, as well as for anti-government protests (fig. 32 and 33). Concerts are held in the cathedral square on specific holidays, and this is where foreign dignitaries meet with the Ukrainian people (fig. 34). The cathedral and its surrounding space have in fact become a new locus for shared experiences and collective memories.

Like the Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes, the recreated Dormition Cathedral complements the monastic architectural setting within which it is located. However, the Dormition cathedral has not yet been open for services and its position on the territory of the National Kyiv-Pechers'k Historical and Cultural Reserve makes it difficult to predict how the issue of access for the faithful will be resolved.

“The Program and Procedures for the Recreation of Prominent Monuments of
History and Culture of Ukraine,” approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 1999, is a well-intentioned statement aimed at consolidating a monumental cultural landscape on the territory of the Ukrainian state. Yet, even the completion of just three monuments from the list of fifty-six underscores the plurality of collective cultural identity in modern Ukraine. The two recreated cathedrals in Kyiv have especially highlighted the tensions between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. And the sooner-than-planned recreation of the Cathedral of St. Volodymyr in Khersones has revealed the pressure to accommodate the ethnic Russian population residing in the country.

Pursued at a high pace, frequently to meet some arbitrarily set political deadline and questionable financial objectives, the recreation projects have neglected to adequately record and preserve the cultural remains they aim to reproduce. They also reveal compromises in the quality of their construction and in aesthetic considerations. As recreations, they engage in stereotypical projections of past architectural forms into the present, distancing these forms from the conventions of past contexts and infusing them with new associations. The Cossack baroque forms of the Cathedral of St. Michael of the Golden Domes and the Dormition Cathedral of the Kyiv-Pechers'ka lavra, so fervently associated in the 1930s and 1940s with the existence of a distinct Ukrainian national polity under Cossack rule, now service two competing Orthodox Patriarchates, one recently established and the other with allegiances that transcend current national boundaries. And neo-Byzantine architectural forms, until recently linked with nineteenth-century Russian imperialism, have been recreated by the Ukrainian government for its own political objective in the Cathedral of St. Volodymyr in Khersones. The contemporary self-identification of the Ukrainian people with such neo-Byzantine forms is evident in Kyiv, where the surviving nineteenth-century Cathedral of St. Volodymyr built in the neo-Byzantine style, now functions as the seat of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate.
While the historical role of recreated architectural monuments can be manipulated and re-presented, their selection and reworking takes place within the limits set by the culture of the people they represent otherwise they would carry few possibilities for interpretation. It is the specificity of the circumstances of the creation, use, destruction, and recreation of historic monuments that engender them with a sense of continuity between the past and the present, and that projects this sense of connectedness into the future. However, it is the variability of the interpretation of their forms that allows their silhouettes to be naturalized as part of a nation’s cultural landscape.\[45\]

The recreated cathedrals in Kyiv and Khersones are contemporary re-presentations of their predecessors, but they are not pure fiction. Their forms are motivated by history and a system of signification that binds the past to the present. It may be tempting to dismiss the three recreated cathedrals as insipid architectural clichés of past architectural forms limited to an evoked continuity with the lost original structures, but this would not explain their vitality in today's social reality. The recreated cathedrals do not present ingenious or novel visions of reality, nor do they merit aesthetic contemplation, instead their value lies in their effect. It is the familiarity and ubiquity of their forms, as much as the very act of their recreation and their intended incorporation into the rituals of daily life that bridges the gap between the past and the present perceived as having been created by the untimely destruction of their predecessors. What is unnerving about the rash trend of recreations in Ukraine, is the realization that this form of healing of old wounds not only acquiesces the past to the present, but also subjects the present to the past.
