

WHAT DOES A RUSSIAN CEMETERY LOOK LIKE? THE RELATIONSHIP OF INFORMAL AND LEGAL PRACTICES.

Abstract: Cemeteries are an integral part of urban space, to which little attention is paid in Russia. To date, there are no comprehensive projects aimed at the development of cemeteries and their integration into the space of the city (Grabalov, 2022).

Modern regulation of cemeteries began to take shape after the 1917 revolution and the development of the idea of widespread secularization. At the beginning of the 1920s, cemeteries left the sphere of influence of the church, and old rituals began to gradually die out. At the same time, the new state was in no hurry to pay attention to the creation of new practices, much less to allocate funds for the maintenance of necropolises (Sokolova 2018, 2022). We see a similar situation to this day. At the same time, to the lack of funding is added a weak legal framework and a general lack of interest. As a result, issues relating to the activities of cemeteries are not raised at the federal level, and exist on the residual principle in the field of view of municipal authorities (Molyarenko, 2017). Moreover, in the case of a new law on the organization of local government, cemeteries will be in an even more dismal situation.

The lack of clear legal regulation combined with a lack of funding led to the creation of informal practices among space users, which is reflected both in the layout of burial plots and in the appearance of individual elements - monuments and fences (Mokhov, 2014).

Our study focuses more on the appearance of Soviet cemetery plots, as well as the influence of "Soviet" trends in the design of graves today, as they remain relevant in almost intact forms. Vostryakovsky cemetery in Moscow was chosen as the subject of the study during the work with theoretical and practical material. Since it meets the formal criteria to the greatest extent: it is open during the Soviet period, which allows tracing various trends in the formation of the appearance, does not have a special protective status, continues to expand.

The main method of research was observation, as conducting in-depth interviews with relatives proved problematic for a number of reasons: difficulty in finding contacts, as well as inaccuracies that could arise from the fact that the monuments were made long ago. An additional method of research was to conduct interviews with cemetery staff, administrators, and employees of stores located in the area.

In our research we focused on three elements - monument, fence, decorations, as well as looked at the layout of the entire site. As a result we have marked out typical and atypical for burials elements of external appearance for certain stages of Soviet time. Such features are associated with both infrastructural underdevelopment of cemeteries, which encouraged some people to create elements of site decoration on their own, which is confirmed by the study of S. Mokhov (Mokhov, 2018, 2020), and in general the partial lack of control over the space of cemeteries, which causes the unusual size and location of burial plots.

According to the results of the study, we conclude that the current state of cemeteries is largely due to the lack of regulation of their functioning both in Soviet times and now. Burials that were organized in the Soviet time today imperatively do not lead to compliance with existing requirements (although there are virtually no requirements), due to the lack of data on those responsible for the sites. At the same time in the case of new burials there are requirements for the location of monuments and fences within the boundaries of the allotted

plot. Despite the fact that the size of the plot is strictly regulated today, people begin to use other ways to "immortalize" the dead, namely the height of the monument and its shape. Such practices lead to conflicts between "neighbors," but the current legal regulation does not have any mechanisms for resolving such disputes (Mokhov, Zotova, 2018).

Thus, the undeveloped legislation, lack of proper state control over the ritual sphere make cemeteries an ambiguous urban area, which is interesting for researchers of different directions.