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Ilyushin Il-2 in Archival and Architectural Manifestation of Historical Memory of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45

## Abstract

The article examines and compares archival documents from the Russian State Archive in Samara (RGA v.g. Samara) and Monument to the Ilyushin Il-2 as components of the “site of commemoration,” which has become a part of historical and cultural code of the city. The example of perception of this national and local symbol of the war reveals features of and prospects for constructing historical memory; detailed written evidences, vivid visual images, large-scale architectural and urban planning solutions are used. The theoretical basis for the research is Maurice Halbwachs’ concept of “historical memory” and Pierre Nora’s “lieux de m?moire.” Russian and foreign scientists are developing these concepts within the frameworks of interdisciplinary “memory studies.” The important role in these studies belongs to historians. Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45 became a backbone idea for our country. It gives meaning to the historical process in the 20th century, manifesting in numerous and various empirical data, events, and artifacts. The Ilyushin Il-2 became a significant “site of memory” in Samara for two reasons. Firstly, many documents on its creation are stored in the Russian State Archive in Samara and are available to researchers and constantly exhibited (on-line as well as real). Secondly, the Ilyushin Il-2 visually symbolizes Samara’s contribution to the Great Victory, as the aircraft, manufactured and restored here, became a center of the composition of the monument to military and labour glory of the citizens in the days of the Great Patriotic War. This monument was opened in 1973. Its last reconstruction was carried out in 2015–17 in order to preserve this unique historical relic. The aircraft-monument and written evidence on the history of its creation, destinies of inventors, production organizers, engineers, workers are situated not far from one other. The Constructor Ilyushin Square and the Memory Square, where the monument and the archive building stand, are connected by Moscow Avenue. It is not just a transport artery, but a pivot of historical memory uniting its documentary, material, and artistic incarnations into general cultural space, in which the Il-2 plays its important role as a “site of memory.”

## Keywords

Russia in the 20th – 21st centuries, archive, local history, aviation technology, historical memory, “lieux de m?moire,” memorials, archives, historical and educational activities.

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