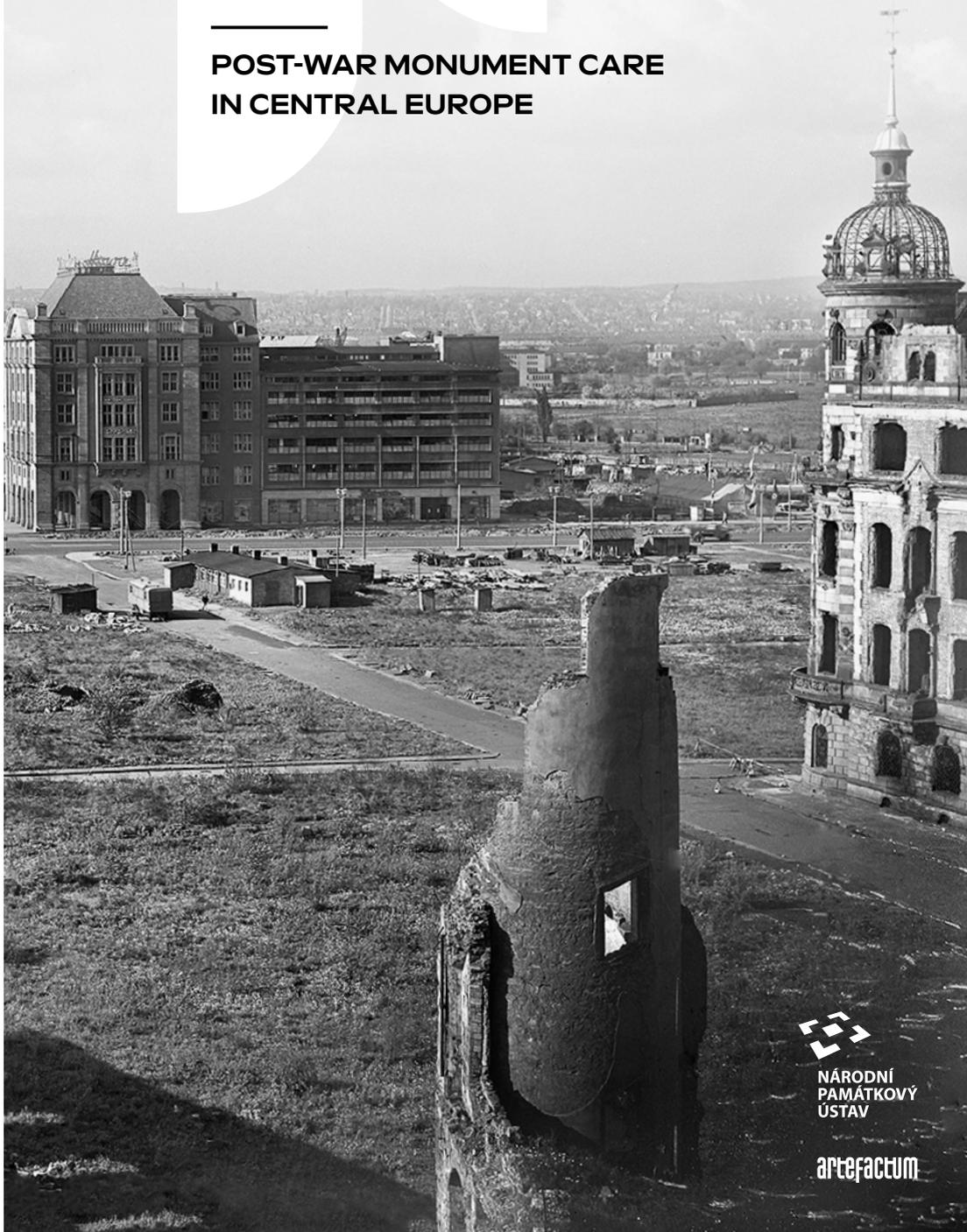


Jakub Bachtík  
Tereza Johanidesová  
Kristina Uhlíková (edd.)

**IN THE NAME OF SOCIALISM,  
IN THE SHADOW OF THE MONARCHY**

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**POST-WAR MONUMENT CARE  
IN CENTRAL EUROPE**



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Institute of Art History, Czech Academy of Sciences  
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HERITAGE  
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# Contents

**14 01 Introduction**

Jakub Bachtík – Tereza Johanidesová – Kristina Uhlíková

## GENERAL STUDIES

**34 02 The Alchemy of Preservation in Postwar Czechoslovakia: Agency, Structure, and the Containment of Things in a Time of Mass Expulsion and Dispossession**

Cathleen Giustino

**64 03 In other words: to care for the heritage properties of part of our nation's socialist construction. State heritage care in the Czech lands from the early 1950s until the publication of the Cultural Heritage Properties Act in 1958**

Michal Sklenář – Kristina Uhlíková

**94 04 Bureaucratization, centralization, categorization. The preparation of the Act on State Heritage Management**

Michal Novotný

**118 05 Monument preservation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Austria**

Paul Mahringer

**140 06 Monument Protection in Hungary in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century**

Pál Lövai

**180 07 Creating the Conservation System in People's Republic of Croatia, 1945–1960**

Marko Špikić

- 204**   **08**   **Monument preservation, cultural policy and urban development in Berlin, Capital of the German Democratic Republic**  
Alena Janatková
- 222**   **09**   **Reconstruction and Religious Heritage in the Polish People's Republic. Construction of a Polish Patrimony?**  
Marcus van der Meulen
- 258**   **10**   **"Aesthetic-Charitable View"? Traditionalism in Heritage Conservation in the Czech lands Between 1945 and 1990**  
Martin Horáček

#### CASE STUDIES

- 294**   **11**   **The Vltava Cascade and Czech conservation in the 1950s and 1960s**  
Martin Gaži
- 318**   **12**   **The Palace of Culture in Dresden**  
Alf Furkert
- 344**   **13**   **Devastation and extinction of cultural heritage properties as a result of demolition events in the Czech borderlands after 1945**  
David Kovařík
- 366**   **14**   **Once it was here, now it's not... Specifics of the care of sacral furnishings within the Czech lands during the totalitarian era and after its fall**  
Šárka Radostová
- 398**   **Summary**
- 410**   **Bibliography**
- 440**   **Index of names**
- 444**   **Index of locations**

01

# Introduction

JAKUB BACHTÍK – TEREZA JOHANIDESOVÁ – KRISTINA UHLÍKOVÁ

*“The relics of the past were seen as symbols of exploitation and were therefore disposed of as instruments of ideological denigration and control. The Revolution, however, had to justify not only the radical social change it brought about, but also its right of succession.”<sup>1</sup>*

The concept of this book is largely based on the specific situation of monument care in the Czech Republic. This is a field that has a strong and rich tradition here, as well as a robust professional and official apparatus. The process of understanding its transformations in the decades after the end of World War II in more detail, however, let alone in an international context, is still in its infancy here, even thirty years after the collapse of the communist regime. Similarly, reflection on current methodological and theoretical approaches that could be innovatively applied to the research of historical and cultural heritage (led by the field of critical heritage studies)<sup>2</sup> is still very slow and cautious in the Czech milieu. Our aim was to offer a comparison with the transformations of monument care in neighboring countries and regions in order to understand the changes that the field has undergone in the decades after the Second World War. Initially, we wanted to do so by meeting with experts in monument care and preservation from the Central European region. This actually took place in 2021 in the form of an international conference entitled “Monuments and monument care in Czechoslovakia and other Central European countries during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”.<sup>3</sup> It showed that perspectives from individual Central European countries provide a valuable overview and rich comparative material that researchers had not had available in a more comprehensive form. We have therefore decided to approach some of the conference participants to contribute to this volume, which has the ambition to offer this comparative overview to a specialist readership within but also beyond the Central European region.

In exploring the history of a field as complex as monument care, there are a myriad of topics that can be opened up, as well as a myriad of ways to approach the entire inquiry methodologically.. Some of these have been shown in the recently published collective monograph *Heritage under Socialism: Preservation in Eastern and Central Europe, 1945-1991*,<sup>4</sup> which coincidentally shares an area of interest with our book.<sup>5</sup> Our volume shares many of the theses and emphases presented in that collective monograph, but its focus is essentially different. The authors of *Heritage under Socialism* draw on the concept of critical heritage studies and focus more on “heritage” as a discursive construct, as a social and cultural practice, and how it was transformed under socialist regimes or how it was used in domestic public space and international contacts. In contrast, the starting point of our book is more traditionally historical. The very title of our publication reflects this. We have chosen the term “monument” (from Latin, *monere* – to admonish, to warn)<sup>6</sup> as the central concept, and from it we derive the name of the field (“monument care”), which deals with the protection, conservation, reconstruction, and management of monuments. At the same time, we are aware that from a contemporary perspective, the term “monument” may seem somewhat old-fashioned<sup>7</sup> in relation to the more topical concept of “heritage”<sup>8</sup> and the term “monument care” too dependent on the German “Denkmalpflege” (the care of monuments). However, the historical conditionality of these terms is precisely the reason why they seem to be an appropriate label for what we collectively consider to be the expert activity in the field of heritage property management in Central Europe, or in countries with historical experience under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. “Monument” (*Denkmal* in German, *památka* in Czech, *müemlék* in Hungarian, *zabytek* in Polish, *spomenik* in Croatian) was by far the most common term used in relation to research and conservation of tangible cultural heritage from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and its semantic field across cultural and linguistic backgrounds was to a considerable extent common, whereas other terms do not show such a degree of similarity for the period in question. At the same time, however, the authors of the individual chapters were left free to choose the terminology they would use to deal with this topic in a way that suited the intent of their message. Many of the central concepts of the heritage issues often carry different connotations in different linguistic and cultural settings, resulting from particular discursive practices and cultural and social tendencies,<sup>9</sup> which would be very difficult to unify in the interest of our publication.

The historiographical background of our book is not only reflected in the term “monument” in its title, but also in the composition of the partners who participated

in the preparation of the publication – in addition to the “disciplinary” institutions whose subject of research and protection are monuments, i. e. the National Heritage Institute and the Institute of Art History of the CAS, these were institutes specialized in the study of modern history, or the history of modern totalitarianism, namely the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Institute for Contemporary History of the CAS. Although from today’s perspective it is already quite clear that tangible cultural heritage has been and is the subject and interest of many different groups and communities that participate in shaping its meaning, our publication deliberately follows the dominant discourse on heritage (i.e., what Critical Heritage Studies today calls the “authorized heritage discourse”).<sup>10</sup> The values and meanings of this discourse have been shaped primarily by state-dominated and regulated monument care and its actors – conservators, state officials, government officials, and regional bureaus, i.e., mostly cultural policy elites whose agency has been constrained in each state by a particular specific legislative and administrative framework, to which we take significant account in this publication. For our purposes, therefore, we understand monument care as a specific field focused on the protection of cultural monuments in the narrower sense of the term, that is, on the expert and institutional care of tangible heritage.

In doing so, we trace the institutional transformations of this field against the background of post-war social changes and its functioning under the conditions of non-democratic regimes of the “people’s democratic” type in the 1950s to 1980s, and what these transformations of the field say about the regimes themselves is also at the forefront of our interest. For example, in relation to state socialism, can we refer to its modernist vision of the preservation and presentation of monuments? If so, how did this manifest itself in the treatment of the cultural properties on the one hand, and in the formation of the system of state care for cultural heritage and its structures on the other? What role in the formation of the socialist discourse of cultural heritage did the apparatus of power assign to the conservators and monument care experts themselves, and to what extent did they actually participate in the construction of this system?

We focus our attention on only one of the many of practices tied to heritage, specifically the management and protection of historical monuments, sites, and cultural artefacts. The other set, which includes heritage from the perspective of tourism and leisure activities (visiting monuments, etc.) is not the primary focus of this volume. We have also left aside the entire broad area of methodology and theory of the field and the question of the changing view of “heritage” as such.<sup>11</sup> Nor have we had the ambition to compare the differences between the

Eastern and Western blocs of post-war Europe, or even to address the question of its global transformations.

We also decided to focus our attention more narrowly geographically, on today's Poland, Hungary, Croatia, the Czech Republic, and Austria. To map the situation in the whole area of the European "Eastern bloc" was deemed too ambitious a task. It was suggested to stay on the area of "Central Europe", but this is a very ambiguous and, as a result, confusing concept, both geographically and politically. We therefore chose the area of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy as a starting point, which is more graspable, and has the undeniable advantage that it is on the soil of this confluence that a strong tradition of monument care was born in terms of theoretical and institutional aspects – the regions under study are therefore based on the same tradition, which makes potential comparisons much easier. After some hesitation, we decided to add the former East German area to the survey,<sup>12</sup> both for a valuable comparison of the situation within the "Eastern Bloc" countries, and because it cannot be separated culturally and politically from Poland and Czechoslovakia. Although the Austrian lands were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, they did not remain in the Soviet zone of influence in the post-war period but rather developed as a democratic country. They can thus provide us with a good comparative example of the development of monument care in the same tradition under different political regimes.

### **Monument care as a discipline in historical perspective**

Choosing the field of monument care as a perspective for understanding the principles, themes, and transformations of Central European societies after the Second World War may not seem like an obvious choice at first glance. In fact, however, it is one of the fields in which several types of social themes, and thus several different levels through which to trace the nature of a particular regime at a given stage, meet in a remarkable way.

Monument care, as it has been shaped within the state power structures in Central Europe since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is first and foremost a field that deals theoretically and quite practically with the relationship to the past, specifically with efforts to define, inventory, protect, and preserve in good condition the tangible heritage, that is, the material forms of social memory.<sup>13</sup> It is therefore directly related to what the community claims or wants to claim as its roots,

what it considers an important part of collective memory, and what it wants to diminish or completely eliminate from it. It is thus a sphere that has been a very useful instrument across many regimes, usually structured according to politically and ideologically motivated narratives while providing suitable supports for them and thus helping to legitimize them.<sup>14</sup> However, monument care is also a professional discipline, combining a humanistic, cultural-historical basis with a range of other human and natural science expertise (restoration and related technologies, architecture, archaeology, etc.). It is therefore, by its very nature, a highly expert, elite sphere of activity, subject to a specific kind of demands and regulation – if only in the sense that access to the field or certain levels of it is subject to various restrictions. The expert level – whether in the form of criteria applied to the practice of the field or in the form of specific professional concepts, outputs, or principles promoted – could come into conflict with ideological and political emphases. It is therefore interesting to see in which areas such conflicts occurred and with what results.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, however monument care is also an organizational system which, especially in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, became one of the official agendas of state administration. In doing so, it takes on different forms and different degrees of complexity. It can take the form of a basic system of rules which is rather a professional apparatus that serves the state administration primarily as an expert consultant. However, it can also be administered by a complex monument law, the observance of which is supervised by a separate official-expert apparatus with its own powers. The nature of the establishment, including its shadow principles, various forms of negotiation, etc., is necessarily inscribed in the functioning of these structures. At the same time, the concrete form of the monument care system and its interdependence with the apparatus of power gives plasticity to the aforementioned conflicts between the expert level and ideological interests: representatives of monument care often found themselves in a position of opposing controversial intentions promoted by the state power, but doing so de facto from the position of employees of the state power-administrative apparatus. In fact, this kind of contradiction is very characteristic of monument care as a field at the border between the academic and practical spheres; and learning about individual cases or the fates of specific actors can provide valuable material for understanding possible strategies for “survival” under authoritarian-type regimes.<sup>16</sup>

In the third place, monument care is one of the representatives of the interest in “soft values”, meaning those that are not (at first sight) vital or, in a narrow

sense, strategic, but which are related to the overall cultural maturity and level of civilization of a given community. Thus, monument care, like nature conservation, promotion of living culture, etc., says much about the real priorities and value settings of a given community, especially where there is a clash between formal declarations of interests and commitments on the one hand and their real implementation on the other.<sup>17</sup>

### **Same or different? On continuity and challenges**

Of course, these themes could not all be explored in the same detail in one volume. The concept of this book is based on a comparison of the situation in the various Central European regions. Our primary aim was to offer a basic context for understanding the main differences and commonalities between the different “monument care” systems, even at the risk that the result will be more of an overview and that it will not always be possible to develop the individual studies to an adequate depth. The focus of most contributions therefore remains primarily on institutions, or rather on the construction of monument care as a system. The second thematic area is the response of conservation to contemporary ideological or general social demand. The third area of topics then concerns significant heritage cases – both demolitions and restorations – that illuminate the workings of a particular system in greater detail. But apart from the already mentioned area of disciplinary methodology what has been left out is, for example, a more detailed look at the life stories of specific actors, both conservationists and politicians and officials, who had a major impact on the shape of the individual systems. Each of the studies also remains in its “own region”; we did not set out to engage in an interpretive synthesis across the systems; we consider it telling, within the current state of knowledge, that the individual overviews stand side by side in a concentrated and comprehensive form.

This does not mean, however, that no more general theses can be expressed over the material collected. On the contrary, it is already possible to point out several areas that deserve closer attention in the context of research into the transformation of post-war conservation.

If we concentrate on comparisons between the various Central European conservation efforts, the most basic question is that of similarities and differences. Post-war Central Europe has traditionally been described as part of the “Eastern Bloc”, a term that suggests a high degree of homogeneity. However,

the comparison shows (not too surprisingly) that monument care within this “bloc” created very different worlds in many ways.

One of the most striking reasons for this is the different continuity of the field in different regions, a conclusion that is also made in the introductory study of the publication *Heritage under Socialism*.<sup>18</sup> Monument care is a relatively young field, its basic premises are firmly tied to the discourse of scientific and social change in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in the interwar period it was still largely searching for its face and social role. In view of the radical social changes that took place after the end of the Second World War, one of the key questions is therefore to what extent the specific shape of monument care as a field and as an exercise of state administration was determined by the current political system and its ideological norms, and to what extent professional, personnel, and procedural continuity, building on the previous tradition, played a role. A comparison of the situation in the countries of the Soviet sphere of influence in Central Europe provides a rather telling answer: although it is a geographically small and historically interconnected area, and although (except for Austria) it was part of the same ideological and political bloc after the Second World War, approaches to monument care differ markedly from country to country in terms of methodology, themes related to heritage, and the functioning of the whole system.

This can be illustrated, for example, by comparing the situation in post-war Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In the late 1950s, Czechoslovakia saw the adoption of the Heritage Act, the establishment of a related state structure (a system of expert-administrative regional centers and a national methodological center in the form of the State Institute for Monument Conservation and Nature Conservation) and the establishment of a list of cultural monuments or a system of urban monument reserves. Hungary, on the other hand, has never adopted a law on monument care, and its heritage institutions have always had the status of more or less respected expert institutions with an advisory, consultative voice. The nature of both systems is clearly influenced by the continuity with previous traditions. In Czechoslovakia, the building of the monument care system was closely linked to the foundations laid in the former Habsburg Commonwealth – not only in terms of methodology and organization, but also in terms of personnel. Some of the key figures in post-war conservation began their professional careers under the monarchy. Although Hungary was part of the same state, it was part of the much more autonomous and independent Hungary, which administered this agenda independently – instead of the Austrian Central

Commission, there was a National Commission from the early 1880s onwards, which remained the only official authority for monument conservation until the end of World War II and became part of the state administration only in the 1930s. This connection is evident not only in the beginnings of the various communist systems, but also after their demise – the Czech Republic still has the (many times amended) Heritage Act of 1986, and the regionally distributed layout of the monuments departments remains, not to mention the methodological doctrines of the field. In Hungary, on the other hand, the inherited institutional fragility became fatal to the entire field when the government of Viktor Orbán completely dissolved the monument care system after years of targeted marginalization.

At the same time, the continuity across regimes did not only consist in the adoption of methodologies and organizational structures, but also, of course, in a strong personnel dimension. It was by no means exceptional that personalities who had been instrumental in building the field in the interwar period remained influential even after the postwar political changes; in some cases, even the decisive actors (e.g., Czechoslovak Zdeněk Wirth,<sup>19</sup> Croatian Ljubo Karaman,<sup>20</sup> and others) managed to retain substantial influence from before the First World War, i.e., through several political upheavals and regimes. A detailed study of these lives can be extremely valuable not only for understanding the development of the field, but also for understanding specific professional strategies and less obvious continuities within the transition between seemingly radically different regimes.

A second important source of difference between the Eastern Bloc countries lies in the different types of challenges and tasks they faced in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A quite fundamental and yet purely practical difference stemmed from the size and preservation of the heritage fund, the shape of which was drastically transformed by the events of the Second World War. On the one hand were the German countries<sup>21</sup> or Poland<sup>22</sup> which dealt with the issue of monuments and entire cities razed to the ground during the war.<sup>23</sup> Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, was faced with the problem of how to deal with the huge amount of movable and immovable property left behind by the forcibly expelled German inhabitants;<sup>24</sup> Poland, with its new western borders, was faced with a similar situation in a different context.<sup>25</sup> These circumstances have not only influenced the amount and nature of the work on the restoration of cultural heritage, but have also defined the basic methodological discourse of individual monument care – the evaluation and meaning of conservation versus reconstruction in the restoration of monuments, the importance and interpretation of the concept of “authenticity of the monument”, and in general what is considered to be a model example of monument restoration and the care of the tangible cultural heritage.

Equally important, however, were differences in ideological approaches to cultural heritage. It is true for all Eastern Bloc countries that the care of cultural heritage became an important component in the process of ideologizing the past; what part of cultural heritage was valued and protected, and what part was ignored or outright destroyed, corresponded to which traditions a given regime wanted to claim and define itself against.<sup>26</sup> In addition, there were, especially in the first decade after the war, experiments in promoting a new layer of cultural heritage, recalling the past of the “workers’ movement”, the Communist parties and their prominent leaders.<sup>27</sup> However, in each country this process took a different form, also in terms of the type of monuments ideologized and the content of the ideologization. Again, it was more the specific local or national memory and tradition that played a role. One example is the layer of religious monuments. Traditional religion and religious life were at odds with the “scientific” communist view that these were phenomena destined at best for gradual extinction. But the practical approach to this area was far more determined by older traditions – while in traditionally skeptical Bohemia (but less so in Moravia or Slovakia) there was a fierce anti-church campaign that resulted, among other things, in hundreds of churches and other religious monuments being demolished or deliberately exposed to deterioration; in traditionally Catholic Poland, by contrast, the churches in the newly built Warsaw were able to become key symbols of revived national pride.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, the desire to nationalize cultural heritage and to dispose of what could be seen as unwanted heritage is a motive that was particularly evident in the first decade after the war in all the regions studied.<sup>29</sup>

In most cases it was specifically about “de-Germanization” – the attempt to cleanse heritage associated with the German national element, either by outright destruction or, even more often, by “resignifying”, reinterpreting the origins of individual monuments. Paradoxically, this tendency also applied to East Germany, where selected monuments and their presentation formed part of the narrative of a “pure” half of Germany whose traditions had nothing to do with the legacy of Nazism.<sup>30</sup> But similar movements were also influential in countries that did not have German countries as neighbors, as in the case of the search for a “Slavic” trace in Croatian antiquities, a response to the invocation of Roman tradition by fascist Italy.<sup>31</sup>

The process of cleansing or appropriating monuments deemed problematic for nationalist or ideological reasons did not only consist in adjusting their reading and interpretation, but often translated directly into their physical substance.

This was not just a matter of destroying inappropriate structures, but more often of removing controversial elements or adjusting them to fit the desired national-ideological narrative.<sup>32</sup> This “repainting” of history, which was only one manifestation of the more general approach of socialist dictatorships to the past, manifested itself in different ways. In particular, where entire cities destroyed by the war were reconstructed, this was often one of the important starting points of monumental reconstruction (this applies to Warsaw, for example, but also to the reconstruction carried out within Split or to monuments in East Germany). Elsewhere, it was more of a temptation, flirted with individually, in the restoration of specific monuments.

It should be noted, however, that this form of instrumentalization of the relationship to cultural heritage was not an invention of modern dictatorships. On the contrary, in the heated atmosphere of the post-war European split, a tradition rooted in the very DNA of interest in cultural heritage was only more strongly applied; monument care has been linked to the process of national self-awareness and self-identification since its earliest days. According to Ján Bakoš, it was “*the nationalization of art, which also allowed the protection of the art of the past to be constituted. Not only is its ownership socialized (where art is understood as property), but its socially enacted, compulsory protection is introduced, because art is considered a creation of the nation, an expression of its genius.*”<sup>33</sup> All the national movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century worked with respect for selected monuments that formed symbolic sites of national memory. Even then, part of this relationship to national heritage was an effort to purposefully reinterpret individual monuments (which often took the form of a dispute between different nationalities over who “owns” the monument),<sup>34</sup> to reinterpret and to (re)construct them in a completely new way.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, while the ideological “cleansing” of monuments is a common feature of monumental care within the Eastern Bloc, its concrete form and practice is again based more on specific domestic traditions and domestic continuities than on the common ideological framework of socialism. Although after the war there were proposals everywhere to get rid of monuments considered bourgeois, feudal, clerical, etc. on a widespread basis, such tendencies did not succeed anywhere, and each region eventually found a way to justify the role of even these “inappropriate” monuments for a particular historical memory – perhaps the most notable case is the assumption of the network of castles and chateaux, i.e. feudal, aristocratic, bourgeois, and even largely German monuments, under state protection in socialist Czechoslovakia.<sup>36</sup> Even where one can observe a more pronounced opposition to a layer of cultural heritage on the basis of an ideological key, as in the case of

religious monuments in Bohemia, its real core can ultimately be found in specific reminiscences going back far into the past of a given community.

The differences in the various regions of monument care also lay in the simple fact that no common doctrine on this matter ever emerged within the “Eastern Bloc”, at least not one that would be more consistently reflected in practice.

Recent studies have shown quite convincingly that conservationists from the “East” have been more involved in international affairs than it might at first seem<sup>37</sup> – the countries of the Eastern sphere were actively involved in the formulation of the Venice Charter and the establishment of UNESCO. And there was no lack of targeted outreach to the international public in the form of “presenting the achievements” of selected major renovations or technological innovations, *“as heritage assumed a central position in the construction of the self-image of the Soviet Union and other socialist states after World War II”*.<sup>38</sup> However, this did not happen to the same extent (e.g. Czechoslovakia did not join UNESCO until after 1989), and it is also a question for further investigation to what extent these contacts were reflected in concrete practice: i.e. whether, for specific major restorations, each country relied on its own school and methodology, or on cooperation with foreign experts, whether from the West or the East.

It is the concentration on specific spectacular projects at the expense of a more systematic, across-the-board care of cultural heritage that may be one of the common features of Eastern bloc conservation. Stories of pompously executed restorations stand out in contrast against the backdrop of widespread loss and demolition, which in some communities have acquired the character, without exaggeration, of cultural trauma. In fact, the consequences of socialist heritage management, in the form of neglected historic buildings and town and village centers, are often still being dealt with today in the former Eastern Bloc countries. Nevertheless, an honest answer to the question of whether socialist monument care has succeeded or failed in protecting cultural heritage will not be easy to find. The losses to cultural heritage did not result from the ideological and political doctrines of the communist regimes. On the contrary, they were committed to the importance of cultural heritage and its protection,<sup>39</sup> and were even able to build on the work begun in previous decades and establish (often very early on) a competent system, including a heritage law and a highly qualified professional apparatus capable of exceptional methodological and technological accomplishments. Moreover, some of the most glaring losses, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, were associated with the construction of industrial and transport infrastructure – the building of

dams, coal mining, highways, and housing developments – projects that were part of the modernization process taking place on both sides of the Iron Curtain, with similar impacts on nature and cultural heritage.<sup>40</sup>

The idea of heritage devastation, widespread destruction of monuments, and overall ecological catastrophe is now an integral part of the memory of communist domination in Central Europe. But it is fair to ask what the extent of the damage was in fact, when compared to the western side of the Iron Curtain, and what the real causes were. It seems, for example, that the answer will be different when looking at the 1950s and 1960s, when post-war modernization was underway across Europe, with systemic and widespread care of monuments still in its infancy, and the 1970s and 1980s, when the communist experiment had become so morally and economically exhausted that it was practically unable to provide adequate protection, either organizationally or economically. Thus, the problematic results of socialist conservation do not seem to have been influenced by ideological or political intentions, lack of systemic preparedness or low expert potential – rather, the decisive factor was the gradual collapse of the communist experiment as such.

*English translation by Bryce Belcher*





# Notes

- 1 Ján Bakoš, *Intelektuál & pamiatka* (Bratislava: Kalligram, 2004), 202.
- 2 We find the new concepts that Critical Heritage Studies brings to the field of cultural heritage research inspiring. However, that it is a strongly presentist-oriented field must be taken into account. Its origins in countries whose cultural and historical context is very different from that of Central Europe may be a complication. The uncritical transfer of these concepts and approaches inherent in the Anglo-American academic world to other milieus may bring with it some obstacles and cannot be done without understanding and adapting to the local conditions in which it is implemented. This issue has been touched upon previously by Matthew Rampley, *Contested Histories. Heritage and/as the Construction of the Past: An Introduction, Heritage, Ideology and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe. Contested Pasts, Contested Presents* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 1–5, and very recently the conference *Critical Heritage Studies: Central European Perspectives* organized by the Institute of Ethnology of the CAS (6–7 October, Prague) has also raised it for discussion.
- 3 The conference was held online from 26 to 29 April 2021. The papers presented can be viewed on the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes YouTube channel. Part of the papers presented here were published in the journal *Zprávy památkové péče* 82, no. 1 (2022).
- 4 Eszter Gantner, Corinne Geering, and Paul Vickers, eds., *Heritage under Socialism: Preservation in Eastern and Central Europe, 1945–1991* (New York – Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2022).
- 5 The topic of monument care in Central and Eastern Europe, although its main focus was the situation in Germany, was also addressed in Ursula Schädler-Saub, and Angela Weyer (eds.), *Geteilt – Vereint!: Denkmalpflege in Mitteleuropa zur Zeit des Eisernen Vorhangs und heute*. ICOMOS-Hefte des Deutschen Nationalkomitees (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2015), which brought together papers presented at the 2013 conference of the same name in Hildesheim.
- 6 Françoise Choay, *The invention of the historic monument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 6.
- 7 “The affirmative, present-oriented and accessible ‘heritage object’ versus the academically-validated, historically-contextualized *Denkmal*, which is different from it and for that reason may also prove difficult or unwieldy.” Quoted from Hans-Rudolf Meier, and Marion Steiner, Einführung = Introduction, *Denkmal – Erbe – Heritage: Begriffshorizonte am Beispiel der Industriekultur = Monument – Patrimony – Heritage: Industrial Heritage and the Horizons of Terminology* (Holzwinden: Jörg Mitzkat, 2018), 20.
- 8 The term “monument” and the context in which we use it (as well as the adjective “monumental” derived from it) belong, from the perspective of Critical Heritage Studies, primarily to the sphere of the hegemonic authorized heritage discourse. See Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), 12.
- 9 On the richness and diversity of heritage terminology in English, French and German, see Astrid Swenson, “Heritage, Patrimoine und Kulturerbe: Eine vergleichende historische Semantik,” in Dorothee Hemme, Markus Tauschek, and Regina Bendix, *Prädikat „Heritage“: Wertschöpfungen aus kulturellen Ressourcen* (Muenster: LIT Verlag, 2007), 53–74; Astrid Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage: Preserving the Past in France, Germany and England, 1789–1914* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 8–13.
- 10 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), 29–34.
- 11 Generally, on the methodology and its development, see, e.g., Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999); Miles Glendinnig, *The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation* (London – New York: Routledge, 2013); Gottfried Kiesow, *Denkmalpflege in Deutschland. Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: Theiss, 2000); Salvador Muñoz Viñas, *Contemporary Theory of Conservation*, (Oxford: Elsevier, 2005).

- 12 The level of professional attention and the number of publications focusing on monument care in the German Democratic Republic is an inspiring example for us, and at the same time proof of the depth and breadth to which the topic of cultural heritage and post-war heritage care in the area of socialist states can be treated. Selection: Sigrid Brandt, *Geschichte der Denkmalpflege in der SBZ/DDR. Dargestellt an Beispielen aus dem sächsischen Raum 1945–1961* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2003); Brian Campbell, “Preservation for the Masses: The Idea of *Heimat* and the *Gesellschaft für Denkmalpflege* in the GDR,” *Kunsttexte.de* 4, no. 3 (2004): 1–8; Franziska Klemstein, *Denkmalpflege zwischen System und Gesellschaft. Vielfalt denkmalpflegerischer Prozesse in der DDR (1952–1975)* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2021); Heinrich Magirius, *Denkmalpflege in der DDR, Denkmalpflege* 59, no. 2 (2001): 125–40; Jason James, *Preservation and National Belonging in Eastern Germany: Heritage Fetishism and Redeeming Germanness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
- 13 Christian Freigang, “Denkmalpflege,” in *Metzler Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft. Ideen, Methoden, Begriffe*, ed. Ulrich Pfisterer (Stuttgart: Springer-Verlag GmbH, 2011), 88.
- 14 On the interconnectedness of politics and monument care in Central Europe, see especially Bakoš, *Intelektuál & pamiatka*, and Michael S. Falser, *Zwischen Identität und Authentizität: zur politischen Geschichte der Denkmalpflege in Deutschland* (Dresden: Thelem, 2008).
- 15 As shown by the texts by Martin Gaži, Marko Špikić, and Šárka Radostová.
- 16 According to art historian Milena Bartlová, we can think of soft power, loyal resistance, or everyday resistance, where professionals sought strategies of adaptation at the cost of preserving the existence and level of the field and at the cost of remaining in an institution that fulfilled the tasks of the communist state, which was also reflected in the language used. This is not a specificity of art history or science, but a widely applied practice of historical actors that cannot be classified as either clearly persecuted or clearly pro-regime. See Milena Bartlová, *Dějiny českých dějin umění 1945–1969. Dějiny umění slouží vědě o člověku* (Praha: UMPRUM, 2020), 207.
- 17 On this conflict in the conditions of Czechoslovakia, see especially Matěj Spurný, *Making the Most of tomorrow: a laboratory of socialist modernity in Czechoslovakia* (Praha: Karolinum Press, 2019).
- 18 Corinne Geering, and Paul Vickers, “Introduction. Heritage under Socialism: Trajectories of Preserving the Tangible Past in Postwar Eastern and Central Europe,” in Eszter Gantner, Corinne Geering, and Paul Vickers eds., *Heritage under Socialism: Preservation in Eastern and Central Europe, 1945–1991* (New York – Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2022), especially 19–23.
- 19 For more on Wirth, see Jiří Roháček, and Kristina Uhlíková, ed., *Zdeněk Wirth pohledem dnešní doby: soubor příspěvků* (Praha: Artefactum – Ústav dějin umění AV ČR, 2010).
- 20 For more on Karaman, see Nina Díaz Fernández, *Ljubo Karaman – Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Dalmatia 1919–1941* (Split: Filozofski fakultet sveučilište u Splitu, 2018).
- 21 There is now a vast amount of literature on post-war reconstruction in West and East Germany, both at the level of studies and monographs. Selectively only, see Klaus von Beyme, Werner Durth, Niels Gutschow, and Winfried Nerdinger, *Neue Städte Aus Ruinen. Deutscher Städtebau der Nachkriegszeit* (Munich: Prestel, 1992); Gottfried Kiesow, *Denkmalpflege in Deutschland. Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2000), Chapter “Probleme der Nachkriegszeit 1945–1975,” 38–49.
- 22 For the situation in contemporary Poland, see, i.a., Beate Störtkuhl, “Geschichte und Grundlagen der Denkmalpflege in Polen nach 1945,” in *Geteilt – Vereint!: Denkmalpflege in Mitteleuropa zur Zeit des Eisernen Vorhangs und heute*, eds. Ursula Schädler-Saub, and Angela Weyer, ICOMOS-Hefte des Deutschen Nationalkomitees (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2015), 147–58 or Grażyna Ewa Herber, *Wiederaufbau der Warschauer Altstadt nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg im Spannungsfeld zwischen denkmalpflegerischen Prinzipien, politischer Indienstnahme und gesellschaftlichen Erwartungen* (Bamberg: Univ. of Bamberg Press, 2014).

- 23** At the same time, each of these countries approached the post-war reconstruction of its architectural heritage from completely different positions, resulting from the role the country played in the war, i.e., whether it represented the aggressor, whose claim to the reconstruction of pre-war monuments was significantly problematized, or the role of the victim, for whom the reconstruction of cultural heritage symbolized the “healing of wounds” and the recovery of a nation exterminated by the aggressor. On this, see Arnold Bartetzky, “The Reconstruction of Destroyed Architectural Monuments in Central and Eastern Europe: Professional Discourses and Political Attitudes (1940s–2000s),” in Stéphane Michonneau, et al., *Paisajes de guerra : Huellas, reconstrucción, patrimonio (1939–años 2000)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2019), 85–93.
- 24** For more on this text, see Cathleen Giustino, David Kovařík, Michal Sklenář, and Kristina Uhlíková. Further, e.g., Kristina Uhlíková, ed., *Konfiskované osudy: umělecké památky z německého majetku získaného československým státem a jejich severočestí majitelé = Konfiszierte Schicksale: Kunstdenkmäler aus deutschem Besitz, erworben durch den tschechoslowakischen Staat, und ihre nordböhmischen Besitzer* (Praha: Artefactum, 2019), on the more general level, then see Matěj Spurný, *Making the Most*.
- 25** Paul Zalewski, “Der Umgang mit „deutschen“ Kulturgut in ländlichen Regionen Westpolens (1945–1962) im Kontext von Gesellschaft und Politik,” in *Geteilt - Vereint!: Denkmalpflege in Mitteleuropa zur Zeit des Eisernen Vorhangs und heute*, eds. Ursula Schädler-Saub, and Angela Weyer, ICOMOS-Hefte des Deutschen Nationalkomitees (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2015), 159–66.
- 26** “The basic argument justifying the positive appreciation and use of historical heritage in the context of the new socialist order became the dialectical principle of ‘two cultures’ formulated by Lenin. According to this principle, it was possible to distinguish two parallel currents within each national culture of the past: the ‘reactionary culture of the ruling exploiting classes and the ‘progressive’ culture of the developmentally progressive classes (whose ideals were reflected in the works of the best artists of the time).” (Michal Kurz, “Do služeb lidu!‘ Historické dědictví jako součást ideálu ‚socialistického města‘ v období padesátých let,” *Historica Olomucensia. Sborník prací historických* 44, (2018): 261). According to Klement Gottwald, the first Czechoslovak communist president, “Our relationship to the national past is very lively and we have much to learn from it. However, it is a matter of orienting ourselves to those periods of history when our nation went forward, orienting ourselves to the progressive, liberating traditions of our nation and culture.” (Klement Gottwald, *Klement Gottwald o Jiráskovi* (Praha: Orbis, 1951), 8). On the concept of two cultures, see Anatolij Vasil’jevič Lunačarskij, *Izbrannyye stat’ji po estetike* (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1975).
- 27** For more, e.g., Čeněk Pýcha, “Making Sense of Socialism through Heritage Preservation: Stories from Northwest Bohemia,” in *Heritage under Socialism: Preservation in Eastern and Central Europe, 1945–1991*, eds. Eszter Gantner, Corinne Geering, and Paul Vickers (New York – Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2022), 169–94.
- 28** As shown, i.e., by Marcus van der Meulen’s text.
- 29** According to Corinne Geering and Paul Vickers “The role of states’ use of heritage protection as part of cultural nationalism to aid political nationalism has been outlined in recent research linking nationalism studies and heritage studies. Regime change in many of the states discussed here, as evident in the wake of the October Revolution and after World War II, generally entailed action to protect historical buildings.” (Geering, and Vickers, “Introduction,” 12).
- 30** See, e.g., Raina Zimmering, *Mythen in der Politik der DDR. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung politischer Mythen* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2000).
- 31** As illustrated by the text by Marko Špikić.
- 32** “Despite its explicitly international claim, after 1945, the idea of communism in the Central European area, respectively the Marx-Leninist political doctrine, became more than ever before intertwined with the national question, which resonated strongly throughout society, and the leaders of the various communist parties, in an attempt to gain wider support and confidence among the population, began to present themselves as state-building, patriotic and national forces, in contrast to the earlier vigorous rhetoric of class struggle and the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’.” Kurz, “Do služeb lidu!,” 260.

- 33** Bakoš, *Intelektuál & pamiatka*, 202–3.
- 34** An illustrative case is the city of Gdańsk and its historical heritage, which has become the subject of questions of ownership and national affiliation between Poles and Germans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See Jacek Friedrich, “Polish and German Heritage in Danzig/Gdańsk: 1918, 1945 and 1989,” in *Heritage, Ideology, and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe. Contested Pasts, Contested Presents*, ed. Matthew Rampley (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 115–29.
- 35** Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction. Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm, and Terence Ranger (Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1–14.
- 36** According to Ján Bakoš, “(r)esidues of the past were understood as symbols of exploitation and were therefore liquidated as instruments of ideological denigration and control. The revolution, however, had to justify not only the radical social change it brought about, but also its right of succession.” Bakoš, *Intelektuál & pamiatka*, 162.
- “The principle of ‘two cultures’ allowed in specific cases to go beyond a narrowly classed view of monuments and to positively appreciate and make use of objects associated in their origin and function with the ‘reactionary’ layers of the church, nobility or bourgeoisie (castles, palaces, bourgeois houses), most often with reference to their ‘real’ builder, since ‘artistic values, although they served other classes, were created only by the creative genius of the common, exploited people.’” Kurz, “Do služeb lidu!,” 262.
- 37** The issue is addressed in: *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26, no. 12 (2020). See especially the introductory article: Nelly Bekus, and Kate Cowcher, “Socialism, Heritage and Internationalism after 1945: The Second World and Beyond,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26, no. 12 (2020): 1123–31. Also, selected chapters in Gantner, Geering, and Vickers, *Heritage under Socialism*.
- 38** Geering, and Vickers, “Introduction.,” 2.
- 39** According to Michal Kurz, the representatives “of the communist regime symbolically occupied the prestigious position of the crowners of this supposedly lawful historical sequence, the rightful heirs, protectors and interpreters of ‘all that is best’ of domestic and even world culture.” Kurz, “Do služeb lidu!,” 262.
- 40** For more, see, e.g., Spurný, *Making the Most*, chapters “Faces of Modernity” and “Two Stories about Technology, Power, and Freedom”, 93–108.



02

# The Alchemy of Preservation: Postwar Retribution, the State, Personal Ambition and the Early Making of Czechoslovak Socialist Heritage

CATHLEEN M. GIUSTINO

Visible today throughout the landscape of the Czech Republic are dozens of state-owned and carefully preserved castles and chateaux, which were once the property of noble families in Bohemia and Moravia. Before the end of the Second World War in 1945, most of these stately architectural works and the interior furnishings inside of them had been the property of people who identified themselves as Germans or had that ethnic identity ascribed to them. After the war, when roughly three-million individuals categorized as Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia in a mass act of postwar retribution and ethnic cleansing, state officials confiscated these immovable and moveable objects and embedded them in a new network of estate-museums valued as Czech(oslovak) heritage. Rooms in these estate-museums made out of former aristocratic homes were installed with thoughtfully arranged displays of artworks and antique furnishings, also confiscated from private owners, most of whom were now abroad as a result of the expulsions.<sup>1</sup> During the socialist period, grand rooms in these elaborate buildings were open to the public for tours led by state-employed guides. Following the end of Communist Party rule in Czechoslovakia in 1989, these estate-museums composed largely of seized German property were placed under the protection of trained experts in monument care working for the National Heritage Institute of the Czech Republic.

How did these former aristocratic homes and the furnishings inside of them, once the belongings of expelled Germans, become transformed into nationally owned and nationally managed Czech(oslovak) heritage objects with well-appointed rooms open for public viewing after the end of the Second World War

and during and since socialism? This article addresses this complex question. To begin answering it, readers must recall that during and after World War II the Czech lands did not experience the same high levels of destruction and looting that occurred in other parts of Europe, including the neighboring countries of Germany and Poland. This left postwar Czechoslovakia with more cultural objects – moveable and immovable – after the war, a fact that contributed to the network of estate-museums made out of German expellees' property.

However, the limited loss of cultural property alone does not explain the transformation of confiscated aristocratic and German property into national Czech(oslovak) heritage. In order to substantively address our question, we must look at activities and developments in the weeks and months immediately following the defeat of the Third Reich and the end of the Nazi occupation in Czechoslovakia. It is very important to emphasize that these activities and developments did not take place while the Communist Party had control over Czechoslovakia's government. Indeed, the transformation of former private noble and German property into national and socialist Czecho(slovak) heritage began in earnest during the small, but busy window of time between the end of the Nazi occupation in May of 1945 and before the Communist Party's takeover of Czechoslovakia in February of 1948. This was the time of the expulsions of Czechoslovakia's Germans and the seizures of their property, including their castles and chateaux, and the art and antiques furnishing the interiors of these buildings.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, this article examines a chapter in the history of historic preservation that largely occurred within roughly a three-year window of time marked by postwar retribution and rebuilding. What is seen when looking at this brief, but entangled history is the establishment of a movement-control system that, due to a complex mixture of forces, was institutionalized within the structures of the postwar Czechoslovak state. While this institutionalized movement-control system has undergone numerous changes over time, from the outset of its existence immediately after the war, through the socialist period and up until the present, it has functioned to contain and channel the mobility of art and antiques confiscated from so-called national enemies in the Czech lands and eventually also from so-called class enemies. Furthermore, throughout the existence of this movement-control system, confiscated castles and chateaux have been part of official heritage practices, serving as hubs for the sorting, storing, and public display of dispossessed interior furnishings.



↑ Fig. 1. Some of the many castles and chateau made out of confiscated cultural property still in the Czech Republic today (photo [www.npu.cz](http://www.npu.cz))

An examination of how former aristocratic and German property became parts of estate museums embedded in the movement-control system reveals an intricate mixing not only of German-Czech ethnic rivalry and disordered, competing postwar state structures, but additionally opportunities for human agency. Stated differently, it also shows that the creation of the movement-control system resulted from the personal and professional ambitions of Czech individuals and experts interested in the securement of confiscated German cultural property in the Czech lands, and their strategizing, negotiating, competing, and collaborating for control over that property in a time of postwar anger and rebuilding and within a complicated set of government institutions. The ambitious individuals, state bodies and memories of national enemies, along with the large array of confiscated cultural objects, were all ingredients in an alchemy of preservation. They combined together in a formula that contained and channeled thousands of moveable decorative furnishings within hundreds of immoveable buildings,

all of which gained the protected status of Czech national heritage. Appreciation of this contingent brew opens doors to deepened understanding of the nature of the postwar and the socialist Czechoslovak state and possibilities for individuals and experts to manipulate and negotiate with bodies of power for the fulfillment of their specific goals in challenging historical contexts.

## **The Presidential Decrees and the Dispossession of German Property**

In May of 1945 Nazi power was defeated and the independent state of Czechoslovakia was restored under the leadership of President Edvard Beneš. The end of the occupation was greeted with great relief and calls for retribution. Soon the expulsions of Germans from Czechoslovakia began. Accompanying the expulsion process was the seizure of most of the Germans' property.<sup>3</sup> This included the castles and chateaux of noble German families in the Czech lands, and the works of art and antique furnishings inside of German homes.

Two presidential decrees legalized the dispossession of Czecho-slovakia's Germans. Decree number 12, announced in June of 1945, focused on the state's confiscation of agricultural property, including castles and chateaux.<sup>4</sup> Decree number 108, issued in October of 1945, covered non-agricultural property including urban palaces, villas, apartments, factories, and businesses belonging to Germans.<sup>5</sup> State officials seized these buildings, and they also confiscated the contents of these sites, including works of art and antiques.

Both presidential decrees were based on the notion of the collective guilt of all Germans for Nazi crimes. A Census completed as early as 1930 provided officials working for the postwar Czechoslovak state with the information used to decide who was a German. It did not matter that the 1930 Census asked individuals to identify their mother tongue, rather than their national identity, or that some people lived in mixed marriages and did not feel themselves to be exclusively German or Czech or even nationally inclined; it did not matter that some Germans opposed the Nazis and were loyal to Czechoslovakia.<sup>6</sup>

Taken together, the presidential decrees affected an enormous number of objects in the Czech lands, both moveable and immoveable. For some Czechs, the fate of German cultural property, including castles, chateaux, art and antiques, was particularly of grave concern, even before the announcement of the first presidential decree calling for confiscation. And here it is time to introduce

one ambitious individual – that is, one agent – important for understanding the construction of the movement control system that transformed private aristocratic and German property into museums open to the Czech(oslovak) public in the postwar period. This is Josef Scheybal (1897-1967), one of the most prolific confiscators of German art and antiques in postwar Czechoslovakia.

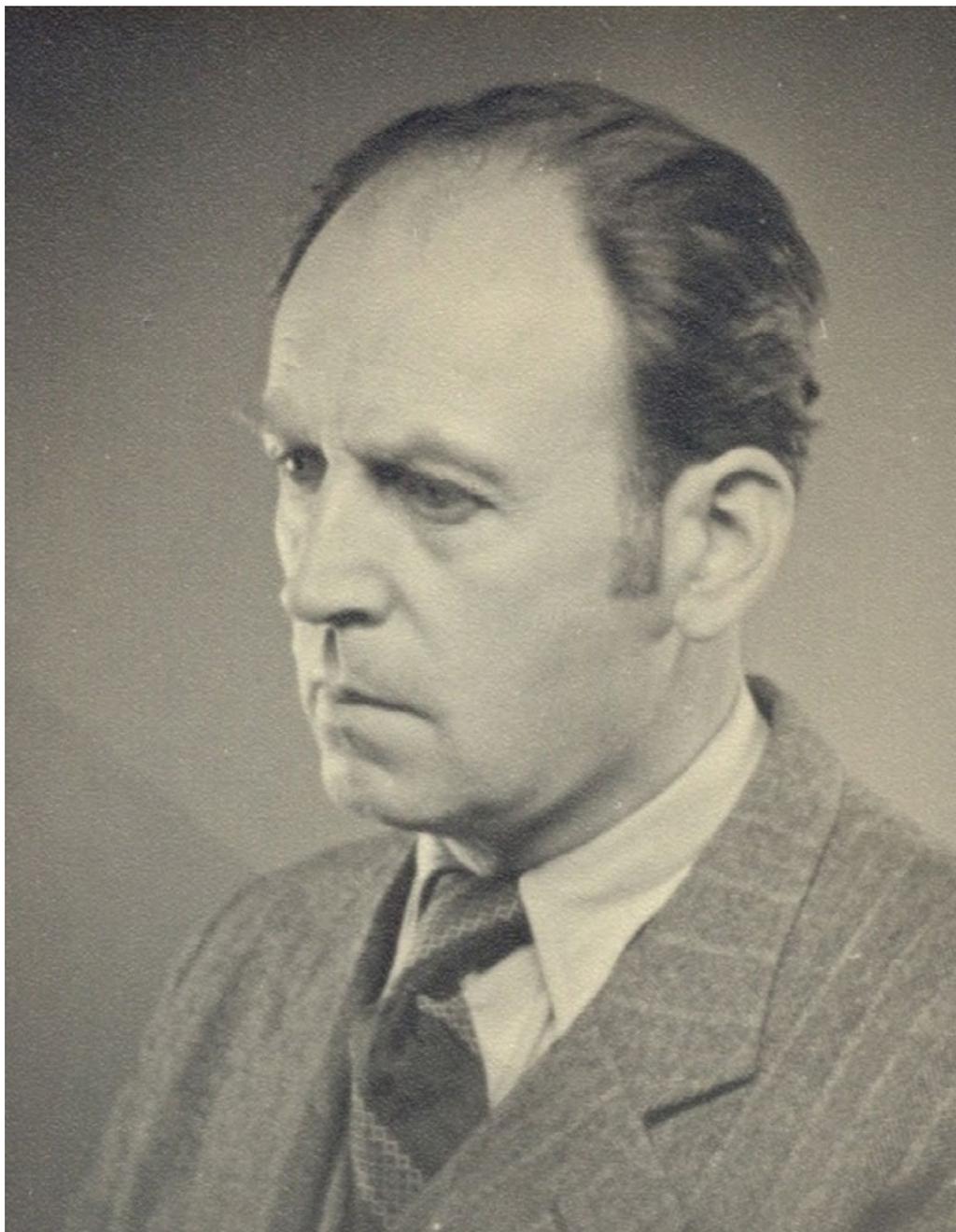
### **The Personal Ambition of Josef Scheybal**

On May 7, 1945 Josef Scheybal and two of his wartime friends responded to an appeal broadcast over the recently liberated Czechoslovak radio. The appeal urged Czech patriots to protect their country's castles and chateaux, and the works of art and antiques inside them, during the first chaotic days of transition from Nazi occupation to restored independence. This radio broadcast was a very early postwar attempt to control the movement of German-owned art and antiques located in Czechoslovakia.

Like most human beings, Josef Scheybal was a complicated person who does not fit into neat categories. One begins to see his complexity when considering his national identity. Scheybal's parents were Czech patriots, and the Czech language was his primary language. None of that stopped him, however, from marrying a German woman, who spoke little Czech. Together the couple lived with her German-speaking father in his northern Bohemian home, in a village very close to the German border.<sup>7</sup>

Scheybal was not an individual that many would consider to be a major player or a “great man” in the world of Czech monument care. He had written no books, developed no theories, directed no state agencies, or even studied at university. Before World War I, Scheybal had been trained in window-dressing, an experience that, along with his father's museum activities, inspired in him a love of collecting.<sup>8</sup> Around 1918, while serving in the military, Scheybal was stationed in northern Bohemia, where he met and settled down with his German wife.

For income, Scheybal initially sold postcards and small objects that he and his wife painted. But in quick time his deepest personal ambition took over: he became a passionate collector of antiques, especially old print matter. In 1941, he looked back, telling a friend that his interest in collecting had started during his childhood.<sup>9</sup> During the interwar period, his love of antiques led him to frequently travel throughout northern Bohemia, where he hunted, gathered,



⬆ Fig. 2. Josef Scheybal (1897–1967)  
(Muzeum Českého ráje in Turnov, Josef V. Scheybal estate, Archive)

traded, and sold objects deemed by himself and others to be collection-worthy. His travels built his appreciation of the local culture and customs in northern Bohemia; these travels also advanced his knowledge of the locations of valuable objects and collections, including those that were in private, often German hands. Scheybal's knowledge about antiques and his ambition to collect them grew expansive enough that, before the Second World War began, he became a state-licensed antique dealer.<sup>10</sup>

The Nazi occupation dealt a hard blow to Scheybal's love of collecting. Part of his collection was lost due to the spread of Nazi power in northern Bohemia; furthermore, during the war, people had little money to spend on antiques, leaving Scheybal with limited opportunities to profit from his antique business. He emerged from the war very eager to work with antiques again. Friends that he made during the war helped him with his ambition. Among these friends was Zdeněk Wirth, an individual or agent of tremendous importance for the creation of the institutionalized movement control system in postwar Czechoslovakia and the transformation of former aristocratic and German homes into estate-museums open to the public. Thus, the very ambitious and successful Zdeněk Wirth will next be introduced.

### **The Personal Ambition of Zdeněk Wirth**

Zdeněk Wirth (1878–1961) was a Czech patriot and an expert in Czech culture who dedicated his long and accomplished career to the advancement of heritage-care in Czechoslovakia.<sup>11</sup> Unlike Scheybal, Wirth is considered to be a major player or “great man” in Czech monument care. Before completing advanced studies in Czech art history at Charles University in 1909, Wirth worked as an assistant librarian at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. While employed there, Wirth became familiar with an important collection of antique furnishings and other cultural artifacts considered to be Bohemian heritage. Before the First World War, he compiled inventories of architectural and other heritage in Bohemia, and he served in numerous organizations dedicated to monument care, including the Club for Old Prague and the Society of the Friends of Czech Antiques. From these activities, Wirth began to learn about government administration of heritage-care and to appreciate how power struggles could affect culture both positively and negatively. Stated differently, Wirth learned about cultural politics, and the strategizing, negotiation, competition, and collaboration that is part and parcel of the alchemy of preservation.

After the creation of independent Czechoslovakia in 1918, Wirth was put in charge of supervising the Department of Monument Care, which was within the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment. This was one of two administrative bodies concerned with protecting historic architecture in interwar Czechoslovakia. The other administrative body was the State Monument Administration, which was under the jurisdiction of the land administration. Both operated separately from one another, meaning that – in structural terms – state monument care was fragmented rather than concentrated or unified. Neither of the two interwar state bodies had a lot of power; neither could do little more than compile inventories of historic objects and observe their conditions. During the interwar period, Wirth tried to secure the passage of a national preservation law that would better protect heritage sites in Czechoslovakia. His attempts were unsuccessful, however, with such a national law first being passed many years later in 1958.<sup>12</sup>

In 1938, shortly before the start of World War II, Wirth retired from his administrative position, in part being pushed out of it due to politics. This was a time of rising threats from Nazi Germany and, in some government circles, Wirth was considered to be too “soft” of a Czech nationalist.<sup>13</sup> Here was a struggle for government influence over culture, one showing that Wirth was no stranger to negotiating and competing for power over culture. Wirth’s experience with cultural politics is further evidence in his rivalry with another very important historic preservationist. This other historic preservationist was Václav Wagner, who worked with the State Monument Administration, mentioned above.<sup>14</sup>

In the early 1940s, Wagner published an article that challenged Wirth’s theory of best practices for monument care. Wirth advocated for a purist approach, whereas Wagner promoted a synthetic approach. Wirth was very critical of Wagner’s views, and a divide opened between the two men and between their respective friends and followers. Wagner sent Wirth a letter in which he tried to make peace, but Wirth seemed never to have forgiven Wagner even after the war, a reality that will become relevant for Czech(oslovak) heritage care later in this article.<sup>15</sup>

Once the Nazi occupation ended, Wirth was very interested in the restored Czechoslovak state’s confiscation of German castles, chateaux, art, and antiques. He presented a patriotic reason for his interest. In at least one instance, Wirth referred to the postwar confiscations as “atonement” for the Battle of White Mountain in 1618.<sup>16</sup> Another reason for his interest was Wirth’s genuine concern that these objects be well cared for and under the supervision of people whom



⬆ Fig. 3. Part of Josef Scheybal's personal collection before 1945  
(Muzeum Českého ráje in Turnov, Josef V. Scheybal estate, Archive)



⬆ Fig. 4. Zdeněk Wirth, leading Czech historic preservationist  
(photo Zdeněk Zenger, 1955, Institut of Art History, Czech Academy of Sciences)

he considered to be knowledgeable about and respectful of Czech heritage. Wirth was very confident that he personally had the necessary expertise in art history and also in the administration of culture to ensure proper protection of these objects. He did not want the art and antiques to be lost due to looting, plundering or other unregulated movement. Furthermore, he did not want someone lacking in what he deemed to be proper knowledge to be in charge of caring for the cultural property seized from expelled Germans.

### **The Disordered State and Care for Confiscated Cultural Property**

During the first tumultuous weeks and months following the Nazi defeat, Wirth was well informed about the fate of cultural objects being seized from Germans. He gained his information from two main sources. One source of his information was his work with the Provincial National Committee, which was responsible for supervising the confiscation of castles and chateaux.<sup>17</sup> The other source was his friend, Josef Scheybal, whose detailed, emotion-filled letters helped to inform Wirth about the situation on the ground at various former German properties in northern Bohemia.

Wirth and Scheybal both saw that, in the immediate postwar period, there existed very little effective supervision or securement of cultural objects taken from Germans. It was very apparent to these two ambitious individuals that there existed no single government body dedicated to the protection and preservation of German-owned castles, chateaux, art, and antiques. The Beneš presidential decrees pertaining to the dispossession of Germans contained no rules or guidelines for the care and safekeeping of confiscated cultural objects. Thus, instead of one dominant, concentrated and unified structure, a number of old and new state bodies were involved in taking objects from German homes, deciding where those things would stay or go, and sometimes not keeping a very careful eye on seized objects. Lines of jurisdiction separating the state bodies were vague with areas of overlap between some offices and their administrative reach. This structural fragmentation and confusion created circumstances favorable for competition among ambitious Czechs for command over German art and antiques. Stated differently, the messy, disordered nature of the Czechoslovak state in the weeks and months following the Third Reich's defeat provided a framework for Czech struggles over German property. Eventually, though, one set of ambitious individuals won sway over the competing structural elements. At the forefront of this group of individuals



⬆ Fig. 5. Zdeněk Wirth (furthest on left) and Josef Scheybal (second from left) with friends interested in preservation during World War II (Muzeum Českého ráje in Turnov, Josef V. Scheybal estate, Archive)

were Scheybal and Wirth. The two men found ways to pursue their personal and professional ambitions within the structural disorder of the postwar Czechoslovak state, contributing to the building of the estate-museums and their embedding within the institutionalized movement-control system that operated during and after the socialist period.

Details will now be presented about the structural character of the postwar Czechoslovak state and some of the bodies within it that were concerned with the preservation of cultural property seized from expelled Germans. This is a challenging topic to narrate on account of the multiple shifting, overlapping parts of the state in the postwar period. Readers are urged to imagine the confusion that state officials and ordinary people on the ground in postwar Czechoslovakia must have felt. They are urged to imagine how ambitious individuals could employ the structural messiness of the postwar state to create opportunities for achieving their goals through negotiation, conflict, competition, and collaboration. This structural disorder of the state was itself an element in the alchemy of historic preservation in postwar Czechoslovakia. The confusing, overlapping nature of government bodies responsible for monument care, along with the agency of some ambitious individuals in a time of mass expulsion and dispossession, combined together in the creation of the movement-control system and the transformation of former aristocratic homes into public museums even before the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in February of 1948.

The first state body that warrants attention was the Provincial National Committee. Starting on May 11, 1945 the Provincial National Committee served as the provisional administration for the running of day-to-day government matters in the western half of Czechoslovakia. Among many other concerns, members of the Provincial National Committee worried about the uncontrolled movement of German art and antiques after the war ended. They wanted attention to the securement and protection of these things. Almost immediately, the Provincial National Committee undertook efforts to control the unregulated movement of art and antique furnishings confiscated from expelled Germans. On May 18, 1945, the Provincial National Committee created a new government agency, called the Securement Commission. The Securement Commission is the second state body warranting attention.<sup>18</sup>

The Securement Commission resulted from an early state effort to build a movement-control system for art and antiques confiscated from Germans. The Securement Commission was given the power to identify, secure, and

protect works of art and antique furnishings found in German homes, including castles and chateaux. The Securement Commission had only four members. Interestingly, they included Josef Scheybal and his two friends who had responded to the radio broadcast on May 7, 1945.

The primary tasks of the Securement Commission were going through the possessions found in German-owned castles and chateaux in northern Bohemia, identifying works of art and antiques among those possessions, and then fixing those objects in place – that is, securing them – so as to help guarantee that they were not smuggled, plundered, or lost in some other unregulated, non-state-controlled movement. To help fix those objects in place, Scheybal and his colleagues recorded inventories of the art and antique furnishings that they found in confiscated castles and chateaux. As an extra security measure, they also locked those objects in rooms, which were then sealed with paper slips announcing that the rooms and the things within them had been secured by the Securement Commission. A torn paper seal was evidence that someone else had gone into a locked room and taken something of value without official permission.

Scheybal worked exceptionally hard on the Securement Commission. Given his passion for collecting, this was as perfect of employment as he could find in the postwar context of economic hardship and the large-scale dispossession of art and antiques. His knowledge of northern Bohemia, including about significant collections in the area, made him well-suited for the job. It is likely that his friend Zdeněk Wirth helped him get this job. While working on the Securement Commission, Scheybal sent Wirth letters informing him of his activities and observations.

Scheybal and the other two members of the Securement Commission also kept in contact with the Provincial National Committee, which had hired them. In one letter to the Provincial National Committee, Scheybal and his friends requested that no other government body be assigned the job of securing cultural valuables in the castles and chateaux of northern Bohemia. They did not want their work “*criss-crossed and unnecessarily complicated.*”<sup>19</sup> Stated differently, Scheybal and his friends did not want overlap and competition with other state agencies in their securement activities; they wanted unchallenged authority over dispossessed moveable cultural objects. The Provincial National Committee seemed to want to honor this request. Still, at that time, the Provincial National Committee

appeared unaware of the fact that an older, pre-existing state body was also securing art and antiques found in German castles and chateaux. This other state body was the State Monument Administration, created during the interwar period and mentioned above. The State Monument Administration was a third state body involved in the securement of confiscated cultural property after the Nazi defeat. Again, readers are encouraged to imagine what people on the ground in postwar Czechoslovakia must have felt about the disordered nature of the postwar war and also imagine how this structural messiness opened up opportunities for strategizing, negotiation, competition, and collaboration among ambitious individuals, giving them agency even in constrained circumstances.

In June of 1945 the State Monument Administration established a branch office in the town of Liberec in northern Bohemia, and its employees began carrying out the very same work of the Securement Commission and doing so in some of the very same castles and chateaux. Here some of the overlap and redundancy of state bodies involved in the securement of German art and antiques became very visible; more specifically, competition between the Securement Commission and the State Monument Administration, became very evident.<sup>20</sup>

Josef Scheybal was very upset about the securement activities of the State Monument Administration in northern Bohemia. He recorded his anger – and his despair – in emotion-filled letters that he sent to Zdeněk Wirth. Scheybal criticized the lack of professionalism of his competitors, one of whom he castigated for riding around atop a vehicle while carrying a machine-gun. Scheybal lamented how seals placed on doors at the Frýdlant Castle had been broken and windows there were left open so that thieves could easily enter. Scheybal criticized shoddy inventories that failed to mention valuable furnishings, including some from the Lemberk Chateau where the State Monument Administration arranged for American diplomats to be entertained. Scheybal strongly suggested that employees of the State Monument Administration were stealing art and antiques found in German homes. Police investigations ensued, with one purported culprit, the artist Jaroslav Dědina, leaving his job and family and moving to South America.

In addition, there was also another source of conflict between the Securement Commission and the State Monument Administration that must be mentioned. This was a personal source of conflict. The postwar director of the State Monument Administration was Václav Wagner. As was mentioned above, Wagner was a leading historic preservationist, who had differing views about the best



⬆ Fig 6. Václav Wagner, Director of the State Monument Administration  
(Source <https://udu.ff.cuni.cz/cs/ustav/historie-ustavu/osobnosti/vaclav-wagner/>, accessed 1 September 2022)

ways to care for heritage than did Zdeněk Wirth. During the Second World War, Wagner became a rival of Wirth's when Wagner advocated for an alternative way of monument care. An intense and permanent rift formed between Wagner and Wirth, and between their respective friends and followers. Wirth's friends, as we know, included Scheybal in the Securement Commission. Wagner's supporters worked for the State Monument Administration; in addition, the Provincial National Committee also gave its support to Wagner. This intellectual-personal disagreement among ambitious individuals, in combination with the structural disorder of the state, created a powerful set of forces contributing to the Czech struggle over German art and antiques – and to the alchemy of historic preservation in postwar Czechoslovakia which resulted in the creation of estate-museums embedded within the movement-control system.

### **A Distinct Moment in the Alchemy of Preservation**

Now that details regarding the complicated state structures involved in heritage care in postwar Czechoslovakia have been presented, it is time to observe how the activities of ambitious individuals or agents working in or around those structures mixed together to create the institutionalized movement-control system and the transformation of former aristocratic and German property into national Czech heritage.

In early July of 1945, the Provincial National Committee examined its ability to secure art and antiques confiscated from German castles and chateaux. It lacked the money and staff needed for effective protection of these moveable objects. It recognized that the State Monument Administration, under the direction of Wirth's rival Wagner, had resources to care for cultural property taken from Germans. Thus, in early July 1945 the leadership of the Provincial National Committee asked the State Monument Administration to serve as the executive organ responsible for the securement of German art and antiques. Václav Wagner, director of the State Monument Administration, accepted the offer. With this change, the Securement Commission, consisting of Josef Scheybal and his friends, was deemed to be no longer necessary and was dissolved after less than two months of hard work.<sup>21</sup>

Needless to say, Scheybal was very upset about the shutting down of the Securement Commission. He was out of a job during lean times; furthermore, he was out of a job caring for the types of collectible objects that he loved.

Additionally, Zdeněk Wirth was also very upset. His rival, Václav Wagner, was in charge of overseeing efforts to secure cultural property. Wagner's position, along with the worrisome contents of Scheybal's letters, made Wirth extremely concerned about the fate of art and antiques confiscated from Germans. Wirth feared that the Czechoslovak state would experience tremendous cultural loss. Wagner's position also threatened Wirth's ability to participate in the preservation of confiscated cultural property and to control the fate of those objects, powers that the ambitious Wirth was loath to give up.

In response to his growing worries, during the summer of 1945, Wirth began working on a plan. This was a plan that could help him gain authority over art and antiques taken from Germans. In this plan, Wirth strove to create a distinct body within the state that would have the power to control the mobility and immobility of moveable cultural objects found in German-owned castles and chateaux. Wirth called this state body the National Cultural Commission. Employees of the National Cultural Commission would go through German homes, identifying valuable art and antiques to be protected as state property, and then move those objects to state-approved storage sites for preservation. In sum, what Wirth was proposing was the creation of an institutionalized movement-control system with concentrated and dominant authority over confiscated cultural objects.

Initially, Wirth hoped that he could convince President Beneš to announce a presidential decree that called into being a state body that would have sole authority over all cultural property taken from Germans.<sup>22</sup> When that did not happen Wirth, who remained in regular communications with Scheybal, needed to find another means to have the National Cultural Commission called into being.

Wirth knew that in the Spring of 1946 the Czechoslovak National Parliament would be reconstituted and start passing laws for the recovering country. This was still before the Communist Party achieved control over the country in February of 1948. Wirth drafted a legislative bill to be voted on in the restored national parliament; the bill called for the creation of the National Cultural Commission with unrivalled, concentrated power to secure and control confiscated cultural objects.

On May 16, 1946 – almost one year after the end of the Nazi occupation – Wirth's bill was passed in the National Parliament.<sup>23</sup> Once the National Cultural Committee became operative, its employees had unrivalled, concentrated command over art and antiques confiscated from Germans. In time, the National



◀ Fig. 6. Example of the seals used to secure confiscated objects (National archives Czech Republic, State Státní památková správa, Kynžvart)

Cultural Commission also gained jurisdiction over individual German-owned castles and chateaux, and eventually also over cultural objects seized from Czechs who were deemed to be “class enemies”.

Something interesting about the passage of Wirth’s bill to create the National Cultural Commission must be emphasized, namely, that leaders of the Provincial National Committee only learned about the bill’s existence shortly before it was presented to the parliament. Furthermore, they did not know that it had been voted on until after its full passage. It was Václav Wagner who alerted them in late April 1946 of the bill’s existence and he did so with two-pages of accompanying notes pointing out his view of the bill’s shortcomings. On April 25, 1946 Wagner, who was still the director of the State Monument Office in Prague, sent the Provincial National Committee a copy of the bill, asking them to give it attention and informing them that the parliamentary body was soon to vote on it. Wagner pointed out that, based on his reading of the bill, all land national councils and all state monument officials, including himself, were to be “excluded” from any activities of the National Cultural Commission. The first article of the bill discussed the composition of the National Cultural Commission, listing eight government offices from the Czech half of the country and a yet to be specified number from the Slovak side. None of the land national councils or the State Monument Office in Prague were included in this list. Wagner maintained that they should be included; these government agencies had complete inventories of chateaux and the moveable objects inside them “as well as a sufficient number of experts for these tasks.”<sup>24</sup>

Wagner expressed concern about the enormity of the task facing the National Cultural Commission. As per Section 4 of the bill, its members would be responsible not only for chateaux and the art and antiques inside them, but also for immovable and moveable cultural valuables in towns and cities. He did not see how the commission, as proposed in the bill, could take care of so much material heritage. Conversely, though, he questioned why a “second track (druhý kolej)” of state administration of cultural objects was necessary, pointing out that both the Ministry of Transportation and the State Monument Office were caring for these things. Again, he observed that both the State Monument Office and the Provincial National Committee were excluded from participation in the proposed National Cultural Commission.<sup>25</sup>

The Provincial National Committee reacted relatively quickly to Wagner’s letter. On May 4, 1946 (twelve days before the bill’s passage), it sent a letter regarding the bill to eight different political parties, six different ministries and the Land National Councils in Brno and Ostrava. The letter stated that, through the State Monument Office, it had been made aware that a bill for the creation of the National Cultural Commission had been presented to the Interim National Assembly for discussion in the near future. It stated the Provincial National Committee with its Cultural Division “*have active interest in the questions, with which the above-mentioned bill should be concerned.*” It added, however, that they and the State Monument Office had never been asked for their opinions or views about the matter. Borrowing from Wagner’s letter, the Provincial National Committee asked whether “*an improvised small office*” could handle such a large responsibility. It pointed out that it and the State Monument Office already had complete registries of monuments and their contents, and that it had sufficient staff to carry out the duties of a National Cultural Commission. It said that the prepared bill would be “*superfluous and it would complicate the question of the securement of historic and artistic objects.*” In its letter, the Provincial National Committee in Prague asked the many recipients of its letter that the bill not be passed, at least not before requesting “*the expert point-of-view of the most qualified circles,*” which included the state monument offices and the land national councils in Prague, Brno and Ostrava.<sup>26</sup>

Almost none of the recipients of the Provincial National Committee’s letter replied to it. One exception was the Club of Representatives of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. In its answer, dated May 14 (two days before Wirth’s bill became law), the Club indicated that it had contacted the Ministry of Education for advice on the matter. That very same day the Communist Party received



↑ **Fig. 8. The Frýdlant Castle in North Bohemia, where seals were broken (photo Cathleen Giustino)**

the Ministry's reply. The Ministry said that its failure to inform the Provincial National Committee about the bill to create the National Cultural Commission was "an oversight" and "not at all the intention." It said that "in the future" the Provincial National Committee would always be invited to deliberations concerning matters related to the National Cultural Commission. The Club of Representatives of the Communist Party concluded its brief response with a request for notes and comments concerning Wirth's bill, a sign that they were not prepared to unquestionably back the council.<sup>27</sup> On June 2, 1946 the Provincial National Committee sent Wagner at the State Monument Office a request that he share his notes with the Communist Party representatives.<sup>28</sup> By then it was too late; the bill had been passed, a development about which the Provincial National Committee seemed unaware. The Club of Representatives for the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party also sent the Provincial National Committee a reply. It was dated June 27 and, not surprisingly, this reply informed the council that the bill had already been passed.<sup>29</sup>

How was it that the Provincial National Committee was not informed about the bill to create the National Cultural Commission in a timely manner? It is very possible



⬆ **Fig. 9. The Ratibořice Chateau in East Bohemia after being opened to the public as a house-museum made out of confiscated cultural property (Source Zdeněk Wirth and Jaroslav Benda, Praha: Orbis, 1955)**

that Zdeněk Wirth intentionally out-manuevered his competition, including Václav Wagner, by not discussing plans for his bill with them. It is possible that this expert in cultural administration had carried out a power play – not for power in and of itself, but for the authority to control the movement of German cultural valuables and to ensure that people whom he considered to be most qualified and his allies were caring for them. The creation of the National Cultural Commission resulted from the accumulation of cultural objects confiscated from expelled Germans, personal ambitions, and the disordered nature of the postwar state. It provided a foundation for the transformation of cultural property seized from German into Czech national heritage on display in a network of confiscated castles and chateaux during and after the socialist period.

### **The National Cultural Commission at Work**

The National Cultural Commission officially began its operations in January of 1947, that is, more than a year before the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia. Zdeněk Wirth was named as its director. He hired his friend, Josef Scheybal, to carry out selections of art and antiques confiscated from expelled Germans to be

assigned the protected status of “state property” and then arrange for the storage of those objects in castles and chateaux also taken from Germans and placed under the authority of the National Cultural Commission. Eventually cultural property confiscated from Czech aristocrats, including the noble Schwarzenberg family, was added to the state-controlled heritage collections.

Wirth, like Scheybal, never joined the Communist Party. Yet, both men were aware of political shifts underway in Czechoslovakia – shifts that ultimately resulted in the Communist takeover of the country in February of 1948. They knew that some Communist Party members were not amenable to saving relics of the old aristocratic order at state expense at any time – and particularly not during a time of economic shortages and rebuilding. In light of this knowledge, Wirth developed plans for helping to make the preservation of castles, chateaux and luxurious furnishings palatable to future Communist Party leaders. In one plan, a limited number of castles and chateaux of exceptional artistic and architectural value were selected to be preserved as exemplars of particular aesthetic styles from the past. The styles included medieval, renaissance, empire, and baroque. Sites would be converted into “lifestyle” museums with rooms decorated to show visitors how aristocrats lived in various historic periods. The first new estate-museum that the National Cultural Commission opened was in the Litomyšl Chateau (1949); the second was in the Ratibořice Chateau (1950).<sup>30</sup>

For Wirth, the primary functions of the new network of estate-museums were to preserve heritage and offer the public lessons about art and architectural history. Still, due to the dominant political order, he recognized that some teaching and reinforcement of Communist-Party ideology also had to occur. The embedding of ideological lessons within tours in museums made out of confiscated property can be seen in the introductory speech that all tour guides were expected to present before visitors entered the interior displays of the estate-museums. The speech stated,

### **Honored Visitors!**

**Before we continue to the actual tour of the present chateau it is necessary to remember the following:**

**After the victory of the glorious Red Army in 1945 and after the February victory in 1948 the parasitical caste of the former aristocracy was forever removed. From the foundation, the whole nature of our state changed; from the foundation, the Consciousness of our folk changed.**

Our heroes are becoming the builders of socialism – our workers and farmers, shock-workers and innovators, etc.

From the classes of the former capitalists and from the feudal aristocracy we inherited their estates, manors, and castles, which are filled with valuables of a high artistic and cultural level from past centuries.

Immediately, at the beginning, we must remember that these jewels of architecture, sculpture, and painting and other items of life-style culture were acquired and collected with the indescribable suffering and hardship of our ancestors, everyday working people.

[...]

Everything that is collected here will be restored and maintained, in order to serve the widest level of our workers with deep cultivation [vzdělání] and spiritual recreation.

Here we can ascertain everything that our socialist homeland gives us.

Our popular democratic establishment prevents the exploitation of one person by another and [in it] everything is oriented towards the education and prosperity of all.

Thus, in these places every worker can feel not like an exploited slave, [but like] a great self-conscious human – a human working and living in the spirit of socialism.<sup>31</sup>

Responses to the introductory statement suggest some resistance from visitors.<sup>32</sup> Still, the estate-museums became popular destinations during the socialist period and remain well visited today.

In 1952, due to a large-scale reorganization of the state administration, the National Cultural Commission was dissolved, and its powers were transferred to a division for monument protection within the Ministry of Education, Science, and Art. The institutionalized movement-control system and the network of estate-museums were transferred with it and, they continued to exist with modifications and refinements throughout the socialist period and up until the present.

## Conclusion

This article has illuminated only one moment in the alchemy of historic preservation. There are many others to be explored in the Czechoslovak past and

in numerous other contexts. Studying this alchemy deepens our appreciation of how the history of heritage-care requires attention to ways in which social relations, state structures, and human agents combine together in multiple and contingent ways, often with unique outcomes specific to the contexts under examination. It offers another lens, one that is cultural in nature, for understanding power relations and the making of meaning.

While the time period covered in this article largely predates the socialist period, the estate-museums and the movement-control system created before the Communist Party takeover in 1948 are relevant for the Cold War era. While historic preservation during socialism certainly faced challenges and merited some criticisms, including about ever-present scaffolding, heritage-care practices and institutions persisted – and with state support – after February 1948. These practices and institutions built upon pre-socialist developments, revealing continuity across time and governments in the Czechoslovak past.



# Notes

- 1 Studies pertaining to the postwar confiscations of cultural property include Kristina Uhlíková, *Národní kulturní komise, 1947–1951* (Praha: Artefactum, 2004); Martin Bakeš, Jitka Císařová, and Kristina Uhlíková, *Osudy konfiskátů: Výzkum provenience a problematika přesunů kulturního majetku v Československu na základě prezidentských dekretů* (Praha: Artefactum, 2020); Cathleen M. Giustino, “Pretty Things: Ugly Histories: Decorating with Persecuted People’s Property in Central Bohemia, 1938–1958,” in *Objects of War: The Material Culture of Conflict and Displacement*, eds. Leora Auslander and Tara Zahra (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 78–105; and Cathleen Giustino, “Julia and Her Things: Restitution, Racism, and Connections in and Beyond the Sudetenland,” *Bohemia: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der böhmischen Länder* 59, no. 1 (2019): 3–49.
- 2 On the expulsions of Czechoslovakia’s Germans after the war see Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, eds., *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951: Dokumenty z českých archivů*, 6 vols. (Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, Mnichov: Collegium Carolinum, Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa, 2009–2011).
- 3 An important study of the postwar expropriations and use of German property (which does not focus on cultural property) is David Gerlach, *The Economy of Ethnic Cleansing: The Transformation of German-Czech Borderlands after World War II*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2018).
- 4 Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, *Dekrety Prezidenta Republiky, 1940–1945: Dokumenty*, vol. 1 (Brno: Doplněk, 1995), 276–83.
- 5 Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, *Dekrety Prezidenta Republiky, 1940–1945: Dokumenty*, vol. 2 (Brno: Doplněk, 1995), 848–60.
- 6 On the Census see Kateřina Čapková, *Czechs, Germans, Jews? National Identity & the Jews of Bohemia* (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 41–55; and Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen: Eine Geschichte der tschechisch-jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Prag (1918–1938)* (München: Oldenbourg, 2012), 29–87. Problems with the application of the label German in one particular case are discussed in Giustino, “Julia and Her Things.”
- 7 Scheybal’s history, including his extensive postwar activities are discussed in Kristina Uhlíková, “Josef Scheybal a jeho role při konfiskaci movitých památek z majetku občanů německé národnosti po 2. světové válce,” Part 2, *Fontes Nissae* 16, no 1 (2015): 44. The first part of this extended article is in *Fontes Nissae* 15, no 2 (2014): 4–15.
- 8 Museum of The Bohemian Paradise Turnov (Muzeum Českého ráje v Turnově, MBPT), State Josef Scheybal, Inv. Nr. SCH OF VII. 2/1-13/1, Vysvědčení – vydané 25. 3. 1914 v Praze První odbornou školou pro moderní a umělecké aranžování výkladních skříní bratří Posnerů.
- 9 MBPT, State Josef Scheybal, Inv. Nr. SCH OF VII 2/4/1-59, Letter of Scheybal to Vojtěch Zeman, 4.3.1941. See also comments Scheybal made to Zdeněk Wirth, which are quoted in Uhlíková, “Josef Scheybal,” Part 1, 7.
- 10 MBPT, State Josef Scheybal, Inv. Nr. SCH OF VII. 2/1-15/1-3, Žádost o zápis do rejstříku soudních znaleců z oboru uměleckých předmětů a starožitností.
- 11 The best biography of Wirth, based on archival sources, is Kristina Uhlíková, *Zdeněk Wirth, první dvě životní etapy (1878–1939)* (Praha: Národní památkový ústav, 2010).
- 12 The full text of this law is found at <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1958-22> (accessed July 8, 2022).
- 13 Uhlíková, *Zdeněk Wirth*, 69.
- 14 To learn about Wagner’s life and work, see *Václav Wagner: Umělecké dílo minulosti a jeho ochrana* (Praha: Národní památkový ústav, 2005).

- 15 Uhlíková, *Národní kulturní komise*, 75–7.
- 16 Zdeněk Wirth, “Kulturní úkoly druhé pozemkové reformy,” *Svobodné noviny*, July 3, 1945.
- 17 Uhlíková, *Národní kulturní komise*, 23–4.
- 18 Information on the Securement Commission’s creation is in Jitka Císařová, “Zajišťování movitého majetku osob považovaných za Němce na Liberecku v letech 1945–1951,” *Fontes Nissae* 19, no 1 (2018), 22–45.
- 19 National Archives Czech Republic (Národní archiv ČR, NA), State Státní památková správa, Carton 631, Sekretariátu pro evidenci uměleckých a historických památek při zatímním Zemským národním výboru, 24. 5. 1945.
- 20 Competing activities of the Liberec office are discussed in Císařová, “Zajišťování movitého majetku osob považovaných za Němce.”
- 21 NA, State Státní památková správa, Carton 631, Věc: Záchrana památek, July 7. 7. 1945.
- 22 This rough, water-damaged and undated draft entitled “National Cultural Fond,” written in Wirth’s handwriting, is found in Institute of Art History CAS, State UKK, Carton 6. See also Uhlíková, *Národní kulturní komise*, 86–8.
- 23 The text of the law is in *Věstník Ministerstva školství a osvěty* 2, no 13 (June 15, 1946) and in Uhlíková, *Národní kulturní komise*, 88–91.
- 24 NA, State Zemský úřad, oddělení církevní, nadační a školské, Carton 805, Letter of Václav Wagner to the Land National Committee in Prague (with notes attached), č.j. 1839/46, dated April 25, 1946.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 NA, State Zemský úřad, oddělení církevní, nadační a školské, Carton 805, Draft of Letter from Land National Committee to Parliamentary Clubs, May 4, 1946.
- 27 NA, State Zemský úřad, oddělení církevní, nadační a školské, Carton 805, Letter from Klub poslanců KSČ to Land National Committee, May 14, 1946.
- 28 NA, State Zemský úřad, oddělení církevní, nadační a školské, Carton 805, Draft of Letter of Land National Committee to State Monument Office, 2 July 1946. This letter indicated that the Land National Committee in Brno shared the concerns of its equivalent in Prague.
- 29 NA, State Zemský úřad, oddělení církevní, nadační a školské, Carton 805, Letter of Klub poslanců československé sociální demokracie Praha to the Land National Committee, June 27, 1946.
- 30 Uhlíková, *Národní kulturní komise*, 48–53.
- 31 NA, State Státní památková správa, Carton 18, Folder, I/m: Čedok a propagace, č. j., 174/51, “Předmluva průvodců.”
- 32 On this resistance, see Cathleen M. Giustino, “Open Gates and Wandering Minds: Codes, Castles and Chateaux in Socialist Czechoslovakia before 1960,” in *Socialist Escapes: Breaks from Ideology and Everyday Routines in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989*, eds. Cathleen Giustino, Catherine Plum, and Alexander Vari (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 48–73. See also NA, State Státní památková správa, Carton 18, “Propagace stát. zámku, politická směrnice ve výkladech.” Nr. 12889/51.



03

# In other words: to make the care for the heritage properties a part of the socialist construction of our state

## State heritage care in the Czech lands from the early 1950s until the publication of the Cultural Heritage Properties Act in 1958

KRISTINA UHLÍKOVÁ – MICHAL SKLENÁŘ

### Introduction

The interest in the protection of the tangible cultural heritage of the past had a long and strong tradition in the Czech lands dating back to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Soon, as in other countries of the Austrian part of the monarchy, state patronage and institutionalization of these activities took place, also supported by a large volunteer movement. In the interwar period, the independent Czechoslovak state built on both of these lines to the full extent. However, the role of the state conservation service was primarily interventionist and advisory, while the center of the actual protection of heritage properties rested with their owners and the network of volunteer subjects. Direct state financial subsidies for the reconstruction of properties, the majority of which were privately owned, were minimal. The status of heritage conservation in the state administration was, in the opinion of most of the experts involved, inferior; the majority of the public and state officials did not consider financial or legislative support for this sphere (and for culture in general) to be very justified. The law, which envisaged a greater degree of state responsibility, although prepared, was ultimately not passed. The entire bureaucratic apparatus, at the center of which were the Education Department of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment and the State Heritage Offices in the various provinces of the Republic, consisted of less than 20 employees, including administrative staff. Although Czechoslovakia was not significantly different from other countries in this respect, the majority of professional conservationists and volunteer activists resented the situation and wished for change.

In the following chapter, we will focus on Czechoslovak monument care in the years before the Cultural Heritage Properties Act of 1958. In the first step, we will present the institutional background of heritage care, where the continuity with the previous stages as well as the period difficulties of the central authorities will clearly stand out. In the second step, we will deal with the decisive entrance of the state into the heritage agenda, the instrumentalization of the heritage fund in the form of the introduction of binding categories, and the purposive interpretation of individual monuments. Here, the continuous development and mental framework of Czechoslovak, especially Czech, society encounters discontinuous elements in the form of the huge range of managed properties and their service to communist ideology.

The end of the Second World War brought, as in most spheres of life, a key turning point in this area. The scope of the tasks that heritage management had to continue to address changed radically, even though Czechoslovakia had minimal direct war damage to monuments compared to other European countries. In several waves of expropriation of private property between 1945 and about 1950, the state gradually became the owner, or at least a temporary owner, of most of the immovable and movable heritage properties, most significantly in the newly forming Eastern Bloc.<sup>1</sup> The attitude of state officials toward heritage conservation also changed. As state support for cultural issues was on the election program of all four political parties, not excluding the victorious Communist Party, it was impossible not to pay attention to these expropriated monuments. After the Communist coup in February 1948, for the first time in Czechoslovak history, the Ninth-of-May Constitution proclaimed that “[c]ultural assets are under the protection of the State. The State shall ensure that they are accessible to all”<sup>2</sup>. Most concerned professionals awaited the promised changes with great anticipation.

## The instrumentalization of heritage care

### Structural aspects

The first real reflection of the anticipated changes was the establishment in 1947 of the National Cultural Commission (Národní kulturní komise, NKK), the first institution in Czechoslovak history to take over the administration and responsibility for the adequate protection and cultural use of at least some of the state-appropriated monuments<sup>3</sup>. Its five-year existence focused particularly on the nationalized aristocratic residences and their furnishings. Act No

## President republiky zhlédl restaurátorské práce v kostele sv. Mikuláše

Vpravo: President republiky v doprovodu doc. Fr. Petra a vedoucího restaurátorského kolektivu Raimunda Ondráčka při prohlídce restaurovaných maleb v kupoli kostela sv. Mikuláše v Praze III.

Dole: President republiky při prohlídce fotografické dokumentace provedených restaurátorských prací v kostele sv. Mikuláše.



President republiky Antonín Zápotocký navštívil dne 13. srpna pracoviště restaurátorů v chrámu sv. Mikuláše v Praze III. S velkým zájmem a zaujetím si prohlédl v nedávné době dokončenou první etapu prací na restaurování nástěnných maleb F. X. Palka v kupoli kostela, kde ho o postupu jednotlivých restaurátorských prací informoval doc. Fr. Petr a vedoucí kolektivu restaurátorů R. Ondráček. Restaurování a očištění malby ve výši 65 m vlastně teprve objevilo a přiblížilo širší veřejnosti malbu neobyčejně vysoké umělecké úrovně, kterou zde v roce 1752 vytvořil do té doby v Praze neznámý malíř F. X. Palko se svými spolupracovníky J. Redelmayerem a J. Hagerem.

Nástěnná malba nejvíce utrpěla zatékáním vody měděnou krytinou střechy i srážením vodních par v rozlehlém interiéru tak, že barevná vrstva byla na celém povrchu silně zpráškovatělá a opadávala hlavně tam, kde malíř využíval na freskovém podkladě temperové podmalby s nasazováním vysokých vápenných past. Restaurátorským zásahem a citlivou retuší se podařilo zachránit malbu v celé její kompozici a se všemi detaily malířova rukopisu v té šíři a úplnosti, kolik se na klěbě malby vůbec zachovalo. Presidentova slova uznání byla povzbuzením k další usilovné práci, kterou je ještě nutno vykonat pro záchranu všech ostatních maleb.



⬆ Fig. 1. Page from the 1956 periodical *Zprávy památkové péče* reporting on the inspection of restored paintings in the church of St. Nicholas in the Lesser Town in Prague by the Czechoslovak president Antonín Zápotocký

137/1946 Coll., which established it, introduced the very important and unusually generous status of “state cultural property”. Certain immovable and movable objects of a cultural nature could acquire this status on the basis of the expert assessment of the NKK and later its successors. Initially, 100 castles and chateaux selected from a thousand of historic noble residences in the Czech lands became the core of the status. Their administration was vested in the NKK and later in other heritage authorities. In addition to the NKK, there was also the State Heritage Institute, which concentrated on the remaining monuments (outside the state cultural property), and the State Photometric Institute which focused on the documentation of monuments. The coordination of the whole sphere belonged to the Heritage Department of the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment, which also administered the nature conservation agenda.

By the beginning of the 1950s, however, the excessive powers of the NKK had already made it a difficult-to-control solitary body, which, moreover, was unparalleled in other spheres of state administration. Thus, at the end of 1951, the whole system of state conservation was reorganized with an attempt to decentralize and transfer most of the powers from purely specialist units.<sup>4</sup> The National Cultural Commissions were abolished and most of their agenda was transferred to the regional National Committees (krajské národní výbory, KNV). The State Heritage Institute was transformed into the State Heritage Institute with Brno Branch and the Slovak State Heritage Institute, both of which were to become purely professional institutions. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Arts retained the national coordination of the sphere of monument care<sup>5</sup>, while most of the staff of the abolished Czech NKK was transferred there. It soon became apparent that the respective regional national committees were mostly unable to adequately ensure their new responsibilities in this sphere for personnel and organizational reasons. A number of agendas, the scope of which was growing relatively quickly, not only due to the steady increase in state cultural property, but also the new agenda of urban heritage reserves, were being transferred back to the Heritage Institute and the relevant department of the Ministry. According to Miroslav Burian, who headed it at the time, “*the tasks of heritage conservation, arising from the cultural and building needs of our socialist state, developed much more rapidly than the organizational frameworks in which these tasks were to be fulfilled. A kind of paradoxical situation resulted in which we achieved our successes through a certain negation of existing organizational forms*”.<sup>6</sup> An open admission of the problem, however, was only made possible by the results of a review of the whole system by the Ministry of State Control in the autumn of 1952.

Turbulent changes, analogous to other sectors of the state administration, would thus continue to accompany the conservation service. In March 1953, after two years, the government decided that a reorganization was necessary. The Minister of Education and Enlightenment hastily resolved the situation by merging all of the central institutions mentioned above, i.e. the 7<sup>th</sup> Department of the Ministry of Culture, the State Heritage Institute, and the State Photometric Institute into a single office called the State Heritage Administration (Státní památková správa, SPS).<sup>7</sup> As of July 13, 1953, a large central authority with extensive executive powers and professional competence was created for the Czech part of the republic<sup>8</sup>, not only in the field of monument conservation but also in the field of nature protection. This was the model preferred by most practicing conservationists, who considered it the most operational and effective for the real practice of conservation and management of monuments. The involvement of the education departments of the regional national committees into the state monument conservation was maintained to a certain extent, and the so-called district conservators<sup>9</sup>, whose task at this time was especially to monitor possible threats to the monuments, continued to work as volunteers in the regions.

### Staffing

In terms of staffing, the post-war conservation authorities built on the previous structures in a relatively significant way. It is therefore understandable that there was also considerable professional continuity with the heritage services of the inter-war period. However, the three Czech-German conservationists Rudolf Hönigschmid, Karl Friedrich Kühn, and Wilhelm Turnwald, who had previously held important positions in the central conservation authorities, were unable to continue their careers. Their (especially in the case of the first two) significant professional contribution was not even permitted to be mentioned. A similar fate befell the important work and views of the chairman of the State Heritage Institute in 1941–1942 and 1945–1948, Václav Wagner, who was convicted in 1950 in one of the fabricated trials of Catholic intellectuals.<sup>10</sup>

Until 1951, the leading figure was the most influential organizer of interwar conservation, the art historian Zdeněk Wirth (1878–1961). It was due to his diplomatic and organizational rather than professional skills, although these were also considerable. His long-standing friendship with the influential post-war communist minister of education, Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878–1962), undoubtedly played an important role in his position. Perhaps it is to Wirth that we owe

# MĚSTSKÉ PAMÁTKOVÉ RESERVACE

V ČECHÁCH A NA MORAVĚ



⬆ Fig. 2. Cover of the 1955 publication *Městské památkové rezervace v Čechách a na Moravě* (authors František Petr and Jiří Kostka)

the inconsistent application of Nejedlý's concept of national history in the field of practical conservation of monuments, especially in relation to Baroque art (richly represented in the Czech monuments collection), which was not dismissed, even though it was created during the period interpreted by Nejedlý as the "dark ages". Zdeněk Nejedlý remained minister until 1953, but Wirth was forced to leave the executive structures of the monuments' care at the end of 1951 for reasons that have not yet been made clear.

Despite the involvement of some younger communists, especially Vlastimil Vinter and Emma Charvátová, the professional core of the conservation authorities remained relatively immune to the ideological pressures of the time.<sup>11</sup> Several prominent personalities who were forced to leave other, mainly pedagogical positions (O. J. Blažíček, V. Mencl) or whose more significant involvement might have been considered problematic at the time, could continue to work there undisturbed to a certain extent, even in leading positions. For example, the architect and Catholic-oriented writer Břetislav Štorm, or the art historians Josef Šebek and Jakub Pavel, who openly declared their adherence to the Roman Catholic Church. The reasons for maintaining this somewhat "tolerant" milieu, which is also evident in texts published in the main press platform the conservation authorities, the periodical *Zprávy památkové péče*, are not yet entirely clear from the available sources. The sphere of heritage care was not a key for the state leadership and was therefore not a more closely monitored sector. After the departure of the non-partisan Zdeněk Wirth, the official leadership of the field was taken over by the archivist Miroslav Burian (1902–1980), a member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, whose very humanly friendly attitude towards the conservation community was probably influenced by his personal experience of imprisonment in a concentration camp. Burian first served as head of the Ministry's Department of Education and later as director of the State Heritage Institute. Jaroslav Veselý (1906–1985), a nature conservationist, became his deputy in the management of this institution, who, despite his membership in the Communist Party, probably respected Burian's tolerant approach to the management of the institution.

### **The instrumentalization of monuments<sup>12</sup>**

In the sources on the development of Czech conservation after 1948 mix the topics of history and the politics of history. Although the emphases corresponded to the current political line of the state, they were not new in principle. The whole

of modern heritage care at this time contains both an element of learning about the past and educational elements showing (making present) national history. These accents and interest in monuments, especially architecture, were particularly strong in European societies during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued on.<sup>13</sup> In the Czechoslovak variant of communist totalitarian rule, we therefore encounter a specific use of long-existing frameworks for the needs of the ideological narrative presented by the state, including the structure of state monument care. In a speech by Prime Minister Antonín Zápotocký to the presidency of the Club for Old Prague in 1950, important theses influencing contemporary monument care were explicitly stated. On the one hand, we hear an emphasis on preserving the national past and making it accessible in times of great change: *“The cultural heritage that we have inherited from many previous generations is part of our national creative process and has become, in the purest sense of the word, the property of all the people. [...] We do not forget the needs of culture even in times of the most serious economic tasks, which grow with the reconstruction of our whole life.”*<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, however, the principle of ideologically based selectivity was quite openly expressed: *“Heritage care must be concentrated in a planned way on cultural values whose preservation is essential for us. It is not possible to include everything of cultural significance in the framework of this care, because life goes on and creates new values, to which older values of lesser significance must give way.”*<sup>15</sup>

The codification in the 1958 law did not deviate from the above tendencies; it illustrates the instrumentalization of heritage conservation as a structure and of individual monuments for the purposes of the memory policy of the communist totalitarian rule. The aim of the regulation was to *“regulate the protection of cultural monuments [...], their use and care for their cultural and political significance so that monuments are preserved, properly managed, put to effective social use and made accessible to the people, and thus become an important part of the cultural and economic life of socialist society”*.<sup>16</sup> A specific form of instrumentalization of monuments for ideological purposes after nationalization became the categories of listed buildings, the preparation of which was also mentioned by Antonín Zápotocký in the speech cited above.

### Categorization of monuments

On the basis of various legislative measures, state heritage care was obliged to ensure the direct administration and protection of a large group of state castles and chateaux, as well as to ensure the reconstruction and protection of

urban conservation areas by its own means. The protection of other groups of monuments was to be professionally supervised and partly subsidized, with the remaining financial costs to be borne by the state departments under whose administration they fell. The unprecedented increase in the number of monuments for which the state was to be responsible necessarily led to the establishment of priorities; this was implemented by categorizing the monuments.

Perhaps for the first time, the new categorization as a major determining factor in the protection of monuments was officially announced in a government resolution of July 1950 concerning the financial underpinning of heritage care.<sup>17</sup> Later, especially during the existence of the State Heritage Institute, these categories were further specified. A relatively fixed structure emerged, with a precise hierarchy of the importance of the designated groups of monuments “for the new society”, which was based in particular on Marxist-Leninist ideology. At that time, the main categories were still mostly subdivided into sub-categories ordered according to their supposed importance. The intrinsic monumental values of buildings and movable works determined the importance of monuments only within the groups, but often only within the sub-groups; a medieval church belonging to a lower category of sacral monuments was thus less important according to this structure than the classical Prague house U kaštanu, which as the site of the founding of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party belonged to the first category.

All period professional syntheses and popularization texts devoted to monuments, as well as various internal official reports, are structured according to these newly established categories. However, the categorization had a number of practical implications, reflecting the degree of care, and thus above all the amount of public money that could be devoted to the protection, maintenance and promotion of a given group of monuments.<sup>18</sup>

This system of priorities was created under the external ideological and utilitarian pressure of the state representatives and did not reflect the realistic view of the majority of conservation professionals educated at interwar universities to respect the classical monument values (especially in the spirit of the tradition of the Viennese School of Art History) of the given group of monuments.<sup>19</sup> This is evidenced to some extent by their published period texts,<sup>20</sup> which rather suggest a determined effort to find ideological or economic arguments to justify the protection of all categories of monuments; the lower the position of a particular group held in the system, the more sophisticated and inventive the

argumentation seems. This is particularly evident in the case of the largest and from a professional point of view the most valuable group of sacral monuments. In the period of the 1950s under our observation, the structure in question consisted of the following main categories of monuments, in the following order:

1. Monuments to the beginnings and development of the labor movement and socialism in our country and to the most important personalities associated with the progressive traditions of the Czechoslovak people.
2. Urban heritage reserves.
3. State castles and chateaux.
4. Folk architecture heritage properties.
5. “Scattered” monuments, which usually include sacral monuments.

In the following text we will start from the presented categorization and try to show the specifics of protection and often real management of individual groups or subgroups of monuments.

### Workers' movement, socialism, progress

The position of the monuments to the beginnings and development of the labor movement and socialism in our country and to the most important personalities associated with the progressive traditions of the Czechoslovak people was certainly exceptional in several respects. These priority monuments were the group most closely associated with the interpretation of history conditioned by communist ideology and constitute clear evidence that before 1960 (see below) the ideological imperative played a decisive role in the approach to monuments. For example, the declaration of President Klement Gottwald's “birthplace” in the village of Dědice, although it did not correspond to the historical reality of his birth, nor was there any other factual reason for granting monument protection, met the sole needs of propaganda. The carefully constructed, universally positive image of the “first workers' president” clearly had elements of a leadership cult, and the efforts to deify Klement Gottwald became fully apparent after his death. In the official commemoration, we can also find a line emphasizing a permanent presence that carries quasi-sacral elements,

while one of the means of maintaining memory has also become an artificially created place of commemoration, the birthplace.<sup>21</sup>

For most of the 1950s, the monuments classified in the highest category belonged to the agenda of a special small department, which was the only specialist department directly attached to the Directorate of the State Heritage Institute. However, their protection, often their management, and in many cases the creation of new monuments was coordinated by the “Ideological Council for the Care of Monuments, Memorials, and Memorial Plaques”, which was established as an advisory body of the Ministry of Culture. It consisted of representatives of the Ministry, the State Heritage Institute, the Institute of the History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and the National Museum.

### Urban heritage reserves

The second category of monuments, urban heritage reserves, became the showcase for the success of Czechoslovak state conservation in the 1950s. However, they primarily earned their ranking as (compared to other groups) relatively the least ideologically burdened in terms of Marxism-Leninism. The comprehensive protection of the centers of historic towns was considered in some form continuously by Czech and then Czechoslovak conservation authorities from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>22</sup> However, in the post-World War II period, the situation of many towns in the borderlands, previously inhabited mainly by displaced German inhabitants, became increasingly alarming. The historic cores of these settlements, often with smaller dwellings with inadequate sanitary equipment, were the least attractive to new settlers, and as late as 1950 an average of one-third of the houses remained unoccupied.<sup>23</sup> Abandoned houses rapidly fell into disrepair. In the post-war years, the promotion of the borderlands was clearly a state priority; state officials considered this area to be a “laboratory of socialism”, a space unencumbered by tradition, where the goals of the socialist establishment could most easily be implemented. It was here, alongside the existing built-up area, that a new layer of the constructed borderland began to emerge with a distinctly ideologizing tone.<sup>24</sup>

The unignorable dilapidated houses, or mostly entire streets in the town centers, undoubtedly stood in the way of the vision of a “laboratory of socialism”. This was probably the main reason why in 1950 the government declared the 30 cores of the most historically significant cities as urban conservation areas, or urban

heritage reserves.<sup>25</sup> However, the promotion of the protection of the historic environment was also related, at least until 1956, to the general cultural orientation of the time towards the past, which is also evident in the historicizing tendencies of the first phase of socialist realism.<sup>26</sup> It also presented a certain counterpoint to the intensive building of industry and its infrastructure. *“The crossroads between the past (tradition) and the future (socialism) did not represent an absurd paradox or a state of existing ‘in spite of the regime’ during the 1950s, but much more a peculiar and functional syncretism within one and the same – Stalinist ideology conditioned – modernization process.”*<sup>27</sup>

### State castles and chateaux

Of the more than a thousand historic noble estates in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia expropriated from their original, particularly aristocratic owners, more than 150 art-historically most valuable buildings, mostly with extensive surrounding gardens and parks covering a total area of 30 km<sup>2</sup>, were gradually selected by the State Heritage Institute. The most valuable furnishings from the remaining expropriated aristocratic residences, as well as other objects, such as the houses and apartments of factory owners, collectors, or people who had been condemned to forfeiture of their property, often for political reasons, were concentrated in these castles and chateaux. Part of this extensive collection, declared under Act No. 137/1946 Coll. as “state cultural property”, was subsequently lent to public collections and other institutions such as government offices, ministries, and other central offices for furnishing representative premises. It was also used to furnish university rectorates and the offices of directors of cultural institutions. However, the administration of this entire convolute was still the responsibility of the central heritage authority, first the National Cultural Commission and, after its abolition at the end of 1951, its successors – the Ministry of Education, Science, and Arts, and then the State Heritage Administration.<sup>28</sup>

One of the first and main tasks entrusted to the newly established State Heritage Administration by the Minister of Culture in 1953 was a general inventory of this movable state cultural property. In fact, its inadequate registration was one of the main criticisms of the inspection carried out by the Ministry of State Control in the autumn of 1952.<sup>29</sup> A large-scale inventory operation carried out in 1953 and especially 1954, which had to involve a number of external workers whose professional level was often questionable (to say the least), eventually recorded 419,904 inventory numbers of items entered in the inventories now known as the “black books”.



↑ Fig. 3. Cheb, the course of reconstruction in the urban heritage reserve in the late 1950s (Collection of photographic documentation of the NHI, file no. 69354)



↑ Fig. 4. Karel Lercha, Memorial of the Duchcov strike, 1950s (Collection of photographic documentation of the NHI, file no. 87168)

Already shortly after the confiscation of the first large group of aristocratic estates in 1945, the leadership of the Czechoslovak state decided to make their relatively numerous most valuable part accessible to the general public. This was consistent with the strong left-wing orientation of the entire political representation and society at the time.<sup>30</sup> For various reasons, the opening of the 48 castles and chateaux selected in the first phase to the public was gradual and relatively slow<sup>31</sup> until 1950, when its form was refined and the arguments justifying the presentation of the former property of the aristocracy, a social group severely condemned for ideological reasons, had been thought through.

After the provisional (framework) installations and museums of residential culture of a certain period, which for various reasons proved not to be an entirely suitable solution, the employees of the National Cultural Commission and later its successors, especially the art historians Zdeněk Wirth, Ema Charvátová, and Oldřich Jakub Blažíček, gradually developed a concept for the presentation of furnishings in castle spaces without display cases and labels, which was subsequently called an interior installation. Oldřich J. Blažíček particularly emphasized its fundamental difference from the installation practices in museums and galleries; the starting point, according to him, was the historical and stylistic character of the structure itself, while the aim was *“the overall impression of the product of architecture, paintings, and sculptures and the mobile inventory rather than the highlighting of individuals.”*<sup>32</sup>

In 1949, however, the direct expert supervision of the state conservation authority, which applied only to properties, was extended to 170 more castle buildings of “category II”. According to the characterization of the time, these were to be buildings of *“such artistic and historical value[,] and therefore of more complex architectural design, that their restoration to a good and usable condition will require more expense than the allottees can provide.”*<sup>33</sup> These were mostly schools, social institutes of various kinds, regional and central museums, archives, and even government offices that were to provide routine maintenance of these buildings.

### Other monument categories

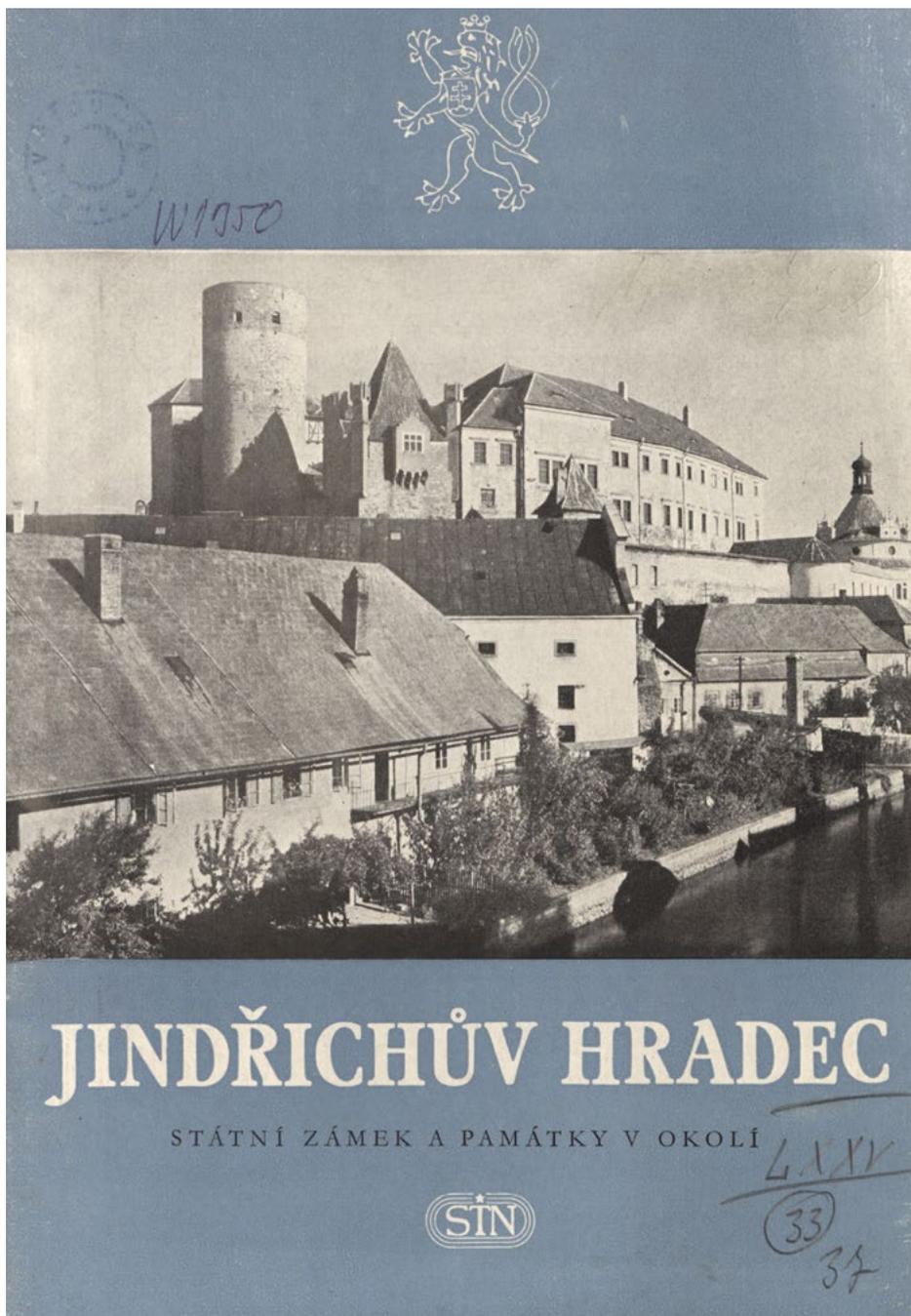
The fourth place in the ranking of importance of monument care in the 1950s was occupied by tangible monuments of folk art, especially architecture. However, they remained very much in the shadow of the previous two large groups, i.e., urban heritage reserves and castles and chateaux, which were the priority of the conservation authorities due to the complexity and scope of their agenda.



⬆ **Fig. 5. Dědice, exhibition in the alleged birthplace of the first Czechoslovak communist president Klement Gottwald, 1950s (Collection of photographic documentation of the NHI, file no. 71706)**

Strangely enough, the strong cult of folk art that emerged after the Second World War, and especially during the Stalinist period, did not have much influence on the real attention paid to this segment.<sup>34</sup> In addition to the aforementioned overload of the heritage authorities with other agendas, a certain cluelessness as to how to approach their protection was probably to blame. Unlike other groups of monuments, these mostly remained in private ownership and, in the absence of a comprehensive heritage act, the authority of the monument conservation was practically not applicable to them. Moreover, the countryside at that time was undergoing a radical transformation due to the collectivization of agriculture, and many previously used farm buildings (barns, stables, granaries) lost their function. Owners of historically valuable residential and farm buildings had little motivation to preserve and maintain them, and this was complicated by the lack of special materials and ignorance of the relevant techniques. The situation was again most alarming in the displaced borderlands, where new owners found it even more difficult to maintain these buildings sensitively than in other regions.

The term “scattered” monuments was most often used in period terminology for other groups of in situ material monuments. However, the scope of the definition



⬆ Fig 6. Title page of a 1959 publication about one of the confiscated aristocratic residences, the castle in Jindřichův Hradec in South Bohemia

of this group varied to some extent. In principle, these were to be monuments that were not under the direct jurisdiction of the conservation authorities until the publication of Act No. 22 in 1958, did not constitute state cultural property (state castles and chateaux, including the furnishings therein), and did not stand within the boundaries of urban heritage reserves. Theoretically, therefore, they should have included the aforementioned monuments of folk art and the first group of monuments, which, however, are practically always listed separately. Until the establishment of the State Heritage Administration, the protection of scattered monuments belonged to the agenda of the State Monuments Institute.

The most prominent and largest subgroup of these monuments were sacral monuments, but in contemporary terminology they were more often referred to as ecclesiastical or cult monuments. Given the long-prevailing affiliation of the population of the Czech lands with the Roman Catholic Church, these were mainly monuments associated with this denomination. By the Acts of October 14, 1949, Nos. 217, 218 Coll. on the economic underpinning of churches and religious societies by the state, which *de facto* assumed control of all religious life in the country, the care of the real estate and furnishings of churches and religious societies also became the economic responsibility of the state. Its administration was entrusted to the State Office for Ecclesiastical Affairs, which also took over the property of religious orders in 1950, whose activities were then either directly prohibited or severely restricted in Czechoslovakia.<sup>35</sup> The direct administration of the property of the former monasteries was carried out by the Church Fund, which was subject to the State Office for Church Affairs. The State Office for Church Affairs and, after its abolition in 1956, the church departments of the regional and district national committees were also responsible for the protection of the monuments in this property.<sup>36</sup> Although there are no precise statistics, the number and importance of these monuments was certainly greater than in the case of the vast convolute of noble residences, not to mention the other groups of monuments mentioned.

In this case, however, the heritage authorities had only the tenacious role of expert consultants, who could only respond to a direct appeal from the State Office for Church Affairs. They had no right to decide on the manipulation of the furnishings, nor were they allowed to propose repairs to the buildings and to include funds for them in the state budget.<sup>37</sup> The Strahov Monastery in Prague and the exposition of the Memorial of National Culture, soon renamed the Memorial of National Literature, were to become the showcase of the state's approach to the protection of sacral monuments and the presentation of a new ideologically

conditioned interpretation of the role of the Church in the history of the Czech lands. Otherwise, however, the preservation of monuments was not a priority concern for the State Office for Church Affairs, which soon began to be reflected in the condition of these properties and movable monuments.

Another group of highly endangered monuments was the buildings and their equipment located in territories that were to fall victim to the rapidly increasing consumption of electricity required by the heavy industry being built on the model and under pressure from the USSR. Among the regions affected in this way was primarily the vast area of the North Bohemian brown coal basin, which supplied coal to most of the thermal power stations, but also the area flooded during the construction of the Vltava Cascade and the hydroelectric power stations on it.<sup>38</sup> It was these regions that the State Institute of Photometrics and later the Documentation Department of the State Heritage Administration focused on. Photographic and planning documentation and, above all, a detailed inventory of the monuments in these areas were systematically performed.

The monument authorities had even less opportunity to intervene in favor of the protection of historical monuments in the case of buildings and their facilities located in the new wide border zone, especially at the borders with the Western bloc countries and in the militarized zones. Here, most buildings, not excluding historic buildings, were systematically destroyed because they complicated the clarity of the area. Only at the special request of the security or military forces could the heritage workers at least document some buildings, especially churches, before their destruction. In some places, but rather rarely, it was also possible to save the rarest parts of the furnishings of these buildings.<sup>39</sup>

### The social role of monuments

In the post-war conservation, the “promotion” of the activities of this sphere and the “promotion” of historical monuments in general played a much greater role than in the past. This was related to the much more important social role that cultural monuments and culture in general were to play in a strongly left-wing state. This tendency was later intensified by the involvement of monuments in the ideologized interpretation of Czech history and in the context of the attempt to justify the meaningfulness of financing the maintenance of such a large convolute of unusable or little-used objects in the public domain. Compared to the situation in the First Republic, the post-war heritage authorities in the

1940s and 1950s, especially the State Heritage Administration with its dozens of employees,<sup>40</sup> were much closer to a state enterprise for the maintenance, protection, and use of monuments than to an advisory professional body. And in this spirit, the state administration authorities also began to view them to some extent and demanded from them the mechanisms of operation common in economic enterprises.

In this context, it is understandable that the texts of the staff of the heritage administration on the one hand explain the specifics of heritage conservation in comparison with other spheres, in simple terms, why costs still outweigh revenues. On the other hand, they try to keep up with the state-owned enterprises and explain how their contribution to the “life of the nation” is essential, i.e., why the new society cannot do without heritage conservation. The efforts to publicize the activities and achievements of the state heritage service were particularly intense in the 1950s. The Orbis publishing house produced several very representative publications based on high-quality photographs, the first in 1953 devoted to the state castles and chateaux,<sup>41</sup> the second in 1955 presenting the municipal conservation areas,<sup>42</sup> and the whole sphere was then covered by Vlastimil Vinter’s book in Czech *The Living Legacy of the Past: Cultural Monuments in Czechoslovakia*<sup>43</sup> published in 1961. In 1957 a popular French-language publication *La protection des monuments historiques en Tchécoslovaquie*<sup>44</sup> was also published. The film industry soon became involved, and narrative documentaries were produced, while the backdrops of the monuments were also used extensively in feature films.<sup>45</sup>

Among the main tourist destinations in communist Czechoslovakia were the state castles and chateaux. In 1953 they were visited by 1,195,467 people, in 1956 by 3,300,000, and the upward trend continued.<sup>46</sup> The explanatory memorandum to Act No. 22/1958 Coll. on Cultural Monuments of 1957 refers to state castles and chateaux as “*places of pilgrimage for the broadest strata of our people.*”<sup>47</sup> Several factors influenced the popular practice of visiting historical sites. State castles and chateaux were officially promoted as suitable destinations and environments for leisure activities, and organized expeditions of various types were directed to them. Although the tours focused only on selected, ideologically convenient topics and the multifaceted nature of the buildings was fading, castles offered an experience that was significantly different from everyday perceptions, including the opportunity to “touch history.” Routine visitation also resulted from closed national borders and the forced use of domestic offerings, but also from the overall development of tourism and the automobile.<sup>48</sup> In addition, heritage sites were also featured in Czechoslovak cinema.<sup>49</sup>

In an era of intense competition between the Eastern and Western Blocs, the focus of which in the post-Stalin period was slowly shifting from the field of armaments to other spheres, especially science and culture, the state leadership began to realize the possibility of using the achievements of state heritage conservation (while concealing the demolitions and dilapidation of monuments, especially in the borderlands) to promote the advantages of the socialist establishment over the capitalist one. The culminating achievement in the promotion of Czechoslovak socialist conservation outside the socialist bloc can be considered to be the part of the exposition devoted to monuments and their care in the Czechoslovak pavilion at the 1958 EXPO World Exhibition in Brussels,<sup>50</sup> which was awarded as the best foreign pavilion of the exhibition.

### The problem of double optics <sup>51</sup>

When the art historian Miloš Stehlík (1923–2020) briefly assessed the period 1948–1958, he stated: “*We were under the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment; there was no Ministry of Culture and no Monuments Act. However, heritage protection was respected and honored. ‘This is what Professor [Stanislav] Sochor said,’ I would hear many years later at meetings I attended. The conservationist’s statement had weight and validity.*”<sup>52</sup> Individual advancement of the interests of experts through strong personalities or social connections was certainly possible and did indeed occur, but the quote also illustrates a fundamental problem. Access to and widespread interest in cultural heritage can be seen in positive terms of social reception. In the Czech milieu, the care of monuments had a long and strong tradition. After February 1948, the state stepped into these long-established tendencies even more strongly with its demands: heritage care and heritage items were to become part of a widely established indoctrination promoting Marxist-Leninist ideology, the communist politics of history and memory.

Although individuals were persecuted and excluded from the community of art historians, the vast majority were allowed to remain in it and continue their activities.<sup>53</sup> According to art historian Milena Bartlová, we can think of soft power, loyal resistance, or everyday resistance, when art historians sought strategies of adaptation at the cost of preserving the existence and level of the field and at the cost of remaining in an institution that fulfilled the tasks of the communist state, which was also reflected in the language used. This is not a specificity of art history or science,<sup>54</sup> but a widely applied practice of historical actors that cannot be classified as either clearly persecuted or clearly pro-regime.



↑ **Fig 7. Photo of the Minister of Education and Culture František Kahuda during a speech in the National Assembly before the vote on the approval of the Act on Cultural Heritage Properties in 1958 published in *Zprávy památkové péče***

## Conclusion

State conservation in Czechoslovakia after the Second World War was confronted with tasks that were disproportionately more complex and demanding than in the previous period, and we find tensions and paradoxes. The transfer of most monuments from private to state ownership gave the previously unimaginable opportunity to significantly influence their maintenance and use. At the same time, however, conservationists had to watch, virtually helplessly, the devastation of many other valuable monuments, including, in the case of the border zone and the North Bohemian brown coal basin, targeted and widespread destruction. The role of the state changed dramatically, not only in terms of ownership relations, but also in terms of the demands placed on the preservation of cultural heritage, its presentation, and the creation of new types of monuments.

In the Czechoslovak Republic before 1958, there were several bodies that represented the performance of heritage conservation at the central level: a department of the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment (Education, Sciences, and Arts), and later the Ministry of Culture, the State Heritage Office (subsequently the Institute), and the National Cultural Commission (1947–1951); these were joined by expert advisory forums and volunteer district conservators. The attempt to transfer the powers of the abolished National Cultural Commission to the regional national committees ended in failure largely because of their inadequate provision. Thus, in 1953, a decision was taken to create a new office merging the existing institutions – State Heritage Administration. Throughout the highly chaotic 1950s, practical difficulties prevailed in the conservation milieu with the operation of a structure that was significantly understaffed and underfunded, yet had to effectively manage a very large property with specific maintenance requirements. The institutions continued to employ the conservationists who had set the direction of the field in the years before the war. Most of them were able to continue their specialization regardless of the contemporary pressure of the Stalinist state.

The ideological influence, on the other hand, was strongly reflected in the categorization and presentation of monuments. The newly introduced categories were based on the need of the established communist totalitarian rule to interpret the past and the present through the newly acquired and largely expropriated monuments. The first place on the five-point scale of monument categories was thus occupied by buildings and items referring to the workers' movement and the “progressive traditions of the Czechoslovak people”. In second place we find urban heritage reserves, which became a completely new and important part of state conservation. The third place was occupied by the state castles and chateaux with interior installations – a place for ideologically tinged education about the way of life of the former upper social classes, a frequent and very popular destination of organized tours and private expeditions. The fourth and fifth positions were occupied by monuments with a much lower ascribed value: monuments of folk art, especially architecture, and so-called scattered monuments, which also included sacral structures and small religious buildings.

The term “instrumentalization” can be used to describe the most important processes that determined the approach to cultural heritage in the Czechoslovak Republic in the late 1940s and during the 1950s. Instrumentalization and the demands of the state are clearly visible in the categorization of monuments, the reductive approach to cultural heritage, and the creation of new sites of memory.

The structure of monument care, the mechanisms of its daily operation, and the practical execution of monument protection, as well as the objects themselves, were to serve as part of a broad-spectrum indoctrination of the population. Although the ideological narratives of communist totalitarian rule, which used heritage care and individual monuments as tools to promote a hegemonic conception of culture, had already emerged after February 1948, their unequivocal assertion is, somewhat paradoxically, linked to the late 1950s and 1960s. It was only after the law was passed, with conservation more firmly established within the state structures and consolidated internally, that the instrumentalization of conservation and listed buildings had the desired effect. The statism and the enforcement of the idea of state-guaranteed care of cultural heritage was, in fact, continuous at least until the time of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. These considerations were already intensively discussed by professional actors at that time and enjoyed considerable public support.

In the Czech milieu, monument care was and is being dealt with by experts of various fields of study – historians, art historians, architects, graduates of technical education, and restorers. For this reason alone, we cannot expect to follow a single operating strategy after 1948. All of them, however, had to cope with a situation that posed a certain difficulty even for scholars: on the one hand, they were (in the vast majority) part of a system that formed a component of the state apparatus and that had a clear ideologizing purpose; on the other hand, they were trying to maintain an adequate level of care for a steeply increasing number of protected objects and to assert an expert approach against the purely economic and utilitarian interests of other parts of the state apparatus.

*English translation by Bryce Belcher*



# Notes

- 1 Jan Kuklík, *Znárodněné Československo* (Praha: Auditorium, 2010), 135–396.
- 2 See Michal Novotný, “Česká památková péče mezi ideály a realitou” (PhD diss., Palacký University Olomouc, 2019), 88.
- 3 A separate National Cultural Commission operated in Slovakia.
- 4 In general, on the history of heritage conservation in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, see *Úvod do dějin a teorie památkové péče I. Nástin vývoje a základní ideové otázky památkové péče* (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1982); Vlastimil Vinter, “Vývoj a organizace státní památkové péče v Československu v letech 1945–1960,” *Zprávy památkové péče* 20, no. 2 (1960): 53–7; Jakub Pavel, “Patnáct let památkové péče a její další výhledy,” *Časopis společnosti přátel starožitností* 69, no. 3 (1961): 129–38; Josef Hobzek, *Vývoj památkové péče v českých zemích* (Praha: Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, 1987); Kristina Uhlíková, *Národní kulturní komise 1947–1951* (Praha: Artefactum, 2004); Novotný, “Česká památková péče mezi ideály a realitou”.
- 5 After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the sphere of Heritage Conservation was the competence of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment. After 1945, however, the name of this ministry was changed several times and the sphere of education, which had always included Heritage Conservation, was transferred to the competence of other ministries. In 1945–1948 it was administered by the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment, and in 1948–1953 by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Arts. In 1953, a separate Ministry of Culture was created, which operated until 1956, when it was again merged with the Department of Education and renamed the Ministry of Education and Culture (until 1967).
- 6 Miroslav Burian, “Současný stav a problematika památkové péče,” *Zprávy památkové péče* 17, no. 1 (1957): 4.
- 7 It was anticipated that this operational intervention, without any support in legislation, would be legalized by the issuance of the Law on Heritage Conservation later that year. However, the politically and otherwise turbulent year did not allow this step. Cf. Vlastimil Vinter, “Vývoj organizace státní památkové péče v Československu v letech 1945–1960,” in: Jiřina Nesvadbková, Zdeněk Wirth, and Vlastimil Vinter, *K vývoji památkové péče na území Československa. Volume 1, Přehled právních dokumentů a nástin vývoje 1749–1958* (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1983), 203; Novotný, “Česká památková péče mezi ideály a realitou,” 3.
- 8 In Slovakia, the Slovak Heritage Institute operated until the publication of Act No. 22/1958 on cultural heritage properties, but it cooperated closely with the State Heritage Administration, and its representatives often participated in regular management meetings.
- 9 Cf. Marek Krejčí, “K výročí vídeňské Ústřední komise pro památkovou péči,” *Zprávy památkové péče* 61, no. 6 (2001): 171–2; Novotný, “Česká památková péče mezi ideály a realitou,” 39, 126, 221. See also Petr Štoncer, “Zdeněk Wirth a systém státní památkové péče v období první republiky,” in *Zdeněk Wirth pohledem dnešní doby*, eds. Jiří Roháček and Kristina Uhlíková (Praha: Artefactum, 2010), 181–208.
- 10 See e.g. Jiří Křížek, “Nové poznatky ke sporu mezi Václavem Wagnerem a Zdeněkem Wirthem o metodu analýzy a syntézy,” in *Zdeněk Wirth pohledem dnešní doby*, eds. Jiří Roháček and Kristina Uhlíková, 239–51.
- 11 “Perhaps because of its low attractiveness, the ambitious generation of the ‘Gottwald Youth’, shielded by Soviet models and revolutionary phraseology, did not predatorily assert itself in the preservation of monuments, but remained the domain of proven pre-war experts.” Marek Krejčí, “Ochrana památek v padesátých letech,” in *Věda a technika v Československu v letech 1945–1960*, eds. Igor Janovský, Jana Kleinová and Hynek Střiteský (Praha: Národní technické muzeum, 2010), 98.

- 12 See Kristina Uhlíková and Michal Sklenář, “Instrumentalizace památkové péče v českých zemích v druhé polovině 40. a v 50. letech 20. století,” *Zprávy památkové péče* 82, no. 1 (2022): 3–16.
- 13 Zdeněk Beneš, “Historiografie 19. století,” in Jana Čechurová and Jan Randák et al, *Základní problémy studia moderních a soudobých dějin* (Praha: Nakladatelství lidové noviny, Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, 2014), 59–117, here 95–7; Jan Randák, “Prameny lidové provenience a české lidové kronikářství,” in *ibid.*, 332.
- 14 “Projev předsedy vlády Antonína Zápotockého k zahájení výstavy Za starou Prahu,” *Za starou Prahu. Věstník pro ochranu památek* 25, no. 6–10 (1951): 41.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 Act No. 22/1958 Coll. on Cultural Heritage Properties of 17 April 1958, § 1.
- 17 Report on the Care of Cultural and Historical Heritage, annex to the Resolution of the 99<sup>th</sup> Government Meeting, July 6, 1950, published in Jiřina Nesvadbíková, ed., *K vývoji památkové péče na území Československa, Volume 3. Výběr autentických dokumentů 1918–1958* (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1983), 358–70.
- 18 See Miroslav Burian, “Památková péče – součást socialistické výstavby našeho státu,” *Zprávy památkové péče* 15, (1955): 1; Josef Hobzek, “Státní památková péče v českých krajích po roce 1945 (stručný nástin),” *Časopis Společnosti přátel starožitností* 36 (1957): 97–106; Jakub Pavel, “Patnáct let památkové péče a její další výhledy,” *Časopis společnosti přátel starožitností* 69 (1961): 129–38. Also, e.g., internal annual reports on the activities of State Heritage Conservation deposited in the National Archives Czech Republic (Národní archiv České republiky, NA), Státní památková správa, Carton 3, Inv. Nr. 2.
- 19 Tomáš Murár, “Ve stopách Vídeňské školy. České univerzitní dějiny umění v Praze za první republiky, 1919–1939,” in *Století Ústavu pro dějiny umění na Filozofické fakultě Univerzity Karlovy*, eds. Richard Biegel, Roman Prahel, and Jakub Bachtík (Praha: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, 2020), 122.
- 20 Burian, “Památková péče – součást socialistické výstavby našeho státu”; Hobzek, “Státní památková péče v českých krajích po roce 1945 (Stručný nástin),” 97–106; Pavel, “Patnáct let památkové péče a její další výhledy,” 129–38.
- 21 This was a farmhouse, rebuilt in an idealized late 19<sup>th</sup> century form, and was joined by a “small living room” in Rousínov, the site of his residence in 1920–1921. Otakar Franěk, ed., *Rodný domek Klementa Gottwalda v Dědicích. Světnička Klementa Gottwalda v Rousínově* (Praha: Museum Klementa Gottwalda, 1959), 6.
- 22 Initially, this was done especially on the grounds of the Club for Old Prague, founded in 1900 primarily to defend the historic core of Prague against the area’s redevelopment. Here, not only practical steps to save Prague’s buildings were considered, but also the theoretical principles of protecting urban complexes were elaborated. Most of the most important Czechoslovak heritage preservationists of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century passed through the club. For a more detailed discussion of the Club for Old Prague and the theory of historic town preservation in Czechoslovakia, see especially Ivo Hlobil, *Teorie městských památkových rezervací (1900–1971)* (Praha: Ústav teorie a dějin umění Československé akademie věd, 1985).
- 23 Burian, “Současný stav a problematika památkové péče,” 4. Many other apartments in these houses were occupied by people who came from a completely different cultural background and were often unable to maintain them adequately.
- 24 Čeněk Pýcha, “Kniha k pohlízení a procházení. Vizualní reprezentace prostoru severních Čech,” *Dějiny – teorie – kritika* 12, no. 1 (2015): 61–87.
- 25 Report on the Care of Cultural and Historical Heritage Properties, annex to the resolution of the 99<sup>th</sup> government meeting, July 6, 1950, published in Nesvadbíková, *K vývoji památkové péče na území Československa*, 358–70. These included town cores of Český Krumlov, České Budějovice, Tábor, Jindřichův Hradec, Třeboň, Domažlice, Prachatice,

- Cheb, Loket, Litoměřice, Nové Město nad Metují, Pardubice, Litomyšl, Jihlava, Telč, Slavonice, Znojmo, Mikulov, Olomouc, Kroměříž, Štramberk, Prague – Old Town, Malá Strana, and Hradčany, Horní Slavkov, Planá u Mariánských Lázní, Kadaň, Horšovský Týn, Kutná Hora, and Moravská Třebová. See the book by Jiří Kostka and František Petr, *Městské památkové rezervace v Čechách a na Moravě* (Praha: Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění, 1955).
- 26** Hlobil, *Teorie městských památkových rezervací (1900–1971)*, 30–1. “Historic cities were in these years a natural stage on which, more than before, the momentous events of our national history were lived out.”
- 27** Michal Kurz, “„Do služeb lidu!“ Historické dědictví jako součást ideálu „socialistického města“ v období padesátých let,” *Historica Olomucensia* 54 (2018), 259.
- 28** The status of state cultural property was abolished only by Act No. 22/1958 on Cultural Heritage Properties.
- 29** Novotný, “Česká památková péče mezi ideály a realitou,” 112. See also Report on the Implementation of the Government Resolution of 10 March 1953 on the Elimination of Deficiencies in the Administration of State Cultural Property, NA, State Státní památková správa, Carton 55, Inv. Nr. 184.
- 30** “A thorough democratization will be carried out, not only in allowing the widest possible strata access to schools and other sources of education and culture, but also in an ideological direction: in humanizing the very system of education and the nature of culture so that it serves not a narrow class of people but the people and the nation.” Point XV of the Košice Government Program – Program československé vlády Národní fronty Čechů a Slováků přijatý na prvé schůzi vlády dne 5. dubna 1945 v Košicích, [Praha] 1945.
- 31** The reason for the slowness of this procedure was primarily due to the NKK’s preoccupation with the agenda of selecting the most valuable furnishings from the many other nationalized buildings.
- 32** Report by V. Dvořáková on, among other things, the contribution of O. J. Blažíček, see Vlasta Dvořáková, “Zpráva o výsledcích konference, konané Kabinetem pro teorii a dějiny umění ve spolupráci se Státní památkovou správou ve dnech 17.–19. prosince 1956,” *Umění* 5, no. 2 (1957), 171–5; Blažíček, in the Dictionary of Heritage Conservation in 1962 (“Instalace,” in *Slovník památkové péče* (Praha: Sportovní a turistické nakladatelství, 1962), 82), characterized it as follows. “Interior installation in heritage spaces [...] is based on the historical individuality of the building, on the architecture and original function of the interior, applying heritage furnishings and collections without the use of techniques and modern presentation, but with respect to the historical layout, in a reconstruction or a hint of the original function and context.”
- 33** Category II castles, 1951 Status Report, NA, State Státní památková správa, Carton 3, Inv. Nr. 2.
- 34** See, e.g., the chapter by Milan Pech, “Autenticita, vyprázdnění a možné řešení,” in *Jdi na venkov!: výtvarné umění a lidová kultura v českých zemích 1800–1960*, ed. Tomáš Winter and Pavla Machalíková (V Řevnicích: Arbor vitae societatis, Artefactum, 2019), especially 364–70.
- 35** Karel Kaplan, *Stát a církve v Československu 1948–1953* (Brno: Doplněk, 1993); *Akce K – likvidace klášterů v roce 1950: Dokumenty a přehledy*, part 1, ed. Jana Váchová (Praha: Ústav soudobých dějin Akademie věd České republiky, 1993); *Akce K – likvidace klášterů v roce 1950: Dokumenty a přehledy*, part 2, ed. Jana Váchová (Praha: Ústav soudobých dějin Akademie věd České republiky, 1993); Jiří Piškula, “Předzvěst pražského jara v době stalinismu. Státní úřad pro věci církevní v letech 1953–1956,” in *Teologie a společnost* 4 (12), (2006): 23–6; Jiří Piškula, “Státní úřad pro věci církevní 1949–1956. Ministerstvo pro kontrolu náboženského života v Československu,” in *Církevní dějiny* 4 (2009): 65–73.
- 36** See the explanatory memorandum to Act No. 217/1949 Coll. establishing the State Office for Church Affairs; for a more detailed discussion of the whole issue, see Kristina Uhlíková, “Ochrana sakrálních památek v českých zemích v letech 1945–1958,” *Zprávy památkové péče* 65 (2005): 335–43; Eva Richterová, “Akce VK – vyklizení benediktinského kláštera v Broumově v písemnostech Státního úřadu pro věci církevní a Náboženské matice,” in *Osudy konfiskátů. Výzkum proveniencí a problematika přesunů kulturního majetku v Československu na základě prezidentských dekretů*, eds. Martin Bakeš, Jitka Císařová, and Kristina Uhlíková (Praha: Artefactum 2020), 177–203.

- 37 The only exceptions were properties that ceased to serve religious purposes and were therefore exempted from the jurisdiction of the State Office for Church Affairs. Burian, “Památková péče – součást socialistické výstavby našeho státu,” 6.
- 38 From contemporary literature, see Zdeněk Budinka, “Mimořádné úkoly památkové péče v zátopových oblastech,” *Časopis Společnosti přátel starožitností* 38 (1959): 214–6. Most recently, see Martin Gaži, “The Vltava Cascade and Conservation in the 1950s and 1960s,” page 295–318 of this publication.
- 39 For more, see David Kovařík, “Devastation and Disappearance of Cultural Heritage as a Consequence of Demolition in the Czech Borderland after 1945,” page 345–65 of this publication. In some cases, by transferring them to churches in the vicinity, or by storing them in collection rooms in state castles.
- 40 In 1958, 165 employees worked at the State Monuments Administration headquarters alone at Hyberská Street No. 3 in the Swéer-Sporckov Palace in Prague. Many other employees worked directly on the premises of the state castles and chateaux.
- 41 Zdeněk Wirth, and Jaroslav Benda, *Státní hrady a zámky* (Praha: Orbis, 1953), a second edition was published in 1955 due to great interest.
- 42 Kostka and Petr, *Městské památkové rezervace v Čechách a na Moravě*.
- 43 Vlastimil Vinter, *Živý odkaz minulosti. Kulturní památky v Československu* (Praha: Orbis, 1961).
- 44 Miroslav Burian, *La protection des monuments historiques en Tchécoslovaquie* (Prague: L'Administration Nat. des Monuments Hist., 1957).
- 45 See Project Victor-E, Visual Culture of Trauma, Obliteration and Reconstruction in Post-WW II Europe.
- 46 NA, State Státní památková správa, Carton 3, Inv. Nr. 2.
- 47 Explanatory report to Act No. 22/1958 Coll., NA, State Státní památková správa, Carton 3, Inv. Nr. 2.
- 48 Cf. Jiří Knapík and kol., *Průvodce kulturním děním a životním stylem v českých zemích 1948–1967. I.* (Praha: Academia, 2011), 39, 866–8; Čeněk Pýcha, “Dějiny ve veřejném prostoru: Proměny institucí paměti” (PhD diss., Univerzita Karlova, 2020), 77–8. See also Jiří Knapík and Pavel Šopák, “„Procházel místnostmi, ze sešitu četl a rukama ukazoval...“: Státní hrady a zámky v letech 1948–1960. Mezi vědou a dovolenou,” *Acta historica Universitatis Silesianae Opaviensis* 16, no. 3 (2010): 197–209; Cathleen Giustino, “Open Gates and Wandering Minds. Codes, Castles and Chateaux in Socialist Czechoslovakia before 1960,” in *Socialist escapes: breaking away from ideology and everyday routine in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989*, ed. Cathleen Giustino (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 48–72.
- 49 Cf. Petr Hudec, “Obraz zpřístupňování památek v československém a českém hraném filmu a televizní inscenaci,” *The Journal of Culture* 9, no. 2 (2020): 10–21.
- 50 Emilie Bartlová Benešová and Karolína Šimůnková, *Expo'58. Příběh československé účasti na Světové výstavě v Bruselu* (Praha: Národní archiv, 2008).
- 51 See Uhlíková and Sklenář, “The Instrumentalization of Heritage Care,” 13–6.
- 52 Miloš Stehlík, *Kam kráčíš, památková péče* (Brno: B & P Publishing, 2018), 164.
- 53 Milena Bartlová, *Dějiny českých dějin umění 1945–1969: dějiny umění slouží vědě o člověku* (Praha: UMPRUM), 207.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 214–25, 427–28.



04

# Centralisation, bureaucratisation, and categorisation. Preparation of the Law on State Heritage Care in Czechoslovakia, its reception, and efforts to change it after November 1989

MICHAL NOVOTNÝ

The Law on State Heritage Care was passed in 1987, shortly before the end of Communist Party rule in Czechoslovakia. Its preparation, linked to the onset of normalisation, began in the early 1970s and the lengthy legislative process continued in the 1980s into the period of the “reconstruction”. Soon after November 1989, while it may have seemed easy for preservationists to replace it with a new legal norm, the law has proved surprisingly durable and, after numerous amendments, remains the basic legal regulation for the protection of cultural heritage in the Czech Republic. From the available archival documents related to the preparation of the law, the development of the legislative process can be reconstructed quite accurately.<sup>1</sup> However, the information in these documents and the contemporary reactions can also be used as a testimony to the precarious position of the professional heritage institution in the system of state administration and, more generally, as evidence of the idea of cultural heritage protection in society in general. In the first part, the following text notes three aspects manifested in the preparation of the Act on State Monument Preservation: the tendency to bureaucratised the protection of heritage properties, the adherence to central decision-making about the heritage fund, and the emphasis on the categorisation of heritage properties. In the section on the post-1989 period, the text points out the efforts to discontinue with the pre-November period, manifested in repeated attempts to change the system of state heritage care, which were very radical until the mid-1990s. Attempts to amend the existing law or to replace it with a new legal regulation were initially aimed at institutionally strengthening the professional independence of conservation. Especially in the early 1990s, a change in the concept of (cultural) heritage properties was

also intensively considered. Continuously, the main ideological theme was the relationship between the public interest in the protection of cultural heritage and the obligations of owners of heritage properties, manifested, for example, in the question of compensation for restrictions on the disposition of property.

### Criticism of the system

Why did the need arise to replace the Cultural Monuments Act (No 22/1958 Coll.) with a completely new law? The first clear criticism of the poor state of cultural heritage by the professional community called rather for an amendment of the existing system. For example, the *Memorandum on the Present State of Heritage Care in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic*, published in 1968, which criticized the existing system of heritage care, praised the current law as one of “*the most progressive and respected standards of heritage care in the world*”.<sup>2</sup> The criticism of the conservationists, evident in the late 1960s as a result of the easing of social conditions, pointed to the inability of the district national committees to exercise the executive power entrusted to them in the management of heritage properties. At that time, the activities of the national committees were essentially replaced by the emerging regional centres for state heritage conservation and nature protection and the State Institute for Heritage Conservation and Nature Protection. Therefore, in 1969, František Plachý, a lawyer with knowledge of practice from the State Institute of Heritage Protection, one of the co-authors of the Law on Cultural Heritage Properties and a published commentary, proposed to remove the decision-making on professional issues of heritage protection from the competence of the national committees, referring to the “*rationality of administration*”.<sup>3</sup> Zdislav Buřival, director of the Prague Centre for State Heritage Conservation, proposed a centrally controlled two-tier system of heritage authorities.<sup>4</sup>

With the onset of normalisation, open criticism of the system disappeared, and the culprit for the ruination of heritage properties was no longer the incompetence of the national committees or the lack of state funding, but rather the lack of interest on the part of the administrators of the buildings, or cases of vandalism. Instead of the need for organisational changes, the need to categorise heritage properties and the attempt to ensure comprehensive control of the heritage stock by the Ministry of Culture, represented primarily by the institution of centralized declaration of items as cultural heritage properties, were becoming the theme. This was to be achieved not by a mere amendment of the existing system, but systematically through new legislation.

## The long preparations for the new law

The need for a completely new heritage law was demanded by a government resolution adopted in 1973 under No. 25, entitled *Concept of Further Development of State Heritage care in Czechoslovakia*, together with the *Principles of Categorization of Cultural Heritage Properties*.<sup>5</sup> The Concept and the Principles emphasized the need to categorise cultural heritage properties in order to allocate limited financial resources efficiently. Consistent categorisation was to be a tool for planning repairs and controlling the condition of cultural heritage, taking into account aspects other than traditional art-historical values, particularly political significance and technical condition. Heritage conservation was to meet the requirement of “*adaptation to modern social needs*”.<sup>6</sup>

According to the requirements of the Concept of Further Development, Milan Klusák, the newly appointed Minister of Culture of the Czechoslovak Republic, submitted a draft of the principles of the new Act on State Monument Preservation for comment. In July 1974, selected officials at the Ministry were able to get acquainted with the draft.<sup>7</sup> Before that, František Siegler, an experienced lawyer in the Ministry’s legislative department who had already commented on draft laws on cultural heritage properties in the 1950s, had commented on the draft. He and Helena Hanšová from the Heritage Department of the Ministry of Culture were involved in the preparation of the future Act on State Monument Preservation until its approval in 1987. The principles for the forthcoming law were ideologically related to the aforementioned conceptual documents: comprehensive care of cultural heritage properties was to be provided “*in a planned and differentiated manner in accordance with the categorization of cultural heritage properties*” and the development of heritage care was to be “*in accordance with economic possibilities*”.<sup>8</sup> The declaration of cultural heritage properties by the Ministry of Culture was a major change from the existing law, which stipulated that properties of heritage value become cultural heritage properties “*ex lege*” and are only entered on state lists of cultural heritage properties for registration reasons. According to the 1958 legal construction, listed and unlisted heritage properties enjoyed the same legal protection, although practice emphasized the priority of listed heritage properties.

Siegler had already criticized the central declaration of cultural heritage properties in his first comments in 1974, for practical reasons (a huge increase in work for the relevant department of the Ministry), historical reasons (until then, this power had been vested in the district national committees), and strategic reasons

(the legislative council of the government had not previously voted to remove the power from the regional national committees, referring to the conclusions of the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia).<sup>9</sup> However, Helena Hanšová and Pavel Korčák from the Department of Heritage Properties insisted on a central proclamation. Criticism was also voiced during the external inter-ministerial comment procedure at the end of 1974. Jiří Grospič of the Institute of State and Law suggested that the power to declare heritage properties should be transferred to regional national committees in order to maintain the two-instance decision-making process,<sup>10</sup> a representative of the Ministry of the Interior pointed to the ongoing decentralisation of a substantial part of the state administration to local committees,<sup>11</sup> and the Czech Planning Commission demanded that a category of *heritage properties of local significance* be considered under the competence of district national committees as part of the decentralisation.<sup>12</sup>

The Ministry of Culture attached a political and economic analysis to the draft principles for the internal comment procedure, which became the basis for the conceptual part of the future explanatory memorandum to the law. The text served well as a guide to an ideologically conforming interpretation of the necessity of the new legislation: it stated that the 1958 law in force at the time was a document that was progressive in its time, but already outdated due to the extensive change in state administration, as it referred primarily to the “*protection and preservation of cultural heritage properties*” instead of creating “*preconditions for the implementation of the cultural and political interests of socialist society*”.<sup>13</sup> The inclusion of cultural heritage properties in the state list was said to fall short of the new requirements for legal certainty and did not allow for the gradation of care of heritage properties according to their importance. Furthermore, the analysis pointed out that the current law did not allow for the establishment of a network of professional state heritage care organizations.

According to the analysis, new legislation was necessary because of the development of socialist society under the conditions of the scientific and technological revolution. At a time of rising living standards, the new law should ensure “*unity of organisational structure*”, enable “*incorporation of heritage properties into contemporary life*” and guarantee “*the highest social efficiency*”<sup>14</sup> of the resources spent. The central declaration of cultural heritage properties and their registration in a central database were intended to fulfil these tasks. Heritage properties were to be categorized according to their cultural and political significance and heritage value so that they could be cared for in a systematic and planned manner.

The analysis was very careful to address the cause of the poor state of cultural heritage, criticism of which appeared in the public sphere towards the end of the 1960s. It explicitly identified the custodians of protected buildings, especially agricultural cooperatives, as the culprits and only cautiously acknowledged the limited capacity of building production.<sup>15</sup> The analysis was silent on the inefficient organizational structure discussed and pointed out by earlier critics.

One of the few professional institutions that had the opportunity to comment on the draft principles during the legislative process was the Institute of Theory and History of Art of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. The director of the institute, Sáva Šabouk, in his November 1974 comments made three suggestions for improvement: in addition to emphasizing the scientific theory of monument conservation at regional centres and greater public involvement in the care of cultural heritage, he mentions the requirement to protect even those heritage properties for which no appropriate content has yet been found in the categorization, and “*which will be fully exploited only by subsequent generations*”.<sup>16</sup> This concept of inexpensive conservation of disused buildings obviously had a long-lasting appeal: it was similarly formulated in the late 1960s (and outside the state monument structures) by the architectural historian Václav Richter,<sup>17</sup> and much later, in 1982, for the wider public in *Rudé Právo* by Zdislav Buřival.<sup>18</sup>

Before submitting the draft principles to the government in September 1978, Klusák’s Ministry had gone through a double comment procedure at both the republican and federal level.<sup>19</sup> The draft was commented on by the Slovak Ministry of Culture, selected district national committees, professional and scientific institutes, the Environmental Council of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and specialized commissions of the Legislative Council of the Government. In December 1977 and again in July 1978, Minister Klusák submitted it to the Legislative Council of the Government. When the draft principles of the law were approved by the Government of the CSSR in November 1978,<sup>20</sup> the Ministry circulated the draft law in paragraph form for comments early the following year. One of the first paragraphed versions, dated June 1980, already contained a definition of a cultural heritage property<sup>21</sup> and other basic concepts (including heritage zone) corresponding to the later approved text. However, no attempt was made to emphasise the urban aspect of conservation: according to the proposal, heritage properties of a non-material nature expressing “*the historical character of a place or the relationship of spatial elements of the environment*”,<sup>22</sup>

such as place names or the composition of spatial elements of settlements and landscapes, particularly historic silhouettes and landmarks, were to be protected.

At the end of 1981, commentators again questioned the effectiveness of central designation for a cultural heritage property. The Ministry had to explain again the effectiveness and ideological correctness of this concept: Siegler stated that the cultural heritage properties fund would comprehensively document Czechoslovakia's contribution to the world's cultural wealth. Thanks to the proposed procedure, according to Siegler, the heritage fund would be "*systematically evaluated, purposefully built up and corrected*" so that its thoughtful control would be able to "*direct the outputs of long-term field forecasts*" and influence "*the scientific and technical development of the field*". It was also argued that the maximum balance should be struck between "*the volume of cultural heritage and its natural decline*".<sup>23</sup>

In contrast, the Ministry backed down on another key issue at this stage: the categorisation of heritage properties, which was originally intended to be a criterion for differentiating the obligations of owners/managers of heritage properties, was no longer to be regulated by legislation. The Ministry, referring to a comment by the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, now admitted that categorisation may be an internal matter for the state heritage protection departments.<sup>24</sup>

Between 1982 and 1983, a number of changes in the legal order took place, and the proposal was therefore subject to further comment by the central authorities. In particular, the provisions on the restoration of a cultural monument became the subject of complex negotiations with the State Commission for Scientific and Technological Development, which was looking for a way to simplify the process of restoring a cultural heritage property as much as possible. For this reason, too, the draft law was not adopted by the government until October 1984. After partial amendments and repeated approvals, Minister Klusák was able to submit the draft law on state heritage care to the Czech National Council in June 1986, which finally adopted it unanimously on 30 March 1987.

The epilogue of the legislative process was the fate of the implementing decree (Decree No. 66/1988 Coll., implementing the Act on State Monument Preservation) containing the necessary requirements for the application of the Act in practice. The decree did not come into force until 1 July 1988, half a year after the Act itself came into force. The delay was caused by problematic negotiations with the Czech Commission for Scientific, Technical, and Investment

Development, the Ministry of Finance, and the Czech Planning Commission.<sup>25</sup> The originally prepared form of the decree was rejected just before the adoption of the law by the Administrative Law Commission of the Legislative Council of the Government, on the grounds that it regulated measures beyond the scope of the law, used imprecise diction, and in some points was already a methodology rather than a sub-legal text.

### **A forced law?**

In the Law on State Historical Preservation, the state abandoned the concept of a dynamic heritage fund (heritage properties protected *ex lege*). While it continued to declare its responsibility for the state of cultural heritage, it wanted to apply it by intensifying control over the heritage fund. This was to be done by categorizing heritage properties, an idea that was not new and not in itself a bad idea, as it determined the way in which a limited amount of funding was allocated. Although the possibility was offered that, in a centrally planned economy, even heritage properties in the last category could be taken care of by the state in accordance with the principle of good management through cheap conservation, the system of the time did not make use of this concept and rather applied the demolition of unused buildings, perhaps knowing that the public had come to identify dilapidated heritage properties with the state's inability to take care not only of cultural heritage, but also with its inability to meet the living needs of the population in general. The discrepancy between the declared interest in protecting cultural heritage and the deplorable state of some heritage properties undermined the image of the success of the socialist establishment.

The many points of comment in the legislative process stand in contrast with the closed-mindedness of the Ministry towards the conservationists themselves. Neither the State Institute of Heritage Protection and Nature Conservation nor the regional centres of state heritage protection had the status of a reminder point. The impression began to grow among conservationists that work on the draft law was being carried out behind closed doors, and that the purpose of the law, rather than the protection of heritage properties, was to concentrate power in the Ministry. The model of declaring cultural heritage properties by the Ministry demonstrated the dominance of the bureaucratic element in heritage management, especially when compared to the previous model of a dynamic heritage fund. The state heritage management system remained divided into executive bodies (national committees) and professional institutions. The concept of an

*Velmi nutné - Lhůta*

MINISTERSTVO KULTURY ČSR		Označení <u>spěšnosti</u> spisu
Císlo: <u>K č.j. 12 785/74</u>	Odbor a oddělení: <u>XII/1</u>	Referent: <u>Dr. Siegler</u>
Datum: <u>19 74</u>	č. <u>324</u>	Telefon <u>513</u> klapka <u>324</u>
Do <u>řed. odboru VI</u>	Reprodukční lhůta:	Zároveň se využívají spisy č.:
Věc: <u>Návrh zásad zákona ČNR o státní památkové péči - vnitřní připomínkové řízení</u>		
Drívější spisy:	Pozdější spisy:	
Do spisu nahlédne:		
před vypravením:	po vypravení:	
1) <u>řed. odb. XII s. Dr. Střnad</u> k aprobaci	<u>oddělení XII/1</u>	
2) <u>oddělení XII/1</u>	<u>3.8.81</u>	
Spisovna: <u>1 L XII 84</u>	Výpravna:	
Došlo:	Došlo:	
Popis spisu: ref. archů,	Opsal:	
exh., příl.	Opisoval: <u>příjma Kostelní 15/8 81</u>	
Značka: <u>30</u> <u>Zákon o památkové péči</u>	Vypraveno:	

Fig. 1. Draft principles of the Czechoslovak law on state Heritage Conservation – internal comment procedure, 29 July 1974 (National Archives Czech Republic, State Ministry of Culture the Czechoslovak Republic/Czech Republic (unprocessed), sign. 30 Monuments, Carton 300

institutionalized duality of professional and bureaucratic components continued to act as a source of permanent tension in state heritage care. In fact, this tension exploded immediately after November 1989 when the creation of the Heritage Office, a professional institution with decision-making powers, was contemplated.

### A longing for change

The negative relationship with the Act on State Monument Preservation gained intensity after November 1989. At the time, conservationists fully criticized the institutional and legislative dimension of heritage care in resolutions accusing the “normalization regime” of devastating the movable fund and pointing to the incompetence and political looseness of the national committees in managing heritage properties.<sup>26</sup> In the transitional period until the first free elections, the conservationists proposed to delegate decision-making powers to professional conservation organizations. For this reason, they also wanted to repeal the “*inadequate Act No 20/1987 Coll.*” and work on drafting a new law with the aim of “*completely rebuilding the organisational structure of state heritage protection, including the redistribution of powers*”.<sup>27</sup> Pending the approval of the new law, the contemporary law was to be amended to the extent necessary.

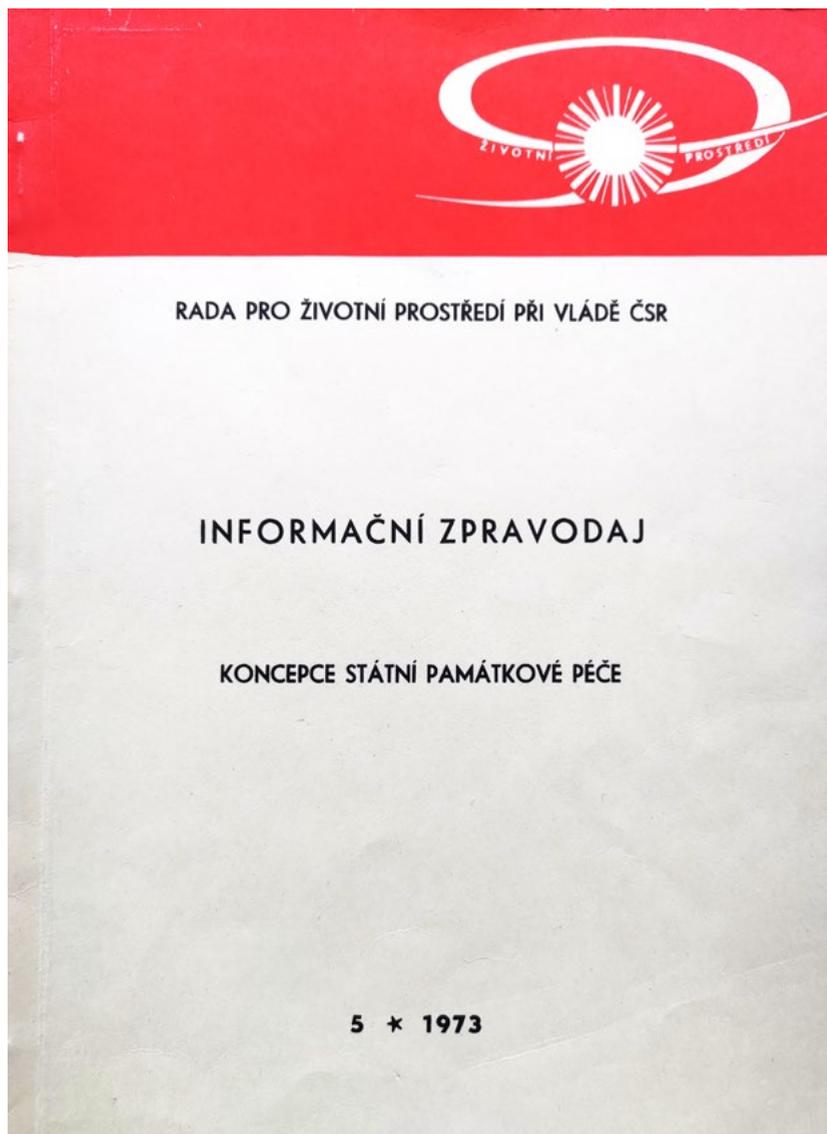
The initial concept therefore favoured a rapid change of the system by means of an amendment to the Act on State Monument Preservation, as was already stated at the meeting of professional conservationists in Roztěž on 12-14 March 1990.<sup>28</sup> In the course of the meeting, the participants drew up a paragraphed draft amendment to the Act on State Monument Preservation, requesting the transfer of administrative powers to regional centres, and submitted it to the Ministry of Culture in April of that year.<sup>29</sup>

Only a few weeks before, in February 1990, the staff of the national committees and architects of the State Institute for the Reconstruction of Heritage Towns and Buildings had met in Poběžovice, where they also denounced the lack of cooperation between the professional and administrative components of heritage protection. However, they refused to blame the National Committees and, in their statement, objected to “*unjustified attacks on some officials of the National Committees*”.<sup>30</sup> They saw the main problem as the fact that the professional staff of the regional centres for conservation and nature protection “*have no personal responsibility for their decisions*”. They considered it important to increase the authority of the administration of cities, municipalities, and districts.

The generally shared belief in the need to change the existing system was met by an amendment prepared since the spring of 1990 by the Ministry of Culture, which envisaged the creation of conservation authorities. In September 1990, the Minister sent it out for comments in September 1990, already in a paragraphed version, due to the urgency of the matter.<sup>31</sup> The explanatory memorandum pointed out the unnecessary administration and, above all, the negative experience of the lack of qualifications of the staff of the national committees.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the Ministry of Culture as the central authority, it was envisaged that there would be newly established regional heritage properties offices, created from regional centres, which would be responsible for decision-making on cultural heritage properties, and a Czech Heritage Properties Protection Office, created from the State Institute for Heritage Properties Protection, which would be responsible for appeals against decisions of the regional offices. This office would be in charge of national cultural heritage properties, with the Ministry of Culture acting as the appeals body.

In the meantime, however, in October 1990, Act No 425/1990 Coll. on district authorities was adopted, which abolished the regional national committees at the beginning of the following year and divided their powers between the district authorities and the Ministry of Culture. This indirect amendment to the Heritage Act practically blocked the possibility of establishing new heritage offices. In this situation, Minister Uhde attempted to find a compromise solution to the relationship between the professional and administrative branches in October 1990 with an amendment submitted by art historian Ivo Hlobil.<sup>33</sup> The amendment envisaged the creation of the post of district conservator (with a qualified university degree) working at the district office, who would also head the district conservation commission. The committee would consist of persons interested in the protection of heritage properties: representatives of the regional conservation institute, owners of heritage properties, and representatives of churches. The amendment was intended to create a platform for a professional and transparent debate in the restoration of heritage properties, as the district authority would have to publicly defend its different opinion before the district conservation commission if it disagreed with the opinion of the expert conservation body.<sup>34</sup> In March 1991, however, this proposal lost the Minister's support, and the Ministry began work on an entirely new law.<sup>35</sup>

It is noteworthy that between 1990 and 1992, two groups of professional conservationists worked simultaneously on the new conservation law. One at the



⤴ Fig. 2. “The Concept of Further Development of State Heritage Protection in Czechoslovakia,” Environment. Newsletter of the Council for the Environment under the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic, no. 5 (1973) (see footnote 5)

State Institute of Heritage properties around the art historian Mojmír Horyna, the other at the Ministry of Culture, where some of the heritage properties were transferred from the Prague Centre for Heritage properties Protection towards the end of 1990.

The group of heritage properties conservationists around Horyna worked on the new law from spring 1990<sup>36</sup> to 1992 with the intention of developing the principles of a heritage properties law that would follow “*our own historical tradition of heritage properties legislation from the last and the first half of our century.*”<sup>37</sup> In contrast to the declaration of heritage properties at that time, the new law was to define a heritage property “*precisely by qualitative and type features*”<sup>38</sup> and its listing was to be a registry act, not a legally binding one. Horyna’s group wanted to increase the number of experts in the state heritage protection system, but the Ministry could not fulfil this idea. Therefore, its other efforts focused on significantly strengthening the influence of expert institutions in the state administration system,<sup>39</sup> which, however, went hand in hand with limiting the rights of monument owners. The proposals set out in the principles for the new law aroused aversion among commentators. For example, the lawyer Jiří Plos, speaking on behalf of the Research Institute of Construction and Architecture, appealed for the responsibility of the individual and the municipality, including in decisions about the shape of the human environment, and stressed that “*heritage conservation must be primarily part of the self-governing activity of the municipality.*”<sup>40</sup> For these reasons, too, ministerial support for the Horyna Group gradually ceased.

Further legislative activity by professional conservationists took place directly at the Ministry of Culture between 1991 and 1992, where some professional conservationists transferred from the Prague centre. Vladimír Razím, Pavel Kroupa, and Dagmar Sedláková also tried to strengthen the roles of the heritage preservationists, either by transferring decision-making powers from the district offices to the existing institutes or to the newly planned heritage offices. In the last drafted version of the principles of the law (June 1992), they explicitly referred to “*the philosophy of the first Czech law on cultural heritage properties*”<sup>41</sup> when defining the concept of heritage properties. A protected property was to be a thing whose protection and preservation was in the public interest because of its heritage value. However, the legal effects of this law were to take effect only from the moment of delivery of the notice of registration to the owner or holder of the property.<sup>42</sup> The draft did not envisage the institution of a national cultural heritage property, due to concerns about the consequences of categorisation.<sup>43</sup>

The administrative authorities were to decide after an unspecified agreement with the State Heritage Institute, which would have the status of a concerned authority; in disputed cases, the Ministry of Culture would deal with the matter.<sup>44</sup>

### Concerns about major changes

When the authors of the proposal left the Ministry after the June 1992 elections,<sup>45</sup> work on their draft law ended. It seems that the period of great ambition regarding the creation of a heritage authority or the revision of the definition of a cultural heritage property ended just then. The conservationists found themselves on the defensive. Their call for the state to act as a guarantor of heritage protection in the transition period sounded to society like a longing for the pre-1989 Lisbon period. A large part of the public shared an aversion to any state regulation, perhaps recalling the former ubiquitous state interference, and believed that by cultivating the individual's relationship to his or her own property, an improvement in the state of cultural heritage could be achieved. Conservationists were coming to terms with the negative consequences of privatization of property and neoliberalism in the economy. In a vulgarized form, heritage conservation was presented as a nuisance interference of state power into the inviolable free sphere of the individual.

The reinforcement of these tendencies is embodied by the legislative actions of Minister Jindřich Kabát (Minister from July 1992), in which the Ministry of Culture was authorized to withdraw the competence of the heritage institutes for professional activities and to transfer part of the performance of heritage care to non-state entities.<sup>46</sup> This paved the way for the partial de-nationalisation of heritage care. However, even these proposals did not reach the Chamber of Deputies. Partly due to the opposition of the professional public, which in a rare consensus strongly rejected them as a manifestation of “*cultural nihilism*”,<sup>47</sup> but mainly because of the Minister's premature and inglorious end in office at the beginning of 1994.

The new minister, Pavel Tigrid, initiated his own major amendment which he submitted to parliament in 1996. It was the result of complex debates and many compromises and therefore did not involve any major conceptual changes compared to the early post-Soviet proposals. It was tactfully presented to the public by the Ministry as a balanced piece of legislation that “*limits the powers of the state conservation authority*” and, on the contrary, “*expands the rights of owners*”.<sup>48</sup>

Its consideration in the Chamber of Deputies was protracted: although there were several committee hearings between August 1995 and April 1996, it was not a priority for the political representation and had rather lukewarm support among conservationists.

After the elections in mid-1996, the new minister, Jaromír Talíř, decided to change the heritage law conceptually, i.e. to abandon the idea of extensive amendments, and instead to draft a completely new heritage law.<sup>49</sup> His ambitious plan was confirmed by the draft Concept of State Heritage Care of the Czech Republic, discussed by the Government in June 1997.<sup>50</sup> It is noteworthy that this proposal considered four(!) options for the organisational structure of heritage protection, including the idea of establishing a heritage office which would, among other things, “*issue decisions on matters relating to the preservation, restoration and use of cultural heritage properties and provide contributions for restoration*”.<sup>51</sup> The concept also committed other ministers to work on the submission of a new heritage law. However, legislative preparation was complicated by, among other things, the forthcoming reform of the public administration and the declared work on a new construction law. For this reason, too, the government did not finally approve the draft law on the protection of heritage properties and heritage care until January 2002.<sup>52</sup>

It was Minister Pavel Dostál who, eleven years after November 1989, succeeded in getting the draft law on heritage properties into the Chamber of Deputies. The bill defined a protected heritage property almost identically to the existing law as “*a movable or immovable object, or a part or set thereof, if they are evidence of the history of the material and spiritual life of mankind from the earliest times to the present day and are of significance for history, science, art, technology or archaeology, or have a direct relationship to significant historical personalities, significant groups of people or significant historical events*”.<sup>53</sup> The protection of a heritage property was based on a decision of the Ministry of Culture; in contrast to the previous regulation, only the owner, the State Institute for Monument Protection, or a municipality could submit a proposal for the declaration of a cultural heritage property. In addition to the hitherto completely identical structure of the heritage fund (heritage reserves and zones, protection zones, archaeological findings), a category of heritage sites was to be added which fell under the independent competence of municipalities. While the Ministry presented this category as an extension of the heritage fund to include heritage properties that do not reach the significance of cultural heritage properties, critics saw it as an alibi for shifting the responsibility of the state to municipalities.

In its final paragraphed form, the proposal was confronted with the expert public at a public hearing held by the Senate on 7 December 2001. The concept of entitlement to contributions for increased costs in the restoration of a cultural heritage property met with the greatest opposition. Previously, the main topics, such as the establishment of conservation authorities, were mentioned only sporadically by the participants. And the return to a legally non-binding list of heritage properties, a topic once discussed, was not mentioned by anyone. The attention of the representatives of regions and municipalities focused on two areas: local governments demanded a founding role for regional conservation institutes (analogous to museums and archaeological conservation institutes) and pointed to unclear provisions on financial contributions from regional and municipal budgets. Regional representatives wanted control over the declaration of cultural heritage properties.<sup>54</sup>

The course of the legislative process so far and its outcome filled the conservationists with concern that the approval of the proposed law would “*weaken the care of heritage properties even compared to the law in force so far*”.<sup>55</sup> This was a significant shift from the outright rejection of the law in the early 1990s.

Aware of the above criticism, on 13 February 2002, Minister Dostál presented the draft Law on the Protection of Heritage properties and Heritage care to parliament at the first reading. He tried to present it as a project that “*concerns an absolutely apolitical area, namely the noble care of cultural heritage properties*”.<sup>56</sup> However, the MPs rejected the proposal under the weight of criticism from the professional public and returned it to the Ministry for further elaboration. Despite this setback, Dostál’s attempt was a symbolic culmination of one of the legislative stages of the effort to create a new monument law.

Important changes in the organisation of heritage care that did not pass the law were implemented by the Ministry in a different way after the draft was returned: by a measure of the Ministry of Culture,<sup>57</sup> the National Heritage Institute was established at the beginning of 2003, a single legal entity bringing together central and regional specialist monument institutions. This put an end to the threatened claims of the regions to the founding function of the regional heritage institutes.

In the context of Czech monument legislation, the time-consuming (almost twenty years) negotiation of the Act on State Monument Preservation and the still unfinished efforts to draft a new heritage law are not unlike previous legislative attempts to protect cultural heritage. Protracted negotiations accompanied the never-passed Heritage Bill in the 1930s and, perhaps surprisingly, the Heritage Act in the 1950s.

The documents on the preparation, reception and attempts to replace the Heritage Act provide more topics to explore, but this text has limited itself mainly to the issues of centralisation, bureaucratisation, and the position of the professional branch of heritage conservation in the system of state administration. The concentration of the Ministry's competences in declaring cultural heritage properties and the associated increase in administration were interpreted by the drafters of the Act on State Monument Preservation as a legitimate tool for proactively addressing systemic deficiencies in heritage care, which they believed would enable an effective way of managing and controlling a significant part of the tangible cultural heritage. These same tools, on the other hand, became in the eyes of the conservationists a negative means of limiting the expertise of heritage care and reducing the heritage fund. It was precisely the regulation of ministerial competences, together with the "subordinate" status of heritage institutes, that was the subject of criticism of the post-Soviet desire for radical change. After unsuccessful legislative attempts at rapid change in the first half of the 1990s, the radicalisation faded away and the subsequent ministerial proposals are, apart from some excesses, more an expression of continuity with the status quo. Even for many conservationists, since the mid-1990s the Act on State Monument Preservation has become a newfound security and a bulwark against erratic legislative attempts.

*English translation by Bryce Belcher*





# Notes

- 1 The text is based on the author's dissertation on the preparation of monument laws in the Czech lands: Michal Novotný, "Česká památková péče mezi ideály a realitou. O přípravě zákonů na ochranu památek ve 20. století od konce 19. století do roku 2002" (PhD diss., Palacký University Olomouc, 2019).
- 2 "Memorandum o současném stavu památkové péče v ČSSR," *Umění* 16, no. 4 (1968): 325.
- 3 František Plachý, "Praxe a teorie státní památkové péče," *Památková péče* 29, no. 5 (1969): 205–8.
- 4 Zdislav Buřival, "Problémy památkové péče v soustavě státního zřízení," *Monumentorum tutela – Ochrana pamiatok* 6 (1970): 78.
- 5 "Koncepte dalšího rozvoje státní památkové péče v ČSR," *Životní prostředí. Informační zpravodaj rady pro životní prostředí při vládě ČSR*, no. 5 (1973).
- 6 "Koncepte dalšího rozvoje státní památkové péče v ČSR," 63.
- 7 National Archives Czech Republic (Národní archiv ČR, NA), State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 300, no. 12.785/74-VI/1, draft principles of the Czechoslovak law on state Heritage Conservation - internal comment procedure, 29 July 1974, annex.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 9 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 300, ref. 12.785/74, comments of the Legislative and Legal Department on the draft principles of the Czech National Council Law on State Heritage Conservation, Siegler, 15 August 1974, p. 1.
- 10 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 300, ref. 15.730/74, Draft Principles of the Czech National Council Law on State Heritage Conservation - circulation for comments, Institute of State and Law, comments of 26 November 1974, p. 2.
- 11 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 301, ref. 15.730/74, draft principles of the Czech National Council Act on State Heritage Conservation - circulation for comments, Ministry of the Interior of the Czechoslovak Republic, comments of 26 November 1974, p. 3.
- 12 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 301, Ref. 15.730/74, Draft Principles of the Czech National Council Act on State Heritage Conservation - circulation for comments, Institute of State and Law, comments dated 19 December 1974, p. 1.
- 13 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 299, draft principles of the Czech National Council Act on State Heritage Conservation, political and economic analysis, 29 July 1974.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 16 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 301, draft principles of the Czech National Council Act on State Heritage Conservation - sent out for comments (15730/74), comments on the draft new wording of the Act on State Heritage Conservation, Institute of Theory and History of Art, Sáva Šabouk, Prague, 29 November 1974.

- 17 Václav Richter, "Památková péče," in *Umění a svět*, ed. Zdeněk Kudělka and Bohumil Samek (Praha: Academia, 2001), p. 383.
- 18 Zdislav Buřival, "Proč zbytečná defenzívnost?," *Rudé právo*, February 10, 1982, 3.
- 19 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 306, draft principles of the Czech National Council law on State Heritage Conservation, submission to the government of the Czech Socialist Republic (21425/78).
- 20 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 305, government draft principles of the Czech National Council law on State Heritage Conservation - submission (10959/79), record, January 1979.
- 21 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 306, draft Czech National Council law on state Heritage Conservation - submission to the Legislative Council of the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic (12233/80), draft - Czech National Council law on state Heritage Conservation, p. 2: "Cultural heritage properties are immovable and movable things, or, in each case, collections thereof, which are significant evidence of the historical development, way of life and environment of society from the earliest times to the present, manifestations of the creative abilities and work of man from various fields of human activity for their revolutionary values, historical, artistic, scientific and technical, or objects and places which are directly related to important personalities and historical events in whose preservation socialist society has an interest and which the Ministry of Culture shall therefore, on the basis of scientific knowledge and social evaluation, declare to be cultural monuments."
- 22 Ibid, explanatory memorandum, special section, p. 18.
- 23 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 23, Carton 109, discussion of the draft law of the Czechoslovak Republic on state Heritage Conservation with the secretary of the Legislative Council of the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic (16.856/82), 1 November 1982
- 24 Ibid, p. 18.
- 25 NA, State Ministerstvo kultury Československé / České republiky, sign. 30 Památky, Carton 264, letter (no. 177/88-SM) from Milan Klusák to Josef Mečl dated 17.3.1988.
- 26 "Provolání k ochraně kulturního dědictví," *Architekt* 36, no. 1 (1990): 8. Other examples include: "Jak dál v památkové péči," *Památky a příroda* 50, no. 1 (1990): 96. "Pláč zemí koruny české," *Památky a příroda* 15 (1990): 96.
- 27 "Jak dál v památkové péči," 96.
- 28 Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Ústav dějin umění Akademie věd České republiky, IAH CAS), State jednotliviny, Carton A602. Conclusions of the Czech Heritage Preservation Professionals, undated.
- 29 Jaroslav Svatoň, "Příspěvek na semináři k legislativě oborů a organizací pečujících o hmotnou část kulturního dědictví," *Bulletin Státního ústavu památkové péče* 7 (1991): 258.
- 30 IAH CAS, State jednotliviny, Carton. A602, Memorandum of the Poběžovice Initiative No. 1, Prague, 6 February 1990, p. 4.
- 31 IAH CAS, State jednotliviny, Carton A603, Letter from the Ministry of Culture to the Institute of Art History, 17 September 1990.
- 32 Ibid, explanatory memorandum, general part, p. 1.

- 33** Ivo Hlobil, "K ideovému zaměření připravované novelizace zákona o státní památkové péči č. 20/1987 Sb. Iniciativní návrh předaný dne 30. října 1990 ministru kultury panu M. Uhdemu," *Bulletin Státního ústavu památkové péče* 7 (1991): 176–9.
- 34** Hlobil, "K ideovému zaměření," 178.
- 35** Milena Sršňová, "Nedoporučuje se," *Respekt* 2, no. 13 (1991): 15.
- 36** Milena Sršňová, "Památková péče," *Respekt* 1, no. 26 (1990): 14.
- 37** Mojmír Horyna, "Příspěvek na semináři k legislativě oborů a organizací pečujících o hmotnou část kulturního dědictví," *Bulletin Státního ústavu památkové péče* 7 (1991): 88.
- 38** Horyna, "Příspěvek na semináři," 91.
- 39** *Ibid.*, 92.
- 40** "The essence of the new approach is the activity of the citizen and the municipality" – IAH CAS, State jednotliviny, Carton A602, Opinion on the Draft Principles of the Heritage Act. Prepared by Jiří Plos, 25 May 1991, p. 1.
- 41** IAH CAS, State jednotliviny, Carton. A602, Draft Principles Act on State Monument Preservation, Prague, 24 June 1992, Basic Provisions, Principle No. 2, p. 3.
- 42** *Ibid.*, Principle No. 5.
- 43** IAH CAS, State jednotliviny, Carton. A602, Draft Principles of the Czech National Council Act on the Protection of Monuments, Prague, 24 June 1992, Evaluation of the Second Commentary Procedure, Principle No. 2, unpaginated.
- 44** *Ibid.*, Principle No. 29.
- 45** Pavel Kroupa, "Škoda památek," *Český deník*, February 19, 1993, 6.
- 46** IAH CAS, State jednotliviny, unprocessed, Draft Act amending and supplementing Act No. 20/1987 Coll., on state Heritage Conservation, dated 1 November 1993, Annex No. III, point 47, § 25(5), p.15.
- 47** Pavel Kroupa, Dagmar Sedláková, Vladislav Razím, and Alena Černá, "Stát si myje ruce?" *Lidové noviny*, November 20, 1993, 8.
- 48** Mrk, "Stát přijde o část pravomocí k nakládání s památkami," *Lidové noviny*, May 4, 1995, 8. See also the article by Jana Bendová. – Jana Bendová, "Pamatujme na památky i na jejich majitele," *Mladá fronta Dnes*, May 13, 1995, 8.
- 49** rep, kul, "Talíř se chce věnovat památkám," *Mladá fronta Dnes*, Juny 8, 1996, 4.
- 50** IAH CAS, State jednotliviny, unprocessed, Concept of the State Heritage Care, Material of the Ministry of Culture at the request of the Subcommittee for Culture, 19 June 1997, p. 20.
- 51** *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 52** Government Resolution No. 1 of 9 January 2002 on the Draft Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Heritage Conservation and on Amendments to Certain Acts (Heritage Act), [https://kormoran.odok.cz/usneseni/usneseni\\_webtest.nsf/o/3C6434D789E8B32DC12571B6006B01DC](https://kormoran.odok.cz/usneseni/usneseni_webtest.nsf/o/3C6434D789E8B32DC12571B6006B01DC), retrieved 20 July 2019.

- 53** Government Proposal for the Issuance of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Heritage Care and on the Amendment of Certain Acts, Section 3. <http://www.psp.cz/sqw/tisky.sqw?O=3&T=1224>, retrieved 23 July 2021.
- 54** Ibid.
- 55** Mojmír Horyna, “K přípravě památkového zákona,” *Bulletín uměleckohistorické společnosti* 14, no. 2 (2002): 11.
- 56** Record of the proceedings of the House of Commons: 46<sup>th</sup> Session, 13 February 2002, <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1998ps/stenprot/046schuz/so46392.htm> to <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1998ps/stenprot/046schuz/so46398.htm>, retrieved 10 March 2021.
- 57** Measures of the Ministry of Culture Ref: no. 11.617/2002 and Statutes: Measures of the Ministry of Culture Reg. No: 11.613/2002.



05

# Monument preservation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Austria

PAUL MAHRINGER

## Introduction

In its chief proponents Alois Riegl and Max Dvořák, Czech and Austrian monument preservation can claim common roots.<sup>1</sup> Each are key figures with their theory of monument preservation, not only for the so-called modern monument preservation and restoration introduced around 1900, but also today, with current questions of defining “what a monument is” and how such an object should be protected and maintained.

The First World War interrupted the initial preservation process, as did the death of Max Dvořák.<sup>2</sup> But this break also led to the birth of the First Republic in Austria and with it the enactment of the first monument protection law.<sup>3</sup> The law is, with a few exceptions, still valid today. Since then – with some exceptions during fascism – the Monument Protection Act in the country has been a federal law, enforced by a federal authority – the Austrian Federal Monuments Authority (“Bundesdenkmalamt”).

According to the Austrian Monument Protection Act (“Denkmalschutzgesetz”, abbrev. DMSG), monuments are man-made, immovable and movable objects of “historical, artistic or other cultural significance” (§1 DMSG). All buildings owned by public corporations, including recognized religious groups in Austria, became ex lege under the Monument Protection Act of 1923, qualifying for almost automatic protection. Objects in private ownership, on the other hand, could only gain monument protection by means of an administrative procedure. Changes to any monument required permission from the Federal Monuments Authority.

## A new start after 1945 – a success story

After the dark period of Austrian monument preservation in the Third Reich,<sup>4</sup> the Federal Monuments Authority was able to successfully recommence its work immediately after the war.<sup>5</sup> The first and biggest task was the rebuilding of Austria's cities, ranging from conservation and restoration projects to the complete reconstruction of more-or-less destroyed historical buildings.

After the Second World War, the Republic of Austria officially described itself as the first victim of the Third Reich (“victim theory”). In the same rhetoric, the first president of the Federal Monuments Authority after the Second World War, Alfons Ivo Quiquaran-Beaujeu, and his successor Otto Demus, described monument preservation as the first victim of the Third Reich, as during this period the preservation of monuments was downgraded from a state to a federal state concern. At the same time, whilst monument preservation in Germany was often accused of collaboration with the Nazi regime, this was not the case in Austria thanks to the victim theory.

Germany attempted a more radical break with the past. In general, there was strong political will to make a fresh start with a completely new architecture. This would set an example for democracy in West Germany with modern architecture, and launch the new socialist state in the East in a style of socialist realism. In contrast, there was determination in Austria to establish continuity with the past whilst excluding the period of the Third Reich; officially referred to as a blight of occupation and foreign rule.

Although there were more extensively destroyed cities in Austria than one might assume today, there was a strong public will to rebuild the cities in the sense that they would be restored and conserved and, if necessary, at least partly reconstructed. The clearest example of this sentiment is the partially reconstructed and restored St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, followed by the reconstruction and restoration of the Vienna State Opera (Figs. 1, 2), as well as the Parliament buildings, including newly built areas inside, namely the National Council Hall and the Auditorium of State Opera (Fig. 3).<sup>6</sup>

All these activities were accompanied by the expertise of the Federal Monuments Authority, which at the time enjoyed a fine public reputation. New architecture, such as that realized inside the Parliament and State Opera buildings, had to subordinate itself to the historical monument. Therefore, this first phase of



⬆ Fig. 1. Vienna, St. Stevens Cathedral. © Bundesdenkmalamt, Michael Oberer

post-war architecture in Austria is also referred to as moderate modernism.<sup>7</sup> It should be said that the great task of reconstruction had to be accomplished by a staff of just 56 employees throughout Austria in 1947 (i.e. including the so-called “Landeskonservatorate” and “Landeskonservatoren”, which are part of the Federal Monuments Authority),<sup>8</sup> and that the Federal Monuments Authority only slowly acquired more staff, so that today there is a payroll of around 200 employees nationwide.

The next phase of the post-war period included several restoration “highlights”. In the 1970s and 1980s especially, numerous monasteries were restored, e.g. in Lower Austria. The Baroque church tower of Dürnstein may be regarded as a symbol of this (Fig. 4).<sup>9</sup> The original blue baroque colour was rediscovered and the tower painted blue again. Despite some initial shock, the blue tower became a symbol of restoration based on scientific findings and research, and the object in its spectacular colourfulness became a sightseeing highlight of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Wachau.

### **Otto Demus’ critical retrospective**

In the following part we will look more at specific challenges and the question of the “mass of monuments” (“Denkmälermasse”), which played a key role in the history of monument preservation in Austria, especially in the 1970s. It must be said that the present and future challenge of monument preservation is more apparent in problematic topics than in success stories.

In this context, Otto Demus’ summary of the first ten years of monument preservation after the Second World War is particularly interesting.<sup>10</sup> As attempted elsewhere, he could well have spoken of the institution’s success. However, he preferred to take a critical look at the new phenomena of the destruction of old cities and the threat to the historical cultural landscape caused by spatial planning, modern architecture and modern transport. This demonstrates Demus’ early view of problems that would affect the future of Austrian monument preservation.

In his critical contribution, he specifically mentions the loss of the “Heinrichshof”, which was built by Theophil Hansen and is regarded as a residential building of the highest historical importance, located in an important urban location opposite the Vienna State Opera. In this vein, he also discusses the Ringstrasse skyscraper

by Erich Boltenstern, which can be described as a threat to the famous Belotto view of the old town of Vienna from the Belvedere, whilst also acknowledging the architectural merit of the high-rise from Vienna's Ringstrasse (Fig. 5).

Like Max Dvořák, Otto Demus stressed the importance of protecting less significant monuments, which are often more endangered than the famous highlights.<sup>11</sup>

### **“Denkmälermasse”**

Especially in the 1970s, the question of “mass of monuments” (an expression of the then General Conservator Ernst Bacher) arose.<sup>12</sup> The discourse on the “mass of monuments” can be seen to a certain extent as a product of the successful European Year of Monument Protection in 1975.<sup>13</sup> The preoccupying question from around 1900 came up again: what can be considered a monument? In the 1970s – as already foreseen by Demus – anonymous buildings and rural architecture, such as workers' settlements and farmhouses, came increasingly under the spotlight of the Federal Monuments Authority. Ernst Bacher therefore spoke of a “flood of monuments”, in which every farmhouse could become a monument and thus not only works of art but also examples of socioeconomic or other significance could be so termed.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of this development, and due to new standards set by Eva Frodl-Kraft with regard to Austrian institutions, such as the Austrian Monument Topography or the Austrian version of the Dehio' Handbook, their volumes became ever thicker.<sup>15</sup>

### **Hazards and ensembles**

In addition to the growing inventory books, the question of what to protect as an actual monument became increasingly important. As one of the consequences of the European Year of Monument Protection in 1975, some federal states began to enact their own townscape protection laws for entire areas such as the old towns of Salzburg, Graz and Vienna.<sup>16</sup> However – in contrast to the Monument Protection Act, which is enforced by the Federal Monuments Authority – the townscape protection laws are only concerned with safeguarding the external appearance, while the monument protection law is about the protection of the overall substance, which can also affect the interior of a building. In order to bridge this gap, the Federal Monuments Authority was authorised by an amendment to the Monument





↑ Fig. 2. Vienna, State Opera. © Bwag - Eigenes Werk, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=49712672>

Protection Act in 1978 to also place “ensembles” under monument protection. In the following decades, starting with the Steyr Wehrgraben, many old towns in the World Heritage Wachau in Lower Austria (Dürnstein, Melk, Weissenkirchen), the cities of Schärding in Upper Austria and Hall in Tirol were placed under monument protection as ensembles, to mention just a few examples.

## Modern architecture

While the possibility of ensembles made it easier to place the majority of old town buildings under monument protection, the question of how to protect most rural objects remained unresolved in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In addition to rural architecture, the question arose as to the significance of the monument and the protection and care of modern architecture, playing as it did an increasingly important role at the time, with the first manifestations of the architecture of the post-war period already appearing.<sup>17</sup> In addition, there was no specific appreciation for the buildings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at that time.

At the end of the 1940s, important Viennese buildings by Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos were already placed under monument protection, such as the so-called “Looshaus” on Michaelerplatz in 1946 (Fig. 6) or the “Rufer and Moll houses” in 1949. Nevertheless, in the 1970s, due to a formal decision from the Federal Monuments Authority dating back to the 1930s which the authority could not change, a light rail station by Otto Wagner was still not under monument protection. At the time, only certain stations were considered worthy of safeguarding.

Despite public protests, some of these stations were destroyed, but Otto Wagner’s famous “Die Brücke über die Zeile” (Bridge over the Zeile) was saved (Fig. 7).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Renate Wagner-Rieger, professor of art history at the University of Vienna, played a key role in the general acceptance and appreciation of historicist and modern buildings. She supported the Federal Monuments Authority by preparing expert opinions at the request of the Federal Monuments Authority, which could be used for the protection of buildings of this period and thus bolster their importance. Due to her expertise, the former Harmonie-Theatre at Wasagasse 33 in Vienna – an early work by Otto Wagner from 1864/65 – was placed under protection in 1974 (Fig. 8).

➔ **Fig. 3. Vienna, State Opera, new auditorium made by Erich Boltenstern.**  
© Bundesdenkmalamt,  
Franz Herbert Weinzierl



⬇️ **Fig. 4. Lower Austria, Dürnstein.**  
© Bundesdenkmalamt,  
Michael Oberer



➔ **Fig. 5. Vienna, Ringturm skyscraper by Erich Boltenstern.**  
© Bundesdenkmalamt,  
Bettina Neubauer



While buildings by the most famous Austrian architects of historicism and modernism were still endangered, the Federal Monuments Authority next began to place modernist buildings by at the time lesser-known architects under monument protection, such as the “Chocolate House” – so-called due to its dark brown majolica façade – by Otto Wagner’s pupil Ernst Lichtblau (Fig. 9).

Many architects thus became committed to the protection and restoration of modern architecture in Austria. In addition to the protection of the most important works of this period, the first restoration of modern architectural masterpieces included the restoration of Otto Wagner’s “Postsparkasse” in the 1970s (Fig. 10). The restorations of the so-called “Looshaus” on Michaelerplatz and the “American Bar” by Adolf Loos can also be described as milestones in the restoration of modern architecture.<sup>18</sup>

As well as the restoration of these masterpieces, by the 1980s work on the now equally famous “Wiener Gemeindebauten” (“Viennese municipal buildings”) of the interwar period had gradually commenced. In time, the Federal Monuments Authority succeeded in saving and restoring these buildings too. One of the most famous municipal buildings is undoubtedly the “Karl-Marx-Hof”, built by Otto Wagner’s student Karl Ehn from 1927 to 1933 (Fig. 11).

But there are also examples of individual works of post-war architecture. Hans Hollein’s famous candle shop “Retti”, which he designed in 1964/65, was already listed in 1985 (Fig. 12) and Roland Rainer’s “Böhler House”, built in 1956–57, was also protected in the 1980s. However, these examples remain exceptions, as the majority of post-war architecture was only placed under monument protection at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

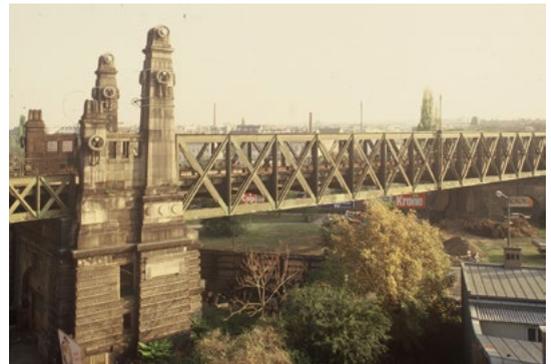
## Postmodernism

While the preservation of monuments after the Second World War relied increasingly on scientific methods and objectifiable results, thus excluding emotional considerations, Wilfried Lipp spoke in 1993, with regards to Alois Riegl’s monument theory (“Der Moderne Denkmalkultus”), of the “postmodern monument cult”.<sup>19</sup> In so doing, he revisited questions of feeling and emotion in monument conservation, previously excluded from the post-war discourse. In this context, he also predicted a “repair company”. He saw furthermore

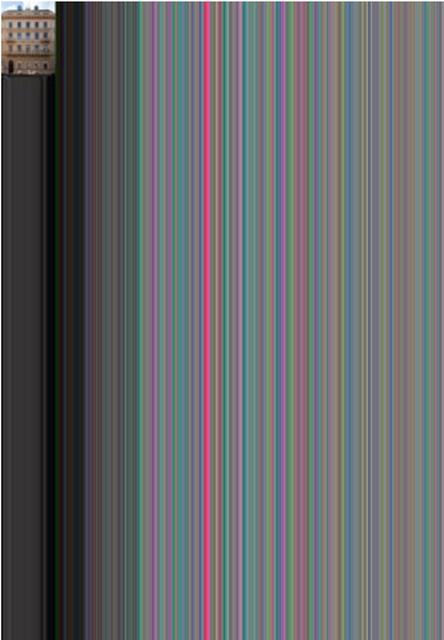


◀ Fig. 6. Vienna,  
Michaelerplatz, Looshaus.  
© Bundesdenkmalamt,  
Bettina Neubauer-Pregl

⬇ Fig. 7. Vienna, bridge  
"Die Brücke über die  
Zeile" by Otto Wagner.  
© Bundesdenkmalamt,  
Michael Oberer



◀ Fig. 8. Vienna, former  
Harmonie-Theater  
at Wasagasse 33.  
© Bundesdenkmalamt,  
Bettina Neubauer-Pregl





⬆ Fig. 9. Vienna, so called “Chocolate house” by Ernst Lichtblau.  
© Bundesdenkmalamt, Bettina Neubauer-Pregl



↑ Fig. 10. Vienna, Postsparkasse by Otto Wagner.  
© Bundesdenkmalamt, Bettina Neubauer-Pregl

the monuments threatened by a postmodern “anything-goes” mentality and with it an arbitrariness of values, which could end in a nihilistic approach to the “real” monuments.

At that time, there was indeed a certain endangerment of historical buildings in the old towns in, for example, Vienna. Because it turned out that the local image protection law could not safeguard historic buildings from fundamental changes – such as additional storeys. Lipp was also one of the first in Austria to deal at least theoretically with the problematic legacy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> In 1946, the Federal Monuments Authority considered the former Mauthausen concentration camp to be a monument.<sup>21</sup>

### **Amendment of the Monument Protection Act and unresolved tasks**

In 1999 there was a further amendment to the Monument Protection Act. Until then, all buildings owned by public corporations, including the recognised religious groups – if considered worthy of protection by the Federal Monuments Authority – qualified automatically under monument protection.<sup>22</sup> Due to the 1999 change, all such buildings, should they remain under monument protection, had to be listed by ordinance until 2010. This led to a large-scale inventory and database recording for all protected immovable monuments but also all potential monuments, which was carried out at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a result, it became known for the first time which and how many immovable monuments were actually under monument protection and which objects could be regarded as potential new monuments – still to be protected. This made it possible for the first time to create a valid, Austria-wide protection strategy for the future.<sup>23</sup> This also led to increasing exposure to objects of questionable heritage, such as Nazi buildings or former concentration camps and, of course, to an increased preoccupation with post-war architecture.



↑ Fig. 11. Vienna, Karl-Marx-Hof by Karl Ehn.  
© Bundesdenkmalamt, Bettina Neubauer-Pregl



➔ **Fig. 12. Vienna,**  
**candle-shop by Hans Hollein.**  
© Bundesdenkmalamt,  
Bettina Neubauer-Pregl



⬆ Fig. 10. Vienna, Postsparkasse by Otto Wagner.  
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# Notes

- 1 Alois Riegl's monuments theory was first translated into English in 1982 and reprinted in 1998: Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: its Character and its Origin," in *The Oppositions Reader. Selected Readings from A Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture 1973–1984*, trans. Kurt W. Forster, and Diane Ghirardo (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 621–53. In German see: Ernst Bacher, ed., *Kunstwerk oder Denkmal? Alois Riegls Schriften zur Denkmalpflege* (Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau 1995). For the complexity of Riegl and Dvořák's heritage custody theory and therefore different interpretations of their role as protagonists of Austrian Heritage Preservation and Protection, see in English: Margaret Olin, "The Cult of Monuments as a State Religion in Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Austria," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1985): 177–98; Andreas Lehne, "Georg Dehio, Alois Riegl, Max Dvořák – a threshold in theory development," in *Conversation and Preservation. Interactions between Theory and Practice. In memoriam Alois Riegl (1858–1905), Proceedings of the International Conference of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee for the Theory and the Philosophy of Conservation and Restoration*, eds. Michael S. Falser, Wilfried Lipp and Andrzej Tomaszewski eds. (Firenze: Polistampa 2010), 69–80; Jonathan Blower, "The Monument Question in Late Habsburg Austria. A Critical Introduction to Max Dvořák's Denkmalpflege" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2012), <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/8723>. In Blower's dissertation you can find a translation of most of Dvořák's German MCH texts – Michele Lamprakos, "Riegl's 'Modern Cult of Monuments' and the problem of value," *Change Over Time. A Journal of Conservation in International Building* 4, no 2 (2014): 418–35; Paul Mahringer, "Making Choices or How to Protect Austrian Most Important Monuments," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 74, no. 1/2 (2020): 96–9, <https://www.bda.gv.at/service/publikationen/oezkd/oezkd-heft-1-2-2020-espon-studie.html>, 27. 12. 2021.
- 2 Paul Mahringer, "Österreichische Denkmalpflege zwischen Idealismus und Realität," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 73, no 1/2 (2019): 55–65, <https://www.bda.gv.at/service/publikationen/oezkd/oezkd-heft-1-2-2019-100-jahre-republik.html>, 27. 12. 2021.
- 3 For the protection act in English see: [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Erv/ERV\\_1923\\_533/ERV\\_1923\\_533.html](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Erv/ERV_1923_533/ERV_1923_533.html), 27. 12. 2021.
- 4 Eva Frodl-Kraft, *Gefährdetes Erbe. Österreichs Denkmalschutz und Denkmalpflege 1918–1945 im Prisma der Zeitgeschichte* (Wien: Böhlau, 1997); Theodor Brückler, ed., *Kunstraub, Kunstbergung und Restitution in Österreich 1938 bis heute* (Wien: Böhlau, 1999); Paul Mahringer, "Geschichte und Zukunft der Inventarisierung in Österreich," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 63, no 3/4 (2010), 231–52.
- 5 For the reconstruction of monuments ("Wiederaufbau") after Second World War see: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege – Aus Trümmern wiedererstanden. Denkmalpflege 1945 bis 1955*, no. 3/4 (2004), especially: Theodor Brückler's, "Die Österreichische Denkmalpflege 1945–1947: 'Resurrectio' oder 'Reanimatio'?", *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 57, no. 3/4 (2004): 390–443. Also see: Paul Mahringer, "Der Umgang mit dem baulichen Erbe der NS-Zeit in Linz. Polyvalence and Transformation of Uncomfortable Monuments" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2013), 56–65, <http://othes.univie.ac.at/28640/>; Paul Mahringer, "Denkmalpflege in Wien nach 1945," in *Wien – Budapest. Stadträume des 20. Jahrhunderts im Vergleich*, eds. Máté Tamáska, and Barbara Rief Vernay (Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2020): 493–511.
- 6 For the opera house see Paul Mahringer's contribution at: "Sein oder Nichtsein. Historische Theaterbauten: Nutzung und Modernisierung Nutzung und Modernisierung." Deutsches Architekturmuseum, 19. 11. 2021, [https://www.icomos.de/icomos/pdf/dam\\_theatertagung\\_flyer\\_web\\_rz.pdf](https://www.icomos.de/icomos/pdf/dam_theatertagung_flyer_web_rz.pdf), <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHNF-hFNtIXSeUp8NX7ysw>.
- 7 Judith Eiblmayr and Iris Medes, *Moderat Modern. Erich Boltzstern und die Baukultur nach 1945* (Salzburg: Anton Pustet, 2005).
- 8 Number of employees 1947: Brückler, "Die Österreichische Denkmalpflege 1945–1947: 'Resurrectio'," 442.

- 9 See: "Turm Dürnstein: Einst Streitobjekt, jetzt Wahrzeichen," Radio Niederösterreich, <https://noe.orf.at/vz/news/stories/2511006/>.
- 10 Otto Demus, "Zur Lage. Eine Mahnung," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 9, no. 2 (1955): 41–7.
- 11 Blower, "The Monument Question," 393: "... *the lowly often needs more protection than the important.*"
- 12 Ernst Bacher, "Denkmalbegriff, Denkmälermasse und Inventar," *Deutsche Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 38, (1980): 121.
- 13 Eva Frodl-Kraft, "Die Österreichische Kunsttopographie. Betrachtungen sub specie fundatoris," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 28, (1974): 114–30.
- 14 Bacher, "Denkmalbegriff," 121.
- 15 Mahringer, "Geschichte und Zukunft der Inventarisierung," 249–51.
- 16 Andreas Lehne, "Das Ensemble und der staatliche Denkmalschutz in Austria. Development, Experience and Definitions," in *Fokus Denkmal. Altstadt Melk. Ensembleschutz für ein Stadtdenkmal* (Horn, Wien: Berger & Söhne, Ferdinand 2014), 37–43.
- 17 For modern architecture and heritage care in Austria see: Bernd Euler-Rolle and Paul Mahringer, "Die Erhaltung der Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts in Österreich – Routine und Neuland für Denkmalschutz und Denkmalpflege," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 72, no 3/4 (2018): 6–18.
- 18 See: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 76, no. 1 (2022).
- 19 Wilfried Lipp, "Vom modernen zum postmodernem Denkmalkultus. Schichtung und Plurivalenz," in *Kultur des Bewahrens. Schrägsichten zur Denkmalpflege*, ed. Wilfried Lipp (Wien-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau-Verlag, 2008), 161.
- 20 Wilfried Lipp, "Das bauliche Erbe der NS-Zeit im 'Heimatgau des Führers'. Bilanz mit Nachbemerking – vorangestellt," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift. Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen* 41, no. 4/5 (1995): 105.
- 21 Paul Mahringer, "Der Alterswert als Narrativ für traumatische Erfahrungen des 20. Jahrhunderts. Denkmalkultus, lebendige Geisteswissenschaft, Postmoderne und neue Zugänge in Theorie und Praxis der Denkmalpflege," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 68, no. 1/2 (2013): 5–27, especially p. 15.
- 22 Mahringer, "Making Choices," 98.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 98–9.



06

# Creating the Conservation System in People's Republic of Croatia, 1945–1960

MARKO ŠPIKIĆ

## Introduction: Political Context

After the Second World War, the international conservation movement entered a new era. Until its heyday of global expansion during the 1970s,<sup>1</sup> it became one of the most important political tools in a materially and morally destroyed Europe. The variety of professional responses depended on the extent of destruction and the intentions of the ruling classes. Post-war reconstructions show different approaches to those two points, recalling Reinhard Koselleck's terms of recollection and hope (*Erinnerung, Hoffnung*).<sup>2</sup> They were instigated by collective traumas, experienced in vast landscapes of ruins.

Similar to the political realities of post-war Yugoslavia, architectural conservation in the newly established state bears specific features. This country emerged from a bloody civil war, mainly between the dominating Serbs and Croats, in the midst of foreign occupation.<sup>3</sup> Immediately after their triumph, Marshal Tito's authorities prompted revolutionary measures. Looking to the future, they adopted the Soviet ideological model (that is, until 1948, when Yugoslavia became the Eastern Bloc's *enfant terrible*); on the other hand, during the ideological reform and economic recovery, they faced complex consequences of war.

In order to achieve a social harmony in a multi-national state, communist authorities promoted the synthesizing ideology of Brotherhood and Unity, enabling the creation of six popular republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, with increasing sovereignty and self-government,

crowned in the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution, that guaranteed the republics the right to self-determination and secession.<sup>4</sup> The first fifteen post-war years were marked by retaliation (against local collaborators mainly in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, but also against German and Italian minorities, and, in and after 1948, against political dissenters), radical socio-economic reforms, a break with Stalin and gradual liberalization and growth to a Yugoslavian version of the economic miracle. In this process, Tito's political persona shifted from the Partisan commander bravely opposing Moscow and father-figure of the Southern-Slavs' Federation in the late 1940s to the co-founder of the Non-Aligned Movement in the late 1950s. In this period, the country was transformed from a pre-war monarchical dictatorship and collaborationist terror-state in the times of global war to an industrialized and urbanized socialist society, with newly-established and publicly approachable academic and cultural institutions.<sup>5</sup>

### Conservation in Croatia before 1945

The first forms of institutionalized conservation activity in Croatia preceded the establishment of the Viennese Central Commission for the Maintenance and Study of Architectural Monuments (Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale) in 1850. Some monuments and ensembles – such as the Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč, the Roman Arch of Sergii, the Amphitheatre and Temple of Augustus in Pula, the cathedrals in Zadar, Šibenik, Trogir and Korčula, Diocletian's Palace in Split, and the historic town of Dubrovnik – attracted the first antiquarian travelers and researchers already in the Baroque and Enlightenment periods. During the reign of the Austrian emperor Francis I, the Archaeological Museum in Split and National Museum in Zadar were established in 1820 and 1832 respectively, motivating archaeological excavations in Salona (started in 1821), the collection of antiquities and the conservation of Diocletian's Palace.<sup>6</sup>

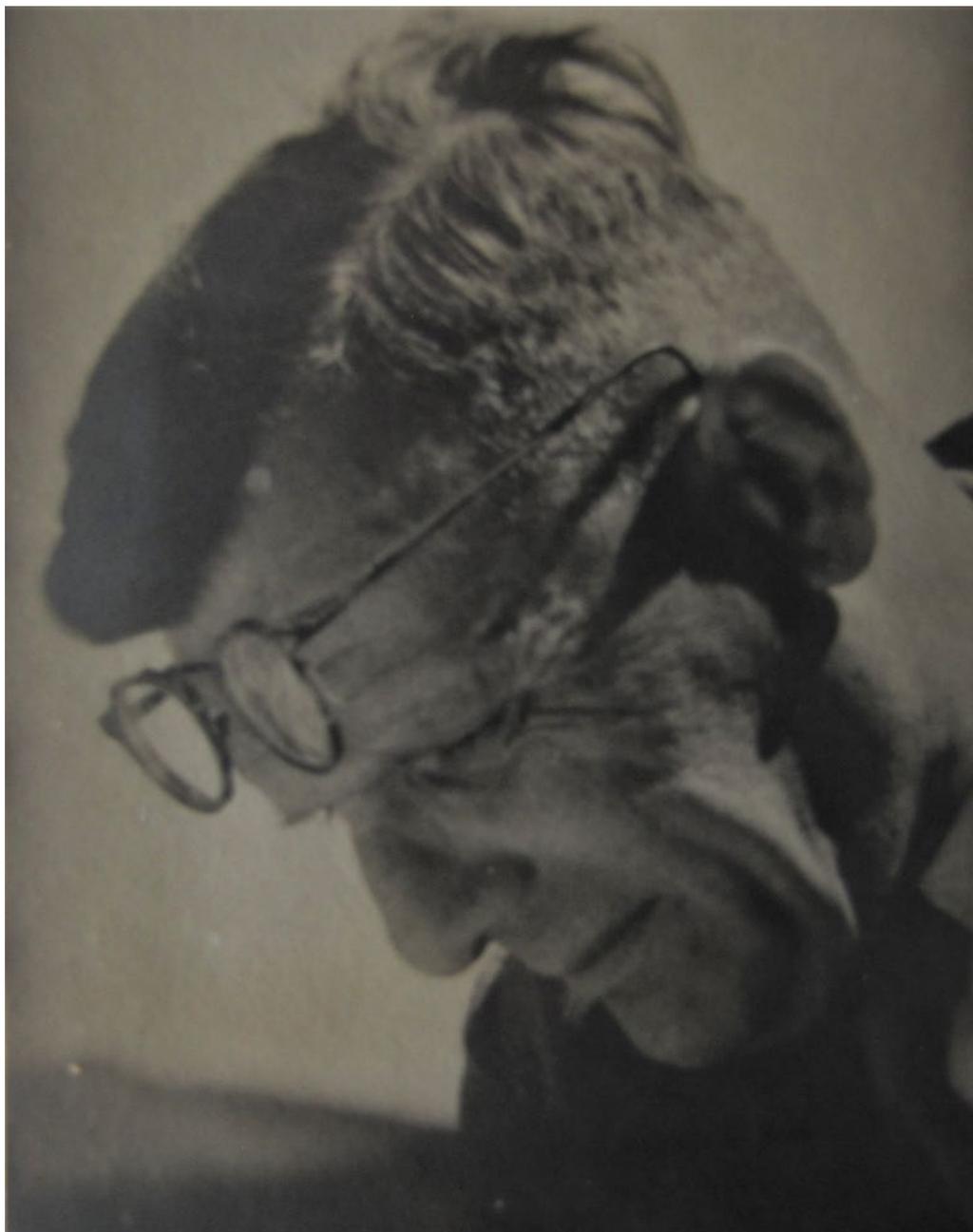
After 1850 some monuments were perceived as most important in the Austrian Empire, especially Diocletian's Palace in Split and during the 1840s the first subsidized restoration projects were initiated on Šibenik Cathedral.<sup>7</sup> As in other parts of the Monarchy, the system functioned with centralized decision-making with the regular flow of information from the provinces, either from honorary conservators or correspondents.<sup>8</sup> Along with the formation and reforms of the Central-Commission between 1850 and 1918, the monuments of Istria and Dalmatia attracted prestigious scholars: Rudolf Eitelberger, Otto Benndorf, Alois Hauser, Alois Riegl, Wilhelm Kubitschek, George Niemann, Cornelius Gurlitt and Max



⬆ **Fig. 1. Employees of the Conservation Institute in Zagreb, March 1946 (Ministry of Culture and Media, Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Photo Archive, Inv. Nr. 4611-I-27j)**

Dvořák to name a few.<sup>9</sup> After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867 the continental (or Northern) Croatia was included in the Hungarian part of the Monarchy, preventing Viennese scholars from conducting a more thorough and systematic research or preparing conservation plans for the cultural heritage of this area. This is why the maritime regions of Istria and Dalmatia, with already initiated research and conservation projects, came to the fore, while the heritage of the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was researched by the renowned individuals Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski (1816–1889) and Mijat Sabljar (1790–1865), without any permanent exchange or support of Vienna.<sup>10</sup>

Until 1910 and the establishment of the Provincial Commission for the Preservation of Artistic and Historical Monuments (*Zemaljsko povjerenstvo za očuvanje umjetnih i historičkih spomenika*) in Zagreb with Gjuro Szabo (1875–1943) as its secretary and most vocal representative, the heritage of Croatia-Slavonia was studied and preserved by local historians, architects and archaeologists, mostly with Viennese academic training.<sup>11</sup> In the last years of the Habsburg Empire, the members of



⬆ Fig. 2. Portrait of Ljubo Karaman, May 1948 (photo Ana Deanović, Ministry of Culture and Media, Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Photo Archive, Inv. Nr. 5731-I-d 41)

the Provincial Commission actively promoted the novel approach of “care for monuments” (*Denkmalpflege*), developed in Austria and Germany, opposing the stylistic restoration of the immigrant German architect Hermann Bollé.<sup>12</sup>

The contribution of art historians, active in the Central Commission, to the discovery, preservation, research and promotion of monuments (and, after 1900, of sites) in Istria and Dalmatia was, therefore, invaluable. In the first year of his activity in the Central Commission, Alois Riegl (1858–1905) was named a member of the Commission for Diocletian’s Palace in Split, promoting the innovative concept of Age value (*Alterswert*), presented in his programmatic publication *The Modern Cult of Monuments (Der moderne Denkmalkultus)*. Max Dvořák followed his path, pleading for careful conservation of individual monuments and ensembles.<sup>13</sup> The whole time the Central Commission functioned without an encompassing legal document, and with the help of recommendations, protocols and circular letters.<sup>14</sup>

After the collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918 and the establishment of the State of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918–1921), then of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1921–1929) and finally, in 1929, of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, conservation lacked firm and continuous support and was mostly left to individual and local initiatives. While according to the Treaty of Rapallo Istria was assigned to the Kingdom of Italy and Dalmatian monuments were protected by the Conservation Office (Konservatorijalni ured) in Split with archaeologist Frane Bulić (1846–1934) and art historian Ljubo Karaman (1886–1971), the Provincial Commission in Zagreb barely existed after 1918 and depended on the energy and reputation of Szabo and his co-workers. In 1919 the painter Marko Murat (1864–1944) established the Office for Art and Monuments (Nadleštvo za umjetnost i spomenike) in Dubrovnik, and managed it until 1929, when he was succeeded by the painter and art critic Kosta Strajnić (1887–1977), who until 1941 motivated discussions on heritage values and the possibilities of the coexistence of modern architecture and historic towns.<sup>15</sup>

The weakening and dispersion of the conservation authority in Croatia in the interwar period was accompanied by the growth of the modernist movement that led to the active disavowal of Gurlitt’s, Riegl’s and Dvořák’s concepts of *Denkmalpflege*, *Stimmung*, and *Stadtbild*. Both centers of Croatian national identity, Zagreb and Split, therefore experienced radical transformations. While the carefully protected Diocletian’s Palace experienced a long evoked removal of the buildings adjoining Diocletian’s Mausoleum,<sup>16</sup> demolitions and ambitious



◀ Fig. 3. Cvito Fisković (detail), October 1947 (photo Milan Prelog, Ministry of Culture and Media, Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Photo Archive, Inv. Nr. 5197-I-f 37)

▼ Fig. 4. Bombarded houses in Senj, 1943 (photo Ivan Stella?, Ministry of Culture and Media, Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Photo Archive, Inv. Nr. 2562)



regulatory plans for the historic core of Zagreb during the 1920s and 1930s resembled the “gutting” (*sventramenti*) in Mussolini’s Rome. While the sinuous streets of the mediaeval quarter Dolac were sacrificed for a spacious marketplace, late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings on the southern side of the central Jelačić Square were demolished and substituted by modernist buildings.<sup>17</sup>

This period also lacked specific legislation. Although there had been initiatives since 1918, conservation legislation was not achieved until the eve of the Second World War in Yugoslavia. Monument protection was in the margins of related documents, such as the *Act on Forests and Minerals* from 1929, *Construction Code* from 1931 and the *Ordinance on National Parks* from 1938. Finally, in August 1940, the *Decree on the Preservation of Antiquities and Natural Monuments* was passed<sup>18</sup> in a chaotic political situation with an already belligerent Europe and the nations of the Yugoslav Kingdom on the brink of inter-ethnic bloodshed.

During the Second World War, Croatia entered a period of schism and civil war. While one part of population supported the fascist puppet state and ally to the Axis powers,<sup>19</sup> the other revolted and formed the resistance partisan movement. The so-called Independent State of Croatia occupied the territory of today’s Bosnia-Herzegovina, while according to the Roman Treaties of May 18, 1941 Italy expanded its rule from Istria to most parts of Dalmatia.<sup>20</sup> This prompted Ljubo Karaman to move from his native Split to Zagreb, where between 1941 and 1945 he managed the Croatian State Conservation Institute (Hrvatski državni konzervatorski zavod),<sup>21</sup> joined by the elderly Gjuro Szabo and the young art historians Anđela Horvat, Tihomil Stahuljak and Ana Bogdanović.

The institute was assigned to the Ministry of Education with scientific aspirations and joined by museum employees and archivists around the newly proclaimed state. With state support, the Zagreb institute became central, with offices in the Archaeological Museum in Split under Italian occupation, and the State Archives in Dubrovnik and the State Museum in Sarajevo under Croatian occupation. These functioned in compliance with the legal requirements. The first, passed on May 14, 1941, was the *Legal provision on the prohibition of alienation, export of ancient artistic, cultural and historical monuments on the territory of the Independent State of Croatia*.<sup>22</sup> The second, accepted on June 30, 1941 was the *Legal provision on Croatian cultural monuments*, declaring all immovable cultural-historical, ethnographic, artistic and natural monuments as *national monuments*, which could not be subjected to change or private traffic.<sup>23</sup>

Due to war-time insecurity, conservators were limited to inventorying, preventing the demolition of architecture (the renaissance fortress of Sisak, the residence of the Turkish vizier in the Bosnian town of Travnik, and the castle in Banja Luka), as well as illicit export. However, they also initiated the listing and relocation of requisitioned objects coming from the churches and collections of the persecuted Serbian population<sup>24</sup> and restoration projects (with the efforts of the restorers Stanislava Dekleva and Zvonimir Wyroubal), with archaeological excavations (the medieval castle of Susedgrad near Zagreb, led by Tihomil Stahuljak). They could not prevent the demolition of the Zagreb Synagogue from late 1941 to early 1942 or the pillaging of Jewish property. Following the tradition of the Central-Commission, the Zagreb Institute continued to rely on the help of correspondents from different parts of the collaborationist state. The other aspect of this tradition was the protection of a monument's environment. Already during the war, conservators in Zagreb drafted the first Ordinances on the preservation of the antiquities of Bjelovar, Križevci, Osijek and Sisak.<sup>25</sup> That approach implied a wider perception of values, characteristic for the generation of Riegl, Dvořák and Gurlitt, and, as we will see, it was continued even after May 8, 1945, when partisan forces entered Zagreb.

### First legal provisions for post-war conservation

Already at the end of 1944, the People's Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia published a document as the introduction to numerous legal provisions for the post-war preservation of cultural heritage. Sitting in Belgrade, liberated on October 20, 1944, the Committee issued the *Rulebook on the Composition and Work of the Commission for Determining Damage Committed by the Occupier on Cultural and Historical Objects and Natural Landmarks of Yugoslavia*. Signed on December 20, 1944 by Slovenian poet and Commissioner of Education Edvard Kocbek (1904–1981), the document prepared the determination of damage, the responsibilities and repatriation of stolen cultural-historical objects or at least of compensation for them. The delegates from the Commission within the federal units had to report to the Commissioner of Education on “*pillaging, damage and destruction of all cultural-historical objects*”. The admitted evidence of damages to schools, academic and scientific institutions, museums, archives, public libraries, theatres, state printing offices, places of worship from all confessions, public monuments and buildings of cultural-historical character, included formal reports, witness statements, photographs and remains of damaged objects. These supposed to help the State Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and their Helpers in identifying and punishing perpetrators.<sup>26</sup>



⬆ **Fig. 5. View of the site of Šibenik Venetian Loggia after the bombardment, 1944 (photo Milan Pavić, Ministry of Culture and Media, Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Photo Archive, Inv. Nr. 2778)**

Still during the war, the People's Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia on February 20, 1945 issued the *Decision on the Protection and Care of Cultural Monuments and Antiquities*, establishing definitions of “artistic and scientific objects”: buildings of artistic and historic significance, public monuments, busts, paintings, libraries and archives.

This document prepared the process of soviet-style nationalization, while proscribing the role of educational authorities and experts. Judging by its brevity, the *Decision* could rather be considered an order, coming directly from the Committee's president and still a war commander, Marshal Tito. With just eight paragraphs, it tended to prevent the export and scattering of objects, especially from private collections.<sup>27</sup>

Several weeks after military victory, on July 23, 1945, the Presidency of the Anti-fascist Council of the National Liberation passed the first peacetime *Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities*. Replacing the war-time



⬆ Fig. 6. Opening of the Eastern (Silver) Gate of the Diocletian's Palace, 1945 (photo author unknown, Ministry of Culture and Media, Archive of the Conservation Office in Split, Inv. Nr. 3430, 515)

*Decision*, it was provided with 21 articles, defining the protection of “all immovable and movable cultural-historical, artistic and ethnological monuments, as well as natural rarities”, which, note the cautious wording, “can be placed under the protection of the state”. For the purpose of protection, the Supreme Institute for the Protection and Scientific Study of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities was to be established in Belgrade, while the federal states were expected to establish republican institutes. The Supreme Institute was entrusted with the recognition and inscription of monuments in “land registers”. The inscribed monuments could not be “excavated, moved, modified, restored, upgraded or demolished” without the permission of the republican institutes. The Act forbade new construction or change of the protected area (“terrain”) without the explicit permission from the conservation authorities, as well as alienation, pawning of monuments or export abroad, while it provided the possibility of expropriation with compensation “for the purpose of more successful scientific research”. While filming or photographing of protected monuments was forbidden without the formal permission of the newly established conservation institutes, the owner of the protected immovable monument could enjoy a tax benefit, ranging from 50 percent to full exemption. This document mentions the task of the district people’s committees (narodni odbori) of informing the competent institutes about any scientific, cultural-historical and naturally rare object on their territory, promoting an innovative model of conservation with the participation of the elected public representatives.<sup>28</sup>

This act manifested clear governmental interest for inherited values and will to support institutionalized conservation. It inherited a pre-war fusion of cultural and natural monuments, originating from the Central European *Heimatschutz* movement, initiated in the German Empire at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and accepted by Croatian conservators already during the period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This convergence helped post-war conservators to continue nurturing the built and natural environment, now in a new administrative system following the federalist political model. On the other hand, while military forces carried out reprisals against domestic and foreign collaborators (with tens of thousands of arrests and executions), legislators adopted the main features from the legislation of the former government: prevention of export as well as nationalization of heritage and its listing.

In order to clarify the provisions of the first post-war Act, two extra documents were issued in November 1945, the *Rulebook on the Scope and Organization of the Supreme Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities* and

the *Rulebook on the Enforcement of the Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities*. The first document regulated the assignments of the Supreme Institute. It was designed to “coordinate the conservation activities throughout the country” and to “preserve the cultural heritage of our nations and natural rarities of our lands from destruction and unprofessional handling”. Belgrade’s Institute was entrusted with collecting the data and keeping files on the cultural and natural heritage, issuing decisions on protection and restoration permits, managing the promotion of heritage, keeping track of scientific research in Yugoslavia, organizing scientific conferences, controlling the creation of reproductions, and publishing the *Yearbook on Monument Protection*. The designated personnel were divided into four groups: professional, administrative, technical and support. Professional staff consisted of the Director, the members of two Councils of experts (for social and natural sciences), the expert referents and assistants, while the technical staff were supposed to consist of preparers, restorers, copyists of fresco paintings, photographers and expert workers.<sup>29</sup>

The second rulebook, published the same day, clarified some points from the *July Act*. The sheer number of articles of this document, twenty-two, shows the temporality of former decisions, announcing the impermanence of Yugoslav legal provisions for the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage. On the other hand, the frequent appearance of new documents also refers to lively discussions among the conservators, in line with the inconstancy of the evolving visions of the imagined Yugoslav society.

At its inception, the *Rulebook on the Enforcement of the Act* offers a detailed explanation of the terms of immovable and movable cultural-historical, ethnographic and artistic monuments in as many as 34 categories.<sup>30</sup> In order for the legal provisions to be implemented, this document mentions two protection authorities, *controlling* and *professional* ones. While control was entrusted to various levels of people’s committees’ authorities, the professional authorities were represented by the Supreme Institute in Belgrade, institutes in federal units and by entrusted scientific institutes, responsible for the protection of monuments.<sup>31</sup>

These legislative attempts have sparked lively debates.<sup>32</sup> In the unstable period of the transformation from a monarchy to a communist federative republic, with retaliation against the “people’s enemies”, and in times when, on November 29, 1945 even the state changed its name (from the Democratic Federation to the Federative People’s Republic),<sup>33</sup> legislative documents were also subject to change. In that sense, on October 4, 1946 the Presidium of the National Assembly

in Belgrade passed the *Act on Confirmation and Amendments to the Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities*.

Although most of the twenty articles resemble the earlier documents, some changes were profound and far-reaching for the future development of autonomous republican conservation bureaus. The revised text from 1946 is entitled the *General Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities*. It kept the division into movable and immovable heritage, with its highlighted cultural, historical, artistic and ethnographic aspects. But already in Article 2 the key implementers of protection became the republican institutes for the protection and scientific study of cultural monuments, responsible to the republican ministries of education, without a single mention of Belgrade's Supreme Institute.<sup>34</sup> Instead, as pointed out in Article 3, the main coordinators of the activities of the republican institutes became the federal government's Committee for Culture and Art and the republican ministries of education. Article 11 further emphasized the autonomy of the republican institutes, which were "authorized to carry out all the work necessary for the repair and maintenance of the protected monument at their discretion and at the state's expense." Finally, Article 19 states that this Act will be applied "until the adoption of acts of the people's republics on the protection of cultural monuments".<sup>35</sup>

### **Administrative organization and personnel**

These were the legal premises for the system's creation. Aligned with political structure of the Federation that provided six republics with autonomous governments located in republican capitals, the conservation service was organized according to its specific local (republican) needs. At the same time, it prevented the creation of a homogeneous professional system at the federal level and now complicates the research in the national states established after the collapse of the Yugoslav Federation in the early 1990s. Archival documents show that conservation officials from Croatia – headed by Ljubo Karaman in Zagreb's "central" republican office – followed one of two political tendencies, that of promoting republican autonomy within the program of Brotherhood and Unity, refusing the centralizing tendencies with professional arguments.<sup>36</sup>

Although it seems natural to assume that the new regime had overarching control, the systemic premise of the republics' autonomy within the Federation enabled lasting independency of the professionals. This did not mean that

they achieved public reputation comparable with, for instance, their Polish and Italian colleagues. Croatian conservators gained their respect primarily in their own professional circles, but never reached such recognition from the general public as, say, Jan Zachwatowicz and Piotr Biegański in Poland or Ferdinando Forlati and Alfredo Barbacci in Italy or, furthermore, as modernist architects, who were given a key role in the embodiment of ambitious political projects for reconstruction and social transformation. This was accompanied by the lack of specialized architectural, art historical, curatorial and preservationist periodicals, such as Zagreb's *Arhitektura* and Belgrade's *Zbornik za zaštitu spomenika* that started to appear only in 1947 and 1950. Until then the only place where professionals could express their views were daily newspapers, such as *Vjesnik* in Zagreb, *Slobodna Dalmacija* in Split and *Novi list* in Rijeka.<sup>37</sup>

Once they were checked and approved by authorities, conservation experts could start their work.<sup>38</sup> Prophetic political rhetoric of the first post-war years was dominated by visions of social reforms, industrial development and urban expansion, included in the Five-Year Plan. The image and presence of the past was only occasionally dealt with by the new political elite. Focusing on visions of the future communist society, the interpretation of the past was left to class conscious historiographers and architects who began to prescribe new ways of research, new creative and interpretive “duties”, and, in practice, to conservators, who were expected to present an acceptable image of heritage, reconcilable with the new social needs of the massively illiterate population.<sup>39</sup> Reading Tito's words addressed to Croatian academicians in Zagreb in November 1947 on the need to “clear our history of all forgeries and unnecessary admixtures” shows a tendency to selectively purify the past and to amalgamate its acceptable components into an envisioned political synthesis.<sup>40</sup> As we will see, Tito's words resonated in the Croatian post-war conservation community.

Archival documents testify that the Croatian conservation system was designed by its personnel. Ljubo Karaman, Cvito Fisković (1908–1996), Anđela Horvat (1911–1985), Ana Bogdanović (later Deanović, 1919–1989) and Tihomil Stahuljak (1918–2007), all art historians, formed a founding group of the system (fig. 1). Karaman (fig. 2) was a Viennese student of Max Dvořák, who, as mentioned, became conservator in Split after the First World War and undoubtedly one of the most respected art historians in Croatia during the interwar period.<sup>41</sup> Forced to leave Split in 1941 due to the Italian occupation, he moved to Zagreb and remained there until his death. Cvito Fisković, on the other hand, studied in Zagreb during 1930s, but returned to Split and remained active there.<sup>42</sup>



⬆ Fig. 7. Šibenik Venetian Loggia reconstructed, 1951 (photo author unknown, State archive in Šibenik 272, Personal archive F. Dujmović)



⬆ Fig. 8. Façade of the Senj Cathedral during reconstruction, August 1947 (photo Tihomil Stahuljak, Ministry of Culture and Media, Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Photo Archive, Inv. Nr. 5063)

Initially, the People's Republic of Croatia had two Conservation Institutes: the central one in Zagreb, entrusted with the territory of the continental part of Croatia, including the regions of Slavonia, Baranja, Hrvatsko zagorje, Međimurje, Banija, Kordun and Lika, and a second in Split, in charge of the coastal region of Dalmatia, extending from the island of Pag to the Dubrovnik area, including numerous islands and the hinterland region of Zagora. The reason for the establishment of these two offices was not only practical, but, as we could see, also historical. The victory of Tito's partisans led to the formation of national territory that exists today, including the regions of Istria and Dalmatia (annexed and occupied by Italy in 1920 and 1941), now unified with continental Croatia. After the Paris Treaty and obtaining the Istrian peninsula from Italy in 1947, the third institute was established in Rijeka. With Karaman as director of the Institute in Zagreb, Fisković (fig. 3) administering the Institute in Split and Aleksander Perc (1918–1981) in charge of the Institute for Istria and the Islands of Quarnero in Rijeka, the republican territory was administratively covered and the system started to take shape.

In the initial years, the three institutes had a varying number of employees, from six to ten in Zagreb and from two to three in Rijeka and Split. These figures show a disproportion and practical difficulties. As mentioned, since the Austro-Hungarian and interwar Italian periods, the region of Dalmatia had been the best researched, with contributions from Austrian and German scholars, but also from politically motivated Italian researchers Adolfo Venturi, Giacomo Boni, Pericle Ducati, Gustavo Giovannoni, Bruno Maria Apollonj Ghetti and Luigi Crema.<sup>43</sup> Publications from the main representatives of the Vienna School of Art History, the Viennese Central Commission and Italian art historians and conservation experts therefore could be considered a form of regional heritage. But in the initial post-war years they rather proved to be an unpleasant and unacceptable legacy, subject to revision or dismissal.

The newly-obtained Istria was in the western part of the Republic. Annexed to Kingdom of Italy after 1918, it was *terra incognita* to most Croatian art historians and conservators until 1947. The numerous activities of the Italian state in the research and conservation of Istrian monuments, with regulatory plans for historic towns, has only recently attracted scholars.<sup>44</sup> The studies show that in almost three decades Italian professionals organized their "Superintendence" (*Soprintendenza*) in regular contact with Rome, with the distinguished experts Guido Cirilli (1871–1954), Ferdinando Forlati (1882–1975), Giovanni Brusin (1883–1976), Bruno Molajoli (1905–1985) and Fausto Franco

(1899–1968). They established museums in Poreč-Parenzo, Cres-Cherso and Pula-Pola, conducted archaeological and restoration works in line with Gustavo Giovannoni’s dominant principles of “scientific restoration” (*restauro scientifico*), overshadowed by political identification with Roman and Venetian monuments (as testimonies of *romanità* and *italianità*),<sup>45</sup> but also faced the dramatic moments of bombardment and post-war reconstruction. The monuments of Poreč and Pula testify to the activities performed at that time.<sup>46</sup>

In 1947, this area, along with the islands of Quarnero and coastal part between Rijeka and northern Dalmatia, was entrusted to a handful of Croatian art historians: Aleksander Perc, Iva Perčić (1918–2006), Branko Fučić (1920–1999), and the historian Ferdinand Hauptmann (1919–1987).<sup>47</sup> In the harsh conditions of the first post-war years, among ruins of the bombarded areas or in the deserted towns of Istria after the Italian exodus, conservators focused on war damage assessment, artistic topography (with a strong emphasis on Slavic contributions, such as Glagolitic letters in Istrian churches, studied by Branko Fučić), reconstruction, revitalization and conservation of historic towns, revision of previous methodologies with the preparation of new ones, and applications for financial support coming from either the republican or federal government.

Until 1949, when the third act on conservation was passed, the institutes’ directors Karaman, Fisković and Perc with their colleagues achieved significant results. In relation to the specificities of the regions, we can distinguish between different degrees of practice, which combined respect for traditional, Central European methods with a drive for revision. This inner dialectic imposed a dualist approach, ranging from Ruskinian conservation (continuity of careful maintenance) to transformative treatment (reconstruction of ruined monuments as an interventionist approach in order to achieve the social and aesthetic ideals of harmony and clarity, that is, the comprehensibility of monuments for the masses). Older conservation dilemmas, instigated in Europe in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were now also accompanied by a radicalized principle of the substitution of the destroyed monuments and sites with contrasting modernist buildings and blocks.

How could these conservators, active in three regional offices, organize their work within newly created borders of the People’s Republic in an area exceeding 56.000 square kilometers? The answer was supposed to lay in the merging of professional inheritance and new political demands. On the one hand, they relied on the help of dozens of honorary conservators (educated citizens, mostly teachers



↑ **Fig. 9. Damaged façade of the Osor Cathedral, prior to restoration, 1953 (photo Kocijančić, Ministry of Culture and Media, Archive of the Conservation Office in Rijeka, Inv. Nr. 3897-I-1250-Osor 67)**

and local researchers) across the republic, that is, on the instrument invented by the founders of the Austrian Zentralkommission.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, they adopted the new order's concept of political participation through the people's committees, regulated by Art. 107 of the 1946 Yugoslav Constitution.<sup>49</sup> As nuclei of popular self-government, the activities of these committees corresponded to the territorial division into districts, municipalities, towns and villages.

The idea of merging the competence of republican and local conservation institutes with the practical interests and needs of the transforming local communities was promoted in the *Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities*, passed on October 19, 1949. This Act redefined the concept of "cultural monuments", now representing "all movable and immovable objects or groups of objects, as well as architectural and urban sites of cultural-historical, historical, artistic or ethnographic character or of special national importance."

The Act had 33 paragraphs, emphasizing dual heritage values: scientific and aesthetic. The bearers of protection were conservation institutes or bureaus (*konzervatorski zavodi*), under the direct supervision of the Republic's Ministry of Education. They were entrusted with inventory, registration and prevention of "excavation, relocation, remodeling, restoration, extension, demolition, or any alteration" of cultural monuments. While paragraph 14 prescribed that all monuments and their environment "must be accessible for scientific research and study", paragraph 16 required that objects of "particular importance" should be "accessible to the general public".

To implement this plan, institutes were to rely on people's committees' assistance. Paragraph 11 states: *"In order to preserve the urban or historical character or architectural ensemble of old towns and places, people's committees are obliged to consider the proposals of the competent conservation institutes when adopting the regulatory plan, not to demolish or change squares, individual blocks of buildings, streets, or parts of the street."*<sup>50</sup> Thus the requirements of development were supposed to be reconciled with conservation principles.

The main concepts of the 1949 Act were, therefore, the intangibility of monumental ensembles, the democratization of cultural heritage and the division of official responsibilities. Although the conservators actively participated in the creation of the first legal document, the legislators chose to omit one of the biggest challenges: codification of the basic methodological principles applicable to bombarded monuments and sites. This omission provided an opportunity for conservators in the field to develop them themselves.

### **Founding principles, main projects and activities between 1945 and 1960**

Historic towns, mainly on the Adriatic Coast, were damaged in bombardments by Axis and Allied forces during the Second World War.<sup>51</sup> Poreč, Rijeka, Senj<sup>52</sup> (fig. 4) and Zadar<sup>53</sup> experienced significant damage on the urban level; Pula,<sup>54</sup> Šibenik and Osor had partial or total damage on central monuments, such as the ancient Temple of Augustus,<sup>55</sup> Venetian Loggia (fig. 5) and Renaissance Cathedral; the multi-layered city core of Split with Diocletian's Palace and the Republic's capital Zagreb were partially damaged. Among the heavily damaged monuments "of particular importance" in Northern Croatia were the baroque church complex in Lepoglava and the neo-classicist manor of Januševac.

So, similar to Jan Zachwatowicz's Warsaw, Hans Döllgast's Munich and Roberto Pane's Naples, Croatian conservators were compelled to devise a revision of the *fin de siècle* Central European, as well as Italian (or, more precisely, Gustavo Giovannoni's), pre-war conservation theories. This implied the abandonment of the catchphrase "*Konservieren, nicht restaurieren.*" and the acceptance of a more radical interventionist approach, which required the involvement of conservation architects. The first to make an attempt in this field was Cvito Fisković in Dalmatia. While the question of Istria was still pending and Karaman's staff in Zagreb initiated the assessment of war damage mainly in the region north of Zagreb, Fisković descended among the ruins of Split and initiated long-awaited work on the central monumental complex, the late-antique Diocletian's Palace. Discarding the Austrian principles of a clear distinction between the original and restored parts as too conscientious, and Giovannoni's concepts from his 1942 booklet *Roman Split* simply as "fascist",<sup>56</sup> he had already initiated in 1945 a process of the "liberation" of the Palace, more radical than his Italian predecessor suggested. The shift of the fascist veneration of Roman and Venetian heritage towards a preference for "local masters"<sup>57</sup> is comparable to the acts of conservators which, during Polonization, remodeled Danzig into Gdańsk, and Breslau into Wrocław.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, using the ruinous state of the Split ensemble as an excuse to carry out "reintegration by demolition" of the Eastern Gate of Diocletian's Palace<sup>59</sup> (fig. 6), he adapted Giovannoni's precepts from his rejected booklet. Fisković's arguments for the removal of the superfluities and hindrances of minor architecture, accumulated over the centuries, were put in service of socio-political transformation, but were presented as aesthetic, so the procedures of the removal and integration of the discovered fragments, without any critical distinction between the original and the restored parts pushed his method further back in the past, before Camillo Boito's and William Morris' criticism of Viollet-le-Duc's stylistic restoration.

His "purifications" and selective re-integrations are reminiscent of another contemporary call for revision, that is, of the standards of innovative "critical restoration" (*restauro critico*) devised in Naples by Roberto Pane, who in 1944 advocated the "abolition" of everything that "disguised" or "offended" the monument's "image of true beauty".<sup>60</sup> The difference between the advocates of revision in Italy and Fisković was not in the expressed will to liberate the multi-layered or damaged monuments from "offensive" additions and layers, but in the treatment of the "liberated", newly-discovered fragment. While Italian theoreticians advocated something similar to *fin-de-siècle* Central-European "creative conservation" (fusion of the original with authentic modern work

as a creative tool for aesthetic and functional integration), Fisković and his Croatian colleagues partly revitalized the methodology of stylistic restoration. Partly, because in their imagining of the original form of the damaged monument they avoided the stylistic restorers' drive to integrate the fragmented monument in every detail.<sup>61</sup>

Fisković inaugurated a set of approaches: purifying interventions, a cult of monuments' aesthetic integrity and a combination of conservation with adaptation to the needs of the modernized society. Already in 1945, much like his contemporaries in Italy but without critical controversies, the ruined sites and social changes gave him the opportunity to abandon Riegl's and Dvořák's protective stance towards "picturesque milieus" and *Stimmung*, and to "liberate" the Palace complex from "patches" and "unhygienic" additions. Removal of the "Venetian wall" in front of the Eastern (Silver) Doors of the Diocletian's Palace, the integration of Roman fragments, deprived of patina, with identical stone, then the demolition of the buildings attached on the eastern and northern sides of the Palace walls while preserving the fragments of the chapel created by the "local master" Juraj Dalmatinac, can be seen as a reiteration of Giovannoni's principles of *liberazione* (liberation)<sup>62</sup> and *reintegrazione con la demolizione* (reintegration by demolition). This can also be seen in the mediaeval town of Korčula, where he directed the clearing of the Venetian Ducal Tower. These procedures, connectible with Tito's words on "clearing our history" of "admixtures" and "forgeries" from 1947, were disguised in the professional pursuit of the aesthetic ideal. While in a less bombarded Split he advocated the principles of liberation from superfluities, on the totally destroyed Venetian Loggia in Šibenik (fig. 7) he demanded integral reconstruction, opposing any possibility of the construction of a modernist building to replace it.<sup>63</sup> Generally speaking, he was promoting the principles of subtraction and addition, dismissing the possibility of the insertion of a modern expression in an old setting as long as it is not hidden by older, historic or historicizing, structures.

His commitment to reconstruction (either by removal or integration) proved to be crucial for generations to come. As in Poland and Italy, Croatian conservators found boldness and a means to initiate iconic reconstructive efforts. Until 1950, they envisaged, initiated or completed complex reconstructions of (inter)nationally recognized monuments. As already mentioned, this implied the contribution of conservation architects: Mladen Fučić (1922–2005), Greta Jurišić (1912–1974) and Aleksandar Freudenreich (1892–1974) in Karaman's Institute in Zagreb and Harold Bilinić (1894–1984), a graduate from the Florentine Academy of Arts,



⬆ **Fig. 10. Façade of the Pauline church in Lepoglava, August 1945**  
 (photo Tihomil Stahuljak, Ministry of Culture and Media, Directorate  
 for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Photo Archive, Inv. Nr. 4740-I-30j)

in Fisković's Institute in Split. While Fučić created a rare synthesis of restoration and “mimicry” architecture<sup>64</sup> on Šabac Tower in Senj, Bilinić is credited with reconstructions of Šibenik and Zadar Renaissance loggias, reintegration of the Cathedral in Senj (fig. 8) in the late 1940s, as well as with anastylosis of the Sacristy of Šibenik's Renaissance Cathedral.<sup>65</sup>

Degrees of interventions between 1945 and 1960 can be distinguished as follows:

- re-integration of lacunae,
- fusion of an original fragment with a new architectural form,
- integral (facsimile) reconstruction of heavily destroyed monuments,
- insertion of modernist architecture in preserved or aged old settings,
- urban rehabilitation of old settings with adaptive reuse,
- substitutive modernist urban planning.

The first sort of interventions can be seen on damaged façades of the cathedrals in Osor and Senj, the Renaissance Loggia in Zadar and the church in Lepoglava.

The Renaissance cathedral in Osor (fig. 9) was bombarded, leaving a scar on its stone façade. Until 1954 it was reintegrated in identical material, with no trace of the traumatic event. This project was different from, for example, the neutral, brick *Domplombe* of the Cologne Cathedral, which between 1943 and 2004 testified to the bombardment of the town. The cathedral in Senj was heavily damaged in the bombardments, leaving it without a roof and upper part of the façade. Bilinić conducted research on the spot and under the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries plaster discovered traces of Romanesque brick arcades, preparing a synthesis of a reconstructive and creative interpretation of the façade.<sup>66</sup>

Regarded as the most experienced, Bilinić was also involved in the reconstruction of the Venetian Public Loggia in heavily destroyed Zadar. Between 1949 and 1953 he and Fisković prepared a project that combined anastylosis and reconstruction, in order to integrate the historic building (in this case, with a preserved Venetian inscription) and to adapt it to new public purposes.<sup>67</sup> Finally, the Pauline monastery and church in Lepoglava (fig. 10) were heavily destroyed in 1945, during the retreat of the German army. A reconstruction of the façade was carried out in 1946–1950 and in 1952 by Greta Jurišić.<sup>68</sup> At that time, the major church buildings in Zadar (Cathedral of Saint Anastasia, Franciscan church and church of Saint Mary) were repaired and reconstructed, with the active participation of the honorary conservators Mate Suić and Grgo Oštrić and the art historian Ivo Petricioli. In difficult circumstances and facing shortages of material and personnel, the sacral buildings of Zadar were repaired and some monuments (the tomb of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Benedictine prioress Vekenega) were carefully reconstructed. As was the case with some Italian churches after bombardment (Santa Chiara in Naples, Santa Maria in Impruneta), the cathedral and church of Saint Mary in Zadar lost its baroque vaults, which were never reconstructed.<sup>69</sup>

The fewest examples exist of the second category, which spread in post-1945 West Germany with projects for “creative fuse” and “repair” (*schöpferische Sicherung, Reparatur*) and “provisional architecture” by Hans Döllgast in Munich, Gottfried Böhm in Cologne, Rudolf Schwarz in Frankfurt am Main and Egon Eiermann in Berlin. These “temporary” solutions became revered for clear historical reasons. Political and conservation authorities in post-war Croatia could not see the point in this combination of admonishment (coming from violent fragmentation) and hope (brought by new and motivating architectural forms). It was therefore rare that an individual, fragmented historic monument was fused with new architecture. What Mladen Fučić did until 1955 in Senj’s Tower of Šabac was he removed the bombarded steam mill’s ruins, restored the fort and erected a new, mimicry (and not modernist) building of the port authorities.<sup>70</sup>

Before its revival in post-communist Europe, the integral (or so-called facsimile) reconstruction was one of the most important instruments of healing collective traumas in Europe after 1945. Croatia was no exception, and until 1960 some of the heaviest damaged monuments were reconstructed. The Venetian Loggia in Šibenik, a 16<sup>th</sup> century public building, was directly hit in allied bombardments in December 1943. After clearance of the rubble and the suggestion of the local authorities that a new building should replace the Renaissance monument, Fisković protested and stood firmly for the Loggia's reconstruction. It was accepted and carried out in two campaigns: between 1947 and 1951 and 1955 and 1960. Bilinić was entrusted with the project, which was a mixture of a reconstruction of the façade (avoiding the possibility of fitting the remaining fragments in the reconstructed building) and new municipal functions, with a redesigned interior.<sup>71</sup>

Palace Vukasović in heavily bombarded Senj was another example of a redefined historical building for new social purposes. The project prepared by the architect Milan Grakalić (1909–1979) entailed a hypothetical reconstruction of the original façade (late gothic, Venice-style windows) and an adaptation of the previously private building for the Municipal Museum, which was carried out between 1954 and the early 1960s.

Finally, in Northern Croatia, the reconstruction efforts on the neo-classicist manor of Januševac stands out. Heavily damaged by explosion in 1945, the complex was fragmented for years, while Zagreb conservators between 1947 and 1961 prevented further damage and pleaded for support from the republican and federal authorities. After long preparative works, the reconstruction of the building was carried out between 1963 and 1967 and 1970 and 1988. As was the case in Zadar, Šibenik and Senj, the façades of the fragmented monument were reintegrated, but the interior was modernized, becoming a repository of the State Archives in Zagreb.<sup>72</sup>

The last three categories were often intertwined, leading to successful cooperation or fierce polemics. All these categories presented important tasks for the post-war Croatian conservators, motivated by bombarded historic towns, social pressure, and, last but not least, by the ambitious plans of modernist architects. All these aspects attracted art historians and conservators to participate in discussions on the future of historic towns.

In the category of urban rehabilitation, two examples come to mind: Poreč and Split. While in Split Fisković advocated careful adaptation of restored monuments



⬆ **Fig. 11. Peristyle in Split, damaged house Aglič, around 1960 (photo author unknown, State Archives in Split, Archive of the Urban Planning Office in Split, Inv. Nr. 11 698 F)**

to new social needs, which was followed by Jerko and Tomislav Marasović, his younger colleague Milan Prelog faced heavy damages in bombarded Poreč during the 1950s. As they had to cope with numerous challenges of preservation during the radical transformation (from ruinous landscapes and depopulation in Poreč, Pula, Rijeka, Senj and Zadar to the introduction of urbanizing overpopulation in Šibenik, Split and Zagreb), modernist architects saw their historical chance:

not only in the insertion of contested, contrasting modernist buildings, but also in comprehensive urban planning. As mentioned, Fisković was willing to accept adaptive reuse, especially if it was concealed by historic (or historicizing) forms. But already in 1945, he was concerned with proposals of what Šegvić called “the industrialization of new constructions”, that is of creating provisional architecture with prefabricated parts for the masses, that could become permanent and disturb in the image of the natural and cultural landscapes.<sup>73</sup> It was, therefore, natural that he opposed the modernist insertion of Ivan Vitić’s elementary school in old Šibenik, completed in 1950.<sup>74</sup> The same would happen to Neven Šegvić’s Aglič House in the heart of Diocletian’s Palace, that is, on Peristyle, in the early 1960s, or with Stanko Fabris’ Željpo office building on Marshal Tito’s Square in Zagreb from the same time.<sup>75</sup>

### Discussions on methodology

Fisković’s interventionist approach was elaborated by art historian, university professor and Karaman’s successor in Zagreb’s Conservation Institute in the early 1950s, Milan Prelog (1919–1988). On the occasion of the national conference in Split in 1953, he claimed that “the healing of severe wounds” imposed a need for “revisions of some dogmatic postulates arising from the strict conservation principles”.<sup>76</sup> This implied a significant turn. Prelog continued: *“Can we come to terms with the fact that the destruction of war has almost robbed us of a number of our monuments, and that our duty is only to conserve their remains as tombstones or mounds? Isn’t it in our work to repair war-damaged monuments, in our inability to come to terms with the fact that weapons of destruction have stolen parts of our monuments, that we also express a humanist negation of the destruction of war?”*<sup>77</sup>

Prelog’s commitment coincided with Renato Bonelli’s call for “revision of the theory of architectural restoration” from the same year.<sup>78</sup> While Prelog was aiming at Austrian standards, Bonelli supported Pane’s critical evaluation and creative interpretation of monuments, opposing the pre-war “philological” emphasis of documentary value, expressed in Giovannoni’s theory. What united Prelog and Bonelli was a commitment to the dominant aesthetic value of artwork in the public eye: in case of the former, for an emancipated, triumphant Slavic beholder, and in case of the latter, for a less politicized and more aesthetically conscious one.

Prelog promoted an art-historical, topographical, and holistic approach to historic towns. As the dynamic of urbanization intensified during the 1950s, with robust



⬆ Fig. 12. Poreč, aerial view after the Second World War (Source Milan Prelog, *Poreč, grad i spomenici*, Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2007, 293)

industrial and housing developments in Zagreb, Split and Rijeka, conservators became more active in the protection of old towns. While in the first post-war years they issued Ordinances on the Preservation of Antiquities within old settings, Prelog suggested socially relevant urban rehabilitation, with special care for monuments and traditional settings. He was followed by Jerko (1923–2009) and Tomislav Marasović (b. 1929) active since the 1950s in the city center of Split (fig. 11). Their interventions in Diocletian's Palace (reconstructions of the façades of the mediaeval and renaissance palaces, urban rehabilitation by adaptive reuse for public purposes) continued Fisković's efforts and left an indelible mark on the complex, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979.<sup>79</sup>

Since the beginning of the 1950s, Prelog was engaged in the urban reconstruction of the bombed Istrian city of Poreč (fig. 12). In 1957 he wrote: "*the reconstruction will be both justified and necessary for one of the most important monuments in*

*this city: for its urban system.*”<sup>80</sup> His contribution to urban historical studies as a constituent part of the expansion of the socialist city was invaluable. In those years Yugoslavia experienced economic and urban growth with the rise of industry and tourism, which led to a transformation of urban landscapes. As in Italy, skyscrapers appeared in the historic centers of Zagreb, Rijeka, Šibenik and Split. Urban centers expanded territorially and demographically (fig. 13), but in most cases development was restrained to the limits of the already existing historic quarters.

Since their first contacts with the *Heimatschutz* movement around 1900, Croatian conservators had been aware of the values of urban and rural ensembles in their natural context. Facing post-Second World War urban growth and war damages, they collaborated or polemized with modernist urban planners and architects.<sup>81</sup> This attracted the attention of Italian experts, so Croatian conservators and architects participated at the 1957 Milan Triennale conference *The Urbanist Actuality of Monument and Old Settings*,<sup>82</sup> presenting diverse results: urban conservation in Istria and Quarnero (by Zdenko Sila), urban rehabilitation of Split (by Tomislav Marasović) and new urban planning in Zadar (by Bruno Milić).<sup>83</sup> It is worth mentioning that after the plans for demolitions in the theretofore depreciated Lower Town of historicist Zagreb, the conservators registered the whole urban area at the beginning of the 1960s.<sup>84</sup>

During the 1950s, Yugoslav society was liberalized and modernized. Croatian conservators established their association in 1959, reaching for public support in newspapers and specialized journals (*Vijesti Društva muzejsko-konzervatorskih radnika* since 1952). Traditional Austrian and German principles of care of monuments were supplemented by post-war Italian, and especially Polish, models. On April 13, 1960 the fourth *Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments* with 81 paragraphs was passed, emphasizing the value of monuments in fulfilling the cultural needs of the social community. Heritage was defined as “*Immovable and movable objects, groups of objects, which due to their archaeological, historical, sociological, ethnographic, artistic, urban and other scientific and cultural value are important for the social community.*” The keywords in the document were “preserving the integrity, maintenance”, and “prevention” for the sake of the “cultural needs of the community”. Although these acts were entrusted to conservation authorities, the act still counted on an active role from the municipal people’s committees.<sup>85</sup>

## The conservation system after 1960

In the remaining thirty-one years of the Yugoslav Federation, industrialization, urbanization and the development of tourism caused a constant clash with conservation principles, both in the preservation of individual monuments and their environment.<sup>86</sup> The political actor of the socialist self-government, people's committees, often proved to be more an opponent than an ally of conservators, while the careful principle of maintenance was often substituted by the principle of restorative intervention on a large scale. Political evolution of the society led to the adoption of the second Constitution and second change of the name of the country (now Socialist Federal Republic) in April 1963. While the economy was stabilized and Tito's international reputation steadily grew, the first signs of revived nationalisms appeared, developing in the second half of the 1960s into a Croatian Mass Movement (or "The Croatian Spring"), blocked by Tito in 1971.<sup>87</sup>

The fourth legislative document on conservation from 1960 was soon accompanied by the fifth and the sixth in 1965 and 1967. In March 1965 the *Basic Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments* was signed by the Chairman of the Federal Assembly Edvard Kardelj and President Tito. With 24 articles, it served as addition to the 1960 Act, adapting to constitutional changes of the time. Monuments, as stated in articles 4 and 7, had to "meet the cultural and other needs of citizens and the community" and to be "available to the public".<sup>88</sup> Two years later, the final legislative document, the *Act on the Protection of Cultural Monuments*, was passed by the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Croatia. Composed of 77 articles, it survived the fall of Yugoslavia, that is until 1999, when the *Act on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Properties* was passed by the Parliament of the then already independent Republic of Croatia.<sup>89</sup> The 1967 Act codified the reform of the conservation system, transforming the previous three conservation offices into four regional institutes in Osijek, Zagreb, Rijeka and Split under the guidance of the central Republican Institute, located in Zagreb.

The significant changes during the 1960s were not just a reflection of the political reforms in the socialist federation. They signified a deep change of the professional paradigm, from conservation to restoration, initially introduced by Fisković in 1945 and Prelog in 1953.<sup>90</sup> This change led to the establishment of the Restoration Institute of Croatia (Restauratorski zavod Hrvatske) in April 1966. In less than ten years after its foundation, this Institute had hired some sixty experts and was



⬆ **Fig. 13. Urban sprawl of Split during 1960s (State Archives in Split, Archive of the Urban Planning Office in Split, Inv. Nr. Split 74)**

engaged in restoring around sixty monuments in Croatia, ranging from static repairs, moisture treatment, the restoration of wall paintings, the production of architectural documentation, photogrammetric surveys, mapping, preventive protection, the reconstruction of paintings, the analysis of materials, to the production of replicas, the removal of dust, and facsimile reconstruction.<sup>91</sup> Inspired by the activities of similar institutions from Rome, Warsaw, Moscow, Brussels and London, the Restoration Institute of Croatia survived the political changes of the 1990s and is still the central institution for the protection of monuments in Croatia, cooperating with 21 conservation departments (konzervatorski odjeli), under the administration of the Ministry of Culture and Media.

The first fifteen post-war years of the conservation system in the People's Republic of Croatia, therefore, can be seen as a foundational period. Without a solid predecessor, it managed to establish an institutional framework for an efficient system within the borders of the Republic. It was accompanied by legislation, specialized personnel, methodology adapted to the social requirements and professional publications, thus presenting a solid foundation for today's institutions. Within the political context of the Yugoslav Federation, it accomplished some of the most significant results and thanks to the early introduction of national specificities of different heritage, it developed as part of the Yugoslav system, but in practice it never depended on centralist authorities coming from the state's capital, Belgrade. This fact can be seen as reflection of the established political system, but it can also be regarded as a latent instrument of the revival of nationalist rhetoric in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The dissolution of the Yugoslav state, as is known, was accompanied by tragic destruction of the cultural heritage.<sup>92</sup> In spite of the fact that the establishment of the independent democratic state implied a renunciation of the political, economic and even cultural legacy of socialist times, the conservation system of post-Second World War Croatia can still be considered as a solid foundation for contemporary activities in the field.



# Notes

- 1 Miles Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement. A History of Architectural Preservation: Antiquity to Modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 257–414.
- 2 Reinhard Koselleck, “Erfahrungsraum’ und ‘Erwartungshorizont’ – zwei historische Kategorien,” in *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 352–53.
- 3 Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia. A History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2001), 152–67.
- 4 *The Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, ed. Dragoljub Đurović, trans. Marko Pavičić (Ljubljana: Delo, 1974), 53.
- 5 Tvrtko Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2002); Leslie Benson, *Yugoslavia: A Concise History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 82–109; Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia* (West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 2019), 159–188; Kate Hudson, *Breaking the South-Slav Dream: The Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia* (London and Sterling: Pluto Press, 2003), 39–54; Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970).
- 6 Marko Špikić, “Aux origines de l’archéologie en Dalmatie, le rôle de l’antiquaire Anton Steinbüchel,” *Revue germanique internationale* 16 (2012): 29–42; Marko Špikić, “Carlo Lanza, prvi ravnatelj Arheološkog muzeja u Splitu,” *Kulturna baština* 34 (2007): 373–388.
- 7 After the first attempts by the architect Paolo Bioni in 1840s, the cathedral was repaired during the 1850s. See Franko Ćorić, *Carsko i kraljevsko Središnje povjerenstvo za proučavanje i održavanje starinskih građevina u hrvatskim zemljama: Ustroj, zakonodavstvo i djelovanje 1850–1918* (Zagreb: University of Zagreb, 2010), 111–13.
- 8 In 1856 the number of conservators in the Austrian Empire was 55. They were joined by 43 correspondents. As in Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Moravia, Bukovina, Galicia and Krakow, Austrian Littoral (Küstenland), Dalmatia and Croatia got one conservator. The historian Pietro Kandler was in charge of the Littoral, Ivan Kukuljević for Croatia-Slavonia and architect Vicko Andrić for Dalmatia. Number of conservators decreased in the following years in favor of correspondents, so in 1872 there were 103 correspondents in the Monarchy. Kukuljević published a series of articles on the monuments of continental Croatia in the *Mitteilungen* of the Central Commission during the 1850s. Franko Ćorić, *Carsko i kraljevsko Središnje povjerenstvo*, 56–58 and 84.
- 9 Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg, *Die mittelalterlichen Kunstdenkmale Dalmatiens* (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1884); Alois (Luigi) Hauser, *Spalato ed i monumenti romani della Dalmazia* (Spalato: Zannoni, 1878); Alois (Luigi) Hauser, *Il tempio di San Donato in Zara* (Zara: S. Artale, 1884); Alois Riegl, *Die spätrömische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn* (Wien: Kaiserlich-königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1903); Alois Riegl, “Bericht zur Wahrung der Interessen der mittelalterlichen und neuzeitlichen Denkmale innerhalb des ehemaligen Diocletianischen Palastes zu Spalato durchgeführte Untersuchung,” *Mitteilungen der k. k. Central-Commission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der kunst- und historischen Denkmale* III/2, 11 (November 1903): 333–341; Max Dvořák, “Restaurierungsfragen. Spalato,” *Kunstgeschichtliches Jahrbuch der k. k. Zentral-Kommission für Erforschung und Erhaltung der Kunst- und historischen Denkmale. Beiblatt für Denkmalpflege* 3–4 (1909): 117–142; George Niemann, *Der Palast Diokletians in Spalato* (Wien: Hölder, 1910); Georg Kowalczyk and Cornelius Gurlitt, *Denkmäler der Kunst in Dalmatien* (Berlin: Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1910).
- 10 Ivana Mance, *Zercalo naroda. Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski: Povijest umjetnosti i politika* (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2012); Martina Juranović Tonejc, *Putne bilješke Mijata Sabljara (1852–1854): Crkveni inventar* (Zagreb: Ministarstvo kulture, 2010).

- 11 Andela Horvat, "O djelovanju Zemaljskog povjerenstva za očuvanje umjetnih i historičkih spomenika u kraljevinama Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji u Zagrebu od 1910–1914," *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 2–3 (1976–77): 7–29; Andela Horvat, "O djelovanju „Povjerenstva“ za čuvanje spomenika u Zagrebu (1914–1923)," *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 4–5 (1978–79): 11–35.
- 12 Marko Špikić, "Denkmalschutz in Kroatien in den letzten Jahren der Habsburger Monarchie," *Internationales Kulturhistorisches Symposium Mogersdorf* 42 (2012): 227–233; Marko Špikić, "Razdoblje borbe i izgradnja dogme – Szabo i konzervatorski principi srednje Europe do 1918," in *Gjuro Szabo 1875–1943*, ed. Marko Špikić (Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 2018), 53–74; Franko Ćorić, "Gjuro Szabo – hrvatski zagovornik kreativnog konzerviranja," in *Gjuro Szabo 1875–1943*, 39–51; Dragan Damjanović, *Arhitekt Herman Bollé* (Zagreb: Leykam International, 2013).
- 13 On the activities and reflections on the Dalmatian monuments of Riegl and Dvořák, see Sandro Scarrocchia, *Alois Riegl: Teoria e prassi della conservazione dei monumenti* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1995) and Sandro Scarrocchia, *Max Dvořák: Conservazione e Moderno in Austria (1905–1921)* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2009).
- 14 The discussion on the necessity of passing conservation legislation started in the era of Joseph Alexander Helfert. All attempts to pass the legislation (in 1894, 1896, Helfert's suggestions between 1898 and 1901, Riegl's attempt in 1903, and various others between 1909 and 1912) have failed. See Ćorić, *Carsko i kraljevsko Središnje povjerenstvo*, 305–33.
- 15 Franko Ćorić, "La tutela dei monumenti in Dalmazia tra le due guerre," in *La conservazione dei monumenti a Trieste, in Istria e in Dalmazia (1850–1950)*, ed. by Luca Caburlotto, Rossella Fabiani and Giuseppina Perusini (Udine: Forum, 2022), 155. Also, the works of Ivan Viđen, "Dubrovački slikar i konzervator Marko Murat (1864–1944)," *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 29–39 (2005–2006): 7–22; Ivan Viđen, "O Pravilniku dubrovačkog Nadležstva za umjetnost i spomenike," *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 33–34 (2009–2010): 7–14; Kosta Strajnić, *Dubrovnik bez maske i polemika s Vinkom Brajevićem o čuvanju dalmatinske arhitekture* (Zagreb: K-R Centar, 2007), 45–65.
- 16 Procedures known in Europe at the time as *isolamenti*, *liberazioni*, *Freilegungen*, or *dégagement*.
- 17 On the change of paradigm in Split (from Central European care of monuments to more radical purification of historical settings, closer to fascist Italy), see Ljubo Karaman, *Pitanje odstranjenja zgrade stare Biskupije u Dioklecijanovoj palači u Splitu* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska štamparija, 1920). On the problem of demolition in older parts of Zagreb during the 1920s, see Petar Knoll, "Agonija staroga Zagreba. Stari Dolac," *Obzor* 66 (1925): 156, 158, 159, 161–3.
- 18 Andela Horvat, *Konzervatorski rad kod Hrvata* (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni konzervatorski zavod, 1944), 36–7.
- 19 Rory Yeomans, *Visions of Annihilation: The Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Politics of Fascism, 1941–1945* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013).
- 20 Eric Gobetti, *Alleati del nemico. L'occupazione italiana in Jugoslavia (1941–1943)* (Roma–Bari: Laterza, 2013).
- 21 In 1943 and 1944 Institute was headed by the art historian Ivan Bach (1910–1983), professor at Zagreb University. In 1944 Karaman returned to his earlier position. See Horvat, *Konzervatorski rad kod Hrvata*, 35.
- 22 Two weeks earlier the collaborationist government passed the infamous *Legal Provision on the Protection of Aryan Blood and the Honor of the Croatian People (Zakonska odredba o zaštiti arijske krvi i časti hrvatskog naroda)*, one of three legal documents that enabled the persecution of Serbian, Jewish and Roma communities.
- 23 Horvat, *Konzervatorski rad kod Hrvata*, 37. See also Martina Juranović-Tonejc, "Zakonska regulativa u zaštiti pokretne baštine u doba Nezavisne države Hrvatske," *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 33–34 (2009–2010): 15–22.

- 24 Martina Juranović Tonejc, *Institucionalni razvoj zaštite pokretne umjetničke baštine u Hrvatskoj od 1850. do 1990. godine* (PhD diss., University of Zadar, 2018), 144.
- 25 Andela Horvat, *Konzervatorski rad kod Hrvata*, 69–73.
- 26 “Pravilnik o sastavu i radu komisije za utvrđivanje štete učinjene po okupatoru na kulturno-historijskim predmetima i prirodnim znamenitostima Jugoslavije i za njihovo vraćanje u zemlju,” *Službeni list Demokratske Federativne Jugoslavije* I, no. 3 (February 9, 1945): 3. (The text was drafted on December 20, 1944). On April 2, 1945 the *Regulation on the establishment of the State Commission for War Damage* was passed in Belgrade, with Marshal Tito, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of National Defense, at the top of the long list of signatories. See “Uredba o osnivanju Državne komisije za ratnu štetu,” *Službeni list Demokratske Federativne Jugoslavije* I, no. 25 (April 24, 1945): 211–12.
- 27 “Odluka o zaštiti i čuvanju kulturnih spomenika i starina,” *Službeni list Demokratske Federativne Jugoslavije* I, no. 10 (March 6, 1945): 1.
- 28 “Zakon o zaštiti spomenika kulture i prirodnih rijetkosti Demokratske Federativne Jugoslavije,” *Službeni list Demokratske Federativne Jugoslavije* I, no. 54 (July 31, 1945): 482–3.
- 29 “Pravilnik o djelokrugu i organizaciji Vrhovnog instituta za zaštitu i naučno proučavanje spomenika kulture i prirodnih rijetkosti,” *Službeni list Demokratske Federativne Jugoslavije* I, no. 88 (November 13, 1945), 938–939.
- 30 The list covers prehistoric settlements, tumuli, fountains, aqueducts, Turkish baths, roads, bridges, temples, mines, squares, docks, fortresses, architectural details, sculptures, paintings of all techniques, manuscripts, early printed books, letters, graphics, wrought and cast iron, filigree works, coats of arms, stamps, medals, fabrics, ceramics, intarsia, jewelry, furniture, musical instruments, scientific equipment, arms, as well as objects and places connected to a certain historical event or person, with particular aesthetic, scientific and tourist character (art. 1).
- 31 “Pravilnik o izvršenju Zakona o zaštiti spomenika kulture i prirodnih rijetkosti Demokratske Federativne Jugoslavije,” *Službeni list Demokratske Federativne Jugoslavije* I, no. 88, (November 13, 1945): 939–41.
- 32 A letter of Ljubo Karaman to his Slovenian colleagues in Ljubljana, dated July 3, 1946, reveals that the Congress of Yugoslav educational workers and employees was scheduled for August 16 to 18 that year in Belgrade, in order to discuss revision of the 1945 Law and to reject the establishment of the Supreme Institute. Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia, Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage, Archivenahradit: (Ministarstvo kulture i medija republika Hrvatska, Uprava za zaštitu kulturne baštine, Arhiva, MKMRH-UZKB-A), Karaman’s Letter to Slovenian conservators on new legislation, 388–1946.
- 33 “Deklaracija o proglašenju Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije,” *Službeni list Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* I, no. 93 (November 30, 1945).
- 34 The Supreme Institute was subsequently renamed the Federal Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments (Savezni institut za zaštitu spomenika kulture) and re-established in September 1950. See Vlado Mađarić, “Organizacija službe zaštite u FNRJ,” *Zbornik zaštite spomenika 4–5 (1953–1954)*: 9–14; Vlado Mađarić, “Zadaci, uloga i mjesto Saveznog instituta u sistemu i organizacionoj strukturi zaštite spomenika kulture u FNRJ,” *Zbornik zaštite spomenika 4–5 (1953–1954)*: 108–14.
- 35 “Opći zakon o zaštiti spomenika kulture i prirodnih rijetkosti,” *Službeni list Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* II, no. 81 (October 8, 1946): 1000–2.
- 36 In Karaman’s letter from July 3, 1946 he and his colleagues from Croatia saw the role of the Supreme Institute in Belgrade as a place where representatives of the republican institutes would gather once a year.

- 37 The lack of professional journals before 1947 (with few exceptions from Slovenia and Croatia between the two wars with a more general approach to heritage and new architecture) forced the leading scholars to publish their feuilletons, criticisms and pleas in newspapers. Therefore, the appearance of the specialized periodicals in the late 1940s reflected the will to establish the system. The first reports on conservation activities appeared in *Historijski zbornik*, established in Zagreb in 1948.
- 38 Due to his service during the collaborationist regime, Karaman was investigated in May 1945 by the new authorities and soon released. Couple of weeks later he continued his work on the same position. In April 1946 he had to report on his younger colleagues' conduct during the war. See MKMRH-UZKB-A, Karaman to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia on the employees of the Conservation Institute in Zagreb, April 29, 1946, 279-1946.
- 39 Out of 15,752,000 inhabitants, Yugoslavia had around 2,200,000 illiterates.
- 40 "By clearing our history of all forgeries and unnecessary admixtures, I am convinced that no nation will lose anything from us South Slavs, but on the contrary we will all gain together." Josip Broz Tito, "Govor na svečanoj sjednici Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Zagrebu," in *Govori i članci III*, (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1959): 207-14, 208 and 213.
- 41 On his conservation activity at the time see Nina Diaz Fernandez, *Ljubo Karaman: Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Dalmatia, 1919-1941* (Split: University of Split, 2018). In 2021 and 2022 two international conferences on Karaman were held in Split and Zagreb. Publication of the proceedings is expected.
- 42 On Fisković's conservation activities see the dissertation by Sandra Šuštić, *Djelovanje Cvite Fiskovića na zaštiti i restauraciji povijesnoga slikarstva i skulpture na hrvatskoj obali* (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2016).
- 43 Adolfo Venturi, "Dalmazia artistica," *Nuova antologia di lettere, scienze ed arti* 188 (May-June 1916), 26-36; Adolfo Venturi et al., *Dalmazia monumentale* (Milano: Alfieri & Lacrois, 1917); Gustavo Giovannoni, *Spalato romana* (Roma: Reale accademia d'Italia, 1942); Bruno Apollonj Ghetti and Luigi Crema, *L'architettura della Dalmazia* (Roma: Reale accademia di San Luca, 1943).
- 44 See, for example, articles by Ferruccio Canali, published since 2001 in the journal *Quaderni del Centro di ricerche storiche di Rovigno* on regulatory plans, conservation projects and political aspects of the appropriation of Istrian and Dalmatian heritage during the presence of the Fascist state.
- 45 On prehistory of cultural appropriation of Istrian and Dalmatian cultural heritage in Italian art history see Donata Levi, "Il patrimonio storico e artistico di Dalmazia e Istria: casi di appropriazione simbolica nel decennio della Prima guerra mondiale," in *La conservazione dei monumenti a Trieste, in Istria e in Dalmazia (1850-1870)*, ed. Luca Caburlotto, Rossella Fabiani, and Giuseppina Perusini (Udine: Forum Editrice Universitaria Udinese, 2020), 95-113.
- 46 See Irene Spada, *Italia in Istria. Tutela, conservazione e restauro dei beni culturali tra le due guerre mondiali* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2017). See also contributions from Spada, Gabriele Botti and Ferruccio Canali in the cited conference proceedings *La conservazione dei monumenti a Trieste, in Istria e in Dalmazia (1850-1950)* and the dissertation by Sara Rocco, *Politiche e pratiche di tutela nel "secolo breve": il caso di Pola/Pula* (PhD diss., Politecnico di Milano, 2021).
- 47 Marijan Bradanović, "Tradicija, osnutak i djelovanje konzervatorske službe u Rijeci," in *Sveti Vid*, ed. Darinko Munić (Rijeka: Izdavački centar, 2001), 127-46; Željko Bistrović, "Haec olim meminisse iuvabit! Biografski i bibliografski prilozi za životopis konzervatora i muzealca Aleksandera Perca (Tuzla, 1918. - München, 1981.)," *Dometi* 1-4 (2020): 101-16; Dragutin Pavličević, "Prof. dr. Ferdinand Hauptmann," *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta* 20/1 (1987): 317-18.
- 48 In his circular letter to the people's committees from September 26, 1946, Karaman pointed out that "culturally aware people" should be nominated as honorary conservators in close cooperation with conservation authorities. See MKMRH-UZKB-A, Circular of the Conservation Institute Zagreb to the people's committees on preservation of monuments, September 26, 1946, 743-1946.

- 49 Article 107 provides a clear statement: “The state authorities of towns (villages, smaller towns), counties, urban areas, cities, districts and regions are people’s committees.”
- 50 “Zakon o zaštiti spomenika kulture i prirodnih rijetkosti,” *Narodne novine* 84 (October 22, 1949): 246–8.
- 51 On allied bombardments see Marica Karakaš-Obradov, *Angloamerička bombardiranja u Drugom svjetskom ratu* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2008).
- 52 Marko Špikić, “Spomenici i urbanističko planiranje u Senju od 1949. do 1955. godine,” *Peristil* 59 (2016): 119–36; Marko Špikić, “Konzerviranje i urbana reforma u Senju, 1945.-1949.,” *Portal Hrvatskog restauratorskog zavoda* 8 (2017): 157–76.
- 53 Dubravka Kisić and Antonija Mlikota, *Zadar – Poslijeratna urbanističko-arhitektonska obnova 1944.-1958.* (Zadar: Državni arhiv u Zadru, 2017); Antonija Mlikota, *Zadar: Obnova i izgradnja nakon razaranja u Drugome svjetskom ratu* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2021).
- 54 Raul Marsetič, *I bombardamenti alleati su Pola 1944–1945* (Rovigno – Trieste: Centro di ricerche storiche, 2004).
- 55 Gino Pavan, *Il tempio d’Augusto a Pola* (Trieste – Gorizia: Istituto giuliano di storia, cultura e documentazione, 2000); Ines Vanjak and Marko Špikić, “Principi restauriranja Augustova hrama u Puli 1946. i 1947. godine,” *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 37–38 (2013–2014): 7–24.
- 56 Marko Špikić, “Riforma sociale e revisione del restauro scientifico a Spalato tra il 1945 e il 1950,” in *Gustavo Giovannoni e l’architetto integrale. Atti del convegno internazionale*, ed. Giuseppe Bonaccorso and Francesco Moschini, 2015–2016 (Roma: Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 2019), 69–74.
- 57 Fisković became famous for discovering neglected archival testimonies of the age-old role of the Slavic masters, overshadowed by former “foreign researchers”. See his booklet *Naši graditelji i kipari u Dubrovniku 15. i 16. stoljeća* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1947). This historiographic affirmation led him to another level: the selective reconstruction and presentation of Dalmatian monuments, in favor of the new regime’s fusion of communist universality and unifying Yugoslav nationalism.
- 58 On the socio-political and urban transformation of German Breslau to Polish Wrocław, see Gregor Thum, *Uprooted. How Breslau Became Wrocław During the Century of Expulsions* (Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003). On reconstructive principles see Jan Zachwatowicz, *Protection of Historical Monuments in Poland* (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1965).
- 59 Cvito Fisković, “Zaštita i popravak spomenika u Dalmaciji 1945-1949 godine,” *Zbornik zaštite spomenika kulture* 1 (1950): 161–87.
- 60 Roberto Pane, “Il restauro dei monumenti,” *Aretusa. Rivista di varia letteratura*, I/1 (March–April 1944): 68–79. On *restauro critico* see Giovanni Carbonara, *La reintegrazione dell’immagine. Problemi di restauro dei monumenti* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1976) and Giovanni Carbonara, *Avvicinamento al restauro: teoria, storia, monumenti* (Napoli: Liguori Editore, 1997), 285–301.
- 61 A good example for this is the reluctance to return the Latin inscription from the era of the Venetian administration to fully reconstructed Loggia in Šibenik.
- 62 Giovannoni spoke of *restauri di liberazione* already in his 1912 conference speech. See Gustavo Giovannoni, “Restauro di monumenti,” *Bollettino d’arte* (1913): 15.
- 63 Fisković, “Zaštita i popravak,” 172 and 176. Illustration was located in Split by Iva Raič Stojanović.

- 64 Giovanni wrote about “architectural mimicry” already in 1925. See Gustavo Giovanni, “Ambiente monumentale,” in *Questioni di architettura nella storia e nella vita* (Roma: Biblioteca d’arte editrice, 1929, second edition). It was supposed to reconcile new architecture with old towns. This is more proof of the adaptation of Italian principles in post-1945 Croatian conservation community.
- 65 Predrag Marković, “Sakristija šibenske katedrale: ugovor, realizacija i rekonstrukcija,” *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti* 34 (2010): 31–50.
- 66 Aleksandar Perc, “Rekonstrukcija stolne crkve u Senju,” *Urbanizam i arhitektura* 5–8 (1951): 66–8.
- 67 Antonija Mlikota, “Gradska loža,” in *Zadar. Obnova i izgradnja nakon razaranja u Drugome svjetskom ratu* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2021), 190–3.
- 68 Greta Jurišić, “Konzervatorski radovi na pavlinskom samostanu i crkvi u Lepoglavi,” *Zbornik zaštite spomenika kulture* 4–5 (1953–1954), 392–6.
- 69 Antonija Mlikota, “Gradska loža,” 184–7, 194–7.
- 70 Marko Špikić, “Spomenici i urbanističko planiranje u Senju,” 129.
- 71 Marko Špikić and Iva Raič Stojanović, “Shaping the Past in the Historic Centers of Split and Šibenik after 1945,” in *Arhitekturna zgodovina* 3, ed. Renata Novak Klemenčić (Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, 2016), 83–95.
- 72 Branko Lučić, “Konzervatorska problematika dvorca Januševca,” *Arhitektura urbanizam. Časopis za arhitekturu, urbanizam, primenjenu umetnost i industrijsko oblikovanje* 6, no. 31 (1965): 48–9; Iva Raič Stojanović, “Recepcija klasicističkog dvorca Januševca i njegovo rekonstruiranje nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata,” in *Klasicizam u Hrvatskoj*, ed. Irena Kraševac (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2016), 195–212.
- 73 Cvito Fisković, “Novi putevi graditeljstva,” *Vjesnik Narodnog fronta Hrvatske* V/178 (15 November 1945): 3–4.
- 74 Cvito Fisković, “Zaštita i popravak,” 174.
- 75 Zlatko Jurić and Ana Vukadin, *Zgrada Željpohe u Zagrebu. Rasprave o arhitektonskoj interpolaciji* (Zagreb: Arhitektonski fakultet, 2011).
- 76 Milan Prelog, “Rad na konzervaciji nepokretnih spomenika kod nas,” *Zbornik zaštite spomenika kulture* 4–5 (1953–54), 33.
- 77 *Ibid.*, 34.
- 78 Renato Bonelli, “Danni di guerra, ricostruzione dei monumenti e revisione della teoria del restauro architettonico,” in *Architettura e restauro* (Venezia: Neri Pozza, 1959), 41–58.
- 79 Duško Marasović, *Povijesna jezgra Splita: Studije – programi – realizacije. Historic Core of Split: Studies – Programmes – Realized Projects* (Split: Grad Split, 2009).
- 80 Milan Prelog, *Poreč, grad i spomenici* (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2007), 291.
- 81 Marko Špikić, “Ruins and Slavic Utopia. Architecture of the Social Reform in Croatian Historic Towns, 1945–1960,” in *Architektur und Akteure. Praxis und Öffentlichkeit in der Nachkriegsgesellschaft*, ed. Regine Heß, (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag 2018), 145–59.
- 82 The conference was organized by Roberto Pane, and, among others, by Agnoldomenico Pica, Renato Bonelli and Piero Gazzola, main representatives of Italian post-1943 restoration theory and practice.

- 83** See Zdenko Sila, “Problemi dei complessi urbanistico-storici nella regione dell’Istria e del Quarnero,” in *Attualità urbanistica del monumento e dell’ambiente antico* (Milano: Görlich, 1958), 131–42; Tomislav Marasović, “Intervento urbanistico-archeologico nel centro del Palazzo di Diocleziano a Split (Spalato),” in *Attualità urbanistica del monumento e dell’ambiente antico* (Milano: Görlich, 1958), 83–90; Bruno Milić, “Valorisation des monuments et sites historiques dans le plan d’aménagement de Zadar,” in *Attualità urbanistica del monumento e dell’ambiente antico* (Milano: Görlich, 1958), 61–8.
- 84** Marko Špikić and Tea Gorup, “Od prevrata do nostalgije. Planiranje socijalističkog grada i zaštita povijesnih ambijenata u Zagrebu od 1945. do 1962. godine,” *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 40 (2016): 7–32.
- 85** “Zakon o zaštiti spomenika kulture,” *Narodne novine. Službeni list Narodne Republike Hrvatske* 16, no. 18 (4 May 1960): 212–20.
- 86** For critical views on new architecture and cultural heritage during the 1960s, see Grgo Gamulin, *Arhitektura u regiji* (Zagreb: Društvo historičara umjetnosti, 1967).
- 87** Ante Batović, *The Croatian Spring. Nationalism, Repression and Foreign Policy under Tito* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017).
- 88** “Osnovni zakon o zaštiti spomenika kulture,” *Narodne novine. Službeni list SFRJ* 12 (1965).
- 89** “Zakon o zaštiti spomenika kulture,” *Narodne novine. Službeni list SRH* 23, 7 (February 15, 1967): 53–61.
- 90** In 1965, the retired Karaman still advocated for the motto of German and Austrian experts of the *fin-de-siècle*, that is “*Konservieren, nicht restaurieren.*” See Ljubo Karaman, “Razmatranja na liniji kraljice Konzervirati a ne restaurirati,” *Bulletin Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 13, no. 1–3(1965): 44–89.
- 91** Branko Lučić, “Restauratorski zavod Hrvatske. Razvoj i radovi od osnutka do godine 1975,” *Godišnjak zaštite spomenika kulture Hrvatske* 1 (1975): 7–23.
- 92** Tobias Strahl, *Kultur, Erbe, Konflikt: Kulturgutzerstörung in Kroatien, Bosnien-Herzegowina und Kosovo 1991–2004* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2018).

07

# Monument Protection in Hungary in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century<sup>1</sup>

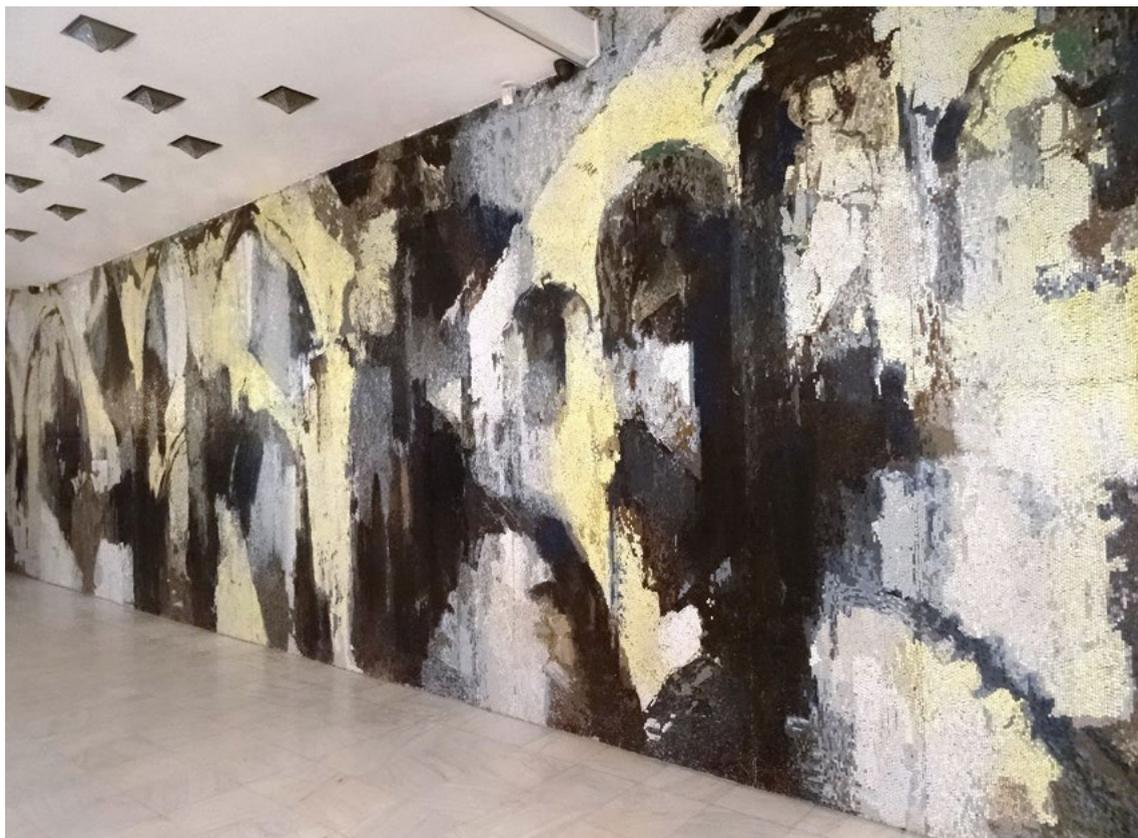
PÁL LÖVEI

After three decades of preparations and provisional arrangements, the first Hungarian organization for the protection of historic monuments, the Provisional Committee of Hungarian Monuments (Magyarországi Múemlékek Ideiglenes Bizottsága), was founded in 1872. Structurally it was modelled on German and Austrian forerunners, with a system of unpaid operative and non-operative, partly professional, partly only external members. The word “provisional” in its designation referred to the fact that this governmental institution had not yet been regulated by law. After the country’s first Monuments Act was codified in 1881,<sup>2</sup> the designation was changed to the National Committee of Monuments (Múemlékek Országos Bizottsága, MOB), although there was no significant alteration to its form or structure until 1934, when it was made a governmental department, keeping the same name. According to the Act, the protection of a site or object was stated by ministerial decree. Monuments protected in this way were to be maintained and restored by the state. It is no wonder that, for fear of the great financial burden, there were only 48 protected monuments by 1948/49 when the MOB was dissolved. This means that, although the registration of historic monuments in Hungary began as early as 1872, the real listing of them by experts had to wait until the beginning of the 1950s.<sup>3</sup>

## **The period of Stalinism: searching the place in state administration**

A new decree of legal force on “museums and monuments” promulgated in 1949 extended to movable and immovable monuments, public and private

collections of national interest, museum artefacts and protected territories.<sup>4</sup> Parallel with the Stalinist political changes the number of protected monuments was multiplied, regardless of the former or still existent private ownership. The legislation brought a number of novelties: it made it possible to protect monument complexes territorially, involved the visitability of the monuments, needed authorization for works related to the monuments and the preliminary opinion of the specialized administration had to be asked for this authorization.<sup>5</sup> The MOB and the National Inspectorate of Public Collections were united into a single authority, the National Centre for Museums and Historic Monuments (Múzeumok és Műemlékek Országos Központja, MMOK). The few employees for monument protection trained during the pre- and post-war periods of the MOB tried – with little success – to prevent the senseless destruction of monuments from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, first and foremost in Budapest, which were sometimes demolished under the pretext of “rubble clearance”, although buildings damaged by war in many cases could have been restored. The damaged Serb Orthodox church from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Tabán District was secretly knocked down despite the protests:<sup>6</sup> *“The demolition decree enacted in [...] 1949, was nevertheless a political decision predicated on the anti-religious attitude of the Communist totalitarian regime, as well as on Hungary’s relations with Yugoslavia that had begun to deteriorate since 1948.”*<sup>7</sup> The Baroque style nave of the Garrison church was demolished in 1951 (originally it was the Mary Magdalene Parish Church of the Hungarian citizens of medieval Buda, and its Gothic tower was restored a year later).<sup>8</sup> The Lloyd Palace built in neoclassical style by architect József Hild in 1827 in the vicinity of the Chain Bridge stood without roof, but could have been restored without larger problems.<sup>9</sup> Close to the Lloyd Palace, the Ullmann House, built in neoclassical style by József Hild in 1834, suffered greater damages, and only its monumental grand hall with the relief works by Marco Cassagrande was declared a protected monument. Later this too was demolished in order to provide space for a new office building.<sup>10</sup> The staff of the MMOK often had to confront direct political interventions – this was the period of Stalinism at its severest.<sup>11</sup> It has to be emphasized that in those days, the historicism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as the style of two or three generations earlier, was condemned, almost despised, not only by communist politicians, but also by architects and the public. For example, the MOB itself had already decided in 1945 not to bring back pre-war architecture in the Buda Castle District, where not one residential house of about 300 had avoided damage, but after presenting medieval remains uncovered by the war and subsequent systematic research, completed them with modernist parts.<sup>12</sup>



↑ Fig. 1. Budapest, Táncsics Mihály street 1, the covered courtyard of the headquarters of the National Inspectorate for Historic Monuments, with the monumental mosaic of Endre Domanovszky, architects of the restoration: Ferenc Erdei and Pál Havassy, 1969–71 (photo Pál Lövei, 2016)

Partly political reasons have led to widespread and quick damage to hundreds of the country's castles and mansions in the province. The relatively minor war destruction in the villages was combined with looting by the Nazis and the Hungarian fascists, and then the Soviet army's often planned robbery. Local people used the buildings as supply for building materials, often supported by the new local authorities and political leaders. The former owners, mostly noble families, had emigrated and so, already in 1945, the estates, which the mansions belonged to, along with their assets became public property. The Government Commissioner of Neglected Treasures and the Ministerial Commissioner for Endangered Private Collections had very modest success in saving and nationalizing the furniture, treasures and artefacts of the former owners. In the next decades the improper use of the buildings and the lack of maintenance caused further damage.<sup>13</sup>

The first modern, single-volume topographical summary of the country's monuments<sup>14</sup> was published in 1951 by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, but only after the intervention of scholars in prominent academic positions, because according to high-ranking party officials, too many religious buildings were included. At the same time, this was the most successful decade for the work on the topography of Hungarian monuments, with six volumes published by 1962 – five more were finished in the later period before the political changes of 1990. Some experts started the work already in the 1930s either individually or in the framework of the MOB, but the publications needed the organizing power of the Academy. The academic inaugural lecture read by the philosopher and art historian Lajos Fülep (1885–1970) in 1950 about the tasks of Hungarian history of art was instrumental in this process.<sup>15</sup>

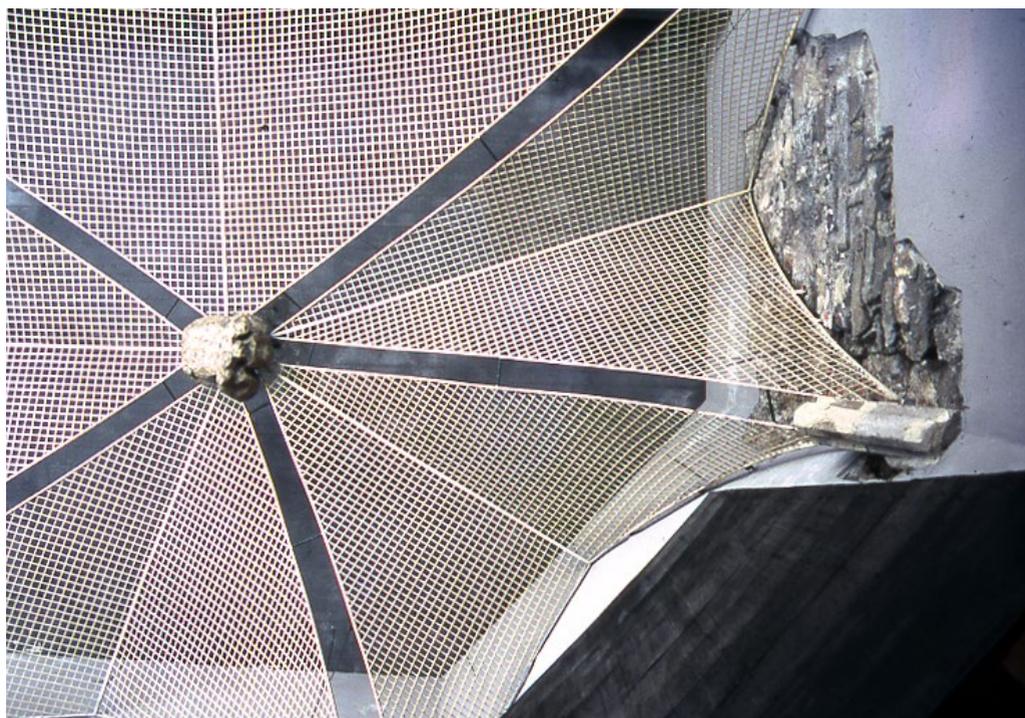
Monument conservation was the responsibility of the minister for cultural affairs and education until 1952, when it was transferred to the portfolio for building affairs, in parallel with the dissolution of the MMOK. For a significant period, the organization responsible for monuments was deprived of its independence, as year by year it was shifted around to become part of different institutions. The tiny organization, with its national scope, never disappeared, and its necessity was never called into question; the only thing was that it never found its proper place.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, this period, the first part of the 1950s resulted in some significant findings: during rubble clearance in the Buda Castle District, the remains of many hitherto hidden medieval buildings were discovered. This led in parallel to work on the Royal Castle of Buda undergoing systematic archaeological, architectural and historical research. As a result, a Hungarian medieval archaeological school tradition evolved, involving a legion of experts and new techniques. In the 1930s, the possibility of protecting urban complexes as a whole never occurred to anyone, but from the 1950s onwards, the new approach of monument protection at the settlement scale began to take root, particularly in the city of Sopron.<sup>17</sup> In the wake of the identification of historic monuments and townscape values, which was still being pioneered even at the international level, the idea of protecting residential buildings became part of the framework for settlement-wide monument protection.

The collections – the archives of plans, drawings and documentation, the photo library, and the library – that had been accumulating since 1872 remained intact, and even in this period, the library continued to expand with some foreign periodicals, for example, with a subscription to the Parisian *Bulletin Monumental*. New investigations show that the leading Western journals of architecture were

generally present in the libraries of the architects' organizations, universities, and state-owned design, construction, building companies also during the 1950s and 1960s – it was a technological requirement against the ideological will.<sup>18</sup>

### New independent organization from 1957

The independent monument protection body, the National Inspectorate for Historic Monuments (Országos Műemléki Felügyelőség, OMF), was established in spring 1957, barely a few months after the Revolution of October – November 1956. It was not a “child” of the revolution: work on the new organizational framework had obviously already begun, and the Ministry for Building Affairs, which had oversight of the new institution, had surely dealt with plans for “putting things in order” throughout 1955.<sup>19</sup> The quick establishment of the OMF, however, was thanks to the art historian Dezső Dercsényi (1910–1987),<sup>20</sup> who grasped the situation clearly and took advantage of the short period of political hesitation following the revolution. This heralded in two decades of substantial progress in monument protection, with particular regard to renovations and reconstructions. The official directors of the institution, appointed by the party,<sup>21</sup> came and went in rapid succession, but for the next two decades Dercsényi, first in the ministry, later as the deputy director of the institution, was essentially the decision-maker in all practical and theoretical questions. Joining the experts coming from the former MOB – like Dercsényi himself –, the staff was enlarged with numerous younger recruits. The scientific department, led by the art historian Géza Entz (1913–1993),<sup>22</sup> was responsible for research, cataloguing monuments, and managing and developing the collections, but also for the restoration of murals, altars and stone monuments. The department for architectural planning was headed by the architect László Gerő (1909–1995),<sup>23</sup> by that time the chief designer of the fortifications around and the medieval remains beneath the Royal Palace, built in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and ruined in the Second World War. Gerő was also the founding editor-in-chief of the periodical *Műemlékvédelem* (Monument protection), first published in 1957, and the only publication of Hungarian monument protection that still exists. The department's task was planning restoration works financed totally or partly by the state, together with inspecting their execution. The building restoration division organized and coordinated on-site restoration projects. It operated initially five, later seven, regional centers<sup>24</sup> for the management of construction covering the whole country: their specially trained staff had the necessary knowledge of ancient technologies forgotten in the new age of industrial building methods.<sup>25</sup> By the 1970s the number of the OMF's personnel was approximately 1200.<sup>26</sup>



⬆ **Fig. 2. Visegrád, Solomon's Tower, reconstruction of the vaulting, architect of the restoration: János Sedlmayr, 1962–65 (photo Ádám Arnóth, 2004)**

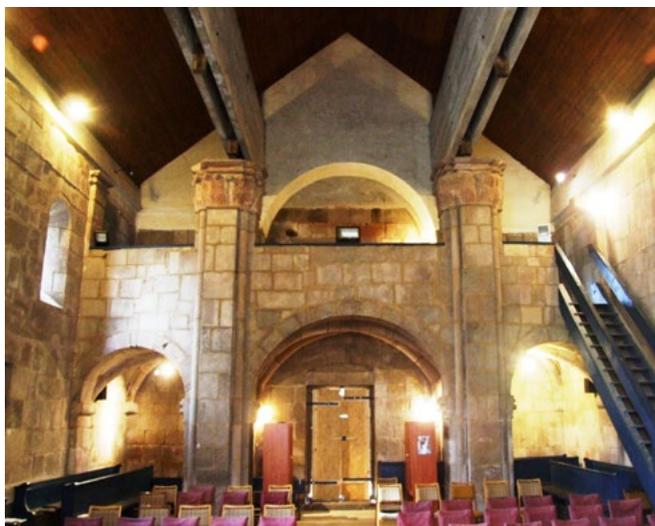
A spectacular system of different kinds of publications was also implemented: besides the afore-mentioned periodical, a monument yearbook was issued every two to three years, while series of books on historic cities and major monuments were published in large print runs. In 1971, the institution acquired its own independent headquarters, a newly renovated, listed building in the Buda Castle District.

One of the objectives of the new organization was to solve the problem of restoring the large and important ruins of castles and monasteries, which required state support. Seen from today's perspective, the rapid restoration of certain monuments (the castle and Pauline monastery in Nagyvázsony, Sümeg Castle and Diósgyőr Castle, and Solomon's Tower in Visegrád) bears witness to great courage and confidence. Some extraordinary personal and organizational opportunities aided the successful implementation of such programs as the research and conservation of the ruined churches and monasteries in the Balaton Uplands. Architecture, having been set free from the compulsory principles of the socialist realism of the 1950s, returned to the modernism of the pre-war period. The first two decades of



⬆ Fig. 3. Karcza, Calvinist church vaulting, architect of the restoration: Judit Kissné Nagypál, 1965–67 (photo Pál Lővei, 2011)

➔ Fig. 4. Karcza, interior of the Calvinist church (photo Pál Lővei, 2011)



the OMF were characterized not only by several spectacular restorations, but also by archaeological excavations, together with the general acceptance of *Bauforschung* (building fabric investigations),<sup>27</sup> so the plans for the restorations incorporated new scientific results.

Before overconfidence could set in, however, the upper levels of political and financial leadership soon made it clear that constraints would be placed on the room for maneuver. According to a governmental decision of 1959, a long-term plan for monument protection was to be devised, based on precise knowledge of the whole architectural heritage. The field work quickly took a turn for the worse, as a strict order was given – albeit only verbally – that aimed to reduce the number of protected monuments by 25-30%. The number of monuments on the list in 1960 was not achieved again until 1996, and a significant proportion of the buildings de-listed after 1960 (by 1964) were later destroyed without being properly documented, while others were eventually reinstated, but only after they had lost much of their value.<sup>28</sup> It is also worth mentioning that apart from the spectacular and successful restorations, far less attention was devoted to maintaining or preserving the full stock of monuments. Castles, ecclesiastic ruins (some examples are mentioned above), village churches were restored, but the majority of mansions in the province, dwelling houses in the settlements' centers, industrial buildings remained untouched. The earlier restored monuments also lacked systematic maintenance: in the planned economy there were no financial funds for such continuous activity and there was no institution in possession of the necessary professional skills for this function.

After fifteen years the decree of 1949 had been repealed, while a new Building Act was codified in 1964,<sup>29</sup> in the framework of which monument protection was regulated three years later by the Ministry for Building Affairs.<sup>30</sup> (After the first one of 1881 the second Monuments Act was not passed until 1997 – without a law issued directly for monument protection the entire socialist period came and went without really strong legal support for monument protection.) Three categories of values have been used already in the practice of the 1950s, but officially defined only in 1960, and codified in 1964 – monuments have been classified on the basis of their characteristics (there were “real” monuments, valuable as a whole, listed buildings of less importance, and buildings significant only for the townscape).<sup>31</sup> A building became a monument not because it was declared a monument, it was declared protected because it complied with the criteria set for monuments. This validated scientific aspects better, excluding subjectivity.



⬆ Fig. 5. Váraszó, “anastylosis” of the ruined medieval village church. Architect of the restoration: Ferenc Erdei, 1963–64 (photo Ádám Arnóth, 2004)

The new organization, as well as the new type of Hungarian monument protection it represented, was blessed with good fortune, which is especially relevant in the light of the sharp contradictions that marked the entire period. The directors of the institution, invariably political appointees, tried to apply pressure on their staff, which was tolerated with bitterness or with a dose of humor, but this could be counterbalanced with the successful interventions of the professional leadership and with the recruitment of deserving colleagues and young experts at the start of their careers. Political support was facilitated by the fact that the professional achievements of monument protection could be turned into cultural and political capital, not least in the eyes of foreigners, who held such matters in high regard. The results of Hungarian monument protection were regularly published in foreign languages, mostly in the periodical for art history of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.<sup>32</sup> Hungarian experts participated in drafting the Charter of Venice (1964),<sup>33</sup> although the Hungarian political leadership had not allowed them to sign it,<sup>34</sup> and in the founding of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, 1965; Dezső Dercsényi was elected as a member of its first executive committee).<sup>35</sup> The centenary

of the foundation of the first Hungarian organization for monument protection was celebrated with the 3<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly and Congress of the ICOMOS held in Budapest in 1972.<sup>36</sup> Its success augmented the credibility of János Kádár's regime among western nations. The most prominent professional representatives of the period's monument protection were rewarded with the Gottfried von Herder-Preis of the Hamburg-based foundation Alfred Toepfer Stiftung: Dezső Dercsényi in 1966, László Gerő in 1974, and Géza Entz in 1983.<sup>37</sup> Ernő Szakál (1913–2002),<sup>38</sup> the leader of the stone carving workshop of the OMF in Sopron, the restorer of the Gothic and Renaissance red marble fountains in the Visegrád palace of the Hungarian kings received the Europe-Prize for Monument Protection (Europapreis für Denkmalpflege) of the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung in 1982.<sup>39</sup>

The OMF was therefore able to make the most of the consolidation efforts of the Kádár regime. Hundreds of monument restorations were carried out thanks to this, and many monuments, village churches and folk homes would not be standing today were it not for the work undertaken then. The application of modern principles in accordance with the spirit of the Venice Charter resulted in numerous monument restorations that can today be regarded as classic examples of the practice. Solomon's Tower in Visegrád, the churches in Karcsa, Felsőörs, Csempezkopács and Váraszó, the reconstructions of the fountains in Visegrád and the oriel window in Siklós, St. George's Chapel in Veszprém and the new building constructed to protect it, and the reconstruction of several empty lots in the Buda Castle District are now not only parts of the history of monument protection, but in their restored state, they are themselves monuments that deserve to be protected – although it is apparent that in certain cases, there is a tendency among some people these days to question this. While these restorations complied with a unified theoretical concept based on the principles of the Charter of Venice, they also gave architects the freedom to apply their own vision and decide on the use of materials, and even today, they radiate a kind of self-confidence, in the positive sense, and an earnest commitment to the protection of monuments.

### **Problems from the late 1970s**

Over time, however, and in parallel with the search for a new direction in international architecture, the faith previously placed in modern architecture and in its preferred materials, especially concrete, waned among architects working outside monument protection, and to a lesser extent among the general public



◀ **Fig. 6. Alsódörgicse, ruins of the medieval village church, architect of the restoration: Tibor Koppány, 1967–8 (photo Pál Lővei, 2018)**

as well. Scientific partners, meanwhile, began to criticize the excessiveness of many interventions, their irreversibility, and the use of materials that turned out to be less than satisfactory in terms of both conservation and aesthetics. The “classical” period of the organization of monument protection, embodied by the OMF, lasted until the late 1970s. The turnaround was marked by a number of personnel changes: as a result of a general internal putsch, initiated by the party, active and still able leading members of the “old guard”, such as Dezső Dercsényi and Géza Entz, were forced into retirement, while others had their careers sidelined. By a strange irony of fate, although one of the outcomes of this process was that leadership of the institution was taken out of the hands of political appointees and given to highly qualified monument protection experts who had been raised in-house; another result was, in many respects, stagnation. The former diversity among the team of architects and designers, which, supported by the scientific background and the results of building fabric investigations, had succeeded in popularizing monument protection among the wider public, was now replaced by far greater monotony in the institution’s activities (instead of the earlier many-sided way of seeing architecture, one single “style” was favored by the new leadership of the department, while some leading architects came



⬆ Fig. 7. Visegrád, royal palace, reconstruction of the “Fountain with the lions”, 1483 (The original fragments are exhibited in the lapidary of the palace.), restorer: Ernő Szakál, 1959 (photo Pál Lővei, 2006)

to an untimely end, others left the field changing over to historical research). The unpopularity of the conservational approach was combined, in many restorations, with a wealth of arbitrary ideas for supplementary additions. The inter-firm partnerships that were established among state ventures in the 1980s, which pointed the way towards new forms of private enterprise, had a disruptive effect on the OMF in both professional and ethical terms – the official tasks and working hours were mixed up with private goals and finance. Finally, several young architects and engineers chose the private activity in the late 1980s, even before the system's change of 1990.

While the 1980s were marred by a decline in architectural progress characterized above and political support, it can still be regarded as a successful period due to the complex protection of historic city centers and the perfection of *Bauforschung* in Hungary. It was the Sopron-based art historian Ferenc Dávid (1940–2017),<sup>40</sup> who played a decisive role in the development, application and dissemination of the method already from the late 1960s. By around 1980 the methodology of *Bauforschung* was fully developed.<sup>41</sup> A fundamental role in this was played by urban monument protection, since investigations into residential buildings – dating from very many periods, often converted or rebuilt, relatively small in size, and with an extremely complicated history – required an unprecedented level of complexity.<sup>42</sup> Having the proper personnel available, with the inclusion of young archaeologists and art historians, the consequent broadening of the geographical scope, research into village churches and Renaissance chateaus in Northeastern and Western Hungary, investigations of residential buildings in several cities, mostly in the Transdanubian region, all coupled with more detailed documentation, meant that this period in the late 1970s and into the 1980s was a golden age for scientific monument protection work. Although these scientific achievements were acknowledged by the profession at large, the dominance of architects continued to prevail within the otherwise increasingly stagnating activities of the OMF.

Several regional cities, such as Győr, witnessed a strengthening of the circle of designers working outside the OMF, who made use of the favorable opportunities for monument protection in the provinces, thus ensuring a brief golden decade. Thanks to their willingness to take advantage of party and state decrees aimed at restoring historic city centers, and their ability both to recognize the ambitions of local city leaders and to apply the specific criteria of the OMF, the authorities and experts in Győr, Kőszeg, Pécs, and Székesfehérvár managed to carry out substantial, comprehensive research into the history of the respective cities, and



to conduct archive examinations and a large number of fabric investigations, which resulted in restorations of major significance. In consequence of this work, Sopron's European Gold Medal for Monument Conservation, awarded by the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung in 1975,<sup>43</sup> was followed by Győr receiving the same award in 1989.

In 1985 Hungary organized the cultural meeting of the so-called Helsinki process. This provided the government with a new opportunity to build its reputation and legitimization with the help of monument protection. As a gesture, after fifteen years, Hungary finally ratified the UNESCO Convention on World Heritage (1972). Two years later, the first two Hungarian sites – Buda Castle with the banks of the Danube, and the village of Hollókő – were inscribed on the World Heritage List. These were followed by the Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma (as well as one natural site and one cultural landscape) in the 1990s.

The architects and architecture historians Miklós Horler (1923–2010)<sup>44</sup> – who played an important role in the monument protection of Budapest already in the 1950s and 1960s, edited two volumes of the monuments' topography of the capital, took part in the work of drafting the Charter of Venice, later headed the planning department of the OMF – and Tibor Koppány (1928–2016)<sup>45</sup> initiated the *Lapidarium Hungaricum* program of the OMF, for the cataloguing of the stone fragments of perished – mostly medieval – buildings, started in 1986.<sup>46</sup> In the course of identifying stone remains, questions arose in connection with special or rare stones that could only be answered with new scientific methods or others modified for this purpose. Together with the restorations of mural paintings, this led to the increasing use of the archeo-metrical methodology from the 1990s.<sup>47</sup>

### **Situation after the system change of 1990**

The afore-mentioned settlement-wide work that had commenced in 1979–1980 started to slow in the late 1980s due to financial regulations, and then, after the system change in 1990, came to a standstill in the wake of the transformation of property management and the systems of ownership. This, however, was just one of the signs that, after the fall of the communist system, monument protection fell into a greater void than at any time since 1934. As in other areas of science and culture, there was a lack of a strong political background. Public interest was relatively low, and the small numbers who were concerned about monument protection exercised little power, despite the growing strength of civil city protection movements, whose support was mainly based on different criteria.



◀ Fig. 10. Pannonhalma, road sign of the World Heritage site of the Benedictine Abbey (photo Pál Lővei, 2006)

In the 1990s the momentary interests of the investors and proprietors of the revived capitalist system and of the politics – which, in order to survive each new election cycle, focused on the most immediate needs of the electorate – brought about a situation similar to that in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: in the interests of serving the demands of clients, only a few dozen economically insignificant heritage monuments and protected ruins were dealt with; moreover, every architectural consideration was handled with the notion of complete freedom, with even the architectural regulations in force between the two world wars disregarded as a vestige of the past. The field of Hungarian monument protection in the 1990s was unable to find an antidote to all this, or any way of addressing emerging problems, and in spite of all the work and energy invested, the transformation of the OMF into the National Monument Protection Office (Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, OMvH), the fracturing of its organization into parts, and the substitution of the earlier architectural dominance with the approach of state administration failed to achieve the desired outcomes. The organization of monument protection had lost its complexity: the building restoration division was privatized, and within a couple of years, all its regional departments had been closed: their specially trained staff, working meticulously and with great expertise, were unable to survive in the free market without state support. Architectural planning was also separated from the main office. Even the legislative process was of no assistance, despite the codification in 1997 of a new law on monument preservation, the first in Hungary since 1881.<sup>48</sup> However, one major achievement of this period – albeit one that was short-lived and which barely papered over the cracks in monument protection as a whole – was the appearance of the “new generation” of scientific publications on monuments, including periodicals and series of books, accompanied by the successful expansion of exhibiting activities undertaken by the OMvH.

The changes that have taken place since 2000 can only be mentioned briefly: thanks to the decisions and measures taken by the government in the 2010s,

there is now no institutional, state-organized monument protection in Hungary. In the course of mostly ad hoc, ill-considered and unconceived, often chaotic decisions and reorganizations, state heritage protection was discredited and finally abolished by a sudden government decision: in 2012, the only central institution for the protection of monuments, ceased to exist. The organization and professionalism of heritage protection has completely disintegrated, and professional decisions contrary to political will cannot be taken. There are only few individual projects – backed by massive governmental and party propaganda – on a national level, mostly entirely pointless reconstructions of long-destroyed buildings (both medieval castle-ruins in Diósgyőr and Füzér and former monarchic and governmental buildings and monuments of the late-Historicism of the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in Budapest, first of all in its Castle District), which cannot be conceived as real conservation work on historic monuments, but which are very expensive and contribute to creating a false national consciousness.<sup>49</sup> By the way, now in 2022, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of founding the first Hungarian organization for the protection of historic monuments ought to be celebrated.



# Notes

- 1 For the first brief summary of the period, see Pál Lővei, “Korszakok és irányzatok az elmúlt évtizedek magyar műemlékvédelmében,” in Számvetés és jövő. 125 éves a szervezett magyar műemlékvédelem, 40 éves az OMF/OMvH. XIX. Országos Műemléki Konferencia, 1997. június 2-5, ed. Erzsébet Kovács (Budapest: Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1998), 49–54. For a popularising summary of the period between 1872 and 2001, broken down year by year, see Judit Tamási and István Bardoly, eds., *Heritage Protection Within the Compass of Legal Regulation: From Law to Law. Stories from 120 Years of Institutional Heritage Protection* (Budapest: Ministry of National Cultural Heritage – National Board for the Protection of Historic Monuments, 2001).
- 2 XXXIX/1881 Act on the Historic Monuments, adopted by the Hungarian Parliament.
- 3 István Bardoly and Pál Lővei, “The First Steps for Listing Monuments in Hungary,” in *The Nineteenth-Century Process of “Musealization” in Hungary and Europe*, ed. Ernő Marosi and Gábor Klaniczay in collaboration with Ottó Gecser (Budapest: Collegium Budapest, 2006), 249–58. Pál Lővei, “Monument Conservation,” in *Motherland and Progress. Hungarian Architecture and Design 1800–1900*, ed. József Sisa (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016), 555–73.
- 4 13/1949 Decree of legal force on the Museums and Historic Monuments, adopted by the Presidential Council.
- 5 Géza Barcza, “A magyar műemlékvédelem fejlődése a jogszabályok tükrében (az 1949. évi 13. számú törvényerejű rendelet),” in *Magyar Műemlékvédelem 1967–1968* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1970), 19–25, with abstract: “Die Entwicklung der ungarischen Denkmalpflege im Spiegel der Rechtsnormen (Die gesetzliche Verordnung Nr. 13 von 1949)”.
- 6 István Bardoly, “[The year] 1949,” Tamási, and Bardoly, *Heritage Protection Within the Compass of Legal Regulation*, 113.
- 7 Tamás Csáki, Xénia Golub, Szilveszter Terdi and Koszta Vukovits, “English Summary,” in *Szerb székesegyház a Tabánban. Az eltűnt Rácváros emlékezete* (Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, 2019), 369.
- 8 Bardoly, “[The year] 1949,” 113.
- 9 Jenő Rados, *Hild József. Pest nagy építőjének életműve* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1958), 91–101, and Fig. 65 (depicting the building in ruins). Dezső Dercsényi, “La tutela dei monumenti in Ungheria dopo la liberazione,” *Acta Historiae Artium* 2, no. 1–2 (1955 [1954]): 101, and Fig. 3.
- 10 Jenő Rados, *Hild József*, 58–59, and pls xxii–xxiii. Gábor György Papp, “Domestic Architecture,” in *Motherland and Progress. Hungarian Architecture and Design 1800–1900*, ed. József Sisa (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016), 101, and Fig. 1/40.
- 11 Bardoly, “[The year] 1949,” 113.
- 12 Gábor Bognár, “[The year] 1945,” in Tamási and Bardoly, *Heritage Protection Within the Compass of Legal Regulation*, 106–7.
- 13 A brief situation report, along with the first results of conservation: Károly Ferenczy, “Kastélyok felhasználása és helyreállítása,” in *Magyar Műemlékvédelem 1949–1959* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1960), 55–64. With abstract: “Benutzung und Wiederherstellung der Schlösser”.
- 14 István Genthon, *Magyarország műemlékei* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1951).
- 15 Lajos Fülep, “A magyar művészettörténet főadata,” in *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia II. Társadalmi-Történeti Osztályának Közleményei 3. muzeológiai sorozat II. kötete, 1. sz. Művészettörténet 1951* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1951), 3–24.

- 16 Géza Barcza, “A magyar műemlékvédelem fejlődése a jogszabályok tükrében 1950–1963,” in *Magyar Műemlékvédelem 1969–1970* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1972), 43–52, with abstract: “Die Entwicklung der ungarischen Denkmalpflege im Spiegel der Rechtsnormen (1950–1963)”.
- 17 István Feld, “Buda (Ofen) und Sopron (Ödenburg) – Meilensteine der ungarischen städtischen Hausforschung,” in *Hausbau und Bauforschung in Ungarn*, ed. István Feld, and Ulrich Klein (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2004), 27–34.
- 18 Edit Lantos, “A kortárs nyugati építészet formanyelvének megismerési lehetőségei Magyarországon 1945 után,” *Ars Hungarica* 47, no. 2 (2021): 167–88, with abstract: “Possibilities for people in Hungary after 1945 to find out about the visual language of contemporary Western architecture”.
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- 20 Géza Entz, “Dezső Dercsényi (1910–1987) zum Gedächtnis,” *Acta Historiae Artium* 33, no. 3–4 (1987/1988): 359–60.
- 21 Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt = Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party.
- 22 Ernő Marosi, “Géza Entz (1913–1993),” *Acta Historiae Artium* 36, no. 1–4 (1993): 11–17.
- 23 János Sedlmayr, “Dr. Gerő László,” *Műemlékvédelem* 39, no. 1 (1995): 1–2.
- 24 In Eger, Miskolc, Nyíregyháza, Pécs, Sopron, Székesfehérvár, Visegrád.
- 25 István Bardoly, “[The year] 1957,” in Tamási and Bardoly, *Heritage Protection Within the Compass of Legal Regulation*, 124–5.
- 26 Tamás Fejérdy, “Jegyzékek és változások. A műemléki védelem 1949–1992 között,” in *A védelem körei*, eds. István Bardoly and Andrea Haris (Budapest: Régi Épületek Kutatóinak Egyesülete, 2020), 55.
- 27 István Bardoly and Andrea Haris, eds., *A falkutatás elmélete és gyakorlata a műemlékvédelemben* (Budapest: Régi Épületek Kutatóinak Egyesülete, 2020), 249–53, with abstract: “The Practice of Building Fabric Investigation in Hungary”.
- 28 András Román, “[The year] 1964,” in Tamási and Bardoly, *Heritage Protection Within the Compass of Legal Regulation*, 135.
- 29 III/1964. Act on Building, adopted by the Hungarian Parliament.
- 30 1/1967. (I.31.) Decree by the Ministry of Building Affairs; Géza Barcza, “A magyar műemlékvédelem fejlődése a jogszabályok tükrében 1964–1972,” in *Magyar Műemlékvédelem 1971–1972* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974), 7–21, with abstract: “Die Entwicklung der ungarischen Denkmalpflege im Spiegel der Rechtsnormen (1964–1972)”.
- 31 At the end of the year 1992 the number of the monuments belonging to these categories was 1945, 6615, 1643 respectively and 25 historic town or village centers were listed as protected ensembles: Fejérdy, “Jegyzékek és változások,” 64 and Fig. 10. (In comparison: the full stock of buildings and structures in Hungary at that time could be estimated at 4,000,000.)
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- 33** Tamás Fejérdy, “Who wanted it? What is the Charter? ... and today? / La Charte de Venise – qui est-ce qui l’a voulue? Que signifie-t-elle? ... et aujourd’hui?,” in *The Venice Charter / La Charte de Venise 1964–2004–2044? The fortieth anniversary (Hungary, May 22–27, 2004) / Le quarantième anniversaire (Hongrie, 22–27 Mai, 2004)*, ed. Erzsébet Kovács (Budapest: Hungarian National Committee of ICOMOS, 2005), 46–51 (= Monuments and Sites XI); Pál Lővei, “The Venice Charter and monument restorations in Hungary” / “La Charte de Venise et la remise en état des monuments historiques en Hongrie,” in *The Venice Charter*, 110–8.
- 34** Fejérdy, “Jegyzékek és változások,” 51.
- 35** Ibid.
- 36** András Román, “Az ICOMOS III. közgyűlése és kollokviuma,” in *Magyar Műemlékvédelem 1971–1972*, 385–403, with detailed abstract: “III. Generalversammlung und Kolloquium des ICOMOS”.
- 37** Georg Kastner, *Brücken nach Osteuropa. Die Geschichte und Bedeutung des Gottfried von Herder-Preises 1964–2003* (Hamburg: Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S., 2004), 158, 216, 278.
- 38** János Sedlmayr, “Emlékezés Szakál Ernő szobrászművészre, a műemlékvédelem mesterére (1913–2002),” *Műemlékvédelem* 46, no. 5 (2002): 298–301, with abstract: “Remembrance of Ernő Szakál sculptor; the master of monument protection”; Ernő Marosi, “Szakál Ernő,” *Műemlékvédelem* 57, no. 6 (2012): 414–17.
- 39** Walter Frodl, “Europapreis für Denkmalpflege an Ernő Szakál (Budapest, 12. Mai 1982),” *Soproni Szemle* 36, no. 3 (1982): 225–7.
- 40** Pál Lővei, “Ferenc Dávid (1940–2019) in memoriam,” *Acta Historiae Artium* 40 (2019): 5–24.
- 41** Bardoly and Haris, *A falkutatás elmélete és gyakorlata a műemlékvédelemben*. On the 150-year historical process of the perfection of the method, see Pál Lővei, “A falkutatási módszer vázlatos története Magyarországon”, in: Bardoly and Haris, *A falkutatás elmélete és gyakorlata a műemlékvédelemben*, 11–50.
- 42** Feld and Klein, *Hausbau und Bauforschung in Ungarn*.
- 43** See Tamás Fejérdy, “The (Indirect) Impacts of the European Architectural Heritage Year in a Former ‘Socialist Country’ – Sketches for a Hungarian Case Study,” in *Eine Zukunft für unsere Vergangenheit. Zum 40. Jubiläum des Europäischen Denkmalschutzjahres (1975–2015)*, ed. Michael Falser and Wilfried Lipp (Berlin: Hendrik Bäfler Verlag, 2015), 382–84.
- 44** Pál Lővei, “Dr. Horler Miklós (1923–2010),” *Műemlékvédelem* 54, no. 6 (2010): 426–30.
- 45** István Feld, “In memoriam Koppány Tibor (1928–2016),” *Műemlékvédelem* 60, no. 1–2 (2010): 127–9.
- 46** Eight volumes of the series have been published between 1988 and 2012.
- 47** Edit Szentesi and Péter Ujvári, eds., *A jáki apostolszobrok – Die Apostelfiguren von Ják* (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1999); Farkas Pintér, György Szakmány, Pál Lővei, Mária Tóth and Attila Demény, “Vörös márvány’ faragványok nyersanyaglelőhelyeinek kutatása,” *Műemlékvédelmi Szemle* 11, no. 1–2 (2001): 53–70, with abstract: “Forschung der Rohstofffundorte für Schnitzwerke aus Rotem Marmor”. Farkas Pintér, György Szakmány, Mária Tóth

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- 48** Act LIV of 1997 on the protection of historic monuments.
- 49** Pál Lővei, “Halotti beszéd”, *Élet és Irodalom* 61, no. 34 (25 August 2017): 8; Pál Lővei, “Protection of Historic Monuments,” in *Hungary Turns its Back on Europe. Dismantling Culture, Education, Science and the Media in Hungary 2010–2019*, ed. Humán Platform (Budapest: Oktatói Hálózat – Hungarian Network of Academics, 2020), 72–74, <http://oktatoihalozat.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/angol.pdf>); Pál Lővei, “Architectural Monument Protection, World Heritage,” in *Hungary Turns its Back on Europe 2. Dismantling Culture, Education, Science and the Media in Hungary 2020–2021*, (Budapest: Oktatói Hálózat, 2022), 63–5, [http://oktatoihalozat.hu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/hattal\\_europanak\\_2\\_20220308\\_web.pdf](http://oktatoihalozat.hu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/hattal_europanak_2_20220308_web.pdf).



08

# Monument preservation, cultural policy and urban development in Berlin, Capital of the German Democratic Republic

ALENA JANATKOVÁ

After the devastation of the Second World War, reconstructions in connection with nation-building became a real boom. On this context of nation-building, monuments and reconstructions, an inspiring study was undertaken by Arnold Bartetzky.<sup>1</sup> The retrospective here goes back to examples of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In its extent, the present is also taken into account in different countries, such as Germany, Poland, Bohemia or Russia. According to Bartetzky, the selective relationship of reconstruction to the original is characteristic for nation building and its attitude towards history. The historical monument is replaced by the ideal or typical model in the sense of purification of the past. The diversity of time traces is exchanged by an idealizing imagination of times gone by. However, as far as was noticed by Bartetzky, these reconstruction projects were hardly ever opposed by the preservation of historical monuments: Rather the institution even explicitly supported the reconstructive process for those monuments that were considered particularly important for national self-confidence and the emotional sensitivity of society.

In the German Democratic Republic as well, nation-building was closely linked to reconstruction projects.<sup>2</sup> The way and means how the German Democratic Republic performed its construction of history is the subject of my contribution. With regard to Berlin, the capital of the German Democratic Republic, the following aspects will be considered in some detail:

1. Historical construction as legitimization of the German Democratic Republic
2. The preservation of historical monuments in relation to socialist urban planning

### 3. Monument reconstruction in the focus of urban heritage management in the German Democratic Republic

#### 1. Historical construction as legitimization of the German Democratic Republic

After the Second World War, the Soviet occupation zone worked purposefully towards the founding of the German Democratic Republic. The decisive factor here was the strategy of demarcation from Germany. The emphasis on a radical break with German history culminated in the anti-fascist founding legend of the German Democratic Republic. This narrative served as justification for the existence of the New Germany. Based on the supposed political and moral integrity of the new elite, it developed into an important instrument of self-promotion. The proclaimed anti-fascism went hand in hand with the construction of a social order that had a so-called “new world” in mind.<sup>3</sup>

Immediately on the 11 June 1946, the call of the German Communist Party stated:

*“Not only the rubble of the destroyed cities, but also the reactionary rubble of the past must be cleared away. ... With the destruction of Hitlerism it is necessary at the same time to complete the cause of the democratization of Germany ... to eliminate totally the feudal remains and to destroy the reactionary old Prussian militarism with all its economic and political offshoots.”<sup>4</sup>*

A good example for this cleaning out in German history is the demolition of Andreas Schlüter’s Berlin Palace that as the whole could have been saved and rebuilt. However, in 1963, parts of the fourth Palace Portal were integrated into the new State Council Building of the German Democratic Republic. The reason for the incorporation of these building remains was an ideological one: It was a means to bring to mind the proclamation of the “Free Socialist Republic of Germany” in 1918 by the Spartacus leader Karl Liebknecht from the balcony of this very portal. The dominating ideology had thus not only claimed sovereignty over the interpretation of history but furthermore, the interpretation had taken historical monuments into focus and determined their destiny.

In general, the cultural heritage of the German Democratic Republic had been established in accordance with the exposed socialism related to the image of anti-fascism. Under this heading, the selected historical sources, pictures and monuments were acknowledged as national tradition. Nevertheless, for current interests, the attitude towards the understanding of tradition was modifiable.



⬆ Fig. 1. GDR, East Berlin, former State Council Building, detail of "Schlüterportal" (photo Rudolph Kramer, 1964, Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek/Deutsche Fotothek, Datensatz 33004108) <http://www.deutschefotothek.de/documents/obj/33004108>



⬆ Fig. 2. GDR, East Berlin, former State Council Building (photo Andrea Ulbricht, 1965, Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek/Deutsche Fotothek, Datensatz 33004109)

Thus, in the 1970s, the German Democratic Republic succeeded in expanding its claim to history: Beside Martin Luther and the Reformation, Frederick II was included to the gallery of ancestors. What followed was a Prussian renaissance in the German Democratic Republic's official history.<sup>5</sup>

It is true that there were conservators in the German Democratic Republic who primarily saw their tasks in everyday monument protection. However, culturally exposed places such as Berlin, the capital of the German Democratic Republic, were staged as showcases for the ruling ideology. Not just the anti-fascist reading of the monuments, but the corresponding setting of the scene was crucial for the contemporary purposes of politics. An important framework for the presentation of monuments was socialist urban planning.

## 2. Monument preservation in relation to socialist urban planning

Cultural policy was thus closely linked with urban planning. In 1950, the principals for the socialist nation building of the German Democratic Republic were defined in the official program called “Reconstruction Act”. Part of it were the “16 Principles of Urban Planning”. Here the socialist city was declared the crystallization point of the progressive political ideas of the time:

*“The urban planning and architectural design of our cities must give expression to the social order of the German Democratic Republic, to the progressive traditions of our German people, and to the great goals set for the construction of all Germany. The following principles serve these objectives: ... The town center forms the defining core of the city. The center of the city is the political focus for the life of its population. The most important administrative and cultural sites are located in the center. The squares in the middle of the city are situated where the political demonstrations, the marches and the popular celebrations take place on festival days. The city core is built with the most important and monumental buildings, it dominates the architectural composition of the city plan and determines the architectural silhouette of the city”.<sup>6</sup>*

According to the Soviet model, in 1951 the programmatic redesign of cities was started. With reference to this project the German “Bauakademie” was founded, its director was Hermann Henselmann. The Bauakademie was affiliated – again following the Soviet model – with the Institute for the Theory and History of Architecture. The goals of the new institute were nationally determined and subordinate to the interests of contemporary urban planning. The objective was to compile the accurate documentation of the progressive German architectural history with respect to the creation of a new realistic art of building. The same agenda, too, included the elaboration of documents in the area of monument preservation.<sup>7</sup>

Under the premise of nation building, the incorporation of historic city elements and monuments into current urban planning was essential.

The famous representative of tradition care in urban development during the 1950s is the Stalinallee. The concept of a national architectural design in this metropolitan boulevard was realized with reference to local historic models. The urban planning principle insisted on the use of the so-called progressive elements of the people’s cultural heritage. This request was carried out by adopting historical



⬆ Fig. 3. GDR, East Berlin, former "Stalinallee" (Stalin alley), Strausberger Square (photo Bert Sass, 1954, Landesarchiv Berlin, Fotosammlung, Bestand F Rep. 290, Verzeichniseinheit 031112)



➔ Fig. 4. GDR, East Berlin, view of the Stalinallee Block Süd (southern block). (Postkarte, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin: PK 2001/386)



⤴ Fig. 5. GDR, East Berlin, Stalinallee (photo Heinz Nagel, 1958, Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek/Deutsche Fotothek, Datensatz 72023964)

building elements: The classicist repertoire of forms from the Schinkel period was established as the design norm. Because the classicist building epoch was identified with the humanist tradition of the French Revolution, the local variant was promoted. Corresponding to the repertoire of local classicist patterns, ideological contents for the German Democratic Republic and its self-image were postulated. According to Thomas Topfstedt, style reception thus offered an opportunity to integrate selected history into the socialist present.<sup>8</sup> The new social order of the German Democratic Republic was to be represented by a visible principle of urban planning order. The most important laws of architectural and spatial design were based on axuality and symmetry. The street line of the Stalinallee was emphasized by horizontal elements such as cornices and ornamental friezes, attics and balustrades. Vertical structuring was achieved by means of central and corner avant-corps, pilasters and pilaster strips. Places of urban prominence, such as Strausberger Platz and Frankfurter Tor, were marked by taller buildings placed opposite each other in pairs.<sup>9</sup>

### **3. Monument Reconstruction in the Focus of Urban Heritage Management in the German Democratic Republic**

Nevertheless, on the one hand, the concept of style reception with reference to national building traditions was abandoned in the German Democratic Republic at the end of 1954. Under the slogan to build “better, cheaper and faster”, in the planning of new residential quarters and boulevards it was replaced by prefabricated building method.

On the other hand, the reconstruction of historical buildings was continued as a design section of socialist construction. The rebuilding of the historic ensemble Unter den Linden with the Opera House and the baroque Zeughaus was started as early as the beginning of the 1950s. From the Brandenburg Gate the historical axis of the avenue led to Alexanderplatz. It ended in the open space of the socialist city center around the television tower, which was intended for political demonstrations, marches and popular celebrations. It is obvious that the guideline here were the “16 principles of urban planning”. The reconstructions united Unter den Linden were primarily façade architecture concealing new interiors. Precisely in this reduction to two-dimensional façade they should be of great value for the distinctive appearance of the city. In regard to the preservation and urban modernization undertakings, they therefore had to be taken into account and reconstructed completely or even partially. On occasion, the

translocation or copying of suitable façades from elsewhere was carried out as the means of a so-called “conservation”.<sup>10</sup>

Since 1977, the Historic Buildings as department were incorporated into the Berlin Office of Urban Planning. They were directly subordinated to the chief architect or head of the Office of Urban Planning and accountable to him. The overlapping interest was once again directed towards the “urban architectural image of the capital” in terms of socialist society. The common destination was making a meaningful use of the old in combination to the new and shaping an organic whole. For the socialist nation building, inwards the integration of tradition was intended to strengthen the mass consciousness. Outwards the intention was to represent the German Democratic Republic. The Department of Historical Buildings had to take care of the necessary undertakings for the inclusion, preservation and reconstruction of valuable historical ensembles, streets, squares, buildings, town centers and monuments. The city council stated that these ensembles, which were characteristic and typical of Berlin’s history, should be integrated into urban planning as an integral part of the capital’s urban architectural and visual development.<sup>11</sup>

One of the first results of the resolution was in 1977/78 the creation of a concept for a quasi-new historical ensemble, namely for the “historical” surroundings of the still existing Gothic Nikolaikirche. Under the designation “Origin of Berlin” the historical significance of this project was extraordinarily high. It’s realization should happen in the form of a testimony to the historical settlement of Berlin from the merchants’ time on. For urban planning the quarter’s situation in the immediate vicinity to the Palace of the Republic was decisive. The design of the entire complex should correspond to the buildings in the large open space around the television tower and be subordinate to the Palace of the Republic.<sup>12</sup>

The modern political center dominated by enormous plazas and buildings ultimately was thus “completed” by the traditional island from medieval times in a historicizing way. In reality the quarter had turned into a 19<sup>th</sup> century business district, by the bombing of the Second World War it was almost completely destroyed, and for the benefit of road extensions and the widening of the Spree it was further transformed in the post-war period. Nevertheless, the surrounding of the Nikolaikirche was memorized in the historiography of the German Democratic Republic as a thoroughly petty-bourgeois area. For the purposes of this narrative, houses were reconstructed that corresponded to this “historical image”. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was erased from the historical appearance.



⤴ Fig. 6. German, Berlin, Nikolaiviertel, look from the Mühlendammbrücke (photo Barbara Esch, 1999, Landesarchiv Berlin, Fotosammlung, Bestand F Rep. 290, Verzeichniseinheit 0403368)



⤵ Fig. 7. Germany, Berlin, Nikolaiviertel (photo Barbara Esch, 1999, Landesarchiv Berlin, Fotosammlung, Bestand F Rep. 290, Verzeichniseinheit 002227\_C)



⬆ Fig. 8. Germany, Berlin, Gerichtslaube (pavilion),  
(photo Barbara Esch, 1999, Landesarchiv Berlin, Fotosammlung,  
Bestand F Rep. 290, Verzeichniseinheit 0022232\_C)

The architecture of that epoch neither corresponded to the desired medieval small-scale structure nor to the German Democratic Republic's understanding of tradition. In place of so-called unscaled buildings from the turn of the century, it was decreed that buildings from other areas of old Berlin analogous to the predecessors of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries should be reconstructed. As a "symbol of the city's relative autonomy and independence from the sovereign" before the Hohenzollern period, the old courthouse was recreated to commemorate "a progressive era in the city's history". With the help of photos and paintings, this building from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century was recreated, or, as it was called, "regained". According to the creative understanding of the designing architect, Günter Stahn, as a plastered concrete prefabrication without the diversity of time traces it was transformed into the "significance carrier of civil jurisdiction".<sup>13</sup> In order to unite everything valuable and positive in a harmonious, cohesive ensemble, the modern buildings belonging to it had to be adapted to the whole in the low and small-scale structure. The large slab construction was furnished with typical design elements such as arcades, recessed and glazed loggias, bay windows, cornices, eaves and pitched roofs with dormers.<sup>14</sup> Following this concept, behind the historicizing façades of diffuse origin, an entertainment district was created directly beside Alexanderplatz. In 1989 it was proposed for the list of protected monuments.

## Conclusion

Like in West Berlin, during the post-war period the city of East Berlin was systematically redesigned. In this process, extensive corrections were made to its historical components. The historical city was only insofar of significance as it served the declared purposes of the present. In dealing with the monuments, destruction, translocation and reinterpretation of architectural fragments as well as complete reconstructions of entire building ensembles were the usual practice.

Nevertheless, even in separate People's Democracies – that is to say socialist countries – the handling of urban planning, urbanism and monument preservation differed to a significant degree. These discrepancies appeared in joint conferences held between 1956 and 1962. The Academies of Sciences in Prague, Bratislava, Warsaw and the German Bauakademie participated in these conferences. The very first common exchange in Erfurt in 1956 immediately made the characteristic positions clear. For instance, the reconstruction work in Polish cities had its own specific ideological dimension. This framework

diametrically differed from the idea of adaptation of the historical city to modern possibilities in the German Democratic Republic. Vice versa, representatives of Czechoslovakia demanded adaptation of modern possibilities to the historical city. The incompatibility finally explained why a joint working group project was withdrawn. There has been still a widespread agreement in one aspect: Namely in the rejection of all interventions in the urban organism during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Here, a wide margin for historicizing reconstructions with corresponding “corrections” was strengthened.<sup>15</sup>

The reconstruction boom in the capital of the German Democratic Republic was ideologically justified by the need for historical legitimization of New Germany. At the same time, however, the medieval Nikolaiviertel took on similar tasks as nowadays Frankfurt’s new Old Town: With its idyllic narrow spaces and historicizing façades, consumerist attractions for tourism had ultimately emerged here as well as there. In this way, nation building and the emotional sensitivity of society were supported by commercial interests.



# Notes

- 1 Arnold Bartetzky, "Das Denkmal und seine politische Bedeutung. Rekonstruktion und Nationenbildung," in *Werte. Begründungen der Denkmalpflege in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Hans-Rudolf Meier, Ingrid Scheuermann, and Wolfgang Sonne (Berlin: Jovis, 2013), 232–45.
- 2 „Städte ‘an sich’ entstehen nicht und existieren nicht. ... Die Bestimmung und Bestätigung der städtebildenden Faktoren ist ausschließlich Angelegenheit der Regierung.“ [Cities ‘in themselves’ do not come into being and do not exist. ... The determination and confirmation of the city-forming factors is exclusively a matter for the government]. Grundsätze des Städtebaus. Von der Regierung der DDR am 27. Juli 1950 beschlossen, cit. after: *Architektur und Städtebau der fünfziger Jahre. Ergebnisse der Fachtagung in Hannover*, Bd. 41 (Bonn: Des Deutschen Nationalkomitees für Denkmalschutz, 1990), 78–9.
- 3 Christiane Brenner, "Die mythische Qualität des DDR-Antifaschismus: Ein Geschichtsmythos und seine Wirkungsgeschichte," in *Osteuropa im Umbruch. Alte und neue Mythen*, ed. Clemens Friedrich, Birgit Menzel (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang 1994), 169–81.
- 4 „... Nicht nur der Schutt der zerstörten Städte, auch der reaktionäre Schutt der Vergangenheit muß weggeräumt werden. ... Mit der Vernichtung des Hitlerismus gilt es gleichzeitig, die Sache der Demokratisierung Deutschlands ... zu Ende zu führen, die feudalen Überreste völlig zu beseitigen und den reaktionären altpreußischen Militarismus mit allen seinen ökonomischen und politischen Ablegern zu vernichten.“ Cit. after Brenner, "Die mythische Qualität des DDR-Antifaschismus: Ein Geschichtsmythos und seine Wirkungsgeschichte," 170.
- 5 Brenner, "Die mythische Qualität des DDR-Antifaschismus: Ein Geschichtsmythos und seine Wirkungsgeschichte," 178.
- 6 „Die Stadtplanung und die architektonische Gestaltung unserer Städte müssen der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, den fortschrittlichen Traditionen unseres deutschen Volkes sowie den großen Zielen, die dem Aufbau ganz Deutschlands gestellt sind, Ausdruck verleihen. Dem dienen die folgenden Grundsätze: ... Das Zentrum bildet den bestimmenden Kern der Stadt. Das Zentrum der Stadt ist der politische Mittelpunkt für das Leben seiner Bevölkerung. Im Zentrum liegen die wichtigsten administrativen und kulturellen Stätten. Auf den Plätzen im Stadtzentrum finden die politischen Demonstrationen, die Aufmärsche und die Volksfeiern an Festtagen statt. Das Zentrum der Stadt wird mit den wichtigsten und monumentalsten Gebäuden bebaut, beherrscht die architektonische Komposition des Stadtplanes und bestimmt die architektonische Silhouette der Stadt.“ Cit. after: *Architektur und Städtebau der fünfziger Jahre. Ergebnisse der Fachtagung in Hannover*, 78–9. See Sigrid Brandt, *Geschichte der Denkmalpflege in der SBZ/DDR. Dargestellt an Beispielen aus dem sächsischen Raum 1945–1961* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag für Kunst- und Geistesgeschichte, 2003), 48.
- 7 Brandt, *Geschichte der Denkmalpflege in der SBZ/DDR. Dargestellt an Beispielen aus dem sächsischen Raum 1945–1961*, 40, 49.
- 8 Thomas Topfstedt, "Zur Frage des Historismus in der Architektur der DDR 1950–1955," in *Historismus – Aspekte zur Kunst im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Karl-Heinz Klingenburg (Leipzig: VEB E. A. Seemann Verlag, 1985), 226–42.
- 9 Topfstedt, "Zur Frage des Historismus in der Architektur der DDR 1950–1955," 235.
- 10 Alena Janatková, "Das historische Ensemble am Marx-Engels Forum," in *Osteuropa im Umbruch. Alte und neue Mythen*, ed. Clemens Friedrich, Birgit Menzel (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1994), 183–93, here 184.
- 11 Janatková, "Das historische Ensemble am Marx-Engels Forum," 185.
- 12 Ibid.

- 13** “Bedeutungsträger bürgerlicher Rechtsprechung,” in Günter Stahn, *Das Nikolaiviertel* (Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen, 1991), 57.
- 14** Janatková, “Das historische Ensemble am Marx-Engels Forum,” 187–90.
- 15** Brandt, *Geschichte der Denkmalpflege in der SBZ/DDR. Dargestellt an Beispielen aus dem sächsischen Raum 1945–1961*, 54–9, 68.



09

# Reconstruction and Religious Heritage in the Polish People's Republic: Construction of a Polish Patrimony?

MARCUS VAN DER MEULEN

*Motto: "Conservatio est aeterna creatio."*

## Introduction

The present landscape of architectural monuments in Poland is largely a fabrication of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the destructions of the Second World War many damaged buildings were restored. The panorama of monuments, however, is as much the result of restoration as of, often intentional, destruction. This certainly applies to the religious heritage of Poland. Before the beginning of the First World War the territories of present-day Poland were typified by a diversity of architectural monuments of various convictions, with wooden synagogues and baroque monasteries, Orthodox cathedrals and Neo-Gothic protestant churches. After the Second World War a more common outlook appeared dominated by great medieval churches and cathedrals. This paper looks at reconstruction and religious heritage in the Polish People's Republic (*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*, from here abbreviated as PRL).

The subject of heritage in the geographical demarcation of Central and Eastern Europe related to the construction of identity has received attention in a couple of publications in recent years.<sup>1</sup> Some of these publications have addressed the reconstruction of historic buildings, however, none of the previous studies have focused exclusively on religious buildings in the PRL. It is noteworthy that in this socialist state considerable funds were allocated for the restoration of conceivably counterrevolutionary buildings, understanding that the construction of churches during the same period was severely hampered by the state. This article analyses why and how reconstruction of religious heritage buildings occurred during the post-war reconstruction decades of the PRL.

Reconstruction in this essay is understood as a broad concept encompassing remodelling and recomposing the outlook of the built environment, of places, buildings, and their interiors. Preserving the perceptibility of religion in the built environment, in places, and buildings, is understood as the conservation of religious heritage. The religious buildings discussed in this essay will be places of worship. Other elements of tangible religious heritage, such as chapels, monasteries or cemeteries, as well as the intangible heritage of religions, are not part of the scope of this essay.

The essay is divided in two main parts. The first part considers various aspects that form the background against which the reconstructions during the post-war socialist period can be explained. Successively, the reconstruction of the nation and the influence from the Soviet Union are considered, the removal of undesirable elements in relation to built heritage and the idea of reconstruction in a national building tradition, as well as the destruction of religious buildings that has altered the outlook of the landscape of monuments of religion in the Polish territories, will be examined. The second part will consider various reconstructions of religious buildings, beginning with churches in the reconstruction of the capital Warsaw and ending with the transformation of Poznań Cathedral. The article will argue that a national patrimony was created during the post-war reconstruction.

## **Reconstruction of the nation**

After the Second World War a reconstruction of a devastated Poland took place that redefined the country both geographically and politically. Geographically, as the loss of the Eastern territories to the Soviet Union, including the historic cities of Vilnius and Lviv, was compensated during Allied conferences by conferring parts of defeated Germany, the so-called recovered territories, to the new Polish state.<sup>2</sup> Politically, as this new state was the socialist PRL. Many towns and cities within the territories of the newly established state were in a disturbed condition after the Second World War, with limited damage in only Kraków and Toruń.<sup>3</sup> The way in which built heritage was approached was principally determined by the devastations of the Second World War as well as the change of the political, economic and social system.<sup>4</sup> The reconstruction of the country after the war posed a conflict between the modernization of the country and an attempt to preserve its historical monuments. The war destruction meant that discussions were raised in the circles of Polish architects and monument conservators about

the necessity of reconstruction of the built monuments.<sup>5</sup> In heavily destroyed places such as Warsaw this conflict was amplified by the degree of destruction of these historical buildings. This proved to be problematic for many historic buildings in terms of functionality, especially regarding potential counterrevolutionary monuments such as places of worship. In the radical phase of the PRL (1947–1956) the state was very reluctant to consent the construction of churches.<sup>6</sup> Most religious buildings can be adapted for new use after only minor interventions. There are directions that point to discussions about new use of churches after eventual restoration.<sup>7</sup>

What determined the conservation of built monuments in the post-war period was foremost related to war destructions.<sup>8</sup> The destruction was blamed by state authorities on the fascist invader and restoration became an act of affirmation. General Conservator of Monuments Jan Zachwatowicz (1900–1983)<sup>9</sup> speaks of a determination to reconstruct the lost heritage after the intentional destruction of Polish patrimony by the fascist invaders.<sup>10</sup> According to Zachwatowicz, it was generally thought that selected forms of the past which were considered valuable, and not forms existing directly before destruction, should be reconstructed.<sup>11</sup> The socialist regime took the protection, conservation and even reconstruction of built heritage very seriously, which was supported by allocating significant budgets for this purpose.<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that efforts were being made to preserve the built heritage from before mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as later forms were considered of lesser value.<sup>13</sup> This attitude, or lack of awareness, had clear consequences for the preservation or non-preservation of certain religious buildings.

Already in 1944 Igor Grabar (1871–1960), the Soviet scholar and later heritage advisor to Stalin, wrote in *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* arguing that reconstruction of destroyed heritage was a patriotic duty to recover the nation's patrimony.<sup>14</sup> “One must simply liberate (the building) from later additions, without, however, adding anything new [...] an exception to this rule may be made only in cases where the condition of the monument requires this.” Grabar's stance on heritage reconstruction after its destruction by the fascists was well known in the circles of architects and monument restorers of the PRL. An issue of the influential Polish journal *Ochrona Zabytkow*, which includes contributions by Stanisław Lorentz and Jan Zachwatowicz, serves as an illustration of this.<sup>15</sup> The 1951 issue contains a review of a book edited by Grabar and translated into Polish, *Zabytki sztuki zniszczone przez hitlerowców w ZSRR* (Art monuments destroyed by the Nazis in the USSR). The message of this publication reiterates the position of the Soviet Union towards built heritage emphasizing the destruction of monuments by the fascists as



⬆ Fig. 1. View of Cracow Suburb leading to Castle Square, Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto II, 1774. In this painting there are several religious buildings including on the right the Church of St. Anne, in the centre the cathedral and on the right the Tower of St Martin's Church (public domain)

⬇ Fig. 2. Krakowskie Przedmieście or Krakow Suburb in Warsaw today. The comparison between today's photograph and the painting from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century shows that monument conservation did not attempt to bring back buildings to the state of Bellotto's time (photo by Marcus van der Meulen)



well as the importance of a national building tradition. The restoration projects of several religious buildings in the Soviet Union are discussed in the book, from churches in Pskov to Chernihiv Cathedral in present-day Ukraine. For the Soviet Union in the 1930s it has been noted that “counterrevolutionary monuments” such as churches could potentially become useful in the new society.<sup>16</sup> The material substance of the building was differentiated from its purpose. While church buildings could certainly be seen as suspect, historic churches in the post-war period could be useful as expressions of a national building tradition, thus creating a sense of belonging, as well as emphasizing continuity.

The influence of Soviet thinking about architecture, including the conservation and restoration of built heritage, in the early PRL was significant. There were disagreements between 1949 and 1956 among professionals about the ideologization of architecture and restoration, which entailed the immersing of communist symbolism of restored buildings.<sup>17</sup> Any restoration project from this period must therefore be seen within the framework of Bolesław Bierut’s<sup>18</sup> totalitarian regime. A conservation manual from the 1950s states that the conservation and reconstruction of monuments is “*not detached or isolated in a complex of creative changes in various fields of our reality, on the contrary, it is ideologically related to the entirety of life, just like in other people’s republics, following the example of the Soviet Union*”.<sup>19</sup> They define both the attitude towards the past, national traditions, the preservation of the most valuable artistic values created in the past centuries, as well as educational and ideological tasks in shaping contemporary man living in a socialist society.<sup>20</sup> In Polish monument conservation of the post-war period both liberating monuments of later additions as well as the additions of new layers became a theme. Efforts were made to not only preserve but even enhance of both condition and appearance of some historic buildings, whereas other buildings were neglected or even destroyed.

### **“Liberation” of undesirable elements**

The landscape of religious heritage that emerged during the post-war reconstruction of the nation was very different from the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic outlook of Poland when it regained independence on November 11, 1918. When Zachwatowicz wrote that heritage as a symbol of Polish culture will be rebuilt,<sup>21</sup> restored and even recreated, this needs to be positioned between the German and the Russian building traditions that were omnipresent in many parts of Poland due to the partitions. It cannot be separated from the Russification and Germanification that took place

in those parts of Poland. From the reign of tsar Alexander III, Orthodox churches in the Russo-Byzantine style were erected across the Vistula Land, as Congress Poland was known between 1867 and 1915, as a form of occupation of the built environment since the construction of these Sobors far exceeded the need for orthodox places of worship.<sup>22</sup> Especially in Warsaw this Russification of the built environment by the construction of Russian-Orthodox places of worship was very strong.<sup>23</sup> Also in the German parts of partitioned Poland there was a very clear connection between state and religion, of Throne and Altar, where the Lutheran denomination became a component of state ideology.<sup>24</sup> Many evangelical churches were built in a Neo-Gothic form and also the Garrison churches were mostly constructed in this style. Between the Russification and the Germanification of the occupied lands of Poland, Catholicism became part of the Polish cultural identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> The Catholic Church, however, has no style, something that became articulated in the Second Polish Republic. Still, positioned amid the Lutheran “Kirche” and the Orthodox “Cerkiew”, the catholic “Kościół” became the manifestation of Polish character in the parts of Poland under German and Russian rule.

The concrete reconstruction of Poland started relatively spontaneously when the Russian troops left the territories of Poland during the First World War and thus abandoned their places of worship. These vacated Russian Orthodox churches, mostly built in the Russo-Byzantine style, were converted for other denominations, which was mostly Catholicism. This involved a remodelling of the interior, because of differences in liturgy, but also remodelling of the exterior. Initially this was hardly more than the removal of the typical Moscow-style elements. For example, in the case of the Garrison Churches in Siedlce and in Lublin, the former was remodelled in a modernist style and the latter in a neoclassical fashion.<sup>26</sup> Orthodox churches were pragmatically remodelled by removing certain ornaments. Ornamentation can be a crime.<sup>27</sup> A perfect example is the Garrison Church of Radom which was redesigned as a Roman Catholic church around 1924. Originally built in 1902 to accommodate the Russian Troops and dedicated to Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, the church was vacated during the First World War and taken over by the Polish Army in 1918. Modernization took place in the following years. The church was modified, it was transformed to look less Russian and more Polish. And this included a rededication to Stanisław the Bishop and Martyr, the Patron Saint of Poland. Reconstruction included not only the remodelling of the interior and exterior of the church, but also renaming it.

What had started as an understandable claim by Catholics to reclaim former churches for catholic worship developed into an aggression in the later interwar

years by the state against Orthodox believers in the eastern and south-eastern territories. The problem of Orthodox religious buildings in the Second Polish Republic finds a culmination in the discussion about the future of Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Warsaw. Ultimately this imposing building is pulled down in 1924–1926. The architect Mikołaj Tołwiński supported demolition and argued that this would not be “*an act of political or religious hatred but [...] a patriotic duty*”.<sup>28</sup>

The intentional destruction of synagogues is undoubtedly the most profound transformation of the presence of religious heritage in the built environment of present-day Poland. The territories of the former Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania historically had the highest concentration of this type of place of worship.<sup>29</sup> The city of Warsaw had one of the largest and most diverse Jewish communities in Europe “*yet today it appears as it was always been a predominantly overwhelmingly Polish*”,<sup>30</sup> that is Roman-Catholic, city. The damaged but not destroyed rotunda or Prague Synagogue (Synagoga Praska) in Warsaw, built between 1825 and 1829–30 by Józef Lessel, was ultimately demolished in either 1955 or 1961.<sup>31</sup> However, the Nozyk Synagogue (Synagoga Nożyków) was restored in 1951.<sup>32</sup> The present outlook of the city is the result of both reconstruction after the war, and destruction. The destruction of religious buildings found a dramatic apogee in those territories later recovered from Germany during the *Reichskristallnacht* of 1938. This tragic event marked the beginning of an almost complete destruction of synagogues in present-day Poland. In the following years the Jewish heritage of Poland was destroyed. The Great Synagogue in Gdańsk was demolished by the authorities of the Free City of Danzig in 1939.<sup>33</sup> During the Nazi occupation several synagogues that were considered architectural monuments were demolished, for example the wooden synagogue of Końskie.<sup>34</sup> In Lublin in Southeast Poland numerous historic synagogues were destroyed. The Maharshal or Great Synagogue, dating back to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, was damaged by the Nazis in 1942. The ruined building, which still had original elements including its bimah, was demolished in 1954 for the construction of the new Millennium Avenue (Aleja Tysiąclecia).<sup>35</sup> Also the ruined Maharam’s Synagogue was ultimately destroyed in 1954 to make way for the Millennium Avenue.<sup>36</sup> This avenue was created in commemoration of *Thousand Years of the Polish State* in 1960–1966, an event that was framed by the socialist state as the birth of the Polish nation under the Piast Dynasty. This Piast dynasty was of greatest importance for the socialist state, and as a consequence for the restoration of certain buildings, as will be discussed further below. The majority of stone and brick synagogues were destroyed or left in ruins, although a relatively large amount were rebuilt, mostly adapted for new functions, such as storehouses, archives or libraries.<sup>37</sup>

## Demolition and reconstruction

Historic buildings in the PRL were observed as either Polish, German, Jewish or Ukrainian.<sup>38</sup> The terms “poukrainski, poniemiecki,” and “pozydowski” in relation to buildings, among others, appear in acts and literature in the PRL.<sup>39</sup> This categorization can be extrapolated to religious buildings. Jan Zachwatowicz famously expressed that “*the People and its Monuments are one*”,<sup>40</sup> and in the monument care in the post-war period this means that monuments of the Polish people are restored, whereas those of the Germans, the Jewish and the Ukrainians receive much less attention. In the south-eastern territories some wooden Ukrainian or Orthodox churches were burned down.<sup>41</sup> And as mentioned above, the post-war reconstruction of Lublin consisted of erasing ruined but standing synagogues. German heritage was also demolished in the PRL<sup>42</sup>, and correspondingly some churches were destroyed.<sup>43</sup> However, a rigid policy of demolishing German built heritage never occurred in the PRL.<sup>44</sup>

The problem of German heritage in the PRL was related to religion and concentrated in Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia and Wielkopolska where, before 1946, evangelical churches comprised at least half of all religious buildings.<sup>45</sup> These places of worship were abandoned after the Second World War when these territories became Polish and many of the autochthone population migrated westwards. The Pomeranian city of Szczecin, for example, became part of the PRL in 1945. A census of the city from 1950 illustrates how places in the recovered territories were repopulated after many natives had left. Almost 70% came from Central Poland, over 22% from the eastern territories, and less than 3% were natives.<sup>46</sup> More or less the same applies to the other recovered territories. With the disappearance of a significant group of Protestant believers many Lutheran churches became vacant and consequently a large amount was destroyed. Many protestant monuments were neglected, such as the Peace Church in Jawor, Silesia, which suffered from theft and vandalism.<sup>47</sup> Other buildings were reused by the Catholics, or by the Polish protestants such as the Evangelical-Augsburg congregation. Saint Christopher Church in the Old Town of Wrocław is an example. Other places of worship would get a new purpose for example as a warehouse. Nevertheless, in the early 1960s there were about 400 abandoned places of worship in Poland.<sup>48</sup>

In order to accelerate the reconstruction of the state, the Ministry of Recovered Territories issued an order in 1947 recommending municipal authorities demolish destroyed or damaged buildings as quickly as possible.<sup>49</sup> This order

coincided with a recovery operation, which was also undertaken by the Ministry of Recovered Territories, on the “management of materials from the demolition of houses in cities and estates”. As a result, historic buildings including churches were dismantled in many locations across Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia.<sup>50</sup> Useful materials from these dismantled buildings were recovered, a technique that is now seen as sustainable. It should be noted, however, that many, if not all, of these demolished Lutheran churches were built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in the Neo-Gothic style. As mentioned above, buildings in a historicizing style, and more generally all buildings built after 1850, were not considered worthy of restoration or conservation. However, something quite different happened to those Evangelical Lutheran churches whose construction dated back to the Middle Ages, before the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The reclamation of the medieval churches in the recovered territories by Catholics can be understood as part of legitimization of the Polish claim over these territories.

The restoration of medieval churches in the PRL, especially in the recovered territories, are exemplary of the general attitudes towards the conservation of monuments in the PRL. In post-war Poland these former German territories were represented as recovered Polish territories and scientific evidence was collected to support this. Especially in territories formerly belonging to Prussia, both political and aesthetic matters influenced the decision-making process of the restoration of monuments.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, religious buildings proved to be useful as representations for the legitimacy of the socialist regime, not only as the natural successors of Polish sovereignty, but also as legitimate rulers of the recovered territories. In the next part of this essay, the reconstruction of religious buildings in the PRL is discussed. First, however, the problem of a national building tradition in Poland is considered to illustrate that restoration in the Gothic style was not obvious.

### **The problem of a national building tradition**

During the interwar period “*the reconstruction of the country in a national style [...] became the duty of a patriotic society*”.<sup>52</sup> In the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a discourse about a national Polish architectural style arose. Of importance is a lecture entitled “Czy mamy polską architekturę?” (Do we have a Polish architecture?) by Stefan Szyller held at the Warsaw Circle of Architects in 1913 and later published as a book in which Szyller argues that identifying these features is needed for reconstructing Poland.<sup>53</sup> A discourse developed focusing



⬆ Fig. 3. Synagoga Praska or Praga Synagogue in Warsaw was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, damaged during the Second World War and ultimately demolished during the early years of the PRL. (public domain)



➔ Fig. 4. Interior of the Church of Saint Hyacinth in Warsaw, restored between 1947 and 1959 by the architect Halina Kosmólska (photo by Marcus van der Meulen)

on identifying the features in architecture that could be labelled as specifically Polish. Initially these features were found in the churches constructed in the Baltic-Vistula Gothic style.<sup>54</sup> However, an architectural style based on a German building culture, as the brick Gothic in this region can be regarded, was perceived by many as an insult to the Polish panorama.<sup>55</sup> The discourse moved towards the secular architecture of the Commonwealth period as best representing the nation. Thus, during the interwar period no unequivocal answer was given as to what the characteristics of Polish architecture would be. However, the building tradition of those periods of sovereignty was considered the most Polish. The position of the Catholic Church in relation to architectural styles in the interwar period is interesting to recount. In 1931 the Archbishop of Warsaw, Cardinal Kakowski, wrote official recommendations to the government in relation to the intended construction of a national basilica. Cardinal Kakowski advised the architects that not only is there a difference between a Muslim mosque, a Jewish synagogue and a Christian church, but also that a Catholic church is different from an Orthodox “Cerkiew” and a Protestant “Kirche”.<sup>56</sup> The Cardinal reminded the architects that the Gothic style is too German. Interestingly the letter concludes that modernism is acceptable for church building, as long as it does not resemble a factory. The new parish churches that were eventually built in the PRL are usually of an extraordinary nature and can be considered the most interesting contribution of Polish architecture in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>57</sup> The conservation of this religious heritage will be a challenge for future monument conservators. Concluding from the above, in the Second Polish Republic the general inclination from both architects and clergy was that the Gothic architectural style was not a national Polish building tradition. During the reconstruction in post-war Poland, however, much attention is paid to the restoration and even reconstruction in this architectural language.

### **Churches and the Capital**

The reconstruction of the capital was the biggest challenge for the new state, however, also provided the biggest tool for the state to unify the nation in a common effort. It can also be argued that the reconstruction of the capital was a leading example for the restoration and transformation of other war-ravaged cities in the PRL.<sup>58</sup> As is widely known Warsaw was largely destroyed during the Second World War. After the failed Uprising of 1944, built heritage was targeted by the Nazis and intentionally destroyed. The initial idea for rebuilding the capital as a functionalist city was rethought after consultation with Soviet

experts.<sup>59</sup> The Head Architect of the capital, Józef Sigalin (1909–1983), travelled to Moscow in 1945 proposing to reconstruct Warsaw in the image of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century paintings by Bernardo Bellotto (1721–1780), called Canaletto the Second.<sup>60</sup> Legendarily these paintings were used to reconstruct the historic city centre.<sup>61</sup> With regard to the reconstruction of religious buildings, however, these paintings were of little importance. This is not because of the poor qualities of the painter, but rather because of the aims of the monument conservators. For example, the painting “View of Krakow Suburb (Krakowskie Przedmieście) leading to the Castle Square” (1774) showing several religious buildings is very different from the present situation. Church of St Anna on Krakowskie Przedmieście is depicted before the significant remodelling of the façade in a neoclassical style by Piotr Aigner in 1788 and with its old bell tower, the ornate spire of Saint Clare’s is still clearly visible, in the centre there is a view of the renaissance façade of St John’s Cathedral, and finally to the left the simple Tower of St Martin’s Church can be distinguished. A comparison between this painting by Bellotto and the current situation will mainly be a summary of differences. More important than the factual replication of what was depicted by Bellotto is the patriotic rationale behind this concept. Reconstruction became the setting of a stage that intentionally looked like the city of Stanisław Poniatowski, the last elected monarch of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the driving force behind the Third of May Constitution. The following is an account of the reconstruction of some religious buildings in historic Warsaw to support this argument.

Trinity Church is depicted in the painting “Behind the Iron Gate Square in Warsaw” (1779) by Bellotto. Trinity Church is typical for the architecture of the Enlightenment in Poland; it is an early neoclassical building built on a circular plan and with a large dome. The choice of the design for this Evangelical-Augsburg church was personally made by the king, Stanisław Poniatowski, who preferred the rotunda by Szymon Bogumił Zug over the proposals made by Domenico Merlini and Jan Chrystian Kamsetzer.<sup>62</sup> Trinity Church was hit in the early stage of the Second World War and burned out early in September 1939.<sup>63</sup> A first plan to reconstruct the building was made by the architect Bursche and presented to the BOS in 1947.<sup>64</sup> In 1951 the rebuilding of the church was approved by the authorities and in 1953 it was announced in *Stolicy* magazine that the rotunda would have a new purpose as a concert hall for the Warsaw Philharmonic, while the religious connotation of this building was avoided.<sup>65</sup> A year later the Warsaw Philharmonic articulates in *Stolicy* that there is no interest in the building as its main location because of a lack of auxiliary space.<sup>66</sup> In 1956, when Stalinism in



⬆ Fig. 5. Church of St. Martin in Old Town, Warsaw (photo by Marcus van der Meulen)



➡ Fig. 6. Historic image of the Church of St. Martin, Warsaw (archive of author)

Poland came to an end, the building is handed over the Evangelical-Augsburg Congregation.<sup>67</sup> Only after the process of reconstruction had begun and after the Philharmonic had showed no interest in the rotunda as its main location was the original function finally returned. This illustrates that a new function for religious buildings was sought by the authorities, but also that these new functions are difficult to find without remodelling. The rebuilding was completed in 1958 although work on the interior continued until 1964. The exterior can be considered a good replica when compared to the design by Zug of 1777 that is kept at the Print Cabinet of the University of Warsaw.<sup>68</sup> The interior is not an exact reconstruction of the original or the pre-war situation, which had a typical pulpit-altar-organ ensemble as its main feature. In the reconstruction these functions are disconnected resulting in separate objects.

In the historical centre of Old Town and New Town the churches of Saint Hyacinth and of Saint Martin were also rebuilt with modified interiors. The façades of both buildings facing the street were enhanced. After the Second World War the Dominican Church of Saint Hyacinth (św. Jacka) was largely in ruins.<sup>69</sup> The post-war restoration of the church took place from 1947 until 1959 under supervision of the architect Halina Kosmólska.<sup>70</sup> In front of Saint Hyacinth's Church there was an early Neo-Gothic gallery which survived the war without much damage.<sup>71</sup> The gallery was demolished and replaced by public space in front of the church and a new porch was constructed in a style referencing the rest of the church façade and tower. Thus, the built environment as well as the building itself were 'liberated' from the undesirable Neo-Gothic layer. The interior is sober and white, with simple pointed arches and little ornamentation.

Zachwatowicz wrote in his notes that the church authorities were not interested in the rebuilding of this large church.<sup>72</sup> It should be noted that in this district of New Town there were several catholic churches within close proximity of each other. Opposite Saint Hyacinth's Church is the Holy Spirit Church. The diocese of Warsaw was only interested in rebuilding the cathedral and not the other catholic churches in Old and New Towns, arguing that it made no sense to rebuild places of worship in a depopulated area.<sup>73</sup> The diocese thus shows that for them the church is primarily a functional building and their main interest is the building of places of worship for parishioners. The authorities, however, intended to reconstruct the historic Old and New Towns including its historic religious buildings and Zachwatowicz mentions in his notes that a discussion with then Bishop Waclaw Majewski about this intention to rebuild all the churches in the historic area became heated.<sup>74</sup> Eventually the church

was handed over to the Dominican Order after Zachwatowicz had approached Cardinal Hlond about the issue of rebuilding churches. The cardinal established the Primate's Office for the Rebuilding of Churches in 1947 which played an important role in financing and coordinating the rebuilding of the ecclesiastical buildings in Warsaw.

Another example is Saint Martin's Church in Old Town, damaged during the Second World War and rebuilt between 1949 and 1959. Once again, the interior, sober and white, should be considered a modern creation and was designed by Sister Alma Skrzydlewska.<sup>75</sup> The large baroque altarpiece that was documented by photographs was replaced by a simple crucifix on a grey stone background. The façade in the street and the spire of the tower are notably different from the pre-war situation. Before the reconstruction the pediment of the main façade had been triangular, as several documents illustrate. After reconstruction this had become concave. The spire had been an unobtrusive tent shape, as several paintings including the painting by Bellotto mentioned above, as well as historic photographs show. The reconstructed version by architect Grudziński is an exuberant baroque form including a lantern. This interventional reconstruction of the façade and tower resulted in an enhanced baroque appearance of the monument, changing the appearance of the urban landscape.

The Church of Saint Casimir by Tylman van Gameren called Gamerski, prominently featured in Bellotto's painting New Town Market Square of 1783, was largely destroyed during the war. The Prints Department of the University of Warsaw has the original designs by Gamerski in their collection.<sup>76</sup> There were also measurement drawings of the building made by students during the interwar period in the collection of the Polytechnic University.<sup>77</sup> Reconstruction of the church according to the original plans and the measurement drawings took place between 1948 and 1952 under the direction of Maria Zachwatowa.<sup>78</sup> Some of the walls that were still standing were pulled down and rebuilt. The interior is a simplified version of the original, almost a caricature.<sup>79</sup> The fittings such as the altar, the ambo, and the tabernacle were commissioned and financed by the Primate's Office for Rebuilding Churches.<sup>80</sup> The objective in the restoration of this building was to reconstruct an image of the square recalling the Bellotto painting.<sup>81</sup> The reconstruction of *Stare Miasto*, *Nowe Miasto* and the Royal Route was a faithful creation in the understanding of Zachwatowicz. Rather than a correct recreation of what was captured by Bellotto it is reminiscent of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was the construction of a stage. The external features of religious buildings were restored or even enhanced. It is difficult to speak of



⬆ Fig. 7. Historic photograph of Poznań Cathedral, dated 1939 (archive of author)



⬆ Fig. 8. The reconstructed façade of Poznań Cathedral. The brick towers echo those of Gniezno Cathedral, the modern spires are elongated versions of the spires that appear on an 18<sup>th</sup> century drawing of the cathedral. (archive of author)

⬇ Fig. 9. The high altar of St James Church in Szczecin is an assembly of several Gothic figures from the Pomerania region, in a modern case. (archive of author)



a “unity in style” approach, in the case of St Martin and St Hyacinth, as these are buildings with several historical layers. In no instance has an attempt been made to restore the church interior to its pre-war condition. The discrepancy between interior and exterior is noticeable and provides a further argument that the pursuit of “unity in style” was not part of the restoration approach. During the restoration, the existing building substance was pulled down more than once, and concrete constructions were used. The reconstruction of religious buildings in the historic centre of Warsaw can be summed up as an attempt to recreate the image of the city as captured by Bellotto and manifested during the pinnacle of the Polish Enlightenment.

### “Lutheran Rape” and the recovery of Gothic churches

Zachwatowicz wrote about the character of monuments that historic buildings should preserve their nature, and he explicitly remarks “*a church must remain a church*”.<sup>82</sup> Continuity of purpose had meaning. That did not mean, however, that places of worship were used by the same group of worshippers as before the war. One of the best-known religious monuments of Northern Poland is the Basilica of Our Lady in Gdańsk. Largely dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century Saint Mary’s Church was a Lutheran place of worship from 1572 until Gdańsk became part of the PRL in 1945. During the war the church was damaged and renovation was begun in 1946. In the same year the state decided to pass the building into the hands of the Catholics. At the time the ruin was referred to as “Cathedral of the Sea” and “Metropolitan of the Polish Coast”.<sup>83</sup> This itself is an example of reframing since Saint Mary’s had never been the seat of a (catholic) bishop or archbishop in its history.<sup>84</sup> In 1939 the Church of Saint Mary had appeared on a Nazi-poster claiming Gdańsk for Nazi-Germany. A return to the Catholics was presented as restoring the church to the rightful owners after it had been taken away and raped by the Lutheran Reformation.<sup>85</sup> The damage to the building during the war had been limited. Between 1947 and 1948 the reconstruction of the roofs in reinforced concrete construction had been carried out.<sup>86</sup> Much of the interior had survived the war. The diversity of the vaults required the individual reconstruction of each vault field.<sup>87</sup> In 1955 the church could be re-consecrated as a catholic place of worship.<sup>88</sup> Saint Mary’s Church can be considered a remarkable site of the medieval church interior. The alleged Lutheran “rape” of a medieval catholic Saint Mary’s Church is contradicted by the significant number of Gothic fixtures and fittings such as the carved wooden Sacrament tower of 1482. Yet the reframing presents centuries of Lutheran, or German, history of Saint Mary’s as a blemish, whilst reclamation is presented as a legitimate act of repossession by

an original owner. Saint Mary's in Gdańsk is more typical than an exception. Saint John's Church in Kamień Pomorski, since 1544 in the hands of the Lutherans, was remodelled after the war to become a catholic cathedral. Saint Mary's Church in Kołobrzeg was heavily damaged during the war. Restoration began in 1957 after initial plans to demolish the abandoned Lutheran church. It remains unclear when the building was returned to catholic worship; only in 1974 was the building entirely in use as a place of worship. The exterior was brought back to its brick Gothic appearance. Although the interior was damaged during the war many medieval fixtures survived. A carved wooden chandelier from 1523 is worth mentioning. The name of the local donor family, Schleiffen, was considered too German, however scientific research claimed a Slavic origin of the family which was thus traced back to Śliwinów.<sup>89</sup> An example of how heritage was reframed. The Church of Saint James in Szczecin, built in a brick Gothic style influenced by Lübeck, passed to the Lutherans in 1535. After the war the building was ultimately restored to the Catholics. The interior of the church is composed of various medieval fittings originating from several churches across Pomerania. A carved wooden altar piece of the 14<sup>th</sup> century came from a church in Ciećmierz. The main altar piece in the east end is a contemporary composition of several Gothic pieces. The central figure dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and comes from Mieszkowice, sculptures used for the predella come from Żuków. The refurbishment of the church interior in a late medieval style before the Lutheran Reformation feels more like a museum of Gothic art of Pomerania than a place of worship. The church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Wrocław was the location where Johann Hess preached in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>90</sup> Hess was an important figure in the Reformation of Silesia.<sup>91</sup> The building had been a Lutheran place of worship from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century until 1948. The building was damaged during the last days of the Second World War, destroying parts of the towers and the vaults of the nave. A first renovation occurred between 1947 and 1952. In the 1960s scientific research was done, including archaeological research, and a second restoration was carried out.<sup>92</sup> In 1972 the building was handed over to the Polish Catholic Church, an old-catholic church within the Union of Utrecht. Medieval churches were thus "liberated" from their Lutheran heritage, because of an association with Germany, and returned to the original pre-reformation community of the faithful, the Catholics.

### Restoration of medieval churches and cathedrals

The Collegiate Church of Our Lady and Saint Alexius in Tum in central Poland was damaged early in the Second World War, already in 1939. Reconstruction of the building began in 1947 by the architect Jan Koszczyz Witkiewicz under

the supervision of the General Conservator of Monuments, Jan Zachwatowicz. In 1961 the church was rededicated. The collegiate church was thought to have been founded by Bolesław I Chrobry,<sup>93</sup> the first king of Poland and hence the founder of Polish Statehood. Before the war damage, the building was an accumulation of different historical layers with a considerable neoclassical interior from the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the important architect Efraim Szreger. The restoration project, however, opted for a reconstruction of the Romanesque church from the 12<sup>th</sup> century for the exterior and a Gothization of the interior.<sup>94</sup> The surviving historic building substance was demolished. For the reconstruction of the Romanesque parts, it must be stated that although parts of the twelfth century church had been preserved, these were too few to allow the medieval church to reappear by only removing the later additions.<sup>95</sup> Some ingenuity from the architects was required to rebuild the church. Today, the collegiate is considered important in the history of art and architecture of Poland as one of the few buildings of the Romanesque period. It is fair to say that in its current appearance the building is a 20<sup>th</sup> century interpretation of the Romanesque church.

The rotunda of St. Nicholas in Cieszyn Castle is an exceptional Romanesque chapel that was reconstructed between 1949 and 1955 by the architect Zygmunt Gawlik. There was scientific research available and archaeological research was carried out. The discovered fundamentals of columns were dated to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the rotunda itself to the period before 1223, which was principal for the way in which the chapel was rebuilt.<sup>96</sup> The restoration was a re-Romanization project, liberating the building from early 19<sup>th</sup> century neoclassical interventions by Joseph Kornhäusl, and exposing original windows and floors.<sup>97</sup> In this way, one of the earliest examples of religious stone buildings of Poland has been brought back. A building that, as a medieval castle chapel, can also be associated with the Piast dynasty.

In Wrocław, capital of Silesia, centuries of history were reconstructed as if perpetually Polish for a new population that had no prior memory of this place.<sup>98</sup> As had happened in other recovered territories, the native population was replaced by a new one. Since the conquest of Silesia in 1741 by Frederick II, Wrocław had been a Prussian city. During the post-war reconstruction, the built environment needed to be “liberated” from its Prussian legacy. The medieval period, however, provided tools to recover the Polish outlook before the arrival of the Prussians. The narrative was maintained of an ancient Silesia of the Piast Dynasty that was recovered by the legal and rightful inheritor.<sup>99</sup> Medievalists were used to legitimize this claim by scientific research. And in the conservation of monuments, this claim

was expressed in the interventive renovation and restoration of religious heritage. Some eighteen medieval churches, chapels and monasteries were researched, restored and even reconstructed.<sup>100</sup> Of all religious buildings in Wrocław the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist is said to have had a special symbolic value.<sup>101</sup> The diocese of Wrocław was established around 1000 under Bolesław I Chrobry of the Piast dynasty. Bolesław I Chrobry, first king of Poland, is associated with the creation of a Polish ecclesiastical province in Gniezno, with Kraków, Kołobrzeg and Wrocław as suffragan bishoprics.

During the war some 70% of the building substance of the cathedral had been destroyed. There were doubts about the possibility as well as the purposefulness of a reconstruction, as happened in other places, from a utilitarian point of view.<sup>102</sup> Archaeological examinations executed between 1949 and 1951 recovered remains of the Romanesque building including evidence for a crypt and allowed identification of several tombstones from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries as belonging to bishops of Wrocław.<sup>103</sup> The pre-war condition of the cathedral had been the result of a remodelling in a Neo-Gothic style and had several baroque elements. Wrocław Cathedral before the war was the result of an accumulation of many layers of history which was reflected in the outlook of the building. The cathedral that was reconstructed by Marcin Bukowski between 1947 and 1951, however, was predominantly the most prominent example of Silesian architecture of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>104</sup> As work on the cathedral started, officials cleared away the rubble of the New Synagogue to create a place for a parking lot for a nearby police station.<sup>105</sup> The reconstruction concentrated on the interior, especially the presbytery.<sup>106</sup> In the interior, architectural forms were simplified and bare brick walls kept un-plastered, in an attempt to appear more Polish.<sup>107</sup> These interventions can be considered partly hypothetical since they are not fully supported by scientific evidence. The naively applied spolia dating back from the Romanesque cathedral of mid 20<sup>th</sup> century had been removed during this 19<sup>th</sup> intervention.<sup>108</sup> The intervention of the restoration of the interior can be regarded a “liberation” of unwanted layers removing some baroque elements and especially the significant Neo-Gothic layer, which was the result of the restoration by Karl Lüdecke of 1873–1875. During restoration the level of the floor was altered and some changes to the vaults. The construction and ornamentation of the wall tries to recreate a sober image. These simple bare brick walls are a recurring feature in the restoration of Gothic churches in the PRL. The presbytery is adorned with a late Gothic carved altarpiece originating from a church in Lubin in the recovered territories of Lower Silesia. The interior differs much from what a medieval church would have looked like at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup>

century (where is the rood screen, or the sacramental tower). On the contrary, the interior is a new creation that makes use of Gothic elements such as choir stalls and altarpieces. The new stained-glass windows in the cathedral connects to the narrative of a Piast heritage of Silesia.<sup>109</sup> The interior is both contemporary and Gothic. The reconstruction of the cathedral was not a restoration of what was lost during the war-damage nor a re-creation of an earlier state, but rather the creation of possibility. The reconstruction of the cathedral was that of an important work of art “*a nie tylko budowli kultowej*”, not only a place of worship.<sup>110</sup> Ultimately the reconstruction of the building was finalised in 1991 when the tall tower helmets were completed. These helmets are hypothetical and not supported by iconographical evidence.

The Archcathedral of Saint John the Baptist, the largest religious building in the historic centre of Warsaw, is a monument of lesser architectural significance, which, nonetheless, possesses many heritage values of association. Several monarchs of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth were crowned here, including Stanisław Leszczyński and Stanisław August Poniatowski.<sup>111</sup> The most significant event was the celebration related to the adoption in 1791 of the first constitution in Europe, the renowned Third of May Constitution.<sup>112</sup> The pre-war condition of the building was the result of a profound restoration project by Adam Idzkowski completed between 1837 and 1842.<sup>113</sup> The reconstruction, however, was a re-gothization project.<sup>114</sup> The reconstruction of the cathedral under direction of Jan Zachwatowicz began in 1947.<sup>115</sup> Some parts of the building were in relatively good shape and many of the original bricks were recuperated and used in the restoration.<sup>116</sup> But also reinforced concrete columns were placed in the nave.<sup>117</sup> The vaults were made in a technique similar to that used in the late Middle Ages and the bricks used for the ribs were made as faithful copies from the original.<sup>118</sup> The first photos of the interior after the reconstruction show that a Gothic altar with Gothic carved statues has been erected in the sanctuary. Later this was replaced by an image of the Blessed Virgin of Częstochowa. The church interior after the reconstruction thus shows a remarkable relationship with the other medieval churches that were restored. One with a sober, almost naive decorative language, and with a Gothic high altar consisting of carved statues. The church interiors were thus presented as regional variations of the same theme.

The most interesting part of the rebuilding of the cathedral is the reconstruction of the façade. In the first phase various possibilities were proposed, ranging from rebuilding of the Neo-Gothic façade to the construction of a hypothetical,

medieval tower.<sup>119</sup> Eventually two designs were made, one based on the few images available of the façade before Neo-Gothic remodelling by Idzkowski and one in the style of the Baltic-Vistula Gothic. The similarity of the façade that was ultimately built with that of the church of Saints Stanislas, Dorothea and Wenceslas in Wrocław has been noted.<sup>120</sup> The semi-Gothic design by Zachwatowicz was executed. The appearance of the cathedral in the public space was remodelled, it was “liberated” from later Neo-Gothic modifications. It is difficult to speak of a scientific reconstruction or even a hypothetical one. Rather this is the creation of something completely new with the intention of connecting the façade visually with the great Gothic churches and cathedrals in Poland. The façade is a glimpse into the complexity of the restoration around the PRL around 1950.

The reconstruction of Poznań Cathedral is more than any other religious building discussed in this essay due to the major transformation this monument has undergone. The current outlook of the cathedral is the result of the reconstruction between 1948 and 1956 conducted by Franciszek Morawski.<sup>121</sup> It should be noted that this coincides exactly with the so-called radical phase of the PRL. The destructive fire of 1945 liberated the building and its interior of potentially unwanted layers and provided the opportunity for a restoration of the nave and presbytery to a Gothic outlook from the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Poznań cathedral before the reconstruction was characterised by large number of layers from different historical periods. The medieval core of the building itself was not homogeneous and combined various construction phases dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with Romanesque groundwork. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Gothic vaults of the nave collapsed and were rebuilt in a different shape. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the towers were rebuilt and the façade remodelled in a classical style. A monumental, baroque main altar was added in the presbytery, which survived the Second World War rather well. Indeed, the building was damaged yet could have been restored to its pre-war condition. Most of the exterior had been preserved in a good condition, with the western façade as main exception. The columns of the classicist loggia were squashed and the tower helmets destroyed. Inside, despite a fire, the main altar was only slightly damaged and most of the fittings survived largely intact. The vaults had not collapsed and the polychromes in the presbytery had been preserved.

The restoration project, however, opted to go back to the oldest layers of the building substance.<sup>122</sup> The general opinion of the classicist and baroque elements was undesirable and consequently removed during the re-gothization of the building. Undoubtedly, the project was influenced by the upcoming millennium

celebration of Polish statehood. In this the Cathedral of Poznań represented the birthplace of sovereignty. The socialist state could claim legitimacy as the natural heirs of Polish sovereignty. The Church, both religion and the building, were important in reaffirming Polish statehood. It was closely associated with Duke Mieszko I of the Piast dynasty, the first ruler of an independent Polish state, who most likely founded the first cathedral.<sup>123</sup> Poznań, however, had been annexed by Prussia in 1793, and the most provocative and aggressive remodelling of a formerly Polish city within the German Empire took place at Poznań.<sup>124</sup> The reconstruction of Poznań Cathedral must therefore be understood as a response to the pompous Imperial Castle that was constructed during the period when the city was part of the German empire.

The reconstruction project began in 1947 under the supervision the Provincial Conservator of Monuments, with the support of a commission consisting of representatives of various fields of art, and the Church. The reconstruction work was carried out according to a predetermined budget but without an architectural analysis. The haste to restore historic buildings in this post-war phase is evident. The surviving building substance was repeatedly removed or pulled down and rebuilt. The three chapel-towers flanking the chancel were razed and built anew, in a new material and making numerous alterations to the original design. The reconstruction of the interior of the presbytery provides another good insight into the degree of intervention. The gothization of the building substance contain a hypothetical triphorium in the choir apse and invented Gothic vaults.<sup>125</sup> These new Gothic vaults were set higher than the ones that were replaced, transforming the proportions of both the cathedral's interior and exterior. Although the main altar piece survived quite well, it was completely dismantled. It was replaced in 1952 by a late Gothic carved altarpiece that was brought from a church in Góra Śląska, a town in the recovered territories of Silesia. To conclude, the west façade with the two west towers was completely rebuilt with the remarkable distinction between brick work and the tower helmets. While the reconstruction of the façade was hypothetical and inspired by regional Gothic forms, the tower helmets were based on an 18<sup>th</sup> century drawing of the façade. Interestingly, however, the decision to have copper helmets in a later architectural style than the brick work created a common Polish outlook, linking the appearance of the cathedral with those in Kraków and Gniezno.

The completely transformed Cathedral of Poznań is perhaps the best example of how a Polish religious patrimony was built in the PRL. The building was “liberated” from undesirable layers, both in terms of material as well as what these layers represented.

The restoration projects discussed above were all initiated during the early years of the nation's reconstruction. Many could even be completed within a relatively short period of time during the radical period of the PRL, namely Gdańsk's St Mary (1946–1955), Wrocław Cathedral (1947–1951), Tum Collegiate (1947–1952/61), Warsaw Cathedral (1947–1952), Gieszyn Rotunda (1949–1955) and Poznań Cathedral (1948–1959). This cannot be explained by a need for places of worship, even though many places of worship were damaged during the Second World War. In addition, the thesis that out of emotion people wished to rebuild the places as they had been before the destruction, as wiping out the traces of war destruction, needs to be treated with restraint. As mentioned above, during the radical phase (1947–1956) of the PRL, which was heavily influenced by Stalinism, the construction of places of worship was severely obstructed by the state. Yet it is precisely this state that initiated, financed, and coordinated the reconstruction of so many churches and cathedrals. The reconstruction of the built heritage was an essential part of the reconstruction of the nation, the new socialist state and the home of a new society. By recovering buildings that were damaged and destroyed during the war the state could present itself as a champion of Polish heritage. Reconstruction of the built heritage gave the socialist state an opportunity to present itself as the rebuilder of a nation destroyed by the Nazis, and simultaneously as the legal heir to Polish sovereignty. Outside the capital Warsaw, the reconstruction of these places of worship was accompanied by archaeological examinations and extensive research of the medieval period. These were useful in some cases for the restoration of damaged buildings, but were generally not indicative. During the reconstruction process the existing building substance was demolished more than just occasionally, and in the case of Poznań Cathedral this destroyed valuable medieval material. It was regularly decided to apply a concrete structure in the existing building. It must be noted, however, that the Athens Charter of 1933 approved of this practice. The reconstruction largely consisted of removing historical layers that were seen as insignificant. This was not limited to the historicizing styles of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “Liberating” the building from undesirable layers, however, often turned out to be not enough to let the original building reappear. To fully recover the authentic building a reconstruction had to take place, one that was based on research, on archaeology, but also on the ingenuity of the architects. The churches and Gothic cathedrals described in this essay are examples of what has come to be known as the Polish School of Conservation (*polskiej szkole konserwacji zabytkow*). This school has both negative and positive associations. Zachwatowicz as perhaps the most eloquent representative of the Polish school formulated that the reconstructions may not be authentic, but they are true.

What was principal in the choices that were made regarding these restoration projects were heritage values. Especially the cultural-historical and art-historical values that these buildings have for the Polish nation were important during the reconstruction. Many church buildings were transformed, the interventions of the restoration resulted in buildings not as they had once been, but as they should have been. Material substance was of lesser importance more generally. The reconstructed buildings had a strong symbolic value. They represent the recovery of Polish sovereignty in the built environment. It is remarkable how the position towards the Gothic changed in Poland, from a rejection during the Second Polish Republic to the rehabilitation as a national building tradition in the PRL. This new interpretation of Gothic has to do with the period before the Lutheran, thus German, reformation, as well as the Piast dynasty. This dynasty had special significance for the history of sovereignty of the Polish nation.<sup>126</sup> Several churches and cathedrals that were reconstructed were directly related to members of this dynasty. As mentioned above, the theory and practice of conservation is deeply influenced by the division of Poland during the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Germanification and Russification of the built environment was done particularly through the construction of religious buildings. The reconstruction of historic catholic churches and cathedrals can be seen as a riposte to the construction of Lutheran and Orthodox places of worship during the period of partitions.

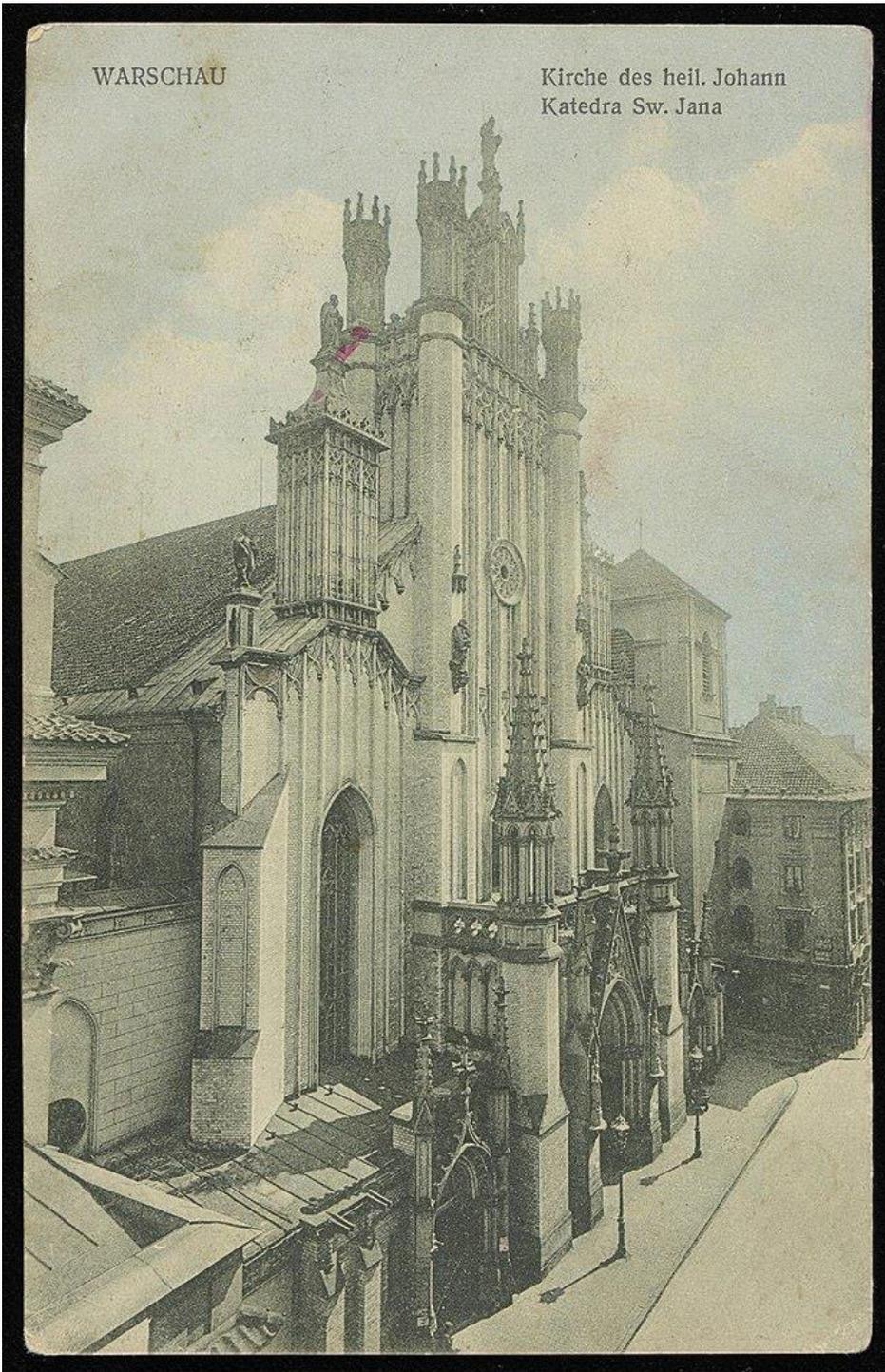
The outlook of the Polish nation during the reconstruction was profoundly different from the state that had regained independence in November 1918. Before 1945 an important part of the religious heritage had already been destroyed and partly remodelled. Tangible traces of centuries of Judaism in the Polish territories have been largely erased between 1938 and 1945. A significant part of Lutheran and Orthodox heritage has disappeared, in part due to a lack of awareness of historicizing architecture. What emerged during the reconstruction was a panorama of catholic churches and cathedrals representing important events from national history, and highlights from Polish architectural history. The reconstruction should thus be understood as the creation of a Polish Patrimony.

## Conclusion

The conservation of monuments in the Polish People's Republic or PRL included the restoration of historic churches. The objective was not to rebuild places for worship but to recover a national patrimony. The restoration of these monuments

WARSCHAU

Kirche des heil. Johann  
Katedra Sw. Jana



⬆ Fig. 10. Photograph of the Neo-Gothic façade of Warsaw Archcathedral. Note the differences with the cathedral façades in fig.1, before Neo-Gothic remodelling, and in fig.2, after post-war reconstruction. (archive of author)



⬆ **Fig. 11. Warsaw Cathedral during reconstruction, around 1950**  
(photo Alfred Funkiewicz, public domain)

was interventionist; layers of unwanted heritage were removed and layers that were considered Polish were recovered. Architectural monuments as well as the built environment were “liberated” from unwanted layers. In the PRL buildings were often considered as either Polish, German, Ukrainian or Jewish. The destruction of unwanted heritage as well as reconstruction in a national style had begun during the interwar years and had been presented as “a patriotic duty”. Historic churches were reframed and history reinterpreted, the restoration of architectural monuments was interventionist. This reconstruction of buildings and of the built environment changed its outlook which changed the panorama of religious heritage in Poland. Medieval buildings had a special significance, untouched by the Lutheran and thus German Reformation, and a materialization of a past that could be labelled as Polish. Heritage values of association had more significance than the preservation of historic building substance. Not only were buildings “liberated” from unwanted historic elements, at times building substance was demolished and rebuilt, and concrete structures were placed within the building. Scientific data was used to support the Polish recovery of the western territories and support interventive restorations. These interventions found a climax in the hypothetical façades of the cathedrals of Poznań and Warsaw. Bringing back the great Gothic churches and cathedrals in the built environment becomes the construction of a panorama of national patrimony.



# Notes

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10

# “Aesthetic-Charitable View”?

## Traditionalism in Heritage Conservation in the Czech lands Between 1945 and 1990

MARTIN HORÁČEK

Motto

*“While the debate between traditionalist and modernist positions often seems to be about architectural style, it is more accurately understood as an argument about the nature of time, history, and progress, and the ways our conceptions of these influence the kinds of interventions we find appropriate in any given setting. [...] It is not our time that demands contrast between the new and the old but an aesthetic theory and a philosophy of history that have long since proved inadequate.”<sup>1</sup>*

### Introduction: Old vs. New and the Vienna School of Art History

The following study is devoted to traditionalist tendencies in heritage conservation in the Czech lands and surrounding regions between 1945 and 1990. Here, the term traditionalism refers to two functionally interconnected phenomena: (1) a group of architectural languages (or artistic styles) that use a non-modernist grammar, and (2) an approach that prefers such languages when restoring a heritage monument or environment where similar languages originally prevailed. This begs some introductory explanation. This explanation is delivered in the first and the second part of the chapter. In the following portions, the “theory” is illustrated by “history”. A panorama of manifestations of traditionalism is delineated, from influential Czech authors’ messages, urban renovations, reconstructions with a significant share of new traditional elements, through to grassroots efforts to preserve heritage values. Local issues are tracked chronologically, and when appropriate, examined within the wider European context.

Let us begin with a clarification of the discussion. Unlike the preservation of intangible heritage, the preservation of tangible monuments faces a specific dilemma. Musical composition, a theatre play or a traditional craft method are

preserved by documenting its authentic presentation. This documentation then serves as a guide for the work's precise reproduction. It is meant to be reproduced many times; the unique circumstances of its origin are not protected because it is impossible and they are not even essential to the work's survival. Composers or inventors of a technique are not immortal, and their workrooms will inevitably cease to exist; the loss of the last remaining copy of a book's first edition does not mean that its text ceases to exist because there could be a manuscript or subsequent edition, in which the content remains unchanged.

In the case of material heritage, by contrast, we value the monuments' unique features which can be perfectly imitated, but by reproducing the work, we do not automatically create all the values associated with the original artefact. Not everyone feels the same way about authenticity; it is not a universally shared concept. The idea that there are elements which cannot be replaced by the best imitations and which therefore need to be protected (that is, isolated) from outside interventions stems from several different motivations. Some of them are rational (an authentic object is a bearer of historical information that an imitation cannot share), while others have (quasi)religious and speculative undertone (the cult of genius, originals are valued more than reproductions).

The aforementioned conservator's dilemma concerns the relationship between "the preserved" and "the added" and brings two unavoidable complications: firstly, material heritage exists in space; it takes up space or to put it more gently – it forms its environment which is by definition subject to changes. This brings a vast array of conflicts between preserved and newly emerged structures, a problem that intangible heritage does not have to deal with: people do not sing their favorite old songs when a new song is being played; a Sunday screening of a new film does not jeopardize a Monday screening of a different, older movie. Secondly, tangible heritage decays with the passing of time and loses some of its valued qualities. Heritage conservation strives to stop the decay, using increasingly sophisticated methods and techniques, but even the least invasive insertion presents an active intervention – something new happens to the monument and its material substance is changed.

To what extent should such interventions imitate the monument's original substance? It is possible to imitate the original shapes and techniques with such precision that the new part can be indistinguishable from the part that has been preserved? Complications arise when we decide to see heritage as more than just a collection of selected historic examples, perceiving it instead as an actor

in a hierarchically organized tissue, the value of which increases with increasing complexity. Do we want to preserve the whole building, city, or cultural landscape? Such efforts increase the number of contemporary interventions. Even if, hypothetically, these interventions strictly follow conservationist interests, other motivations will necessarily exceed the boundaries of pure preservation; even the most protected building will likely need electrical work, so wires have to be placed in the walls and switches installed, adding a new design element to the interiors.

Working with ideal models, however, will lead us to a dead end. Absolute imitation of a monument and its “authentic” environment is neither possible nor desirable. The other extreme – the effort to distinguish each new intervention visually or by using a different material – would lead to the gradual decline of all heritage values that were supposed to be protected. Representatives of the Vienna school of art history, who entered the conservationist discourse at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were already aware of this problem. By this time, European heritage conservation involved primarily reconstruction practices: a building was remodeled or refurbished to fit with the architectural style it was supposed to exemplify in both a historical and artistic sense. The art historian Alois Riegl (1903) emphasized that the values we seek in artefacts perceived as “heritage monuments” can have a more general or what we might call an existential dimension.<sup>2</sup> With this “existentialism” in mind, the question of whether the conservationist treatment is done in the “appropriate style” loses its importance. Riegl engaged in polemics with supporters of reconstructions, a struggle that was later interpreted as an aversion to stylistic revivals used in these reconstructions. In reality, Riegl mistrusted reconstructions as such: heritage preservation, he believed, is not meant to give selected “monuments” a face lift.

Riegl’s follower Max Dvořák worked to bring his tutor’s academic and somewhat patronizing position closer to the practice and “realpolitik” of heritage conservation. He linked Riegl’s idea of minimal intervention and his opposition to mixing the old and the new with the homeland protection movement, which prioritized the values of the whole over those of the individual components. His efforts resulted in a set of guidelines that generally recommended preserving everything from the pre-industrial era. Modern additions do not need to be subdued, says Dvořák, but they have to “conform to the old condition as well as the site and landscape image”.<sup>3</sup> The examples in Dvořák’s *Katechismus der Denkmalpflege* (1916) and his other texts show that this was a well thought-out and consistent position based on the (Riegl-inspired) belief that the individual co-exists with

the world in an inherently harmonious manner and that dissonant interventions in any style should be excluded (Fig. 1a–b).

### Traditionalism and Modernism

A study devoted to the situation after 1945 would not have to mention Riegl († 1905) and Dvořák († 1921) if their legacy had not soon developed (at least in the Czech heritage debate) into a specific founding-fathers' myth with these theorists' selected and often drastically simplified theses being used as weapons in conflicts over the correct method of heritage preservation. The present text does not aim to trace this century-long debate; the important point here is that the broader professional consciousness embraced Riegl's and Dvořák's imperatives of "not reconstructing", "distinguishing the new from the old" and "not preferring one style to others." These guidelines were meant to free the "modern cult of monuments" from the flawed nineteenth-century practices. But wouldn't the new century bring new problems? Dvořák may have been aware of one: "*There are still many artists, architects in particular, who perceive old art as their enemy,*" he writes in the *Katechismus*, "*because they want to emancipate themselves from it.*"<sup>4</sup> Dvořák himself tended to perceive artistic styles as attributes of particular historical periods. He sympathized with contemporary artistic innovations, seeing them as legitimate stages in the development of art. In his *Katechismus*, he showed no example of negative results of the "emancipation from old art", perhaps because he feared that this would weaken his arguments against stylistic imitations.

Thirty years after the publication of *Katechismus*, the situation was much different: two world wars, massive property transfers and economically and politically motivated devastation had drastically reduced the amount of heritage throughout Europe. Artists and architects, who strove precisely for the "emancipation" as Dvořák had described it, managed to dominate the discipline's key institutions, gain political influence (in both liberal and authoritarian states) and, most importantly, create a viable "style of our time" which, they claimed, could be used universally, based on developmental constructs coined by art historians.<sup>5</sup> This style's innovative aspects did not involve alternative stylization of decorative elements or figural representations as was the case, still in Dvořák's lifetime, with art nouveau and expressionism. Rather, it introduced patterns that had minimal common features with the classical and vernacular artistic traditions. The instant success of

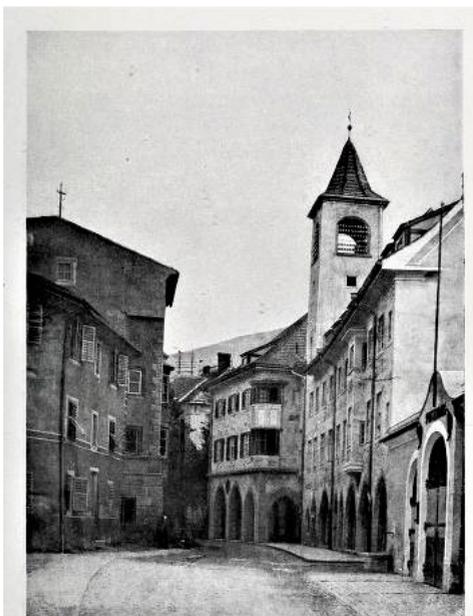
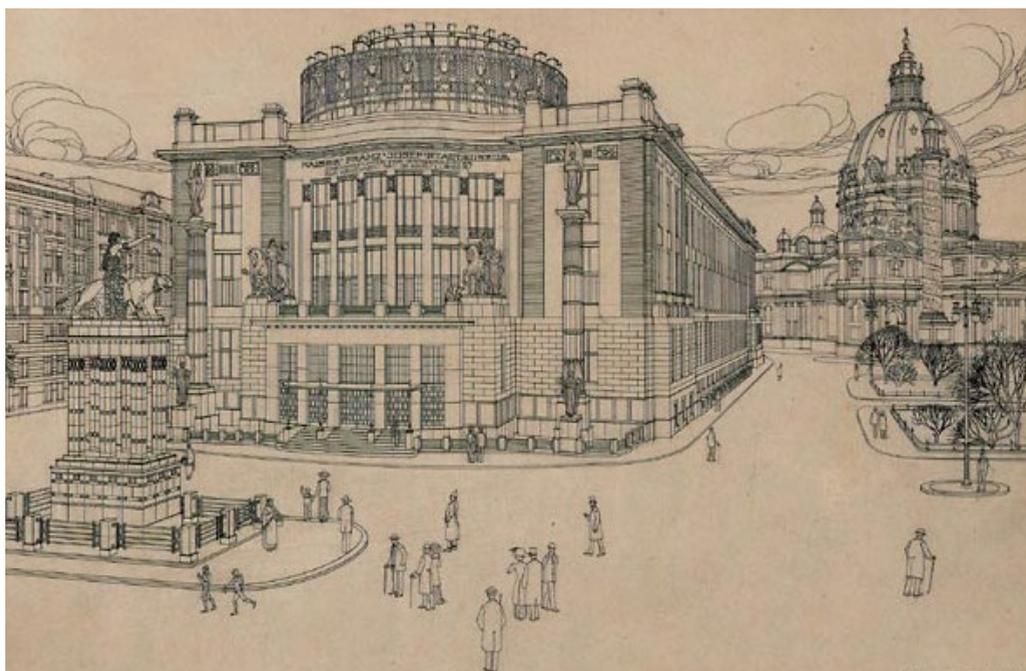


Abb. 133. Das neue Postgebäude (von Th. Fischer)  
in Hall in Tirol.  
(Das Haus mit dem Turm und das Eckhaus.) Als Beispiel eines  
Neubaues, der sich gut in das alte Straßenbild einfügt.

⬅ Fig. 1. a, b. Two examples of Max Dvořák's heritage impact assessment: (a) a good example, when extant values determine the character of a modern intervention: Theodor Fischer, post office in Hall in Tirol, 1912 [source: Katechismus der Denkmalpflege, image 133];  
⬇ (b) a bad one, when a modern intervention competes with extant values: Otto Wagner, design of the Municipal Museum in Vienna, 1909 (source: Wikimedia Commons)



these patterns would not have been possible without executive authorities at the time adopting the specific worldview, now referred to as modernist, which – paradoxically – stemmed from a hundred-year-old conception of philosophy of history. This worldview was inevitably reflected in heritage conservation. What were its characteristic features?

A modernist believes that history unfolds in separate epochs, each of which has its own distinct visual language and that these attributes are layered on top of one another; the past therefore stands in opposition to the present, and if there is anything left of it, it is allowed to survive in a segregated zone – a museum or a conservation district. The “old” survives next to the “new”; the stylistic contrast signals the preserved fragment’s distance in time from the present, while also manifesting its presumed authenticity (Fig. 2).

But not everyone was convinced. Against modernists stand traditionalists, whose conception of history can be summarized as follows: a traditionalist believes that history is part of the present and that history does not change in leaps and bounds; there is a continuity of forms and traditions, with successful earlier achievements providing lessons for the present. As a result, the attributes of the past and the present are interrelated and integrated. If one wants to distinguish the “new” from the “old”, one must do so more subtly than by merely juxtaposing shapes, so as not to disturb the harmony of the whole. Harmony is important, its essence arising from the existing condition of the whole.

The tension between modernists and traditionalists has become one of the leit-motifs in the conservation debate and – as the opening quote illustrates – it also significantly marks the current global situation.<sup>6</sup> Conservation methodologies, programs, declarations and restoration plans illustrate the controversy between the two camps, which also applies to the specific cases described below. This does not mean that there are no individual differences within the camps, but in principle, conservationists tend to side with one or the other pole.

The following paragraphs offer an overview of the segment of architectural heritage conservation between 1945 and 1990, in which the traditionalist attitude prevailed. Examples come from the Czech lands. Where necessary, the text includes references to the international context. This is an outline; it is meant to show that there is a certain continuity in the way cultural heritage is perceived in Central Europe, a tradition that is unexpectedly complex and in its own way quite resistant to both the competing modernist worldview and political turbulence.

The first section is devoted to authors who expressed the traditionalist position in their texts. It is followed by illustrations from the practice: reconstructions of destroyed settlements, reconstructions of monuments with a significant proportion of new elements in non-modernist styles, reconstructions of gardens and parks, open-air museums and, grassroots heritage conservation. We will also touch upon the question of tangible and intangible heritage and the international context of the local discourse.

## Ideas and Texts

The Czech lands emerged from the Second World War with less damage to cultural heritage than the surrounding countries, including the Slovak part of what was then Czechoslovakia (Slovakia saw a significant outflow of movable heritage resulting from the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy).<sup>7</sup> The communist government that came to power in 1948 declared an ambitious plan for blanket protection and renovation of valuable settlements, which were damaged as a result of the expulsion of their inhabitants and property transfers after 1945, rather than by the war itself. Beginning in 1950, the most important historical urban cores were declared heritage reserves and the state committed to their renovation over the next ten years. This concerned both traditionally public and newly nationalized buildings, as well as buildings remaining in private ownership. In 1954, the State Institute for Renovation of Heritage Towns and Buildings (Státní ústav pro rekonstrukce památkových měst a objektů, SÚRPMO) was founded, with its primary task set in its name.<sup>8</sup> In 1956, the Czechoslovak parliament passed the State Nature Conservation Act and in 1958 the Cultural Heritage Act. The existing conservationist organizations were transformed to create the State Institute for Heritage Preservation and Nature Conservation (Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, SÚPPOP) in 1958, bringing together, under the authority of the Ministry of Education and later the Ministry of Culture, all kinds of conservationists in the spirit once imagined by Max Dvořák. This connection lasted until 1990, when nature protection became the responsibility of the newly established Ministry of the Environment. The joint institute must have been founded on the idea of common goals. In retrospect, it is clear that environmental ideas and tendencies to perceive protected objects holistically – that is, traditionalist tendencies – remained very strong in Czech conservationist thinking.<sup>9</sup>

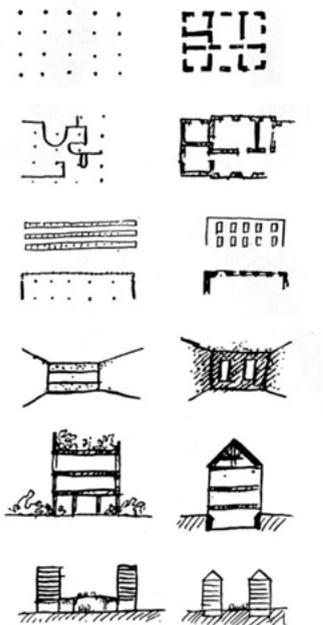
There are many texts from this period that share the idea of heritage preservation as protection against the consequences of the abandonment of traditional

values. These consequences usually, but not always, included the fashion of using modernist vocabulary. The views of the authors quoted below were formed by experiences they had gained before the communist regime came to power; these five authors represent various segments of traditionalist thinking in the field. In his book *Umělecké dílo minulosti a jeho ochrana* (*The Artwork of the Past and Its Protection*, 1946), the art historian and conservationist Václav Wagner (1893–1962) emphasizes the value of the whole over that of the fragment: “If, then, in a street or a square governed by a single order and a single unified scale, one of the architectural elements is replaced by a shape of a completely different scale and a fundamentally different organization of matter, it is a manifestation of the same way of thinking, since it is considered a virtue to document the time, and our time considers as its distinctive document for the future only that which is fundamentally different from any of the past forms. This way, we indeed do get an artefact characteristic of the period (for an artefact can be characteristic also in a negative way), but we simultaneously erase everything that used to be called ‘preservation of monuments’ and what we would now prefer to call the service to living old art.”<sup>10</sup>

The architect-conservationist Břetislav Štorm (1907–1960) emphasized the connection between intangible and tangible heritage. In his view, preserving the craft of building is an essential part of preserving buildings themselves. Štorm’s book *Základy péče o stavební památky* (*The Basics of Architectural Monument Preservation*) was published posthumously in 1965.<sup>11</sup>

The restorer František Petr (1884–1964) pointed to the importance of old artworks in the development of the public’s taste. In his book *Městské památkové rezervace v Čechách a na Moravě* (*Urban Heritage Reserves in Bohemia and Moravia*, 1955), he writes: “Renovated architectural monuments in urban reserves are not a dead museum environment. [...] they are filled with contemporary life because conservation is guided by the idea that these buildings should serve people as dwellings after the renovation. [...] their charm is also in the fact that these are no ordinary apartments but they give their inhabitants a sense of artistic beauty. [...] This way, art education, refinement of taste, and a conscious sense of beauty become part of everyday life.”<sup>12</sup>

Jiří Kroha (1893–1974), an influential architect who created avant-garde designs in the 1920s and 1930s, arrived at traditionalist positions in two ways: he briefly designed buildings in the “1950s transitional architectural traditionalism” (as he himself called the short episode of so-called socialist realism) and, his lifelong interest in the sociology of housing led him to appreciate the humanistic aspects of traditional buildings and to openly criticize the communist regime’s mass



◀ Fig. 2. Le Corbusier’s famous Five Points of Modern Architecture illustrate the differences between non-traditional and traditional architecture (source: Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre Complète*, 1910–1929)

construction. He considered this kind of construction inhumane and contrary to “*life traditionalism*” shared by most dwellers. Kroha links the term “*traditionalism*,” which has otherwise been slow to gain ground in the Czech debate on architecture and architectural heritage,<sup>13</sup> with ecological thinking and the attitude of “*the population that wants to live more closely connected to nature.*”<sup>14</sup>

In his book *Obytná krajina (Residential Landscape, 1947)*, the architect Ladislav Žák (1900–1973) offers the most radical solutions to the question of heritage conservation. Rather than criticizing avant-garde vocabulary, he proposed the absolute protection of both developed and undeveloped landscapes, permitting only those interventions that would help “*re-naturalize*” the world, so humans could live in harmony with other creatures and put a stop to the “*imperialism of the human race.*”<sup>15</sup>

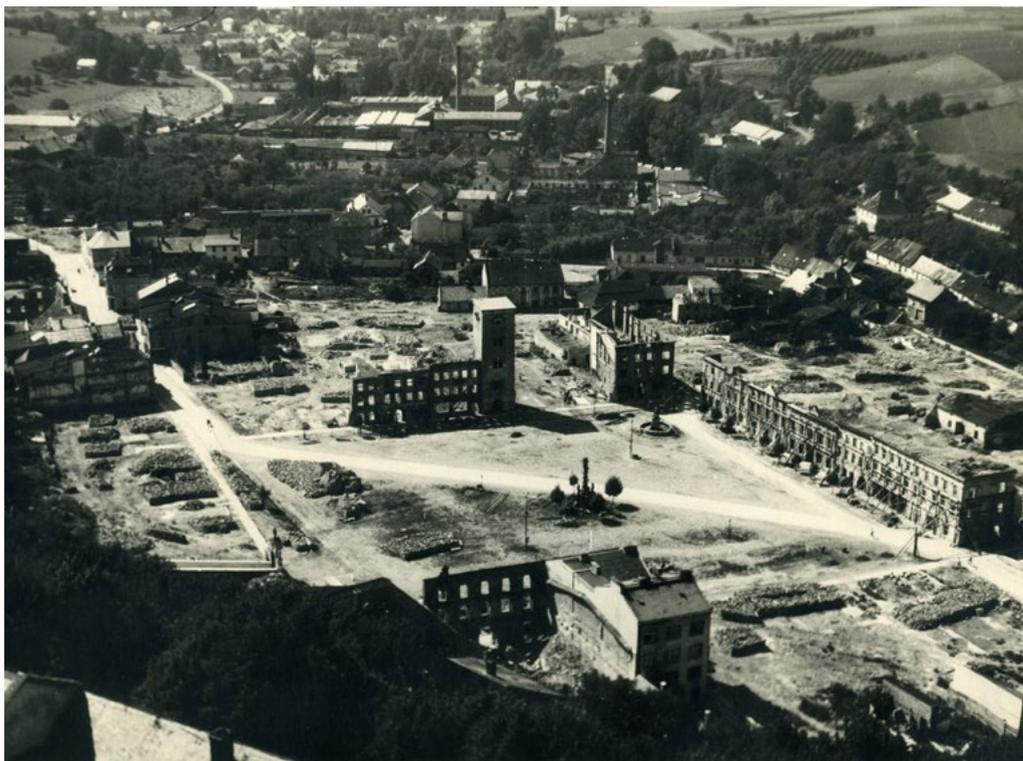
## Reconstructions

All the aforementioned authors have gone through periods of hopeful expectations associated with the advent of socialism and subsequent disappointment when the regime’s hypocritical representatives claimed that cultural heritage was their priority, but then treated it in a predatory or indifferent manner. The

Czech milieu lacked major themes in heritage renovation that would unite the government and the people and simultaneously help refine the professional debate. None of the major Czech or Moravian historic towns were damaged to the point of becoming a symbol of national reconstruction, overcoming the painful past and the new beginning, as was the case with Warsaw, Wrocław and Gdańsk in Poland.<sup>16</sup> No iconic monument had to be rebuilt, like the aristocratic palaces around Leningrad or the Opera House in Dresden.<sup>17</sup>

However, these spectacular actions did have modest analogues in the Czech lands. Reconstructions that took place immediately after the end of the Second World War prioritized traditionalist solutions. Destroyed buildings were not replaced with replicas, but the architects maintained key dispositional and morphological patterns. In Moravia, the centers of two picturesque towns were restored in this way, namely Fulnek (following the design of the architect Jan Sedláček, 1947–1961) (Fig. 3a–b) and Moravský Krumlov (designed by Jiří Auermüller, 1945–1960). Occasionally, important stand-alone landmarks were reconstructed using traditional vocabulary. The most monumental examples include the castle in Mikulov, South Moravia, which burned down and was subsequently rebuilt according to the design of the architect Otakar Oplatek (Fig. 4).<sup>18</sup> Reconstructions sometimes served as an opportunity for aesthetic corrections (as in the case of the Warsaw Cathedral and elsewhere):<sup>19</sup> rather than being restored to the form immediately preceding the destruction, the monument reverted to its older form, which was considered more valuable. In 1945, the architect Klaudius Madlmayr renovated the town hall tower in Vyškov, Moravia, giving it a form that evoked its Renaissance appearance instead of its latest iteration from 1884.<sup>20</sup>

The reconstruction of the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague was politically motivated, which was exceptional in Czechoslovakia. Demolished in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the chapel was rebuilt between 1949 and 1954 according to the design of Jaroslav Fragner using old vedute and fragments of masonry preserved within the later development. Here, the primary reason for reconstruction was not the chapel's architectural value, but its connection with the history of the Hussite movement which the communist regime perceived as its ideological predecessor (Fig. 5).<sup>21</sup> In other regions of the Eastern Bloc, politics played a greater role in heritage reconstructions. Art-historical interest usually went hand in hand with patriotic motivations, and so traditionalist conservationists were able to use the political support for their purposes. This was the case with the reconstruction of the Bratislava Castle<sup>22</sup> and the reconstruction of the Royal Palace in Visegrád,



⤴ Fig. 3a. Fulnek, Komenského Square, (a) after the liberation in 1945  
(source: <https://www.valka.cz/Fulnek-t121120>, accessed August 31, 2021)  
⤵ and (b) after the renovation in 1947–1961 (project Jan Sedláček). Photo 2012



Hungary.<sup>23</sup> Although at first glance they may have reflected the state's cultural politics, reconstructions were sometimes based on covertly anti-regime, political-traditionalist motivations. In Tallinn, Estonia, the unusually well-preserved medieval city walls and buildings were reconstructed beginning in 1954, stemming in part from a patriotic, anti-Soviet emphasis on local cultural heritage that visually connected the city with the Western cultural tradition (Fig. 6).<sup>24</sup> In the Czech lands, heritage renovations were not an outlet for anti-regime resentment – at least not in the case of key monuments, although we cannot rule out that such a motivation existed outside the centers, in relation to regional political representation and in specific local contexts.

Reconstructions driven exclusively by art-historical and aesthetic motives were also rare. One exception was the row of buildings forming the northern front of the square in Nové Město nad Metují in East Bohemia, which was renovated in the Renaissance style by the team around the architect Miloš Vincík between 1953 and 1954 (Fig. 7a–b).<sup>25</sup>

### Modernists in Heritage Conservation: Traditionalism “Under Fire”

Modernists became involved in heritage conservation as early as in prewar Czechoslovakia, and their engagement increased after the communist coup in 1948. These were often former members of avant-garde art and architecture groups. Their conservationist enthusiasm was questioned already in the 1950s; for some of them, heritage conservation was just a way to escape the drabness of prefabrication, giving them an opportunity to design atypical stand-alone structures.<sup>26</sup> These architects were not primarily interested in the preservation of heritage values. Typically, they preferred to juxtapose their structures with preserved fragments, protesting aggressively against their traditionalist colleagues. Bohuslav Fuchs (1895–1972), a former avant-garde architect, railed against “*pseudo-historicism*” and called for “*liberation from romantic-conservationist myths*” in the “*regeneration of the historic core*” (1969).<sup>27</sup> Albeit far less fundamentalistic, Jiří Kroha warned against the “*aesthetic-charitable view*” (1962), having the reconstructions of the pre-industrial urban image in mind.<sup>28</sup> The architect Emanuel Hruška (1906–1989) labelled similar praxis as “*cinematic romanticism*” (1962).<sup>29</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, modernist dogmas continued to infiltrate the conservation movement worldwide and even became reflected in the 1964 *Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*. Article 9 of this key document



⤴ Fig. 4. Mikulov. The chateau (on the right) was destroyed by a fire in 1945. The renovation carried out in 1948–1962 according to the design by Otakar Oplátek respected the original architectural volumes. Photo 2012



⤴ Fig. 5. Monument reconstructed for ideological reasons: Prague, Bethlehem Chapel, 1949–1954 (project Jaroslav Fragner). Photo 2011





◀ Fig. 6. Tallinn, the ongoing renovation of medieval city walls and houses was initiated in 1954 (designed by Teddy Böckler and others).  
Photo 2018

said that the inevitable additions to heritage monuments “*must bear a contemporary stamp*,” a statement which remained open to interpretation.<sup>30</sup> The street line and the height level were vaguely respected, while the “contemporary stamp” usually meant architectural style. The new building of Dyje Department Store in Znojmo, South Moravia, by Bohuslav Fuchs and collective represents such an example of a modernist building in the middle of a heritage reserve (Fig. 8).<sup>31</sup>

The problematic nature of the aforementioned Venice Charter article was detected immediately after its publication; a number of later international documents essentially aimed to eliminate its modernist interpretation.<sup>32</sup> Oddly enough, in the same period when the conservationist debate became an international affair, the discipline of (architectural) heritage conservation had a tendency to overspecialize and close itself off. From the perspective of nature conservation, it is absurd to call for a “contemporary stamp” when protecting a selected species or ecosystem. In any case, the same tendency for documentarism and professional specialization was evident in open-air museums, a field closely connected with heritage conservation.<sup>33</sup> These museums will be discussed below.

While the above-described phenomena were experienced in countries with all sorts of political regimes, the communist bloc was unique in that the change of Soviet leaders in the 1950s was accompanied by a change in the “official style.” Nikita Khrushchev offered a politically motivated critique of traditionalist architecture. Traditional styles in new architecture were stigmatized as manifestations of the cult of Joseph Stalin’s personality, tastelessness and immoral debauchery, a criticism that basically echoed Western trends from a decade earlier. But while architects in the West working against the grain may have simply lost their contracts, disobedience was risky in the East. As a result, reconstructions had less support within the state heritage preservation, and modernists assumed positions of authority: Bohuslav Fuchs was awarded the title of National Artist in 1968, Emanuel Hruška was elected chairman of the Czechoslovak National ICOMOS Committee (1971, in office until his death in 1989) and chairman of one of the world’s oldest conservation civic associations, the Club for Old Prague (1980–1988). Overall, the academic milieu became increasingly detached from the issue of heritage renovation. In Czechoslovakia, the consequences were felt until the end of the communist rule. In 1987, when the city of Prague held a competition for the completion of the Old Town Hall, the jury voted for modernist designs, while the general public preferred the design by Milan Pavlík and František Kašička proposing to reconstruct the town hall in its Gothic form and rebuild the neighboring demolished Baroque houses (Fig. 9).<sup>34</sup>

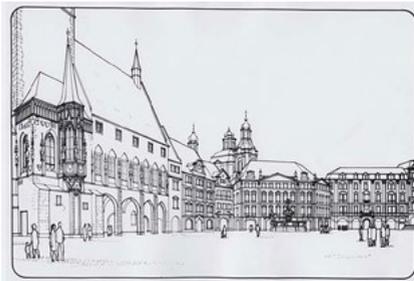


⬆ Fig. 7. Nové Město nad Metují, Husovo Square, northern side (a) before reconstruction [source: Karel Honzik, *Architektura všem* (Praha: Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění, 1956), image 125] and (b) after reconstruction (designed by Miloš Vincík and others, 1953–1954). Photo 2016





↑ Fig. 8. Modernist “regeneration” of a town core: Znojmo, Dyje Department Store, 1969–1970, designed by Bohuslav Fuchs, Kamil Fuchs and others. Photo 2019



◀ Fig. 9. Milan Pavlík and František Kašička, design for the reconstruction of Old Town Hall and adjacent houses, Prague, 1987 (source: <http://stary-web.zastarouprahu.cz/ruzne/staromrad.htm>, accessed August 31, 2021)



◀ Fig. 10. Olomouc, Bishop Zdik’s Palace, 12<sup>th</sup> century. Survey-based reconstruction was conducted in 1973–1988 according to the design by Jan Sokol and Aleš Rozehnal. Photo 2009

In the professional journals of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, traditionalists were able to criticize heritage conservation practices and the devastation wrought by new construction projects, but in reality, they found themselves on the defensive.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, this period welcomed the so-called research-based reconstructions emphasizing the restoration approach; restorers themselves saw these renovations as a professional and artistic challenge.<sup>36</sup> Key examples of this approach include the renovation of the Romanesque bishop's palace in Olomouc, based on intensive surveys and carried out by the team of the architect Jan Sokol and restorer Aleš Rozehnal (Fig. 10).<sup>37</sup> Another outstanding example of Czech restoration at the time – the Stone Bell House on Prague's Old Town Square – received its renewed medieval appearance based on an array of medieval elements uncovered and restored by the group around restorer Jiří Blažej (Fig. 11).<sup>38</sup>

Unlike in the 1940s and 1950s, traditionalist views were not concentrated in monographs: we can find them scattered, but not hidden, in studies published in the journal *Zprávy památkové péče* [*Journal of Historical Heritage Preservation*] and its successors, *Památková péče* [*Heritage Preservation*] and *Památky a příroda* [*Monuments and Nature*], as well as in polemics in the journal *Architektura ČSR* [*Architecture in Czechoslovakia*]. The art historian Dobroslav Líbal (1911–2002) became a respected authority in this period, embracing all kinds of architectural heritage (industrial and modernist too),<sup>39</sup> while the art historian Josef Štulc (\*1944) convincingly summed up the balanced view of the younger generation. In one of his brilliant essays, Štulc emphasized that by advocating contrived novelties at the expense of historical features, one goes against the purpose of conservation, whether these novelties are Neo-Gothic or Brutalist: “*For the historical identity and integrity of architectural monuments (or even entire historical urban ensembles), one-sided promotion of modernism is just as dangerous as any false architectural historicism. Designers [...] often claim that it is their right or rather obligation to express their creativity even when this would negate the monuments' recognized, authentic artistic, historical or urbanist values.*”<sup>40</sup>

### **Garden Art, Vernacular Architecture and Grassroots Heritage Conservation**

The modernist stylistic juxtapositions hardly found their way into the field of gardens and parks renovation. This does not mean that the garden architects would strive to precisely reconstruct the ruined garden elements; in the case of green spaces, this is not even possible. Garden archeology as a discipline was only

beginning to take shape internationally. The architect Dušan Riedl (1925–2015), the author of the designs for the restoration of the Baroque chateau gardens in Milotice and Slavkov in South Moravia, described his perception of the architect's role as follows: *“today’s architect [...] must recreate the stylistic expression of the past with the awareness of the present, reconstructing the stylistic idea using new means of expression.”*<sup>41</sup> (Fig. 12)

The field of rural architecture preservation was subject to specific conditions.<sup>42</sup> Academic art historians generally overlooked it. Although the individual structures or groups of buildings were catalogued, they often did not receive state protection until after 1989. The initiative usually came from ethnographers, local activists and museums.

Open-air museums enjoyed great popularity among visitors. The oldest and largest of them, in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm in the Wallachia region (North Moravia), opened in 1925, others followed during the communist regime (Veselý Kopec, Kouřim, Třebíz, Strážnice, Příkazy and Zubrnice), sometimes based on the older local tradition (Přerov nad Labem).<sup>43</sup> Each rescue of a vernacular structure presented a unique story where grassroots initiatives to varying degrees reached the professional sphere and met with the willingness of public authorities. In East Bohemia, Luděk Štěpán (1932–2017) became a legend in the field of vernacular architecture preservation. Initially a volunteer worker, he later founded the Vysočina Folk Architecture Museum.<sup>44</sup> Since 1989, the museum has included the Bethlehem area in Hlinsko, one of the few Czech examples of wooden architecture ensembles preserved in a town. It is worth mentioning here that in the Czech lands, the phenomenon of reconstructing prehistoric, ancient and early medieval structures in archeological open-air museums began with the first experimental archeology site in Březno near Louny in 1981. Nevertheless, such kind of museums became more common only after 1989.<sup>45</sup>

Although the communist regime in Czechoslovakia generally let non-political civic associations operate, conservation activities were rather tolerated than approved. The Club for Old Prague was not abolished and its members were, in some cases, able to reverse the worst architectural plans. While in Prague, the Club's activities were basically in line with the intentions of professional organizations (SÚPPOP, SÚRPMO), in part because the same people were engaged in both forms of conservationism,<sup>46</sup> civic initiatives elsewhere had a harder time gaining the support of local authorities. For example, in the town of Klobouky u Brna, citizens wanted to rebuild a wooden windmill. They reconstructed it on their own in 1985 under



↑ Fig. 11. Prague, the Stone Bell House at the Old Town Square. Survey-based reconstruction of the building's medieval form was conducted in 1980–1987. Photo 2021

the auspices of the Czech Union of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, combining authentic parts of the same mill type from another village with copies of the portions that had disappeared. But it took “*lengthy negotiations*” to get permission from the Regional Centre of the State Heritage Preservation and Nature Conservation (Krajské středisko státní památkové péče a ochrany přírody, KSPPOP).<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, field workers from the same KSPPOP gladly offered advice to owners who wanted to renovate their country cottages in an “authentic” way. Here, the term cottage refers to vernacular country houses adapted to seasonal recreation: thousands of empty properties remained in the Czech lands after the war, mostly in hilly and wooded areas. At first, the public administration wanted to demolish these houses but then decided to offer them for a bargain as summer or winter vacation homes to anyone interested. The Czech cottage phenomenon can be considered a form of mass grassroots traditionalism. In 1981, there were approximately 30,000 cottages in Czechoslovakia.<sup>48</sup> Owners themselves renovated them meticulously in the traditional style employing authentic handicrafts (Fig. 13), often outperforming the “official” conservationist projects in cities and other prominent places.

Before 1989, 38 of the historic city centers in Bohemia and Moravia received heritage reserve status. This (in most cases) saved many valuable buildings from demolition but not from gradual dilapidation. The public administration soon abandoned its ambitious plans from the 1940s and 1950s for widespread renovations. Projects that did not end prematurely dragged on for decades (Český Krumlov).<sup>49</sup> At the same time, the large complexes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were mostly ignored.<sup>50</sup> In Western Europe, however, precisely such neighborhoods attracted the attention of those who were critical toward modernist urban planning and who called for an “urban renaissance,” combining a new perception of heritage values with an emphasis on utilitarian comfort. The European Architectural Heritage Year, declared by the Council of Europe for the year 1975, became a catalyst for these efforts.<sup>51</sup> Although some of the communist countries were involved, Czechoslovakia was not. The state did not ratify the World Heritage Convention until 1991 either. However, Czechoslovak specialists contributed to the birth of the Venice Charter and participated in the founding of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1965.<sup>52</sup>

After all, the demand for complex rehabilitation of the traditional urban fabric emerged also in Czechoslovakia. The relationship toward nineteenth-century traditionalist architecture was a critical issue: modernists opposed it in their



▲ Fig. 12. Milotice, chateau park, renovated according to the design by Dušan Riedl in 1962–1976. Photo 2018



◀ Fig. 13. Doubrava (Lipová, near Cheb), Rustler's farmstead, built since 1751. Renovated in 1976–1991 by a private owner. Photo 2011

“battles of styles” but they simultaneously demanded that the key works of their own movement be recognized as bearers of heritage values. In theory, this led to a remarkable reconciliation: Czechoslovak heritage authorities easily abandoned “bourgeois” and “formalist” labels in reference to architecture, and decided quite sensibly – and relatively soon, compared to the rest of the world – that even modern buildings and architectural ensembles can be evaluated, protected and renovated in keeping with the standards applied to older monuments.<sup>53</sup> In practice, however, there was not much change. Teplice in North Bohemia, once an elegant spa featuring top-quality architecture, was slowly demolished beginning with the end of the Second World War, and the destruction continued even after 1989. The comparison of colonnades in other popular spas is also illustrative. While in Karlovy Vary, the famous Hot Spring Colonnade was replaced with brutalist architecture, the colonnade in Mariánské Lázně was restored according to a design by the architect Pavel Janeček and adorned with new frescoes by the painter Josef Vyleřal. Covering 570 square meters, these frescoes are considered the largest painting of its kind in Bohemia by a single artist since the mid-nineteenth century. In this unique case, the late-nineteenth-century building was renovated with respect for heritage values, combining modern technology with traditional art (Fig. 14a–b).<sup>54</sup>

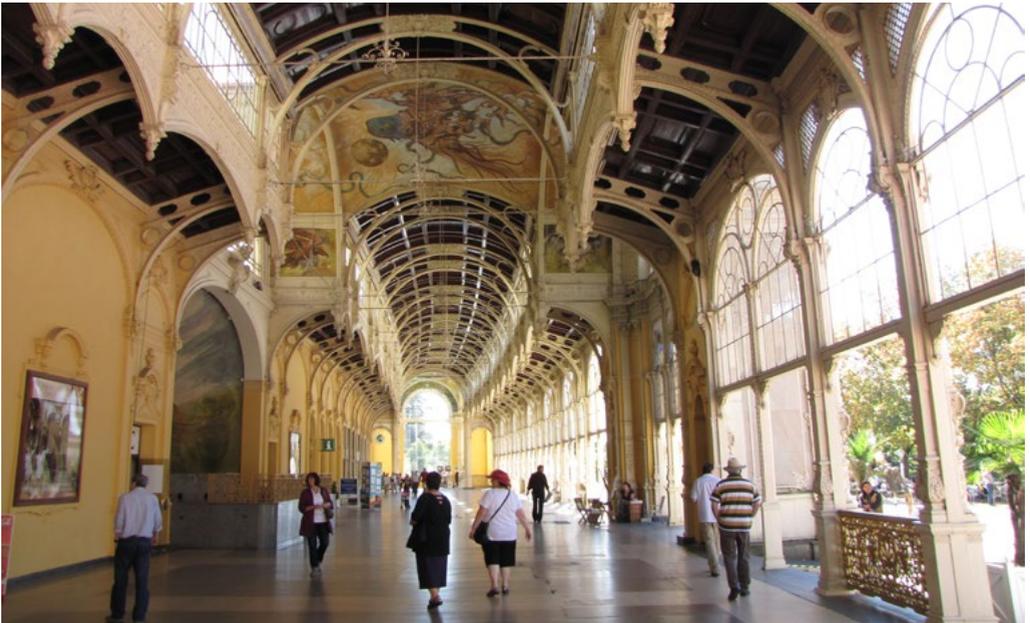
## Conclusion

Neither the traditionalist nor the modernist position in heritage conservation has been explicitly defined in any of the discipline’s key documents – international or national (when considering former Czechoslovakia and the current Czech Republic). Traditionalists among Czech conservationists liked to cite Václav Wagner, and they were bothered by the functionalist and brutalist additions to buildings in pre-modernist styles or in the gaps between such buildings. However, it would be a mistake to interpret their attitude as opposition to modernist architectural vocabulary as such: traditionalists support renovation in an authentic style even in the case of functionalist and brutalist buildings and they will always oppose the replacement of dysfunctional or missing parts with “*a shape of a completely different scale and a fundamentally different organization of matter.*” In this respect, the first proposals for the restoration of interwar buildings, such as Villa Tugendhat in Brno (from the late 1960s and early 1970s), can also be considered traditionalist.<sup>55</sup>

The traditionalist position has also been reflected in the attitude towards the materials and technologies used in heritage restoration. A traditionalist will support



⤴ Fig. 14. Great nineteenth-century colonnades – either replaced or restored:  
⤵ (a) Karlovy Vary, Hot Spring Colonnade, new building by Jaroslav Otruba from 1971–1975; (b) Mariánské Lázně, colonnade from 1888–1889 renovated according to the design by Pavel Janeček in 1973–1991. A unique project in its time combining respect for heritage values, modern technology and contemporary art. Photos 2005 and 2011





⬆ Fig. 15. Baroque reconstructed and Baroque vital: (a) Salzburg cathedral, damaged during WWII and rebuilt in 1945–1959 by the team around architect Karl Holey, a former collaborator of Max Dvořák; (b) to compare: “contemporary” Baroque on the island of Malta, where the style is still in vogue: the Carmelite church in Valletta, new building from 1958–1981 designed by Guzè d’Amato. Photos 2017 and 2013



the use of carpentry construction where there used to be carpentry construction, or lime plastering where there used to be lime plaster. If the condition of the building permits, a traditionalist will try to avoid cement grouting into stone foundations as well as artificial moldings where there was hand-modelled stucco.<sup>56</sup>

This brings us to the question of the connection between tangible and intangible heritage. The sphere of monuments, “reserves” and heritage conservation has become a haven for traditional artists and craftsmen. Between the end of the 1950s and 1989, practically no new landmarks in the traditional sense were built in Central and Eastern Europe, providing little space for these artists to leave their mark (Fig. 15a–b).<sup>57</sup>

There is not enough space here for a detailed comparison of the Czech situation with the neighboring countries.<sup>58</sup> In any case, traditionalism as described above does not represent a strictly local school of thought. As evident from the recent critiques of Eurocentrism in the debate about heritage values, this is in fact a more global, universal and “traditional” approach than the modernist one. Its manifestations are quite similar in Central-European countries between 1945 and 1990, albeit with different variables and constellations. The situation always depended on political programs and on how thoroughly they were implemented: what constituted the “official” style and what was “dissent”? Other factors included conservationist doctrines, educational programs, and the specific expertise of architects, restorers and art historians, as well as citizen interest, fashion trends, communication between the civic society, experts and authorities and, in a much wider, general sense, the personal values of all actors involved. In many Central and Eastern European cities, the mentioned large residential complexes from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries survived the communist building boom and the modernist aversion to traditional styles. Some remained exceptionally compact, featuring numerous preserved period details. Was this due to a lack of funding for rebuilding, or was it, at least somewhere and sometimes, the result of intentional conservation?

Just as there are no spatial limits to conservationists’ traditionalism, neither is it limited in time. In the 1970s and 1980s, it was energized by the wave of postmodern and so-called new traditional architecture.<sup>59</sup> Architects themselves began to pay more attention to the heritage values of architectural ensembles, which they entered.<sup>60</sup> This made them more willing to listen to arguments that had already been “on the table.” The heritage discourse is naturally linked with trends or innovations in related disciplines, such as architecture and art history,

so transformations within this discourse tend to come from outside influences. However, traditionalism as discussed above stems primarily from heritage values assessment and from the extent of what is meant to be preserved and passed on into the future. Political preferences – ideas about how an ideal society should be organized – play no role here. Václav Wagner and Břetislav Štorm did not fundamentally change their approach following the advent of the communist regime in 1948 and neither did Dobroslav Líbal and Josef Štulc after it ended in 1989.

The dispute between traditionalists and modernists over the stylistic expression of new elements in protected areas is not settled. While in other European countries, the debates mostly concern the extravagantly shaped designs by “starchitects,” in the Czech lands the problematic interventions stick to brutalist and minimalist models – usually either windowless monoliths or glass cubes. Besides that kind of bogeymen, there are also new pressing challenges – from the extremely rapid decline of industrial heritage to the rise of virtual reality. These trends have opened new chapters in the history of traditionalism in the conservation movement in the Czech lands and beyond.

*All recent photos taken by Martin Horáček.*

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*English translation by Hana Logan*



# Notes

- 1 Steven W. Semes, *The Future of the Past: A Conservation Ethic for Architecture, Urbanism, and Historic Preservation* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 29.
- 2 Alois Riegl, *Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen und seine Entstehung* (Wien and Leipzig: W. Braumüller, 1903).
- 3 “Projekt [...] den Erweiterungsbau dem alten Bestände, dem Orts- und Landschaftsbilde glücklich anpaßt.” – Max Dvořák, *Katechismus der Denkmalpflege* (Wien: Julius Bard, 1918, second edition), 117.
- 4 “Es gibt leider noch sehr viele Künstler, besonders Architekten, die die alte Kunst als ihren Feind betrachten, [...] weil sie sich von ihr emanzipieren wollen” – Dvořák, *Katechismus*, 37.
- 5 David Watkin, *Morality and Architecture Revisited* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001). – Martin Horáček, *Za krásnější svět: Tradicionalismus v architektuře 20. a 21. století / Toward a More Beautiful World: Traditionalism in Architecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries* (Brno: Barrister & Principal and VUTIUM, 2013); James Stevens Curl, *Making Dystopia: The Strange Rise and Survival of Architectural Barbarism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
- 6 Richard M. Economakis, “From Apologia to Praxis: Three Generations of New Traditional Architects,” in *Traditional Architecture: Timeless Building for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Alireza Sagharchi and Lucien Steil (New York: Rizzoli, 2013), 310–316.
- 7 So far, there is no detailed scholarly overview of the history of conservation movement in the Czech lands in English. The key written sources covering the period between 1945 and 1990 are in Czech, however, local publications were often equipped with summaries in German, French, Russian or English. That applies also to Czech books and articles quoted hereafter, both period and recent. The basic information with English references is included here: John H. Stubbs and Emily Gunzburger Makaš, *Architectural Conservation in Europe and the Americas* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2011), 245–57 (*Chapter 16: Czech Republic and Slovakia*). A valuable synthesis on the Czech urban heritage conservation in 1945–2010 written by contemporaries is available: Karel Kibic and Aleš Vošahlík, *Památková ochrana a regenerace historických měst v České republice 1945–2010* (Praha: Národní památkový ústav, 2011). For Slovakia cf. Vendelín Jankovič, “Dejiny pamiatkovej starostlivosti na Slovensku v rokoch 1850–1950,” in *Monumentorum tutela / Ochrana pamiatok* 10 (Bratislava: Slovenský ústav pamiatkovej starostlivosti, 1973), 5–80. – The traditionalist approach to architectural environment was extensively discussed in a monograph by the author (Horáček, *Za krásnější svět: Tradicionalismus*), including chapters devoted to architectural conservation. The topic is further elaborated in the present essay, which attempts to present a summarizing view.
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- 9 Cf. Jan Dostalík, *Organická modernita: Ekologicky šetrné tendence v československém urbanismu a územním plánování (1918–1968)* (Brno: MUNI Press, 2015); Martin Horáček, “Protecting life: The common goals of nature reserves and architectural heritage sites,” *Journal of Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism*, no.1 (2020): 369–82, accessed August 31, 2021, <https://traditionalarchitecturejournal.com/index.php/home/article/view/364/41>.
- 10 “Jestliže se pak v ulici nebo náměstí, ovládaném jedním řádem a jednotným měřítkem, nahrazuje jeden z domovních článků tvarem naprosto rozdílného měřítka a zásadně odlišné organizace hmoty, je to projev stejného myšlenkového zaměření, poněvadž je pokládáno za ctnost dobově dokumentovati, při čemž za svůj jedině výrazný dokument pro budoucnost pokládá naše doba jen to, co je zásadně rozdílné ode všeho předcházejícího. Dostaneme tak sice výtvor pro dobu charakteristický (neboť je možný i výtvor charakteristický negativně), ale zároveň mizí všechno, co se dříve

nazývalo 'ochranou památek' a co bychom dnes raději nazvali službou živému starému umění." – Václav Wagner, *Umělecké dílo minulosti a jeho ochrana* (Praha: Vladimír Žikeš, 1946), 19; cf. Josef Štulc, "Odras syntetické metody Václava Wagnera ve významných akcích památkové obnovy 70. a 80. let," in *Historická inspirace: Sbormik k poctě Dobroslava Líbala*, ed. Martin Kubelík, Milan Pavlík and Josef Štulc (Praha: Jajna, 2001), 375–86.

- 11 Břetislav Štorm, *Základy péče o stavební památky*, ed. Helena Hanšová and Oliva Pechová (Praha: SÚPPOP, 1965); Břetislav Štorm; "Péče o památky architektury a cesty její myšlenkové koncepcí," *Zprávy památkové péče* 19, no. 3–4 (1959): 57–68.
- 12 "Obnovené stavební památky v rezervních městech nejsou však mrtvým muzejním prostředím. [...] jsou naplněny dnešním životem, neboť konservace je vedena myšlenkou, aby po opravě sloužily lidem jako obydlí. [...] půvab je také v tom, že v nich není bydlení tuctové, ale že dávají svým obyvatelům pocit uměleckého krásna. [...] Umělecká výchova, vybrušení vkusu, uvědomění pocitu krásna stává se tím samozřejmostí." – František Petr and Jiří Kostka, *Městské památkové rezervace v Čechách a na Moravě* (Praha: SNKLHU, 1955), 16.
- 13 Cf. recently Pavel Zatloukal, *Meditace o městě, krajině, umění: Olomouc 1919–1989* (Ostrava and Olomouc: Ostravská univerzita and Muzeum umění Olomouc, 2020), 48, 139, 542.
- 14 "obyvatelstva, pokud chce životně býti úžeji spjata s přírodou." – Jiří Kroha, "Doslov: Socialistická vazba městských sídel se životním prostředím [dated 1965]," in Bohuslav Fuchs, *Nové zónování – urbanistická tvorba životního prostředí z hlediska sídelního a krajinného* (Praha: Academia, 1967), 84–95; Martin Horáček, "The architectural rhythm of a small town ... is very familiar to us: A Small Town as an Aesthetic Ideal of the Twentieth Century," in *Small Towns in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries: Heritage and Development Strategies*, ed. Lud'a Klusáková (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2017), 52–73.
- 15 "imperialismus lidského rodu" – Ladislav Žák, *Obytná krajina* (Praha: S. V. U. Mánes and Svoboda, 1947), 178.
- 16 Wojciech Kalinowski, ed., *Zabytki urbanistyki i architektury w Polsce: Odbudowa i konserwacja*. Vol. 1: *Miasta historyczne* (Warszawa: Arkady, 1986).
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- 18 Karel Kibic, "Památkové ztráty v našich historických městech po roce 1945," *Památky a příroda* 16, no. 1 (1991): 1–13.
- 19 Piotr Majewski, *Ideologia i konserwacja: Architektura zabytkowa w Polsce w czasach socrealizmu* (Warszawa: TRIO, 2009), 200.
- 20 Kibic and Vošahlík, *Památková ochrana*, 17–35.
- 21 Alois Kubiček, *Stará Praha v nové kráse: Obnovené památky pražské* (Praha: Orbis, 1957), 12–14; Antonín Frinta, "Poznámky k obnově kaple Betlémské," *Památková péče* 30, no. 1 (1970): 41–6.
- 22 Dušan Martinček et al., *Oživené pamiatky* (Bratislava: Obzor, 1974), 15–31; Alfred Piffli, *Zápas o Bratislavský hrad: Denník 1948–1972*, ed. Ján Čomaj (Bratislava: Marenčin PT, 2007).
- 23 Gergely Buzás, *The Hercules Fountain of Giovanni Dalmata in the Royal Palace of Visegrád* (Budapest and Visegrád: TKM Association and the King Matthias Museum, 2001).
- 24 Miles Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement – A History of Architectural Preservation: Antiquity to Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 374–78.
- 25 Hugo Rokyta, ed., *Rekonstrukce historických měst* (Praha: SÚRPMO, 1956), 34–6, 214–19.
- 26 Emil Belluš, ed., *Rekonštrukcia miest a ich historických jadier* (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 1956), 68, 70, 73–5.

- 27 “Soudobá moderní architektura [...] potřebuje se však osvobodit od mnoha architektonických a romanticko-památkářských mýtů...” – Bohuslav Fuchs, “Před novou epochou výstavby historického jádra města Olomouce,” in *Historické jádro města Olomouce a jeho problematika*, ed. Zdeněk Gardavský (Olomouc: Městský národní výbor, 1969), XXIII–XXIV, here XXIV.
- 28 “estetickocharitativní názor” – Jiří Kroha, “Historické městské architektonické dědictví v socialismu a komunistické perspektivě,” *Památková péče* 22, no. 3 (1962): 65–73, here 68.
- 29 Quoted in Ivo Hlobil, *Teorie městských památkových rezervací (1900–1975)* (Praha: Ústav teorie a dějin umění ČSAV, 1985), 41; cf. Emanuel Hruška, “Několik otázek k ochraně stavebních památek, zejména kompozičních souborů a urbanistických celků,” *Památková péče* 27, no. 6 (1967): 167–8.
- 30 Bogusław Szmygin, ed., *Conservation officer's handbook: International standards in cultural heritage protection* (Warsaw: ICOMOS Polska, 2015), 39–42, accessed August 31, 2021, <http://bc.pollub.pl/Content/12726/PDF/conservation.pdf>.
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- 36 Vladimír Novotný, “Oprávněnost rekonstrukce,” *Památky a příroda* 2, no. 7 (1977): 386–90.
- 37 Jan Sokol and Oliva Pechová, “Příprava stavebních úprav Přemyslovského paláce v Olomouci,” *Památková péče* 25, no. 6 (1965): 161–70; Josef Štulc, “Obnova Přemyslovského paláce v Olomouci,” *Památky a příroda* 1, no. 1 (1976): 24–7; Marek Perůtka, ed., *Přemyslovský palác Olomouc: Národní kulturní památka* (Olomouc: Krajské vlastivědné muzeum, 1988); Josef Štulc, “Obnova Přemyslovského paláce v Olomouci a vývoj její památkové koncepce,” *Památky a příroda* 14, no. 4 (1989): 200–15.
- 38 Josef Mayer, “Koncepce památkové obnovy domu U zvonu na Staroměstském náměstí v Praze,” *Památky a příroda* 13, no. 3 (1988): 139–141. Also, Štulc, “Odráz.”
- 39 Patrik Líbal, ed., *Dobroslav Líbal – vědec, pedagog a památkář (1911–2002)* (Praha: Národní památkový ústav, 2017).
- 40 “Nemenší nebezpečí než falešně pojímaný architektonický historismus znamená pro historickou identitu a integritu stavebních památek (případně i celých historických urbanistických souborů) jednostranně prosazovaný modernismus. Ze strany projektantů [...] je často reklamováno právo, ba povinnost, uplatnit svůj tvůrčí projev i v těch případech, kdy se tím popřou poznané autentické výtvarné, historické či urbanistické hodnoty obnovovaných památek.” – Josef Štulc, “K ožívání romantických koncepcí a puristických metod při sanaci a komplexní obnově stavebních památek,” *Památky a příroda* 9, no. 3 (1984): 129–42, here 137; cf. Josef Štulc, “K současnému stavu metodologie údržby a obnovy stavebních památek,” *Památky a příroda* 12, no. 3 (1987): 129–47.
- 41 “dnešní architekt [...] musí tedy dotvářet slohový výraz minulosti s vědomím současnosti, rekonstruovat slohovou ideu novými prostředky.” – Dušan Riedl, *O obnově historických zahrad: Zámecká zahrada v Milotčích* (Brno: Národní památkový ústav, 2008), 6.

- 42 Piero Gazzola et al., *Monumentorum tutela / Ochrana pamiatok* 9 [Proceedings of the ICOMOS Symposium on the Protection of Folk Architecture, held in the High Tatra Mountains and Brno in 1971] (Bratislava: Slovenský ústav pamiatkovej starostlivosti, 1976).
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- 48 Jiří Rudolský, “Chalupy v české krajině,” in *Knihovna Květů pro volnou chvíli* 46, ed. Antonín Jiráček (Praha: Rudé Právo, 1981), 4–9, here 4.
- 49 František Soukup et al., “Obnova historického jádra Českého Krumlova,” *Památky a příroda* 10, no. 5 (1985): 270–79.
- 50 Cf. Lech Krzyzanowski, “Ochrana varšavských památek z minulého století,” *Památková péče* 35, no. 5 (1975): 271–78.
- 51 Hans-Dieter Dyroff, ed., *Erhaltung, Erneuerung und Wiederbelebung alter Stadtgebiete in Europa* (Bonn: Akademie der Architektenkammer Nordrhein-Westfalen and Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission, 1981); Gottfried Kiesow et al., *Alte Städte – Neue Chancen: Städtebaulicher Denkmalschutz* (Bonn: Monumente, 1996).
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- 53 Jiří Grabmüller, ed., *Ochrana památek moderní architektury: Sborník referátů přednesených na celostátní vědecké konferenci v Brně, březen 1970* (Brno: KSSPPOP, 1972); Zdislav Buřival, ed., *Staletá Praha VII: Pražské památky období 1860–1960 a jejich ochrana* [Proceedings of the symposium Praha 1860–1960, held in Prague in 1971] (Praha: Pražské středisko státní památkové péče a ochrany přírody, 1975).
- 54 Pavel Janeček, *Rekonstrukce areálu kolonády v Mariánských Lázních ve vzpomínkách projektanta* (Praha: ČKAIT, 2017).
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- 56 Štulc, “K ožívání,” 136.
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11

# The Vltava Cascade and Czech heritage preservation in the 1950s and 1960s

**MARTIN GAŽI**

There are few more radical and less reversible interventions in the cultural landscape than the construction of dams in historically inhabited areas. This essay aims to uncover whether contemporary heritage preservation had the opportunity to mitigate the cultural losses associated with these large-scale constructions and whether the divergence of central and regional perspectives was evident behind the scenes of its activities.

## **The hydroelectric prestige of the state**

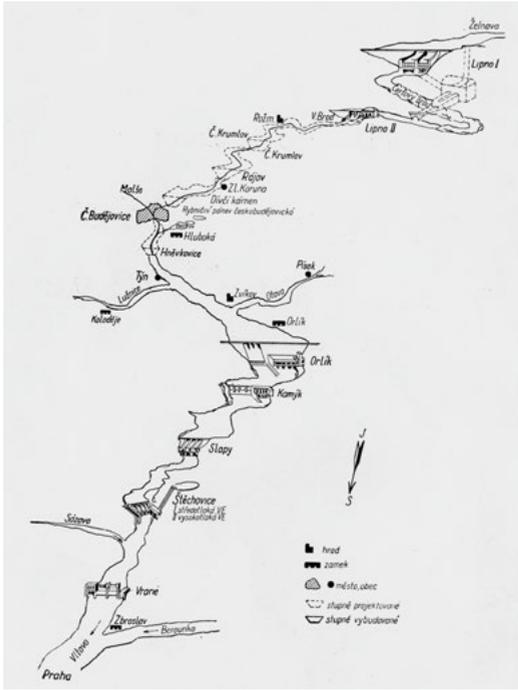
The vision of the Vltava Cascade of hydroelectric works had been gradually crystallizing since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its four-stage form was discussed by the government as early as 1925, and the first law on the construction of dams was passed in the early 1930s. Thereafter, the ambitions of the “hydrocrats”, appealing to broad sections of the population with arguments about the civilizing mission of industrialized rivers, grew rapidly. The plan to build a cascade of hydroelectric dams to turn almost the entire Vltava into the most energy-efficient Czech river was approved by the Czechoslovak government in the early 1950s. In the first phase, not only the Slapy and two Lipno reservoirs, but also the Dívčí Kámen I and II hydroelectric dams were to be built. In the second five-year period, i.e. in the second half of the 1950s, the Orlický and Kamýk dams were to be added, and in the third five-year period the Hněvkovice, Rájov, Český Krumlov, Vrbno and Miřejovice dams were to be added. Although the plans were soon significantly delayed, some of them were nevertheless realized at enormous financial cost (in 1951 the construction of Slapy, 1952 Lipno I and II, 1954 Orlický, and 1956 Kamýk).<sup>1</sup>

The ambitious goal of “*electrifying the national economy*” through water power was in harmony with the intentions of controlling water resources, which in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gradually reached the global East and West and in this technologically optimistic spirit also strongly influenced public opinion.<sup>2</sup> It envisaged the radical exploitation of natural resources without much regard for cultural or natural losses. In pre-February Czechoslovakia, the American cascade of hydroelectric power plants on the Tennessee River in particular found a positive response.<sup>3</sup> In the following decades, idealized examples of hydroelectric works built mainly in the USSR played a major role in the Czechoslovak discourse. Plans for the transformation of nature saw oversized hydroelectric works as a crucial prerequisite for creating the economic base of a supposedly classless society.<sup>4</sup> Only slightly more sophisticated proclamations were also directed behind the Iron Curtain. Maximized waterworks were presented to the world public as proof of the efficiency of the communist-dominated social order. Exemplary in this respect was the emphasis on the presentation of the Orlik waterworks at the 1958 Brussels World Expo; opposite the entrance to the pavilion, which won a gold medal, stood a two-hundred-ton Kaplan turbine as a “*world peculiarity*”.<sup>5</sup>

### Documentation of a vanishing landscape

In the era of Czechoslovak Stalinism and early Khrushchevism, the pressure of the political power system gave almost no space for public discussion of the loss of cultural heritage in the flooded territories. Slight signs of change could be seen during the power-shaky year of 1953. In practice, however, this was only cosmetically manifested, for example by the partial photo-documentation of disappearing monuments organized by the Prague Stare Care Monuments Administration.

In June 1955, the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (Československá akademie věd, ČSAV) established the working group A/16 “*for scientific research and technical security of monuments*”, which originally belonged to the academic Commission for Assistance to Large Socialist Buildings, and later to the Commission for Water Management. This expert group was headed by the powerful Prague academic Zdeněk Wirth, a renowned First Republic heritage expert and in the early 1950s chairman of the Philosophy and History Section of ČSAV. The documentation of the brutally devastated heritage stock in practice began slowly in 1957, and only in the summer of the following year did it gain a bit more momentum.<sup>6</sup>



◀ Fig. 1. The Vltava Cascade planned in the second half of the 1950s, published 1958. Sketch by Antonín Chlum



◀ Fig. 2. Postage stamp issued on the occasion of Czech participation at EXPO 1958 presenting Kaplan's turbine for the hydroelectric power plant at the dam of the Orlická waterworks (Private collection)

The uniqueness of these surveys lay mainly in their attempt at interdisciplinary comprehensiveness; in addition to conservationists, art historians, archaeologists, and ethnographers, urban planners and landscapers as well as geologists and biologists shared the results of their activities. The most comprehensive results were relatively achieved by the teams focused on geological and ethnographic research.<sup>7</sup> The planned “*exemplary care*” of many disciplines could thus be presented to the general public. However, the efficiency of the documentation activities was already hampered by the strong bureaucratization of the management, the lack of material equipment of the surveyors and the fatal lack of time – the demolition of the buildings was carried out at a much higher pace.<sup>8</sup>

### Archaeological surveys

There were also fundamental problems related to rescue archaeological excavations. Although Zdeněk Wirth repeatedly presented their efficient system at academic meetings, the reality was different. In the mid-1950s, the summaries of the work carried out included surveys of three dozen villages on both sides of the river, but these were rather indicative findings without a concentrated focus on research. This laziness was most evident in the case of the ruins of St. Nicholas Church below Zvíkov Castle. When the state enterprise Hydroprojekt carried out a probing geological survey in the area of this 13<sup>th</sup> century building in 1955, the archaeological supervision was rather formal. In the following year, although archaeological probes were laid more systematically, a single archaeologist could only use the work of a single worker.<sup>9</sup> Although the excavation was far from complete, further professional activities ceased in the following years. It is therefore not surprising that when in May 1958 Karel Polesný, the district conservator, sent a notice to the Prague State Care Monuments Administration on this matter, he considered it beyond doubt that the archaeological investigation of the site had definitely not proceeded as the importance of the site required.<sup>10</sup> He was not alone in his surprise. Shortly before, the geologist Quido Záruba had also strongly warned his academic colleagues about the neglect of the important survey, and gradually other members of Wirth’s academic commission, especially Viktor Kotrba, joined him.<sup>11</sup> Already in the spring of 1959, workers organized by the South Bohemian Regional National Committee (Krajský národní výbor, KNV) began to move around the area below the level of the approaching flood, dismantling the remains of the medieval structures without any ado and using the material to secure the higher parts of the castle; the rescue work organized by the ČSAV working group, on the other hand, did not start until September

1959.<sup>12</sup> Similar postponement of archaeological investigations can be traced in written sources at other sites intended to be partially or completely flooded.

### Hints of controversy and emphasis on modern salvage technology

Internationally, the contradiction between the economic demands of rapidly modernizing states and the protection of cultural values became a major topic of debate in the late 1950s and early 1960s. There was, however, overwhelming agreement that a fruitful link had to be found between the unquestioned values of civilizational progress and cultural heritage. This was also the spirit in which the calls for global UNESCO campaigns were formulated, most notably the one launched in 1959 in connection with the Great Aswan Dam on the Egyptian Nile. Czechoslovak public opinion reacted sensitively to *“the greatest action for the preservation of heritage properties ever undertaken by mankind”*.<sup>13</sup> The connection between dam building and the preservation of cultural heritage was therefore increasingly made in domestic public discourse as a sign of civilizational maturity.

In Czechoslovakia, the publication of the groundbreaking Act No. 22 on cultural heritage properties (1958) could be seen as somewhat at odds with the prevailing optimism of the modernization discourse. At the time, its content was interpreted very boldly by Jakub Pavel, the deputy director of the newly established State Institute for Monument Protection and Nature Conservation (Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, SÚPPOP) in Prague and an unquestioned authority in the field at the time. In a semi-public medium, he presented ideas that critically touched upon the foundations of the ideology of state hydrocratic prestige.<sup>14</sup> When he questioned *“the planning works that are pervasively reshaping the face of our landscape”*, especially the vast valley dams, he must have known that he was also questioning the scientific and technical achievements of socialism. Experience had shown that *“in this struggle, irreplaceable cultural certainties usually lost out and lost ground to the planned economic values”* which, as he coolly suggested, *“did not come to the extent envisaged”*. Thus, instead of the promised prosperity, only extensive cultural damage was repeatedly achieved.

It was clear from Pavel’s text, which was addressed to regional conservationists, that the field he was defending was meant to express opposition to the government’s proposed trend. However, there was no room for this in practice. It did, however, offer itself in the development of technologies for saving selected parts



⬆ Fig. 3. Červená nad Vltavou, archaeological survey of evidence of settlement from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, including the foundations of a stone tower-like structure built around 1200, identified as a watchtower and river navigation station built by the Premonstratensians from the monastery in Milevsko, photo September 1960 (Photoarchive of the National Heritage Institute, Regional Office in České Budějovice)

of the endangered heritage stock. In the context of the Orlík waterworks, this concerned in particular two high-value conservation areas: Orlík Castle and Zvíkov Castle. In the case of Orlík in particular, it was necessary to secure the bedrock statically at depth. The methods and specific working procedures of this complex intervention were developed by a centrally organized interdisciplinary group under the leadership of Prof. Bedřich Hacar, the long-time leader of the Research and Testing Institute of Building Materials and Structures at the CTU in Prague. The public promotion of state investment in these life-saving technologies emphasized “*the achievements of our leading experts*” and there was undoubtedly much to highlight and be proud of. The rock under Orlík Castle has become a laboratory of innovative technical procedures applicable to other similarly endangered sites.<sup>15</sup>

The feverish pace of development of new technologies, however, brought with it considerable pitfalls. Already ten months after the start of operation of the waterworks, it was clear that the obligatory optimism would have to be tempered. The alarm call of the district conservation activists, i.e. the unpaid regional field workers, led to the establishment of a working group consisting of specialists from the Prague SÚPPOP, the České Budějovice regional center, the district conservator and the relevant officials of the district and town national committees (městský národní výbor, MNV). In October 1962, it met at Orlík Castle and noted the terrible defects of the stone blocks and masonry. The permanent contact of rock, masonry, and water confronted theoretical assumptions with a reality that could hardly be simulated before the rise of the water level. Traditional structures, although “improved” by massive protective interventions, continued to behave unpredictably in an environment so different from that for which they were built. Two years later, within a single day, cracks of up to two centimeters appeared between the western retaining wall and the mass of the castle.<sup>16</sup> “Adverse events” due to the direct action of the rising water level had to be repeatedly dealt with in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>17</sup> Although the system has long been publicly proclaimed to be functional and efficient, its actors at the time could not necessarily avoid fundamental doubts about its effectiveness and purpose.

### **Hasty transfers of selected monuments**

Although tentative proposals for the transfer of some particularly remarkable rural architecture from the Orlík Valley had been made at central level for several years, they had never been translated into realistic considerations. The organization of such activities by research organizations was almost bureaucratically unfeasible, and the demolitions organized by the KNV were already in full swing in 1958. By the time the transfer could be discussed and approved, there was nothing to transfer.<sup>18</sup> The fact that the top Gothic church in Těchnice in Central Bohemia was quietly sacrificed, and with it hundreds of other less conspicuous and important heritage properties, was simply not discussed.

The effort to save at least some of what would soon disappear beneath the Orlík Reservoir culminated in the hasty dismantling of 1,100 steel and many hundreds more stone elements of one of the first chain bridges in Central Europe, built between 1846 and 1848 near Podolsko. For many years thereafter, its parts were overgrown by bushes near the reopened waterworks. After many

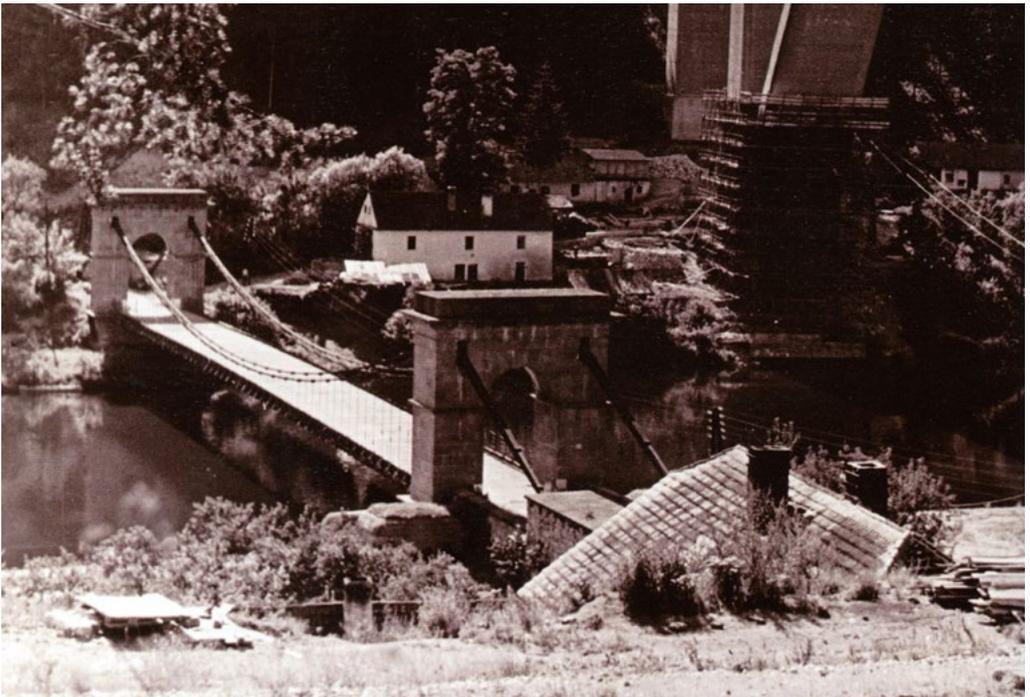
vicissitudes full of misunderstandings and contradictions between the persons and organizations involved, the “*last functional chain bridge in Czechoslovakia*” was finally rebuilt in Stádlec. However, the complete takeover of the real socialist “endless” construction took place only in 1975.<sup>19</sup>

The rescue of the Romanesque-Gothic church of St. Bartholomew in Červená nad Vltavou was also considered a spectacular undertaking that could be used as a proof of the cultural character of the socialist establishment.<sup>20</sup> The first manifestations of serious interest in its relocation can be traced in the environment of the academic group A 16 in the first half of 1958, but they did not accelerate the real action. The rapidly passing months of helplessness were bridged only by the activity of regional conservationists – the district conservator and later the staff of the regional center. It was only on the basis of their repeated impulses that the central conservation institutions began to act. As late as December 1959, the water management directorate admitted the possibility of “*leaving [the church] in place [and] flooding it with rising water after the removal of the valuable and monumental parts*”.<sup>21</sup> The specialists in the central institutions did not take into account the need for negotiations at the political level and concentrated on discussing the technology of intervention. The plan to flood the structure was only definitively reversed by a ministerial decree of 11 March 1960.<sup>22</sup> A clear sign of the heritage “victory” was the fact that this attitude was rigidly adopted by the district and regional political authorities, which initially rejected the financially costly construction intervention or approached it with deliberate passivity and reserve.

In the exceptionally rainy summer of 1960, the restorers removed the murals from the church walls, attempted to dry them by baskets of burning coke, and placed them temporarily in crates, which they took to a local inn, where they moldered for many years. The flow of the Vltava was closed on 29 September 1960, the church tower was demolished on 12 December 1960 and shortly afterwards, on new foundations, about 150 meters long and 40 meters high from the original location, the construction of the church began using individual original architectural elements and partly blocks of masonry. The considered concept of saving the entire original mass of the church, including the tower and the enclosure wall, which preferred to transfer the entire structure of both faces of the masonry by means of reinforced blocks, was apparently only partially successful in reality. The masons left the site in April 1961<sup>23</sup> and any work activity thereafter ceased for a long time. Nevertheless, the project and the realization of the transfer of the June Church were celebrated at an



◀ Fig. 4. Orlik Castle, static securing of the bedrock beneath the northern façade, in addition to deep boreholes fed with "cement milk" and filled with "activated cement mortar" or the use of prestressed rods and reinforced concrete belts, the caverns were sealed with new masonry using tubular scaffolding at a height of 60 m above the river level, 1960 (photo Zdeněk Budínka, published in the journal Památková péče, 1964)



⬆ Fig. 5. Podolsko near Písek, one of the first chain bridges in Central Europe before it was removed from its original location, 1960 (Private collection)



◀ Fig. 6. Podolsko u Písku, temporary location of the numbered parts of the bridge above the border of the floodplain, 1964 (Photoarchive of the National Heritage Institute, Regional Office in České Budějovice)



◀ Fig. 7. Červená nad Vltavou, St. Bartholomew's Church in the bend of the Vltava River, its masonry partly removed and transported outside the area of the floodplain, tower in the state shortly before demolition, archaeological survey underway in the foreground, September 1960 (Photoarchive of the National Heritage Institute, Regional Office in České Budějovice)

exhibition at the Grassi Palace on the occasion of the *Second International Congress of Monument Architects and Engineers* in Venice, Italy, at the end of May 1964.<sup>24</sup> The modernist trend in European conservation, based on optimistic assumptions of harmony between cultural heritage and the latest technologies for its preservation, was triumphant there at the same time that the transferred structure of the Červená church, which had long lacked an owner and a caretaker, was rapidly becoming a mold-filled ruin surrounded by a makeshift building dump overgrown with bushes.<sup>25</sup>

### The “barricaded” chateau and the city’s demolitions

The construction of the Orlick dam also significantly affected the face of the settlements sixty river kilometers away from the dam. This was particularly true of the chateau, the chateau park and the town of Koloděje nad Lužnicí as well as the historic bishop’s town and until 1960 the district town of Týn nad Vltavou.

In the end, the best way to protect the heritage values was to protect the Baroque chateau with its important medieval and Renaissance structures in Koloděje. This happened despite the fact that the regional political elites initially favored the interests of the local collective farm, which had occupied the agricultural part of the chateau grounds after the communist seizure of power. Its management sought to obtain financial subsidies, earmarked by the state investor for riverbank improvements and protection of the chateau, for the construction of a new cooperative complex.<sup>26</sup> The intention of the Koloděje cooperative workers went with the times; at Christmas 1959, even the supreme Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, who at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union called for the widespread demolition of the old village buildings and the construction of a new, already fully socialist countryside, must have spoken to them from his heart.<sup>27</sup>

As Koloděje chateau, was directly threatened by the rising water level, representatives of the Prague Directorate of Construction, Development, and Administration of Water Works commissioned a dam project to protect it. However, its technical solution corresponded to the desire to save as much money as possible, and therefore the chateau’s cellar was in danger of flooding on a regular basis. Representatives of the České Budějovice Regional Centre for Heritage Protection, the Prague SÚPPOP and the Prague Municipal Museum, which was building its depositories in the chateau, part of the complex, therefore



⬆ Fig. 8. Koloděje nad Lužnicí, chateau with repaired façades behind the newly built dam by the river bank, 1964 (Photoarchive of the National Heritage Institute, Regional Office in České Budějovice)

⬇ Fig. 9. Koloděje nad Lužnicí, townhouses No. 140, 141, 142 shortly before demolition, 1963 (Photoarchive of the National Heritage Institute, Regional Office in České Budějovice).



had an excited discussion about its parameters. However, the cheap option was still looming in February 1961.<sup>28</sup> After the “behind the scenes” intervention of the aforementioned academic Bedřich Hacar and a series of meetings with the participation of Zdeněk Budinka, the most experienced among the technically oriented monuments’ architects of his time and at that time an employee of SÚPPOP, a more demanding technology with a “*deeply founded sealing dam with a sheet pile wall*” and water pumping in case of excessive water level rise was finally used.<sup>29</sup> The innovative technical solution subsequently began to arouse public interest, which contributed, among other things, to the rapid release of state funds not only for security against rising water levels, but also for the repair of the castle façades and the restoration of some of the interior murals.<sup>30</sup> However, other monumentally valuable buildings in Koloděje, especially seven valuable townhouses with Renaissance and Baroque structures, were sacrificed without any sign of negotiation. No one even tried to prevent their removal.<sup>31</sup>

In Týn nad Vltavou as well, regional conservationists could only helplessly watch the demolition of several mills, chapels and especially townhouses, including those with medieval cores, in the early 1960s. The coastal part of the town with its unique atmosphere was then completely forgotten. The official urban narrative welcomed “*great changes*”, while the inhabitants had long been convinced that the large-scale demolitions marked a new beginning in the history of the town, which would no longer be rurally “lost” and would become the sought-after center of the south of the “*great lake*”.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps needless to say, this grand vision remained a utopia.

### **Under the threat of further flooding**

Even after the Orlick and Kamýk reservoirs were put into operation, the state plan envisaged the construction of further stages of the Vltava cascade, which had a considerable impact on the conservation of the areas concerned.<sup>33</sup> However, the progress of their preparation was already delayed in the second half of the 1950s, and the district plan for the Upper Vltava region, which was to determine the long-term outlook for the preparatory work and the actual implementation of water management structures, was revised again and again. Its final form was postponed with indeterminate deadlines. There was no consensus of intent even among the various branches of the state administration, which gradually found that the return on the huge investment in water works was not realistic in the geographical conditions of the mountainous European watershed.<sup>34</sup>

Prospectively, the greatest damage to the monument fund was threatened by the dam above Český Krumlov, the flood of which, according to plans from the 1950s, was to swallow the Gothic church in Zátoň and the extremely valuable, albeit devastated by the post-war displacement of the German-speaking population, town of Rožmberk nad Vltavou. In 1955, an unsuccessful initiative to declare the town a conservation area was launched from there.<sup>35</sup> Neither the local civic initiatives organized by local artists in 1957 nor the warning sent to the state authorities – this time with his name and therefore his professional authority – by the art historian Viktor Kotrba in 1959 helped.<sup>36</sup>

The threat of flooding of the town, including the lofty Gothic parish church, was perceived at the time as extremely urgent, with the water level rising to the foundations of the Lower Castle. The project to secure the rock beneath this former aristocratic residence, which was to be inspired by the technologies then applied to the bedrock of Orlík Castle, was first officially discussed after mid-1959.<sup>37</sup> At the end of that year, the conservationists of the České Budějovice Regional Centre even decided to call on the state authorities to reassess the plan for the waterworks altogether.<sup>38</sup> It is not entirely clear from the surviving sources who was behind this initiative, probably the young conservationist Marian Farka, then still employed at the České Budějovice Regional Center,<sup>39</sup> who at the same time actively sought (albeit also unsuccessfully) to change the parameters of the prepared guideline zoning plan, on the basis of which a valuable part of the historic buildings of Týn nad Vltavou was subsequently demolished. It is clear from the correspondence that he consulted in detail with Jakub Pavel from Prague.<sup>40</sup>

Although there was a building closure in the town's inner city and no funds were allowed to be spent on repairs to local monuments, at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, conservationists in cases of damage to parts of the historic town (especially the town houses and walls) acted as if the forthcoming total demolition was not certain.<sup>41</sup> From 1962, however, the Český Krumlov District National Committee (okresní národní výbor, ONV) was deciding on matters related to the abolition of monument protection and construction in the town of Rožmberk, knowing that destruction was inevitable. The town houses and other buildings, including the local synagogue, began to disappear one by one, according to the district and regional national committee, which at that time insisted only on the preservation of the medieval town walls. Moreover, the “*monument demolitions*” were financed primarily with money earmarked for monument preservation, which the regional center (unsuccessfully, of course) objected to.<sup>42</sup>



⬆ Fig. 10. Týn nad Vltavou, demolition of townhouses within reach of the rising river level, 1962 (Photoarchive of the National Heritage Institute, Regional Office in České Budějovice)

⬇ Fig. 11. Rožmberk nad Vltavou, general view of the valley with the town in the river meander and the upper and lower castle on the hill, 1962 (Photoarchive of the National Heritage Institute, Regional Office in České Budějovice)





⬆ Fig. 12. Rožmberk nad Vltavou, townhouse no. 77 on the square, state after the collapse of the gable with the attic floor, in the background the lower castle, 1962 (Photoarchive of the National Heritage Institute, Regional Office in České Budějovice)



⬆ Fig. 13. Rožmberk nad Vltavou, interior of the staircase of the townhouse no. 76 with visible medieval constructions, on the reverse side is a record of the photo taken five hours before the collapse of the building, 18 April 1962 (photo Petr Pešek, photoarchive of the National Heritage Institute, Regional Office in České Budějovice)

The most destructive plans were conceived by the water managers in 1966 and 1967, when they were politically backed by the ambitious communist reformer Josef Smrkovský, chairman of the Central Water Management Administration and later minister.<sup>43</sup> Not only were the ideas for more Vltava reservoirs activated at that time, but even worse was that the level of the Český Krumlov I reservoir, which was supposed to reach 553 m above sea level according to the older plans, was suddenly raised by more than 10 m in the last plan, to 563.1 m above sea level. This would have meant partial flooding of the Lower Rožmberk Castle and the grounds of the Vyšší Brod Monastery.<sup>44</sup> Regional conservationists were not invited to the negotiations at that time. At a meeting organized by Hydroprojekt in November 1966 with the participation of centrally organized experts from ČSAV and SÚPPOP (Anežka Merhautová, Jarmila Vildová, Václav Spurný, and Jakub Pavel), a variant design for a cascade of waterworks was presented, focusing in particular on the Český Krumlov, Rájov, and Dívčí Kámen waterworks.<sup>45</sup> Although the record of the meeting managed to include wording that did not recommend the maximized alternative of a dam above Český Krumlov, the further results of the meeting did not even try to give the impression of seeking a compromise. This was in the preservation of the selected historic buildings themselves, not in the conditions of their continued existence. Ten meters higher than the 1955 plan, the upper part of the ruins of Dívčí Kámen Castle was to be left on a newly created inaccessible island. And in the immediate vicinity of the Zlatá Koruna Monastery, two ten-meter high earth dikes were to be built.

The design work continued in this vein until the spring of 1971, after which – without anyone officially cancelling it – it ceased to be publicly discussed. However, until the early 1990s, the built-up area of Rožmberk nad Vltavou remained in a catastrophic state, resembling a town that had been ravaged by war. Dozens of townhouses with valuable historical structures were derelict, and even many of those that survived could no longer be repaired and made functional without significant losses.

## Conclusion

After the Cultural Monuments Act was passed in 1958, there was a need to set up ways of cooperation between central and regional conservation institutions. As we have tried to show in the cases related to the construction of the “*Vltava stages of socialism*”, buildings that the propaganda of the communist authorities made into a showcase of the social order, the cooperation of conservationists



⬆ Fig. 14. Zlatá Koruna, general view of the valley with the Cistercian monastery, 1989 (photo Vojtěch Storm, private collection)

at different levels of the institutional structure in many cases led to mutually beneficial activities. The exceptions were especially cases when state investor organizations tried to reach out to Prague and regional specialists separately, taking advantage of the resulting information noise.

It is possible to trace relatively constant differences in the central and regional perspectives on heritage conservation. Centrally organized specialists were usually closer to “technocratic” problem solving, massive documentation or rescue campaigns, and public presentation of successful integration of the worlds of conservation and scientific and technical innovation. Regional conservationists, whether from the regional center or individual district conservators, as well as members of district conservation commissions, usually saw the merit of their activities in gathering information and negotiating with regional government structures. At a time when distant experts were arguing over the details of technology or the finer points of the theoretical grounding of conservation approaches, they attempted to use much less sophisticated arguments that nevertheless had the hope of being understood in the regional political context. In places where the successful use of new technologies was broadcast to the world from the center, they tended to see all that was unthought of and left out. The applause of the international forum, which in Venice in 1964, for example, looked with interest at the slowly opening world of conservation behind the Iron Curtain, did not inspire enthusiasm in the region.

The modernist concept of balancing the values of cultural heritage protection and rapid civilizational progress in a regional perspective was losing its luster, partly because the condition of the structures that had recently been saved and presented as an unquestionable success of the field (and, according to the phraseology of the time, the functionality of the whole system) was deteriorating rapidly. The county and district conservationists were close witnesses to the real state of affairs and tried to sound the alarm.

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*English translation by Bryce Belcher*



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- 22 Decree of the Ministry of Energy and Water Management of 11 March 1960. Srov. Varhaník, "K záchraně," 294.
- 23 NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, PI 2539 A, minutes of the inspection of 19 April 1961.
- 24 Jakub Pavel, "II. mezinárodní kongres architektů a techniků památkové péče v Benátkách," *Památková péče* 24 (1964): 233–6.
- 25 SOkA Písek, Konzervátor Písek, sign. II-1, tab 2, letter from Karel Dolista to Jan Toman, 22 December 1965; idem, IV-2, tab 7, copy of letter from Karel Dolista to Josef Kořen, Inspector for Culture of the ONV in Písek, 26 April 1965.
- 26 NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČB 197, copy of a letter from the Commission for Water Management and Energy of the ONV in České Budějovice to the Museum of the Capital City of Prague, 15 March 1961.
- 27 From Khrushchev's speech quoted, e.g., by Jiří Hružka, *Budoucnost měst* (Praha: Orbis, 1962), 115.
- 28 NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČB 197, copy of a letter from the Directorate of Construction, Development and Administration of Water Works in Prague addressed to the KSSPPOP ČB on 16 December 1959; copy of a letter from the KSSPPOP ČB addressed to the Directorate of Construction, Development and Administration of Water Works in Prague on 28 December 1959; copy of the minutes of the meeting of 23 February 1961 and a copy of the decision of the Department of Water Management and Energy of the ONV in ČB of 24 February 1961.
- 29 Budinka, "Nad dílem," 86–7.
- 30 NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČB 197, copy of minutes of meeting of 5 December 1962; copy of letter from KSSPPOP ČB to the South Bohemian Monument Maintenance Company in Tábor on 3 May 1963; copy of letter from KSSPPOP ČB to the Museum of the Capital City of Prague on 30 December 1963.
- 31 NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČB 197, copy of a letter from KSSPPOP ČB to the Directorate of Construction, Development and Administration of Water Works in Prague on 12 May 1959; copy of a letter from KSSPPOP ČB to SÚPPOP on 14 May 1959; letter from MNV in Týn nad Vltavou to KSSPPOP ČB on 12 March 1963.

- 32** SOkA České Budějovice, Městský národní výbor Týn nad Vltavou, ID 227, *Pamětní kniha města Týna nad Vltavou* (1934–1980), p. 243.
- 33** See Martin Gaži, “Rožmberk pod Vltavou, Dívčí Kámen na ostrově. K záměrům dokončení Vltavské kaskády v druhé polovině 20. století,” *Památky jižních Čech* 6 (2015): 33–67.
- 34** ÚDU AV ČR, Wirth, box 50, file 1 (Vltava. Memorandum), Report on the discussion of the technical and economic guidelines of the district plan on 10–12 November 1958, č. j. XXII/1.951, fol. 43–6.
- 35** NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, Č – Rožmberk town A, 1955–1975, letter of the ONV in Kaplice addressed to the State Care Monument Administration in Prague, 11 May 1955.
- 36** IAH CAS, Wirth, Carton 50, file 1 (Vltava. Memorandum), *Kulturněhistorický průzkum oblastí Vltavy se zřetelem k realizaci vltavské kaskády*, typescript by Viktor Kotrba, 18 May 1959, fol. 37.
- 37** NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČK – Rožmberk town A, 1955–1975, letter from the Directorate of Construction, Development and Administration of Water Works in Prague addressed to KSSPPOP ČB, 31 July 1959; minutes of local investigation, 11 September 1959.
- 38** NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČK – Rožmberk město A, 1955–1975, copy of letter from KSSPPOP ČB to the Department of Education and Culture of the KNV Council on 11 November 1959; typescript *Rožmberk nad Vltavou. Město a krajina, její minulost a význam pro přítomnou dobu*, without author and date.
- 39** Marian Farka, a heritage town planner, worked at the Prague SÚPPOP during the 1960s and after 1968 at the Vienna Monuments Office and the local university. See Friedrich Berg, “In memoriam Dr. Marian Farka,” *Archäologie Österreichs. Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte* 42, no. 3/2 (1992): 4.
- 40** NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČB – Týn nad Vltavou město, různé, 1951–2002, copy of letter from KSSPPOP ČB to the Department for Construction and Water Management of the KNV, 16 September 1959; manuscript of undated concept note.
- 41** NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČK – Rožmberk město A, 1955–1975, letter from KSSPPOP ČB to KSSPPOP ČB, 22 September 1959; copy of letter from KSSPPOP ČB to the Department of Education and Culture of the Council of the ONV in Kaplice, 25 September 1959.
- 42** NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČK – Rožmberk město A, 1955–1975, copy of demolition permit dated 21 May 1962; copy of letter from KSSPPOP ČB to the Department of Education and Culture in Prague on 14 August 1962; copy of letter from KSSPPOP ČB to the Council of the ONV in Český Krumlov on 19 September 1962; minutes of the meeting on the proposal to demolish listed buildings in Rožmberk on 19 December 1963.
- 43** At the beginning of the 1950s, Josef Smrkovský was the top representative of the Stalinist plan for the transformation of nature, cf. Olšáková and Janáč, *Kult jednoty*, 164, 248.
- 44** NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČK – Rožmberk město A, 1955–1975, copy of a letter from the Department of Education and Culture of the ONV in Český Krumlov addressed to the Department of Construction of the ONV there 24. March 1966; copy of a letter from KSSPPOP ČB to the Regional Investor Unit in České Budějovice (KIÚ ČB) on 4 October 1966; NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČK 1489/4 A, copy of a letter from the Department of Construction of the ONV in Český Krumlov to KIÚ ČB on 29 December 1966.
- 45** NPÚ, ÚOP ČB, ČK – Rožmberk město A, 1955–1975, copy of letter from the Department of Construction of the ONV in Český Krumlov to the KIÚ ČB, 18 January 1967; copy of the record of the production committee for the study of the complex use of the Horní Vltava River, Hydroprojekt Praha, 10 November 1966.

12

# The Palace of Culture in Dresden

ALF FURKERT

The history of the Palace of Culture in Dresden (Fig. 1)<sup>1</sup> from the first ideas about its construction to its appearance and use in the present, is a vivid example of the change of views on architecture and urban planning in the socialist society of the former GDR and also of the epoch after the German reunification in 1990 and the previous peaceful revolution.

The destruction of the Second World War<sup>2</sup> was so extensive in the centre of Dresden (Fig. 2) that one could not speak of a repair or renovation of the substance, but rather the term of rebuilding the city<sup>3</sup> was more appropriate. At the same time it was hoped that a modified reconstruction would improve the hygienic situation of the previously very densely built-up city centre and facilitate a better inner-city circulation.

Plans for a modified reconstruction of Dresden's inner city, as well as other German cities which were threatened by aerial warfare, were already made during the time of national socialism. The danger of the war returning to the territory of the former German Empire had evidently been realistically assessed. Such planning was obviously associated with implementing ideological ideas in urban planning. For the time of national socialism this meant to create large marching spaces and buildings for mass meetings and events, connected via a large city axis.<sup>4</sup>

The socialists who ruled eastern Germany after the end of the Second World War, with Soviet support, also pursued ideological intentions with the implementation of their reconstruction plans. The working man should be at the centre of

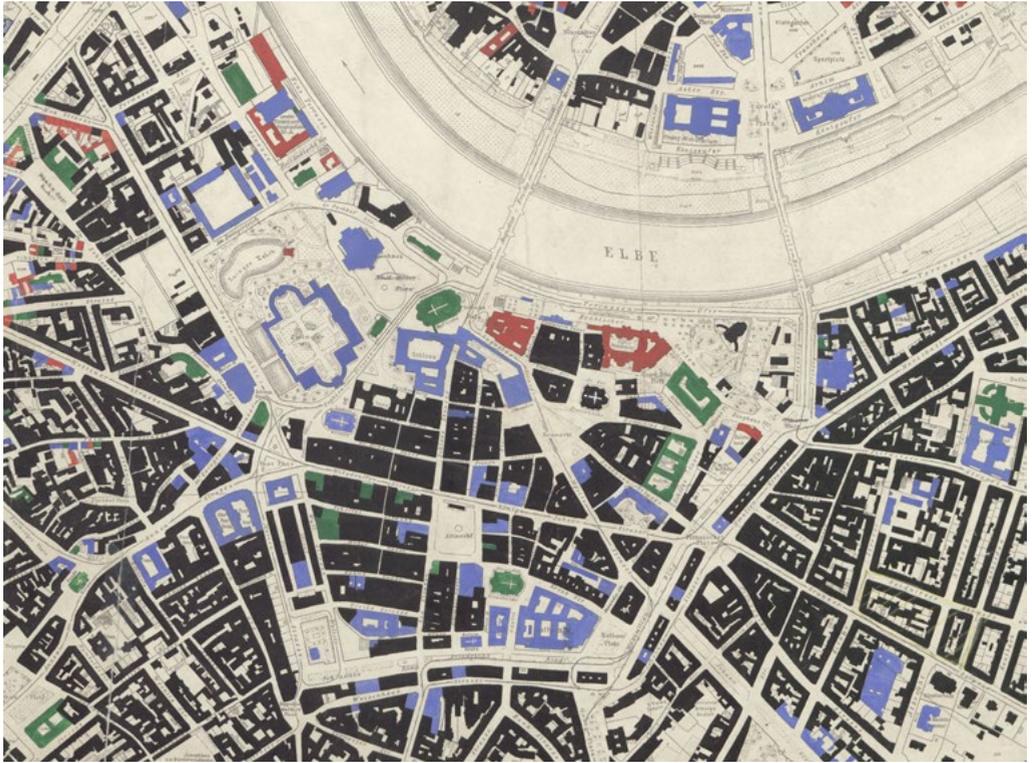


↑ **Fig. 1. Dresden, Palace of Culture after its completion in 1969.**  
Photo Matthias Adam (SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek, sign. df\_hauptkatalog\_0170091)

society and capitalist domination should be a thing of the past. This included the structural legacy of this form of rulership, which was believed to be outdated. And so, castles, manor houses and often churches had a difficult time in terms of reconstruction and were even demolished in many places.<sup>5</sup>

Early plans for the reconstruction of the Dresden centre show a high proportion of residential buildings in a closed neighbourhood structure, but much more loosely than before the destruction<sup>6</sup> (Fig. 3). In 1946 the exhibition “The New Dresden” took place in Dresden to get ideas for rebuilding the destroyed centre. Part of the exhibition was a competition in which prize money totalling 100,000 marks was awarded. For the first time, the idea of a “culture house for the creatives”<sup>7</sup> emerged. With the “16 principles of urban development”<sup>8</sup> adopted by the GDR in 1950, the immediate inner city area was described under point 6 as a zone of “the most important political, administrative and cultural sites”.

In 1952 the GDR Council of Ministers also confirmed the urban planning basis for Dresden. Dresden is named in the “National Development Program” as one



↑ **Fig. 2. Dresden City Council, damage plan of the air raids in 1944/1945, Legend: black = completely destroyed, blue = heavily damaged, green = moderately damaged, red = slightly damaged (Stadtarchiv Dresden, StAD, Stadtbauamt 4.1.9, Dezernat Aufbau, Mappe 513)**

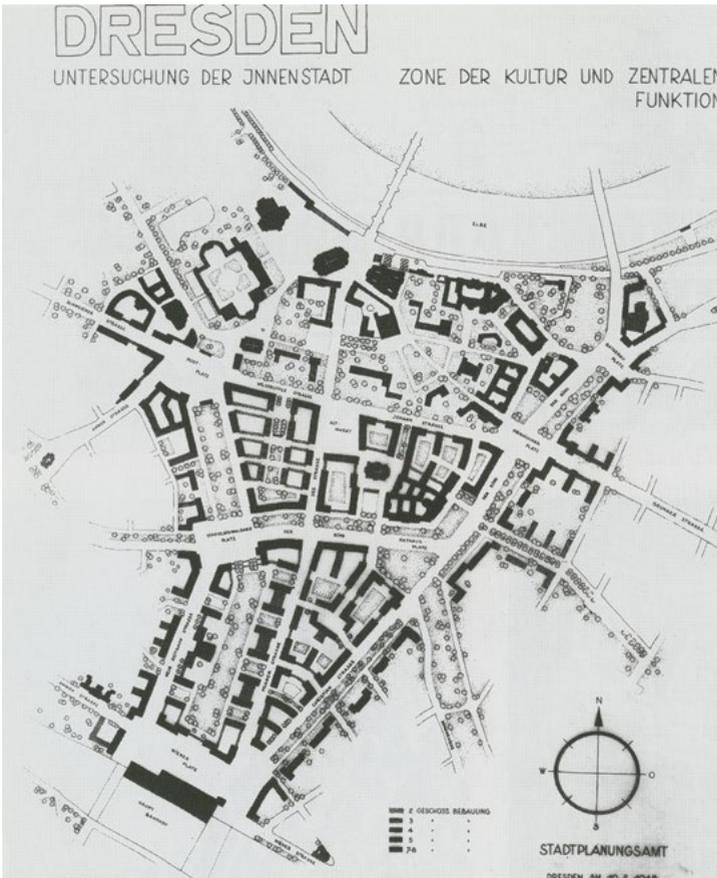
of 53 development sites. The role of the Altmarkt is defined as “a central place and a demonstration place”. In 1952, a limited competition for the design of the Altmarkt was launched among four Dresden architects’ collectives, which demanded that a grandstand and a public building should be provided on the north side of the square. Herbert Schneider (1903–1970), chief architect of the city of Dresden, designed a “House of the Party” for the south side of the Altmarkt, a 76 m high-rise building based on Moscow examples from the Stalin era and thus gave the idea of the tower house a specific shape for the first time. Walter Ulbricht, Deputy Prime Minister of the GDR from 1949 to 1960, liked the dominant feature of the city, better than a central “House of Culture”.<sup>9</sup> In addition to accommodating a wide range of cultural uses, the building should also take on an important urban planning task. The aim was to document the dominance of the new political system also through its structural superiority in the height of the building. Higher than the royal castle tower and also higher than the Frauenkirche and the town hall tower,

both representatives of the city's civic development, the House of Culture should have heralded the new era in the silhouette of the city.

Two aspects are noteworthy here. On the one hand, the new rulers lined up with their efforts in the traditional race for the tallest building, thus adopting traditional values of documenting power despite new demands. On the other hand, a picture template was chosen for the photo montage which contained the dome of the Frauenkirche (Fig. 4). However, this had collapsed as a result of the fire after the bombing and was missing in the silhouette of post-war Dresden. This is possibly an indication that the reconstruction of the Frauenkirche on the Neumarkt was still planned at that time. In the further development up to the end of the GDR, the preservation of its ruin was propagated as a memorial for the Second World War and its destructions.

In terms of style, the planned House of Culture had a traditional neo-baroque appearance and thus corresponded to the residential developments with shops on the ground floor and the first floor that had been built on the east and west sides of Dresden's Altmarkt (Fig. 5) since the early 1950s. This architectural style is often referred to as Stalinist, because it occurred during the time of Stalin's rule, apparently found his favour and was also realised in the Soviet Union itself. The German Building Academy defined the design of the "new German architecture" as "national tradition", the more classical-antique-oriented branch of the Stalinist architectural style, often with a large, antique-looking gable resting on columns on the main façade. It should be understandable for the people through references to their own building tradition. What is remarkable about the construction that was carried out in Dresden are the baroque quotations and, above all, the extensive use of Elbe sandstone in Stalinist post-war architecture (Fig. 6). This material is already predominant in Dresden because of its proximity to the Elbe Sandstone Mountains, and its use in the new buildings in the city centre after the Second World War, despite the somewhat strange stylistics, leads to a better integration of these buildings into the urban fabric and to a faster familiarization or acceptance by the viewer.

For the building of the House of Culture in this pompous architectural style the time had however obviously expired, and despite different draft revisions by the architect Herbert Schneider up to 1956, no decision was made.<sup>10</sup> Stalin had already died in March 1953, and his successors turned away from strict standards, also in architecture. The development period of the Soviet Union, generally known as the thaw, showed signs of turning away from the Stalinist cultural doctrine.



⬇ Fig. 3. Reconstruction plans of the city of Dresden, “Untersuchung der Innenstadt – Zone der Kultur und Zentralen Funktion” from Kurt W. Leucht im Stadtplanungsamt, 10. February 1948 (Stadtarchiv Dresden, StAD, Stadtbauamt 4.1.9, Dezernat Aufbau, Mappe 513)

⬇ Fig.4. Herbert Schneider, “House of Culture”, draft of 1<sup>st</sup> version in the silhouette of Dresden, photomontage 1953 (Stadtarchiv Dresden, Archiv Stiftung Sächsischer Architekten, Nachlass Leopold Wiel)



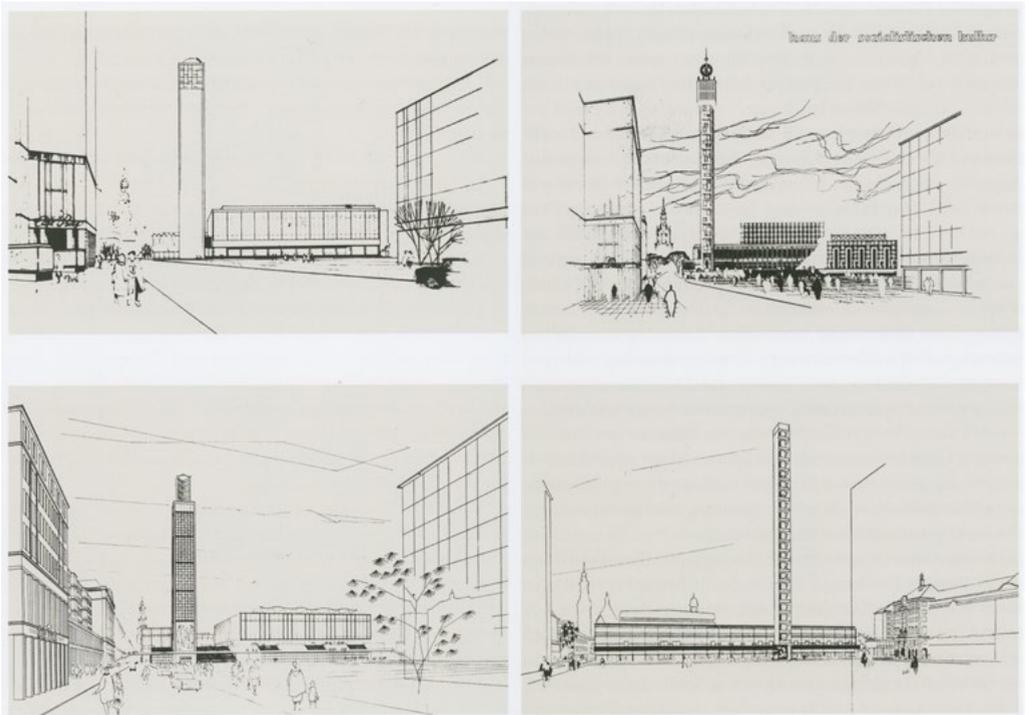


⬆ Fig.5. Herbert Schneider (design); Lothar Thiel (drawing),  
"House of Culture", draft of 3<sup>rd</sup> Version, 1956 (Landesamt für Denkmalpflege  
Sachsen, Plansammlung, Nachlass Herbert Schneider)



⬆ Fig. 6. Dresden, view from the roof of the house of the estates (Ständehaus) to the south over cleared areas, new buildings on the Altmarkt, 1956. Photo Walter Möbius (SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek, sign. df\_hauptkatalog\_0137580)

⬇ Fig. 7. Competition designs "House of Socialist Culture" with tower, 1960 (Stadtplanungsamt Dresden, Archiv Stiftung Sächsischer Architekten, Vorlass Leopold Wiel)

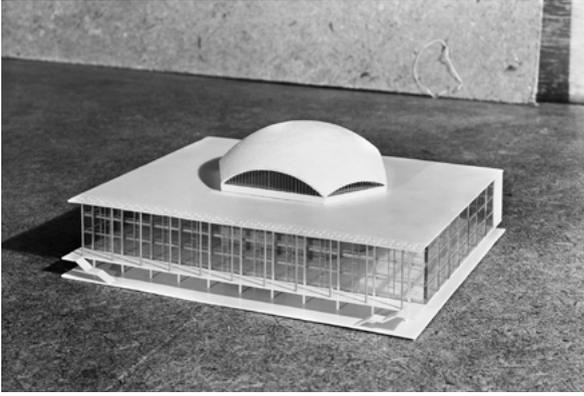


For the House of Culture in the centre of the city, which was still planned in Dresden, this meant a kind of new start. In 1958, the fifth party congress of the SED decided to accelerate the construction of the city centres using the industrial construction process and, specifically for Dresden, called for the completion of a cultural centre by 1965. A multifunctional place for the education and training of the socialist people should be created and serve the *“special care of the unity of professional and folk art”*.<sup>11</sup> In 1959, the city of Dresden launched an idea competition for this “House of Socialist Culture”, which was decided in 1960. Various halls, a cinema, gastronomy, circuit and exhibition rooms, an honorary tribune for 1,000 people and more were required. The specification was still to build a dominant height that would structurally prove the superiority of the socialist system. There was no formal-stylistic specification.

In the competition, in which 29 works were submitted, the exemption from stylistic specifications in the Stalinist sense becomes clear. Between 1958 and 1960 the construction industry was realigned. The architect Gerhard Kosel (1909–2003) was the new President of the German Building Academy. Modern trends could be reflected in architecture and building-related art. *“In 1959, Walter Ulbricht himself called for the use of modern technology for the Palace of Culture, the use of reinforced or prestressed concrete, large glass surfaces, aluminium and new chemical building materials such as silicate panels.”*<sup>12</sup> The submitted drafts are throughout modern, partly inspired by American multistore building drafts or show free standing towers, comparable to Campaniles in modern Italian architecture (Fig. 7). In this way, the requirement to formulate a height dominant is met creatively in different ways. One work stands out, because it does without the required dominant height and instead presents a modern flat dome as the upper end of the building (Fig. 8).<sup>13</sup>

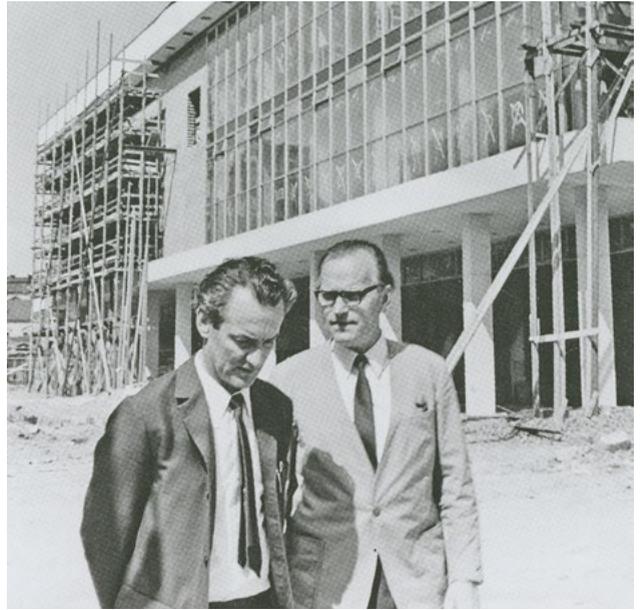
Although the work would usually be excluded for violating the competition conditions, its quality speaks for itself. It shines with an excellent distribution of functions, clear floor plans, and the dome cannot be denied a great charm. The draftsman is, of all people, the university professor Prof. Leopold Wiel (1916–2022) and his collective<sup>14</sup> from the Technical University of Dresden. The decision-makers were at a loss.

In order to secure a decision against later criticism, it was decided to present the problem in Moscow itself. In 1961 the SED city delegation travelled to the Soviet Union and presented the competition designs to a committee made up of representatives from the Moscow Faculty of Architecture and party officials.

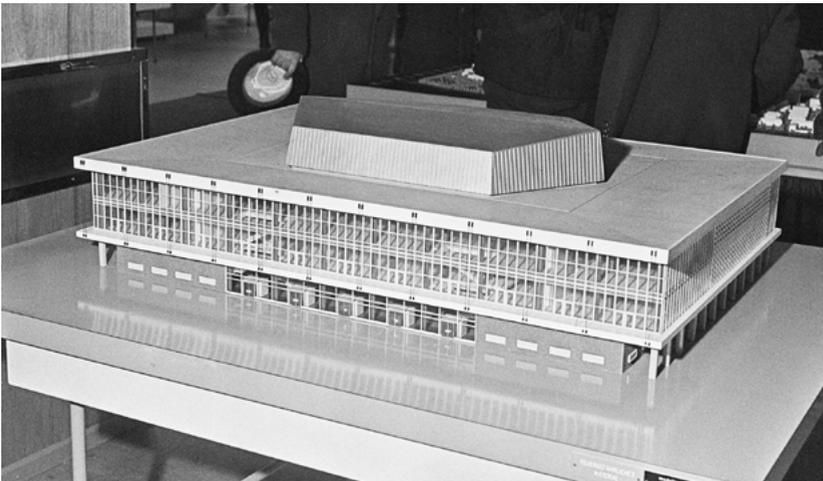


◀ Fig. 8. Model of Palace of Culture, design by Leopold Wiel, revised by Wolfgang Hänsch and Herbert Löschau, around 1963. Photo Rudolph Kramer (SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek, sign. df\_hauptkatalog\_0155904)

▶ Fig. 9. Wolfgang Hänsch and Leopold Wiel on the construction site, around 1968 (Stadtplanungsamt Dresden, Archiv Stiftung Sächsischer Architekten, Nachlass Leopold Wiel)



▶ Fig. 10. Leopold Wiel, Wolfgang Hänsch and collective, Palace of Culture Dresden and model, implemented, around 1965. Photo Erich Höhne & Erich Pohl (SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek, sign. df\_hp\_0005221\_011)



*“The Moscow experts recommended the towerless competition solution from Wiel, because it is not only functionally convincing, but could also be used to preserve the Dresden city skyline.”<sup>15</sup>*

With the now secured decision for the competition work without a tower and instead with a dome, the planning for the House of Culture could go ahead. Numerous reschedulings took place and the rest of the work was entrusted to a planning collective under the direction of Wolfgang Hänsch (1929-2013) and Herbert Löschau from the Project Planning Office VEB Dresdenproject, because Prof. Wiel, as a university professor, was unable to complete the building himself. The cooperation between the two, Wiel and Hänsch, was constructive (Fig. 9).

The revision of the planning mainly led to a reduction of the upper floors from three to two, the elimination of a fixed tribune planned in front of the building, for large-scale demonstrations and the replacement of the dome with a polygonal dome. The planetarium which had been planned under the dome was not realized (Fig. 10).<sup>16</sup>

Construction work began in 1967<sup>17</sup> and ended in 1969, so that the building, now known as the “Palace of Culture”, was punctually finished for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the GDR and could be handed over on October 7, 1969. Its appearance was characterized by great elegance, which was due in many cases to the choice of materials, and at night through its lighting effect down to the urban space on the Altmarkt (Fig. 11). It dominated the north side of the Altmarkt in terms of urban planning and, thanks to its appropriate building height, did not obstruct the view of the silhouette of the old town, which was still imperfect due to the destruction of the war, with the castle tower, court chapel, house of the estates and Dresden Art Academy, but still without the dome of the Frauenkirche. As a structure strictly committed to modernity, it sets a counterpoint to the Stalinist east and west buildings on the Altmarkt.

In the interior the Palace of Culture in Dresden presents itself with innovative technology and high-quality materials. Its large hall was designed as a multifunctional hall and meet this requirement with a mechanically moveable tilting parquet.<sup>18</sup> With its help, parts of the rising stalls could be transformed into a horizontal surface and the hall therefore was also available for larger dance or other events (Fig. 12).



⬆ Fig. 11. Dresden, Palace of Culture after its completion at the inauguration on October 7, 1969. Photo Richard Peter (SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek, sign. df\_ps\_0003588)

When designing smaller halls or foyers, high-quality woods are used and specially manufactured suspended ceilings that meet special acoustic requirements.

Its exterior in Castle Street is adorned with a huge, large-format mural *The Path of the Red Flag*, which was created in 1968/69 by Gerhard Bondzin (1930–2014) with the participation of a working group from the Dresden Art Academy, which depicts the victorious path of the red flag as a symbol of the target of communism (Fig. 13). In a coating technology developed at the University of Transport in 1963, electrostatically charged glass splinters and crushed cork are “shot” onto a surface treated with adhesive and paint.<sup>19</sup>

Since its opening, the Palace of Culture has enjoyed great public acceptance, supported by an extensive program of events in various areas such as music and dance. From 1969 the Palace of Culture in Dresden was one of the first centrally located, multifunctional culture and congress centres of the GDR<sup>20</sup>. A broad spectrum of programs is offered, from classical concerts, organ and choral music to hit music, music competitions, theatre, cinema and entertainment shows. The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra with its amateur choirs was located in the Palace of Culture, and until 1985 also the Staatskapelle Dresden. In addition to the events in the large hall or in the integrated smaller studio stage with its many rooms, the building was also a rehearsal location for amateur choirs, dance groups and many other cultural and cultural-political activities.<sup>21</sup>

In the years after the peaceful revolution and the restoration of German unity in autumn 1990, not only the consumer behaviour of the people changed, but also cultural life. The world was open to everyone, people were busy traveling to previously inaccessible countries, and a variety of new locations and formats developed in the event industry that rivalled traditional event venues such as the Palace of Culture.

The twenty years of uninterrupted playing operations at this time had left its mark, and new building regulations, especially with regard to fire protection, resulted in the need to renovate the Culture Palace. In the 1990s, there was also a broad discussion about how to deal with the structural evidence of socialism. The Culture Palace was regarded as a well-suited example, and some demanded it be demolished. Unsure what to do with the large mosaic of the path of the Red Flag, it was covered with a protective net. The reason given was that parts could fall off. The real reason for this was probably the uncertainty in dealing with this legacy. In 2001 the picture was placed under monument protection as a historical document.

Feasibility studies were carried out, conversions and more conversions around it were planned and the construction of a new concert hall discussed. The land around the Palace of Culture should be sold to finance construction work. Project developers quickly appeared on the scene, who, attracted by the lucrative building site in the city centre, promised a new commercial building and, inside, a concert hall, perhaps even the traditional one.<sup>22</sup> In the case shown, an architectural style was used that is reminiscent of the neo-baroque Stalinist architectural style that we encountered in the first drafts from the 1950s. Only the tower is missing.

But there was also the counter-movement of civic engagement, which advocates the preservation and renovation of the previous Palace of Culture. Not least because of the impending loss, one had remembered its importance. And the multi-year closure due to fire protection deficiencies increased this fear of loss. In addition, as the distance to German reunification grew, there was a reassessment of one's own history. This included the built environment as an identity-creating factor.<sup>23</sup>

And last but not least, the chief architect during the construction of the Palace of Culture, Wolfgang Hänsch himself, who was already over 70 at the time, came up with suggestions on how the Palace of Culture could be upgraded for further use with additions<sup>24</sup> (Fig. 14).

Hänsch resisted the idea of tearing down or changing the interior of the multi-purpose hall. These thoughts had been surfacing in the discussion to revive the Palace of Culture, but now with a hall for predominantly philharmonic use.

In 2004 the Dresden city council decided unanimously to refrain from the previously intended sale of the property and to keep the building in principle, but only in order to improve the acoustics through certain measures. However, there were concerns about a protected status. *“When the Saxon State Office for the Protection of Monuments in Saxony had worked out the justification for the monument status at the end of 2005, discussions with its superior Saxon State Ministry of the Interior led to a wait”*<sup>25</sup> and, in particular, to include research results into the considerations. In 2008 the Saxon State Office for the Protection of Monuments put the Palace of Culture under protection.

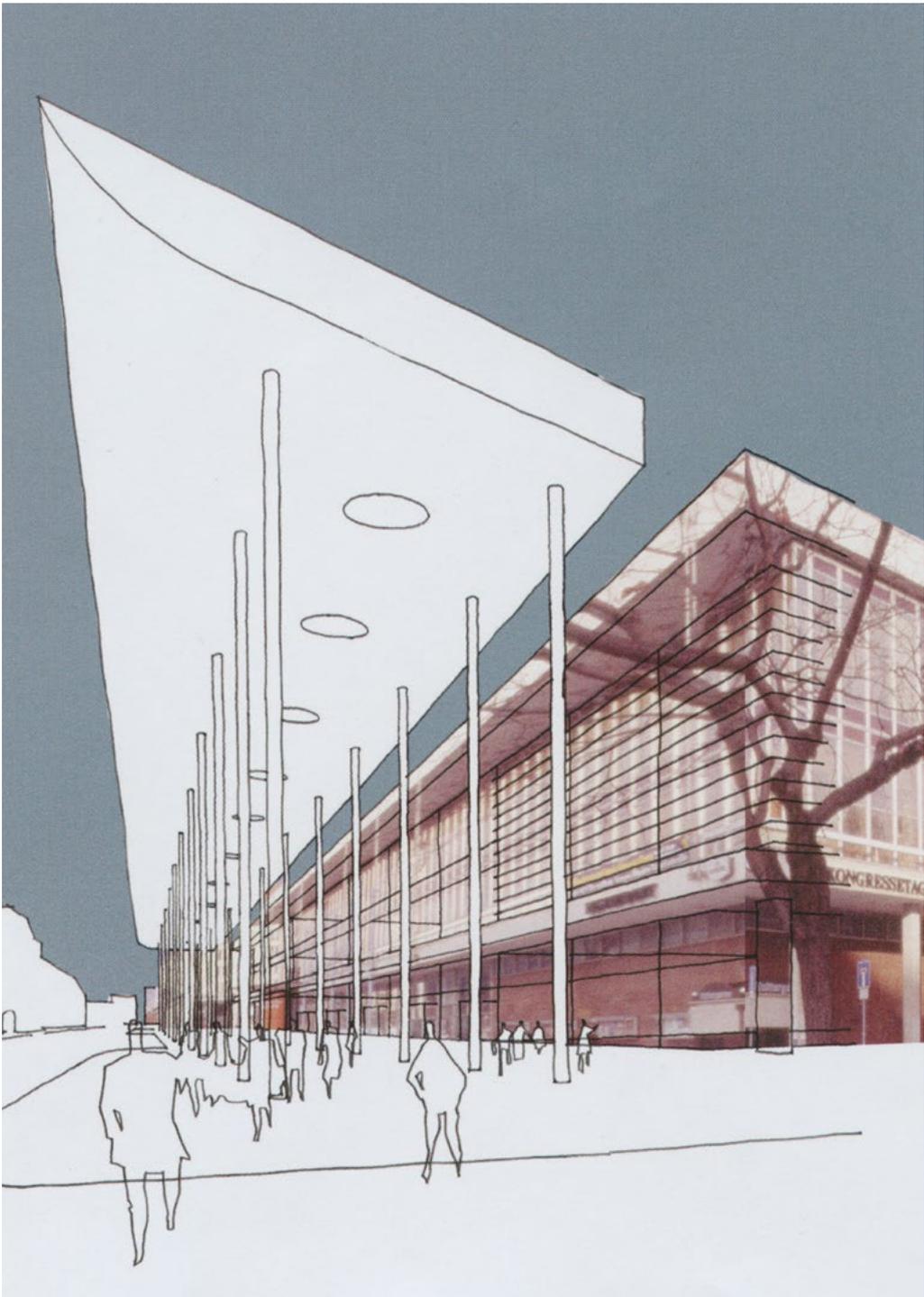
The City of Dresden had decided to preserve the building, and to rebuild it as mentioned. For this a new architectural competition<sup>26</sup> was posted, the third in



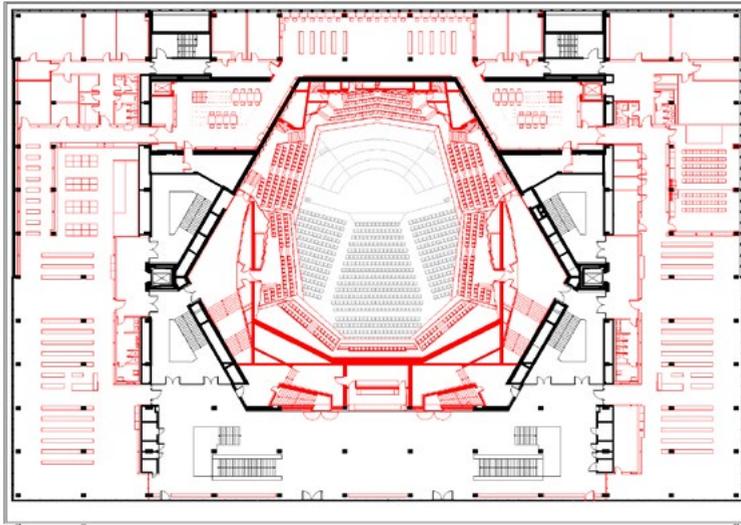
⬆ Fig. 12. Dresden, Palace of Culture, 1969–2013, multi-purpose hall with stage, auditorium with tilting parquet, furnishing Deutsche Werkstätten Hellerau, 1970. Photo Friedrich Weimer (SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek, sign. df\_hauptkatalog\_0268441)



⬆ Fig. 13. Dresden, Palace of Culture, 30-meter-long west side mural "The way of the red flag", artist group around Gerhard Bondzin, 1969. Photo Richard Peter (SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek, sign. df\_ps\_0000567)



⬆ Fig. 14. Wolfgang Hänsch (design, drawing), study for the reconstruction of the Palace of Culture in Dresden, 2002 (Stadtplanungsamt Dresden, Archiv Stiftung Sächsischer Architekten, Nachlass Wolfgang Hänsch)



⬆ Fig. 15. Meinhard von Gerkan and Stephan Schütz with Nicolas Pomränke, second floor plan for renovation and conversion by Gerkan, Marg & Partner (gmp architects). Demolition of the old multi-purpose hall, installation of a completely new concert hall, after the renovation in 2017 (gmp Architekten)





◀ Fig. 16. Dresden, Palace of Culture, new concert hall as the so-called “bird nest hall”, after the renovation in 2017. Photo Christian Grahl (gmp Architekten)

the history of this building since 1952. The task was to accommodate a cabaret and the city library in the listed building next to a new hall for the Dresden Philharmonic as the city orchestra.

The well-known German architect's office Gerkan, Marg and partner<sup>27</sup> won the competition with a very clear and convincing design. The new hall, which was conceived for acoustic reasons as a so-called "bird nest hall", fit with its entrances and internal development stairs exactly into the structural envelope of the old hall. As a result, all the foyers and adjoining rooms could be retained in their raw structural form. The cabaret hall was inserted below the ascending main tier of the concert hall, and the city library on the two upper floors in the rooms around the hall on the outside of the building. The foyers are used by visitors to the concerts and the library. Intelligent control of time usage enables smooth operation (Fig. 15, 16).<sup>28</sup>

With the enrichment of new functions in the building, the Palace of Culture has experienced a strong upgrading of its public use. While the library is predominantly frequented during the day, concerts and cabaret events predominantly take place in the evening. The almost all-day use gives the Palace of Culture a more important role in urban life.





# Notes

- 1 For more detailed information on the planning history of the Palace of Culture in Dresden, see Leopold Wiel, “Vom Fall des nichtgebauten Turmes,” in: Susann Buttolo, *Das Buch zum “Wiel”*. *Leopold Wiel zum Hundersten* (Dresden: Sandstein Verlag, 2016), 141–165; Susann Buttolo, “Der Dresdner Kulturpalast – Vom Werden eines besonderen Baudenkmals und den anhaltenden Versuchen seiner Destruktion,” in: *Denkmal Ost-Moderne, Aneignung und Erhaltung des baulichen Erbes der Nachkriegsmodeerne*, ed. Mark Escherich (Berlin: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2012), 198–211; Hartmut Ritschel, “Vom Haus der sozialistischen Kultur zum Kulturpalast Dresden – Metamorphosen eines Bauwerks,” in: *1960 plus – ein ausgeschlagenes Erbe? Dokumentation der Tagung des Deutschen Nationalkomitees für Denkmalschutz am 17. / 18. April 2007 in Berlin, Band 73* (Bonn: Deutsches Nationalkomitee für Denkmalschutz, 2007), 26–30; Claudia Quiring, “Der Kulturpalast Dresden – Architektur als Auftrag” (Exhibition in the city museum Dresden), 22. 4. 2017 to 17. 9. 2017; Bettina Klemm, *Der Dresdner Kulturpalast. Eine Zeitreise von 1969 bis heute* (Berlin: Bild und Heimat Verlag, 2016); Dieter Schölzel, “Kulturpalast Dresden. Baugeschichte und Umbauvorschläge zur Dresdner Philharmonie,” in: *Architektur und Städtebau der Nachkriegsmodeerne in Dresden*, ed. Michael Klaus (Dresden: Sächsische Akademie der Künste, 2003), 57–62.
- 2 Compare with Susann Buttolo, “Planungen und Bauten in der Dresdner Innenstadt zwischen 1958 und 1971” (PhD diss, Technische Universität Dresden, Fakultät Architektur, 2010), 14–16; Matthias Lerm, *Abschied vom alten Dresden. Verluste historischer Bausubstanz nach 1945* (Leipzig: Hinstorff 1993), 19.
- 3 Buttolo, “Planungen und Bauten,” 15–22; Lerm, *Abschied vom alten Dresden*, 21–37.
- 4 Lerm, *Abschied vom alten Dresden*, 14–17.
- 5 Leopold Wiel, “Der Fluch der bösen Tat. Der Kampf um die Ruine der Sophienkirche,” in: Buttolo, *Das Buch zum “Wiel”*, 131–39; Lerm, *Abschied vom alten Dresden*.
- 6 Various ideas for the reconstruction of the city of Dresden came from the city planner Herbert Conert (1886–1946), from architects Johannes Bronder and Kurt W. Leucht (1813–2001), who worked in the city planning office, but also from Mart Stam (1899–1986) and Egon Hartmann (1919–2009). In 1946 the exhibition “The New Dresden” advertises ideas for rebuilding the destroyed centre. In 1950 a “competition to obtain drafts for the urban redevelopment of the city of Dresden” took place.
- 7 Quiring, “Der Kulturpalast Dresden,” poster 1 for the exhibition.
- 8 Lothar Bolz, *Von deutschem Bauen. Reden und Aufsätze* (Berlin: Verl. d. Nation, 1951), 32–52.
- 9 Hartmut Ritschel, “Vom Haus der sozialistischen Kultur,” 26; Quiring, “Der Kulturpalast Dresden,” poster 1 for the exhibition.
- 10 Some fierce discussions took place, in Schneider’s planning revisions, the tower should have been up to 124m high. See Ritschel, “Vom Haus der sozialistischen Kultur,” 27; Wiel, “Vom Fall des nichtgebauten Turmes,” 131–39; Lerm, *Abschied vom alten Dresden*.
- 11 Quiring, “Der Kulturpalast Dresden” poster 1 for the exhibition.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Wiel, “Vom Fall des nichtgebauten Turmes,” 145–54.
- 14 These included Klaus Wever, Siegfried Emmerich, Gunnar Wörn and Angela Waltz, freehand drawings by Helmut Traumark (1927–2003), traffic planning by Walter Christfreund and Joachim Dake, greenery design by Werner Bauch (1902–1983).

- 15 Wiel, "Vom Fall des nichtgebauten Turmes," 156.
- 16 Ibid., 156–163.
- 17 During the structural construction phase, the population of Dresden volunteered 3,700 hours, see Quiring, "Der Kulturpalast Dresden," poster 3 for the exhibition; Klemm, *Der Dresdner Kulturpalast*, 23–6.
- 18 Klemm, *Der Dresdner Kulturpalast*, 38–41.
- 19 Quiring, "Der Kulturpalast Dresden," poster 6 for the exhibition. On the other works of art in the Palace of Culture, see Ritschel, "Vom Haus der sozialistischen Kultur," 28–9; Klemm, *Der Dresdner Kulturpalast*, 37–8.
- 20 For the development of the culture houses in the GDR see: Simone Hain, Stephan Stroux and Michael Schroedter, *Die Salons der Sozialisten. Kulturhäuser in der DDR* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 1996).
- 21 Quiring, "Der Kulturpalast Dresden," poster 4 for the exhibition. Klemm, *Der Dresdner Kulturpalast*, 42–103; Wiel, "Vom Fall des nichtgebauten Turmes," 164–5.
- 22 Sachsenbau Chemnitz presents a project with a design by architect Hans Kollhoff, Berlin, see Quiring, "Der Kulturpalast Dresden," poster 7 for the exhibition; Schölzel, "Kulturpalast Dresden," 57–62.
- 23 Klemm, *Der Dresdner Kulturpalast*, 104–23. Quiring 2017 (see note 1), poster 7 for the exhibition.
- 24 Stiftung Sächsischer Architekten ed., *Wolfgang Hänsch 1929–2013 in Memoriam*; (Dresden: Sandstein, 2016), 53–4; Klemm, *Der Dresdner Kulturpalast*, 123–31.
- 25 Ritschel, "Vom Haus der sozialistischen Kultur," 29–30.
- 26 More information about the competition at <https://www.wettbewerbe-aktuell.de/ergebnis/kulturpalast-dresden-14092>, accessed 28 August 2021.
- 27 Meinhard von Gerkan and Stephan Schütz eds., *Kulturpalast Dresden gmb FOCUS* (Berlin: JOVIS Verlag, 2018).
- 28 For the renovation of the Palace of Culture see Ulrike Hübner-Grötzsch, "Ostmoderne wie aus dem Ei gepellt. Möglichkeiten der Denkmalpflege bei der Sanierung des Kulturpalastes," in: *Denkmalpflege in Sachsen. Jahrbuch 2017* (Dresden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Sachsen, 2018), 106–15. Klemm, *Der Dresdner Kulturpalast*, 132–83.



13

# Devastation and disappearance of cultural monuments as a consequence of demolition operations in the Czech border region after 1945

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The present study aims to present and document the fate of cultural monuments located in the border areas of the Czech lands in the period from the end of the Second World War to the early 1960s. During this period, the Czech borderlands underwent a significant transformation which included the desertion of many villages, settlements, and isolated areas. The disappearance of these settlements was accompanied by their physical demolition as part of state-organized demolition operations. They mainly affected the abandoned settlements that remained empty after the displacement of their German inhabitants and owners after 1945, while others had to be removed because they were in the border zone or in military areas. Thus, during the demolition operations, many buildings in the border area disappeared, from individual houses and solitudes to entire villages and settlements, and this demolition or destructive damage was not avoided by auxiliary historical and cultural monuments, even though some of them were already protected by law at the time. In the following text, the fate of cultural monuments in the Czech borderland at the time of the demolitions will be presented in a general overview and through specific examples, and the role of conservationists and conservation institutions in this process will be recalled on the basis of contemporary sources.

## The status of cultural heritage properties in the Czech borderlands after 1945

After 1945, the Czech borderland became the scene of the largest migration movement in the modern history of the Czech lands.<sup>1</sup> This migratory process

was a consequence and culmination of the previous national tensions between Czechs and Germans and the dramatic and tragic developments in the region in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Until the end of the Second World War, the area was inhabited by a predominantly German population, a large part of which, however, turned to Nazism and support for Hitler's Germany in the crisis period of the 1930s and 1940s. After the end of the war and the defeat of Nazism, the Czech Germans were declared stateless and three million of their members were deported across the border. They were replaced by around two million new settlers from various parts of the Czech interior and from Slovakia, as well as Czech and Slovak compatriots from abroad heading to their ancestral homeland as part of their re-migration.<sup>2</sup> The post-war exchange of almost five million inhabitants in this area not only changed the national, social, and demographic composition of the local population, but also affected the cultural landscape and changed the appearance of many border towns and villages, as well as the relationship and treatment of local monuments, many of which succumbed to decay or significant damage and deterioration.<sup>3</sup>

The causes of the destruction or devastation were varied, and each local monument was accompanied by its own tragic story. Many of the local monuments disappeared simply because they remained abandoned and unmaintained for many years, until they eventually fell into a state of complete disrepair and decay to the point where they lost not only their purpose but also their original monumental or cultural value. Other heritage or culturally significant buildings, however, were also physically demolished and razed regardless of their condition at the time. Such damage and demolition were carried out either arbitrarily by local residents or anonymous vandals, but more often it was carried out with the participation of the Czechoslovak authorities in state-planned and centrally organized demolitions.<sup>4</sup>

The largest group of post-war demolitions in the Czech borderlands consisted of residences and farm buildings left empty as a result of the displacement of their original German inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> Although the Czechoslovak authorities tried to repopulate the borderlands with new people, those who came here voluntarily in the early years, mostly in an attempt to find a new home and a better life, and later also as part of forced resettlement, the population density in these areas fell by a full one-third compared to the pre-war situation. This absolute decline in population would not yet have posed such a major demographic problem for the further development of the affected regions if, however, there had been large differences in the number of new arrivals between the settled areas in the border region. In some of these regions, towns and villages were able to fill in almost

to their original state, but in other places many areas remained abandoned or only sparsely populated.<sup>6</sup>

Another group of demolitions consisted of buildings damaged by deliberate destruction or careless handling, which did not spare even listed buildings. Particularly in the first weeks after the war, many places in the border region were looted by “gold-diggers” who stole and plundered.<sup>7</sup> However, new settlers often contributed to the damage and destruction. They used the furnishings and furniture of abandoned houses and farmhouses left by the Germans to supplement their own household or workshop, and sometimes also used empty buildings as a cheap source of building materials. Moreover, the society of the post-war settlers was characterized by the absence of tradition and a closer relationship to the new environment and the local material culture that previous generations of indigenous people had built up over the centuries.<sup>8</sup> In many places, monuments were demolished and damaged, for example, simply because these works were associated with the German past and German authors and were therefore supposed to represent symbols of Germanisation in the minds of the Czech public. Such was the fate of the work of the German sculptor Franz Metzner (1870–1919), whose fountain with the statue of the Knight Rüdiger, which stood in Jablonec nad Nisou, was torn down and dismantled by Czech inhabitants of the town in June 1945.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the desire to settle accounts with the German past, however, there was another important factor involved in the destruction of monuments in the Czech border region, which was related to the military and security interests of the post-war Czechoslovak state. After the Second World War, in addition to the border zone, which included a several-kilometer-long strip encircling the state border and which will be discussed in more detail later in this text, several large military compounds (training grounds) were built in the wider border area, selected and closed areas that were used for training the Czechoslovak army, from which the entire civilian population had to be evicted.<sup>10</sup> Thus, many dozens of villages and settlements, including most of the local monuments, disappeared after the army’s arrival, and were damaged and destroyed by vandalism of the soldiers, insensitive reconstruction, or careless treatment by the new administrators, but most often they became targets during military exercises and in some cases even served as war backdrops for filmmakers shooting combat scenes.<sup>11</sup>

The disruption or even complete disintegration of the settlement network in the Czech borderlands, accompanied by the presence of a large number of



⬆ **Fig. 1. Church of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary in Cudrovice, that was demolished with the whole village, before demolition (Security Services Archive, Collection of photoalbums and photographs)**



⬆ Fig. 2. Church of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary in Cudrovice, after demolition (Security Services Archive, Collection of photoalbums and photographs)



➤ Fig. 3. Mnich, Church of John the Baptist destroyed with the whole village after the establishment of the forbidden zone in 1952 (From Luděk Jirásko, *Zmizelé Čechy – Česká Kanada*, Praha: Paseka 2011, fig. 140)



➤ Fig. 4. Hamry, chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows in Kreuzwinkl, demolished during full-scale demolition operations in 1959 (From Tomáš Kohoutek, *Zapomenuté české kostely: po stopách umírající krásy*, Praha: Brána 2011, 69)

abandoned settlements and farm buildings, from individual houses to entire villages, confronted the Czechoslovak authorities with the question of how to deal with this heritage and remnant of the pre-war German settlement, of which the local monuments were a part. Leaving the houses and other buildings to their fate resulted in a number of problems and difficulties, ranging from arbitrary damage to these objects, mostly as a source of cheap building materials, to the safety and health risks associated with the unplanned collapse of these unsecured and unprotected buildings, to complaints from local residents and local authorities pointing to the neglected appearance of their surroundings. From the end of the Second World War until the 1960s, therefore, large-scale demolition operations took place throughout the Czech borderlands, which eventually reduced the number of local settlements substantially and, in addition to changing the overall appearance of most border villages, also proved fatal for many heritage buildings.

### **First organized demolition – action program of the National Land Fund**

In the first post-war years, especially between 1945 and 1950, a large-scale demolition operation was organized by the National Land Fund (Národní pozemkový fond, NPF) in the Czech border area. After the war, this institution was in charge of all the agricultural and forestry property confiscated under Presidential Decree No 12/1945 “on the confiscation and accelerated distribution of agricultural property of Germans, Hungarians as traitors and other enemies of the Czech and Slovak nation”, issued on June 21, 1945, which also included most of the rural settlements and homesteads located in the Czech border area.<sup>12</sup> Among these confiscations there were many uninhabited, abandoned, or damaged buildings where no further use was foreseen, and so they were eventually proposed for removal by demolition, mostly for the aforementioned purpose of obtaining usable building material. The biggest beneficiaries of these demolished buildings were the respective national committees, municipal enterprises, agricultural cooperatives, but also interest organizations or individuals from among the population, who used the material from the demolition sites mostly to repair their own houses.

The specific implementation of the demolition work, the procedure laid down and the criteria for selecting the buildings to be demolished were contained in a circular issued by the National Land Fund on October 24, 1946, which also stipulated that all buildings proposed for demolition must have a valid certificate from

the relevant district national committee stating that they were not subject to the protection of the then State Heritage Office (Státní památkový úřad, SPÚ).<sup>13</sup> The question of monuments among agricultural confiscates is also mentioned in the “Set of Measures on the Expeditious Removal of Demolition Sites”, issued on October 24, 1949, where the State Heritage Office was instructed to draw up a list of listed buildings of conservation and cultural value that were threatened with demolition. At the same time, the conservationists were to prepare a proposal for the safeguarding and further use of these monuments, because, as the document stated, *“If these buildings are left without function, they will fall into disrepair, so that they too will eventually have to be demolished.”*<sup>14</sup> However, as we learn from other contemporary sources, the Heritage Office did not have any list of confiscated monuments at this time, except for former noble residences (i.e. mainly castles and chateaux). Nevertheless, conservationists estimated that among the other confiscations there were about two thousand objects to be preserved.<sup>15</sup>

### **The twilight of monuments in the forbidden border zone**

Another large-scale demolition operation taking place in the Czech borderlands was the widespread destruction of settlements and other buildings that were in the forbidden zone around the western borders. From the end of the Second World War, the state and security authorities introduced various regulations and procedures to guard and secure the Czechoslovak state border, which included setting aside a special area where specific measures were in force to restrict the activities and life of the local civilian population. The prohibited zone, which represented the culmination of the restrictions around the state border, was proclaimed in the Provisions on the Border Territory issued by the Ministry of National Security (Ministerstvo národní bezpečnosti, MNB) on April 28, 1951. It ordered the creation of a closed area along the border with Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany and partly with the “friendly” German Democratic Republic, two to three kilometers wide from the frontier inland, from which all the population had to be evacuated and where no one was allowed to enter without permission except members of the Border Guard.<sup>16</sup> Between the end of November 1951 and the end of April 1952, several hundred inhabitants were relocated from this demarcated area on the basis of the relevant decree of the Ministry of the Interior (Ministerstvo vnitra, MV).<sup>17</sup>

As a result of the resettlement of the population from the restricted zone, however, hundreds of empty villages and settlements remained in the vicinity of



⬆ Fig. 5. Church in Kapličky before demolition, 1959  
(Security Services Archive, Collection of photoalbums and photographs)

⬇ Fig. 6. Church in Kapličky before demolition, 1959  
(Security Services Archive, Collection of photoalbums and photographs)



the border thus affected, and the state and security authorities were faced with the decision of what to do with the depopulated villages and other settlements. Empty houses and other local buildings were a nuisance to border guards during their guard duty, there were also fears among them that these abandoned places would become havens for border intruders or hideouts for smugglers and their contraband. Thus, quite soon after the displacement of the local inhabitants, there was a demand for the removal of the abandoned villages and solitudes in the forbidden zone by demolishing and razing them to the ground. In order to carry out this task, on August 16, 1952 the Ministry of the Interior issued guidelines for the demolition of buildings and facilities in the prohibited zone, according to which all buildings in this area were to be demolished, with the exception of selected buildings occupied and to be used by the Border Guard or the Czechoslovak army.<sup>18</sup> The buildings retained by the Border Guards or the soldiers for their use were mostly larger and spacious buildings serving as barracks, garages, or storage areas. Paradoxically, this seizure also avoided the immediate destruction of some monuments, especially churches, whose towers also served as strong points and observation posts from which the border guards could inspect the surrounding countryside. However, these monuments under the administration of security and military administrators were usually not properly maintained, which often meant that after some time even these objects and facilities ceased to be used anymore and were not spared later demolition, or fell into disrepair and turned into ruins.

Other immovable monuments located in the restricted zone, which were not taken over by the Border Guard or the army, were usually demolished because security concerns outweighed their cultural and historical value. In the directive on the demolition of buildings and installations in the prohibited zone, there is a section for this case which dealt with and addressed the treatment of religious and other historical monuments. All churches and other important monuments were to be inspected by the district conservators or other authorized persons before they were demolished, and the valuable furnishings of these monuments were to be secured and transported to a new site designated by the relevant regional national committee. In this way, at least the movable monuments from the interior of the churches were saved and transported to museums or galleries. The State Office for Religious Affairs (Státní úřad pro věci církevní), the institution that since 1949 had managed and implemented church policy in Czechoslovakia and supervised the activities of the clergy, also became involved in the matter of the demolition of the monuments. On September 11, 1952, this office then issued its own instructions, in which it tasked the clerks for church affairs at the

district national committees with making arrangements, in agreement with the local consistory or the relevant parish authority, for the removal of furnishings and internal equipment, including bells, organs and other worship equipment from demolished churches, chapels and monasteries in the prohibited zone.<sup>19</sup>

In connection with the establishment of the prohibited zone in the vicinity of the western state border and the issuance of a directive on the removal of buildings and equipment in this area, various efforts and attempts were then made by conservationists, conservators, or museum workers to save at least the most historically and culturally valuable monuments, which, however, in most cases ended in failure. Arguments and opinions of security and military officials calling for the removal of as many objects as possible around the border, including monuments, were stronger and more urgent for the authorities at that time, while the care of monuments simply had to take a back seat at this time of heightened internal political and international tensions. The demolition operation in the restricted zone took place between 1953 and 1956, and not only resulted in the complete destruction of some 130 villages and settlements, but also in the enormous and irreversible loss of many cultural and historical monuments, as well as marking the entire cultural landscape around the border.<sup>20</sup>

As one of the examples of the activity of the preservationists at that time in an attempt to save at least the most valuable buildings in the forbidden zone from their irreversible destruction, the initiative of the district conservator of the State Monument Care in Jindřichův Hradec, Dr. Jan Muk, can be mentioned, who in January 1952 wrote a letter to the local District National Committee demanding that the Church of St. John the Baptist in Mnich near Nová Bystřice be preserved in the occupied border area, because this building was of exceptional historical value as one of the oldest and most valuable Romanesque monuments. Dr. Muk's opinion was also supported by the then director of the State Monuments Office in Prague (Státní památkový úřad v Praze, SPÚP), František Petr, who wrote a letter to the Regional National Committee (Krajský národní výbor, KNV) in České Budějovice: *“According to the report of the conservator for state monument care in the Jindřichův Hradec district, there is a danger that the Romanesque church in the village of Mnich could be demolished during the clearance measures. Since the building itself is one of the most precious Romanesque monuments and the interior furnishings are of remarkable artistic value, we request that every effort be made to exclude this church from any demolition measures and to properly secure the inventory from damage or loss.”* However, even this request did not help and the church in Mnich was eventually demolished, despite the efforts of the conservationists.<sup>21</sup>



⬆ **Fig. 7. Members of the demolition squad securing the church in Kapličky before its demolition (Security Services Archive, Collection of photoalbums and photographs)**

### **Large-scale demolition and its impact on cultural monuments**

The state-organized demolition of settlements in the Czech borderlands continued to take place throughout the 1950s, culminating in a large-scale demolition project by the Ministry of the Interior between 1959 and 1960, which had previously been approved by the top party leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.<sup>22</sup> While in the demolitions managed by the National Land Fund, economic reasons were the main motivation for the removal of buildings, and security and military aspects played a decisive role in the demolition of settlements in the restricted zone, the full-scale demolition of the late 1950s and early 1960s had other reasons and causes. These included, once again, the desire of state and municipal authorities to improve the appearance of the border villages and to ensure the health and safety of citizens, but, last but not least, the demolition action was also forced by new factors including international

pressure and the poor reputation of the Czechoslovak state among foreign visitors. It was the foreign visitors who, with the resumption of tourism in the second half of the 1950s, began to arrive in greater numbers in Czechoslovakia again, usually immediately after crossing the state border, who saw the neglected border towns and villages where there were still many empty and unmaintained houses or other buildings in a state of disrepair and ruin.<sup>23</sup>

However, the mass removal of unoccupied buildings and facilities carried out as part of the nationwide demolition campaign in 1959 and 1960 brought a further wave of destruction to a number of listed or historically valuable buildings, despite the fact that local monuments were already protected by the then newly approved Heritage Act No. 22/1958 Coll.<sup>24</sup> The directive on the implementation of the demolition operation also included a requirement to protect the state-protected monuments in the border area and to ensure cooperation with the State State Institute for Monument Preservation and Nature Conservation (Státní ústav památkové péče a ochrany přírody, SÚPPOP) in order to avoid unnecessary damage or even demolition of these buildings. However, this cooperation often did not work ideally, and demolitions of legally protected monuments were repeatedly carried out, resulting in complaints and protests from conservationists. In the final report on the progress of the 1959 demolition operations submitted to the Collegium of the Minister of the Interior, *“unnegotiated issues with the monument administration”* were also identified as one of the shortcomings that *“could jeopardize the smooth execution of the planned tasks”*.<sup>25</sup>

The lack of a central inventory of the various monuments in the border areas of the state that were to be protected and thus secured from the dangers of the organized demolition operations underway was seen as a huge problem, at least in the early months. Therefore, the staff of the SÚPPOP repeatedly made a number of critical comments and complaints about the actions of the demolition crews, reporting various defects, including disregard for the applicable laws and measures for the protection of cultural monuments. As an example of the “arbitrariness” of the demolition crews, a complaint was lodged on May 21, 1959 by the Regional Centre for Heritage Protection in Plzeň against the demolition of the Baroque Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on a hill called Kreuzwinkel near the village of Hamry in the Klatovy district. This church was registered as a cultural monument and protected by the relevant law. The complaint of the conservationists states: *“Permission was not sought for this demolition from the Ministry of Education and Culture under Section 23 of the relevant act. Thus, an offence has been committed by the responsible party, which*

*we are obliged to report to the District Attorney for investigation and appropriate action. This has caused irreparable damage to cultural values, not to mention that the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, which is supposed to protect the law, has knowingly violated the law here.”<sup>26</sup>*

On May 23, 1959, a meeting was held in the building of the State Institute for Heritage Protection in Prague (Státní ústav památkové péče v Praze) to discuss the issue of demolition of listed buildings in the border region. A representative of the Ministry of the Interior was invited to the meeting, to whom the monument-keepers present expressed a strong demand: *“that in future the Ministry of the Interior should communicate the intention to demolish listed buildings to the Ministry of Education in good time and with sufficient advance notice so that the matter can be properly considered and, in cases where further protection of monuments is to be dispensed with, so that the necessary formalities can be fulfilled before demolition, i.e. surveying, documentation, removal of architectural details or fragments of decoration, etc.”* It was also pointed out at this meeting that heritage buildings were not necessarily just churches and castles, but other buildings as well, so any demolition should really be checked to see if it was a heritage building protected under Act No. 22/1958 on cultural monuments.<sup>27</sup>

Subsequent meetings between conservationists and representatives of the Ministry of the Interior were also to include discussions on some of the specific monuments that were in danger of demolition. From the surviving sources we learn that the conservationists, for example, rejected the proposed demolition of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in the former village of Cetviny (then the Kaplice district, now Český Krumlov), primarily because of the surviving original plasterwork with Gothic wall paintings in this building. Similarly, they also opposed the planned demolition of the pilgrimage Church of Saint Anne, located on the Tanaberk hill near the village of Všeruby in the Domažlice district, because in this case the conservationists defended the local work as an important Baroque monument built by the Italian architect and builder Marco Antonio Gilmetti, who worked in nearby Klatovy. Both churches remained standing thanks to the intervention of the conservationists, and after 1989 they received proper repairs and renovation, so that they now represent an important monument in their surroundings. In other cases, however, the conservationists failed with their demands, as in the case of the Baroque chateau in Chlumec (Ústí nad Labem district), whose destruction was due to the fact that the building was already in a very dilapidated state at that time, having burned down a few years earlier.<sup>28</sup>



↑ Fig. 8. Blowing up of the church in Kapličky, 1959 (Security Services Archive, Collection of photoalbums and photographs)

It was only in September 1959, five months after the start of the full-scale demolition operation in the borderland, that an inter-ministerial agreement on the protection and safeguarding of monuments was concluded between the Ministry of Education and Culture (Ministerstvo školství a kultury), the institution under which monuments were then under the responsibility of, and the Ministry of the Interior, the institution organizing and carrying out the demolition work in the borderland.<sup>29</sup> At the same time as this agreement, an invitation was made to the representatives of the education and culture departments of the district national committees concerned to draw up an inventory of listed buildings or buildings of historical and cultural value in their areas of responsibility, unless they had already been demolished or irreparably damaged in the course of the demolition operation. These lists of buildings which were protected under Act No. 22/1958 on cultural monuments were to be sent directly to the office of the Ministry of Education and Culture via the relevant regional national committees.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast, for some endangered cultural objects located in the border area, the conservationists did not object to their demolition as part of the demolition operation being carried out, especially if they were monuments standing in close proximity to the state border in the restricted zone, where there was also greater pressure for their removal by the security and military forces. Such a sad fate befell, for example, the Parish Church of Saint John and Saint Paul in Kapličky near Vyšší Brod (former Kaplice district, now Český Krumlov), built in the Neo-Romanesque style at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this particular case, the conservationists involved probably considered that the cultural and monumental value of this church was not significant enough to preserve the former sanctuary on the site. The demolition of this building was carried out by first removing and breaking the interior decoration and then blasting the church on June 4, 1959 with explosives, which was also thoroughly documented photographically by the demolition organizers.<sup>31</sup>

The full-scale demolition operation in the Czech border region was completed in October 1960. As a result, around 40,000 structures, mostly houses and farm buildings, were eventually demolished and disappeared. As the torso of surviving archival sources and contemporary photographs from the demolition sites reveal, the demolitions did not avoid some cultural monuments either, although the exact inventory is not known and it is not clear whether it was taken at the time.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

The demolition operations in the Czech border region, the largest of which took place between 1945 and 1960, not only brought about the largest reduction of settlements in this area in modern Czech history, but also affected and marked the continued existence of many cultural heritage properties which were also razed or severely damaged during the demolitions.<sup>33</sup> In this context, the question arises as to why, in addition to the demolition of abandoned and unused houses or farm buildings, numerous listed buildings had to be destroyed as part of these demolition operations. The official documents consisting of directives and decrees on the demolitions dealt with the issue of monuments rather marginally, and the actors of the demolitions of the time often did not even respect the applicable regulations for their protection. The most significant factor for the demolitions appears to be the neglected condition of the affected buildings, including most monuments, which spoiled the appearance of the border villages and became the target of criticism by local residents and visitors to the affected areas.<sup>34</sup>

Another explanation for the demolition of many monuments in the borderlands could be that these buildings represented unwanted symbols and reminders of the old times that did not fit into the newly constructed image of the progressive borderlands as a showcase of the socialist establishment, as well as distorting the atheist propaganda of the regime of the time. Often, these monuments represented the unwanted cultural heritage of the “former Sudetenland”, which was linked to the life and work of the local German inhabitants. The German past may have been another reason for the unwillingness of the state and local authorities to take proper care of these monuments and preserve their legacy and original mission. The broader population of the border region lacked a closer relationship to these monuments, whose spiritual and social value was mostly unknown to them. Indeed, this complex search for identity by the people of the border region is still ongoing in many areas today.<sup>35</sup>

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*English translation by Bryce Belcher*



# Notes

- 1 In this paper, we define the Czech borderlands as the territory inhabited until 1945 by a majority German population (for which the colloquial but geographically and historically inaccurate and highly disputable term Sudetenland has also been adopted), comprising approximately one quarter of the territory and stretching, with the exception of the Moravian-Silesian-Slovak border, along almost the entire historical borders of the Czech lands. On the concept of the Czech borderlands and its development see: Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, eds., *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951. Češi a Němci do roku 1945. Úvod k edici* (Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa, 2010), 31–9; Andreas Wiedemann, *Pojď s námi budovat pohraničí. Osídlování pohraničí a proměna obyvatelstva bývalých Sudet*, (Praha: Prostor 2016), 27–33.
- 2 In addition to the literature cited in note 1, on post-war migrations in the Czech borderlands, see also Tomáš Staněk, *Odsun Němců z Československa 1945–1947* (Praha: Academia, 1991); František Čapka, Lubomír Slezák and Jaroslav Vaculík, *Nové osídlení pohraničí českých zemí po druhé světové válce* (Brno: Akademické nakladatelství CERM, 2005).
- 3 For a general overview of landscape changes in the Czech lands after 1945, see Pavel Hájek, *Jde pevně kupředu naše zem. Krajina českých zemí v období socialismu 1948–1989* (Praha: Malá Skála, 2008).
- 4 Generally, on the issue of post-war demolitions in the Czech borderland, see David Kovařík, “Demoliční akce v českém pohraničí v letech 1945–1960” (PhD diss., Masaryk University Brno, 2009).
- 5 There is an extensive literature on the topic of the post-war displacement of Germans from the Czech lands. The most comprehensive review to date remains the work: Staněk, *Odsun Němců z Československa*.
- 6 While the predominantly lowland and more fertile areas, such as Polabí, Zatecko or South Moravia, were settled quite quickly with new inhabitants and were also relatively successfully economically restored, other, mostly mountainous and remote regions did not receive such restoration. The mountainous areas close to the national borders suffered particularly significant population losses, in Bohemia this included the mountain and foothill areas of the Novohradské hory, Šumava and Český les, while in Moravia and Silesia the Jeseníky Mountains in particular underwent a great depopulation, with many villages and settlements completely deserted or only minimally populated. Even in the early 1950s, 13 border districts still had less than half the population of their pre-war state, see Lubomír Slezák, *Zemědělské osídlování pohraničí českých zemí po druhé světové válce* (Brno: Blok, 1978), 184.
- 7 On the phenomenon of so-called gold mining in the first postwar weeks and months in the Czech borderland, see Andreas Wiedemann, *Pojď s námi budovat pohraničí*, 168–9.
- 8 On the post-war transformation of the borderland and its relationship to the local landscape, see Matěj Spurný, “Krajina a paměť. Zkušenost českého pohraničí,” in *Odchody a návraty: vzpomínková kultura a životní příběhy sudetských Němců v českých zemích a Bavorsku ve 20. století*, ed. Marita Krauss and Sarah Scholl Schneider (Praha: Antikomplex, 2015), 50–9. Cf. also Eagle Glassheim, *Cleansing the Czechoslovak Borderlands: Migration, Environment, and Health in the Former Sudetenland* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016). In the Czech edition *Očista československého pohraničí. Migrace, životní prostředí a zdraví v bývalých Sudetech* (Praha: Academia, 2019).
- 9 Zdeněk Hojda, “Příběh jablonecké kašny aneb Prodaný rytíř,” *Dějiny a současnost. Kulturně historická revue* 33, no. 4 (2011): 12.
- 10 After 1945, the military camps Boletice and Dobrá Voda in the Šumava, Prameny in the Slavkov Forest, Hradiště in the Doupov Mountains, Ralsko in northern Bohemia, and Libavá in northern Moravia in the foothills of the Jeseníky Mountains were built in the Czech border region. Pavel Minařík, “Vznik a rozšiřování vojenských výcvikových prostorů na území Československa a s tím spojené vlivy na migrační procesy,” in *Nucené migrace v českých zemích ve 20. století*, ed. Petr Bednařík, Helena Nosková and Zdenko Maršálek (Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2018), 135–49.

- 11 The military retreat of Hradiště in the Doupov Mountains became a popular destination for filmmakers, where five feature films with war themes were made in the 1950s and 1960s alone. For more details, see Karolína Pauknerová, *Krajina mezi pamětí a zapomínáním: Studie z Čech* (Praha: Karolinum, 2020), 99–100.
- 12 For more on Decree No. 12/1945, including its full text, see Karel Jech and Karel Kaplan, *Dekrety prezidenta republiky 1940–1945. Dokumenty* (Brno: Doplněk – Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2002), 276–83.
- 13 National Archives Czech Republic (Národní archiv ČR, NA), State Národní pozemkový fond (NPF), Carton 2, Inv. Nr. 6, Oběžník NPF č. 132/46, Estimates of demolition of buildings discarded during the settlement of the borderland, 24 October 1946.
- 14 State Regional Archive (Státní oblastní archiv, SOA) Plzeň, State Krajský národní výbor Plzeň, Carton 1822, sign. Zem8 NPF bulletin, Accelerated use of unsettled confiscations suitable for further use, October 24, 1949.
- 15 NA, State NPF, Carton 2, Inv. Nr. 3. Ochrana zemědělských objektů – konfiskátů, Reply of the State Heritage Office to the NPF, February 3, 1950.
- 16 Security Services Archive (Archiv bezpečnostních složek, ABS), State Sekretariát ministerstva vnitra, Part I, Carton 54, Inv. Nr. 1722.
- 17 NA, State Ministerstvo vnitra – tajné, Carton 83, sign. T-P 249. Relocation of the population from the prohibited zone and unreliable persons from the border zone, November 12, 1951.
- 18 Ibid., Carton 89, sign. 444. Directive for the demolition of buildings and installations in the prohibited zone, Aug. 16, 1952.
- 19 Moravian Land Archives (Moravský zemský archiv), State Krajský národní výbor Jihlava, Carton 42. Demolition and removal of buildings and facilities in the prohibited zone, Report of the Office for Religious Affairs, September 11, 1952.
- 20 ABS, State Sekretariát ministerstva vnitra, Part I, Carton 24, Inv. Nr. 246.11. Meeting of the Collegium of the Ministry of the Interior. Report on the implementation of the demolition action in the prohibited zone, March 28, 1957.
- 21 Mnich, kostel sv. Jana Křtitele, *Poškozené a zničené kostely, kaple a synagogy v České republice*, <http://znicenekostely.cz/?load=detail&id=13849>, accessed on July 31, 2021.
- 22 NA, State Politické byro ÚV KSČ 1954–1962, Vol. 219, Arch. Unit 297. Resolution of the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia of May 26, 1959.
- 23 ABS, State Sekretariát ministerstva vnitra, Vol. I, Carton 48, Inv. Nr. 1322. Report on the implementation of demolition action in the border areas, undated (probably 1959).
- 24 Act No. 22/1958 (Cultural Heritage Properties Act), dated April 17, 1958. Collection of Acts of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1958, Prague 1958, pp. 63–69.
- 25 ABS, State Sekretariát ministra vnitra, Part II, Carton 18, Inv. Nr. 1142. Meeting of the Collegium of the Minister of the Interior, January 7, 1960 – Report on the demolition works carried out in the border areas of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1959.
- 26 SOA, State Krajský národní výbor Plzeň, Carton 1173, Inv. Nr. 478. Destruction of the Baroque church in Hamry - Kreuzwinkel, investigation, May 21, 1959.

- 27 NA, State Ministerstvo vnitra – dodatky, Carton 1294, sign. 425/3. Minutes of the meeting on the demolition of monuments in the border area, May 23, 1959.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 On the organization and institutional structure of monument care in post-war Czechoslovakia, see the study by Kristina Uhlíková and Michal Sklenář in this publication.
- 30 NA, State Ministerstvo vnitra – dodatky, Carton 1294, sign. 425/3. Letter from the Minister of Education and Culture regarding Phase III of the demolition action – protection of monuments, September 14, 1959.
- 31 The demolition of the church in Kapličky is documented in detailed photographic detail, as are some other demolitions carried out as part of a nationwide demolition operation in 1959–1960, which are part of the “At Work” photo album stored in the Security Services Archive in Prague.
- 32 Security Services Archive, State Sekretariát Ministerstva vnitra, Vol. 2, Carton 20, Inv. Nr. 1170. 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Collegium of the Ministry of the Interior, Final Report on the Completion of Demolition Work in the Border Districts, 1960.
- 33 The vanished monuments in the borderlands are partially documented in the literature, where authors’ attention is focused on destroyed or devastated church and sacral buildings, see Tomáš Koubek, *Zapomenuté české kostely: po stopách umírající krásy* (Praha: Brána 2011); Martin Čechura, *Zaniklé kostely Čech* (Praha: Libri, 2012). A database of destroyed or seriously damaged churches, monasteries, and chapels from the post-1945 period in the Czech borderlands is also available on the website: <http://www.znicenekostely.cz/>, accessed on July 31, 2021.
- 34 As an example, a confidential report of the Ministry of the Interior from 1959 states: “*There is a constant stream of warnings from visitors from friendly countries and from foreign Western tourists who claim to have had embarrassed or even distressed feelings and impressions when they crossed the state border and began their journey through Czechoslovakia*”. ABS, State Sekretariát Ministerstva vnitra, Vol. 1, Inv. Nr. 1322. Report on the implementation of the demolition operation in the border area, 1959.
- 35 On the issue of the search for regional identity of the “new” inhabitants in the border area in relation to the local monuments, see Irena Cejpková and Andrea Šimáková, “Regionální identita a její význam pro zachování hmotného kulturního dědictví v pohraničním prostoru,” *Historická sociologie*, no. 1 (2021): 99–118.

14

# Once it was here, now it's not...

## Specifics of the care of sacral furnishings within the Czech lands during the totalitarian era and after its fall

ŠÁRKA RADOSTOVÁ

The title of the article<sup>1</sup> refers to the ease of loss or change in the state of things, capturing the transience of values. For Czech readers, the title in Czech is also a quotation of a song from the theatre production *Ballad for a Bandit*, whose author Milan Uhde who was banned in 1975 but after 1989 became a prominent politician and minister of culture. Despite the communist persecution and despite the totalitarian authorities' efforts to silence the author, the production was a phenomenal success and the song became popular.<sup>2</sup>

In the history of sacred heritage properties, which I also wish to explore, is the ease with which monuments were destroyed on the basis of political decisions. Equally, however, we can observe how artefacts that were forbidden or unwanted by the regime were rescued by individuals. Unfortunately, the liquidated collections today usually resemble only solitary pieces whose relevance to the whole has been forgotten and whose testimony needs to be recognized and revived. Each such process is characterized by reversals in evaluation, where some acts must be understood differently than is usually the case: a theft can be transformed by recognition into a rescue, a damage to the whole into a necessary way of preserving at least part of the monument, and a bid at a legal auction into a trade in a stolen work registered in the international police database of Interpol. The most important role in these stories of heritage items is played by the people who stood on the side of salvaging values.

To introduce the issue of the destruction of sacred spaces in Czechoslovakia, I have chosen seven heritage properties and interiors to which provenance

research led me. The examples reveal that we have to take into account the specifics of the care of heritage properties under totalitarianism – these are works whose provenance links have been broken, while the original context forms an essential part of their heritage value. The common denominator of the first three cases was the removal of furnishings from sacred interiors which took place between 1950 and 1975. The following Svátá Hora and Most “cases” illustrate how the care of sacral heritage was used for the ideological suppression of religion and faith. In the third part, dealing with the situation after 1989, I will present a pair of heritage items that were returned from abroad, where they had been illegally exported. All of these examples demonstrate a fundamental change in the state’s approach to the care of heritage during and after the fall of totalitarianism.

### **Persecution of churches in post-war Czechoslovakia**

The worship spaces of the Catholic and Roman Catholic churches were distinguished by their facilities. During the First Republic, the Catholic church was still the natural spiritual center of every larger village and town: despite the progressive secularization of society, baptisms and funerals and other ceremonies held in the church were among the most basic events and naturally attracted people with a more lukewarm attitude to faith. Churches were central to the memory of a place and were intertwined with it. Even an abandoned church did not cease to bear witness to life. The sacred furnishings, altars, paintings, statues, baptismal fonts, monstrances, candlesticks, i.e. “movable” heritage items, represent a diverse set of artistic and cultural and historical property and constitute a valuable record of the history and spiritual prosperity of the community. From a conservation perspective, such collections are most valuable in the place with which they are associated.

Some of the religious interiors have survived in their entirety, but most have been damaged by lack of care. Totalitarianism relegated religion to the realm of the undesirable, albeit to some extent tolerated. The state’s attention to religious monuments was motivated by hostility. Under totalitarianism, religious monuments were at best left unnoticed, and so the gradually decaying fund shared the fate of the buildings in which it was housed. At worst, the monuments were destroyed. This was regardless of whether they were listed as cultural heritage or not. At the same time, the laws ensured that the state had sufficient influence over the care of sacral monuments, but they were also used to undermine the churches.<sup>3</sup>

Churches were first deprived of their personal and financial independence from the state. This happened primarily through the adoption of two laws in 1949: Act No. 217/1949 on the establishment of the State Office for Church Affairs (Státní úřad pro věci církevní)<sup>4</sup> and Act No. 218/1949 on the economic security of churches and religious societies.<sup>5</sup> Under threat of punishment, the churches were required to compile inventories of their movable and immovable property and property rights, their constituent parts, communities, institutes, foundations, churches, circles and funds, and all existing sources of funding of which they had been deprived. The laws were also used to fabricate trials and persecution of clergy and believers, including children who attended religious classes, ministered, etc.,<sup>6</sup> and impacted the capacity of clergy. Immediately after 1949, the shortage of clergy grew, as many existing clergy were not given state approval or had their approval withdrawn after a while for political reasons. There were also parish closures and mergers, which also had a negative impact on the care of monuments. The pressure on the parish priests, who, in addition to their spiritual work, were also responsible for the preservation of the monuments of an increasing number of adjacent churches, grew. Although the church remained the owner of the buildings, it had to apply to the state for funds for their preservation and maintenance. The later Law No. 22/1958 on cultural heritage properties introduced the registration of monuments in the state lists, but declared that monuments outside them were also protected. The vast majority of the registered movable monuments were located in the sacral premises of the Roman Catholic Church.

The provision of Section 12, paragraph 1 of this law, according to which it was not permitted to move heritage items in places open to the public without the consent of the regional national committee, is relevant to our issue. In Law 20/1987, § 18, paragraph 1, the necessity of a statement from the State Conservation Service was added. Moving items from sacred interiors was often their only possible protection against destruction by unsuitable conditions, vandalism and security against theft, and for these reasons furnishings were moved and taken away throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The level of threat was related to the abandonment of the church. Initially, collection points were set up in the parish or in the surrounding area and the collections were managed by a representative of the church, but later they also existed depending on the local activities of church secretaries, county officials, and other exponents of power. After the establishment of collection points for property confiscated according to presidential decrees, church furnishings were also included in the funds of expropriated and nationalized castles and chateaus.<sup>7</sup> Most of the collections



⬆ Fig. 1. The reverse of the Madonna statue with a text documenting the origin of the statue from the main altar in the church in Svatobor. The inscription was later removed during the restoration of the statue and the provenience of the work was forgotten (photoarchive of National Heritage Institute, Directorate-General, Nr. N063802)

were intended to be returned to their original locations, and the provenance information was also of an important legal nature because according to church law the original parish was the owner of the collected mobiliary. At the beginning, therefore, all the collected objects were marked with provenance markers, data on the connection to the locality and parish (Fig. 1), but with the lengthening of the period of deposition or with the change of the place of deposition, the arrival of a new parish priest, etc., this information was lost. The removed files were a burden for the church and the collecting institutions. The return of the works to their original places was delayed by them and gradually became impossible. Some of the churches were destroyed, and some were not suitable for the return of the furnishings. Parish priests and other actors were on the edge of the law, where they were pushed by the bureaucratization of the steps to obtain funding for repairs, the persistent rejection of these requests, and the gradual devastation of the fund. There is also evidence of the disposal of items, for example, that were in poor technical condition. Items from the collection fund were also used as payment, for example, for masonry work done for the church when the state did not grant funds for repairs. Exceptionally, works from depopulated sites were also brought into private collections in this way. At the same time, the removal of a piece of equipment from its original context always represents an intrusion into a given memory structure and implies a loss of value. The complex message of the art-historical collection is disturbed, the iconographic meaning is shifted or lost, and the memory structure is disturbed, including a break in the link to archival materials. The correct reading or reconstruction of the link to a specific interior is an essential step in understanding the work.

### **The destruction of sacred interiors after 1948**

After 1945, sacred structures in the borderlands, from where the German population was forcibly removed, were first threatened, and the sites were then inhabited by people with no connection to their environment or razed to the ground. Despite the proclaimed state interest, the supervision of church secretaries and the punishments, the process of looting and the disappearance of some interiors was inevitable. However, many of the original features were retained and emerged from private ownership after a long period of time. This also applies to the sculpture from the furnishings of the Church of St. Jošt in Cheb, built between 1430 and 1439. The church's demise began in 1945 when the roofing was damaged by shelling of the nearby railway bridge. (Fig. 2) On 9 February 1948 the Provincial National Committee in Prague issued a decision



⬅ Fig. 2. View of the damaged church of St. Jošt in Cheb (photoarchive of National Heritage Institute, Directorate-General, Nr. N090456)

⬇ Fig. 3. View of the interior of the Church of St. Jošt with the altar on the Gospel side, later transferred to the Municipal Museum in Cheb. The statue of St. Sebastian, captured on the right on the altar extension, was lost (photoarchive of National Heritage Institute, Directorate-General, Nr. N090457)



➡ Fig. 4. The remains of the Church of St. Jošt and the Calvary Altar, later transferred to the Cheb City Museum. The statuettes on the altar extension were lost (photoarchive of National Heritage Institute, Directorate-General, Nr. N090464)



that the church should be repaired. After the communist takeover, however, reconstruction was postponed due to unallocated funds until the roof and ceiling collapsed in 1954. In May 1964, the building was damaged by the army and the same year the heritage protection was abandoned. In 1968, the remaining masonry was demolished.<sup>8</sup> (Fig. 3)

Historical photographs show that the interior was already structurally damaged in 1951 and parts of it were allegedly lying in the castle moat, from where they were rescued by the Cheb City Museum.<sup>9</sup> In 2018, the statue of St. Sebastian was presented as a work without a past from the estate of a South Bohemian antiquarian as part of the agenda of Act 71/1994 Coll. on the sale and export of objects of cultural value (Fig. 4). However, based on documentation, it was identified as part of the decoration from the altar of the evangelical side.<sup>10</sup> The theft of the statuette could not be classified as theft even after almost seventy years. The Cheb Museum unsuccessfully sought to purchase the statuette, given its provenance.<sup>11</sup> Due to the context, the statuette was declared a cultural monument, which allowed it to be protected and presented as an important example of the original furnishings. It commemorates the destruction of the church after the German population was expelled.<sup>12</sup>

After 1950, churches in military territories had to be cleared out. This is the case of the valuable furnishings of the pilgrimage church in Svatobor, mentioned as early as 1352 as a foundation of the monastery of Osek. The pilgrimage church, richly documented by sources, was built in the Middle Ages by the lords of Plavno.<sup>13</sup> The spiritual life in the area is illustrated by Baroque archival documents. Among them is an apparently exaggerated account from 1730 of the dilapidated state of the church, written by the then parish priest Nowotnig, who sought to improve it. The Gothic building was replaced by a Baroque new building designed by the architect František Maxmilián Kaňka and built between 1731 and 1736 (Fig. 5). Information about the amount of the bills has survived, we know that the Kadaň sculptor Karl Weizmann participated in the altar decoration, the polychromy was carried out by the Radonice staufer Johann Georg Rochler in 1767. The donor was the owner of the estate František Josef Czernin.<sup>14</sup> The Baroque investor probably had a newly polychromed and gilded late Gothic carving of the Virgin Mary inserted from the furnishings of the older building into a special display case of the main altar. (Fig. 6) Although there are no records of its grace character, it survived together with other Baroque furnishings until the displacement of Svatobor after World War II.<sup>15</sup> The placement of the older work in a new setting at the most prominent point of the interior testifies to the reverence paid to

this Madonna in the Baroque period, although no reports of the statue's grace character have survived. The last information relates to 1931, when the church was renovated and the three altarpieces were restored and retooled by Anton Bašný of Nový Jičín. After 1945, life in the village and the church was subdued due to displacement and the establishment of a military area, history lost its materialization, and the pilgrimage site fell into disrepair. The last parish priest, Father Vojtěch Sadl, managed to place most of the equipment in neighboring parishes. On the basis of recent provenance research by the National Heritage Institute, the aforementioned woodcarving of the Madonna was identified in the Kladruby collection,<sup>16</sup> and on the basis of art historical criteria, the possible appearance of the medieval altar in the church in Svatobor with the statue of the Virgin Mary in the center could also be reconstructed. (fig. 7).<sup>17</sup> The Baroque pulpit in Svatobor was an extraordinary artistic item, which has now unfortunately disappeared. Primarily by the theme of the Apotheosis of St. John of Nepomuk, and secondly by the quality and richness of the workmanship of the Ostrov carver Möckel (fig. 8). The patron saint of the Czech lands sits on a triumphal chariot led by the symbols of the four evangelists (bull, lion, eagle, angel), which are especially commonly given a place in the decoration of pulpits. The chariot rises from the surface of the Vltava River at the Charles Bridge, where John was drowned. The saint looks upwards, where the carving component transitions into a painting and where the illusory depictions of the Czech patrons of the country, St. Wenceslas and St. Sigismund, await John's arrival in heaven. Only the torso of the pulpit from Svatobor, a statue of St. John on a cart, has been identified in the Kladruby collection (fig. 9).<sup>18</sup> The church, abandoned in a military area, fell into disrepair until it was destroyed in 1966, presumably as a result of a fire or artillery (fig. 10).<sup>19</sup>

However, the destruction of the historical unit caused irreversible damage to the cultural heritage, and the works virtually connected to the site in the exhibition in Kladruby are only a poor reminder of the original aggregate that was lost.

### **Heritage mobiliary as an instrument of persecution of believers**

Through the consistent application of the aforementioned laws, under the pretext of manipulating the furnishing of sacred spaces and the finances tied to them, the totalitarian regime carried out the persecution and criminalization of the clergy. This was also attempted by the State Security in the case of the Svatá Hora grace statuette and precious devotionals that were hidden in the premises of the



◀ Fig. 5. Svatobor, Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. View of the lavishly decorated interior before its destruction. Some of the furnishings were taken away and later relocated to a number of other religious buildings outside the diocese. Two pieces were moved to the assembly site in the former Metternich residence in Kladruby (photoarchive of National Heritage Institute, Directorate-General, Nr. N051953)



◀ Fig. 6. Svatobor, Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Nave of the church after the interior was cleared out (photoarchive of National Heritage Institute, Directorate-General, Nr. N071966)

pilgrimage site on Svatá Hora near Příbram. The pilgrimage site was established and grew in connection with the development of the cult of Our Lady of Svatá Hora from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The core of the cult was a small medieval statue. After World War II, the Redemptorists assumed care for the site. The spiritual life was first paralyzed by the crackdown on religious figures. In 1949 the rector, P. Josef Hynek, was arrested and on the night of 13–14 April 1950 the Redemptorists were taken away and interned in the “centralization” monastery in Králíky.<sup>20</sup> They had been reportedly warned beforehand that the communists wanted to destroy the statue in order to put an end to the religious cult. This is apparently why it was placed together with important devotionals in hiding in the monastery and the surrounding terrain in 1948. Priests took the place of the Redemptorists, but even their work was thwarted for ideological reasons, and some of them were imprisoned. We learn about the systematic criminalization of these clerics and the circle of believers from the 1950s onwards from the files of the politically driven investigation of P. Maximilian Pittermann and a group of clerics in the early 1960s.<sup>21</sup> The discovery of stashes of valuables, including a golden armor-plate, crowns and a statue of the Madonna of St. Mary (fig. 11), served as a pretext. The investigation files also revealed a line of replacement of the statue for its copies.<sup>22</sup> Apparently, for the investigators, clarifying the reasons for hiding the statue and quantifying the possible damage was difficult to grasp, and “shortening” the proceeds of the church collections was sufficient to convict the clergy. The Svatá Hora clergy used the money raised from the faithful to support persons released from prison and clergy who had their state approval revoked or were otherwise persecuted.

Hatred of religious life did not improve in the 1960s and 1970s, and religious buildings, especially in displaced areas, moreover became a destination for thieves. Again, it was the salvage drives that were one of the leading ways of protecting monuments in the localities at that time. In this context, the letter of Father Hodinář from 1968 in the matter of the Church of St. Barbara in Valkeřice (Fig. 13) is telling: *“To the Bishop’s Chapter Consistory, I inform you that I have taken away 11 statues [...]. I did not report anything to the security, it is not worth it. I have reported countless church break-ins to them and no result. The previous SNB [...] from Valkeřice told me that we should guard the churches ourselves [...] Sincerely, P. Jan Hodinář.”* Father Hodinář moved the works within the merged parishes, especially to Verneřice. The complexity of the situation is illustrated by the story of the Valkeřice altarpiece, the Apotheosis of St Barbara, a fine painting influenced by the work of Peter Brandl, probably created before 1728 by Christopher Wilhelm Tietz (1662-?) and preserved in situ (fig. 12). It received the status of a cultural



◀ Fig. 7. Svatobor, Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Ruins of the interior (photo Klára Vaňáková 2016)

▶ Fig. 8. Statue of the Madonna, Master of the Marian Altar from Seeberg (workshop), 1520–1530, Cheb. The statuette from the glass case on the main altar of the church in Svatobor has survived in the assembly fund in Kladruby chateau (photo Gabriela Čapková, 2018)





⬆ Fig. 9. Iconographically rich structure of the pulpit in Svatobor church with the unique theme of the Apotheosis of St. John of Nepomuk. The entire piece consisted of carpentry, carving and painting, and culminated in an illusionistic mural by J. Kramolín (photoarchive of National Heritage Institute, Directorate-General, Nr. NO61953)



⬆ Fig. 10. Statue of St. John of Nepomuk from the decoration of the pulpit of the church in Svatobor, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, now displayed in the Nepomucene exhibition in State Chateau Kladruby (photo Šárka Radostová 2018)

heritage property in 1967, was stolen the following year, and was considered destroyed in 1979, so that its registration as a cultural property was cancelled and thus the protection of the work was revoked. In 2011, the large painting was discovered in a private collection and subsequently declared a cultural heritage property again at the proposal of the National Heritage Institute.<sup>23</sup> Following an out-of-court settlement, it was recovered by the parish and placed in the church in Jedlka. The example shows that even the painting of the high altar, the most important work of the sacred interior, was not spared the vicissitudes of concealment, destruction, and restoration, including official decisions granting, withdrawing, and re-granting protection as a cultural heritage property.<sup>24</sup>

The history of churches and chapels makes it possible to trace the systematic destruction of religious life by the regime. This is also shown in the film documentaries about the relocation of the Dean's Church of the Assumption in Most. The church was built between 1517 and 1550 by Jacob Heilmann of Schweinfurt, a pupil and follower of Benedikt Ried (fig. 14).<sup>25</sup> Like five other religious buildings in Most, it was to be demolished in the early 1970s, along with the entire historic core of the town, due to the discovery of coal. Protests from the professional public and the obvious need to demonstrate the technical and cultural maturity of the socialist state led to the implementation of an extraordinary project, albeit at the cost of ending the religious function of the building.<sup>26</sup> In documents following the social debate on the possibility of moving the church, the loss of its liturgical function was foreshadowed. In the visually impressive film *How to Move a Church* (written and directed by František Lukáš, 1967), an actor supporting the move expressed himself in the following words, "*Just like [St. Vitus Cathedral], our dean's church can serve a purpose other than as a place of worship.*" The commentator at the end of the film added: "*So the former dean's church will stand here for centuries to come and its story will enter into legend.*"<sup>27</sup> For its time, the media's extraordinary attention to religious space was characterized by an almost incomprehensible purging of any hint of the spiritual function of the space and the existence of the faithful. I found only one mention of the liturgical function of the church in the contemporary press – an article entitled *The Last Ringing in the Most Church* by the author (lc) provided information about the last church ceremonies attended by the Bishop of Litomerice, Dr. Štěpán Trochta, on Easter Monday. The author devoted the remaining two thirds of the text to the dimensions of the church and the principles of moving.<sup>28</sup> First, the facility had to be cleared, then the tower was dismantled and in 1975 the church was moved by 841.1 meters using a special system and rails. The equipment was carefully stored, as its clearance was supervised by the secretly ordained priest František Pospíšil.



2 Pohled do úkrytu a na uložené věci v něm.



3 Záběr kalichů po odstranění obalů.

MV č. skl. 601

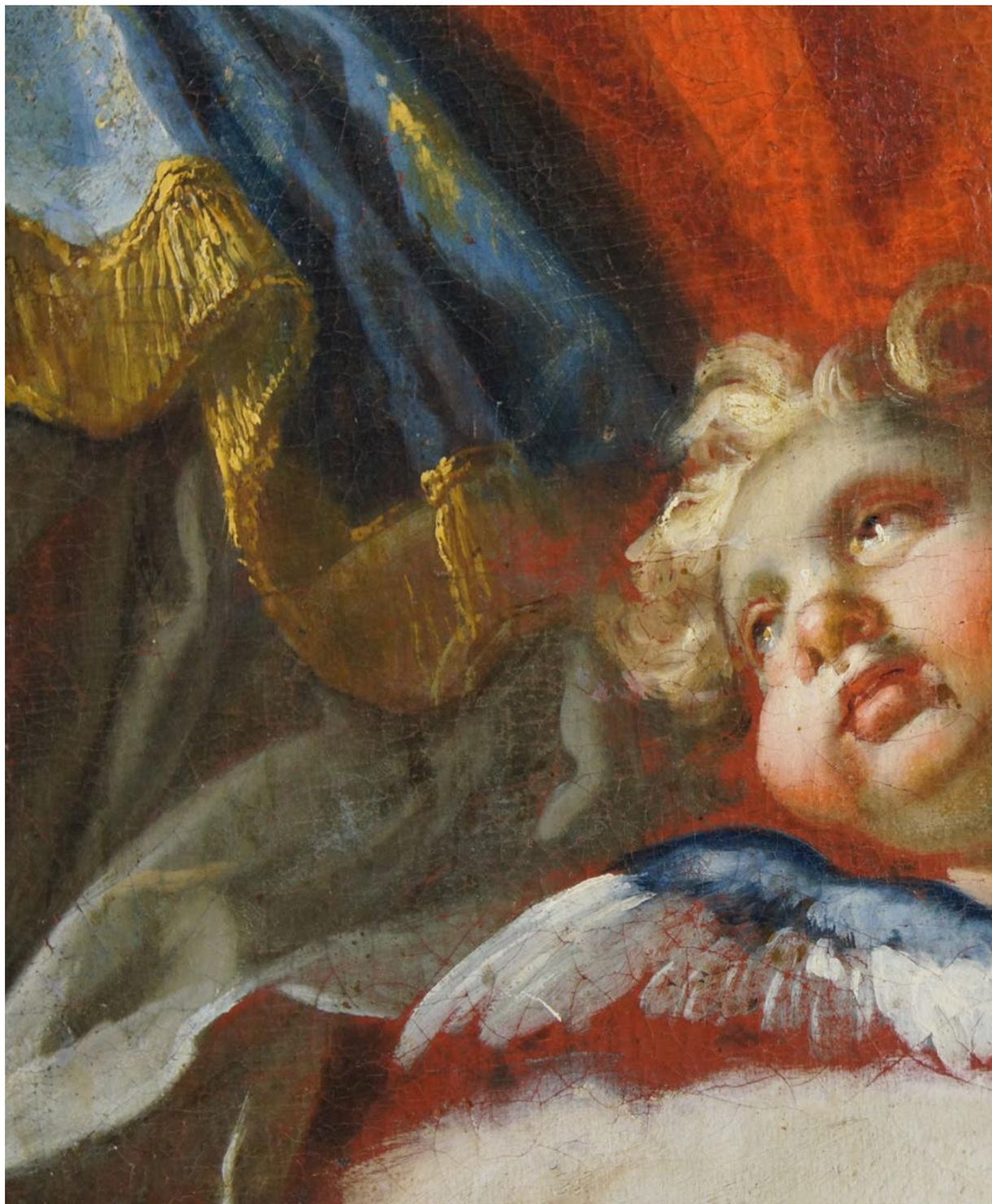
⬆ Fig. 11. Svatá Hora near Příbram, footage from the StB file for the Kangaroo court against a group of local clergy: stashing valuables in a pilgrimage site (Security Service Archive, sign. CH-13, inv. Nr. 68)



⬆ Fig. 12. Valkeřice (Algersdorf), interior of the Church of St. Barbara in 1966 (State District Archives Dečín, Digital archive, photo D-01680, unknown author)



⬆ Fig. 13. Valkeřice (Algersdorf), interior of the Church of St. Barbara shortly before demolition in 1974 (State District Archives Dečín, ONV Děčín, inv. Nr. 1169, box Nr. 1086, unknown author)



⬆ Fig. 14. *The Apotheosis of St. Barbara*, Christopher Wilhelm Tietz, ca 1728, detail with a pair of putti (photo Šárka Radostová, 2013)



By clearing out the furnishings and popularizing the move, which removed the orientation of the church, the space was profaned.<sup>29</sup> The church roof leaked and the building fell into disrepair without proper security. It was again Father Pospíšil who, in the late 1970s, asked foreign friends to publicize the fate of the church. An article in the West German press, *The World's Most Expensive Pigeon House*,<sup>30</sup> was published, which is said to have worked, and the reconstruction of the church began, with the historicizing 19<sup>th</sup>-century decoration removed. At this point it is necessary to recall the efforts of Heide Mannl-Raková (25. 3. 1941 – 2. 2. 2000), a historian from Most, who because of her German origin had to overcome the unfriendliness of the communist regime already on her way to education and for the same reasons faced the surveillance of the State Security. As a documenter of the Most Museum, she made a significant contribution to the preservation of many Most monuments, including the furnishings of the dean's church.<sup>31</sup> However, it was only with its transformation into a gallery space in 1983-1988 that it was opened to the public again.<sup>32</sup> The church was not resanctified until 1993.

### Threats to sacred furnishings after 1989

This brings us to the post-1989 period, when the democratization of society and the opening of borders led to an extraordinary increase in crime and a wave of thefts in sacred spaces. In Bohemia, some buildings were repeatedly affected, some as many as eight times. Often these were organized groups of thieves. It is estimated that gradually, during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, up to 100,000 objects disappeared from churches and chapels alone.

The state's response was quite strong, and on the basis of Government Decree No. 307 of 28 August 1991, the *Integrated System for the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage*, known as ISO, was established to protect cultural property forming part of the national cultural treasure. In the justification, the state of endangerment of the cultural heritage was stated, as well as the lack of documentation of the items. The Government established cooperation between the Ministries of Culture and the Interior to address the issue. The Ministry of Culture concluded an Agreement on the Recording and Documentation of Cultural Property and a Cooperation Agreement on the Documentation of Cultural Property Owned by the Roman Catholic Church with the Czech Bishops' Conference, which was followed by agreements between regional heritage institutes and Roman Catholic

Church entities. Funds were allocated for cooperation between conservationists and the Church, and sacral interiors were newly documented and videotaped. Church buildings and depositories were better secured, first mechanically and gradually by a system linked to the police security desk. The program also allocated funds for the purchase of works for state collections and the repatriation of illegally exported artefacts. The government adopted Act No. 71/1994 Coll., which prevented the uncontrolled export of objects of cultural value and set rules for sales on the antiquities market. The benefit was to cleanse the market of stolen objects. The police also launched a database of stolen PSEUD works and started international cooperation in the search for them.

With the relaxation of borders, a large number of illegally acquired objects were exported abroad. With the cooperation of state institutions in the ISO program, the help of volunteers, and the assistance of newly established civic associations, it became possible to recover these works. The ratification of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the subsequent ratification of the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Property have helped the state in its efforts.

The process of tracing and returning stolen works is complicated and lengthy, but necessary for the protection of national cultural heritage. In foreign auctions, stolen works usually appear with a longer time lag after the theft. An example is the late Gothic statue of St. Nicholas from the workshop of the Master of the Zvíkov Lamentation from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was stolen in August 1990 from the church in Dlouhá Ves. In 2012 it appeared restored in the Munich auction house Hampel (fig. 16) and the legal steps taken by the Ministry of Culture to return it were successful. St. Nicholas was thus exhibited again last year in Hradec Králové at the exhibition *In the Middle of the Bohemian Crown. Gothic and Early Renaissance Art of Eastern Bohemia* (fig. 17)<sup>33</sup>

However, a number of works of art stolen from sacral spaces in the Czech Republic could not be returned, mainly due to insufficient documentation or other reasons. On New Year's Eve 1991, for example, the counterpart pair of angels of the side altar of St. John of Nepomuk in the village of Úterý was stolen (fig. 18). The author of the high quality altarpiece was the sculptor František Ignác Platzer; the commission is archival evidence from 1752. In 2009, a statue of one of the angels was discovered in a Munich auction by Hampel, but repatriation

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822  
Franz Ignaz Platzer,  
1717 - 1787

HULDIGENDER ENGEL

Höhe: 98 cm.  
Spannweite: 144 cm.  
Tiefe: 50 cm.

Mit weit ausgespanntem rechten und angezogenem linken Flügel, Körperwendung nach links, auf einer Wolkenbank kniend. Die linke Hand in eleganter Bewegung an die Brust gelegt, das durch Rilenschlitzerei quergestreift wiedergegebene Gewand über der Brust zusammenhaltend. Der Kopf nach links geneigt, mit über den Rücken herabfallenden Haarlocken und prägnanter Schläfenlocke sowie edlem Antlitz. Gürtlung des Kostüms durch im zarten Relief angeschnitztes Gürtelband. Die Füße in Sandalen. Inkarnat- und Goldfassung original erhalten. Die geriffelte Oberfläche des Gewandes, die quergestreiftes Textil ergibt, ist einerseits typisch für den Bildschnitzer Platzer, der sich von der Wiener Bildhauertradition von Donner und Martinelli angeregt weiß, andererseits bereits Zeichen des frühen Klassizismus des ausgehenden 18. Jahrhunderts. Rechter Arm fehlt. (7310221)

Estimate € 6.500 - 8.500

Kunst Auktionen im Kinsky | 93. Kunstauktion | Antiques | Ignaz Franz Platzer

http://www.gallia-kinsky.com/en/auktion/item/?Item=0453&view=150

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(Klein-Engelfigur aus der hl. Wendt-Kirche bei Pöchlarn, 1752)  
Lindenerz, gold gefasst, hochwertige polychrome Holzschlitzerei eines kleinen Engels auf einer halbkugelförmigen, schalenförmigen, wulstigen Basis, 98 x 144 x 50 cm.  
Teil: A-Frang  
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↑ Fig. 15. Angel from Úterý, František Ignác Platzer, 1752. Stolen statue on sale at the Hampe auction house, Munich, 2009 (downloaded from the company's website)

← Fig. 16. Angel from Úterý, František Ignác Platzer, 1752. Stolen statue on sale at the Im Kinsky auction house, Vienna (downloaded from the company's website)

through international negotiations failed (fig. 19). In 2012, the same angel surprisingly appeared at the Im Kinsky auction in Vienna with its date, authorship, and location, although the illegal origin was concealed from the buyers (fig. 20).<sup>34</sup> The angel eventually returned to the Czech Republic thanks to the efforts of a private collector and was exhibited in the National Gallery (fig. 21). In 2021, the National Gallery acquired the sculpture for its collection with the help of a financial grant from the ISO program.

## Conclusion

The communist government's approach to sacred cultural heritage, despite its proclamatory steps, was ultimately devastating, and so the thefts of the 1990s were actually attributable to totalitarianism. Only the democratic state, with a quick reaction, returned attention to the protection of sacred buildings. It was supported in this by experts from the ranks of art historians and conservationists, particularly Mojmir Horyna and Daniela Vokolková.<sup>35</sup>

The examples given could not exhaust the range of situations provoking damage or even the destruction of sacred buildings. The nuances of the individual stories were introduced by people on both sides, on the side of the persecuted believers and clergy, and on the side of the communist regime, which constructed processes in which the care of works of art was a pretext for the persecution of individuals or the pressure to secularize society.

Each case presents a unique tangle of impulses, causes, actions, and their actors, from the committed action of a particular church secretary, to the ordinary or more lukewarm performance of the officials' duties, or, on the contrary, the unjustified bullying of the authorities, to the improvisation, willingness, perseverance, and dedication of parish priests, parishioners, museum workers, conservationists, and others.

The imminent state of threat to the heritage properties was mainly indicated by the disinterest of the society, indifference to vandalism, theft, and a desire to enrich or change the function of the space.

In crisis situations, there were rescue collections of equipment. Both of these parties used salvage collection as the quickest, easiest, cheapest, and often the only way to secure a work. Due to the nature of the monument, usually tied to



⬆ Fig. 17. Angel from Úterý, František Ignác Platzer, 1752. Stolen statue at the exhibition in National Gallery in Prague (photo Šárka Radostová 2013)



⬆ Fig. 18. Statue of St. Nicholas, Master of Lamentation from Zvíkov (circle), 1520 -1530, on the door of the main altar of the Church of St. Nicholas in Dlouhá Ves (National Heritage Institute)



⬆ Fig. 19. Statue of St. Nicholas, Master of Lamentation from Zvíkov (circle), 1520 -1530. Statue stolen from the church in Dlouhá Ves, presented in the catalogue of the Hampel auction house (downloaded from the company's website)

the architecture of the chapel or church, only easily separable parts were included in the collections. Separation of units, such as altars and pulpits, was done at the cost of violent breakage or other “minor” damage.

Yet we know that artistic and cultural property “in motion” is always at risk. Already by being removed from the whole, there is a loss of value, in addition to the risk of mechanical damage, and even if the immediate threat of theft passes, there is still the risk of alienation of another kind, accompanied by a loss of connection to the original context. In this respect, this article bears the character of appeal.

As the stories of individual monuments show us well, even destroyed units create a cautionary memento, showing what individuals, professional institutions and society can influence. It is impossible to protect society from adverse historical events and radical reversals. Investigating the value of the units, consistently documenting them, describing them, publishing them, already helps to minimize the inevitable damage to cultural heritage.

The resistance to all things religious and sacred, strengthened and provoked by totalitarian power, has weakened with the gradual democratization of society and the passage of years.

From today’s point of view, we must conclude that the resistance to everything religious and sacred, which was strengthened and provoked by the totalitarian power, has weakened with the gradual democratization of society and the passing of the years. In addition to state and regional institutions, many projects of local communities, voluntary organisations and associations are now devoted to the restoration and protection of cultural heritage. They are supported by state financial support and the professional activities of institutionalised church and state conservation.

*English translation by Bryce Belcher*



# Notes

- 1 The article was written as part of scientific research activities funded by the budget of the National Heritage Institute.
- 2 Milan Uhde (b. 1936), writer and critic, editor of the Brno monthly *Host do domu*, founder of the Atlantis publishing house, politician, signatory of Charter 77, member of the Movement for Civil Freedom, author of the play *Ballad for a Bandit* (1975), made famous by its production and the film of the same name based on it. The drama was signed by the director of the *Husa na provázku* Theatre, Zdeněk Pospíšil.
- 3 Act No. 217/1949 Coll. on the establishment of the State Office for Religious Affairs and Act No. 218/1949 Coll. on the economic security of churches and religious societies, from the point of view of Heritage Conservation, were joined by Act No. 22/1958 Coll. – Act on Cultural Monuments, later replaced by Act No. 20/1987 Coll. – Act of the Czech National Council on State Heritage Conservation. The laws were supplemented by a number of directives further regulating individual areas of state intervention, e.g. the Directive for the Demolition of Buildings and Facilities in the Prohibited Zone of 16 August 1952, which also applied to sacral monuments in the border zone.
- 4 See Section 2 of Act No 217/1949 Coll.: “*The task of the State Office for Religious Affairs is to ensure that church and religious life develops in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of the people’s democratic system, and thus to secure for everyone the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of religion, based on the principles of religious tolerance and equality of all faiths.*”
- 5 See § 11, Act 218/1949 Coll. All private and public patronage of churches, congregations and other religious institutions passes to the State.
- 6 Jan Anastáz Opasek, abbot of the Břevnov monastery, who was imprisoned for life for alleged espionage, describes the crackdown by the authorities. Anastáz Opasek, *Dvanáct zastavení: Vzpomínky opata břevnovského kláštera* (Prague: Torst, 1992) and (Prague: Torst, 1997, 3<sup>rd</sup> and revised edition). See also <https://mistapametinaroda.cz/?lc=cs&id=429&ls=en>, accessed June 25, 2022.
- 7 In particular the Decree of the President of the Republic on the confiscation and accelerated distribution of agricultural property of Germans, Hungarians, as well as traitors and enemies of the Czech and Slovak nation No. 12/1945 Coll.
- 8 The church was built from the foundation of the Rudusch family of Cheb and consecrated in 1440 by the Bishop of Regensburg. Jaromír Boháč, *Cheb – město. Historicko-turistický průvodce (č.11). Cheb/Eger – Stadt. Historisch-touristischer führer* (Nr.11) (Domažlice: Město Cheb, 1999), 73–4, 199–200; Martin Čechura, *Zaniklé kostely Čech* (Prague: Libri, 2012), 82–3. See also [www.znicenekostely.cz/?load=detail&id=13964](http://www.znicenekostely.cz/?load=detail&id=13964), accessed June 25, 2022; Jaromír Boháč and Roman Salanczuk, *Zmizelé Chebsko – zničené obce a osady okresu Cheb po roce 1945* (Cheb: Museum Cheb, 2007); <http://encyklopedie.cheb.cz/cz/encyklopedie/kostel-sv-jodoka>, accessed June 25, 2022.
- 9 Photos available at [www.znicenekostely.cz/?load=detail&id=13964](http://www.znicenekostely.cz/?load=detail&id=13964), accessed June 25, 2022. Archival images documenting the gradual decay of the building are also preserved in the photo archive of the National Heritage Institute, General Directorate (NPÚ, GnŘ), especially images inv. no. N090458, N090460, N090465.
- 10 The altar with the Calvary theme was commissioned in 1687 by Anna Katharina Sybilla Otto von und auf Ottengrün together with its counterpart. The altar of the Crucifixion bears the initials of the founder and the date 1687, the inscription informs about the establishment of the altar in 1693, the opposite altar also according to Dürer’s design, the remains of the altars were moved to the courtyard in the 1970s and from there to the collections of the Cheb Museum - <https://muzeumcheb.cz/?s=jošt>, accessed June 25, 2022. The statue of St. Sebastian probably belonged to the altar secondarily and it is possible that it comes from the older church furnishings.

- 11 The statuette is listed under No. 106271 in the Monuments Catalogue: <https://pamatkovykatolog.cz/>.
- 12 Cheb was settled approximately only by half, and the church remained on the periphery of the new inhabitants and the state.
- 13 Archival records are stored in the State District Archive (SOkA) Karlovy Vary, FÚ Svatobor, book of church accounts 1726-1755; SOkA Karlovy Vary, FÚ Svatobor, book of church accounts 1751-1821. SOkA Karlovy Vary, FÚ Svatobor: *Liber memorabilium ac jurium parochialium ecclesiam Zwetbaviensem spectantium*, unpaginated; *Inventarium ecclesiae et parochiae a me P. Josepho Voigt p. t. parochi confectum*; an archival photograph from 1954 shows the Baroque form of the statue including the crown and sceptre (Photoarchive of the National Museum of Natural History, GmŘ , by Pilman, inv. no. N063.800-63.803).
- 14 In a letter dated 3 March 1730, he asked the archbishop's consistory to change the patronage of the church to the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. In this connection he also mentioned the state of the building: "Since the most noble lord, Count Czernín, moved by spiritual zeal, at my constant entreaties, has graciously decided to build my small, dark and collapsing parish church, which the most worthy Consistory has graciously entrusted to me, together with the rectory, which is also very much in danger of collapse, from the foundations, for which construction the necessary preparatory work is also being carried out...". National Archives Czech Republic, APA I, card 1198. Quoted from Anna Strnadlová, "History of the Parish Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Svatobor" (Karlovy Vary district) (Bc., Charles University, 2008), 14-18.
- 15 The statue was also registered on the main altar by the inventory literature: *In einer Vitrine auf dem einfachen Tabernakel des Hochaltars spätgotisches Standbild des Gottesmutter mit dem Kinde aus dem 16. Jahrhundert, vergoldete Holzplastik, 0,84 cm hoch. Die Kronen sind Karlsbader Gürtelarbeit aus dem Jahre 1764. Anton Gnirs, Topographie der historischen und kunstgeschichtlichen Denkmale in dem Bezirke Karlsbad.* (Prag 1933) (München: Oldenbourg, 1996), 171. Apparently after the army took over the area in connection with the establishment of the Hradiště Military District, the statue and other church furnishings were deposited in Rybáře near Karlovy Vary (archival photographs show it here with Baroque polychrome and accessories still in place). According to Jaroslav Vyčichlo, the Madonna of Svatobor was considered missing until now. See the relevant entry in Šárka Radostová, ed. Hana Baštýřová, Tomáš Gaudek, Magdalena Wells, co-ed., *Ad unicum. Selected Works of Gothic, Renaissance and Mannerist Art from the National Heritage Institute, Czech Republic* (Prague: National Heritage Institute, 2020).
- 16 After the confiscation of the Windischgrätz property under presidential decrees, the former monastery in Kladrubby functioned as one of the collection points where the NCC deposited sorted cultural property. The building, including the collection sites, came under the conservation administration only in 1967. Later on, works that were without proper protection and owners were deposited in this fund in smaller sets, and occasionally the fund was enriched with works purchased from the antiquities trade. This was done thanks to the foresight of the castellan, who saved sacred monuments that were being sold off. These works were mostly of unknown origin.
- 17 They are connected with three other carvings of saints and a bishop, which are in the collections of the National Gallery after being transferred from the Museum of Decorative Arts. Radostová, *Ad unicum*, cat. No. 41, 231-36 (author of the entry Šárka Radostová).
- 18 The origin of the sculpture was pointed out by Klára Vaňáková.
- 19 The Society for Documentation and Restoration of Monuments of the Karlovy Vary Region is now seeking to reconstruct the ruins of the church, see [www.dokumentacepamatek.cz](http://www.dokumentacepamatek.cz), accessed June 25, 2022.
- 20 See <http://svata-hora.cz/cz/225/svata-hora-v-dobe-komunismu>, accessed June 25, 2022.
- 21 Investigation files of the Ministry of the Interior, Security Service Archive, Department of Archive Funds of the MV ČSR Kanice, fund sign. CH-13, in. j. 68, cartouche no. 70, CSV VB-23/401-61 and inv. no. V-4660/MV - group investigation file no. 1126.

- 22 Dalibor Státník, „Skrutá Milostná P. Marie Svatohorská,” *Podbrdsko* 14, no. 1, (2007): 107–15, especially 108.
- 23 Register no. 104846. Čechura, *Zaniklé kostely*, 279–80.
- 24 Šárka Radostová, “Peripetie památkové péče aneb znovuobjevení oltářního obrazu z Valkeřic,” *Zprávy památkové péče* 72, no. 6 (2012): 528–30. See also the website of the project Hortus Montium Mediorum – Documentation, Research, and Presentation of Cultural Heritage of Selected Sites of the East Bohemian Central Highlands, NAKI DG18P02OVV066 (2018–2022) Faculty of Arts, UJEP, <http://ff.ujep.cz/hortus/index.html>, accessed June 25, 2022.
- 25 The Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary is owned by the state, administered by the National Heritage Institute, and has been protected by the status of a national cultural heritage property since 2010.
- 26 A summary of the removal process in German, English and Russian: Heide Mannlová-Raková, *Kulturní památka Most. Děkanství kostel Nanebevzetí Panny Marie v Mostě a jeho stavitelé* (Prague: Propagation Works Prague, 1989), 100–7.
- 27 *Jak stěhovati kostel* [How to Move a Church], written and directed by František Lukáš, 1967.
- 28 Lc, “The Last Ringing in the Most Church,” *Rudé právo*, April 8, 1969, 1.
- 29 F. Pospíšil was secretly ordained by Cardinal Štěpán Trochta, who celebrated the last service before the move. Fittingly for the function of the relocated church, the option of establishing a museum of the workers’ and communist movement was also considered.
- 30 The newspaper text could not be further identified, but memoirists agree on the title of the article; it is cited in the publications mentioned as a newspaper article in general terms; [https://mostecky.denik.cz/zpravy\\_region/utajovany-knez-frantisek-pospisil-pomohl-vzbudit-zajem-o-most-v-cizine-20141110.html](https://mostecky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/utajovany-knez-frantisek-pospisil-pomohl-vzbudit-zajem-o-most-v-cizine-20141110.html), accessed June 25, 2022.
- 31 The extraordinary personality of H. Mannl-Raková was commemorated by the exhibition *The Story of Old Most / Die Geschichte de alten Stadt Most*, which took place at the turn of 2020, but its course was limited by anti-pandemic measures. Jitka Šrejberová, ed., *Příběh starého Mostu: na památku Heide Mannlové Rakové = Die Geschichte der alten Stadt Most: zum Andenken an Heide Mannlová Raková* (Most: Oblastní muzeum a galerie v Mostě, 2020).
- 32 In 1988, the architect Zdenka Nováková received the Prize of the Minister of Culture of the Czechoslovak Republic for the installation of the gallery in the Most Cathedral. According to her, the main aim of the significant transformation of the space by “removing the furnishings” was to respect the late Gothic expression of the interior as given to the church by Jakub Heilmann of Schweinfurt at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Jan Novotný, “Gallery in the Most Church,” *Československý Architekt* 35, no. 8 (April 1989): 1–3. The text does not mention a single word about the religious function of the church, except perhaps the architect’s solution to the problem of elevating the chancel. The reconstruction, including making the space accessible, took 13 years. The architect describes the transformation of the High Baroque space with admiration, “*The realization, however, clearly confirms the legitimacy and correctness of the chosen concept and is, I think, a clear response to both the voices calling for a conservative return to the state before the move and those who, on the contrary, advocated leaving the stripped interior in its purely structural form.*”
- 33 St. Nicholas, h. 110 cm, register number 32368/6-131/36-2242. Identified in the sale as St. Bishop, lot no. 1269, ([http://www.hampel-auctions.com/de/onlinecatalog-search.html?search\\_txt=1269](http://www.hampel-auctions.com/de/onlinecatalog-search.html?search_txt=1269) - accessed May 16, 2012) at Hampel Antiques, Fine Art Auctions, Schellingstrasse 44, Munich. Šárka Radostová. Medieval furnishings of the Church of St. Nicholas in Dlouhá Ves, in *Gotické a raně renesanční umění ve východních Čechách 1200–1550. Příspěvky z vědecké konference*, ed. Ivo Hlobil and Milan Dospěl (Hradec Králové: Muzeum východních Čech, 2014), 109–18; Helena Dánová and Markéta Pražáková, eds. *Uprostřed Koruny české. Gotické a raně renesanční umění východních Čech. 1250–1550. Průvodce výstavou* (Hradec Králové: Muzeum východních Čech, 2019), cat. III.VII.7, 178.

- 34 Hampel Fine Art Auctions in Munich, December 4, 2009, under lot no. 1002; <http://www.palais-kinsky.com/en/auction/item/?KatNr=0453&overview=150>, accessed December 12, 2013. On this, Šárka Radostová, “Cesty umění”, *Zprávy památkové péče* 69, no. 3 (2009): 216–219; Šárka Radostová, “Platzerův anděl z Úterý zpět v Čechách zásluhou soukromého sběratele aneb Bezprecedentní návrat ukradené památky,” *Zprávy památkové péče* 73, no. 5 (2013): 481.
- 35 Mojmír Horyna (23. 3. 1945 – 26. 1. 2011) [https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mojm%C3%ADr\\_Horyna](https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mojm%C3%ADr_Horyna), accessed June 25, 2022; Daniela Vokolková (14. 10. 1944 – 23. 1. 2010), accessed June 25, 2022.



# Summary

## **The Alchemy of Preservation: Postwar Retribution, the State, Personal Ambition and the Early Making of Czechoslovak Socialist Heritage**

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Throughout the Czech Republic there are dozens of state-owned museums installed in carefully preserved castles and chateaux many of which, after the Nazi defeat in May of 1945, were confiscated from expelled German noble families. How did these former private homes and the furnishings inside them become official Czech(oslovak) heritage objects with well-appointed rooms open for public viewing during and since socialism? The limited loss of cultural property in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia alone does not explain this transformation. Activities and developments following the fall of Third Reich must be examined. It merits emphasizing that the transformation began between the end of the Nazi occupation and before the communist takeover in February of 1948. This article reveals that in these three years an intricate causal mixing of German-Czech ethnic rivalry; a fragmented state structure; and personal and professional ambitions of Czech experts who strategized, negotiated, competed, and collaborated for control over confiscated castles, chateaux and valued objects inside them. Appreciation of this alchemy of preservation opens doors to deepened understanding of the nature of the postwar and socialist Czechoslovak state and possibilities for individuals to negotiate with institutions of power for the fulfillment of their goals in challenging historical contexts.

**In other words: to care for the heritage properties of part of our nation's socialist construction. State heritage care in the Czech lands from the early 1950s until the publication of the Cultural Heritage Properties Act in 1958**

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State heritage property care in Czechoslovakia after the Second World War was confronted with tasks that were incomparably more complex and demanding than in the previous period, with the accompanying tensions and paradoxes. The transfer of most heritage properties from private to state ownership offered a previously unimaginable opportunity to significantly influence their maintenance and use. At the same time, however, conservationists have had to look on, virtually helplessly, at the devastation of many other valuable heritage properties, even at the targeted and widespread devastation in the case of the border zone or the North Bohemian brown coal basin. The role of the state changed dramatically, not only in terms of ownership relations, but also in terms of the demands placed on the preservation of cultural heritage, its presentation, and the creation of new types of heritage properties.

The term “instrumentalization” can be used to describe the most important processes that determined the approach to cultural heritage in the Czechoslovak Republic in the late 1940s and during the 1950s. The structure of heritage property care, the mechanisms of its daily operation, and the practical performance of heritage property protection, as well as the buildings themselves, were to serve as part of a broad-spectrum indoctrination of the population. Although the ideological narratives of communist totalitarian rule, which used heritage care and individual heritage properties as instruments to promote a hegemonic conception of culture, appeared after February 1948, their unequivocal assertion is, somewhat paradoxically, linked to the late 1950s and 1960s.

### **Bureaucratization, centralization, categorization.**

#### **The preparation of the Act on State Heritage Management**

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In 1974, the Ministry of Culture began drafting a new heritage law which was to replace the hitherto valid law of 1958 on cultural heritage properties. The preparation of the new law on state heritage management lasted throughout nearly the entire period of normalization. Although the need to make extensive changes in state heritage management had been formulated by preservationists in the late 1960s, the first conceptual documents on the

bill completely ignored them. Instead of the proposed increase in respect for the expert opinion of heritage institutions, the main theme of the new law became the effort to strengthen the Ministry's methodological control over the nation's heritage fund. The original concept of a dynamic heritage fund was replaced by a system of centralized declaration of assets as state-protected cultural heritage properties. The increasingly stronger state bureaucracy, as well as the advances of the scientific and technological revolution that were trying to apply the idea of a scientifically controlled society in the real world with the assistance of expert management, were to contribute to this. The preparation of the heritage act also demonstrated a new emphasis on positive law that strove for the accuracy of legal provisions in the creation and interpretation of law.

### **Monument preservation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Austria**

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The responsible institution for the care of material cultural heritage in Austria is the Federal Monuments Authority Austria (Bundesdenkmalamt). Immediately after the WW II one of the biggest challenges for the institution was to help with the rebuilding of Austria. It lasted in Austria until the 1950s. In the late 1940s the Federal Monuments Authority also started to protect Adolf Loos buildings from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1960s and 1970s and especially around the European Heritage Year 1975 questions of how to protect old cities and Austria's cultural landscape against modern skyscrapers, highways and other kind of environmental destruction arose. In the 1970s and 1980s numerous important monuments like monasteries in Lower Austria were restored. Beside the restoration of highlights the question of the „masses of monuments“ like rural buildings came up and the institution also started to engage stronger with buildings of the classical modernity from pre Second World War and exploration of the roots of modern heritage care around 1900. At the end of the century there was the first engagement with post Second World War buildings and a public discussion how to handle with Russian War Monuments of the late 1940s.

## Monument Protection in Hungary in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

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The paper gives a brief account of the tendencies of monument protection in Hungary from the end of the Second World War until the changes after the political transformations of 1990. The National Committee of Monuments, founded in 1872, was dissolved in 1949. The institution was reorganized several times, but the scientific programs of the young research workers from the 1930s, first of all important volumes of the monument topography could only be realized in the 1950s. The National Inspectorate for Historic Monuments was created in 1957, which brought a two decades' flourishing period first of all on the field of renovations and reconstructions. Its scientific department was responsible for research, cataloguing monuments, and managing and developing the collections, but also for the restoration of murals, altars and stone monuments. The task of the department for architectural planning was preparing plans for restoration works financed totally or partly by the state, together with inspecting their execution. The building restoration division organized and coordinated on-site restoration projects. It operated seven regional centers for the management of construction covering the whole country: their specially trained staff had the necessary knowledge of ancient technologies forgotten in the new age of industrial building methods. The 1980s brought already a decline from the point of view of the architectural progress, and political support, but with the complex protection of the historic town centers, and the perfection of *Bauforschung* it was still a successful period. After 1990 the organization lost its complexity: the building restoration division was privatized, and within a couple of years, all its regional departments were closed down.

## Creating the Conservation System in People's Republic of Croatia, 1945–1960

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After the Second World War Croatia became one of six republics in new Yugoslav federation. It took a week for conservators to transform the war-time Croatian State Conservation Bureau into new, central institute for protection of

monuments. The staff faced radical changes in political ideology, economy and culture, and in this context a new system for the protection of monuments was created. In line with constitutional sovereignty of each federal republic, Croatian conservators designed the system in three regional offices, organizing the staff, financial support, and projects in order to contribute to post-war reconstruction. They reassessed the pre-war conservation theories originating from Germany, Austria and Italy, expressing their opinions at conferences and in first specialized journals. This article presents the political framework, main protagonists and projects, methodology and contemporary influences in the process of creation of a new conservation system in the first fifteen years of communist Croatia.

## **Monument preservation, cultural policy and urban development in Berlin, Capital of the German Democratic Republic**

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The founding of the German Democratic Republic emphasized a radical break with German history. The founding legend of the New Germany and its nation-building based on the narrative of antifascism. Under this heading, the selected historical sources, pictures and monuments were acknowledged as national tradition. The narrative of antifascism was closely linked to reconstruction projects in architecture. For the contemporary purposes of politics, a corresponding socialist urban planning was crucial. In conformity with the Soviet model, in 1951 the programmatic redesign of cities was started. Under the premise of nation building, the incorporation of historic city elements and monuments into the current urban planning was essential. Culturally exposed places like Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic, were staged as showcases of the ruling ideology. In Berlin, the clearing away of the past was symbolized by the demolition of Andreas Schlüter's Berlin Palace. However, according to the proclamation of the "Free Socialist Republic of Germany" in 1918 by the Spartacus leader Karl Liebknecht from the fourth Palace Portal and its anti-fascist reading, these parts of the palace did survive.

The famous represent of tradition care in urban development during the 1950s is in Berlin the Stalinallee. Here, the urban planning principle insisted on the use of the so-called progressive elements by adopting historical building patterns from the classicist building epoch that was identified with the humanist tradition of the French Revolution. By copying local classicist patterns, ideological contents were incorporated into the new socialist architecture.

In the capital of the German Democratic Republic, since 1950s the historical axis Unter den Linden with the Opera House and the baroque Zeughaus were rebuilt and subordinated to the socialist city centre. In addition to the socialist image of the capital, characteristic and typical ensembles of Berlin's history should have been created. In 1977/78, this concept was followed by the creation of a quasi-new historical ensemble near the still existing Gothic Nikolai Church as the so-called „Origin of Berlin“.

This way, the modern socialist city included historical adaptations that framed the nation-building in the German Democratic Republic.

### **Reconstruction and Religious Heritage in the Polish People's Republic. Construction of a Polish Patrimony?**

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Monument conservation in the Polish People's Republic departed from the assumption that it was both desirable and achievable to not only preserve but to recover an authentic phase of national culture. In this understanding, selected architectural monuments were restored during the post-war reconstruction. Undesirable layers of history were removed and churches were restored in a national architectural style. In part this was a continuation of interwar inclinations. Heritage values of associations and events were of greater value than preservation of materiality. Both modern and traditional techniques were used. The heritage of a multi-faith and multi-ethnic country was lost altering the outlook of the nation. Reconstruction of monumental churches resulted in a common Polish patrimony.

### **“Aesthetic-Charitable View”? Traditionalism in Heritage Conservation in the Czech lands Between 1945 and 1990**

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This study focuses on the phenomenon of using traditional (pre-modernist) architectural vocabulary and technology to reconstruct historic buildings, as well

as to finish and newly construct buildings in settlements with heritage values. It explores the idea of “contemporary stamp” in the conservationist debate, while emphasizing attitudes that did not share the need to revolt against classical and vernacular vocabulary and urbanism. The study examines a diverse range of practical approaches from traditionalist urban renovations (the squares in Fulnek and Moravský Krumlov), full reconstructions either built (Bethlehem Chapel in Prague) or proposed (eastern wing of the Old Town Hall in Prague), reconstructions with a significant share of new traditional elements (the Bishop’s Palace in Olomouc, chateau gardens, open air museums), through to grassroots efforts to preserve heritage values (cottages and civic initiatives). The Czech projects discussed are placed in the larger European context.

It was here, now it’s not... The specifics of caring for religious heritage properties of a movable nature during the totalitarian regime and after its fall

### **The Vltava Cascade and Czech conservation in the 1950s and 1960s)**

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There can be few more radical interventions into the cultural landscape than the building of reservoirs in historically inhabited areas. This essay attempts to uncover whether heritage care had the opportunity at that time to mitigate the cultural losses linked with such extensive construction projects, and whether the difference in activities between the central and the regional perspective manifested itself behind the scenes.

Worldwide, ambitious intentions to electrify the economy by means of hydro-electric power appealed to both East and West. Communist propaganda turned the building of the Vltava cascade into a showcase of social management. As early as the beginning of the 1950s, the Czechoslovak government approved a plan to build twelve waterworks which were to change almost the whole flow of the Vltava into a highly energy-productive river. The plans soon fell considerably behind, but some of them, naturally after huge financial expenditure, were actually realised (from 1951 Slapy, 1952 Lipno I and II, 1954 Orlický and 1956 Kamýk).

During the time of Stalinist repression it was impossible to draw attention publicly to the danger of losses of the cultural heritage in the flooded areas; however, at least later a narrow space for discussion existed. In June 1955 an interdisciplinary working group was established in the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences “for scientific research and the technical protection of the heritage”.

However, the brutally devastated heritage did not begin to be documented until 1957. The general public could then be presented with the plan of the “exemplary work” of the Czech sciences. The effectiveness of the documentation activities, including archaeological research, was however nipped in the bud by strong bureaucratic management, the inadequate material equipment of the researchers, and fatal lack of time.

After a law on the cultural heritage was passed in 1958, which gave rise to the regional centres for heritage care and nature protection, there was a need to establish methods of cooperation between the central and the regional institutions. This often led to mutually beneficial activities which however more than once came up against lack of understanding in the differently oriented state organisations and institutions (a consequence was for example the disintegration of the valuable development of Rožmberk nad Vltavou).

Relatively constant differences in the central and regional perspectives of heritage care can be traced. The centrally organised specialists were for the most part closer to the “technocratic” solution of problems, massive documentation, and protective campaigns and public presentations of the linking of the world of heritage care being successfully linked with that of scientific and technical innovation. Regional conservationists, whether they were from a regional centre, or were individual local conservationists and members of district heritage commissions, for the most part saw the merit of their activities in collecting information about the actual state of memorials and negotiating with regional structures of the government administration. While the Prague conservationists broadcast to the world the successful use of new technologies (for example in the securing of the castle Zvíkov and chateau Orlík of Koloděje nad Lužnicí, of the transfers of the Romanesque church in Červená nad Vltavou, and of one of the first chain bridges in central Europe in Podolsko), they had a tendency rather to see everything that was not thought through and was threatened with destruction.

The approval of the international forum, which in 1964 for example in Venice gazed with interest on the slowly opening world of heritage care behind the iron curtain, aroused no enthusiasm in the region. The condition of the buildings which had been rescued not so long ago and presented as indubitable success in the field (and, according to the phraseology of the time, in the functionality of the whole social system), rapidly deteriorated in more than one case. The regional and district conservationists were close witnesses of the real state of affairs. In the regional perspective, the modernist concept of balancing the values of protection of the cultural inheritance against those of a speedy civilizational progress lost its shine.

## The Palace of Culture in Dresden

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The city center of Dresden was destroyed through the bombardment of the Allies a few months before the end of Second World War. After the end of the war, almost the whole city center was cleared out to gain space for a new socialist urban development. Following Soviet specifications, straight streets and large squares were built. The first residential and business buildings conformed to the so-called “national tradition” of Stalinist influence; and, with respect to Dresden’s architectural history, were constructed in a neo-baroque style.

The Northern side of the square “Altmarkt” was supposed to be rounded off with a multifunctional culture palace. The first drafts resembled the Lomonosov University in Moscow or the culture palace in Warsaw; however, it was decided against them. In 1959, an architectural competition was held – its draft’s requirements contained a request for a “high-dominant feature” to represent the superiority of the socialist idea. 29 plans were handed in; one of them was very modern but did not include a tower. Therefore, no one dared to select it as the winner of the competition. A delegation to discuss the matter was sent to Moscow; and, to everyone’s surprise, came back with a positive vote for the plan without a tower. The building was constructed until 1969.

After 1989, a new discussion arose as to whether to demolish the culture palace. Nowadays, Dresden’s culture palace is an integral part of Dresden’s city center and is highly frequented after being reconstructed following guidelines for historical monuments and supplemented with new functions in the interior.

## Devastation and extinction of cultural heritage properties as a result of demolition events in the Czech borderlands after 1945

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The paper deals with the fate of cultural heritage properties that came under threat, were damaged, or disappeared completely as part of the demolitions carried out along the Czechoslovak border after the Second World War. In addition

to the mass demolition and extinction of abandoned settlements, agricultural buildings, and other structures, the post-war destruction also affected a vast number of heritage properties and religious buildings (especially churches, monasteries, and chapels). Their extinction was explained to the public as in the interest of security and military, public protection, or an attempt to settle the issue of German cultural heritage in these areas. The paper is chronologically limited to the period from 1945 (when the borderlands were reassumed by the Czechoslovak administration and the process of ethnic, social, and demographic transformation of the area began) to 1960, when the nationwide demolition of abandoned settlements in the former Sudetenland was completed. The network of settlements along the Czechoslovak borderlands was radically reduced during this transformational period. The paper also addresses the role and participation of the State Heritage Office and the State Heritage Management Authorities in deciding on the fate of local heritage properties threatened by post-war demolition.

### **Once it was here, now it's not... Specifics of the care of sacral furnishings within the Czech lands during the totalitarian era and after its fall**

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This contribution focuses on the gradual impoverishment, deterioration, liquidation, loss, or complete destruction, of the furnishings of sacred interiors in Bohemia and Moravia. It deals with issues concerning movable objects belonging to our cultural heritage in the second half of the twentieth century, when items from the furnishings of sacred buildings and art works held in long-standing state and private collections began to be moved around on the basis of specific political impulses. Under totalitarianism, this occurred primarily as the result of the deportation of the German population: the creation of military districts; the liquidation of “redundant” sacred buildings; the persecution of the church; and the liquidation of the monastic life, and was also caused by the implementation of political and economic priorities at the expense of protecting the cultural heritage. After the fall of totalitarianism, after 1989, the sacred heritage was impacted by a strong centrifugal force caused by the relaxation of political conditions when, borders being opened, there was a massive growth in theft and the illegal export of cultural property. Special attention is devoted to the question of what are called rescue transports, in which individual works and entire sets were always transported. The presentation of the issue is based on seven monuments and interiors.



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# Index of names

**A**

Aigner, Piotr 233  
 Alexander III (russian tsar) 228  
 Apollonj Ghatti, Bruno Maria 156  
 Auermüller, Jiří 268

**B**

Bacher, Ernst 123  
 Barbacci, Alfredo 154  
 Bartetzky, Arnold 205  
 Bartlová, Milena 84  
 Bašný, Anton 374  
 Bellotto, Bernardo (Canaletto II)  
     123, 226, 234, 237, 239  
 Beneš, Edvard 38, 45, 52  
 Benndorf, Otto 142  
 Biegański, Piotr 154  
 Bierut, Bolesław 227  
 Bilinić, Harold 161, 162, 163, 164  
 Blažej, Jiří 277  
 Blažiček, Oldřich Jakub 71, 78  
 Böckler, Teddy 272–273  
 Bogdanović (Deanović), Ana  
     147, 154  
 Böhm, Gottfried 163  
 Boito, Camillo 160  
 Bolesław I Chrobry 241, 242  
 Bollé, Hermann 145  
 Boltenstern, Erich 123, 127  
 Bondzin, Gerhard 330, 333  
 Bonelli, Renato 166  
 Boni, Giacomo 156  
 Brandl, Peter 376  
 Brusin, Giovanni 156  
 Budinka, Zdeněk 307  
 Bukowski, Marcin 242  
 Bulić, Frane 145  
 Burian, Miroslav 68, 71  
 Buřival, Zdislav 96, 99  
 Bursche, Teodor 234

**C**

Canaletto II *see* Bernardo Bellotto  
 Cassagrande, Marco 182  
 Charvátová, Emma 71, 78  
 Cirilli, Guido 156  
 Crema, Luigi 156  
 Czernin, František Josef 373

**D**

D'Amato, Ġużè 284  
 Dávid, Ferenc 193, 194  
 Dědina, Jaroslav 49  
 Dekleva, Stanislava 148  
 Demus, Otto 120, 122–3  
 Dercsényi, Dezső 185, 189,  
     190, 191  
 Döllgast, Hans 160, 163  
 Domanovszky, Endre 183  
 Dostál, Pavel 108, 109  
 Ducati, Pericle 156  
 Dvořák, Max 119, 123, 142–3, 145,  
     148, 154, 161, 261, 262, 263,  
     265, 284

**E**

Ehn, Karl 128, 133  
 Eiermann, Egon 163  
 Eitelberger, Rudolf 142  
 Entz, Géza 185, 190, 191  
 Erdei, Ferenc 183, 189

**F**

Fabris, Stanko 166  
 Farka, Marian 308, 406  
 Fischer, Theodor 263  
 Fisković, Cvito 146, 154, 156, 157,  
     160–4, 166, 167, 169  
 Forlati, Ferdinando 154, 156  
 Fragner, Jaroslav 268, 271  
 Francis I (Austrian emperor) 142  
 Franco, Fausto 156  
 Freudenreich, Aleksandar 161

Frederick II (king of Prussia)  
     208, 241

Frodl-Kraft, Eva 123  
 Fuchs, Bohuslav 270, 274, 276  
 Fuchs, Kamil 276  
 Fučić, Branko 157  
 Fučić, Mladen 161–2, 163  
 Fülep, Lajos 184

**G**

Gameren (Gamerski), Tylman van  
     237  
 Gawlik, Zygmunt 241  
 Gerkan, Meinhard von 335, 338  
 Gerő, László 185, 190  
 Gilmetti, Marco Antonio 358  
 Giovannoni, Gustavo 156–7, 160,  
     161, 166  
 Gottwald, Klement 74, 79  
 Grabar, Igor 225  
 Grakalić, Milan 164  
 Grospič, Jiří 98  
 Grudziński, Jan 237  
 Gurlitt, Cornelius 142, 145, 148  
**H**  
 Hacar, Bedřich 300, 307  
 Hänsch, Wolfgang 327, 328, 331,  
     334  
 Hansen, Theophil 122  
 Hanšová, Helena 97, 98  
 Hauptmann, Ferdinand 157  
 Hauser, Alois 142  
 Havassy, Pál 183  
 Heilmann, Jacob 380  
 Henselmann, Hermann 209  
 Hess, Johann 240  
 Hild, József 182  
 Hlobil, Ivo 104  
 Hlond, August 237  
 Hodinář, Jan 376

- Hollein, Hans 128, 134  
Holey, Karl 284  
Hönigschmid, Rudolf 69  
Horler, Miklós 195  
Horvat, Anđela 147, 154  
Horyna, Mojmír 106, 389  
Hruška, Emanuel 270, 274  
Hynek, Josef 376
- I**  
Idzkowski, Adam 243, 244
- J**  
Janeček, Pavel 282, 283  
Juraj Dalmatinac 161  
Jurišić, Greta 161, 163
- K**  
Kabát, Jindřich 107  
Kádár, János 190  
Kahuda, František 85  
Kakowski, Aleksander 233  
Kamsetzer, Jan Chrystian 234  
Kaňka, František Maxmilián 373  
Karaman, Ljubo 22, 144, 145, 147, 153, 154, 156, 157, 158, 161, 166  
Kardelj, Edvard 169  
Kašička, František 274, 276  
Khrushchev, Nikita 274, 296, 305  
Klusák, Milan 97, 99, 100  
Kocbek, Edvard 148  
Koppány, Tibor 191, 195  
Kopecký, Václav 69  
Korčák, Pavel 98  
Kornhäusl, Joseph 241  
Kosel, Gerhard 326  
Koselleck, Reinhard 141  
Kosmólska, Halina 232, 236  
Kostka, Jiří 70  
Kotrba, Viktor 298, 308  
Kramolín, Josef 378  
Kroha, Jiří 266–7, 268
- Kroupa, Pavel 106  
Kubitschek, Wilhelm 142  
Kühn, Karl Friedrich 69  
Kukuljević Sakcinski, Ivan 143
- L**  
Le Corbusier 267  
Lercha, Karel 77  
Lessel, Józef 229  
Leszczyński, Stanisław 243  
Leucht, Kurt W. 323  
Líbal, Dobroslav 277, 287  
Lichtblau, Ernst 128, 130  
Liebknecht, Karl 206, 403  
Lipp, Wilfried 128, 132  
Loos, Adolf 126, 128, 129, 401  
Lorentz, Stanisław 225  
Löschau, Herbert 327, 328  
Lóvei, Pál 194  
Lüdecke, Karl 242  
Lukáš, František 380  
Luther, Martin 208
- M**  
Madlmayr, Klaudius 268  
Majewski, Waclaw 236  
Mannl-Raková, Heide 386  
Marasović, Jerko 165, 167  
Marasović, Tomislav 165, 167, 168  
Mencl, Václav 71  
Merhautová, Anežka 311  
Merlini, Domenico 236  
Metternich, Klemens Wenzel von 375  
Metzner, Franz 347  
Mieszko I 245  
Milić, Bruno 168  
Möckel, Martin 374  
Molajoli, Bruno 156  
Morawski, Franciszek 244  
Morris, William 160
- Muk, Jan 355  
Murat, Marko 145  
Mussolini, Benito 147
- N**  
Nejedlý, Zdeněk 69–71  
Niemann, George 142  
Nowotnig, Mikuláš 373
- O**  
Oplatek, Otakar 268, 271  
Orbán, Viktor 22  
Oštrić, Grgo 163  
Otruba, Jaroslav 283
- P**  
Pane, Roberto 160, 166  
Pavel, Jakub 71, 299, 308, 311  
Pavlík, Milan 274, 276  
Perc, Aleksander 156, 157  
Perčić, Iva 157  
Petr, František 70, 266, 355  
Petricioli, Ivo 163  
Piašt Dynasty 229, 241–2, 243, 245, 247  
Pittermann, Maximilian 376  
Plachý, František 96  
Platzer, František Ignác 387, 388, 390  
Plavno, Lords of 373  
Plos, Jiří 106  
Polesný, Karel 298  
Pomränke, Nicolas 335  
Poniatowski, Stanisław 234, 243  
Pospíšil, František 380, 386  
Prelog, Milan 165, 166–167, 167, 169
- Q**  
Quiqueran-Beaujeu, Alfons Ivo 120
- R**  
Rainer, Roland 128  
Razím, Vladimír 106  
Richter, Václav 99

Ried, Benedikt 380  
Riedl, Dušan 278, 281  
Riegl, Alois 119, 128, 142, 145, 148,  
161, 261, 262  
Rochler, Johann Georg 373  
Rozehnal, Aleš 276, 277

## S

Sabljar, Mijat 143  
Šabouk, Sáva 99  
Sadl, Vojtěch 374  
Scheybal, Anna 39  
Scheybal, Josef 39–41, 43, 45, 46,  
47–8, 49, 51–2, 56, 57  
Schinkel, Karl Friedrich 212  
Schleiffen (family) 240  
Schneider, Herbert 321, 322, 323, 324  
Schütz, Stephan 335  
Schwarz, Rudolf 163  
Schwarzenbergs (family) 57  
Šebek, Josef 71  
Sedláček, Jan 268, 269  
Sedláková, Dagmar 106  
Sedlmayer, János 186  
Šegvić, Neven 166  
Siegler, František 979, 100  
Sigalin, Józef 234  
Sila, Zdenko 168  
Skrzydłewska, Alma 237  
Smrkovský, Josef 311  
Sochor, Stanislav 84  
Sokol, Jan 276, 277  
Spurný, Václav 311  
Stahn, Günter 216  
Stahuljak, Tihomil 147, 148, 154,  
155, 162  
Stalin, Josip 84, 142, 225, 274, 322  
Stehlík, Miloš 84  
Štěpán, Luděk 278  
Štorm, Břetislav 71, 266, 287

Strajnić, Kosta 145  
Štulc, Josef 277, 287  
Suić, Mate 163  
Szabo, Gjuro 143, 145, 147  
Szakál, Ernő 190, 192  
Szreger, Efraim 241  
Szyller, Stefan 231

## T

Talír, Jaromír 108  
Thiel, Lothar 324  
Tietz, Christopher Wilhelm 376,  
384–5  
Tigrid, Pavel 107  
Tito, Josip Broz 141–2, 149, 154,  
156, 161, 169  
Tołwiński, Mikołaj 229  
Topfstedt, Thomas 212  
Trochta, Štěpán 380  
Turnwald, Wilhelm 69

## U

Uhde, Milan 104, 367  
Ulbricht, Walter 321, 326

## V

Venturi, Adolfo 156  
Veselý, Jaroslav 71  
Vildová, Jarmila 311  
Vincík, Miloš 270, 275  
Vinter, Vlastimil 71, 83  
Viollet-le-Duc, Eugène Emma-  
nuel 160  
Vokolková, Daniela 389  
Vyletal, Josef 282

## W

Wagner, Otto 126, 128, 129, 131,  
135, 263  
Wagner, Václav 42, 49–52, 53–6,  
69, 266, 282, 287  
Wagner-Rieger, Renate 126  
Weizmann, Karl 373

Wiel, Leopold 323, 325, 326, 327,  
328  
Wirth, Zdeněk 22, 41–8, 49, 51–7,  
69, 71, 78, 296, 298  
Witkiewicz, Jan Koszczyc 241  
Wyroubal, Zvonimir 148

## Z

Zachwatowa, Maria 237  
Zachwatowicz, Jan 154, 160, 225,  
227, 230, 236, 237, 239, 241,  
243–4, 246  
Žák, Ladislav 267  
Zápotocký, Antonín 67, 72  
Záruba, Quido 298  
Zug, Szymon Bogumił 234, 236

# Index of locations

- Alsódörgicse 191  
 Austria 18, 21–2, 119–33, 352  
 Austria-Hungary 16, 18, 65, 142–3, 145, 151, 156, 265  
 Balaton (region) 186  
 Banja Luka 148  
 Belgrade 148, 151, 152, 153, 171  
 Berlin 205–17  
   — Berlin Palace 206, 207  
   — Brandenburg Gate 212  
   — Frankfurter Tor 212  
   — Gerichtslaube 215  
   — Nikolaikirche 213  
   — Nikolaiviertel 214, 217  
   — Opera House 212  
   — Palace of the Republic 213  
   — Stalinallee 209, 210–11, 212  
   — Strausberger Platz 210, 212  
   — Unter den Linden 212  
   — Zeughaus 212  
 Bjelovar 148  
 Bratislava 216, 268  
 Březno (near Louny) 278  
 Brno 54, 68, 282  
 Brussels 84, 170, 296  
 Budapest 182, 183, 190, 194, 195, 197  
   — Buda Castle 182, 184, 186, 195  
   — Bridge 182  
   — Lloyd Palace 182  
   — Mary Magdalene Parish Church 182  
   — National Inspectorate for Historic Monuments 183, 185  
   — Serb Orthodox church 182  
   — Ullmann House 182  
 Červená nad Vltavou 300, 302, 304, 305  
 České Budějovice 301, 305, 308, 355  
 Český Krumlov 280, 308  
 Cetviny 358  
 Cheb 77, 371–3, 377  
 Chernihiv 227  
 Chlumec (chateau; near Ústí nad Labem) 358  
 Ciećmierz 240  
 Cieszyn (castle) 241, 246  
 Cologne 163  
 Cres (island) 157  
 Croatia 18, 23, 141–71  
 Csempezkopács 190  
 Cudrovice 348–9  
 Czech lands 36–7, 65–87, 38, 259–87, 345, 367–91  
 Czech Republic 18, 22, 35, 95, 282, 287, 389  
 Czechoslovakia 15, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 35–59, 65–87, 95–110, 217, 265, 268, 270, 274, 278, 280, 282, 295–313, 346, 347, 351, 352, 354, 357, 368–71  
   — Bohemia 23, 25, 35, 39, 41, 45, 48, 49, 76, 82, 85, 205, 278, 280  
   — Moravia 23, 35, 76, 280  
   — Silesia 76  
   — Slovakia 23, 53, 265, 346  
 Czeszochowa 243  
 Dalmatia 142, 143, 145, 147, 156–7, 160  
 Danube (river) 195  
 Dědice 74, 79  
 Diósgyőr (castle) 186, 197  
 Dívčí Kámen (castle) 311  
 Dlouhá Ves (near Havlíčkův Brod) 387, 390  
 Doubrava (near Cheb) 281  
 Dresden 319–338  
   — Altmarkt 321, 322, 325, 328  
   — Frauenkirche 321, 322, 328  
   — Neumarkt 322  
   — Opera House 268  
   — Palace of Culture 319–338  
 Dubrovnik 142, 145, 147, 156  
 Duchcov 77  
 Dürnstein 122, 126, 127  
 East Germany see German Democratic Republic  
 Egypt 299  
 Erfurt 216  
 Estonia 270  
 Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) 120, 163, 352  
 Felsőörs 190  
 Frankfurt am Main 163, 217  
 Frýdlant (castle) 49, 55  
 Fulnek 268, 269  
 Füzér (castle) 197  
 German Democratic Republic 18, 23, 24, 205–9, 212–7, 352  
 Germany 36, 42, 120, 145, 205, 206, 224, 229, 239, 240, 346 (see also Federal Republic of Germany; German Democratic Republic)  
 Gdańsk 160, 239–40, 268  
   — Saint Mary's Church 239–40, 246  
   — Great Synagogue 229  
 Gniezno 238, 242, 245  
 Graz 123  
 Győr 193, 195  
 Hall in Tirol 126, 263  
 Hamry (near Klatovy) 350, 357  
 Hlinsko 278  
 Hollókő 195  
 Hradec Králové 387  
 Hungary 18, 21–2, 143, 181–97, 270  
 Impruneta 163  
 Istria 142, 143, 145, 147, 156–7, 160, 168

- Italy 23, 145, 147, 154, 156–7, 160, 161, 168
- Jablonec nad Nisou 347
- Januševce (manor) 159, 164
- Jawor 230
- Jindřichův Hradec 80, 355
- Kadaň 373
- Kamień Pomorski 240
- Kaplice 358, 360
- Kapličky (near Vyšší Brod) 353, 356, 359, 360
- Karcsa 187, 190
- Karlovy Vary 282, 283
- Kladruba (monastery) 374, 375, 377, 379
- Klatovy 357, 358
- Klobouky u Brna 278
- Kołobrzeg 240, 242
- Koloděje nad Lužnicí 305–7
- Końskie 229
- Korčula 142, 161
- Kószeg 193
- Kouřim 278
- Kraków 224, 242, 245
- Králíky (monastery) 376
- Křiževci 148
- Lemberg (chateau) 49
- Leningrad see Saint Petersburg
- Lepoglava 159, 162, 162, 163
- Liberec 49
- Lithuania 229
- Litomyšl (chateau) 57
- London 170
- Lübeck 240
- Lubin 242
- Lublin 228, 229–30
- Church of the Immaculate Conception 228
- Maharam's Synagogue 229, 230
- Maharshal (Great) Synagogue 229, 230
- Millennium Avenue 229
- Lviv 224
- Mariánské Lázně 282, 283
- Mauthausen (concentration camp) 132
- Melk 126
- Mieszkowice 240
- Mikulov 268, 271
- Milotice (chateau) 278, 281
- Mnich (near Nová Bystrice) 350, 355
- Moravský Krumlov 268
- Moscow 170, 228, 234, 321, 326, 328
- Most 368, 380, 386
- Munich 160, 163, 387, 388
- Nagyvázsony 186
- castle 186
- Pauline monastery 186
- Naples 160, 163
- Nile (river) 299
- Nové Město nad Metují 270, 275
- Nový Jičín 374
- Olomouc 276, 277
- Orlík (castle) 300–1, 303, 308
- Osek (monastery) 373
- Osijek 148, 169
- Osor 158, 159, 162–3
- Ostrov 374
- Ostrava 54
- Pag (island) 156
- Pannonhalma (monastery) 195, 196
- Paris 184
- Pécs 193
- Poběžovice 103
- Podolsko 301, 303–4
- Poland 18, 22, 23, 36, 154, 161, 168, 205, 216, 223–49
- Polish People's Republic 223–49
- Poreč 157, 159, 164, 165, 167, 167
- Poznań 224, 238, 244, 245–6, 249
- Prague 41, 53, 54, 67, 72, 96, 106, 108, 216, 274, 278, 299, 300, 301, 305, 313, 371
- Bethlehem Chapel 268, 271
- Church of St. Nicholas in the Lesser Town 67
- house U kaštanu 73
- Old Town Hall 274, 276
- Stone Bell House 277, 279
- Strahov Monastery 81
- Prerov nad Labem 278
- Příkazy 278
- Pskov 227
- Pula 157, 159, 165
- Amphitheatre 142
- Roman Arch of Sergii 142
- Temple of Augustus 142, 159
- Quarnero islands 156, 157, 168
- Radom 228
- Radonice 373
- Ratibořice (chateau) 56, 57
- Rijeka 154, 156, 157, 159, 165, 167, 168, 169
- Rome 147, 156, 170
- Rožmberk nad Vltavou 308, 309–10, 311
- Church of St Nicholas 308
- Lower Castle 309–10, 311 town 310
- Rožnov pod Radhoštěm 278
- Roztěž 103
- Saint Petersburg (Leningrad) 268
- Salona 142
- Salzburg 123, 284
- Sarajevo 147
- Schärding 126

- Senj 148, 155, 159–60, 162, 163,  
164, 165
- Šibenik 142, 159, 162, 164, 165,  
166, 168
- Cathedral 142, 162
- Venetian Loggia 149, 155, 159,  
161, 162, 164
- Siklós 190
- Sisak 148
- Slavkov (chateau) 278
- Śliwinów 240
- Sopron 184, 190, 193, 194, 195
- Soviet Union *see* USSR
- Split 24, 142, 145, 147, 150, 154,  
156, 159, 160, 161, 162, 164, 165,  
165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170
- Stádlec 302
- Steyr 126
- Strážnice 278
- Sümeĝ (castle) 186
- Susedgrad 148
- Svatá Hora (Příbram) 368, 374,  
376, 381
- Svatobor (near Karlovy Vary)  
370, 373–4, 375, 377–9
- Szczecin 230, 238, 240
- Székesfehérvár 193
- Tallinn 270, 272–3
- Tanaberk (Church of Saint Anne)  
358
- Těchnice 301
- Toruń 224
- Travnik 148
- Třebíz 278
- Trogir 142
- Tum 240, 246
- Týn nad Vltavou 305, 307, 308, 309
- USSR (Soviet Union) 18, 25, 82,  
141, 142, 224, 225, 227, 296,  
305, 322, 326
- Úterý 387, 388, 390
- Valkeřice 376, 382–3
- Valletta 285
- Váraszó 189, 190
- Venice 164, 305
- Verneřice 376
- Veszprém 190
- Vienna 120, 123, 126–33, 142, 143,  
156, 259, 261, 389
- Belvedere 123
- Böhler House 128
- Bridge over the Zeile
- “Chocolate House” 128, 130
- Harmonie-Theatre 126, 129
- Karl-Marx-Hof 128, 133
- Looshaus 128, 129
- Municipal Museum
- National Council Hall 120
- Parliament 120
- Postsparkasse 128, 131, 135
- Retti candle shop 128, 134
- Ringstrasse 123, 127
- St. Stephen’s Cathedral 120, 121
- Vienna State Opera 120, 122,  
124–5, 127
- Vilnius 224
- Visegrád 186, 186, 190, 192, 268
- Vltava (river) 295, 302, 304
- Vltava cascade 82, 295–313
- Český Krumlov dam 295, 308, 311
- Dívčí Kámen dam 295, 311
- Hněvkovice dam 295
- Kamýk dam 295, 307
- Lipno dam 295
- Měřejovice dam 295
- Orlík dam 295, 296, 297, 301,  
305, 307
- Rájov dam 295, 311
- Slapy dam 295
- Vrbno dam 295
- Všeruby 358
- Vyškov 268
- Vyšší Brod (monastery) 311, 360
- Wachau (valley) 122, 126
- Warsaw 23, 24, 160, 170, 216, 224,  
225, 228, 233–9, 246, 249
- Alexander Nevsky Cathedral 229
- Church of St Anna 234
- Church of St Casimir 237
- Church of St Hyacinth 232, 236
- Church of St Martin 234, 235, 237
- Krakowskie Przedmieście  
226, 234
- Holy Spirit Church 236
- Nozyk Synagogue 229
- Prague Synagogue 229, 232
- St John’s Cathedral 243, 246,  
248–9, 268
- Trinity Church 234
- Weissenkirchen 126
- West Germany *see* Federal Re-  
public of Germany
- Wrocław 160, 241–2, 268
- Cathedral of Saint John the —  
— Baptist 242, 246
- Church of St Christopher 160
- Church of St Mary Magdalene  
240
- Church of St Stanislas,  
Dorothea and Wenceslas 244
- New Synagogue 242
- Yugoslavia 141–2, 145, 147, 148–9,  
152, 153, 158, 168, 169, 171, 182
- Bosnia-Herzegovina 141, 147,  
148
- Croatia 141–71
- Macedonia 141

— Montenegro 141  
— Serbia 141, 142  
— Slovenia 141, 142  
Zadar 142, 159, 162, 163, 164, 165,  
168  
— Cathedral of Saint Anastasia  
142, 163  
— Church of Saint Mary 163  
— Franciscan church 163  
— Renaissance Loggia 162, 163  
Zagreb 143, 145, 147, 148, 153, 154,  
156, 159, 160, 161, 164, 165, 166,  
167, 168, 169  
Zátoň 308  
Zlatá Koruna (monastery) 311, 312  
Znojmo 274  
Zubrnice 278  
Żuków 240  
Zvíkov (castle) 298, 300  
Zvíkovské Podhradí 298



## Side notes











**In the Name of Socialism, in the Shadow of the Monarchy:  
Post-War Monument Care in Central Europe**

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