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## ALWAYS A MATTER OF STYLE? THE QUESTION OF PROPER ARCHITECTURAL VOCABULARY IN CASTLE RENOVATIONS FROM THE 1890S TO THE 2020S IN BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA

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**ABSTRACT:** This study addresses castle renovations from the turn of the twentieth century up until the present, focusing on their stylistic aspect. Although castles (both ruined and inhabited) have been considered prominent subjects of heritage conservation since the beginning of the conservation movement, they require architectural additions to further their integration into contemporary life, even if a strictly protective approach is applied. In contrast to nineteenth-century European attitude to conservation, the twentieth- and twenty-first-century conservation professionals mostly recommend that the new elements comply with the preserved composition or scale, leaving the question of their style (i.e. a coherent architectural vocabulary) open. The study examines selected Czech examples that feature a substantial newly-added layer (Gothic in Bouzov, the 1890s–1900s; Art Nouveau and Art Deco in Nové Město nad Metují, the 1910s–1920s; Classical in Prague Castle, the 1920s–1950s; Technocratic in Lipnice, the 1970s–1980s; Romantic in Častolovice, the 1990s; Minimalist in Helfštýn, the 2010s). Drawing on these examples, the analysis raises the following questions: how should new additions relate to the authenticity and integrity of the renovated monuments and what variables influence this relationship? Should conservation authorities regulate the vocabulary of modern interventions?

**KEY WORDS:** architectural conservation, castles, Bohemia, Moravia, architectural vocabulary, style, authenticity, integrity, heritage value

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## 1. Introduction

This study focuses on the “*style*” of architectural modifications to castles during their renovation between the end of the nineteenth century and the present. What exactly is meant by this? Representatives of the conservation movement have always placed castles and chateaus, i.e., the country residences of prominent aristocratic families, among key objects of interest, at least in Europe. Yet, we can find only a few examples, if any, in which the rehabilitation of such buildings involved no visible new additions and structural alterations. This is also true of structures that lost their dominant residential function and became museums. In the case of ruins, their stabilization and accessibility often call for interventions beyond mere patches, fillings and retouchings. All of these additions, from railings around the former castle moat to a new roof and interior furnishings, require “*design*” and also discussion over what the newly designed elements should look like. In the European theoretical debate, there has been a clear shift over the last hundred and fifty years: while in the nineteenth century the correct style of new forms (i.e. the optimal choice of architectural vocabulary in the given context) was a crucial question, since the mid-twentieth century, national and international recommendations and methodologies have essentially avoided addressing the issue. However, not talking about a problem does not mean that it will resolve itself or simply disappear. In fact, the dispute over the “*correct style*” gradually resurfaced in debates about whether it is acceptable to replicate parts of defunct buildings or whether new additions should be made obvious and to what degree.

The study will briefly introduce six renovations of large castles in the Czech lands (although some have lost their fortifications over time, the text uses the term “*castle*” for all of them, also in line with the usual designation). All of these renovations include a significant new component but differ in the period when the addition was built, its socio-political circumstances and the stylistic approach to the new structures. The Bouzov Castle was renovated under the Habsburgs in the Gothic Revival style at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the castle in Nové Město nad Metují by its new owners in the Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles in the 1910s and 1920s; Prague Castle under the First Czechoslovak Republic in the Classical Revival style in the 1920s to 1950s; the castle in Lipnice nad Sázavou during the reign of the Communist Party in the 1970s and 1980s. The Častolovice Castle received its romanticizing interiors at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries after returning to private hands, while the ruins of the Helfštýn Castle were refurbished in the minimalist style in the last decade. In all of these cases, the projects did not aim to reconstruct the previous state; rather, they were closer to “*renovations*” as defined in the 2019 European Standard EN 15898 entitled “*Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Main General Terms and Definitions*.” Here “*renovation*” is described as “*the act of renewing an object without necessarily respecting its material or significance*,” which “*may involve some conservation actions*” without being a “*conservation activity in general*”<sup>1</sup>. However, all six castles discussed here are important sites of cultural heritage, especially in the case of Prague Castle, and so heritage values were a primary focus in all of the renovations.

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<sup>1</sup> EN 15898, *Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Main General Terms and Definitions*, Brussels: European Committee for Standardization CEN-CENELEC, 2019, Entry 3.5.9.

The selected examples will serve as a material basis for a more general analysis that reaches beyond the borders of the Czech cultural space and the typology of castle and chateau architecture. What is the relationship of the style of the new forms to the authenticity and integrity of the renovated monuments and what variables influence it? Should the vocabulary of modern interventions be regulated by conservation authorities?

## **2. Six Monuments, Six Styles**

The oldest example in the presented selection is the renovation of the Bouzov (Busau) Castle in Moravia, in today's Olomouc Region. The castle was built in the early fourteenth century on a hill visible from many sides and against the monumental backdrop of the Jeseníky Mountains panorama. In 1696, the castle was purchased by the Teutonic Order. The Order neglected the building for a long time and the castle fell into disrepair. This changed with the accession of a new Grand Master, Eugen of Austria-Teschen, Archduke of the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty (1863–1954, Grand Master between 1894 and 1923). The Archduke decided to turn the castle into a museum for the Order and a luxury residence for himself and his widowed mother. Between 1896 and 1910, a spectacular renovation was carried out according to the design by Georg von Hauberrisser (1841–1922), a prominent representative of Central European Gothic Revival<sup>2</sup>.

According to period documents, the architect sought to create and apply a local stylistic idiom, the so-called "*Moravian Gothic*"<sup>3</sup>. However, he did not intend to reveal nor imitate the former medieval appearance of the castle. The outer ward remained Baroque, but the castle palace itself was raised in height and given towers and gables and splendid interiors in historical styles from Gothic to Baroque. The design combined original surviving elements, decorations based on the architect's imagination, and spolia brought from various European historic buildings connected with the Order's history (Fig. 1, 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Váňa R., *Hrad Bouzov / Die Burg Busau / The Castle Bouzov / Château de Bouzov*, Olomouc: Sprint, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Zatloukal P., *Příběhy z dlouhého století: Architektura let 1750–1918 na Moravě a ve Slezsku*, Olomouc: Muzeum umění, 2002, pp. 370–372.



Fig. 1 Bouzov Castle, Moravia. Photo before renovation at the end of the 19th century, source: <https://michalov.cz/hrad-bouzov/> [accessed 19 June 2023]



Fig. 2 Bouzov Castle, Moravia, renovated 1896–1910, photo by the author, 2015.

The second example is the castle in Nové Město nad Metují, a town in eastern Bohemia near the border with Poland. The massive four-winged castle with a cylindrical tower originated in the early-modern era (Fig. 3). In 1908, it was purchased by the Bartoňš, a family of successful entrepreneurs in the textile industry who decided to build a family residence here and commissioned the architect Dušan Jurkovič (1868–1947) to do the renovations. Jurkovič, originally from Slovakia, was quite popular among patriotic Czech clients and the commission came at a time that marked the peak of his creative career<sup>4</sup>. The renovation of the palace according to his design took place between 1909 and 1912. After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic (1918), the Prague architect Pavel Janák (1882–1956) significantly contributed to the interiors of the palace in 1922–1930<sup>5</sup>.



Fig. 3 Nové Město nad Metují Castle, Bohemia, photo by the author, 2016.

The architectural interventions in Nové Město followed explicitly the requirements of the conservation authorities. Jurkovič examined the masonry and uncovered decorative wall paintings, envisaging their conservation and presentation. This was consistent with his principles – after the establishment of the new Czechoslovak state, he even had a brief stint as the top representative of state conservation in Slovakia. However, his relationship to architectural heritage was not primarily historical; he perceived it as a living source of inspiration rather

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<sup>4</sup> Bořutová D., Zajková A., Dulla M., *Dušan Jurkovič: Súborná výstava architektonického diela / General Exhibition of the Architectural Work*, Bratislava, Slovak National Gallery, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Kiesling N., *Pavel Janák*, Řevnice: Arbor Vitae, 2011.

than mere historical document. Jurkovič in fact became famous for his signature architectural language, based on the Arts and Crafts movement, the regionalist vernacular revival and Art Nouveau. His designs for Nové Město are fully in line with this approach<sup>6</sup>. He added his own variations to the uncovered and renovated ornamental designs, while working to meet his client's requirements for comfortable living (Fig. 4). He spoke of a personal style which he adapted to the monuments, "according to his heart"<sup>7</sup>. A decade later, Pavel Janák followed Jurkovič's concept, using a more current style of Art Deco.



Fig. 4 Nové Město nad Metují Castle, Winter Garden by Dušan Jurkovič, 1910, photo by the author, 2016.

The third example is the most prominent of all. Prague Castle, the historical seat of Czech princes, kings and presidents from the ninth century to the present day, is an amalgam of architectural styles from the Romanesque onward. The renovation initiated by the first Czechoslovak president, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk is of key importance for our comparison. Over the course of the renovation, carried out from 1920 until 1956 (with breaks), the Castle saw three more presidents and two changes of political regime, yet the construction work stuck with the plans prepared by Masaryk's architect, Jože Plečnik (1872–1957).

<sup>6</sup> Horáček M., *Za krásnější svět: Tradicionalismus v architektuře 20. a 21. století / Traditionalism in Architecture of the 20th and 21st Centuries*, Brno: Barrister & Principal – VUTIUM, 2013. pp. 231-233, 413.

<sup>7</sup> Bořutová D., *Architekt Dušan Samuel Jurkovič*, Bratislava: Slovart, 2009, pp. 128-139.

The last two Habsburg emperors did not use the Castle as their residence; instead, there were offices or empty rooms. President Masaryk wished to restore the tradition of the Castle as the seat of the head of state, but at the same time, he wanted to follow the will of the public and loosen the Castle's connection with the Habsburgs, opening it to the future, which was not feudal or imperial but republican. Masaryk approached Jože Plečnik, an architect of Slovenian origin and an exceptionally talented graduate of the Vienna Academy who had previously taught at the School of Applied Arts in Prague for ten years. Although Plečnik received a university position and several commissions in Ljubljana after the collapse of the monarchy, he still prepared dozens of designs for Prague Castle's interiors and exteriors, such as the president's apartment, courtyards, and gardens<sup>8</sup>. Plečnik was assisted on-site by his former student Otto Rothmayer (1892–1966). After Masaryk resigned from the presidency (1935), Plečnik turned his attention to Ljubljana, and Rothmayer, whose designs follow Plečnik in style, took over the management of the Prague Castle renovations.

Plečnik referred to his personal architectural language as “*perennial architecture*”<sup>9</sup>. Historians of architecture usually classify his vocabulary as classical, but they do emphasize his authorial uniqueness. In an effort to distinguish Plečnik from nineteenth-century classicism and the contemporary British and American classicism of Edwin Lutyens and John Russell Pope, historians highlight the “*modern*” elements in Plečnik's designs, which give his rendition of the historical canon a personal twist<sup>10</sup>. Plečnik's work at Prague Castle suggests that a preference for a traditionalist architectural language does not necessarily need to be associated with the ethos of heritage conservation. Plečnik was not principally concerned with conservation or reconstruction; instead, he wanted to visually connect and unify the interiors and exteriors of the Castle using interventions and corrections in his own style. The Prague Castle lost a number of architectural elements that we would probably not be willing to sacrifice today. As a whole, however, Plečnik's designs gave the Castle a dignified appearance without sacrificing any of its essential features, which, in fact, became more prominent through Plečnik's thoughtful and “*timeless*” architectural language (Fig. 5, 6).

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<sup>8</sup> Lukeš Z. et al., *Josip Plečnik: An Architect of Prague Castle*, Prague: Prague Castle Administration, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Prelovšek D., *Jože Plečnik 1872–1957: Architectura perennis*, New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Horáček M., *Josip Plečnik and the Architecture of Humanism in the 20th and 21st century*, [in:] D. Šovarová (ed.), *The Extraordinary Work of Josip Plečnik: The Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord*, Prague: Municipal District Prague 3, 2015, pp. 44–57.



Fig. 5 Prague Castle, Bohemia. Wall in the Garden on the Ramparts, 1923–1925, photo by the author, 2012



Fig. 6 Prague Castle. Third Courtyard, renovated 1926–1932, photo by the author, 2022

The fourth example was renovated during the period of Communist Party rule in Czechoslovakia (1948–1989). The castle in Lipnice nad Sázavou is situated in a hilly landscape on the border of the historical lands of Bohemia and Moravia. The building has medieval origins. In 1869, it burnt down, and fifty years later, in 1924, the ruin was purchased by the Czechoslovak Tourist Club, which took care of it and opened a museum there. In 1953, the castle became property of the state. The Regional Centre for State Heritage Preservation and Nature Conservation, which was responsible for the castle, decided to “reconstruct” the castle in order to make it more attractive for visitors. The project was created by architects and engineers from the State Institute for the Reconstruction of Heritage Towns and Buildings, a centralized institution established to conduct historical surveys and restoration of architectural heritage. The construction took place in the 1970s and 1980s, but the planned goal was never met<sup>11</sup>.

One may expect that in this case, heritage conservation was a primary focus and that Lipnice presented an exception among the selected examples. The reality, however, suggests otherwise. Massive concrete ceilings were inserted into the remaining fragment of the castle palace, while many authentic historical components (wooden elements, plaster) were destroyed due to negligence, indifference and unwillingness to adapt conventional techniques and practices of the construction industry to the specific values of this heritage building. The castle received a new silhouette reconstructed based on its hypothetical original appearance, and new interiors; only the floor plan and the layout of the windows were preserved (Fig. 7, 8, 9).



Fig. 7 Lipnice nad Sázavou Castle, Bohemia, with the Samson Tower on the left and the remnants of the Great Tower on the right. Photo 1951, source: [https://www.soupisamatek.cz/ar1-kcz/cs/detail-kcz\\_un\\_auth-0000816-Hrad-Lipnice-nad-Sazavou/](https://www.soupisamatek.cz/ar1-kcz/cs/detail-kcz_un_auth-0000816-Hrad-Lipnice-nad-Sazavou/) [accessed 19 June 2023]

<sup>11</sup> Kuča K. et al., *Guidebook to Monuments Managed by the National Heritage Institute in the Czech Republic*, Prague: National Heritage Institute, 2019.



Fig. 8 Lipnice nad Sázavou Castle, Bohemia, after the “reconstruction” in 1970s and 1980s, photo by the author, 2019



Fig. 9 Lipnice nad Sázavou Castle, Bohemia. Samson Tower re-roofed in 1980–1982, photo by the author, 2019

The fifth example, the castle in Častolovice, East Bohemia, underwent a stylistic transformation in the 1990s and 2000s. Originally a medieval fortress, the building was converted into a Renaissance palace in the early seventeenth century. In 1694, it was bought by the Counts of Sternberg. The Sternberg family owned the castle (with a break during the Second World War) until the Communist takeover, after which the building was nationalized and became a “state castle” with an interior installation for tourists (Fig. 10). In 1992, the Sternbergs received the castle back in relatively good condition. The owner, Franziska Diana Phipps Sternberg (born 1936), had worked in Britain and the USA as an interior designer. After returning to Častolovice, she decided to keep the exhibition for tourists open, but she added private memorabilia and home textiles (curtains, drapes, upholstery) of her own design. In addition to her changes to the publicly accessible part of the castle, Sternberg had other rooms adapted for residential purposes, both for family members and guests<sup>12</sup>.



Fig. 10 Častolovice Castle, Bohemia, photo by the author, 2015

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<sup>12</sup> Horáček M., *Za krásnější svět: Tradicionalismus v architektuře 20. a 21. století / Traditionalism in Architecture of the 20th and 21st Centuries*, Brno: Barrister & Principal – VUTIUM, 2013, p. 271.

She also wrote a book on interior design entitled “Affordable Splendour” in which she described methods applied in Častolovice and elsewhere<sup>13</sup>. These include the use of traditional ornamental designs and materials, creative reminiscences of former aristocratic fashion and do-it-yourself assemblages of fabric pieces (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11 Častolovice Castle, bedroom, 2000s., photo by the author, 2015

<sup>13</sup> Phipps D., *Affordable Splendour: An Ingenious Guide to Decorating Elegantly, Inexpensively and Doing Most of It Yourself*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982.

The sixth and last example is Helfštýn Castle in North Moravia. In the Middle Ages, it served to guard the Moravian Gate, a geomorphological narrowing on the ancient Amber Route between the Baltic and Danube regions. The castle belonged to several aristocratic families, but was abandoned in the eighteenth century and gradually became a ruin. Its attractive location with distant views made it a popular tourist destination in the first half of the nineteenth century. Since 1960, the castle has been used by the Comenius Museum in Přerov. From 1982, the castle hosts the Hefaiston, an annual international gathering of artist blacksmiths, which has since gained considerably in popularity. In order to provide facilities for the blacksmiths and visitors to the festival, the fortifications along with some of the castle's adjacent buildings were partially completed in the 1990s according to the historicizing design by the architect Zdeněk Gardavský (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12 Helfštýn Castle, Moravia. The Hussite Tower, reconstructed in 1986–2002, photo by the author, 2015

In 2015–2020, the remaining fragment of the central castle palace was finished in a different spirit: the exposed masonry was covered with a horizontal glass roof and the walls received bridges and staircases made of corten steel<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 13, 14). The Olomouc architects Miroslav Pospíšil and Martin Karlík, who designed these new additions, won the Czech Architecture Award 2021, the most prestigious domestic award in the field, and the project was also praised in the international press. In both phases, historicist and modernist, the architectural interventions were referred to as “reconstructions”.

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<sup>14</sup> Lapáček J. et al., *Hrad Helfštýn – strážce Moravské brány*, Přerov: Muzeum Komenského v Přerově, 2020.



Fig. 13 Helfštýn Castle, Moravia. Castle palace before the discussed renovation, photo by the author, 2013



Fig. 14 Helfštýn Castle, Moravia. Castle palace after the renovation in 2015–2020, photo by the author, 2021

In terms of style, the added elements from the period between 2015 and 2020 are described as “contemporary” (Helfštýn Castle Reconstruction, 2021), with late-twentieth-century castle revitalizations in Switzerland and Austria, carried out in the then fashionable minimalist style, cited as inspiration. It is worth noting that the conservation authorities insisted on preserving the “ruin condition”, so the building was largely roofed (with a flat roof that does not show in distant views), but received no windows and doors (Fig. 15, 16).



Fig. 15, 16 Helfštýn castle palace “reconstruction,” 2015–2020, photo by the author, 2021

### 3. Style, Authenticity, and Integrity of a Heritage Monument

As noted in the Introduction, the word “style” has slowly disappeared from the professional debate. Experts do discuss the form of new elements included in historical structures but rather than style, they address the adaptation of composition and scale, and sometimes materials and techniques. The 1964 Venice Charter is a rare exception – its Article 11 mentions style in a negative sense: “unity of style is not the aim of a restoration”<sup>15</sup>. The absence of “style” in the theory of heritage conservation can be perceived as a consequence of its connection with the theory of living art and architecture and with the globally prevailing avant-garde trend in art education, where the concept of “style” is no longer used<sup>16</sup>.

The concern over an excessive effort to reach stylistic unity expressed by the authors of the Venice Charter does not have much relevance in the case of castle and chateau renovations: castle ruins aside, palaces that were inhabited (or used for other practical purposes) usually had eclectic interiors and the “stylistic restoration” did not change much about this; at most it was reflected in the outer appearance of the building and selected representative spaces. In the private

<sup>15</sup> Szmygin B. (ed.), *Conservation Officer’s Handbook: International Standards in Cultural Heritage Protection*, Warsaw: ICOMOS Polska, 2015, p. 40.

<sup>16</sup> Michl J., *Co Bauhaus dal – a co VZAL: Kritické úvahy o modernistickém pojetí designu a architektury*, Brno: Books & Pipes. Selected chapters in English, here: <https://janmichl.com/>, 2020, accessed 17 January 2023.

rooms, however, the comfort of the inhabitants and the enjoyment of visually diverse objects accumulated over generations played a greater role. To replace these objects with stylistically unified furnishings (as was done in nineteenth century churches) would not have been welcome in most cases.

Nevertheless, this is a minor issue. For further discussion, let us assume that in the kind of architecture that is usually the subject of conservation interest, “*style*” is one of the important categories which help us describe and interpret heritage buildings. Therefore, any contemporary intervention must address the question of style in some way or other, even if the intervention itself may be perceived as “*stylistically neutral*”. There is no reason for us to avoid the term “*style*”, at least as far as architectural monuments and heritage urban environments are concerned. If a new element is introduced in such an environment, its style is named, as in Bouzov, according to the style of the original structure (Gothic), if it adopts it. Or, as in Helfštýn, it is characterized as “*contemporary*” (or “*modern*”), if it adopts the style of modernist architecture, absent from the monument’s architectural history. In an eclectic architectural ensemble, a new element can be designed in one of the styles present in the structure, although not necessarily one that is immediately adjacent to the new element. However, such a practice has not been used in Central-European heritage conservation for a long time (unlike, for example, in the UK<sup>17</sup>), and so in further discussion, we will stick to the variants exemplified by Bouzov and Helfštýn. What do we want to achieve by choosing one or the other option?

This topic is most often presented simplistically as a dispute between the proponents of “*traditional*” (or “*traditionalist*” or “*historicist*”) interventions and the proponents of a “*contemporary*” (or “*modern*”) approach. However, such a distinction is based on considerations of what the currently proposed architecture should look like, not on the needs of conservation. Conservation is principally interested in the heritage value, authenticity and integrity of a protected artifact in relation to its material substance (based on the UNESCO World Heritage agenda, which can be seen as a model<sup>18</sup>). From the perspective of heritage conservation, the interventions of architects, restorers, and any other renovators need to be assessed primarily in terms of their contribution to the preservation and presentation of the monument’s authenticity and integrity. Style, along with the other characteristics of new additions (e.g., their material or size), can contribute to or detract from the authenticity and integrity of a monument. Naturally, it depends on each of these qualities individually and on the way they interact – even a carefully chosen style, for example, cannot redeem an oversized new element, and vice versa.

According to “*Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*” (Article 82) authenticity means that “*cultural values (...) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes including: form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques and management systems; location and setting; language, and*

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<sup>17</sup> Wood M., *John Fowler: Prince of Decorators*, London: Frances Lincoln, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Cameron C., Rössler M., *Many Voices, One Vision: The Early Years of the World Heritage Convention*, London – New York: Routledge, 2016.

other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feeling; and other internal and external factors”<sup>19</sup>. The style of the new design relates to all of these attributes; some are more relevant, others less so. The choice between “traditional” and “contemporary” design itself accentuates a level of authenticity, one that we could call the dynamics of change in the artistic language. In one case, “authenticity” may mean clinging to a traditional grammar, while in another case, it may mean introducing a new grammar, since this was a common practice in the past and it in fact represents one of the values for which the object is protected and renovated. However, the latter approach usually does not address the relationship to the place, or spatial coordinates (as opposed to time coordinates). Style can be local, or it can be imported. This applies (hypothetically) to both traditional styles (including replicas) and newly invented styles. Does this mean that “Moravian Gothic” is reasonably authentic at Bouzov, whereas Plečnik’s style (“Archaic Grecian”) is not authentic at Prague Castle, therefore weakening its overall authenticity? Is “Swiss minimalism” authentic in Swiss castles (e.g. Bellinzona), whereas it is not in the Moravian Helfštýn, whose new architecture was inspired by Bellinzona? (Fig. 17) Or is it more correct to say that minimalism is a unified international style whose relationship to the authenticity of the monument is the same regardless of the monument’s location and dominant architectural language? (other European examples of architectural interventions collected by Molski<sup>20</sup>)



Fig. 17 Bellinzona Castle, Ticino. “Swiss minimalism” authentic only in Swiss castles?, photo by the author, 2013

<sup>19</sup> OGL, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2021, p. 31, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>, accessed 17 January 2023, <https://doi.org/10.35784/odk.2369>

<sup>20</sup> Molski P, *A Historic Ruin – Interventions and Their Conditions*, [in:] *Protection of Cultural Heritage* 10, 2020, pp. 61–72, <https://ph.pollub.pl/index.php/odk/article/view/2369/2301>, accessed 17 January 2023

If we perceive Plečnik's style as an original authorial creation rather than an imported revival, we may also ask: does it compromise the monument's authenticity or does it create a valuable (perhaps the most valuable) heritage layer, precisely because it is unique? In that case, Plečnik's interventions at Prague Castle, Jurkovič's in Nové Město and those by Diana Sternberg in Častolovice would be most in line with ideals of heritage conservation.

Concerning the second key aspect, integrity, UNESCO's *Operational Guidelines* say (Article 88) the following: "*Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes*"<sup>21</sup>. Let us compare Bouzov and Helfštýn: In Bouzov, the morphology and syntax of the architectural language used in the renovation more or less corresponded to the preserved structure, thus ensuring the structure's overall integrity. This approach, however, obscured the attributes of discontinuity and aging. A contrasting process took place at Helfštýn: the result can be described more as a penetration, with the newly implemented architectural language serving to emphasize the collage-like effect and the specific ruined-castle aesthetics, which in this case was perceived as a value worthy of protection.

Discussions about new additions to heritage structures usually cite the well-known articles of the Venice Charter No. 9 ("*any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp*") and 12 ("*Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence*")<sup>22</sup>. The various interpretations of these articles have been summarized elsewhere<sup>23</sup>. At this point, it is worth underlining that these paragraphs concern the "*restoration*" of monuments and were intended as recommendations for restorers. They are not general instructions for designing new elements that come into contact with heritage monuments, let alone for designing new buildings in protected architectural ensembles (Article 9: "*The process of restoration is a highly specialized operation...*"). "*Contemporary*" design could mean anything—that is, if "*contemporaneity*" were a significant value in and of itself, heritage conservation would have to accept all interventions that have taken place or are taking place in the monument.

How do we relate "*contemporaneity*" to the phenomenon of authenticity? Are the concrete ceilings at Lipnice Castle automatically an "*authentic*" expression of "*the period*" and therefore worthy of protection? Are the corten staircases and footbridges at Helfštýn Castle sufficiently "*contemporary*" (i.e. representing the second decade of the twenty-first century), even though they stylistically replicate models that are thirty years older? Even if there was a society-wide consensus on what "*contemporary*" design should look like (as wrongly assumed in the *Vienna Memorandum on "World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic*

<sup>21</sup> OGL, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2021, p. 31, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>, accessed 17 January 2023, <https://doi.org/10.35784/odk.2369>

<sup>22</sup> Szmygin B. (ed.), *Conservation Officer's Handbook: International Standards in Cultural Heritage Protection*, Warsaw: ICOMOS Polska, 2015, p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> Hardy M (ed.), *The Venice Charter Revisited: Modernism, Conservation and Tradition in the 21st Century*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.

*Urban Landscape*<sup>24</sup>), how could this idea be reflected in the evaluation of heritage monuments created and reshaped in times when no such consensus existed?

The idea that each period has (or should have) its own characteristic style is a legacy of nineteenth and twentieth-century European historicism. In art history, its limits became clear as the attention turned to vernacular heritage and non-European art and architecture. In these cases, “*style*” does not necessarily indicate the period when the work or its parts were made. Therefore, conservation of these heritage items is not concerned with stylistic “*contemporaneity*” of additions, but with accentuating the intangible artistic and artisanal traditions associated with the work, and the continuity of means of expression, including artistic language.

This can be related to the question of authenticity: in the cases of Prague Castle and the palace in Nové Město nad Metují, the new stylistic elements incorporated in these heritage buildings can be perceived as an expression of the “*authentic*” tradition of Central-European aristocratic culture which, from the Middle Ages on, adopted stylistic trends usually coming from abroad. In contrast, in Asian aristocratic residences, stylistic fashions changed in a more subtle way; more pronounced leaps occurred only later, after contact with European cultural centres (Fig. 18). It is not surprising, then, that the demand for a “*contemporary stamp*” has been only voiced in the European heritage conservation debate.



Fig. 18 Dubai, Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum House, built in 1896, occupied until 1958, renovated 1986. Architectural style does not indicate the period of origin, photo by the author, 2015

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<sup>24</sup> Vienna Memorandum on “World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic Urban Landscape”, Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2005.

#### 4. Conclusion: The Choice of Style in Heritage Conservation

Can we use this discussion about the style of new elements in heritage settings to draw conclusions for conservation practice? Should the style of these new features be regulated by conservation authorities?

An anonymous reviewer of the first version of this article doubted whether the references to “historical” examples could “*be considered useful for resolving contemporary conservation dilemmas*”. That is a relevant point. However, it raises a question of distinguishing between “historical” and “contemporary”, which, according to my opinion, would lead the discussion to a dead end. Moreover, the very concept of “contemporaneity” with its supposedly identifiable attributes goes against the philosophy of our reasoning, as readers may deduce from some previous passages. Therefore, I would suggest laying the objection aside for now; let’s assess discussed examples as similarly relevant without sticking to the dates of origin.

Experience has shown that trying to formulate a top-down, universally valid rule about the “correct style” will always clash with the diverse aspects of a particular monument and the diverse public opinion about what values and qualities need to be preserved. On the other hand, this does not mean that heritage conservation professionals should not comment on the matter at all. But, it does mean that their views should reflect heritage values of the buildings and architectural ensembles in question rather than the newest trends in contemporary architecture. The debate should be based on a heritage value assessment<sup>25</sup>; this may also include architectural language – that is, style – as well as the artistic or artisanal practices associated with particular styles (for example, the technique of decorative stucco in the Baroque). “Style” is sometimes one of the key values we want to preserve: in some cases, the monument’s value lies precisely in its stylistic purity and importance in art history (for example, the Petit Trianon and Linderhof (Fig. 19), when speaking of aristocratic residences). What would be the point of adding a different stylistic layer to such a structure?

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<sup>25</sup> Szmygin B (ed.), *Heritage Value Assessment Systems: The Problems and the Current State of Research*, Lublin – Warsaw: Lublin University of Technology – ICOMOS Polska, 2015.



Fig. 19 Linderhof Palace, Bavaria, 1873–1887. The unity of style, photo by the author, 2005

But even in the case of more stylistically diverse objects (such as all the Czech castles mentioned here) and buildings of local significance, the artistic language of the added elements is worth careful consideration. **The value of a heritage monument is not only grounded in what is physically present in it; it also lies in what is not there. The absence of style characteristic of ordinary, non-heritage buildings is precisely what underlines the specific position of a heritage monument and its role in the contemporary world.**

There will always be disputes over the “*correct style*” of new elements in heritage structures<sup>26</sup>. Any added visible element will always have its “*design*”, even if it is just a light switch. In most cases, there will be multiple variations of that particular design to choose from. The choice will be based on the designer’s and customer’s personal taste – and taste is an important part of a person’s identity. However, the role of heritage conservation professionals is not to advocate for living designers, architects or artists; rather, their role is to protect heritage monuments. The sphere of heritage conservation should not serve as a battleground in a “*battle of styles*”, as was often the case in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and as it sometimes still is in the present (especially in the Czech Republic). The competence of a heritage conservation expert should not be judged by whether he or she allows or prevents one party in this battle to impress its style on a heritage monument. Instead, conservation experts should try to anticipate the damage

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<sup>26</sup> Semes Steven W., *The Future of the Past: A Conservation Ethic for Architecture, Urbanism, and Historic Preservation*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009.

that actors with diverse tastes may inflict on monuments. If such damage has already occurred, their decisions should be guided by an effort to mitigate it, while always taking into account the monument's condition.

By way of conclusion, let us give a positive example: between 2007 and 2014, the castle in Lipnice nad Sázavou underwent yet another renovation. As part of the project, the walls that had remained undamaged during the previous “*reconstruction*” in the 1970s and 1980s were restored. The reinforced concrete ceilings from this era were not removed, because the structure is quite fragile and new reinforcement would be too costly; instead, the ceilings were visually integrated into the whole structure using retouches and patina (Fig. 20). The designers of this solution, Václav Girsá, Miloslav Hanzl and Jana Strnadová of GIRSA AT, a leading Czech studio specializing in the restoration of heritage monuments, call this approach a “*corrective repair*”<sup>27</sup>. Distinct from “*re-Gothicizing*” or “*modernization*”, this term is reminiscent of “*conservative surgery*” recommended a century ago by the British urban planner Patrick Geddes, who was trying to come up with methods of preserving historic urban fabric while enhancing its attractiveness and sustainability<sup>28</sup>. A more detailed comparison of Girsá's and Geddes's approaches is not necessary here. Both of them represent a balanced position in heritage conservation; they do not get carried away by the discussion of style but respect all its results, as long as they do not cause damage to the monument in question. Their examples show how the field of heritage conservation is slowly emancipating itself from its original connection with the creative disciplines. As evidenced by the history of castle renovation, this emancipation is hardly easy and straightforward.

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<sup>27</sup> Girsá V., Hanzl M.,. *A Typology of Conservation-Restoration*, Prague: Czech Technical University in Prague, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Geddes P., *Cities in Evolution*, London: Williams & Norgate, 1915.



Fig. 20 Lipnice nad Sázavou Castle. A “corrective repair” from 2007–2014, photo by the author, 2019

### **Acknowledgements**

The funding for this chapter was provided by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for specific research at the Palacký University Olomouc (IGA\_FF\_2023\_010).

Hana Logan deserves credit for the English translation.

All recent photos taken by the author.

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