

## IMPACT OF THE NARA DOCUMENT ON AUTHENTICITY – CASE OF THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE BANSKÁ ŠTIAVNICA

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**ABSTRACT:** Banská Štiavnica – an ancient mining town in Slovakia – has been internationally recognized as having an outstanding universal value and it has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. This fact represented a challenge which accelerated the process of its protection and restoration. In 2002 in the framework of the international conference *Materials, Techniques and Technologies in Built Heritage Conservation* participating renowned experts adopted the *Banská Štiavnica Appeal*. This key document transmitted the principles of the *Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994) and applied them to the specific cultural conditions in Slovakia. In the spirit of the *Appeal*, in 2007 a plan was set up to save and restore the Banská Štiavnica Calvary complex.

The article explains the strategy of its revitalization; a combined approach to re-establishing the heritage landscape, the values with respect to authenticity; the public participatory approach, authorities' engagement, management and fundraising, as well as development of a scientific methodology for the conservation and restoration interventions, mechanisms for sustainability.

The Baroque Calvary became an example of how interruption of use, neglect, and abandonment lead to vandalism and uncontrolled growth of vegetation. Unprofessional interventions and restrictions related to its religious use during socialism, mainly in the years 1979 – 1981, contributed to losses of architectural and urban values.

The process of safeguarding and conserving the complex was accelerated by the fact that it was included in the *List of 100 Most Endangered Monuments in the World*<sup>1</sup>.

**KEY WORDS:** Banská Štiavnica, Calvary complex, cultural heritage, authenticity, restoration

<sup>1</sup> World Monuments Fund. (2008). *World Monuments Watch 2008. List of 100 Most Endangered Sites*. New York, USA, 5. Information about the completed restoration project of part of the Calvary in the WMF Project Catalogue: <https://www.wmf.org/projects/bansk%C3%A1-%C5%Alt%C3%A1iavnica-calvary-complex>

## More than 30 Years of the NARA Document on Authenticity – the Context

The principles of authenticity, as articulated in the *Document on Authenticity* and in subsequent documents, with reference to the Venice Charter, have resonated in theoretical studies for more than 30 years and are being verified in the practical restoration of cultural heritage.

In Slovakia, the first sites with outstanding universal values had been included in the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List (WH List) in 1993 (Banská Štiavnica and technical monuments in the vicinity, vernacular architecture in Vlkolíneč, and the medieval Spiš Castle with its sub-castle). It was precisely the time when the previously discussed question of authenticity was finally anchored in the *Nara Document on Authenticity*<sup>2</sup> and when, after the division of Czechoslovakia (1993), the Slovak Republic assumed the obligation arising from the International Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage<sup>3</sup> to ensure proper protection, restoration, presentation and sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage in its territory.

In 1993 also the Sassi di Matera in Italy were included in the WH List. This site offered the opportunity to start verifying and applying the concepts developed mainly by Herb Stovel, Jukka Jokilehto, and continued / adapted by Andrea Urland in the framework of the 1994 -1998 ICCROM ARC courses<sup>4</sup>. The process started in 1994 by preparing the Character statement for the site and then continued with surveys and research almost on a yearly basis until 1998. The values and authenticity were the main subject of study.

The obtained experiences were sent to the World Heritage Centre in 1999 as a contribution to setting up the practice of monitoring reports. Much of this knowledge and principles could be applied in the case of Banská Štiavnica.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the state of cultural heritage in Slovakia was unsatisfactory and marked by decades of broken continuity of ownership and use, a lack of professions for appropriate conservation and restoration, no practice of permanent maintenance of already restored monuments. The inclusion of the mentioned sites in the WH List was a strong incentive for increased interest and efforts for their proper restoration and management. On one hand in some sites the state of general awareness of the urban-architectural values was low (e.g. historic structures were being demolished...), on the other hand, some local authorities strove to include their site in the WH List. Furthermore, the sites were not sufficiently legislatively prepared at the time of inscription. Legislation for the protection of the listed sites was ensured only later thanks to great efforts of experts (for example, the extended boundaries of the heritage-protected area of Banská Štiavnica were adopted only in 2000, i.e. seven years after the inscription of the site in the WH List). Internationally accepted doctrines and documents therefore played a key role in defining the scope and subject of built heritage preservation, as well as in the communication with local

<sup>2</sup> ICOMOS. (1994). *The Nara Document on Authenticity*. <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/386-the-nara-document-on-authenticity-1994>

<sup>3</sup> *International Convention on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage*. (1972). <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

<sup>4</sup> International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property in Rome – International Architectural Conservation Courses for professionals.

authorities and the local community. Discussions about how to understand the term "authenticity" and how to ensure it, at least for monuments on the UNESCO WH List continued in the society for a long time in seminars and professional discussions. The principles stated in the *Document on Authenticity* and the *Venice Charter*<sup>5</sup> were a helpful tool for defining what should be the subject of protection, restoration and presentation in the urban and architectural context in Slovakia.

The effort was made to define and monitor form and design, environment, traditional materials, techniques and technologies, original functions of historical structures, local traditions, spirit/genius loci, for every protected object or site along with the determination of the subject of protection or bearers of the monument's values. The basic international doctrines with their principles of respect for the original, but at the same time for all traces of historic changes - have not yet received a general consensus in society. In the case of an architectural work or urban heritage, the attempt has been made to interpret these from the *Document*: "...authenticity as a source of heritage, which is materially original or genuine as it was built and aged and weathered over time..., authenticity can be understood in relation to the creative process that created it as a true product of its time and also includes the effects/traces of its passage through historical time"<sup>6</sup>.

The verification – theoretical or practical – of the "authenticity test", as formulated in the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, had been subject of scientific studies and research at the Faculty of Architecture and Design of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. A theoretical application to Slovak conditions of restoration of monuments had been the topic of the work of Pavol Ižvolt<sup>7</sup>. Banská Štiavnica's authenticity had been the subject of study on urban level through developing a site-tailored test of authenticity. This scientific work of the author Katarína Vošková had the ambition to evaluate the quality of monument restorations on the territory of this specific World Heritage Site by applying the "authenticity test"<sup>8</sup>. Other theoretical verifications of authenticity followed – such as the dissertation of Robert Erdélyi or Barbora Váchová<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> ICOMOS (1965). *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter)*. Approved by the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments in Venice from 25 to 31 May 1964, adopted by ICOMOS in 1965. <https://www.icomos.org/en/participer/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/157-thevenice-charter>

<sup>6</sup> ICOMOS. (1994). *The Nara Document on Authenticity*. <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/386-the-nara-document-on-authenticity-1994>

<sup>7</sup> Ižvolt, P. (2010). *Authenticity in the restoration of monuments*. Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Faculty of Architecture. <https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=085E9E48F47272874ED46DB4B241>

<sup>8</sup> Vošková, K. (2012). *Process of monument transformation during monument restoration – intentions versus implementation*. Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Faculty of Architecture. <https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioFormChildCAE41&sid=D6D3FA1F9AF5FFB8A161A66948E7&seo=CRZP-detail-kniha>

<sup>9</sup> Erdélyi, R. (2016). *Surplus churches and large chapels of Christian churches in Slovakia*. Slovak University of technology in Bratislava, Faculty of Architecture; Váchová, B. (2016). *Application of the copy as a specific method of presentation of extinct cultural-historical values of historical architecture*. Slovak University of technology in Bratislava, Faculty of Architecture.

## Overview of the Situation and History of the Site, Principal Challenges

The state of cultural heritage in Slovakia and also of Banská Štiavnica in the early 1990s reflected the state of the society characterized by decades of neglected maintenance, lack of interest, lack of crafts necessary for conservation and restoration, lack of trained experts in practice. For the UNESCO World Heritage Site *Banská Štiavnica and Technical Monuments in the Surroundings* – with its exceptional urban and architectural values, technical mining and metallurgy works related to the development of gold and silver mines present and perfected in the area from the Middle Ages to the 19th century - the first key material was the specification of cultural-historical values of the territory, i.e. the *Cultural-historical Topography of the City of Banská Štiavnica*<sup>10</sup>. It was the first multidisciplinary research of the territory with the aim of defining the values of archaeology, urbanism, architecture, visual and artistic works, technical works, natural landscape values, traditions, important personalities and events (thus also intangible culture), the quality of the environment, etc.

The legislative status of protection at the time of the city's inclusion in the World Heritage List did not provide territorial protection for the defined values. The legal protection of the area was updated in 2000, when the boundary of the protected area was expanded, taking into account the material culture that represented all social aspects throughout the city's history (it included the mining development, the craft background of the city and technical monuments related to the mining activity).

The key and strategic material for changing the approach to the protection of cultural heritage in Slovakia – and the main spark for organizing training in the field of conservation and restoration of monuments – was the document *Banská Štiavnica Appeal*, adopted at the international scientific colloquium, connected with the course for craftsmen *Materials, Techniques and Technologies in Built Heritage Conservation*<sup>11</sup>. The initiators of the event – representatives of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic and the Faculty of Architecture of the Slovak University of Technology in cooperation with internationally renowned experts and often also co-authors of fundamental international documents and ICOMOS charters (such as Jukka Jokilehto, Michel Bonnette, Gennaro Tampone and others) opened the space for a modern approach to conservation and restoration with the participation of trained artisans, appropriate conservation and management methodologies, and community involvement. The *Banská Štiavnica Appeal* became an interpretation of the basic theses of the *Venice Charter* and the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, adapted to the conditions of Slovakia. The *Appeal* defined the tools to preserve authenticity by articulating and emphasizing the need "...to establish a training and education centre that would provide life-long learning in cultural heritage preservation methodologies for artisans, as well as information and advice to owners of monuments"<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Schwarczová, A. (1991). *Cultural-historical topography of the city of Banská Štiavnica*. Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Faculty of Architecture.

<sup>11</sup> Vošková, K., Hrčka, M. (Eds.) (2002). *Banská Štiavnica Appeal*. In: Materials, Techniques and Technologies in Built Heritage Conservation. Pamiatkový úrad Slovenskej republiky (Monuments Board of Slovak Republic). 74-79.

<sup>12</sup> Dvořáková, V., Husovská, L. (2002). *Banská Štiavnica Appeal*. In: Protection of cultural heritage in international documents of ICOMOS, Part I – Charters and recommendations, Bratislava. 107-111.

In the field of education and training, a series of international training activities (always with the involvement of the public, local community, students and owners of historical buildings) have been organized under the auspices of ICOMOS Slovakia since 2002. In 2002 – *Materials, Techniques and Technologies in Built Heritage Preservation*, in 2003 – *Lime and Lime Technologies in Built Heritage Preservation I.*, in 2005 – *Lime and lime technologies in Built Heritage Preservation II.*; in 2007 – *Windows and Doors in Built Heritage Preservation*, in 2010 – *Stone Built Heritage Preservation*. The Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Faculty of Architecture and Design continues offering courses, workshops and scientific colloquia – e.g. the Autumn University of Architecture (organized regularly since 2007). Thanks to the training programs around 100 craftsmen and more than 300 students have been trained at a multidisciplinary level. In accordance with the *Banská Štiavnica Appeal*<sup>13</sup> the life-long training for professionals in conservation and restoration of architectural heritage is offered by several other organizations in Slovakia, such as Academia Istropolitana Nova, the Centre for Building Heritage in Banská Štiavnica, the Samuel Mikovíni United School (restoration department) and others.

### Banská Štiavnica – the Historical Context

Banská Štiavnica was established due to rich resources of gold and especially silver by settlers from Germany (Saxony, Swabia, Tyrol). These had been invited to the territory as they already had experience in mining precious metals. The town was founded not later than in the 12th century and developed in a very complicated natural environment amidst the volcanic mountains of Central Slovakia. On the slopes above the valley covered with palaces, also poor miners built their tiny houses, settling near the mines. The profit made in the mines was reflected in the richness of the architecture, the quality of the craftwork, and the artistic ornaments of the palaces, churches, and schools.



Fig. 1. Banská Štiavnica – panoramic view of the historic town, the development of which had been determined by the hilly morphology. Photo: Lubomír Lužina

<sup>13</sup>

Ibidem.

The mountainous landscape also inspired the Baroque builders, starting from the end of the 17th century, to take advantage of the natural landscape phenomenon. In the 18th century, important architectural structures were built on distinct hilltops and became the dominant features in the city's panorama. This period was marked by the most intense development of mining – underlining the fact, that the mining of gold and silver and all of the related mining industry has always been an integral part of the long and rich history of the town. It was naturally accompanied by developments in science, technology, knowledge, education, art, and architecture. The city's 18th century boom was its peak to date, thanks to which it was possible to preserve the originals of mediaeval buildings in the mediaeval urban plan, although in a Baroque "dress" (facades as another cultural layer).



Fig. 2. Banská Štiavnica – The specific urban concept – wealthy burgher houses in the centre, artisanal architecture on the edges and miners' small houses are scattered on the slopes around the historic core. Photo: Katarína Terao Vošková

The protected area today is not only the representative city centre and the Baroque Calvary (as the previously protected areas), but also the larger area of technical and industrial complexes related to mining. The mining shafts, galleries, towers, and the ingenious water supply network of the "tajchs" (water reservoirs) all together form an important part of the town's cultural heritage. These values were the reason for the 1993 inscription of the city and its surroundings in the UNESCO World Heritage List, entitled "Banská Štiavnica and the Technical Monuments in its Vicinity", comprising an area of 20 632 hectares.

### **Studies of the Town's Authenticity**

Banská Štiavnica has to today's date maintained the qualities of its urban structure and landscape as well as the architectural values which formed – together with the preserved mining industry monuments – the basis of the outstanding universal value defined at the time of inscription. Several years of surveys and monitoring of the technical state of the structures allowed a quantification of

the losses of entire buildings or their architectural / historic values. Authenticity of the buildings had been studied with regard to these losses from 2001. The studied categories included:

- A) Natural loss of authenticity and values due to neglect
- B) Loss of authenticity due to the loss of the whole building (demolished or collapsed)
- C) Loss of authenticity due to inappropriate interventions or restorations of poor quality.

This category had been studied for two periods: years 1976 – 1993 and years 1993 – 2011, as it is important to take into consideration changes in approach to restoration.

The results have shown that of the total of the town's 637 buildings the number of national monuments is about 190 (i.e. 30 %), by 2011 the number of lost buildings was 55 (i.e. 8,6 %), of which 35 (i.e. 5,5 %) had been destroyed between 1976 – 1993 and 20 (i.e. 3,1 %) between 1993 – 2011. It was also possible to quantify that 7 (i.e. 1,1 %) buildings were in a state of a ruin, 24 (i.e. 3,8%) were severely rundown and 39 (i.e. 6,1%) were in a state of danger. Altogether the number was 125 (i.e. 19,6%) buildings with total or partial loss of authenticity.

#### **Authenticity as the Measure of Successful Restoration Processes from 2012 to Present Day – the Case of the Calvary (1744 – 1751)**

A special case from the point of view of preserving the authenticity has been the important Baroque landscape and architectural landmark – the Banská Štiavnica Calvary situated on the summit of the sacred hill Scharffenberg which has, unfortunately, become an example of a massive decay due to lack of interest, abandonment, deterioration and vandalism. Unprofessional interventions during socialism (mainly during 1979 – 1981) and communist restrictions related to its religious pilgrimage use also contributed to the losses of historical architectural and urban values, which resulted bigger than those in consequence of World War II.

The gradual disinterest of the public caused that after the year 2000 the state of the monument could be described as alarming. At that time, local experts started initiatives to save it. However, many efforts failed due to lack of funds.

Since the middle of the 18th century, the city belonged to the biggest and most influential free royal towns of the Hungarian kingdom and its mining industry experienced its golden period. Favourable economic conditions provided for the unprecedented cultural development and brought about changes in the town's outer appearance including the construction of a unique Calvary complex. This sacred complex is an extremely impressive Baroque area and prominent landmark. The perfectly elaborated composition of architecture, sculptures, paintings and craftwork in unity with the natural environment literally drags visitors into the story that brings to life the scenes of the last journey of Jesus – the Way of the Cross<sup>14</sup>. The architectural complex consists of 17 stations, three churches (the Lower Church, the Holy Stairs, and the Upper Church) and three smaller chapels (Ecce Homo, the Jail, and Jesus' Tomb) and finally, the stone statue Seven Sorrows of Virgin Mary. The complex - in an especially sensitive way - takes advantage

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<sup>14</sup> Čiço, M., Kalinová, M., Paulusová, S. (2002). Kalvárie a krížové cesty na Slovensku. *Pamiatkový ústav Bratislava*. 74-94.

of the properties of the natural environment<sup>15</sup>. As one of the most important representatives of Baroque sacred architecture in its typological class in Europe it has become part of the *Atlas of holy mountains, calvaries and devotional complexes in Europe*, which were surveyed in 2001 by the Italian Istituto Geografico DeAgostini<sup>16</sup>.



Fig. 3 Banska Štiavnica Calvary, situated on the hill Scharffenberg above the town. Copper engraving of the Calvary complex from 1751<sup>17</sup>. Photo: Vladimír Rupeldt

### The Case of the Calvary

The Calvary had unfortunately found itself under serious threat at the beginning of the 21st century. The loss of cultural-historical values during the period between 1989 – 2004 is incalculable. As a paradox, during that same time the Calvary complex has become a part of the area of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The consequences of long-term neglect and the past unprofessional repairs led to problems such as vandalism (destroyed roofs, stolen and destroyed furniture); abandoned state with no maintenance, overgrowing greenery and no water management; use of inappropriate materials and technologies during the communist regime (concrete and cement technologies in 1978 – 1981); inappropriate modifications of the original urban concept – three chapels had been relocated from the original place and the pilgrim road had been shortened; lack of public interest.

The year 2007 meant a breakthrough in the modern fate of the Calvary. Thanks to the initiative of local activists, the Calvary complex was enrolled in the *World Monuments Watch 2008 List of*

<sup>15</sup> Vošková, K. (2024). *Pilgrimage through the Calvary in Banska Štiavnica*, Spolok Banskej Štiavnice '91, Kalvársky fond Banska Štiavnica, (3rd ed.). 2-4.

<sup>16</sup> Barbero, A., Bilska-Wodecka, E. (2001). Monte Calvario Banska Štiavnica. In: *Atlante dei Sacri Monti, Calvari e Complessi devozionali europei = Atlas of holy mountains, calvaries and devotional complexes in Europe*. 166-167. [http://www.parcocrea.it/atlas/volume.htm#regno\\_unito](http://www.parcocrea.it/atlas/volume.htm#regno_unito) Atlante dei Sacri Monti, Calvari e Complessi Devozionali Europei.

<sup>17</sup> Copper engraving of the Baroque architectural concept of the Calvary Complex in Banska Štiavnica from 1751 (Johann Michael Pfrimb – Thomas Messmer, 1812, Vienna). Slovak Mining Museum in Banska Štiavnica.

100 Most Endangered Sites<sup>18</sup>. This fact had made an impact in the community, motivated activists (Baden-Powell Foundation and Association for Banská Štiavnica '91) and the key institutes (the Roman-Catholic Church, City of Banská Štiavnica and Slovak Mining Museum) to take further steps in order to save and rehabilitate the Calvary. In 2008 a civic association, the Calvary Fund, was established uniting relevant owners, professional institutions (Faculty of Architecture and Design of the Slovak University of Technology and the Slovak Mining Museum) and activists from the civic associations. From the first moment the Fund had been in systematic charge of the professional conservation and restoration of the monument as a complex, and cared for its appropriate protection and revitalisation. The present Calvary Fund continues the historical tradition of protecting, maintaining, and embellishing the Calvary complex – an activity originally performed by the initiator of its construction, Jesuit Father František Perger (1700 – 1772)<sup>19</sup>. The former Calvary Fund had been established in 1751 and functioned until 1951, when its activities were stopped by the communist regime after exactly 200 years<sup>20</sup>. Since 2009, the Calvary Fund has gradually coordinated the restoration of three churches, seventeen chapels, three specific objects in the composition (God's Tomb, Pilate's Palace – the Ecce Homo Chapel and the Statue of the Sorrowful Virgin Mary on the pedestal), and has been taking care of permanent maintenance of the area – mowing, repairing retaining walls, sidewalks, access roads<sup>21</sup>.



Fig. 4, 5, 6. Condition of the Baroque architecture and art before 2007: Façade of the Upper Church, Wooden Baroque sculpture from the altar, Façade of the Lower Church. Photo: Lubomír Lužina (4, 6) and Katarína Terao Vošková (5)

<sup>18</sup> World Monuments Fund. (2008). *World Monuments Watch 2008. List of 100 Most Endangered Sites*. New York, USA. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Information about the completed restoration project of part of the Calvary in the WMF Project Catalogue: <https://www.wmf.org/projects/bansk%C3%A1-%C5%A1tiavnica-calvary-complex>

<sup>20</sup> Čičo, M., Kalinová, M., Paulusová, S. (2002). Kalvárie a krížové cesty na Slovensku. *Pamiatkový ústav Bratislava*. 74-94.

<sup>21</sup> Vošková, K. (2024). *Pilgrimage through the Calvary in Banská Štiavnica*, Spolok Banskej Štiavnice '91, Kalvársky fond Banská Štiavnica, (3rd ed.). 2-4.

## Heritage Management Methodology

The Slovak University of Technology Faculty of Architecture and Design (FAD) has played a key role in the rehabilitation process based on a scientific methodology. After initiating the nomination to the List of 100 the Most Endangered Monuments in the World it set up the rescue and recovery methodology and continued to take part in the leadership of the scientific multidisciplinary research and coordination of the process - as the conservation and restoration has not yet been completed, the leading and coordinating role of FAD is still going on till present day. In 2007 it organized an international scientific colloquium and workshop *Banská Štiavnica Calvary - Prospect of its Revitalization* with accompanying events involving also the local lay public community - such as the opening of the long-term exhibition *Calvary in Asylum* (collection of the original Baroque wooden reliefs and sculptures from the Calvary complex). These events – scientific colloquium and exhibition – provided a general platform for dialogue and conditions for signing a Memorandum of Cooperation for the restoration of the Calvary. A team of experts outlined urgent, medium-term and long-term actions that would contribute to the preservation and revitalization of the Calvary complex based on the results of the *Colloquium Outcomes*<sup>22</sup>. Thus the specific methodology was adopted as a result of a number of multidisciplinary researches and international scientific colloquia in 2007 and in 2014.



Fig. 7, 8. Signing of the Memorandum on cooperation in saving the Calvary and Opening of the Exhibition *Calvary in Asylum* – involvement of local authorities and the Calvary complex owners. Photo: Archive of authors

<sup>22</sup> Vošková, K. (Ed.) (2008). *The Calvary in Banská Štiavnica and the Prospects of its Revitalisation. International Colloquium and Workshop*. Faculty of Architecture, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. 157-167.

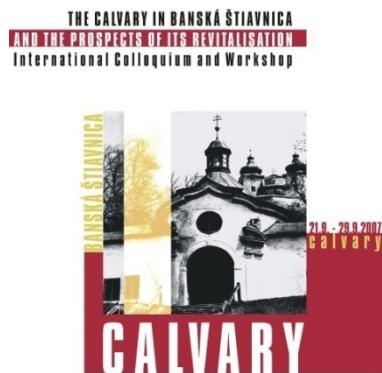


Fig. 9, 10. International colloquium and workshop to preserve and safeguard the Calvary, organized by the Faculty of Architecture and Design of the Slovak University of Technology in September 2007 and 2010. Photo: Lubomír Lužina

The restoration methodology was set up in accordance with Cesare Brandi's theoretical principles<sup>23</sup>, the ICOMOS Charter of Venice, as well as the Document on Authenticity. Its formulation was preceded by a series of steps. After completing measured drawings of the churches, chapels and sculptural elements, multidisciplinary researches had been launched: archaeological (discovering an anti-Turkish probably wooden watch tower on the top of Calvary hill on a stone base), architectural-historical (of the development of construction stages - traces of the Baroque architectural concept were found), conservator-restorer research (the fresco decoration of facades and interiors of churches and chapels had been revealed), survey of the wooden furniture of churches and chapels and stone sculptural decoration; art historical archival research of historical documentation (original copper engravings and depictions of the complex before and during construction); dendrological study (the original extent of the greenery of the architectural-landscape concept had been revealed); survey of the stone and wooden building elements and bearing structures (such as stone staircases and wooden trusses of the towers in the Lower and Upper Church) and a number of smaller studies that ascertained the structural and technical condition, diagnosed failures and proposed solutions for restoration.

### Conservation Methodology

At the end of the research, which lasted for almost two years, a general architectural project for the conservation and restoration of the complex was prepared. A methodology for supplementing the missing Baroque parts and elements was determined consensually by members of a professional working group from various institutions in view of the degree of damage and missing parts of the sculptural decoration, taking into account the original iconographic concept<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Brandi, C. (1963). *Teoria del Restauro*, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, Roma.

<sup>24</sup> Medvecký, J. (2010). Anton Schmidt, Schemnicziensis Pictor academicus. In: Chmelinová, K. (Ed.). *Industriálna krajina? Stredoslovenské banské mestá v. 16. – 18. storočí*. Slovenská národná galéria Bratislava. 115-118.



Fig. 11, 12. The principle of authenticity was applied during the restoration of architecture and the fresco decoration of churches – the preservation of the maximum of the original substances with the respect for the materials and technologies used. Interior fresco restoration of the Lower Church. Photo: Lubomír Lužina



Fig. 13, 14. During the conservation process of the Baroque chapels from the Calvary complex, inappropriate interventions from the 1980s were removed and lime technologies were applied for rehabilitation. Photo: Katarína Terao Vošková

The next step was the project implementation. The restoration of the Calvary lasted 16 years, and work is still continuing to complete its original iconographic richness.

The Calvary Fund devoted itself also to systematic work with the public. Voluntary workshops were organized for the maintenance of the area, cleaning, small celebrations on the occasion of the completion of individual stages of restoration. Cooperation with the media played an important role in fundraising and in involving the local and entire community. The visibility and promotion of the professional restoration of a nationally significant monument meant an improvement in the public's relationship to the preservation of cultural heritage.

As the final step, after the completion of the restoration of the complex, a sustainability plan is to be established, focusing on financial self-sufficiency, and regular maintenance of the area.



Fig. 15, 16. Comparison of the condition of Lower Church from the Calvary Complex before and after restoration. Photo: Archive of Authors



Fig. 17. The restoration process accompanied by a discussion between experts (conservator-restorers and World Monuments Fund representative) – restoration of the frescoes in the Lower Church. Photo: Lubomír Lužina



Fig. 18, 19. The opening and mass in the Upper Church, 2018. Photo: Lubomír Lužina

The timely mobilization of forces and the undertaken actions with carefully planned interventions on the basis of thorough research have significantly contributed to saving this valuable complex and preserving its authenticity. It was positive that the restoration did not take place spontaneously, but step by step according to pre-determined criteria, expert proposals following expert discussions. Crucial was the funding – financial grant to the Faculty of Architecture and Design – for the scientific researches of the Calvary complex (granted by the VUB Foundation, 2008 – 2019)<sup>25</sup> and the financial grant for the most urgent fresco conservation in the Lower Church – from World Monuments Fund, New York, USA (2008 – 2013).

In the case of the Calvary the rehabilitation process, restoration methodology and collaboration, joint forces of all stake holders allowed for a very positive result. It has been confirmed, that a dedicated process management, fundraising and leadership as well as the involvement of the local community and volunteers are very effective.

Nowadays, the Calvary is a lively place for religious services and pilgrimages, a popular tourist destination, a place for cultural events and school activities. A big challenge for the future is setting up a plan for sustainability and permanent maintenance of the buildings and grounds.

### Conclusion

Using the example of the baroque sacral complex Banská Štiavnica Calvary, we tried to demonstrate that despite poor initial conditions of a site and buildings, it is possible to preserve the still identified authenticity if the process is well managed. However, proper preparation and strategy are necessary before starting the actual interventions.

The developed strategy for saving the site with an emphasis on preserving authenticity was based on the principle of a cross-professional approach ensuring the following:

- Detailed professional documentation of all structures and the area;
- Landscape-ecological research of the site with an emphasis on dendrological research of native trees and the original concept of the landscape appearance;

<sup>25</sup> The VUB Bank Foundation (Intesa Sanpaolo Group) was the general sponsor of the conservation and restoration of the Calvary complex. They supported the interventions financially for 12 years (2008 – 2019).

- Architectural-historical research with evaluation and recommendations for preservation and presentation;
- Art-historical and conservator-restorer research of frescoes, stone and wooden sculptures and interior fittings of churches and chapels;
- Ongoing informing the public about procedures, organizing events with public participation (exhibitions, voluntary working sessions, sports events);
- Involvement of children and school youth in the topic of protection and presentation (art school competitions with the theme of Calvary, kite flying on the slopes after Calvary).

The restoration of the sacral architectural complex was carried out with stress on preserving authenticity: form and design (Baroque expression of architecture and typical silhouette of a monument in the landscape); environment (legal protection of the Calvary Hill was achieved, in order to ensure the protection of the original silhouette of the monument); and in the case of a sacred object, the spirit/genius loci was re-established (by restoring the original function of the churches with the renewal of the liturgical program and the organization of pilgrimages). The place has become an important point in the network of the historical Jacob's Pilgrimage Route and the historical route in the field of cultural tourism – the Amber Road.

In the process of conservation and restoration, or reconstruction interventions, the involved experts tried to maintain the highest degree of authenticity – preserving the maximum of the original material, techniques and technologies.

The result is a living monument – an area that is used for its original purpose and massively visited by tourists. Due to the increased interest in the monument and for the interpretation of its values and historical significance, the Calvary Visitor Centre was established in 2016 under the Scharffenberg Calvary.

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### **Author Contributions**

Both authors have worked together for years in the various parts of the research process. The article is a joint work in proportion Katarína Terao Vošková 60%, Andrea Urland 40%.

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