

## Abstract

Czech born art historian Max Dvořák is known as one of the leading persons of modern heritage protection in Central-East Europe. He formulated, similarly as his own teacher Alois Riegl, position in manner of science work typical for Vienna School of Art History. Main purpose and contribution of this work lies in a comparison of some parallels of phenomena including reception of his ideas in other states of Central-East Europe: former Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary or Slovenia from the early organized conservation efforts in former Austrian Empire in 19<sup>th</sup> century to present.

On a theoretical level, in former Czechoslovakia, the Dvořák's modern conservation principles were accepted as universal. Unfortunately, in practice, this dominant discourse was changed by conformity in a conflict with political reality. The 1950's mean a stage of expansion of the state heritage protection, but a bitter price was paid by superordination of the political criteria to the professional ones. The moral ethos suffered also a lot of injuries. This resulted in preferring bureaucratic formalism over factual approaches, voluntarism, in compromise ability and in unwillingness to risk one's position for getting involved in fundamental questions of the preservation of monuments without any deeper interests in methodological and theoretical reflections. Only some art historians: Oldřich Štefan (with holistic understanding of the monument), Václav Richter (heavily influenced by philosophers Martin Heidegger and Jan Patočka) and later Ivo Hlobil and Mojmír Horyna demonstrated a serious interest towards the conservation theories trying to define the role that monuments play in modern society and their effective values.

Since 1900, politics contributed to the construction of strong nationalistic discourses of heritage. On the other hand, the monuments for which the national principles cannot be used were depreciated, even destroyed. This process was strongly observed in the regions whose populations have completely changed due to post-war shifted borders in Central-East Europe (East Prussia, Silesia, Sudetenland).

In the course of the 20th century, the protection of monuments has proved still more of a necessity at an international level. Since First World War within the League of Nations were created *Commission internationale de coopération intellectuelle*, and finally *L'Office international des musées* which organized in 1931 Athens Conference where Athens Charter on the Restoration of Monuments was adopted. Next doctrinal document was Venice Charter

of 1964. The victory of Polish cultural diplomacy in 1960's was the fact that International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) was officially founded at the first congress held in Cracow and Warsaw. In presence many Polish scientists involved in current discussion about methodological and theoretical issues of conservation. Andrzej Tomaszewski was chairman and secretary of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee for the Theory and the Philosophy of Conservation and Restoration and Bogusław Szmygin, the secretary of the same committee.

Heritage preservation does not exist separately from a society, depending on many objective and subjective circumstances. The understanding of heritage has been rapidly changed. New concepts of heritage (f.e. the UNESCO's new category of immaterial heritage, environmental conservation, historic urban landscapes, places of cultural significance, hermeneutic and semiotic approaches), are recently discussed. Traditional approaches based on preserving the authentic form and substance of monuments were questioned by the Nara declaration and the Burra Charter adopted under auspices ICOMOS, which recognized that authenticity is a relative concept.

Consciousness of the relativism of values among some professionals has led to increasing interest on traditional, European conception of heritage based on the ideas of Vienna School of Art History. Alois Riegl, respectively Max Dvořák, solved the same problems which modern conservation is faced with. Their studies through sharing experiences offer an opportunity for current interpretations. In last decades much has been written about both art historians, where even some found their inspiration in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche or socialist movement.

Recent publication of Dvořák's text edited by Italian art historian Sandro Scarrocchia showed inspiring wealth of his legacy. Dvořák warned against over-emphasis of individualism and technical progress. Also educational aims of heritage preservation were well reflected by Dvořák.

Present new heritage challenges make Dvořák's legacy once again relevant, first of all towards of his ethics of conservation. Dvořák further compared the ethic responsibility of historian of art to sustain a scientific treatment of the monuments corpus and medical treatment of doctors. The errors in their discipline are practically irreversible. The professional art historians can prove their role as leader in the understanding and protection of cultural heritage.