

Summary

Adaptations of Prague Castle in the Time of the First Czechoslovak Republic

The main subject of this thesis is to analyse one of the latest stages of the development of Prague Castle. The extent of the changes the historic core of the Czechoslovak state went through in the time of the first Republic is comparable only to the Theresian reconstruction in the second half of the 18th century, which unified the appearance of the castle and had a definite impact on the panorama of Hradčany. The period between 1918 and 1938, called the first Czechoslovak Republic, is connected with the development of a new democratic state. To offer a complete picture, the building activities in the area of Prague Castle shortly before 1918 are summarized as well; in some cases it was inevitable for the understanding of the modern reconstruction to insert short overviews of the whole building history.

The analysis and the attempt to evaluate the mentioned important stage in the development of Prague Castle are based on a detailed study of the building activities that originally followed different goals. These activities concerned various parts of the castle and can be divided into three groups according to architects and builders: Kamil Hilbert, Josip Plečnik and Karel Fiala. The characters of the structures and of the areas these personalities reconstructed were different, and the approaches to them differed as well. The thesis examines how a different approach to historical architecture and to a monument of nationwide importance influenced the concrete adjustment, renovation or restoration of architecture, what influence it had on the final appearance of the area of Prague Castle and how the adjustments and renovations were accepted by the broad scholarly and lay public.

A number of scientific contributions to the realized building projects by Josip Plečnik have already been published. However, some circumstances, especially immediately after the proclamation of independence in October 1918 and in 1919, are less known. Spontaneously Prague Castle has been selected the seat of the president of the newly established state. This, however, took place only after some ministries and other institutions of the state administration moved to the castle, which had brought about considerable difficulties. The foundation of institutions that led, coordinated and supervised the building activities was of uttermost importance. In the beginning, obscurities, personal disputes and disputes over competences accompanied their work. The dissertation focuses on the circumstances of the foundation and development of the Building Division of Prague Castle (Stavební správa Pražského hradu) as the institution overseeing building projects. A part of the overall image in

this period are activities of the broader public, which by means of own attitudes and the expression of fears of the fate of Prague Castle tried to influence many decisions of the responsible institutions. The conversion of Prague Castle, by then an imperial and royal palace, into the symbol of the new and democratic Czechoslovakia was accompanied by all of the above mentioned circumstances. The specific execution of the building changes were of course influenced by the preferences of President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. However, not all parts of Prague Castle were granted the same official interest.

Work concentrated, among others, also on the question of heritage care and the acceptance of new ideas of monument preservation both in theory and practice. Their concrete application can best be analysed in the building adaptations, reconstructions and restorations in St Vitus' Cathedral and in the Old Royal Palace. Additional building-historical surveys of both these monuments are currently processed. In a number of cases they enable a detailed study of by then building adjustments including technological details.

Keywords:

Prague Castle, Heritage preservation, Restoration of architectural monuments, Renovation in architecture, Building-historical research