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From Historic City to Heritage City.

How to Construct Historical Continuity in the Buda Castle District

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From Historic City to Heritage City. How to Construct Historical Continuity in the Buda Castle District

In the last two decades, urban heritage has become omnipresent through the heritagization of thousands of cities and urban quarters all over the world and a complex (holistic) phenomenon encompassing all aspects of urban existence. Consequently, it has become a rival to urban history in terms of interpretation and experience of the urban past as well as a legitimate and spectacularly expanding research topic for urban history. This article examines the possible models of temporality integrated into the model of 'regimes of urban heritage' to render the evolution of urban heritage suitable for historical analysis. The current regime is characterized by an ahistorical 'management of change' approach. It regards historically layered cities as temporal and spatial continuums. One of the many consequences is the vast amount of urban (monument) reconstruction that was previously impossible to implement. In addition, significant changes have come to light in current historical interpretations and in the role of urban history in general. Hence, the continuous time of urban heritage and the deconstruction of the principle of authenticity proper are true challenges to historical time based on temporal ruptures and the critical urban history approach. These challenges will be explored by analyzing the example of the reconstruction of Buda Castle District.

1. Introduction

Buda Castle District is No. 1 on the list of national places of memory ranked in the Annex of the Hungarian Act LXIV of 2001 on the Protection of Cultural Heritage. Its singular importance in Hungarian nation building lies in its embodiment of the ancient glory of the independent Kingdom of Hungary, which ceased to exist at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but also of constructions, additions and reconstructions undertaken from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, through which the respective political powers expressed their vision in this symbolic place. The work did not end with the renovation of Buda Castle District, which was severely damaged during the siege of Budapest in World War II, in the second half of the twentieth century. The current political regime launched the National Hauszmann Program (NHP) to, "like [a] Sleeping Beauty," wake "the Buda Castle Palace District from its slumber during the coming decade". The threefold aim was to "improve the quality of life for resi-

dents”, to “bring about a twentyfirst-century renaissance of Hungarian national identity”, and to “enrich the built heritage and its environment.”¹ The Sleeping Beauty and renaissance metaphors are particularly revealing in terms of the temporality behind the government program as it sees Buda Castle District in an overarching continuity. “Slumber” not only alludes here to its destruction in World War II and the years of abandonment in the 1940s and 1950s, but also to renovation efforts during State Socialism (1960s-1980s), and even to the decades (1990s-2000s) that followed, during which the district remained unmodified. Thus, these metaphors not only justify the reconstruction of Buda Castle District, which is inconsistent with the acknowledged principles of monument protection, but also the destruction of previous renovation achievements considered inauthentic and anachronistic by the current regime led by Viktor Orbán.

The procedure has been harshly criticized by Hungarian monument conservation experts. Since 2015, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee has repeatedly “expressed its concern at what it considered to be a threat to the historical authenticity of the Buda Castle Quarter as a result of reconstruction works, and it urged the State Party to halt all ongoing and planned works”. In vain, however, since their calls to halt the NHP and “engage in dialogue have not been responded to”.² The dispute between the Hungarian state and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre reached such heights that in 2021, Buda Castle District narrowly escaped entry onto the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Although the planned scale of the reconstruction is truly remarkable, the contemporary case of Buda Castle is by no means unique in Europe. The delisting of Liverpool from the World Heritage List in 2021 and the placement of the Historic Centre of Vienna on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2017 indicate that the habitual concept of urban heritage is currently being challenged. Moreover, similar reconstruction projects are taking place everywhere in the erstwhile Communist Bloc, of which the best-known examples are the Humboldt Forum in Berlin and the historic center of Potsdam. These developments show that urban heritage – in its current complexity – is an indicator of the contemporary understanding of urban history and calls for proper methodology.

The NHP inserts Buda Castle District into three related registers of objectives: (1) it intends to rehabilitate one of Hungary’s seminal sites of memory to its former symbolic and emblematic glory; (2) it corrects a range of historical mistakes, allowing replicate reconstructions to rectify ideologically flawed pe-

¹ National Hauszmann Program (2019-2024), <https://nemzetihauszmannprogram.hu/nhp-strategy-2021.pdf> [1.11.2021].

² State of conservation report, 2021: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/4101> [1.11.2021].

riods in the past; (3) it is not an immediate rectification (as in the case of the Town Square in Warsaw after World War II, Teatro la Fenice in Venice after the arson attack in 1996 or Notre Dame in Paris after the fire in 2019), but a belated one, that is not merely recovery following a – natural or political – disaster, but the revival of a historical period or even successive periods.

In these three registers, current actions (rectification, correction or reconstruction) are taking place in opposition to the critical approaches of the relevant academic disciplines. Memory, or the political use of the past, overwrites historical science, whose interpretations of the past are traditionally ordered according to ruptures. The objectives and related arguments are placed in continuity with a deliberately selected period and this selection justifies the destruction of buildings and cultural goods that disturb the political narrative. Since the latter is based on the mission of national revival and identity building, it is authorized to refrain from the critical approach of the three academic disciplines concerned. First, historical science is replaced by a memory-driven interpretation of the past, which François Hartog refers to as a presentist approach.³ Second, from an archaeological point of view, the ancient ruin is opposed to the modern or even contemporary ruin, where the witness and his/her memory is utilized as an essential reference. Third, monument protection determined by authenticity (that is to say, renovation instead of reconstruction) is disqualified from the narrative perspective based on revival and continuity.

In Hungary, monument protection lost its independent institution in 2017. As the UNESCO report dolefully states: “In terms of governance, the Prime Minister’s Office [...] will now be responsible for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* and heritage protection in general. It has started a review and deregulation of the Hungarian World Heritage regulations – but the context of the term ‘deregulation’ is unclear”.⁴ Consequently, official debates on the Buda Castle reconstruction work were nigh on impossible. At the same time, several experts and scholars – architects, art historians, urban planners and aesthetes – raised their voice either for or against these interventions. Historians, on the other hand, remained silent, as if this crucial reinterpretation of the past in the context of urban heritage had no bearing on their domain. Current international developments in urban history, where the study of urban heritage has become a legitimate and rapidly expanding research topic, do not justify this attitude.⁵

³ François Hartog, *Croire en l'histoire*, Paris 2013; François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity. Presentism and Experiences of Time*, New York 2016.

⁴ State of conservation report, 2021: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/4101> [1.11.2021].

Nevertheless, urban heritage is not simply a new theme for urban history writing, it is a rival interpretation and experience of the urban past that follows its own logic in constructing and narrating urban identity. The present article suggests using the model of urban heritage regimes as a method of arranging the seemingly disparate elements of urban heritage in a critical chronology appropriate to a historical interpretation. The model will be demonstrated through the dialogue between the international conceptual history of urban heritage and the heritagization periods of Buda Castle District.

2. The Model of Urban Heritage Regimes

The European history of cultural heritage should start with the nostalgic and protection-driven reaction to the destructive and future-oriented dynamics of the Industrial Revolution in the United Kingdom and those of the French Revolution. Correspondingly, the European history of urban heritage begins with the identification of the first historic urban entities in Europe. Although its significance and practice can be quite different to the definition and recognition of contemporary urban heritage sites and elements, they are united in the same heritage discourse and, consequently, in the same chronology. Unless it had been destroyed by war or violent political and economic forces, the protected territory and physical settings of the historic center rarely changed in the course of conceptual shifts in cultural heritage. Hence, a key characteristic of cultural heritage is this intentional continuity and calls for a temporal model in which continuity prevails over change, a context that is otherwise a standard topic of historical science. The other major aspect of cultural heritage to be considered is an integrating tendency that stems from the soothing nature of world heritage discourse and is rooted in the logic of international cultural diplomacy, which in turn interprets conceptual shifts and their inherent contradictions as an organic evolution.

The model of successive regimes of cultural heritage meets both requirements. “Regime” as an analytical category considers norms and regulations to be essential and it allows for simultaneity as opposed to the term “period”, which postulates succession. It regards the history of cultural heritage as a continual process, in which conceptual shifts integrate into rather than replace one another, regardless of whether they are at variance as in the understand-

⁵ An appropriate indicator for this expansion might be the number of sessions related to heritage and heritagization at international urban history conferences. In the case of the biannual European Association for Urban History (EUAH) conferences, the first session on urban heritage took place in 2012. Since then, three to six sessions on this topic have taken place at each conference.

ding of authenticity in tangible and later intangible heritage discourses. “Regime” is also a convenient concept when it comes to analyzing the succession of governance configurations, in which heritage, primarily a political and administrative domain, gains significant currency due to its expanding scope. As a result, the study of heritagization reveals “negotiations among actors on an international level”⁶, but also on the national and local level, and how the mechanisms of power function. Moreover, “regime” is also applied to portray the changing perception of time and history, which is essential for understanding the significance and historical role of the conceptual evolution of cultural heritage.⁷

Up to the 1970s, the history of cultural heritage was used at different – primarily national – levels of identity-building endeavors and provided them with a solid basis by mobilizing both savants and amateurs for protection and preservation projects. During this long process, “historic centers/towns” were defined and protected all over Europe. Then, in a first major shift, UNESCO globalized the concept of cultural heritage as the career of the common culture of humanity. The second half of the twentieth century saw historic centers and towns multiply across Europe, the burgeoning of extensive debates on their regeneration in light of the mass destruction during World War II, and the dazzling urban development that followed. As a result of these debates and the discussion on new world heritage standards, preserved urban entities were redefined as “urban heritage sites”. By the 1990s, cultural heritage had become a truly global concept with a dynamically emerging number of heritage sites, an effect of the nation states’ ratification of the World Heritage Convention (1972) and the growing number of – mostly urban – sites on the World Heritage List (1978). Despite the unmistakable success of the world heritage concept, the Western conceptualization of the Convention and the European dominance on the List were both subject to constant criticism. The demand for a holistic approach to cultural heritage ultimately led to the concept of “heritage city”.

Accordingly, the model of urban heritage regimes divides the complex history of European cities and towns⁸ into three successive regimes. The first re-

⁶ Regina F. Bendix/Aditya Eggert/Arnika Peselmann (eds.), *Heritage Regimes and the State*, Göttingen 2012, p. 12-13.

⁷ Lucas Lixinski, *International Cultural Heritage Regimes, International Law, and the Politics of Expertise*, in: *International Journal of Cultural Property* 20:4, 2013, p. 407-429; Lucie K. Morriset, *Des régimes d'authenticité. Essai sur la mémoire patrimoniale*, Rennes 2009; Gábor Sonkoly/Tanja Vahtikari, *Innovation in Cultural Heritage Research*, Brussels 2020, p. 11-20.

⁸ This categorization is primarily based on European history, but if we compare it with Nezar Alsayyad’s more global periodization of “heritage and tradition” in relation to cultural consumption in the last two centuries, a similar history unfolds. Nezar Alsayyad

gime is determined by national and local heritage conservation regulations whose unit is the historic center or historic town (1800s-). The second regime corresponds to the institutionalizing of cultural heritage as an international norm whose unit is the urban heritage site (1970s-). The third regime corresponds to the redefinition of cultural heritage whose unit is the heritage city or town (1990s-).

Buda Castle District is an area of splendid buildings constructed after the reunification of Budapest (1873), which became one of the two capitals of the Dual Monarchy following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. The new capital was eager to compete with the old one, Vienna. Dissatisfied with its role merely as a *Residenzstadt* for the monarchy (from 1892), it sought to become a true national center, both economically and culturally. Buda Castle District played a major role in the realization of both objectives. Accordingly, the Royal Castle and the District itself were reconstructed in the period from 1880-1905 with the aim of hosting the royal court and its events, and recreating the lost glory of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary with the advanced technological means of a progressively imposing city. Its reconstruction was led by Miklós Ybl (1814-1891), the emblematic architect of the united capital in the 1880s. His achievements – the reconstruction design and rampart reinforcements – were quite limited, however, due to the tenacity of the state and the capital to restrict financial support. It was Ybl's successor, Alajos Hauszmann (1847-1926), who succeeded in defining the ultimate architectural pattern. Following reconstruction, the District was characterized by a blend of modern technology and a eclectic historical style typical of the Hungarian Millennium (1896) period. The commemorations of the one thousandth anniversary of the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin provided sufficient resources to construct palaces and representative buildings, and gave the Royal Castle a stunning new design.⁹ The reconstruction work was a turning point in the modern history of Buda Castle District, which became a revitalized center of power, albeit the Habsburg monarchs were merely present symbolically. Thus, amid the vibrant development of the *Werkstatt* in Fin-de-Siècle Budapest¹⁰, Buda Castle District embodied the first urban heritage regime in a manner comparable to European

(ed.), *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage. Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, New York 2001, p. 3. In the case of many European historic centres that lost their significance during the deurbanization process prior to the last third of the twentieth century, this model can be enriched with Daniel Fabre's triad of *déclassement-classement-surclassement*, which he used to describe the last century of the historic Parisian quarter of Marais. Daniel Fabre, *Habiter les monuments*, in: Daniel Fabre/Anna Iuso (eds.) *Les monuments sont habités*, Paris 2009, p. 34-49.

⁹ Hauszmann Alajos, *A magyar királyi vár* [The Hungarian Royal Castle], Budapest 2011, p. 6-8.

capitals. Its legitimacy was ensured by the territorial continuity with the medieval royal castle and its central location, which in turn was visually enhanced by its elevated position on Castle Hill. The long timespan of abandonment by national monarchs gave way to constructions in a historical style as corrections of the past. After the fall of the Dual Monarchy, the significance of Buda Castle District as the emblematic center of political power gathered momentum during the Horthy regime (1920-1944), when it became not only the residential area of the governor, but also the focus of key representative events impregnated with nostalgia for the glorious national past.



Image 1: Buda Castle destroyed, 1946.

The heritagization of Buda Castle District according to the logic of the second regime, that is to say, in line with international cultural heritage norms and (e)valuations set by UNESCO and its expert organizations, was accomplished in 1987, when “Budapest, the banks of the Danube and the district of Buda Cast-

¹⁰ Péter Hanák’s exploitation of the metaphor of Budapest as a workshop is particularly relevant since it reveals the ambiguity of historical nostalgia and the dynamic technological development of the Hungarian capital at the turn of the century. Hanák Péter, *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest*, Princeton 1998.

le”¹¹ were recognized as one of the first Hungarian World Heritage sites. While the reconstruction of the District as a historical reference in the late nineteenth century was somewhat belated compared to other European capitals, UNESCO recognition came early, given that up until then only four European capitals (Rome, Valetta, Warsaw, Bern) had been acknowledged as World Heritage sites. The renovation of Buda Castle District started quite late after its demolition during the siege of Budapest in 1944-1945.¹² Up until 1958, successive regimes lacked the necessary resources to get renovation underway, and although the Stalinist Rákosi regime (1948-1956) had plans to set up the headquarters of political power there and began archaeological excavations¹³, the District remained in ruins until the revolution of 1956. The Kádár regime (1956-1988) organized the overall renovation of Buda Castle District and the entire medieval quarter. After the years of terror following the revolution, this regime sought to consolidate a compromise between the totalitarian system and the divergent interests of society, in which the redesign of the symbolically significant Buda Castle District was to play a key role.¹⁴ In compliance with the abstemious ethos and image of the Kádár regime, the political elite did not reclaim the District. Instead, it was designated to host cultural and scientific institutions. Accordingly, the Hungarian Museum of Labor Movement (1966-1989), the Budapest History Museum (from 1967)¹⁵, the Hungarian National Gallery (from 1975)¹⁶, the National Library (from 1985), and the Ludwig Museum (1991-2005) were all located in the Royal Palace. From the 1960s to the 1980s, Buda Castle District was home to numerous academic and artistic institutions. Renovation of the Castle and its quarter was predominantly carried out along the principles of the Venice Charter and supervised by the Hungarian monument protection authorities, whose institutional history dates back to the mid-nineteenth century and its official recognition to 1881.

This period of monument protection can be described as one that preferred monuments and remnants from chronologically distant periods, notably Gothic and Renaissance, and had little interest in the preservation of monuments from the late nineteenth century or later.¹⁷ It applied the “renovation instead

¹¹ UNESCO Incription, 1987: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/3728>, [1.11.2021].

¹² Kollányi Béla, *Az újjáépült Budavári Palota*, Budapest 1990.

¹³ Gerő László, *A budai középkori királyi palota és vár maradványainak helyreállítása*, Magyar Műemlékvédelem 1957-58, p. 155-161.

¹⁴ Gerő László, *A Budai Vár*, Budapest 1971, p. 24-34.

¹⁵ Feuerné Tóth Rózsa, *Középkori Királyi Palota a Budai Várban*, Vezető a Budapesti Történeti Múzeum kiállításán, Budapest 1978.

¹⁶ Garas Klára, *A budai vár egykori képgyűjteménye*, Budapest 1968.

¹⁷ *A budai vár házainak 1957. Évi műemléki kutatásai*, Budapest 1959. Czagány István, *A budavári palota és a Szent György téri épületek*, Budapest 1966.

of reconstruction” principle systematically and favored contemporary insertions to copies.¹⁸ In the global field of urban heritage, it saw Hungarian monument protection as among the most progressive. This was reflected in the Washington Charter (1987)¹⁹, which was prepared at a meeting organized and hosted by Hungarian experts in Eger,²⁰ and in the fact that Budapest as a World Heritage Site was not proposed as a historic center, which was the case with the majority of urban heritage sites, but rather for “the view over the Danube.”²¹ In other words, it was considered an innovative spatial concept that preceded the urban landscape.



Image 2: Buda Castle renovated, 1970.

Although the fall of the socialist regime could have heralded further renovation to the District, monument protection failed to do so, thereby preserving the status quo attained in the 1980s. In the twenty years between the new Hungari-

¹⁸ Zolnay László, *A budai vár*, Budapest 1981, p. 126-131.

¹⁹ Charter For The Conservation Of Historic Towns And Urban Areas, 1987: www.icomos.org/charters/towns_e.pdf [1.11.2021].

²⁰ Compte rendu de la 7e Assemblée générale de l'ICOMOS, Rostock/Dresden 1984, p. 37-39.

²¹ WHC Nomination Documentation, 1987: <https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/400bis.pdf>, [1.11.2021].

an democracy and the Orbán regime (1990-2010), monument protection was gradually replaced by heritage protection, both conceptually and legally. This shift, however, has had no major impact on Buda Castle District.

3. The Third Regime and its Challenges

The professional challenges to the second regime principles of urban heritage began to multiply in the late 1990s. The earliest and most widespread conceptual attempt to renew them was the notion of a “historic urban landscape”, first defined in the Vienna Memorandum of 2005. It presented a general framework for urban heritage preservation which integrated third regime heritage notions such as cultural landscape, cultural diversity, cultural rights and intangible heritage. Although UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape in 2011 as a global instrument, its echo was more intense in non-European countries. The first international instrument that refers to it is The Xi’an Declaration on the Preservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures (2005). This document alludes to the Recommendation as a reference, not as a model, since it introduces its own “heritage structure” to replace the original monument. The Declaration sees the lenient attitude to change as one of the main advantages of the proposed term “Historic Urban Landscape” and claims that “managing change to the setting of heritage structures, sites and areas need not necessarily prevent or obstruct change.”²² Hence, it was also an attempt to find an appropriate concept to integrate continuity encoded in “sustainability” and “management of change”, which in turn became the major challenges to urban heritage preservation. The Chinese setting of the Xi’an Declaration indicates that the deconstruction of the heritage conservation principles turned out to be truly global during the years around the turn of the millennium, and was marked by the Nara (1994) and Yamamoto (2004) Documents, both of which played a crucial role in relativizing the authenticity of predominantly Western traditions. The growing importance of non-Western experts in UNESCO and ICOMOS from the 1990s onwards and their criticism of cultural heritage conceived within linear and historical time also contributed to the more complex perception and conceptualization of urban heritage.

Although the historic urban landscape approach was originally developed in close collaboration with Vienna²³, the most dedicated UNESCO center for trai-

²² Xi'an Declaration on the Preservation of the Setting of Heritage Structure, Xi'an 2005: <https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/xian-declaration.pdf>, [1.11.2021].

²³ International Conference World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture, Managing the Historic Urban Landscape, Vienna 2005.

ning and research on historic urban landscape is situated in Shanghai²⁴, with pilot cities elsewhere in China and in the Asia-Pacific area. The geographical distribution of the approximately 160 historic urban landscape host cities²⁵ and the twenty-eight case studies on urban conservation using this approach in the recent explicatory volume²⁶ are shown to be evenly dispersed across world regions, with a slight primacy in Europe and the Asia-Pacific area. This globally defined and applied approach to urban heritage replaces the static perception of the monument (historic) city/quarter with a dynamic six-step model of sustainability, in which the integration of urban heritage values appears only in the fourth step and coordinated actions for conservation and development in the fifth.²⁷

This understanding of third regime urban heritage began with the Vienna Memorandum and developed alongside rival concepts. The “management of change” was prioritized in the 2011 Recommendation²⁸, which regards “the active protection of urban heritage and its sustainable management as a condition sine qua non of development” and proclaims the “active collaboration of the main stakeholders”²⁹, indicating the degree to which this approach is based on functioning in the present. It also attempts to bring about a paradigm shift: “In the course of the past half century, urban heritage conservation has emerged as an important sector of public policy worldwide. It is a response to the need to preserve shared values and to benefit from the legacy of history. However, the shift from an emphasis on architectural monuments primarily towards a broader recognition of the importance of the social, cultural and economic processes in the conservation of urban values should be matched by a drive to adapt the existing policies and to create new tools to address this vision.”³⁰ The

²⁴ According to the self-definition of this center: “Since 2013 WHITRAP (Shanghai) and Tongji University’s Advanced Research Institute for Architecture and Urban-Rural Planning, in cooperation with UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre, are facilitating the implementation of the 2011 *UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* by promoting and undertaking research and training, as well as developing pilot projects in the region”, <http://historicurbanlandscape.com/index.php?classid=5351>, [1.11.2021].

²⁵ Ana Pereira Roders, *The Historic Urban Landscape Approach in Action. Eight Years Later*, in: Ana Pereira Roders/Francesco Bandarin (eds.), *Reshaping Urban Conservation. The Historic Urban Landscape Approach in Action*, Singapore 2019, p. 27-31.

²⁶ Ana Pereira Roders/Francesco Bandarin (eds.) *Reshaping Urban Conservation. The Historic Urban Landscape Approach in Action*, Singapore 2019.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁸ UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. A New International Instrument, including a glossary of definitions 2011, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL/_ID=48857&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, [1.11.2021].

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ UNESCO Recommendation 2011, Introduction 4.

paradigm shift expressed in the historic urban landscape approach is neither exclusive nor universal in how current urban heritage is understood and managed, since concepts were developed simultaneously with similar intentions or with the aim of upholding ideas and practices from previous heritage regimes.³¹ Nevertheless, as a result of the recent conceptual evolution of urban heritage, the perception of its temporality is primarily marked by continuity.

Since the very beginning – that is, since the definition of the historic center and of historic urban monuments – urban heritage preservation has borne an inherent contradiction to the perception of time: in theory, it battles with the loss induced by modernization, but in practice functions according to modern logic because it chooses privileged periods from the past – regarded as distant and separated by the rupture of modernization – to be conserved unchanged. The second heritage conservation regime inherited this contradiction, while its modern(ist) practice was gradually subject to criticism based on the growing complexity of urban heritage and partly ineffective measures to preserve historic cities or conserve them as obstacles to urban development. Consequently, the desperate struggle with unbridled progress was eventually replaced by elaboration of the principles of sustainability, a scheme of the third regime to frame contemporary urban identity and to designate urban heritage as its principal conveyor as a result of its anti-modernist theoretical foundation and newly developed continuity-based practices. This new approach interprets evolution as continuity rather than a series of ruptures that distances the present from the past. Sustainability is the embodiment of this continuity. The third urban heritage regime thus goes beyond the conflict between static heritage conservation and dynamic urban development: in the six critical steps of the historic urban heritage approach, urban heritage values are incorporated into a sustainable management program by virtue of their vulnerability and the “socio-economic stresses and impacts of climate change.”³² This definition of urban heritage, marked by continuous space and time, inevitably leads to disagreements with the monument conservation inherited from previous heritage regimes.

³¹ For a detailed list and analysis of these notions, see Sonkoly, p. 154-157.

³² Pereira Roders, p. 40.



Image 3: Finishing the full reconstruction of the “Wrangler Court” (*Csikós udvar*) with the Riding Hall (left) in December 2019. The Riding Hall was built in 1899-1902, partially destroyed during World War II, and completely demolished in 1950. Its reopening as a 1500 sqm event hall is due in 2021.

Current reconstruction work on Buda Castle District, as manifested in the NHP, fully complies with the characteristics of the third urban heritage regime. The principles of the Venice Charter that created distance between a past worthy of renovation and a present that produced its technical maintenance were replaced by the continuity of reconstruction, in which the boundary between past and present is blurred into one architectural unit representing the correction of contested bygone periods. This overarching continuity applies to tangible heritage and its associated functions. Hence, the District has regained its original function as the center of political power. From a reconstruction perspective, there is no discontinuity in its treatment. Buda Castle District is seen as a continuous territorial unit, in which the different layers (archaeological sites,

areas and buildings renovated in the second half of the twentieth century, insertions in the twentieth century, recently reconstructed buildings) are all subject to the same master narrative and thus can be modified and adjusted accordingly. The third significant feature of the third urban regime, however, the pre-eminent role of the heritage community, remains rhetorical in the NHP. While the role of monument protection – and indeed its institutions – has been diminished in the extreme, participative principles in the decision-making process are not applied because neither the municipalities concerned (Budapest and its 1st District) nor civil organizations are being consulted on the design and implementation of the NHP, which justifies its program as the revival of urban authenticity in Buda Castle District.

4. Conclusion

The diverging conceptualization of urban heritage is manifested as the redefinition of authenticity, which has been the principle of cultural heritage conservation in world heritage discourse since the 1970s, a legacy of the European monument conservation tradition. Its first deconstruction, widely debated and documented³³, took place in the 1990s and 2000s, and its reconstruction is still in the making. The world heritage definition of authenticity has exploded since it was launched in 1977, when the Operational Guidelines determined four – tangible – attributes (design, materials, workmanship and setting) that heritage sites should possess in order to “meet the test of authenticity.”³⁴ Forty-two years later, these have been extended and specified, and are now joined by four new – mainly intangible – attributes (use and function, language and other forms of intangible heritage, spirit and feeling, other internal and external factors), following the wording of the Nara Document, which has become the definitive paradigmatic reference in terms of desirable reconstruction.³⁵ The principles of the Nara Document (diversity against “aggressive nationalism”, cultural context versus fixed criteria) meet the expectations of world heritage con-

³³ Sophia Labadi, World Heritage, authenticity and post-authenticity, in: Sophia Labadi/Colin Long (eds.), *Heritage and Globalisation. Key Issues in Cultural Heritage*, London 2010, p. 66-84; Andrew Pooter, *The Authenticity Hoax. How We Get Lost Finding Ourselves*, New York 2011; Helaine Silverman, *Heritage and Authenticity*, in: Emma Waterton/Steve Watson (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, London 2015, p. 69-86.

³⁴ UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, 1977: <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide77b.pdf> [1.11.2021], p. 3.

³⁵ UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, 2019: whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/ [1.11.2021], p. 26-27. The Nara Document is added to the Operational Guidelines as an Annex.

vention critics, but their implementation has generated challenges yet to be solved. As the Operational Guidelines cannily point out: “Attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity, but nevertheless are important indicators of character and sense of place, for example, in communities maintaining tradition and cultural continuity.”³⁶ In consequence, third regime authenticity is not only confronted with cultural diversity and context – that is, cultural relativity – but also with the practical difficulty of evaluating spirit and feeling – that is, experience – which requires “a great variety of sources of information” and the study and “elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage.”³⁷ All told, this constitutes a holistic academic approach. The more lenient interpretation of authenticity even reconsiders the ban on reconstruction clearly established in the Venice Charter (“all reconstruction work should [...] be ruled out ‘a priori’”)³⁸, allowing it in an “exceptional circumstance”³⁹ to be defined in contemporary heritage preservation.

This seemingly minor permission, a logical result of the cultural relativity of the third regime’s understanding of heritage authenticity, re-arranges the battlefield between the guardians of urban heritage sites and the advocates of urban development in the context of the newly designed “heritage city” that sees (1) the distinction between protected (that is, historic) and unprotected areas replaced by a continuous conception of urban territory that is not necessarily hierarchized according to the age of the quarter, but rather by the awareness and vitality of the local heritage community; (2) safeguarding is no longer exclusively the domain of heritage experts, but includes the supposedly active participation of the heritage community; (3) territorial continuity and the duly recalibrated temporal protection hierarchy (that is, management of change) induce temporal continuity, in which historical ruptures are rendered insignificant and subject to political commemorations as well as to community and/or personal memory. In the context of this “heritage city”, applying authenticity as a principle is not only a suitable indicator to complete the other three (territory, temporality and community) when it comes to analyzing the conceptual evolution of urban heritage preservation in international discourse and in modern and contemporary history, but also to examining current urban reconstruction. Following the logic of urban heritage regimes, contemporary reconstruction could be incorporated into the conceptual history of authentic-

³⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 91.

³⁸ International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter): https://www.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf [1.11.2021], p. 3.

³⁹ UNESCO Operational Guidelines 2019, S. 27.

ty of urban centers. Reconstruction was often regarded as the principal threat to authenticity in the first regime⁴⁰, but during the second regime, when conserved heritage sites began to proliferate, it was identified as the very embodiment of threat.

The contemporary political use of the past exploits the newly found continuity, which is a temporal experience related to the heritage of the third regime, emanating from the almost unbridgeable distance between “horizons of expectations” that have become despairingly uncertain and “historical experiences.” Under this presentist condition, where the future is closed down and the past opens up to serve as an experimental and explicatory field for social actors in search of identity justifications, belated reconstructions are easily justified by current political necessities, which in turn permit reminders of recently rejected periods to be demolished. Hence, these reconstructions divulge current historical discourses and/or the degree to which history is used politically (the level of involvement of historians and monument protection researchers and experts),⁴¹ the nature and mechanisms of current political regimes to apply them as justificative tools (the level of scientific, social and civil participation, the process of decision-making), and the pathological conditions of a society associated with historical traumas embodied by reconstructed edifices and quarters. In the historical analysis of these reconstructions and of third regime urban heritage in general, authenticity should be regarded as a contested and redefined principle of global heritage discourse, but also as a formative experience of modernity (the entanglement of a constant desire to be authentic and the fear of being “fake”)⁴² and a “strong and widespread ethical ideal that one should be true to oneself and lead a life that is expressive of what the person takes herself to be.”⁴³ In this sense, the “authentic experience”, including “spirit and feeling”, claimed and promoted by the third heritage discourse and exploited by political decision-makers, simply cannot fail to include the critical thinking of history and other social sciences and humanities if the destructive feeling of being fake and not true to oneself is to be avoided. The experience of

⁴⁰ Regina Bendix, *In search of authenticity*, Madison 1977, p. 95-154.

⁴¹ In the case of contemporary Hungary, the role of monument experts and conservation researchers was reformulated along the academically non-reflected concept of “cultural heritage” in the late 1990s, when the Ministry of Culture was renamed Ministry of National Cultural Heritage (1998-2010) and the National Office of Monument Conservation replaced by the Office of Cultural Heritage Conservation (2001-2016). Both reforms were initiated under the first Orbán government (1998-2002). In the 2010s, the recently institutionalized “cultural heritage” conservation was replaced and/or integrated into ministries, which clearly shows its increasing political and decreasing academic determination.

⁴² Somogy Varga, *Authenticity as an Ethical Ideal*, New York 2012, p. 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

temporal continuity characteristic of heritage cities could, therefore, evolve into the experience of historical continuity through self-reflection and, if need be, proper mourning. This self-reflection should take place in a global context, where authenticity, once relativized as a Eurocentric concept, could regain its significance as a principle of urban heritage, globally appropriated to represent local and/or national differences. The marking of authenticity as a “new urban regime” in the case of central Tokyo’s conservation, for instance, indicates this tendency⁴⁴

While the NHP in Buda Castle District is a prominent example of secession from the established heritage regime in a European country, it is very much in accordance with reconstructions of urban heritage in other parts of the world, where neither historicity nor monument protection share the same roots and to which the Orbán regime is eagerly establishing political, economic and cultural ties.

Images

Image 1: Buda Castle destroyed, 1946. Fortepan / Fortepan/Album002.

Image 2: Buda Castle renovated, 1970. Fortepan/Simon Gyula.

Image 3: Finishing the full reconstruction of the “Wrangler Court” (*Csikós udvar*) with the Riding Hall (left) in December 2019. Author’s photo.

⁴⁴ Jiewon Song, *Global Tokyo. Heritage, Urban Redevelopment and the Transformation of Authenticity*, Singapore 2020.