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ERNŐ MAROSI AND THE PROTECTION OF HUNGARIAN HISTORIC MONUMENTS

A characteristic and integral part of Ernő Marosi's extraordinary scholarly work are his publications and (especially after 1990) his considerable public efforts in the area of monument protection theory and practice—activities which, typical of conditions in Hungary, have passed almost unnoticed. When briefly surveying his many decades of work in this field, in many respects exceptional by Hungarian standards, two particular circumstances deserve special emphasis. One is Marosi's professional method, which he has applied consistently since he devised it early in his career. He believes that a historiographical reflection and an approach to the object that combines perspectives from archeology, museology, and monument protection should always be a fundamental part of critical methodology. Moreover, as a university educator whose research focuses on concrete topics, he has regularly addressed related questions in the history of Hungarian and general art history, both in his more comprehensive works and in his studies of particular issues. Thus, the development of the concept of historical monument and the practice of monument protection as well as aspects of its art developed from that practice, fit naturally into Marosi's approach.¹ The other significant motivating factor that has led to Marosi's extensive publications and statements on monument protection is the ever deepening crisis in Hungarian monument protection, which began almost unnoticed three decades ago and whose effect has somewhat later come to bear on museum affairs, too. Cooperation between the three closely intertwined fields of monument protection, museum work, and art history was once thought and seemed to be solid, however, anyone familiar with the relationship between these interdependent and mutually enriching disciplines cannot ignore the increasingly serious troubles which now affect the very existence of the profession. Under such circumstances, the need to repeatedly explain and raise the public awareness of these connections, in as wide a circle as possible beyond the boundaries of the profession, is critical, even if, as Marosi has noted, the profession is limited by social forces which clearly have other interests.² In Hungary the predicament is more pronounced than in Western Europe, likewise in the Czech Republic which has a similar communist past.³ This is because non-governmental cooperation, which could have a significant impact on the protection of Hungar-

ian cultural heritage, is unreliable thanks to a fundamental weakness of the civil structure. The challenge to protect cultural heritage became strikingly clear in the former “socialist” countries the moment changes took place in world politics in 1990. Because of the complex nature of the task, the boundaries of the profession—in this case primarily art history—must not give halt to the search for value-driven answers. Instead the message of the profession should be drafted within the context of general cultural politics. When the time was right to do this, Marosi did not hesitate to take action.

The crisis in question, of course, is not just a Hungarian phenomenon. The roots of the problem stretch as far back as monument preservation itself. The central dilemmas of monument protection arose amidst the tension between practice versus theory, that is, social profitability and representation value versus intellectualism and the universal approach of science. As bipolar world politics ended in the 1990s, the stable relationship established between the profession of monument protection and museums following World War II was shaken, and business concerns took significantly greater precedence over the preservation of national treasures. During this same period Eastern Europe has been gradually building a market economy, and a political structure very similar in theory to those found in the West emerged; thus the problems in both halves of the continent began increasingly to resemble each other. The 2005 statement briefly summarizing the essential components of the phenomenon by the board of the German Association of Art Historians expresses the situation well: “Those triumphs of civil society which have proven so vital to the foundation of civil national states—for example the creative acquisition of cultural products of the past in museums and collections, as well as subsidizing of art and the protection of architectural monuments—are not, as time has shown, requirements of the political sphere. The legitimization of power through the support of culture and art is an outdated model. Today’s politicians do not need to be legitimized—they are elected. And in general financial difficulties, every cultural and artistic institution is in the end retailored according to the needs of business management. Political administrations appear eager to shed their social charge of preserving cultural and artistic property as quickly as possible. But they are not authorized to do this! No political mandate gives them this power! If we take a narrow view, from the perspective of the national economy, they are acting uneconomically, because cultural and human resources are being squandered.”⁴ All this, down to the last detail, could be said about Hungary. Willibald Sauerländer’s concerns similarly relate to Hungarian problems: “... art history is just a mirror of the general state of a society in which the question of how much critical potential, how much reflexive civility will survive the absolute power of the economy remains open.”⁵

The golden age of Hungarian monument protection was during the communist period. This fact, in addition to the peculiar history of Hungary’s national treasures, has given rise to a particular method of operation in Hungarian monu-

ment preservation and an unusual set of problems that differ from those found in Western Europe or in other countries formerly under Soviet rule. At the same time, the effects of deeply rooted attitudes and social-historical antecedents can be felt in Hungarian history. When explaining Hungary's outstanding achievement in monument protection during the socialist period in comparison to Western European efforts at the same time, three important circumstances merit special attention. First, when the Soviet system was introduced, the majority of buildings, including residential buildings, became state property. Second, a concept of the people and nation as identified with the state was embraced. As a consequence, both the rigid communist system imposed in 1948–1949 and its 1956 version, with its bloody reprisals in response to the uprising, classified historical monuments as important elements of identity, in contrast to other people's democracies which promoted an ideology hostile to historical monuments.⁶ Finally the fact that a large number of well-qualified, well-educated professionals in fields related to monument preservation were available who were of varying ages and political persuasions, but were well-versed in international trends, also had a major role in the evolution of such a situation. The conscious Hungarian cultural politics of the inter-war period assured such a layer of society was disposable when the communist system was introduced. Many of these professionals, satisfying the system's demands and needs for legitimization, attained important decision-making posts in the sphere of cultural politics, and proved able to present fundamental bourgeois traditions using rhetoric appropriate to the changing requirements of party ideology, for example, expressing the financial needs of monument preservation in a way consistent with the logic of a planned economy.⁷ Conditions for employment of top experts were thus established. Later, during the period "thaw" during the so-called goulash communism, the system sought to increase its legitimacy abroad by highlighting its success in monument preservation. Therefore, though in Hungary after 1945 an unusual situation developed in which every essential element of bourgeois society was systematically eliminated in the course of a few years, the practice of preserving historic monuments, theoretically a foreign concept in the communist system, was able to maintain an intellectual and spiritual continuity with the pre-WW II period, incorporating many of the profession's values into the institutional structures and mechanisms of a system that operated on fundamentally different principles.

Among the most important achievements of Hungarian monument preservation before World War II were the expansion of the field's scholarly base, the education and employment of a well-trained set of researchers, at least the partial development of institutional requirements, a more extensive collection of topographical material, a rise in documentation activities, and the early treatment of Hungarian national treasures in corpuses and monographs, with the increasing inclusion of baroque and classical monuments. It should also be noted that restorations were carried out on ruins, the majority buried under ground, from Hungary's destroyed medieval period, the most important among them being the early

Gothic palace chapel of Esztergom, which was first excavated in 1934 and reconstructed in 1938 using anastylosis. For decades this work was a starting point in methodology and remained a basis of reference for Hungarian monument protection which defined itself within the framework of the Athens Charter drafted in 1931 and the Venice Charter issued in 1964. A determinant figure in this period was the Budapest professor of art history Tibor Gerevich, who served as president of the National Commission for Historical Monuments, the central institution of Hungarian monument protection, from 1934 until the committee was abolished in 1949.

In the period following 1945, his student Dezső Dercsényi, a colleague at that same institution from 1935, gradually took over the leading role. Although always the second in command behind a politically appointed director, Dercsényi was the true head and strategic developer of the Hungarian organization of monument protection until 1977, a body that was solidified in an institutional framework in 1957. This new set of preservationists took advantage of the widespread nationalization carried out in 1949, and a new law on monument protection issued in the same year quickly declared some seven thousand buildings historic monuments. Until then, the 1881 law on historical monuments had been in effect, which allowed for scarcely four dozen buildings to be placed under official protection. A series of topographies on Hungarian historic monuments were launched the next year, based on an Austrian example and relying on the results of Gerevich's initiatives a decade and a half earlier. During this process, material from four and a half of Hungary's nineteen counties and the districts of Buda were successfully published in twelve volumes, although the speed of publication was drastically reduced over the years: six volumes appeared in the first decade and after that only two volumes per decade, with the last publication in 1987. In addition to the topographies, multi-levelled forums for regular publications on monument protection were formed, and results were announced at international conferences and in professional publications.

In the early 1950s, extensive research on seventy-four settlements with the rank of town was carried out with the assistance of architects and art historians. The goal was to record both historic treasures and monuments that added to the cityscape of each settlement at the time the development plans were drafted. Other important achievements of the period included: large-scale archeological excavations and conservation works; organization of urban-scale protection; comprehensive or detailed restoration of historical city centers; preparation of the necessary historic preservation documentation (including surveys of the castle district of Buda, and the historic centres of Sopron, Győr, Székesfehérvár); new methods of building research (*Bauforschung*, functional analysis, etc.); documentation of urban buildings from the second half of the 19th century primarily in Budapest; and the expansion of protection to folk architecture as well as technical and industrial monuments. These efforts resulted not only in the physical preservation of historic monuments, the development of related methodology, and the creation of a

broad professional spectrum, but also in the enrichment and nuancing of our view of the history of these settlements, our built heritage, and the integrally related branches of art. With this our understanding of the treasures to be preserved for posterity was similarly enhanced.

The National Board of Historic Monuments, founded in 1957 (its successor was known from 1992 as the National Office for the Protection of Historic Monuments and from 2001 as the National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage), served as the institutional background for this. From the perspective of financing and the effectiveness of official activities, it was critically significant that the office was placed under the supervision of the minister of architectural affairs. It was a peculiarity of the system that the office, which included divisions for scholarship, administration, and restoration, but also had the capacity to plan and execute, as it were part of the socialist building industry.

No monograph has yet examined the various periods in the history of Hungarian monument protection. There is a wealth of literature, however, on the socialist period, as the most important achievements were published more or less regularly in the institute's yearbooks, which also included bibliographies for the years they covered—a project which continues with increasingly rich content.⁸

In 1963, by the start of Ernő Marosi's career, the institution had been fully developed and was in its days of glory. In the interview quoted above, Marosi, just like his classmates, spoke of his aspirations, of finding employment at the office of monument protection when he finished his studies. A conspiracy of circumstances, however, led him to a university career.⁹ Certainly Dezső Dercsényi's lectures on Romanesque art in the Art History Department at the time played a role in this attraction. As Marosi wrote, "I think it's scarcely an exaggeration to say that his elegant figure in many ways—including his smoking—provided some kind of model at ELTE [=Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest] in the 1960s."¹⁰ In any case, concerns about monument protection as part of an important set of topics necessary for the development of his chosen field appear in many contexts throughout his



1. Ernő Marosi as a university student on a department field trip, early 1960s
(Photo: Research Archives of the National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Budapest)

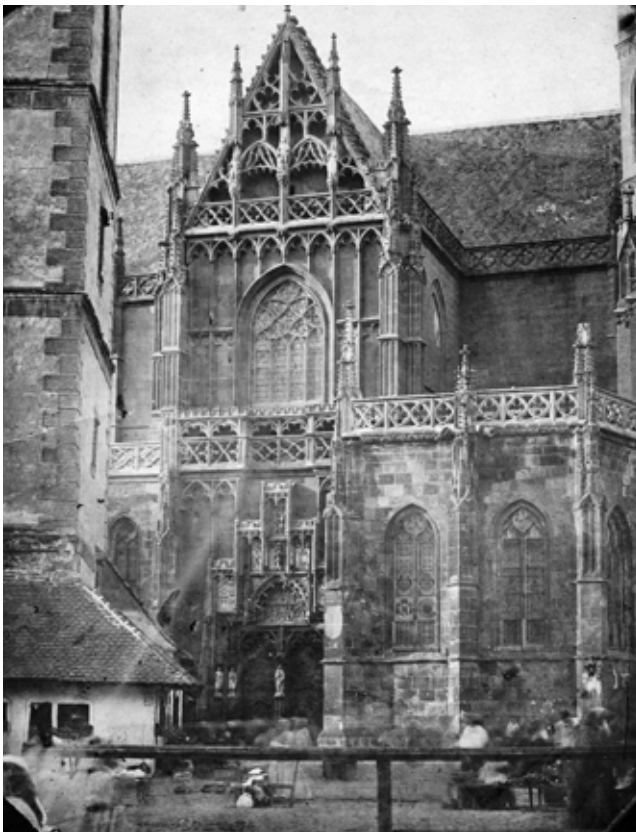


2. St Elizabeth Church in Kassa from the northwest, before the late 19th century restorations
(Photo, 1854: Photo Archives of the National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Budapest)

work. He examined the Church of St Elisabeth at Kassa (Košice, SK) in eight significant studies, as it provided him an opportunity to analyze the most important tendencies and key figures in Hungarian art history and the 19th-century history of monument protection using chiefly monuments as source material.¹¹ He considers such a historical reckoning a part of “philological hygiene”, and finds its

significance in that “the works of art are not just objects, but intellectual phenomena that have been left to us together with their interpretation.”¹² To better care for treasures, whether a museum piece or a monument, we need to consider the varying scholarly paradigms and all the intellectual responses to them, and the same is true when we wish to better understand the works. Thus, systematic scholarly surveys related to the object form an essential complement to Marosi’s research in architectural history.¹³ Consistent with this logic was an exhibition two decades later dedicated to the web of connections of the Viennese school of art history that had a profound impact for several generations on Hungarian art history and its development. The catalogue has been a fundamental point of reference for researchers interested in this question.¹⁴

Marosi’s pioneering propaedeutic work in the teaching of Hungarian art history and his collection of texts on general art history, with its comprehensive introduction and comments, present a solid base for all further study.¹⁵ However, an



3. Northern façade of the St Elizabeth Church in Kassa, before the late 19th century restorations (Photo about 1860: Photo Archives of the National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Budapest)

introduction to his extraordinarily rich work in architectural history, which systematically analyzes the key questions in the history of Hungarian medieval architecture, is beyond the scope of this essay. Nevertheless, before a short introduction of his critical comments on monument protection, brief mention should be made of a study outlining the possibilities for an art historical evaluation of 15th-century castle architecture as a good example of what can result from a fruitful cooperation between monument protection and art history.¹⁶

The 1960s and 1970s were favorable to Hungarian monument protection, but in the 1980s, the situation began to erode. One of the obvious reasons for that was the general crisis in the communist system which made economic performance increasingly difficult. But perhaps even more important and what remains today a crucial factor was increasing consumerism, which occurred despite economic troubles, and the fact that the life style resulting from a consumerist attitude could gain a decisive role. In this atmosphere, politics also began to place less value on cultural display, and the steady financing of utopian ideological goals related to culture was in danger of coming to an end. These conditions led to the slowing down of previously well-functioning scholarly projects directed at the long-term accumulation of knowledge and later to their gradual demise at the time of the political changes in 1989. The creation of Hungarian topographies of historic monuments suffered this same fate, as did the entire series of research projects devoted to the publication of more corpuses and monographs. Of course, there were counterexamples, too (and still are,¹⁷ but we will return to that later, in another context). The conditions for scholarly research developed by Tibor Gerevich and his circle in the mid-1930s and applied as a national program in the socialist years, have never been restored. In the following witty, yet bitter assertion, Marosi clearly conveys the situation of his profession, although naturally it is not the cessation of state monopoly that he mourns: “the state monopoly on art history writing ended before it could complete its task, and thus rose Hungarian postmodernism and its basic problem: often there is nothing to deconstruct, as the fundamentals are missing.”¹⁸ It should be added that the generation of art historians and architects responsible for building the scholarly and institutional foundation of the protection of historical monuments in Hungary of the period in question and who had struggled to the end were no longer active by the late 1970s. Thus, there is little surprise that signs of a new era in the handling and practical restoration of historic monuments became more prevalent. In 1990 Marosi published a study entitled “Hungarian Monument Protection at the Crossroad!” in *Kunstchronik*,¹⁹ in which he analyzes the trends of the previous decades with a focus on changes in the practice of monument restoration. His starting point was the rebuilding, in the spirit of the Athens Charter, of parts of the palace chapel of Esztergom. One of the essential and most important basic principles adhered to in this period of Hungarian monument preservation was the clear differentiation between the colours, forms, and materials of the original structure and that of the modern reconstruction. Another principle observed was the free use of modern structural techniques



4. View of the St Elizabeth Church in Kassa from the southwest, the south tower designed by Imre Steindl (never built to this height). Drawing by Ottó Szešlo, 1920 (Plan Archives of the National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Budapest)

and reinforced concrete, so long as they did not affect the outer appearance. In the 1960s changes in this approach became apparent, such as the reinforced concrete wall additions to the 13th-century keep in Visegrád or the castle of Diósgyőr, as well as the inclusion of the ruins of the former Dominican monastery in Buda into

the Hilton hotel complex. Marosi saw this as a constructivist change in taste in which the architect-restorer's hand in the project is obvious.²⁰ In a lecture the previous year he warned of the associated dangers: "One of the most important endeavors in modern monument protection is to show respect for the unique history of each monument, in other words its life history, to trace the changes the monument has undergone and make them visible. The ultimate test of tolerance and respect for the individuality of the work, however, is the restraint shown by the restorer when he leaves the signature of his time on the monument, on the surroundings, or in the texture of the historical settlement or ensemble of structures. After all, this is generally the point at which the monument, in the hands of a generation convinced of its supremacy on the evolutionary scale, is converted from a historically significant work in need of conservation into a self-conscious memorial."²¹ As Marosi often emphasizes, from the perspective of an art historian, this is not only problematic because it is a return to a historicist approach discredited a century ago, but also because in some cases the alterations in the texture of the monument are irreversible and the monument's value as a primary source is damaged. What is left for posterity is thus an interpretation of the monument, but not the monument itself. The art historical concept of the monument lies at the theoretical center of the ethical problem. This position, expressed in terms of the universal mission of art history, was first expounded by Alois Riegl,²² a defining figure in the Vienna School of Art History at the turn of the 20th century, and in many respects Riegl's point is still valid today. In addition to clarifying the various approaches to monument protection and their connections, his study draws conclusions about the theoretical methods of dealing with monuments. Riegl first published his thoughts in 1903 with the aim of providing a theoretical foundation for an intended Austrian law on monument protection.²³ Since then his views have been a recurring subject of debate in international discourse on monument protection. Promoting awareness of Riegl's ideas among art historians and others involved in monument preservation has been an important element of Marosi's related work. Interestingly, in the history of Hungarian monument protection, openness to Riegl's principles was greatest at the time they were drafted, whereas in German-speaking regions, Riegl's work was for some time scarcely known. In Hungary in 1906, Baron Gyula Forster, vice-president and later president for thirty years of the National Committee for Historic Monuments, discussed at length Riegl's ideas.²⁴ Later, however, Riegl's views rarely or only tangentially appeared in Hungarian discourse on monument protection, and not at all in public discussion until Marosi's critical work in the field. The first complete Hungarian translation of the work came out in 1998, full of mistranslations typically caused by and leading to confusion over Riegl's ideas.²⁵ Marosi's critique deals with the requirements of monument protection which have taken shape over time in connection with how individual monuments are treated, and he naturally uses medieval works as examples. Riegl explained the fundamental principles he wanted to emphasize and felt were lacking in the methods of preserving historic monuments from the

perspective of historical value as commemorative value: “Signs of decay, which are most important for age value of relics, should, by all means, be removed from works of historical value. However, this should not be performed on the object itself, but on a copy or merely in thought and word. Even for a work of historical value, the original relic should be viewed as fundamentally untouchable, although for completely different reasons than for works with age value. In the case of historical value, we are not talking about conserving the traces of time, the ravages of



5. Choir of the Palace Chapel of Esztergom, reconstructed by Kálmán Lux in 1934–1938 (Photo: Róbert Hack, 1992, Photo Archives of the National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Budapest)



6. Castle of Diósgyőr before the restoration
(Photo Archives of the National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Budapest)

Nature, which are at least indifferent, if not burdensome to the object; what is much more important is that the work be preserved in the most original form possible for future art historical research. All human estimates and additions are prone to subjective errors; this is why the original, the only certain point of reference, must be preserved untouched, so that posterity can inspect our experiments in reconstruction and perhaps replace them with better, more justified solutions.”²⁶

Marosi perceived the crisis in the concept of the monument as the basic category of art history, believing that the widely fashionable and unreflective use of the concept of cultural heritage threatened to dilute the concept of the historic monument and ultimately lessen its traditional respect. This fear is particularly justified, since, as he writes, “the balance that has existed until now between public interests and private impulses, between creativity and the need to conserve, and between the need to maintain and the desire for profits has been upset.”²⁷ A monument, as he explains, is an integral part of cultural heritage, but only if it has been interpreted intellectually. Of course, a prerequisite for this, as we can read in Riegl, is that subsequent generations assure as best they can the preservation of the material reality of the object. This was the basic principle of historic monument preservation throughout the entire 20th century, having become the norm with the triumph of the maxim of conservation over historicist attempts at restoration at the turn of the 20th century.²⁸ In contrast, in the late 1990s, a period when

society was experiencing considerable uncertainty over its place in the world, several representative restoration projects were undertaken which stand in stark opposition to this approach: historic monuments were handled in a way that essentially transformed them into *memorials*.²⁹ The dramatic restorations of surviving ruins from the monuments of Székesfehérvár, Esztergom and Visegrád, the three royal centers of medieval Hungary in addition to Buda, represent an irreparable break in the tradition of Hungarian monument protection, once an example of exceptional intellectual continuity. The effect on the entire attitude toward historic monuments set the tone for Marosi's critique.³⁰ Elsewhere, Marosi draws this final conclusion: "In the recent past—and consistently during the millennium restorations—not only have revitalization efforts were set against the cult of ruins, but the need for actual representation, too. This represents a throwback to a theoretical stance discredited a century ago. What a strange and unprecedented phenomenon in the practice of European monument protection!"³¹

The debates that have cropped up alongside this phenomenon are presented as theoretical dilemmas centered on the slogan of *authenticity*, and Marosi sees them as a symptom of uncertainty. The main weakness of such discussions is the dispensation of the otherwise obligatory theoretical reflection, which reveals the emptiness of the arguments presented. This is not necessarily an innocent act, as the motivation is self-justification. In other words the arguments neglect to clarify the content and magnitude of the concepts used and the reasons for their use. Of course this deficiency is easily lost, even on a public generally interested in historic monuments but without any expertise in the field. This is especially true if marketing techniques developed for the ferocious struggles for market shares or for political power are used and the worlds of business and politics are won over as allies.³²

The challenges faced in Hungarian monument protection are unique, since a significant portion of Hungary's national treasures were produced in the historical Hungary, geographically speaking the Carpathian Basin, during some one thousand years' period before the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918. Today these works are found outside the borders, scattered among countries mostly belonging to the European Union.³³ It



7. The reconstructed rondella of the Castle of Diósgyőr, 1963
(Photo Archives of the National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Budapest)

follows that the problems concerning the medieval period can only be solved with international cooperation, and Hungary has its own share of international responsibilities in the area of monument protection. Professional dependence, however, is not one-sided. From 1860, when the establishment of Hungarian monument protection broke from the imperial framework, until the new state system was established in 1918, the protection of historical monuments throughout the Carpathian Basin (which included all of Slovakia) was part of the Hungarian institutional system, and thus a wealth of documentation is preserved in Budapest. Furthermore, the historical monuments in the Carpathian Basin can be characteristically divided into groups according to ethnic and religious-cultural associations (this is true of today's Hungary, too, but less so than elsewhere). Scholarly treatment of these works thus requires different methods of research and monument protection because of the special problems of language and historical experience, and satisfactory results can only be achieved through international cooperation. Another fundamental aspect is that art historical phenomena need to be interpreted within the historical and geographical context in which they arose. In this way Czech research, for example, in medieval and Baroque art has been beneficial to Hungarian monument preservation, and numerous other examples could be given. The European Union, seen as a community of shared values, needs to transform not only into a community of states, but one of nations, so that the most valuable parts of our historical heritage, our cultural diversity, can be preserved and systematically cultivated. In this respect, joint efforts to promote cultural heritage, and within this the legacy of Hungary's and other nations' historical monuments as a part of universal culture as well as national memory, should not be a source of conflict. Instead—to borrow Ernő Marosi's idea frequently mentioned lately—it could be the starting point for a new kind of regional consciousness, or even patriotism. This idealistic and utopian vision naturally does not reflect the real conditions, and the problem is not just Hungary's. Although different in certain fundamental ways, the question of how to jointly handle German-Polish and Polish-Ukrainian cultural heritage is comparable to the Hungarian problem in terms of the unshed burdens of history and the dangers of reviving the shadows of the past. Also similar is the problem of cultural heritage in Transylvania, in particular the large volume of historical monuments left behind by Transylvanian Saxons, who were exported to Germany as part of Ceausescu's politics. In the past two decades, the Germans and the Poles have taken serious, methodical and effective strides in this matter. Similar tendencies have been observed within Hungary in the two decades following the political changes, with positive developments occurring in all fields related to monument protection, including joint professional ventures, important exhibitions, and cooperative research carried out on major historic monuments. Following World War II, Hungarian art history became disenchanted with the theory of a prevailing Hungarian cultural supremacy in the Carpathian Basin, an idea which had played an important role in the political ideology of the inter-war period and in the historical sciences, too. Instead a

pluralistic concept, as discussed above, was appropriated. With this, “the foundations of a realistic approach to the cultivation of Hungarian art were set within a Central European framework.”³⁴ Although a detailed discussion of these questions is beyond the scope of this paper, a quote from Marosi conveys the nature of the difficulties which in part still remain. Clearly in reference to the already-mentioned politics of Ceausescu and current forms of behavior that are more nuanced, but also more confrontational, Marosi made this slightly resigned statement: “The developments of recent times have taught us that efforts which lay claim to appropriate the historical tradition of monuments, but at least appreciate them, are our better chance. It is worse if monuments are not needed, are classified as foreign objects to be erased, if their decay is aggressively accelerated, or just passively anticipated, if distance is kept, and if those who keep tradition alive are persecuted.”³⁵

In 1989, as Hungary stood on the threshold of political change, Marosi described the necessary tasks: “It would be self-deceptive to talk of Hungarian monument protection, if it did not mean the protection of all the monuments that form the basis of Hungarian art history, and if the same standards were not applied and the same attention not devoted to these as to the fate of historical source material, literary-historical treasures and memorial places, and sites of ethnographic significance. Unfortunately, opportunities to take protective measures are limited at the most critical points. As long as the system of international scholarly and institutional connections fail to facilitate the promotion of national interests, to offer domestic financial support or labor to save even the most important or most endangered monuments, Hungary can only blame itself. The collection, treatment, and publication of documents covering all movable objects in Hungary’s collections, including the entire body of Hungarian art historical and archeological objects tied to places outside Hungary’s borders, present a challenge that if not met would prevent us from determining what kind of preservation is needed. The task, in all its complexity, shows how the universal mission of Hungarian monument protection can be served by fulfilling our national obligations.”³⁶

In this respect, there have been significant, if not systematic, accomplishments following 1990, which Marosi has recorded in the appropriate venues. Of central importance was the publication of a series of pre-World War I drawings and photographic documentary material collected by the National Commission for Historical Monuments (1872–1949), the predecessor of today’s National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, in volumes with art historical commentary generally parallel to their exhibition.³⁷ The Ethnographic Museum also participated in this series, using its own collection to support historical perspectives on monument protection.³⁸ The results of the international conference organized jointly by the Bratislava Office of Historic Monuments (Pamiatkový ústav) and the Budapest National Office in 1998 was a survey of current developments in Slovak, Hungarian, Czech, Polish, Romanian, and Slovenian monument protection related to the widespread documentation activities of Viktor Myskovszky, a pioneer

in Slovak monument protection, born in 1838 in Bártfa (Bardejov, SK).³⁹ The cooperation of Hungarian and Romanian researchers has also brought about important and encouraging results in the protection of the only surviving medieval cathedral in the Carpathian Basin, the cathedral of Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia, RO).⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the corpus of medieval wall paintings in the region has increased by nearly fifty percent thanks to previously unheard of joint efforts in researching and conserving churches over the past decade and a half, which have enabled art historians to better interpret this form of art. Developments of similar magnitude have been made in the survey and conservation of wooden statues and other church furnishings from the medieval period to the Baroque.⁴¹ The list could be expanded with numerous examples of individual research efforts.

Marosi's activity in historical monument topography, an important area of research in monument protection, also deserves mention. Topography, or the systematic scholarly recording and continuous publication of any object in the category of historic monument, is indispensable to the protection and care of a country's historic treasures. In Hungary, this genre of scholarship and publication has a long history extending back to the early days when monument preservation was institutionalized, and though few, its achievements are respectable.⁴² In this narrow field, the idea that no favorable changes in the situation are likely is now a century-old cliché. This is why Marosi's decision to launch a German-Austrian Dehio-type small topography research program in the mid-1980s, when he was already vice-director of the Art History Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, was so significant. At this time, the continuation of a series of handbooks in Hungarian art history, one of the larger projects in the state-directed field was called into question. This program oversights in approximately two decades. That this did not happen is not Marosi's failing. Small achievements were made, however, and as was typical, ten years after the actual field work was carried out, one volume on Fejér County was published. Marosi could realistically have compensated for a significant portion of the profession's painful shortfall. He had not only directed the work as head of the institution, but also participated in the exploration of several dozen settlements and the preparation of entries in the topography.⁴³

Finally, mention should be made of the fundamental changes that took place in universal culture in the last quarter of the 20th century, and which will certainly have a significant impact on further paths in monument protection. These developments, effectively analyzed by Hans Belting, and stemming from the fact that new art has dismantled old paradigms, impact the basic functions of the field of art history, too, and lead to a fundamentally pluralistic interpretation of its subject. Reflecting on these problems, Marosi clearly saw that from the aspects of monument protection that most interest us here satisfying answers to these questions can hardly be provided at the moment.⁴⁴

A study by Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper, professor of art history and monument protection at the Technische Universität in Berlin, was presented at the 2008 Bu-

dapest colloquium of the Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art (CIHA). Entitled "How to Write Art History—National, Regional or Global", Dolff-Bonekämper's work summarizes some of the basic and urgent goals which Hungarian art history and monument protection needs to achieve, too.⁴⁵ Her concluding remarks summarize well Ernő Marosi's proposed approach as well, which was enhanced by the fact that parallel to the publication of the original German study, Marosi also published his own Hungarian translation in a critical journal.⁴⁶ Dolff-Bonekämper summed up her answer to the main question of the conference as follows: "It is my personal conviction, that for the future of our discipline, the model of trans-national art history, present since the 18th century alongside various national constructions, is the most usable. It is this model which should be taken up, and developed in an international context, with the support of CIHA. Together with the concept of a common cultural heritage, as expressed by the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro, 2005), this notion of trans-national art history writing, which recognizes borders but also transcends them, acknowledges the goals of current European policy, without denying the national conditions in which we all live. Whether and how this concept can be developed on a worldwide scale is for others to decide."

Notes

¹ Recalling the early years of his career, Marosi confesses: "... while researching my specialty, the architectural history of medieval Hungary, I became closely connected to the field of monument protection. My senior thesis was about the history of the Gothic approach, while my doctoral dissertation was on the medieval building history of the Kassa [Košice, SK] cathedral. The main basis for the latter—considering I had little more opportunity to examine the building than a tourist—were Steindl's plans for reconstruction. During this work I discovered that learning about medieval architecture requires the study of the 19th century and a critical approach to efforts to preserve monuments." See A. Harangi, "'Ami az Athéni és Velencei Charta értelmezését, aktualizálását és felülírását jelenti a műemlékvédelemben, az a jelen.' Interjú dr. Marosi Ernő akadémikussal" [Interview with Dr. Ernő Marosi, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences], *Műemlékvédelem* XLVIII, 2004, 375–76.

² "Criticism of restorations carried out in Hungarian museums is lacking, just as it is for monument protection, too." E. Marosi, "A műemléki örökség," *Magyar Műemlékvédelem* XI, Budapest 2002, 12.

³ See the article of the head conservationist in Czech monument preservation: J. Stulz, "Die Tschechische Denkmalpflege in der wieder hergestellten Demokratie," *Kunstgeschichte aktuell. Mitteilungen des Verbandes österreichischer Kunsthistorikerinnen und Kunsthistoriker* XXI, 2/2004, 12.

⁴ The statement was entitled "On the cultural political situation", and was published as preparatory material to the conference XXVIII. Deutscher Kunsthistorikertag (Universität Bonn, 17 March 2005) organized by the Verband Deutscher Kunsthistoriker, see „Mitteilungen des Verbandes Deutscher Kunsthistoriker – Zur kulturpolitischen Lage. Stellungnahme des Vorstands des Verbandes Deutscher Kunsthistoriker," *Kunstchronik* 58, 2005, 87.

- ⁵ W. Sauerländer, "Vom Stuhl des Pensionärs aus," *Kunstchronik* 58, 2005, 52.
- ⁶ See *Kunstchronik* 43, 7/1990, which gives an overview of the state of affairs in monument protection in the former socialist countries.
- ⁷ In connection with this, see G. Entz, "Inventorization of Monuments in Hungary and the Dehio Handbook," *Centropa* 7, 2007, 67–71.
- ⁸ *Magyar Műemlékvédelem I–XIV, 1960–2007*. The most important summaries in other languages: D. Dercsényi, "La tutela dei monumenti dopo la liberazione," *Acta Historiae Artium* II, 1954, 99–134; idem, *Monuments de Hongrie, leur sauvegarde, restauration et mise en valeur*, Budapest 1966, 1–31; idem, *Historical Monuments in Hungary. Restoration and Preservation*, Budapest 1969; idem, "Les cent ans de la protection des monuments en Hongrie," *Acta Historiae Artium* XVIII, 1972, 7–39; G. Entz, "La tutela negli monumenti negli ultimi tre anni," *Acta Historiae Artium* V, 1957, 255–82. Two important foreign commentators: W. Frodl, "Einheit von Theorie und Praxis. Zum Centennarium der ungarischen Denkmalpflege," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* XXVII, 1973, 97–108; H.-H. Möller, "Denkmalpflege in Ungarn. Beobachtungen und Erfahrungen auf einer Reise," *Deutsche Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 41, 1983, 23–41. For a study that controverts the point of view expressed in Walter Frodl's work above and summarizes the theoretical stand on Hungarian monument protection at the time, see M. Horler, "Bilan critique de restauration des monuments hongrois," *Acta Historiae Artium* XXX, 1984, 357–74.
- ⁹ See Harangi (n. 1 above), 365.
- ¹⁰ E. Marosi, "Dercsényi Dezső (1910–1987), a középkori magyarországi művészet kutatója," in "Emberek, és nem frakkok". *A magyar művészettörténet-írás nagy alakjai. Tudománytörténeti esszékgyűjtemény*, ed. I. Bardoly–Cs. Markója, *Enigma* XIV, 2007/49, 528.
- ¹¹ The most important conclusions were published in German, too: idem, "Beiträge zur Baugeschichte der Pfarrkirche St. Elisabeth von Kassa," *Acta Historiae Artium* X, 1964, 229–45.
- ¹² Idem, "Művészettörténet-írás, művészettörténészek (Bevezetés)," in *Emberek...* (n. 10 above), *Enigma* XIII, 2006/47, 28.
- ¹³ Idem, *A gótikus stíluskorszak szemlélete a magyar művészettörténeti szakirodalomban*. Szakdolgozat. ELTE Bölcsészettudományi Kar, Művészettörténet Tanszék, Budapest 1963, vol. I., 1–100, vol. II., 101–200, ELTE Művészettörténeti Intézet Könyvtára, ltsz. 262/1–1 [university thesis, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest]; idem, "Das romantische Zeitalter der ungarischen Kunstgeschichtsschreibung," *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestiensis de Rolando Eötvös Nominatae. Sectio Historica* 7, Budapest 1965, 43–77; idem, "A gótikus stíluskorszak szemléletének néhány kérdése a két világháború közötti magyar művészettörténeti szakirodalomban," in *Acta Ivenum. Emlékkönyv az Eötvös József Kollégium hetvenedik évfordulójára 1965*, ed. G. Tóth, vol. II., Budapest 1968, 383–412.
- ¹⁴ *Die ungarische Kunstgeschichte und die Wiener Schule 1846–1930*, exh cat., ed. E. Marosi, Collegium Hungaricum Wien, Budapest 1983. One chapter of the exhibition catalogue discusses the period of 1860 to 1900 in Hungarian monument preservation, see E. Marosi, "Der Triumph des Historismus im ungarischen Denkmalwesen," *ibid*, 32–37.
- ¹⁵ Idem, *Bevezetés a művészettörténetbe művészettörténész szakos hallgatók számára*. Budapest 1973; *Emlék márványból vagy homokkőből. Öt évszázad írásai a művészettörténet történetéből*, selected, translated, and the foreword written by E. Marosi, Budapest 1976, foreword, 9–114.
- ¹⁶ E. Marosi, "A 15. századi vár mint művészettörténeti probléma," in *Castrum Bene 1990. Várak a későközépkorban*, ed. J. Cabello, Budapest 1992, 40–54.
- ¹⁷ A good example of this is the series *Lapidarium Hungaricum*, which, by publishing the continually increasing inventory of some seventy thousand carved stone fragments of Hungarian architecture (a large part of the history of medieval Hungarian architecture can be reconstructed from these), undertakes to fulfill an old desire of Hungarian monument protection and architectural history. In the period 1988 to 2009 seven volumes were published, and the project continues. The journal *Műemlékvédelmi Szemle*, published by the National Office for the Protection of Historic

Monuments (from 2001 National Office for the Protection of Cultural Heritage) from 1991 to 2004, allowed for the publication of more penetrating studies, from which the profession has benefitted greatly. In addition, the more than fifty-year-old journal *Műemlékvédelem*, with a modernized appearance, appears regularly every other month. Tracking current activities in monument protection, the publication is an indispensable tool and one of the most important sources of information on the past fifty years. (See E. Marosi, “A Műemlékvédelem fél évszázada,” *Műemlékvédelem* LI, 2007, 2–4.) The 2005 yearbook of the Office was dedicated entirely to the bibliography of monument protection for the 1990s. With its broad collecting parameters, it contains more than eleven thousand entries touching on the literature of neighboring countries (I. Bardoly, “Műemléki bibliográfia 1991–2000,” *Magyar Műemlékvédelem* XII, Budapest 2005, 536 pages). Even in the absence of deeper analysis, this state of affairs suggests that interest in the subject is significant even within the fundamentally changed circumstances; in fact, many initiatives have been considered, which earlier would never have gained attention. What will apparently be lacking for some time, however, is a uniform approach combining all of these and a comprehensive view of the problem.

¹⁸ Marosi (n. 12 above), 28.

¹⁹ Idem, “Ungarische Denkmalpflege am Scheidewege!,” *Kunstchronik* 43, 1990, 574–82.

²⁰ Ibid, 577.

²¹ E. Marosi, “Évezredek műemlékei,” in *Évezredek építészeti öröksége. XV. Országos Műemléki Konferencia, Székesfehérvár 1989. október 5–7.*, Budapest 1990, 25.

²² A. Riegl, “Wesen und Entstehung des modernen Denkmalkultus,” in *Kunstwerk oder Denkmal? Alois Riegls Schriften zur Denkmalpflege*, ed. E. Bacher, Vienna–Cologne–Weimar 1995, 53–97.

²³ For more recent reflections on this, see A. Lehne, “Intentional and Unintentional Monuments: Various Aspects of the History and Theory Behind Monument Preservation in Austria,” *Centropa* 7, 2007, 32–43.

²⁴ Gy. Forster, *A műemlékek védelme a magyar és külföldi törvényhozásban*, 2nd ed., Budapest 1906, 579–90.

²⁵ “A modern műemlékkultusz lényege és kialakulása,” in *Alois Riegl, Művészettörténeti tanulmányok*, selected and ed. L. Beke, Budapest 1999, 7–47. On mistranslations affecting the concept of relics and historic monuments, see Marosi (n. 2 above), 14.

²⁶ Riegl (n. 22 above), 74.

²⁷ Marosi (n. 2 above), 7.

²⁸ *Konservieren, nicht restaurieren: Streitschriften zur Denkmalpflege um 1900*, ed. M. Wohlleben, Braunschweig–Wiesbaden 1988; M. Wohlleben, *Konservieren oder restaurieren?: zur Diskussion über Aufgaben, Ziele und Probleme der Denkmalpflege um die Jahrhundertwende*, Zürich 1989.

²⁹ Marosi (n. 2 above), 9.

³⁰ Idem, “Drei mittelalterliche Schlüsseldenkmäler der Kunstgeschichte Ungarns – restauriert. Székesfehérvár, Esztergom, Visegrád im Jahr 2000,” *Acta Historiae Artium* XLII, 2001, 255–81; idem, “Building Monuments. Medieval Székesfehérvár, Esztergom and Visegrád—in 2000,” *Budapest Review of Books* 11, 2001, 16–29.

³¹ Marosi (n. 2 above), 9.

³² On trends in Hungarian monument protection following 1990, see S. Somorjay, “Die Denkmalpflege in Ungarn – Beispiele und Tendenzen,” *Die Denkmalpflege* 65, 2007, 139–45; idem, “Mire való a műemlék? Jelenségek és balsejtelmek a mai magyar műemlékvédelemben,” *Ars Hungarica* 35, 2007, 447–56; idem, “Tendencies in Historic Building Preservation in Hungary Today. Practice, Consequences, Responsibility,” *Acta Historiae Artium* XLIX, 2008, 255–64.

³³ The countries in question, which naturally are not all equally affected, are Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Slovakia and Ukraine.

³⁴ E. Marosi, “Műemlékvédelem – az örökség hagyományozása,” in *A magyar műemlékvédelem korszakai. Tanulmányok*, ed. A. Haris–I. Bardoly, Budapest 1996, 14.

- ³⁵ Marosi (n. 21 above), 27.
- ³⁶ Ibid, 27–28.
- ³⁷ Zs. I. Bakó, *Gerecze Péter fényképhagyatéka*, Budapest 1993; *A "szentek fuvarosa." Divald Kornél felső-magyarországi topográfája és fényképei 1900–1919*, ed. and selected by I. Bardoly–I. Cs. Plank, Budapest 1999; *Az örökség hagyományozása. Könyöki József műemlékfelmérései 1869–1890*, assembled by J. Váliné Pogány, Budapest 2000.
- ³⁸ *Huszka József, a rajzoló gyűjtő*, exh cat., ed. Z. Fejős, Néprajzi Múzeum, Budapest 2006.
- ³⁹ *V. Miškovský 1838–1909 Život a dielo*, ed. J. Duchoň, Košice 1988; *Viktor Miškovský a súčasná ochrana pamiatok v strednej Európe. Medzinárodná konferencia pri príležitosti 160. výročia narodenia Viktora Miškovského, Košice, Bardejov – 18.–21. mája 1998*, Bratislava–Budapest 1999.
- ⁴⁰ D. Marcu Istrate, *A gyulafehérvári római katolikus székesegyház és püspöki palota régészeti kutatása (2000–2002)*, Budapest 2008.
- ⁴¹ J. Lángi–F. Mihály, *Erdélyi falképek és festett faberendezések*, Budapest, vols. 1–3., Budapest 2002, 2004, 2006. For an evaluation of related achievements related to wall paintings, see E. Marosi, "Falképek a középkori Magyarország északkeleti részéről," in *Falfestészeti emlékek a középkori Magyarország északkeleti megyéiből*, ed. T. Kollár, Budapest 2009, 7–25.
- ⁴² In connection to this, see Entz (n. 7 above), 57–74; about the beginnings, see I. Bardoly–P. Lővei, "The First Steps for Listing Monuments in Hungary," in *The Nineteenth-Century Process of "Musealization" in Hungary and Europe*, ed. E. Marosi–G. Klaniczay in collaboration with O. Gecser. Collegium Budapest, Budapest 2006, 249–258.
- ⁴³ *Fejér megye művészeti emlékei*, ed. G. A. Entz–J. Sisa, Székesfehérvár 1998, 267; see also the very first volume of a new series: *Magyarország műemlékei – Székesfehérvár*, ed. G. A. Entz, Budapest 2009.
- ⁴⁴ "The diagnosis of the simultaneous existence of two different concepts of art prompted Hans Belting to formulate his provocative and exhortative question *The end of the history of art?* How does this same question sound when applied to the protection of historical monuments, although obviously the field is not separate from art history?" Marosi asks rhetorically: Marosi (n. 2 above), 14. A review of the writings of Géza Hajós (published between 1981–2002) on his theory of monument protection provided Marosi with an opportunity to raise some points relevant to this set of problems in a book review. See E. Marosi, "Denkmalbegriff, Schutz und Pflege. Géza Hajós, *Denkmalschutz und Öffentlichkeit. Zwischen Kunst, Kultur und Natur. Ausgewählte Schriften zur Denkmaltheorie und Kulturgeschichte 1981–2002*. Frankfurt am Main, 2005," *Acta Historiae Artium* XLVIII, 2007, 354–56.
- ⁴⁵ G. Dolff-Bonekämper, "National – regional – global? Alte und neue Modelle gesellschaftlicher Erbeonstruktionen," *Acta Historiae Artium* XLIX, 2008, 235–41.
- ⁴⁶ G. Dolff-Bonekämper, "Nemzeti – regionális – globális? A társadalmi örökségkonstrukciók régi és új modelljei," *Magyar Szemle* 1–2/2009, 35–48.