

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS AND STUDY OF CURRENT STATE OF BRAN CASTLE DOMAIN, IN ORDER TO RESTORE THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ESEMBLE – FORMER ROYAL RESIDENCE

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Abstract

National landscape needs to create benchmarks for national identity, especially because it is just beginning. In fact, if a historic landscape path could no longer be restored, then landscapers will need to refer to the tradition of a foreign nation. The smaller the funds for management, the greater its importance. Assessment of impacts on historic gardens and parks refer to their condition at the time of the study. Due to maintenance deficiencies, management, financing and lack of a national strategy for the conservation, improvement and use of historical monuments with landscape interest, we are currently witnessing rapid degradation of the few landmarks that nation-wide landscape holds. Most restorations were aimed at construction areas, the domains of gardens and parks, sometimes with surfaces of tens of hectares, are not at all addressed, or addressed only theoretically. This study will explore in a historical and landscape point of view, the Bran Castle Park, as well as make an analysis of the current status, necessary studies in order to professionally restore the historic area. Knowing the main aspects of accounting and inventory of historical components assembly also includes a range of information that help sustainable management strategy in the future. Preservation, conservation, but also restoration and revitalization of cultural heritage landscape is a core concern in the development of a cultural society. These testimonies of the past are very important milestones, necessary in order to understand the historical context of the evolution of society. Maintenance and development of the historical monument landscape values, in conjunction with the architectural may lead in the future to a sustainable development of the monument, a concept that can be incorporated into future marketing strategies.

Key words: Historical garden, historical identity, restoration, revitalization, landscaping heritage.

INTRODUCTION

Awareness on knowing the cultural heritage, instilling respect for national identity for the appropriation inherited values as elements of national identity and continuity are values that can be inspired only knowing the history and successive transformations undergone by a monument over time until now.

In complex analysis of domain structure, in-depth historical study of the assembly and the current state of the monument are the essential points of any debut in a professional study of a landscape restoration assembly.

Like any restoration, the main objective is the development of new concepts in terms of preservation and conservation of the site of the old structures of historical value. This objective can be achieved through a multidisciplinary approach and inventory analysis studies by adopting optimal solutions, introducing new

functions needed by society, by engaging appropriate techniques and materials used.

Knowledge, investigation and preservation or restoration of these gardens is perhaps just as important as other cultural values that are part of the heritage of a country and, in many cases, the World Heritage (Law no 451, 2002).

Any intervention will be recorded in an analytical and chronological order to follow the time evolution and sequence of works performed, but also to allow the retrospective control of the procedure and to ensure consistency of subsequent interventions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Bran Castle was built as a royal fortress through the privilege signed by the Hungarian king Louis I of Anjou on November 19th, 1377. It is the oldest building-the royal residence, preferred especially the second Romanian queen, Queen Maria.

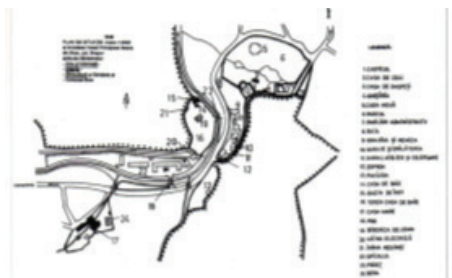


Figure 1. Plan of Bran domain (Ion N.D., 2003)

Built by the inhabitants of Brasov since 1378, it was in the successive possession of ruler Mircea cel Bătrân (between 1412 to 1418) and then Iancu de Hunedoara who made the first interventions on the city, ordering repair and strengthening works. From the late fifteenth century (1498) and by the middle of the eighteenth century is used as the customs, providing management functions of the royal domain. The architecture of the castle is enriched in 1593 with a round tower added to the southwest corner of the building, and between 1622-1625 with a gate tower, built after a rectangular plan.

As part of administration and customs control, there are no records on the presence of gardens, at that time they probably had utility role.

Between 1883-1886, the area was turned over to the inhabitants of Brasov, the castle received the second intervention, restoration required after employment of an Austrian regiment. In 1916 is offered as a gift on the occasion of the coronation of Emperor Charles I of Austria-Hungary. He is forced to decline due to collapse of the monarchy and creation of Romania Mare, on 1 December 1918.



Figure 2. Bran Castle seen from Măgura Branului (Ion N.D., 2003)

The same intention of giving the Castle was once again two years later, this time to the new sovereign of Romania Mare.

For the fate of the castle, it was its chance to return to life, the passion of Queen Maria, who transformed the city into a welcoming lovely summer residence of the royal family. Without restorations made by order of the Queen, by architect Karel Liman, with money provided by the domain administrator Crown Prince Barbu Știrbey, the castle would probably have been affected by indifference and degradation that led to the disappearance of many medieval monuments.

Until 1920, when it is donated to Queen Maria of Romania, the castle was owned by Forestry Office in Brasov. But starting this year (1920), the castle and its fields will enter a complex process of restoration and renovation.



Figure 3. Queen Maria in the park near Măgura Branului (Ion N.D., 2003)



Figure 4. Interior courtyard of Bran Castle (Ion N.D., 2003)

Early interventions focused on transforming the medieval castle with its sober and unwelcoming style into a modern and comfortable home, without harming its originality, as shown in the Queens memoirs: 'I did nothing which would take away the feudal appearance, I didn't transform the quickness of the stairs, I didn't raise the roofs nor did I straighten the crooked rooms'. Under the guidance of Czech architect Karel Liman Queen Maria brought improvements for 18 years (1920-1938) in the comfort of housing, water and electricity connected the whole assembly, introduced telephony and the lift serving the castle with its four floors and also created the link between the castle and the park.

In the period 1920-1922 the first references to the Bran Castle gardens appear. Creating a pictorial, free style garden, the architect Karel Liman, followed valuing dominant architectural elements, a unique way of undermining the green area to the adjacent construction. Bran domain was expanded, encompassing meadows around the castle.

In the composition appeared construction facilities completed to the requirements of the passionate queen: *Tea house*, built from wooden beams (144m.p.), Guest house, built from raw stone (78 m.p.), Princess Ileana's Children house (43 m.p.), New personal house (176 m.p.), Staff housing (378 m.p.), Horse stables, Hunting house, Wooden church, two huts and six garages.



Figure 5. The tea house and maintenance people in the Bran Castle Parc (Ion N.D., 2003)

In the year 1922 modern greenhouses were commissioned, heated by radiators and a plan was made by the royal house architect (Karel Liman) for a rose garden. The garden had

special care, by the chief gardener of the castle, Petre Conrad, under the guidance of the royal parc chief, Constantin Pamula.



Figure 6. Queen Maria in the garden (Ion N.D., 2003)

The Palace Parc was enriched with "fourty apple trees, twenty trees, fifty cherry trees, twenty five prune trees and seventy blueberry shrubs" brought by the royal garden direction in Cotroceni. Also, the park lake was populated with 1000 trouts and a few swans.



Figure 7. Queen Maria by the swan lake in Bran Castle Parc (Ion N.D., 2003)

Unfortunately, on 18th July 1938, Queen Maria dies. The Bran estate becomes the property of princess Ileana, the restorations and maintenance go on for nine more years. The first years of this period (1938-1943) are dedicated specially to the current repairs of the castle, which due to rare inhabitation suffered (princess Ileana lived there six months a year, respecting the condition imposed by King

Carol the second, her brother, on her marriage to the archduke Anton of Habsburg) Due to the Princesses marriage with Prince Anton of Habsburg, she was revoked and forced to live in Sonnberg castle, Austria. Starting with 1943, the princess will permanently live in the country, living in the castle only in the summer months and tending more to charity works.

The magnitude of the domain transformations was greatly diminished, this period overlapping with that of the war, when all the country was going through rough social, material and economical times.

Still, Princess Ileana inherited the spirit and charitable soul of Queen Maria, throughout her stay in Romania, looking toward helping and supporting the nearby residents and the war casualties. In this purpose she built with great sacrifice and calling to many acquaintances who could help her, a hospital on an estate close to the Castle. By doing this, she could express the great love and consideration which she had for her mother, naming the hospital "Queens Heart".

The abdication of King Mihai I, on 30th of December 1947, releases the domain in the possession of the Romanian government. Princess Ileana is forced to leave the country the political conditions allowing her to return to the Castle only in 1990.



Figure 8. Queen's Heart" Hospital in Bran (Ion N.D., 2003)

In the year 1957, 10 years after the instauration of People's republic of Romania, the Bran Castle became a museum, the communist regime starting a long period of degradation and estrangement of the wealth of the royal family, which although were not Romanian born, protected, contributed and cherished the

Romanian cultural legacy. Today only three sections function: Castle Section – with pieces of the royal family patrimony (many of them disappeared in the communist regime period), Medieval Customs Section – in process of restoration and Ethnography Section – in the park near the Castle.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Current state

The expansion which the domain had during the time of Queen Maria is no longer valid.



Figure 9. Guest house in the natural park (Dobrescu E. 2009)

Of the total surface "233 acres to which 183 forest acres (fir and beech), 93 acres of meadow and 2 acres of grasslands are added" (Ion N.D., 2003) accessible and arranged for touristic purpose are just the spaces around the castle.



Figure 10. Lake landscape park (Dobrescu E., 2009)

In development is the Medieval customs area. Many of the buildings, surrounded by their

respective terrains, are now out of the touristic route of the Bran estate. The surface of the Park holds the Castle area, the park area to the former garage workshops and the ethnographic area in the park. The other areas are not presented, some of them being the property of other institutions.

The Palace Park is precarious maintained, the lake is clogged, the mature vegetation needs regeneration works and the young vegetation is abusively and wrongly added. The bath house with the swimming basin, placed beyond the river are not on the touristic route. The same for the wooden Church, the Big House, the Hospital and the cript where Queen Maria's heart was placed until 1970.



Figure 11. Thuja Occidentalis in a degraded state (Dobrescu E., 2009)

Note that the park had, during the Queen, a strong direction for natural landscape design, the grasslands and the lake shores were designed to be natural, free, the meadow was mowed manually, without o special concern for accuracy and minute details. The flowers were natural, wild species and they gave the place the charm sought by the Queen and the cultivated species were only to be found near the castle. Fruit bearing trees only completed the already present masses of trees resembling those found in the nearby forests, thus showing the pragmatism of the natural style and the desire to be close to nature.

We cannot ignore the fact that, currently, the landscape is not in accord with it's original style and does not respect the romantic character created in it's glory days.



Figure 12. Wrong approach in the context of a natural style park (Dobrescu E., 2009)



Figure 13. Inner courtyard of Bran Castle (Dobrescu E., 2008)

The Bran Monument did not reveal any documentation regarding the garden surrounding the castle, not until it entered the possession of the royal court. The wish of Queen Maria, to be surrounded by a landscape fitting her passion for nature, gave birth to the design which we can analyze today (with a bit of imagination). Let us not forget that then, the young sovereign came from a country with a strong landscaping tradition (England), with very refined tastes and an inclination towards the romantic style. All the transformations made to the castle and the estate were grafted on the old structure of the domain, under the needs identified at that time.



Figure 14. Tea house in the natural park (Dobrescu E., 2008)



Figure 15. Guest house in the natural park (Dobrescu E., 2008)

CONCLUSIONS

Following the historical review no documents were found regarding restorations previous to the ones made by the royal house architect, Karel Liman. All the transformations following 1938 have no value from a historical or stylish points of views. As such we can consider that

future restorations have to keep in mind the historical moment marked by Queen Maria and the aspect of the landscape created in that period. All the restoration interventions have to have as a historic mark the period between 1920 and 1938, taking in consideration the current necessity to adapt the historical monument to the touristic functionality and not as a housing facility. Also we have to reclaim the domains belonging to the Queen which have a strong historical hold.

The new functions have to keep account of the original atmosphere without major alterations to the whole image.

Restoration, as an actualization of a work of art, is included just to this filtration and accumulation of data; it is thus natural to identify two stages: the first is the reconstruction of the authentic text of the work, the second intervention over the matter from which the work is composed.

This study is not only a research theme, but also an action to induce or recover the respect towards the history and national values of patrimony, without which a true restoration could not take place.

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