

INTRODUCTION

The residences of the elites play an important role in the understanding of the nobility's way of life, as they reflect the social status and political identity of their owners, addressing aspects of power representation in the regional landscape, whether rural or urban. Thus they occupy a central place in the European architectural history, attracting the interest of scholars from the late nineteenth century onwards. Various methodological approaches have been introduced since,¹ starting with the archaeological and architectural inventories, focused on chronological framings and stylistic analysis, continuing with the functional and spatial analysis,² as instruments to seize the changes in society and in the political structure.³ Concepts of social use of space and designed landscapes⁴ in studying noble residence ensembles have brought significant improvements in understanding the complexity of this architectural and archaeological heritage, by analysing not only the architectural features as mere objects, but the whole context that generated them (social, economic, political, etc.), an interpretation that highlighted a more complex system of functions that these complexes had possessed. In this context, the military role of the castles, once considered fundamental in the functioning of the ensembles, had in time fallen to a secondary position by interpreting the fortification system rather as symbol of status than as element of defence.

¹ See Gábor Virágos, *The social archaeology of residential sites. Hungarian noble residences and their social context from the thirteenth through to the sixteenth century: an outline for methodology* (Oxford: BAR International Series, 2006), 89-94 for a complex analysis of various methodological approaches in studying castles, with a focus on Hungarian historiography in comparison mainly with the British school of castle studies. The tendency in researching the building history is to surpass the linear vision relating to a typological approach, more specific to the evolution of biological species, see Matthew Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 154; Ionuț Costea, *Solam virtutem et nomen bonum. Nobilitate, etnie, regionalism în Transilvania princiară (sec. XVII)* (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2005), 20.

² Referring to the spatial and functional distribution, relation between private and public space, circulation diagrams, access analysis, etc. For a critique of the spatial analysis method, see Virágos, *The social archaeology*, 94-97; and Anika Andersson, "Spatial analysis in time. Hammershus Castle," in *Visions of the Past. Trends and traditions in Swedish Medieval Archaeology*, eds. Hans Andersson, Peter Carelli, and Lars Ersgård (Stockholm: Central Board of National Antiquities, 1997), 645-70.

³ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Yale: Yale University Press, 1978), 143.

⁴ See Martin Hansson, "The medieval aristocracy and the social use of space," in *Reflections: 50 years of medieval archaeology 1957-2007*, Monographs Volume 30, eds. R. Gilchrist and A. Reynolds, (Leeds: Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2009), 435-452, with bibliography; Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces. Use and the Art of the Plan* (New York, Cambridge, Massachusettes, and London: The MIT Press, 1990).

The literature regarding the noble residences from Central and Eastern Europe did not make an exception, using various new approaches and methodologies,⁵ but it must be mentioned that this methodological shift lacks, in many situations, a thoroughly documented background or research tradition. For example, in Romania there is no solid tradition for the systematic analysis of the architectural details (*i.e.* window and door frames, *spolia*, fireplaces, ornaments, etc.). Many are still preserved *in situ* or spread among various museum collections, but they have not yet been properly catalogued.⁶ The same situation applies to Medieval and Early Modern archaeological excavations, mostly initiated (and conditioned) by restoration projects, severely influenced by the government's poor initiatives and finance, or by a lack of systematic intervention.⁷ Thereafter only few monuments benefit from an archaeological investigation, the noble courts being the most obliterated.⁸ Apart from the poor architectural ruins still surviving,⁹ not enough written evidence has been preserved regarding the ceremonies and the inventories of these residences. The functional analysis in itself has shown its limits, as the archival sources can rarely offer a recognisable description of the spaces, making it difficult to recognise the room that the inventory references.¹⁰

An analysis of the Medieval and Early Modern monuments from the wider geographical area of Central and Eastern Europe has already been approached in the traditional cultural and artistic historiographies. Jan Białostocki offers one of the first syntheses on the artistic heritage of the

⁵ See for example the twelfth number of *Castrum Bene* series, Katarina Predovnik, ed., *The castle as a social space*, *Castrum Bene* 12 (2014) (Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete University Press, 2014).

⁶ Art historian Jolán Balogh analysed a corpus of stone frames, coats of arms, funerary monuments, and decorations found in various buildings in the sixteenth century town of Cluj-Napoca, successfully identifying a famous workshop of stonemasons, whose works are spread all over Transylvania, especially in noble residential architecture, see Jolán Balogh, *Kolozsvári kőfaragó műhelyek XVI. század* (Budapest: A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Művészettörténeti Kutató Csoportja, 1985). Nevertheless, the study is based mainly on archival sources, and the catalogue lacks dimensional information and details of their decoration. A first attempt to catalogue stone frames from Renaissance Transylvania belongs to architect Gheorghe Sebestyén, who published detailed architectural surveys of the most well-known stone doors and window frames, see Gheorghe Sebestyén and Victor Sebestyén, *Arhitectura Renașterii în Transilvania* (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Romîne, 1963).

⁷ For a more complex description of this reality, see Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică. Fortificații și cetăți din Transilvania și teritoriile învecinate (sec. XIII-XIV)* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2005), 14-26.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 25. The same situation appears to also be valid in Hungary, see Virágos, *The social archaeology*.

⁹ For Romania, a National Report on built heritage notifies on the imminent loss of the material evidence in case of many noble residences, see *Raportul Comisiei Prezidențiale pentru Patrimoniul Construit, Siturile Istorice și Naturale, Administrația Prezidențială* (București, 2009), 37.

¹⁰ This problem has also been highlighted by traditional works, such as Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, and Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces. Use and the Art of the Plan* (New York, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 1990), 10.

historical regions of Bohemia, Poland and Hungary, highlighting the common cultural and artistic background of the region during the Medieval and Early Modern periods, based on an intricate system of social and dynastic alliances.¹¹ The collapse of Communism has stimulated several more initiatives of studying the artistic and cultural history of Central and Eastern Europe. The work of Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann is illustrative in its aim at viewing Central Europe as a cultural entity, comprising within its geographical border Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Ukraine, Lithuania and western parts of the Russian Federation.¹² Moreover, scholars from Central Europe have founded the *Castrum Bene International Castellological Association*, bringing together specialists in archaeology, art and architectural history, and documentary history in order to stimulate research on the architecture of castles, manors and fortresses and offer a framework for sharing the results. In 1995 an annual monographic series first issued, by the name of *Castrum Bene*, as a result of the international *castellological* conferences.¹³

During the Communist period, a large number of noble residences from Romania suffered both irreversible damage and significant loss of their structural substance and of their furnishings, due to an irresponsible or even intentional use as agrarian annexes, hospitals, offices, among others. During the past decades several initiatives of saving and promoting the architectural heritage of castles proliferated all over Central and Eastern Europe,¹⁴ aiming to retrieve the history of this architectural heritage, distorted and mutilated by Communist propaganda. A series of inventories using archival sources and specific literature also led to a wider acknowledgement of the noble residences' heritage.¹⁵ Unfortunately,

¹¹ Jan Białostocki, *The Art of Renaissance in Eastern Europe* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1976); Idem, "Borrowing and Originality in the East-Central European Renaissance," in *East-Central Europe in Transition: From the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, eds. Antoni Maczak, Henryk Samsonowicz, and Peter Burke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1985, 153-166.

¹² Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister & City. The Art and Culture of Central Europe 1450-1800* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

¹³ For the Romanian representation, we must mention the contribution of historian Adrian Andrei Rusu, whose work *Castelarea carpatică* represents, as the author states, "the first volume of systematic Romanian *castellology*," referring to all types of fortifications in Medieval Transylvania. See Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică*.

¹⁴ *The European Castle Institute*, <http://www.deutsche-burgen.org/en/institut/>; *Slovenian Castles*, <http://www.gradovi.net/en/>; *Castrum Bene*, <http://www.castrumbene.hu/erdelyivarak/>; *Castles from Historical Hungary*, <http://www.varak.hu/>; *Castles in Europe*, <http://kastely.ementor.hu/>; *Magyar kastély lexikon*, <http://www.kastelylexikon.hu/>; *Art Historia*, <http://art-historia.blogspot.com/>; *Monumente uitate*, www.monumenteuitate.org/; *Castle in Transylvania*, <http://www.castel.intransilvania.ro/>; *Visiting the Transylvanian nobility*, <http://www.retopolisz.ro/about/>; *The Hungarian Virtual Encyclopaedia in Romania*, <http://referinte.transindex.ro/enciclopedie/?link=enciclopedie>, etc. (accessed on 12.06.2017).

¹⁵ *Erdélyi kastélyok, felmérési dokumentáció* (Kolozsvár: 1994) (Kulturális Örökségvédelmi Hivatal Tervtára Budapest); István Feld et alii, *Régi magyarországi várkastélyok. Rajzok, grafikák és fényképek*

conservation and restoration works did not develop at the same pace, and apart from a few notable exceptions,¹⁶ the architectural heritage of these residences was preserved in a ruined and derelict state.

The *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica* proposes for the next two issues a vast and generous theme on the subject of aristocratic and noble residences from central and eastern regions of Europe during the Medieval and Early Modern periods. The motivation for this theme comes from the need to highlight new research methodologies and to tackle the issue of a discontinuous state of research in Central and Eastern Europe, with results that are often inaccessible in publications and written in languages that are also hardly accessible. The differences between one country and another may be substantial in the way that this architectural and archaeological heritage has been perceived, studied and preserved, and therefore one of our special aims is also to encourage discussions relating to the destiny of these residences during the twentieth century, especially under the totalitarian regimes.

The papers gathered in this volume present an interesting cross section of different approaches and methodologies in the analysis of the residences of the elite and their way of life.

An introductory paper, submitted by art historian Ileana Burnichioiu, presents the fate of Medieval and Early Modern elite residences during the Communist regime in Romania and the following period, continuing with the perspective of present day Romania (“The Historical Residential Architecture under Totalitarian Regimes and After. The Romanian Case”). The author aims to present issues of research and protection of this specific architectural heritage as reflected by the context of the political regimes. The historical elite residences are detected thus as important elements in understanding the relation between architectural heritage and ideology.

Four articles form the core of this first volume. In the first article (“Ceremony and Space: Contact between the Nobles and the Monarch from the 16th to the 18th Century in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth”), Katarzyna

az Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal gyűjteményeiből [cat. exp.] A Sárospataki Rákóczi Múzeum Füzetei 32, (Sárospatak: Rákóczi Múzeum Baráti Köre, 1997); Hilda Horváth, *Régvolt magyar kastélyok* (Budapest: Gemini Budapest, 1998); Hermann Fabini, *Atlas der siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Kirchenburgen und Dorfkirchen*, Band I (Sibiu-Heidelberg: Monumenta Verlag Hermannstadt und AKSL, 2002); Attila Weisz, *Száz erdélyi műemlék* (Kolozsvár: Utilitas, 2007); Ákos Karczag, Tibor Szabó, *Erdély, Partium és a Bánság erődített helyei. Várak, várkastélyok, városfalak, templomvárak, barlangvárak, sáncok és erődítmények a honfoglalástól a 19. század végéig* (Budapest: Semmelweis, 2010); Zoltán Bicsok, Zsolt Orbán, *“Isten segedelmével udvaromat megépítettem...” Történelmi családok kastélyai Erdélyben* (Csíkszereda: Gutenberg, 2012).

¹⁶ For Transylvania see: Bánffy Castle in Bontida; Dániel Castle in Tălișoara; Apafi manor house in Mălâncrav; Mikes Castle in Zăbala etc.

Kuras explores the everyday royal court ceremonial in the Early Modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in order to analyse the dynamic relationship between nobility and the elected King. Moreover, various other ways of interaction between the monarch and the nobility, the coronation ceremony, informal visits of the monarchs to noble palaces and mansions, and even the death of the king have been investigated. The author emphasises that the court etiquette of the Early Modern Polish court, essentially different from French and Spanish ceremonies, distinguishes itself through having rather simple and unrestricted access to the King, which is also reflected in the spatial layout of the royal castle in Warsaw, where the (often noisy) parliamentary deliberations of the nobles were hosted in the royal state apartment, in the same complex with the King's private apartment. Nevertheless, Kuras suggests that the roots of this tradition can be found in the political system of the Commonwealth, mainly in the reduced power of the elected King. Even more so, the separate analysis of these aspects during various reigns has revealed that the King's personality and preferences have greatly influenced the court etiquette.

Éric Hassler's contribution ("Between Palaces and Castles: the Viennese Aristocracy at Home during the First Half of the 18th Century") aims at investigating the "aristocratic habitus" and social identity of the Viennese aristocracy as reflected by the multiple residences owned simultaneously, urban, suburban or manorial during the first half of the eighteenth century. The regular transfer between one's various residences is interpreted both as a way of imitating the imperial court, but also as a reflection of the nobility's double identity: as courtiers and as landlords. One of the premises of the study lies in the necessity of understanding the residences in their social and geographic context, militating against the "objectification" of the buildings, as their architecture alone cannot testify on the complexity of their social use and significance, or against the "ritualization" of the elite way of life lectured only in the functional reconstitution, ignoring other elements of social identity. Counts Harrach and Questenberg, both owning a residence in Vienna and another in their rural estate (Lower Austria and Moravia respectively), become the subject of this investigation, based on various and well documented sources: architectural forms, iconography and furnishings, but also economical aspects related to the buying, decorating and functioning of the residences in general. This latter aspect brings into discussion a very important dimension, seldom analysed in the traditional art historical studies, in assessing the financial investment and the revenues a residence necessitate, revealing also the symbolic value of the residences.

The article of Franciszek Skibinzki ("Transformations and Adaptations of Architectural Models in the Residential Architecture of the 17th Century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth") offers a provocative analysis of the architectural

transfer process in the Early Modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with a focus on residential architecture. In order to investigate the process of reception and adaptation of various European architectural models to the local requirements, the author analyses the spatial configuration patterns of the main reception spaces (the vestibule and the dining room), identifying among the source models the designs of Sebastiano Serlio and the residence Palais du Luxembourg, but also a transfer of architectural models between different layers of society. The paper also introduces a number of literary sources relevant in studying the Polish-Lithuanian Early Modern architecture, for example the first Polish book of architecture (*Krótką nauka budownicza*, 1659), which highlights the importance of acculturation in transfer of architectural models by selectively adapting the foreign architectural models to the local requirements. The importance of the local cultural tradition that emerges from this study has to be noted, reflecting in the observation that “for a Polish or Lithuanian nobleman, a country house, an ancestral seat of his family, was the embodiment of all virtues.” (*Infra*, p. 78).

The last contribution brings to attention an important example of elite residences from Romania, the Haller Castle in Coplean. Once considered emblematic for Transylvanian Baroque and Rococo, it is now condemned to irreversible destruction. This contribution sheds light upon “the life” of the monument in the period after 1950, using mainly the archive of the nowadays Institute of National Heritage. The archive comprises a valuable fond with letters, inventories, photographs and surveys dating from the sixties until eighties of the last century, attesting the state of conservation of a large number of noble residences from Romania and the struggle of the specialists to save them. These documents confess about the repeated requests and claims for protecting and repairing the buildings belonging to the Direction of Historical Monuments and the lack of any practical interventions. The study case of Coplean reflects thus the paradigm of the epoch regarding attitude towards heritage in Romania during and after the Communism period. The inscription still visible today, dating from the sixties, – “Socialism. Happiness” – ironically states a still valid situation of the Romanian heritage.

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