

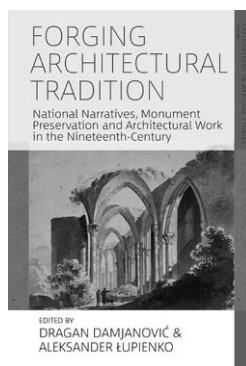
MARIN DUIĆ

FORGING ARCHITECTURAL TRADITION

NATIONAL NARRATIVES, MONUMENT PRESERVATION AND ARCHITECTURAL WORK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Architectural heritage has often been an essential element of nation-building. Nation-states were established in the long 19th century, during which a change occurred in how contemporary people looked at architectural structures from a distant past. The book *Forging Architectural Tradition: National Narratives, Monument Preservation and Architectural Work in the Nineteenth Century* edited by Dragan Damjanović and Aleksander Łupienko, explores the processes of creating modern national identities and myths around architectural structures.

The book is not so much about the form and style of the monuments themselves as it is about their perception and the frequent changes of meaning imposed on them based on social factors. The research undertaken by authors is not focused on nationalism as such but explores an aspect of nation-building mostly related to space shaping and connection with historical structures. The book fills in gaps in nation-building studies by tracing some of its cultural aspects. It combines the analysis of nation formation with architectural history and heritage studies to emphasize that places and monuments are not culturally neutral. This work is not a review of the whole process, but it rather examines thirteen case studies focused on the 19th (and partly early 20th) century, a period in which nation-building processes led to heritage nationalization or the nationalist manipulation of heritage. The research refers to the eastern and central parts of the European continent – that is, to areas most often characterized as multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious and therefore, particularly suitable for the analysis of the aforementioned processes.

Thematically divided into three parts, it opens with an introduction by Aleksander Łupienko and closes with an afterword by Dragan Damjanović. The first part (*Architectural Conservation and National Narratives*) in five studies focuses primarily on the mutual influence between national narratives and the preserva-

tion of monuments. Bérénice Gaussein examines Viollet-le-Duc's attempt to reconstruct the country's architectural monuments as well as French national identity; Kristina Jöekalda investigates the afterlife of nineteenth-century gothicizing renovation of Estonian churches; Aleksander Łupienko writes about Polish discourse; Anda-Lucia Spănu explores the context of the creation of a national style in Romanian architecture; and Georgios Karatzas researches the articulation of medieval revival in the architecture of the 19th century Athens.

The second part (*Styles for the Nation and State*) discusses attempts to create national architecture and national styles in four texts. Douglas Klahr writes about the new public architecture and monuments on the example of the monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I in Berlin; Paolo Cornaglia explains how interconnected the national and royal (dynastic) systems of meaning are on the examples of Turin, Budapest, and Bucharest; Gábor György Papp shows the process of searching for a national style that would show national uniqueness on the example of Hungary; and Dragan Damjanović emphasizes the tradition of vernacular wooden architecture and medieval stonework in the national architecture of Austro-Hungarian Croatia.

The third part (*Appropriation of Heritage(s)*) discusses the appropriation of heritage in favor of national ideologies, also in four texts. Gulchachak Nugmanova talks about Russia in the 19th century; Andrea Kocsis shows how Hungarian nation-building used medieval archaeological heritage in the nineteenth century; Monika Ewa Adamska focuses on the context of Silesia's architectural heritage during Prussian rule over the region; and Anatole Upart researches the example of a church in Rome that went through the process of Ukrainian nationalization.

Drawing from their stylistic analyses, all authors contextualize stylistic characteristics within the historical political, social, and economic setting of the time and connect them to national narratives. In the texts, we notice

that almost all the analyzed European nations had more than one national style during the 19th century. What was considered national architectural heritage changed and adapted due to the changing nature of nationalist movements. The studies show that in areas of low urbanization, the search for a national style often turned to vernacular architecture. Simultaneously, in more urbanized areas, where researchers had started with the creation of national narratives earlier, sacred and public buildings of the medieval and early modern periods were taken as models. In areas with several religious groups, the national style served to create a difference from other religious groups. The nationalization of the architectural heritage logically led to the system of monument protection. However, as we learn in some of the studies, the nationalization of the heritage did not always accompany its preservation. The re-narration of heritage became possible on a broader scale with the development of the bureaucratic state.

The book *Forging Architectural Tradition* is an excellent contribution for anyone interested in the creation of national narratives around architectural buildings. It is suitable for architects, art historians, historians, sociologists, cultural researchers, and the general cultural public, as well as anyone interested in the national narratives of "small" nations.

The topics explored in the book should not be viewed as a part of the distant past but as still current as the historical processes described in the book can help us deal with problems related to the politicization of heritage that is still evident today. Narratives related to national monuments continue to develop daily, whether they concern the general protection and restoration of heritage or the political exploitation of an individual monument. It happened in the past, it is happening today, and it will undoubtedly happen in the future. Whatever building does not get crushed by the wheel of time, shall necessarily be re-invented and re-narrated.