

Hollókő, a Hungarian World Heritage settlement between past and future

Introduction

Hollókő, the first Hungarian World Heritage site (since 1987), is a perfect case study to investigate the changes in the theory, method and results of architect protection. UNESCO World Heritage Committee with its specialized sections, such as the ICOMOS and ICCROM, has worked to establish and spread the best practices of heritage management that would include architecture protection as well. This set of international institutions not just generates knowledge, evaluates methods, but incorporates the practical needs of the contemporary users (inhabitants) as well (UNESCO World Heritage Mission Statement 2008). The internationally accepted status of the settlement is a result of the cooperation of local leaders and professionals. Via the success of Hollókő, the country became acknowledged by the international cultural heritage community. For instance the Washington Charta of 1987 about the Rehabilitation of Historic Towns and Villages was verbalized by the Hungarian National Committee of ICOMOS, as well as, many national and international conferences such as the Békés Vernacular Architectural Conference at every second year (see the publications about these conferences Népi Építészeti Tanács 2014) can be seen as a consequence of the fruitful acknowledgement of Hollókő among professionals. After the political change, when Hungary became a democracy in 1989, this international reputation of Hollókő motivated the formation of numerous Hungarian civil organizations in this field (Hollókői civil szervezetek 2011). Hollókő turned to be a number one tourist attraction (first nationally then internationally), what the inhabitants have used for their economic benefits.

Besides all the positive outcomes, it has to be noted that the perception of the settlement and its transformation to a World Heritage site have been criticized in many aspects as well. Accordingly, this site is also a good case study to illustrate the changes of focus from the Venice Charta to the Nara Documents and to its most current additions. This paper discusses the introduced case study in the triple concept of theory-method-results focusing on different time sections such as before its protected status, at the time of receiving the World Heritage status and after the political change of the country, when the settlement's status was re-

evaluated. The three identical time sections show three different stages on all level (theory, method and result) and help to formulate fruitful and effective future steps as well, not just for the particular site but in general also. Numerous scholarly and governmental reports were published about Hollókő in the last quarter century that are critically analyzed to point out some interconnectedness that have to be reevaluated and used for future planning (Fejérdy 2013). This intense discussion happened due to a result of anniversaries (2012 was the 25th anniversary of Hollókő becoming UNESCO World Heritage site), official obligations (in 2014 the preparation of the next professional management plan for the upcoming period has started) as well as happy (in 2012 Hollókő won The Most Charming Village of the Country Award) and sad events (2005 was the year when András Román, the Hungarian professional, who worked tremendously for the accreditation of Hollókő as a World Heritage site, passed away). Among others modified professional requirements, locals' continuously forming responses and necessary preservation and adaptation actions on the protected groups of buildings can be decoded in these texts accordingly the theory – method and result triple concept can be defined.

Theory

When scholars discovered the settlement, it was seen as a pure and authentic representation of the original nation, as a typical requirement for the national culture narrative (Hall 1997). An outstanding example for this is Viola Tomori's work, who conducted research in the village in the 1930s, but her work has been published multiple times, such as in 1986, right before the settlement received its world heritage status. She speaks about the inhabitants, who live in symbiosis with nature, and have no connection with contemporary human world (Tomori 1986). Such description interprets the settlement and the locals ancient almost pre-civilized. Also Zoltán Szabó in his description about the village from 1930 says that "the village exists isolated within its surrounding as the nut or the pearl in its shell" (Szabó 1986). This image alludes to the timelessness of the national narrative.

The re-establishment of this lost pure state has reached total sovereignty, when continuity and tradition were ensured by the protection of the buildings and Ferenc Mendele's ideology behind it. Mendele (1934-1994) was an Ybl-awarded architect, conservationist, and the

former director of the National Inspectorate of Historic Monuments. He held and adapted the ideology that every function has to be located within the monument buildings (Mendele 1969). The natural surrounding and the allowed agricultural activities were adjusted also to ensure the living museum or mausoleum ideas of the settlement (Kiss 2013).

Later the conserved monument buildings were gone through a transformation in function due to the existing “Socialist monument policy” (Galambos and Román 1967). It named the main aim of the protection steps to transform the monument to a venue for cultural educational tasks of Socialism. The pioneer groups and the artists’ communities were envisaged to use the advantages of the conserved monuments by establishing colonies and by becoming a desired destination for internal tourism.

After the international acknowledgement of UNESCO (1987) and the political change of the country (1989), Hollókő has attracted international tourists as well, and became part of the national identity and its representation. Globalization as the leading force of the current time period has multiple and many times opposing effects too as Stuart Hall points out (Massey 2002). If we adapt his notion to Hollókő and see UNESCO world heritage initiative as a kind of cultural globalizing trend, we can detect these diverse effects in the many times unequal views of the participating actors, the political and the professional representatives as well as the locals. Sandra Lustig followed a similar chain of thoughts in her research of the mainly Eastern or Central European Jewish Quarters, when she emphasizes the possibilities and threats of the existing numerous requirements and the countless actors in these cases (Lustig 2009). Today the attention is more on the contemporary inhabitants’ intention to protect their own heritage, which was not the case at all in the first monument protection attempts in the 1950s and 1960s.

We could also detect the elements of a more recent social movement called festivity here (Gábor 2000). The constant aim to organize participatory entertainment events emphasizes more the intangible heritage than the tangible ones. This alludes to the fact that modifications took place within the international organization as well by moving the emphasis to other aspects of the requirements. Nowadays, besides authenticity, integrity and outstanding universal values (that one can find for instance in Venice Charter; ICOMOS 1964), cultural

relativism and the participation and involvement of the locals are also important requisites in the evaluation processes (as the Nara Doctrine formulated it; ICOMOS 1999).

Method

After the monument protection specialists identified this area, they enlisted the territory in official monument and protected area lists. First, it was mentioned among the monuments of the county (1954), then a management plan formulated about the protection of the buildings that led to the official status of group of monuments in 1979. Due to the political and policy circumstances of that period (1950s - 1980s), the state had to buy these buildings first in order to be able to protect them. Hollókő's successful protection was a result of the fruitful cooperation of protection and policy professionals (Dobosyné 2013). Similarly, the management of the Office for the Protected Landscape Area of Hollókő kept requiring an old, traditional method of gardening (small plot gardens) to save the traditional agricultural methodologies still in used at that time (Mendele 2013). It is not an effective and sustainable methodology, and prohibits entirely any construction on the surrounding hill sides (Kiss 2013).

In order to draw the attention of the targeted groups of Socialist monument policy to come and enjoy Hollókő, a national campaign was launched. As a part of that the female chorus of the village participated and won the nation-wide, televised art talent contest in the 1970s. Similarly, one of the hand craft artists of the village, Ferenc Kelemen wood artist, became part of a nation-wide organization that propagated local artists and monuments to the public (Farkas 2013). Along these lines, later added extra elements on the protected buildings have not been counted as mistakes or attacks on authenticity. For example, a Hopper window on the roof of a house originally served as the post office, and became the post museum and hostel, was seen acceptable partly as it has a form like a garret window made by tin from the outside (Magyar Építőipar 1991).

After 1989, the scholarly acknowledgement and appreciation of the Hungarian monument protection steps realized in Hollókő continued. A remodel of a house from Hollókő with original furniture in it was exhibited at the 20th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention at the UNESCO headquarter in Paris in 1993, as a representation of the village, of

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ARQUITECTONICS NETWORK:
Barcelona, 3-4-5 June 2015
Theme 9 Design and History
(Modernity and Tradition)

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Hungary's architectural values and its folk art as well as of the whole Central Europe (Koris 1993). As a more recent case, in 2003, the Hungarian National Bank announced a series of decorative coins about Hungarian World Heritage sites that contained a 5000 Hungarian Forint coin made of pure silver featured Hollókő that also emphasized the expressed aim (Magyar Nemzeti Bank 2003).

Today, festival is organized after festival not just the traditional one in Easter, when “Lady is not remained dry” as the marketing quote says (Hollókő Easter Festival 2015), but diverse events are organized almost every month (such as wine feasts and celebration of Saint Stephen, the first king of the country and the anniversary of the establishment of Hungary) (see in Hollókő's official website programs link). These touristic events are arranged not just on the homepage of the settlement, but on diverse social media channels as well. It is important to point out that the category of Hollókő's facebook page has nothing to do with heritage, culture, history or even folk art. It goes solely under the category of travel and leisure that alludes to the intention of those forming the social presence of the village (I love Hollókő 2014). Moreover, Hollókő leaves its physical boundaries behind not just with the help of the social media, but also by participating on programs outside the village, as well as, by creating their own events also outside the settlement, such as press conference or introductory event in the capital (almost 100 kilometers far away) (A Centrál Kávézóban mutatkozik be Hollókő 2014).

Results

It is important to state that when monument protection started in the 1950s, the village was at the edge of its existence. Its population was dramatically decreased; it lost its identical prefecture status and was a co-settlement with the neighboring Nagylóc village (N. Waigand 2013). From an almost dead village, it became the center of the Hungarian preservation and then of the international cultural heritage discourse. Hollókő is not just one of the first World Heritage sites from Hungary, but one of the pioneer vernacular tangible heritages on UNESCO World Heritage list too (Kovácsi 1988) as well as an example for Hungarian monument protection on the level of not just individual houses, but of group of buildings (as

an early step towards the notion of heritage area and with the protection of the natural surroundings even of cultural landscape).

Building structure and hand craft motifs that were evaluated previously as a combination of regional characteristics are seen as identical and typical motif system of Palócz culture, the ancestors of the locals, an already integrated Slovakian minority, or even of Hollókő (Ács 1990). The traditional Palócz vernacular architecture trends (ICOMOS 1987) that are mentioned in the World Heritage proposal dated back to the 18th - 19th century, when this minority was a unique and distinct group. But in the late 20th century, when the settlement achieved its new status of international acknowledgement, the named minority had already integrated into the mainstream society (Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon 1977-1982). Moreover, the entire village was completely burnt down in 1909 and only the structure and the characteristics point back to the pre-20th century period (Koris 1992).

Higher education of this profession, as well as, the necessary structure of institutions nationwide and the necessary legal frameworks (missing laws and regulations) were smoothly formulated after the political change of the country (Forster Központ 2014). Tourism, as the sole source of surviving available for the locals, has been present. The settlement became a special destination, a kind of exotics for the foreign tourists to whom folk programs and other shows were also successfully offered (Örsi 2013). They can meet with the past there. Accordingly, the exclusive tourist serving attitude of the locals is part of their identity for instance by playing out intangible heritage traditions and practices regularly. Also partly due to the same aim the monument houses and accordingly, the entire old village turned to be a theatrical stage. The street of the Old Town has covered with concrete and electric street lights are also introduced for the visitors' convenience. The inhabitants moved out from that area establishing a totally new and modern settlement next to the chain of monuments (Mezősiné 2001).

There have been even other views and discourses that formulated as a kind of reaction to the global heritagization processes, and they emphasize the uniqueness of Hollókő, and its national value got highlighted for example by projecting it on national events outside the settlements (Bajtai 2012). Even though many try to stick to the traditional keeper identity of Hollókő, the settlement is not a living village anymore and never will be like that. Based on

this chain of thought, the village is complex depending on whether Hollókő is connected to the past or to the present and if it is researched in its smaller or wider location. For example while the inhabitants moved out almost fully from the monument buildings and established a new settlement next to the authentic one they have their incomes from tourism and marketing activities of the historic settlement (Nagy 2013). So they stick to their local unique identity, while they use the possibilities of the world heritage status. Accordingly, Hollókő and its transformations can be seen as a discourse about modernity and tradition, which would lead to useful outcomes not just for the professionals, but for the local inhabitants of any heritage site, not mentioning the educational advantageous of such investigation.

Conclusion

This shift towards a complex identity of the inhabitants and the settlement as such too represents the change of importance from the monument houses to the intangible heritage elements, when the architectures are only symbols or metaphors of the human activities. Some scholars evaluate this alteration as a natural consequence (Fejérdy 2008). None can be forced to live the pre-20th century lifestyle as well as the monument must serve “some socially useful purpose,” which can be proper heritage tourism as well. Others would initiate rethinking of the concept of Hollókő, as the original values are not fully present there (for instance, there is no living settlement any more), as a result of that Hollókő does not fulfill the requirements (Sonkoly 2010). It is important to point out that even though Hollókő has lost those features, due to which it gained its world heritage status, there has not been any complain or reaction in this regard from the international community. This alludes to the fact that modifications took place within the international organization as well by moving the emphasis to other aspects of the requirements.

Only these few examples show clearly the complexity of Hollókő’s reuse in diverse periods and similarly the transformations in the theory-method and result triple concept of heritage protection in the last approximately six decades. Homi K. Bhabha offers a possible solution by the notion of translation. This new identity construction connects strongly to the past and traditions, but it also incorporates no intention to turn back to this past due to the impossibility of such notion (Bhabha 1994). Accordingly, Hollókő needs to have at least a dual identity that

are interconnected, and which on one hand protects and passes on its heritage (tangible and intangible ones alike) as values, but on the other hand develops a contemporary Hollókő identity (not just as the keeper of the lost values and lifestyle). For this all actors should cooperate; the creators of this notion, but also those, who realize and those, who are targeted with the given notion have to be active members of the processes. Similarly to its past, Hollókő would not have fulfilled such success only by the locals' activities scholarly professionals and the political support were both needed and are still needed. Also without the daily activities of the inhabitants of the village not just the heritage values, but most probably even the settlement could have been already disappeared.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ARQUITECTONICS NETWORK:
Barcelona, 3-4-5 June 2015
Theme 9 Design and History
(Modernity and Tradition)

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