

## *Conference report*

### **Theophil Hansen transregional – Dissemination and Reception of Historicist Architecture**

**Conference at the Research Unit History of Art of the Institute for Habsburg and Balkan Studies (IHB) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), Vienna**

**Organisers:** Timo Hagen, KHI, University of Bonn

Richard Kurdiovsky, IHB, ÖAW Wien

Gábor György Papp, MI, HUN-REN, Budapest

Frank Rochow, IBK, BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg

**Venue:** Postal Savings Bank (Postsparkasse), Georg Coch-Platz 2, 1010 Vienna

**Dates:** June 19 to 21, 2024

On the occasion of his 200th birthday, several books were published on Theophil (von) Hansen, one of the most prominent architects of Vienna's *Ringstraße*. The conference *Theophil Hansen transregional* took his impact beyond the main locus of his activity as a starting point for a more general exploration of reception and dissemination processes in architecture in the second half of the 19th century.

The overall thematic framework was provided by TIMO HAGEN, RICHARD KURDIOVSKY, GÁBOR GYÖRGY PAPP, AND FRANK ROCHOW. The organisers spotted desiderata of the hitherto existing Hansen research by presenting some accumulated data on Hansen's students, by touching the Hansen memoria since his death in 1891, by sharing insights into the protocols of the *Hansen-Club* and by testing the geographical limits of Hansen's reception in Western Europe at the example of France. They posed questions which focused on the broader theme of mechanisms of reception and dissemination in a transregional perspective and embedded these into recent research trends in art history and historical research on Central Europe.

The first thematic panel with the focus on "**Hansen's Byzantine Revival in Ecclesiastical Architecture**" consisted of two parts. MAXIMILIAN HARTMUTH opened with a focus on Hansen's influential first buildings in Vienna for different religious groups. By bringing together Hansen's stylistic language, the symbolic meaning of the particular architecture and the framework of 'Aatholic' emancipation, HARTMUTH provided a multi-faceted access to his oeuvre. In addition, he emphasised how Hansen's works became "progressively self-referential". This can be assumed as the first factor for his later reception.

ELENI-ANNA CHLEPA continued with a geographical shift to Greece. She showed not only the variety of influential buildings Hansen had planned in Byzantine Revival style but managed to provide insights into the many connections to the broader (Central) European architectural discourse. In this respect, Greece – and in particular Athens – can be regarded as important hubs for the stylistic discussions of that time. However, in contrast to the "classical" heritage, a national appropriation of the mediaeval Byzantine style only took place around 1870.

Already touched in the discussion after CHLEPA'S paper, OKSANA HERII elaborated more on the materiality of Hansen's works. In L'viv, the chapel of his House of Invalids was received, although mostly disconnected from the name of its architect, and its positive reception fostered the adoption of Byzantine Revival for Ruthenian church constructions beyond the Galician capital. However, other types of church building based on traditional local forms (e.g. the three-domed type) were of much greater importance to the general architectural production than Hansen's chapel. HERII highlighted the importance of the Habsburg-Russian border for this architectural phenomenon since it must be understood as a watershed in church architecture.

COSMIN MINEA tested the outreach of Hansen's architecture in Romania. Building on two of his works in the country and two Hanzenatika style churches by other architects, he comes to the conclusion that Hansen's Byzantine style was not associated with a single direction of political thinking. Yet, one could identify the patrons of these projects as belonging to a rather conservative, state-loyal and Habsburg affine social group. That Hansen was not received more widely can be explained with the strong influence of French beaux arts-architecture (and its greater importance for Romania's cultural self conception) and the search for a "national style" based on autochthonous traditions around 1900 - traditions which Hansen's Byzantine style could not offer. Although the discussion showed that more precision is needed when talking about central and southeast European states, the paper clearly showed how interwoven national identity discourses and the proliferation of architectural styles were.

The day was concluded with a **keynote** lecture by MARI HVATTUM on the complex interaction between centre and periphery in architectural discourse. Starting with the case of mistaken identities around the planning of the Norwegian parliament building and spanning further to Hansen's Norwegian students who – like Harald Bødtker – planned and conducted buildings as far away as South America, HVATTUM distilled a number of ways of how the periphery attempted to "appropriate the centre". Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of modern press and the use of illustrations as well as the outreach and longevity of reputation as basal processes which structured this discourse during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The second day of the conference started with the panel titled "**Hansen Seen from a Distance**". PETER THULE KRISTENSEN focused on the question why Hansen left so little imprint on his home country Denmark although he invested a lot of energy in e.g. developing a proposal for the re-building of the castle of Christiansborg. KRISTENSEN thus continued on the special form of Hansen's significance for the Scandinavian countries, which Hvattum had pointed out the day before, namely that the geographical ancestry was obviously more important than the concrete built oeuvre. Against this background, he highlighted the rich fundus of presentation drawings by Hansen for Christiansborg at the archive of the Royal Danish Library which has remained un-researched hitherto. This was also remarkable because Hansen's decision in favour of the Byzantine style for this building type constituted a clear shift in his preferred iconology in comparison to the Viennese Imperial Council (later: Parliament) Building. KRISTENSEN concluded that the fruitlessness of Hansen's attempts was caused by his inability to adapt his additive way of designing to local needs and practices, but

was also a result of political power struggles which resulted in a politicisation of stylistic questions.

JINDŘICH VYBÍRAL focused on Hansen's position in early German art historiography. The example of the Berlin based art historian Alfred Woltmann showed how Hansen and his architecture were constructed as counterpart to Berlin's "decadent" developments and as continuation of Winckelmann's and Schinkel's thoughts. In contrast, the Viennese liberal press of the 1860s viewed Hansen's architecture as mere repetition of the old and thus outdated. The ensuing discussion revealed the underlying principles of the discipline of early art history such as the art historian's direct encounter with the subjects of the discipline as prime source for further consideration.

GÁSPÁR SALAMON illustrated the spectrum of opinions during a revived Hansen reception in Hungary and in particular in Budapest around 1900. Imitating Hansen's architecture could build on a positive reputation the architect held in certain circles. Referring to him thus served as cultural capital. Negative critic was uttered either concerning the architectural style – e.g. arguing that his style was not "pure" enough – or in respect to the question whether his architecture belonged to Budapest at all. As the missing reception of Hansen's Byzantine style and the interpretation of his neoclassical form as modern further shows, the late Hansen reception in Budapest was very ambiguous.

The first speaker in Panel 4 titled "**Design Transfer by Hansen's Students**" was ENIKŐ TÓTH. With the example of Hansen's student Győző Czigler she showed how the "master"'s ideas were brought to Budapest and how Czigler himself served as a nucleus for further proliferation of stylistic ideas and as the central figure of a group of former Hansen students. At the same time, this paper exemplified the methodological problem of art historical analysis to reveal dissemination processes by solely looking at formal motifs of a building regardless of the fact that certain stylistic elements were simply part of the standard repertoire of the time.

GYULA DÁVID continued this panel with a paper on Lajos Pákei who studied in Hansen's class and worked for him on the Viennese Parliament building. Focussing on Pákei's biography, DÁVID managed to reconstruct his professional network which kept him in touch with alumni networks in Munich and Vienna as well as with Hansen and Győző Czigler. At the same time, he emphasised the ambiguous meaning of limited resources for the proliferation of architectural designs in peripheral contexts. The lack of financial funds encouraged searching for inexpensive decorations which made the offer by producers in the centre – illustrated by the example of Hansen's motifs distributed by the terracotta company Wienerberger – highly attractive. At the same time, the transfer of products from the centre to the periphery resulted in adaptation and appropriation processes and mutual economic dependency which challenge the underlying analytical dichotomy.

TAMÁS CSÁKI added the case study on the Sremski Karlovci Ecclesiastical Complex to the discussion. In the first part of his paper, he showed how Hansen's Byzantine Revival was adopted by his Serbian students and became widespread as a "national style" in Serbian Orthodox church building in Hungary and the Kingdom of Serbia. Within the long and complex planning process for the Sremski Karlovci Ecclesiastical Complex, one of the designs

featured this style setting itself apart from the earlier Baroque Structures on the site. But already at an early stage, a design based on early research on actual mediaeval structures in Serbia was brought forward. Interestingly, this design was by Pártos and Lechner - proponents of a Hungarian "national style". As a result of the ensuing discussion, the convened agreed on historicising and more critically contextualising the term "national style" and that more research into local branches of Byzantine art is necessary.

With the title "**Dissemination and Reception in the Construction Industry**", the following panel focused more on underlying economic processes which influenced the reception and dissemination of Hansen's architecture. BENJAMIN VON RADOM provided important insights into the alliance between Hansen and the Viennese terracotta manufactures/industries which laid the foundation for a distribution of entire decoration sets all over the monarchy and beyond. He analysed the marketing strategies of Brausewetter and Wienerberger which included not only widely spread catalogues, but also representative architecture like the Heinrichshof. VON RADOM convincingly showed that Hansen's collaboration with the industry generated a substantial income for him which served as a basis for his well-documented generosity. Without the general evolution of mass production and mass consumption this development would have remained unthinkable.

ANDREAS NIERHAUS focused on Joseph von Wieser, who remained active in Vienna after his study period with Hansen. After detailing the formats which Hansen applied to teach his students, NIERHAUS showed the multi-faceted activities of Wieser. However, little direct connection to Hansen's stylistic language is tangible in his works. This resulted in the questions to what extent Hansen had prepared his students for their later professional life and whether the content of his teaching can be sufficiently described with a sole focus on Hansen's personal architectural style, turning the works of his students into mere copies. Instead, it was proposed to look closer at the planning process, the wishes and expectations of the commissioners and on how architects approached given tasks.

The third conference day commenced with the final panel "**Hansen in the Province**" which focused on the phenomenon of the province as an analytical framework. JAN GALETA opened the panel by highlighting the strong connection between Moravia and Vienna. Projects given in the imperial centre could directly result in tasks for the province. Depending on the commissioner, Hansen could use these projects as testing fields e.g. for the use of terracotta (e.g. on the Beseda building in Brno) and of iron (e.g. for the oriels of Hansen's and Christian Ludwig Förster's Klein building in Brno). At the same time, commissions in the province were doubtlessly less prestigious and did thus not translate into publications as projects in the centre did. Consequently, Hansen's works in Moravia are less known until today. As it was Hansen himself who decided not to publish any article like for other projects, the basis for this bias was already set by him.

DRAGAN DAMJANOVIĆ concluded the array of papers with a systematic approach towards the question whether Hansen left an imprint on the architecture of the provinces of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia. Starting from the finding that Hansen's authorship is not confirmed for any building in these provinces, he focused on three groups of students: the military engineers who took classes during Hansen's activity at the Viennese Engineering Academy in the beginning of the 1850s, architects stemming from these provinces who studied at the

Academy of Fine Arts and Hansen students from other parts of the monarchy who eventually became active in this region. By systematising the potential direct influences in this way, DAMJANOVIĆ proposed a model for a more systematic research of reception and dissemination networks in Central and Southeast European contexts. In the scope of his talk he could only sketch out how fruitful such an approach could be. He also highlighted the prevalence of the use of various new materials, especially terracotta and iron, in the architecture.

The conference ended with a final discussion starting with a reflection on its title. The convened agreed that the person of Theophil Hansen did successfully function to bind together case studies of dissemination and reception processes in the realm of historicist architecture. In sum and in connection, they provided thorough insights into the way ideas were developed, proliferated and adapted as well as how meaning was attributed to them. The role of architecture and architectural styles was emphasised in the process of nation and identity building throughout the region, although the call for a more elaborated methodological approach was uttered. This counts particularly for a closer analysis of temporal and spatial factors for dissemination and perception process in architectural history. These factors include the general transformation of society in the 19th century, epitomised by the rise of mass production, and the recurring theme of the centre-periphery relationship. Furthermore, the transregional approach revealed, on the one hand, the necessity to pay more attention to local and regional particularities while, on the other, embedding this scale of analysis into broader processes of meaning making and impact generating which are marked by asynchrony and fashions. The contributions of this conference provided insights into the complex interplay of these different factors and analytical levels.

***Programme:***

**WEDNESDAY, 19<sup>th</sup> of June**

14:00–15:00 Welcome and Introduction by Timo Hagen, Richard Kurdiyovskiy, Gábor György Papp, and Frank Rochow

**PANEL 1: Hansen's Byzantine Revival in Ecclesiastical Architecture: Identity Discourses across Europe (Part I), Chair: Timo Hagen**

15:00–15:45 *Maximilian Hartmuth (University of Vienna): Hansen's Architecture and 'Aatholic' Emancipation in Central Europe*

15:45–16:30 *Eleni-Anna Chlepa (University of Athens): Hansen's reception in 19th-century Greek Ecclesiastic Architecture*

16:30–17:00 Coffee Break

**PANEL 2: Hansen's Byzantine Revival in Ecclesiastical Architecture: Identity Discourses across Central Europe (Part II), Chair: Timo Hagen**

- 17:00–17:45 *Oksana Herii (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Lviv): Theophil Hansen and the Church Architecture of the West of Ukraine: Searching a Byzantine Revival Style*
- 17:45–18:30 *Cosmin Minea (Masaryk University Brno): Between National and European Architecture: The Short-lived Hanzenatika Style in Late 19th Century Romania*
- KEYNOTE Chair: *Frank Rochow*
- 18:30–19:30 *Mari Hvattum (The Oslo School of Architecture and Design): A Case of Mistaken Identity: Theophil Hansen and the Debate over the Norwegian Parliament Building*
- 19:30 Reception

#### THURSDAY, 20<sup>th</sup> of June

PANEL 3: **Hansen Seen from a Distance**, Chair: *Gábor György Papp*

- 10:00–10:45 *Peter Thule Kristensen (The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen): The Expatriate's Fruitless Danish Endeavors. Theophil Hansen's Projects after Christiansborg's Fire in 1884*
- 10:45–11:30 *Jindřich Vybíral (Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague): Theophil Hansen According to Alfred Woltmann*
- 11:30–12:15 *Gáspár Salamon (Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Budapest): Zwischen Klassizismus und Moderne. Fremdeinschätzungen von Theophil Hansens Lebenswerk im ungarischen Architekturdiskurs um 1900*

12:15–14:00 Lunch Break

PANEL 4: **Design Transfer by Hansen's Students**, Chair: *Anna Minta (Katholische Privatuniversität Linz)(? to be confirmed ?)*

- 14:00–14:45 *Enikő Tóth (Hungarian Museum of Architecture, Budapest): Hellenic Renaissance and Hansen's Inspiration in the Architecture of Győző Czigler*
- 14:45–15:30 *Gyula Dávid (Budapest): A Student from the East End of the Monarchy: Pákei Lajos (1853–1921)*

15:30–16:15 *Tamás Csáki (Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences + History Museum, Budapest): The Sremski Karlovci Ecclesiastical Complex – a Mostly Unrealised Chapter of the Hansen Reception*

16:15–16:45 Coffee Break

PANEL 5: **Dissemination and Reception in the Construction Industry**, Chair: *Richard Kurdiovsky or Frank Rochow*

16:45–17:30 *Benjamin von Radom (Wien): Grace – Model 992 as a Case Study for the Evolution, Distribution and Acceptance of Theophil Hansen Historicist Style in Vienna, across the Monarchy and around Europe*

17:30–18:15 *Andreas Nierhaus (Wien Museum): Architecture and Industry. Hansen's Student Joseph von Wieser*

19:30 Joint Dinner

#### **FRIDAY, 21<sup>st</sup> of June**

PANEL 6: **Hansen in the Province**, Chair: *Jozsef Sisa (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest(? to be confirmed?))*

09:15–10:00 *Jan Galeta (Masaryk University Brno): Hansen in the Province. Projects, Contacts, Reception*

10:00–10:45 *Dragan Damjanović (University of Zagreb): Theophil Hansen and the Architecture of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia at the End of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Century*

11:30–12:00 Coffee Break

12:00–13:00 Closing Remarks and Final Discussion, Chair: *Timo Hagen, Richard Kurdiovsky, Gábor György Papp, Frank Rochow*

#### **SATURDAY, 22<sup>nd</sup> of June**

10:00 Field Trip: Objects by Hansen and His Students in Vienna