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**DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORICAL METHODS OF STONE MONUMENTS  
CONSERVATION IN TECHNICAL AND AESTHETIC ASPECT  
ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE CONSERVATION  
OF THE RENAISSANCE PEDIMENT OF THE GATE BUILDING  
OF THE SILESIA PIAST CASTLE IN BRZEG**

Doctoral dissertation under the supervision of prof. zw. dr hab. Ireneusz Płuska

**ABSTRACT**

The inspiration for taking up the topic of the doctoral dissertation in the field of theoretical considerations in the technical and aesthetic aspect were the conservation works carried out by the author at the renaissance stone pediment of the gate building of the Silesian Piast Castle in Brzeg. Those included, in accordance with the original program of conservation proceedings, the full range of activities of a technical and aesthetic nature. This issue, in the context of historical renovation and conservation of the object discovered during the works, had a significant impact on the course of the conservation process and its final effect. The multiplicity and diversity both in terms of technology and technique of execution, as well as aesthetic design, revealed the problem of stone conservation and the scope of works, the renovators and conservators working on the facility over the past centuries had to face.

The dissertations begin with an *INTRODUCTION*, which outlines the aim of the work, showing the development of stone conservation methods on the example of the frontage of the castle in Brzeg and answers the question of how much the approach to the issue of its broadly understood conservation has changed over the course

of several centuries. The author indicates the sources on which the research was based, both written and iconographic, relating to the works carried out at the pediment of the gate building, with particular emphasis on the period from the destruction of the castle in the 18th century until the last restoration of the pediment.

The work has been divided into three chapters. Chapter 1, *CASTLE IN BRZEG* presents the history of the seat of the duke's court of Legnica-Brzeg line of the Silesian Piasts, the castle in Brzeg, until the end of the Piast dynasty in the 17th century. This chapter includes a little known and probably the first view of Brzeg from 1537.

Chapter 2, *RENAISSANCE CASTLE* presents the history of the foundation of Prince George II, the renaissance reconstruction of the Brzeg castle with the presentation of its creators of the Italian Parr family, as well as the techniques and technologies of stone decoration of the pediment. Referring to the renaissance reconstruction of the building, a very interesting, the only known such detailed description of the castle by Friedrich Lucae from around 1668 is recalled here. In this chapter, the author is the first to identify and indicate the source of the extraction of the stone from which the decoration of the front of the gate building was made, the Czaple quarry.

In the fundamental chapter 3, *DESTRUCTION, RUIN, RECONSTRUCTION*, in a very broad sense, with reference to the turbulent history of the Brzeg castle, which was outlined in each of the discussed historical periods, the history of the destruction and reconstruction of the building is presented. This is the period from the death of the last Piast in 1675 to the present day, with particular emphasis on the frontage of the gatehouse.

The chronological presentation of the works on the stone pediment with an attempt to define the scope of activities, starting with the oldest known renovation of the pediment from 1865, shows how certain methods of stone renovation and conservation have remained unchanged for centuries. This nineteenth-century renovation was also the beginning of the perception of this type of work in terms of aesthetic reception. The emergence of the need for an opinion and evaluation of their performance.

Evolution of approach to the issue of broadly understood monument protection and the professionalization of works resulted in the first conservation of the pediment carried out in 1926 based on prepared guidelines, which today we call conservation recommendations.

A wide range of research, preparation of expert opinions and design studies was preceded by a huge renovation and conservation project carried out at the Brzeg castle in 1938–1943.

The continuation of works at the Brzeg castle interrupted by the Second World War was its reconstruction and renovation started on a large scale in 1958, including restoration works at the front of the gate building. First carried out after the war in the years 1961–1963, the conservation of the stone decoration of the front of the gatehouse is already an example of activities aimed mainly at finding the right technological solutions, selecting the appropriate means and materials for stone preservation.

Subsequent conservation works from 1967 consisted of undertaking conservation solutions based on the experience of previous conservation, but also the reconnaissance and in-depth analysis of the state of preservation of the stone.

An expert opinion from 1983 was a significant elaboration for future restoration works on the stone pediment decoration. Conservation status assessment and the proposed conservation procedure was based on the results of laboratory tests of samples taken from the building. The proposition of appropriate preparations and materials intended for the conservation of stone indicate the development of that time, especially in the field of chemistry for conservation purposes.

The assessment of the state of preservation of the building carried out in 1986 did not bring anything significant to the issue of the conservation of stone decorations of the pediment, apart from the historiography of the renovation and conservation works carried out so far.

Conservation works from the years 1988–1990 are fully professional implementation carried out on the basis of the correct selection of conservation measures and methods. The availability of appropriate materials, adopted technique and technology of works as well as the clearly elevated aesthetic aspect of their performance are a manifestation of the development of the "art of conservation" of the time.

The year 2001 is time of the creation of a comprehensive study on technological research, recognition and assessment of the state of preservation of stone decorations front end as well as the assessment of the accuracy and durability of the adopted technological solutions conservation work carried out so far. A thorough analysis of the state of preservation of the stone supported by a wide range of physicochemical tests was the basis for formulating extensive conservation

assumptions. Based on the presented assumptions, a detailed work program was developed. The program referred to each aspect of the issues of the conservation of the stone pediment decoration, providing in principle ready-made technological and technical solutions with an indication of the necessary materials to perform the proposed treatments. The importance of the proper aesthetic reception of the final effect of restoration works was also clearly emphasized. The prepared studies that comprehensively capture the issues of work at the pediment are the result of the development and availability of technologically advanced preparations and stone preservatives.

The works from 2001, carried out on the basis of the above-mentioned conservation program were carried out correctly in terms of the technology, however they cannot be considered successful in terms of the achieved aesthetic effects.

Another conservation of the stone decoration of the front of the gate building was carried out in 2002 under the supervision of the author of this dissertation. It was preceded by the elaboration of an original conservation program. The program raised the broadly outlined issue of the stone preservation together with reference to the proposed conservation procedure, presenting in detail the technique and technologies of performing individual treatments. Owing to the systematic development of the so-called segment of conservation chemistry, as well as the availability of devices supporting the conservation process, proper execution, the possessed technical and technological capabilities allowed to achieve the assumed effect of conservation works.

The chapter with a very rich illustrative material includes photos from 1941 showing the original damaged elements of the balustrade crowning the pediment of the gate building of the Brzeg castle. Those photos were published for the first time and found by the author of the work in the archives of the Herder Institute in Marburg.

The work ends with a *SUMMARY* with the author's reference to the presented dissertation. The work adopts the method of chronological presentation, analysis and comparison of subsequent studies. It included expert opinions on the state of preservation of the stone decoration of the pediment and conservation guidelines developed on their basis, but above all, documentation of the work carried out along with the huge role of photographic documentation. According to the author, it allowed him to achieve the assumed goal of the work, to present the development of stone

conservation methods on the example of the conservation of the Renaissance front of the gatehouse of the Silesian Piast castle in Brzeg.

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