

ABSTRACT

The Monograph of *Pelișor* Castle (1903-1948) is – as its title reveals – an ample monographic paper dedicated to the summer residence belonging to the couple Ferdinand-Marie, and it refers to the period between 1903 – the inaugural year of Pelișor Castle – and 1948, the moment the inventory process of the royal residences in Sinaia started, as they became state property owned by the Popular Republic.

In the present historiographic context, the only text on Pelișor Castle is the one written by the historian Mircea Hortopan and it was composed in order to complete the information in the monograph dedicated to architect Karel Liman. In the ten pages containing illustrations with copies of some of the original plans and vintage photographs of Pelișor Castle, the historian makes a short presentation of the construction and decoration stages and salutes the initiative of any future studies. Answering that expectation, our paper joins the range of monographs of royal residences in Romania and it is a normal enterprise in historical context of the last two decades, which contains milestones such as the exceptional volumes dedicated to Bran, Peleş and Balcic Castles, as well as to Cotroceni Palace. Therefore, the monograph of Pelișor Castle is a reparative, necessary and useful endeavor both for those specialized in the field of history and for the amateurs.

Our paper consists of five ample chapters, which give a detailed presentation of the construction and decoration stages of Pelișor Castle, after which we extensively dealt with its representative function as a place for political decision making, then with the way the Court is organized, as well as with the variety of daily life aspects encompassed by the high aristocracy's realm of pastimes. In the chapter dealing with the construction stages of Pelișor Castle, we pointed out the part the summer residence played among the wide range of royal residences, appreciating – by punctual stylistic comparison with Peleş Castle – the second place taken by Pelișor Castle, as a princely residence and German *villa*, perfectly integrated in the type *Fachwerk* architectural landscape of Peleş domain. Based on the plan and old photographs, we managed to retrace in detail and for the first time both the first stage of the building of the summer residence belonging to the

couple Ferdinand-Marie, and the so far unknown stage of the architectural reconfiguration of Peleş Castle, from around 1910. At the same time, with the help of numerous and various archival documents, we identified the names of the companies which contributed to the building of Peleş Castle and we established the exact sums for different tasks and construction materials. Last but not least, we analyzed the architectural versions proposed by architect Karel Liman to his patron, King Carol I, and we followed both the way in which the architect succeeded in compensating for the limitations imposed by the preexisting foundations and the stylistic evolution of the facades.

Our paper reconstructs for the first time the vast decorative project of Peleş Castle, carried out between 1901-1903, on the basis of the original photos discovered in the private archive of the Viennese decorator Bernhard Ludwig and according to several documents found in the archives of Peleş National Museum, as well as in the National Archives of Romania. Furthermore, it identifies as the main source of the decorating program the paper *Houses and Gardens* of the architect and decorator Hugh Baillie-Scott, published in London in 1906, from which a number of chapters had already been published in different architecture and interior design magazines. Starting from the principles stated by Baillie-Scott, with whom the Princess had collaborated when decorating the tree house *Juniperus* (1897), Marie adheres to the principles of the English artistic movement *Arts&Crafts*. From the collaboration with Bernhard Ludwig, which imbues the interiors of Peleş castle with the spirit of the *Secession* current, the outcome is a modern and light decorative assemblage, of great artistic force.

The chapter dealing with the decorative stages also establishes the degree of Princess Victoria Melita's involvement in the interior decoration of Peleş Castle and it identifies the period interiors which inspired Marie as models for their residence in Sinaia, such as the Ducal Palace in Darmstadt, Wolfsgarten Castle or Cliveden House. Moreover, stylistic analogies are made with the other *dream houses*, especially with Cotroceni Palace and Bran Castle, decorated by Queen Marie, with the support of architect Karel Liman. Finally, the chapter offers details of the decorative interventions taken by Queen Marie after 1920, with the help of some archival documents, inventories and her *Daily Notes*. Based on this deep analysis, we proved that the residence at Peleş

Castle is the unique aulic assemblage of *Secession* and *Arts&Crafts* type in Romania, which stood almost intact until today, despite the tests of history.

The third aspect of the paper treats the representative part as a place for political decision making that Pelișor Castle played during the young monarchy before and after 1914. Its representative function is illustrated by the solemn moment of Pelișor Castle inauguration ceremony (24th Mai 1903) and by the birth of Prince Nicolas (18th August 1903), events we analyzed in detail based on archival documents, as well as primary sources. The funerary events linked to the passing of the two sovereigns, King Ferdinand (20th July 1927) and Queen Marie (18th July 1938) were retraced with the help of primary sources (memoirs, diaries), and in particular of the ample articles published in newspapers of wide circulation and differently placed in the political spectrum. The resort to the press stands out as our most valuable contribution through this chapter to the historical reconstruction of those events, which have been the object of other researches too.

Its condition as a place for political decision making is proved by several political events, such as archduke Franz-Ferdinand's official visit in July 1909, accompanied by Sophia Chotek, as well as Ottokar Czernin and von dem Bussche's interventions in the years of neutrality, in their earnest endeavor to make Romania respect its military alliances. Furthermore, based on archival documents and primary sources, the chapter deals in detail with the matrimonial events which took place at Pelișor Castle: Princess Elisabeth's betrothal (12th October 1920), Princess Mary's "unofficial" betrothal (9th January 1922) and Princess Ileana's civil wedding with archduke Anton of Habsburg (26th July 1931). The part played by Pelișor Castle as a place of political decision making was exemplified by the presentation of the two Crown Councils held here, on 31st December 1925 and 31st January 1926.

The fourth aspect of the thesis focuses on the theme of the Court organization at Pelișor Castle. The Court is analyzed by comparison to the one at Peleș Castle, this being an original scientific approach, based on primary sources (memoirs, diaries, correspondence), plans and archival documents. Through a considerable synthetic effort, we managed to put together the data concerning the staff of Pelișor Castle, respectively those referring to the members of King Ferdinand's Civil House and Military House, as

well as of Queen Marie's Civil House, likewise the information on the evolution of these institutions after King Carol I's demise. We succeeded in identifying the secretaries of Peleş Castle and the spaces at their disposal and the Queen Mary's ladies-in-waiting. The chapter gives special attention to the tutors and governesses, responsible with the Princes and Princesses' education. In order to understand the Court environment of Peleş Castle, the chapter emphasizes private visits and especially the kitchen and meals at Peleş Castle, as well as the 5 o'clock tea parties organized by the hosts.

The last chapter relates the daily life from all its angles. The princely (then royal) family's daily life falls into the range of typical pastimes of the contemporary high aristocracy. The reconstruction of the atmosphere of the summer residence was possible due to primary sources (correspondence, Queen Marie's unpublished *Notes* and various memoirs), numerous archival documents, as well as secondary sources. The eleven sub-chapters give details on both types of household interests – inside (reading, writing, painting, handicraft) and outside (the passion for botany and garden design on the royal domain at Sinaia, riding, hunting, winter sports, tennis and car driving). To all these we may add entertaining events which brought together family and friends, sometimes even members of the staff, such as cinema nights, classical music concerts, scenes *vivante*, fancy dress balls, and the unavoidable anniversary parties too. In this context, we considered essential the dissertation on Queen Marie's hobby as an art collector and patron for Peleş Castle, which we illustrated with examples proving the presence of important painters and photographers, such as Nora Steriadi (1889-1948), Oscar Stössel (1879-1964), Pietro Canonica (1869-1959), François Flameng (1856-1923) and Emil Otto Hoppé (1878-1972).

From the point of view of the vision and theme approaching method, we embraced a multidisciplinary perspective, which combines history with the fields of art and architecture, in a classical chronological presentation comprising a period of more than four decades. The approach of the subject regarding the construction stages was based on the chronological method doubled by the comparative one. Thus, we established differences and similarities between the two buildings, Peleş Castle, the official residence, and Peleş Castle, the secondary residence, still resembling architecturally the neoRenaissance assemblage of the royal domain at Sinaia.

For a clarifying analysis of the decorating stages of Peleşor Castle, the most useful research method remains, of course, the chronological one seconded by the comparative method: Peleşor Castle was one of Queen Marie's numerous artistic experiments. Therefore, whenever possible, we made analogies with other royal residences decorated by Queen Marie, especially Cotroceni Palace and Bran Castle. The chapters dealing with official or particular events in the princely, then royal, family life, with the Court organization and daily life seen in its full complexity, started from the documentary sources studied through the classical historical method, via a chronological approach, whose main purpose was to re-create as truthfully as possible the complex universe of the monarchic period of Peleşor Castle.

To support the aspects presented, we exploited original documents found in archives in Romania and Austria, in the following archival fonds: the Central Archives of National History, the Plan Archives of Peleş National Museum, the Photo Archive of Peleş National Museum, the private Archives owned by decorator Bernhard Ludwig, in Vienna. The documents and photographs mentioned are completed by unique photos belonging to architect Mădălin Ghigeanu's collection. Likewise, we benefited from the access to a considerable amount of articles, art albums and magazines, unavailable in Romania, kindly offered by the British art historians Annette Carruthers și Shona Kallestrup.