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MARSHAL KONĚV AND THE IMMACULATE VIRGIN:
SOME ART-HISTORICAL ISSUES IN THE CZECH POLITICS OF MEMORY

Milena Bartlová

The contribution explores recent conflicts concerning public monuments in the Czech context. It looks in detail at two specific cases, namely the removal of the bronze figure of Soviet Marshal Koněv in Prague Bubeneč and the erection of a copy of the Baroque Marian Column at the Old Town Square in Prague. In both cases, the root context is political: post-Communism and the social memory of the recent past in the case of Marshal Koněv, and post-secular demands from part of the Catholic Church to acquire more political influence in the case of the Marian Column. While art historical judgments have also played a key part in the debates surrounding both cases, these have been used only superficially and instrumentally: there has not been any in-depth critical discussion about these cases within the theoretical framework of art history as an academic discipline.

Keywords: public monuments, politics of memory, Prague monuments, artistic quality, Czechoslovak culture 1948–1989

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The recent rise in the importance of public monuments in civic discussions may have come as an unpleasant surprise to those who believe that the public sphere should be governed by political rationality. The 2020 campaign to bring down monumental public representations of powerful white men who had been slave holders, slave traders or political supporters of slavery highlighted the importance of visual images, mostly larger-than-life statues in durable materials. While their character of 'high quality art' may be disputed, such sculptures maintain one of

the ancient functions of monumental figures, namely to represent the depicted person in a way that stands in direct opposition to the modern definition of distanced aesthetic attitude towards artworks.[1] They prove that visual, or rather material images can be – and very often are – a visible and tangible embodiment of power relations and that the erection or removal of a public sculpture is as political an act as there can be.

The Czech public discussion of the movement to demote the glorification of slavery was dominated by right-wing conservative opinion and, moreover, characterized by a deep misunderstanding of the issues at hand. At precisely the same time as that international discussion was taking place, notable monuments were both removed and erected in the local public space. In the following, I provide a brief analysis of prominent recent Czech cases of monument controversy and hope it may give the international readership an insight into the Czech politics of memory and history. I will discuss two cases of public artworks that made Czech media headlines in 2020, before attempting to reflect critically on the role that art historical scholarship played in these and continues to play in similar cases.

Down with the Memory of Communism

The first wave of the Covid-19 crisis in spring 2020 was quickly evaluated as a period when the near impossibility of staging any demonstrations made it easier for monuments to be removed and erected in Prague. The two monuments in question were both highly controversial. The first, a bronze monument to Marshal Ivan Stěpanovič Koněv by sculptor Zdeněk Krybus and architect Vratislav Růžička, was erected in 1980 in the elite, although not central, district Praha 6-Bubeneč. The man it commemorated was the Soviet general who led the Red Army when it drove the Nazi German army out of Prague on May 9th 1945.[2]

1 I have discussed this topic in detail in my book MILENA BARTLOVÁ, *Skutečná přítomnost. Středověký obraz mezi ikonou a virtuální realitou* [The Real Presence. Medieval Image Between Icon and Virtual Reality], Praha 2012, especially pp. 314–325. For a general introduction, see SERGIUSZ MICHALSKI, *Public Monuments. Art in Political Bondage 1870–1997*, London 1998; UWE FLECKNER, MARTIN WARNKE, HENDRIK ZIEGLER (eds.), *Handbuch der politischen Ikonographie*, München 2011; in the Czech context ZDENĚK HOJDA, JIŘÍ POKORNÝ, *Pomníky a zapomníky* [Memorials and Forgettings], Praha 1997. – The references in this article have been selected primarily to provide further bibliography and more detailed argument.

2 JAN ŠINDELÁŘ, *Dnes už bez šeříků. Historie Koněvova pomníku* v *Praze* [No More Lilacs Today. The History of the Marshal Koněv Monument in Prague], Dějiny a současnost 40/2018,

He was awarded honours in 1946, but the public sculpture was only designed later, at a time when the Communist regime had already started to dissolve in the aftermath of the Charter'77 dissident movement. Because of its relatively low artistic quality, Prague's central monument authority, the Prague Municipal Gallery, transferred legal ownership of the monument to the Prague 6 district government in 2013. In 2018, a new plaque was placed on the granite socle that also mentioned Marshal Koněv's repressive roles in the Hungarian uprising in 1956, the Berlin crisis in 1961 and the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. This was, however, not enough to satisfy the newly elected district council in 2019, led by the Civic Democratic Party, which bases its right-wing politics on the ideological legacy of the 1990s, namely on vehement simplified anti-Communism. When the Koněv statue was vandalized with a splash of red paint – not for the first time – on the anniversary of the May 1945 events, the district council decided to remove the monument from the public space and promised to have a new memorial built in its place. Currently, they have yet to make up their mind which interpretation of the memory of May 1945 any newly designed memorial should stand for. It may prove nigh on impossible to unify the traditional positive image of the liberation in the early days of spring (as signified by the lilac twig in the Marshal's hand) with the sobering memory of the Soviet Secret Police (GPU) abductions of Czechoslovak citizens from the Russian and Ukrainian group of White exiles, who had lived in a kind of 'Russian colony' in Prague 6-Bubeneč – the truth of which was covered up until 1989.[3]

The key narrative here is an anti-Communist one and the displacement of the bronze statue of Koněv must be seen in the wider context formed by other demolitions of monumental architecture in the course of the last decade, during which the label of 'arrogant Communist style' has proven strong enough to drive the large-scale demolition of monumental buildings dating from the 1970s–80s, in spite of their arguably high artistic quality. In most such cases, it is easy to un-

no. 7, pp. 44–46. For wider context, see MILENA BARTLOVÁ, JINDŘICH VYBÍRAL et al., *Building a State, The Representation of Czechoslovakia in Art, Architecture and Design* (exhibition catalogue), Praha 2015, especially the chapter *Homeland, Monuments and their Heroes*, pp. 8–78; PETRA ŠVARDOVÁ, *Pamätníky Červenej armády v Československu a premena verejného priestoru po roku 1945* [Monuments to the Red Army in Czechoslovakia and the Transformation of the Public Space after 1945], in: Milena Bartlová (ed.), Co bylo Československo? Kulturní konstrukce státní identity [What Was Czechoslovakia? The Cultural Construction of State Identity], Praha 2017, pp. 148–158.

3 ANASTÁZIE KOPŘIVOVÁ, *Střediska ruského emigrantského života* v *Praze (1921–1952)* [Centres of Russian Émigré Life in Prague (1921–1952)], Praha 2001; ELENA CHINAYEVA, *Russians Outside Russia, The Émigré Community in Czechoslovakia 1918–1938*, München 2001.

derstand this anti-Communist rhetoric primarily as a guise in which commercial developers have presented their desires to build far less artistically potent structures in place of the monumental buildings, which would be much more effective in terms of the potential profit derived from the building lot. While the rationale behind removing the so-called brutalist and technicist architecture is shared with the 'former West', the success of arguments that identify these international period styles with 'communist arrogance' is specifically local.[4] The most vivid example of this focused on a site that is almost within sight of Koněv's statue. The flamboyant monumental architecture of the Hotel Praha, built in the early 1980s by the Czechoslovak Communist Party to house its international guests in a highly contemporary style and furnished with first class interior design, was demolished in 2013 by the richest Czech entrepreneur Petr Kellner, not to cash in on any new development but simply in order to obtain an empty space.[5] The space in question enabled him to regain the grand vista his house had originally enjoyed and to restore the luxurious neighbourhood in which it is located its 'original character', although the newly enlarged park is not open to the public as it had been after 1989. The idea, accepted by the majority of public opinion at the time, was to eliminate architecture reminiscent of the four decades of dictatorship under the Czechoslovak Communist Party and to move on 'as if nothing had happened'.

The removal of Marshal Koněv, as well as the more extensive efforts to demolish the monumental architecture of the second half of the 20th century, aimed to erase material memory of the Communist-ruled decades. Such a move is, however, profoundly paradoxical: the same representatives of the conservative right who support this erasure are constantly heard arguing that 'people do not remember well enough how horrible the Communist regime was'. The rupture reveals the inner meaning of such memory operations: a desire to create a materially palpable fiction of unhindered continuity between the idealized interwar Czechoslovak Republic and today, 'as if there had been no Communism'. It is a move that results in pressure to convince older generations they should cease to believe in their own memories of living in an illiberal and undemocratic but socially egalitarian state, with poor consumer options but with no unemployment,

4 MILENA BARTLOVÁ, *Zbořte ty komunistické baráky! Socialismus a modernita mezi pamětí a zapomínáním* [Tear Down those Communist Shacks! Socialism and Modernity Between Memory and Forgetting], in: Petr Drulák, Petr Agha (eds.), Sametová budoucnost? [The Velvet Future?] Praha-Olomouc 2019, pp. 45–62; LADISLAV ZIKMUND-LENDER, *Anatomy of Demolitions: How we got to the Case Transgas?*, in: Nonument!, Ljubljana 2020, pp. 264–279.

5 PAVEL KAROUS et al., *Hotel Praha* [Hotel Prague], Praha 2019.

no homelessness and no housing crisis. What is more, this politically charged operation to 'delete' the Communist regime from public memory also supports an ideal of identification between the neo-liberal globalized capitalism of the post-1989 republic with its 1920s predecessor. The members of the oligarchic elite prefer to see themselves as representatives of an ethos based on the 'good old' nationalist concept of small family entrepreneurship.

Construct the Desired Memories

The second controversial event of 2020 in Prague's public space took longer than the removal of Marshal Koněv's statue and took place at the imminent core of the city, at the Old Town Square, which has served as the symbolic centre of the town, its *forum,* since the 12th century. It was precisely due to the square's symbolic central role that a column was erected here in 1650.[6] It was topped by a figure of the Immaculate Virgin Mary with a halo of twelve stars, stepping on a symbolic dragon and accompanied on the socle by four armed Archangels portrayed as knocking down the allegories of War, Plague, Hunger and Heresy. The last of these was especially topical in Prague in the middle of the 17th century, as it was only at this time that the Calixtine, or Hussite Utraquist church had been finally defeated after two hundred years of independent existence.[7] The sculpture was torn down on November 3rd 1918, i.e. five days into the existence of the new Czechoslovak Republic, declared after the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire. A crowd led by a few Socialist newspapermen brought the statue down on their way back to town from White Mountain: the battle that was lost there in 1620 was considered a potent symbol of Habsburg rule. At the time, the Marian Column was considered to mark not only the end of the Thirty Years War and final defence of Prague against the Protestant Swedish army, but also the Catholic party's victory. It was built by Emperor Ferdinand III and modelled on the Marian Columns erected in Vienna's Am Hof Square in 1645 and in

6 PETR BLAŽEK, VOJTĚCH POKORNÝ, *Duchovní střed Evropy. Dějiny Mariánského sloupu na Staroměstském náměstí* v *Praze 1650–2020* [The Spiritual Centre of Europe. The History of the Marian Column at the Old Town Square in Prague 1650–2020], Praha 2020 (a collection of documents interpreted from the viewpoint of the Catholic exponents of the recent reconstruction).

7 HOWARD LOUTHAN, *Converting Bohemia – Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation*, Cambridge 2009.

Munich in 1638.[8] Unlike the Koněv statue, the Marian Column was classified as high-quality artwork. Its sculptor Jan Jiří Bendl (Johann Georg Bendl) represented the first generation of Baroque sculptors in Bohemia. He came to Prague from South Germany and established himself, gaining fame for the ensemble of sculptures in the newly remodelled Jesuit church of the Holy Saviour, opposite the Charles Bridge Old Town Tower.[9]

New monument constructions demand much more social energy and time than demolitions. Endeavours to rebuild the Marian Column surfaced almost immediately after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and were sustained by a group of conservative Roman Catholic believers who were genuinely convinced that rebuilding the Column would constitute a gesture of satisfaction for the previous disgrace against the Virgin and thus would truly help the Czech nation. Because their efforts were little understood by Czech society post-1989, the authority of historians, art historians and state heritage care was strong enough to stop the case: they argued that no relevant copy could be produced since there was not enough of the original sculpture extant.[10] One of the warrior groups on the socle had been replaced by a poorly executed copy in 1906: how could a Baroque original be restituted? The religious team was not deterred, however, and sculptor Petr Váňa proceeded to carve a replica monument step by step over the following decades. The project became a focus for public religious devotions, pilgrimages and services. The promoters were, however, forced to remove the words 'here the Marian Column once stood and will stand again' from a plaque they set into the paving at the original site in 1993 to represent the new founding stone, in spite of a negative statement from the town authorities.[11] In 1994, a rather poorly carved replica of the figure of the Virgin was brought from the USA to Prague and erected in the garden of the Strahov Monastery. Known as 'Our Lady of the Exiles', it had been created in marble by 'papal sculptor' Alessandro Montelone in 1954, venerated in the Benedictine Abbey in Lisle, Illinois, and

8 ONDŘEJ JAKUBEC, PAVEL SUCHÁNEK (eds.), *Mariánský sloup na Staroměstském náměstí* v *Praze: Počátky rekatolizace v Čechách v 17. století* [The Marian Column at the Old Town Square in Prague. The Beginnings of Recatholicisation in Bohemia in the 17th Century], Praha 2020.

9 OLDŘICH J. BLAŽÍČEK, *Jan Jiří Bendl* (exhibition catalogue), Praha 1982; OLDŘICH J. BLAŽÍČEK, *Baroque Art in Bohemia*, Praha 1968; TAŤÁNA PETRASOVÁ, ROSTISLAV ŠVÁCHA (eds.), *Art in the Czech Lands 800–2000*, Prague 2017, nos. 130, 133.

10 VÍT VLNAS, *Mariánský sloup a jeho náměstí (poznámky o smyslu a místě)* [The Marian Column and Its Square (Notes on its Meaning and Place)], Zprávy památkové péče 75/2015, pp. 219–226; P. BLAŽEK, V. POKORNÝ, *Duchovní střed* [The Spiritual Centre], 2020, pp. 236–241.

11 'Zde stál a opět bude stát Mariánský sloup'. See P. BLAŽEK, V. POKORNÝ, *Duchovní střed* [The Spiritual Centre], p. 232.

served as a spiritual focus for exiled Czech Catholics.[12] The issue of rebuilding the Column thus acquired a new dimension as it became tied to the suffering of the Catholic Church under the aggressively atheist regime and could be now included in the anti-Communist narrative. During the following decade, financial contributions collected from devoted individuals proved sufficient to cover the substantial cost of the stone required (some of it imported from India) and in 2003, Váňa's finished replica of the Virgin figure was exhibited on a modern support on the premises of the Týn Church, just off the Old Town Square. After Dominik Duka became Archbishop of Prague in 2010, efforts to rebuild the monument gathered new momentum. The core of the group that sustained them protested against the Prague Pride festival with the Gothic painted panel of the Virgin that had been located in the elaborate socle of the original column. The project of erecting the replica was then taken up by members of the Christian Democratic-People's Party in Prague's municipal and district councils and during the 2010s, it slowly gained the ground of public consent. The topic was once again raised with the municipal government at the unique moment when a single vote in favour became available by coincidence, and construction of the concrete foundation for the replica began in February 2020. The new replica was consecrated by Archbishop Duka in August 2020 and humorously considered by some to be a Coronavirus Plague Column.

The pivotal moment that remained difficult for many to see was the shift of accent from a pious activity promoted by a small group of devout Catholic believers to a public issue in the political arena; a shift that was intentionally covered up by the project's religious supporters. Together with the Catholic devotional discourse, the erection of a replica of the Marian Column was discussed in terms of a restitution of high-quality Baroque artwork. This concealed a post-modern hybrid of religious and secular discourses: in fact, if the decisive contexts were to be artistic and art historical, then art historians' objections would have had to be taken seriously. The post-secular impulse is the most pertinent context in which to view the Marian Column reconstruction: it is not only an attempt to erase the borders between secular and sacred public contexts, it is an impressive demonstration of the power of an eminently political religious movement in a society where a mere 14% of inhabitants registered as belonging to any church or religious group in the last census ten years ago (that percentage includes some marginal non-Christian groups and well below 10% are in fact

12 P. BLAŽEK, V. POKORNÝ, *Duchovní střed* [The Spiritual Centre], pp. 205–214.

Roman Catholics).[13] This rupture reveals some less visible levels of memory politics in the Czech Republic today. Revoking the political gesture that was the destruction of the Marian Column in 1918 does not take aim at the rhetorically perused Communist rule but rather renounces the modernist and secular ethos that characterized the First Czechoslovak Republic in the interwar period and that was symbolically sustained by the actions of its first President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. A revealing detail in the history of the Column is the fact that its reconstruction had been authorized once before: the right-wing nationalists who dominated the government of the German Protectorate agreed to rebuild it in May 1939 in response to a suggestion from the conservative Catholic writer Jaroslav Durych. That the plans came to nothing was only due to the outbreak of WWII that same autumn.

The Hidden Politics of Art History

One of the arguments that has appeared during recent campaigns against monuments commemorating slave-holders in the US and Western Europe is the naively historical claim that to tear them down would be to erase history. There is indeed a past that is revised or re-written by such acts, but it is not the past of the slavery itself; it is the more recent past when the monuments were built. In the case of Confederate generals in the United States it became clear that their statues were in fact only erected between the end of Reconstruction and the strengthening of racial segregation policies in the 1920s.[14] The disputed British monuments date from the later Victorian period, two hundred years after slavery was abolished in Britain albeit in fact sustained in the imperial colonies. The decisive moment is, however, the present: how do we want the past to inform our current issues and lives?

At first sight, the case of Marshal Koněv appears to fit neatly into such discourse. It seems obvious that members of the liberal democratic Czech society do not want to glorify a military officer who participated in the violent imperial acts of the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 60s, including the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact itself. It is legitimate not to want such a monument. However, the sculpture was primarily erected to com-

13 MILENA BARTLOVÁ, *Die Kirche und die künstlerischen Denkmäler in Tschechien*, Kunst und Kirche 75/2013, Nr 1, pp. 10–13.

14 KATHERINE POOLE-JONES, *Historical Memory, Reconciliation and the Shaping of the Postbellum Landscape*, Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art, Spring 2020 https://editions.lib.umn.edu/panorama/article/historical-memory/ (accessed on April 4, 2021)

memorate the liberation from the occupation by Nazi Germany, although it was constructed only three decades later, by which time images of Soviet tanks and soldiers have already acquired an additional meaning after the Soviet occupation in 1968. In fact, it is society's evaluation of the May 1945 liberation that is at the core of the controversy concerning Koněv's statue. During the three decades since 1989, right-wing interpreters have gradually established an evaluation that is directly opposed to the one that prevailed in the imminent post-war years and that became established as the legitimation narrative of the Communist rule: what happened in May 1945 was not a liberation from oppression but just a transition between two intrinsically identical 'occupations', from fascism to communism. Their identity is often accounted for by the alleged leftist character of both anti-democratic movements.[15] As it turns out, then, the controversy surrounding Koněv's monument is driven by an internal difficulty in how Czech citizens handle their own history and thus is a legitimate political topic. If the public space was ruled by rational debate, the question over whether to have Marshal Koněv standing on a pedestal should properly be discussed. Such a discussion would reveal and bring home to citizens the fact that their ancestors faced options and choices that were far from black-and-white and that a moralizing approach is dysfunctional. In fact, this is precisely the role that public monuments in democratic liberal societies ought to play, and it is arguably no minor role.[16] It stands in opposition both to the primeval glorifying force of a monumental image executed in long-lasting material and put over our heads, inaccessible, visibly costly and powerful, and to the irrational power that leads to political monuments being torn down in the emotional flare-up during a revolution.[17] The latter emotion was behind the demolition of the Marian Column but was not behind all the cases, those mentioned above and many others, of Communist era public art and architecture being removed from the public space. Many such cases have been thoroughly thought through, analyzed, planned and carefully carried out. Art-historical scholarship has an inescapable role to play in these processes and its voice should be heard. I would like to conclude this text with a consideration of why it is that art history nevertheless most often abstains.

15 PETR PLACÁK, *Gottwaldovo Československo jako fašistický stát* [Gottwald's Czechoslovakia as a Fascist State], Praha 2015.

16 MILENA BARTLOVÁ, *Čím jsou pomníky?* [What are Monuments?] in: M. BARTLOVÁ, Retrospektiva. Vybrané studie k dějinám umění 12.–16. a 20. století [A Retrospective. Selected Studies on Art History of the 12th – 16th and 20th Centuries], Praha 2018, pp. 312–323.

17 DARIO GAMBONI, *The Destruction of Art. Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution*, London 1997.

In the case of Marshal Koněv the issue at hand is the discussion of the sculpture's quality. As I have already mentioned, the statue was officially dismissed from the oversight of the specialized municipal institution (the Prague Municipal Gallery) because of its 'lower quality' and was entrusted to the local district government. There was, however, no scholarly discussion of the topic and there exists no art historical analysis of the question. The history of Czech art between 1950 and 1990 habitually excludes art created for the 'official' arena and deals only with such artworks as conform to the Western canon and are labelled as 'opposition art', with minimal conceptual debate and argumentation.[18] A possibly huge number of works of art are thus left aside under the label 'socialist realist art'; these are not the object of any institutional collecting (but may be very successful on the art market), no theoretical criteria have been elaborated in relation to them and any discussion about them relies, at best, on intuitive individual evaluation. At worst, historians of art and architecture are willing to accommodate either financial or ideological demands by providing commercial assessments and media appearances. The problem of quality criteria is admittedly theoretically highly complex as it touches on one of the core paradigms of modern art history and far exceeds the accustomed intellectual audacity of the Czech management of the field.

In the case of the Marian Column, the related art historical topics are more differentiated but no less complex and theoretically demanding. Here, another core paradigm is challenged: that of originality. The high artistic quality of the Baroque original is considered proven by special research since the 1960s. The question that remains is to what degree, if at all, we should consider the copy, replica or remake to be a vehicle of the same art quality. Several lines of thought confront each other at this point, but without clear analysis and classification, the resulting situation remains blurred and incomprehensible. One branch of dispute concerns the tradition of Czech state heritage care that has been fundamentally split since the 1940s between the so-called analytic and synthetic approaches. The analytic approach recognizes the artistic value in the material authenticity of a unique handcrafted object.[19] As a result, it must settle with the inevitable deterioration of old artworks and admit clearly visible modern inter-

18 The first attempt is TOMÁŠ POSPISZYL, *Úkoly pro dějiny umění východní Evropy doby socialismu* [New Tasks for the Art History of Eastern Europe in the Socialist Period], Sešit pro teorii, umění a příbuzné zóny [Notebook on Art, Theory and Related Zones] 12/2019, Nr 27, pp. 16–25.

19 In historical perspective, cf. MILENA BARTLOVÁ, *Dějiny českých dějin umění 1945–1969* [A History of Czech Art History 1945–1969], Praha 2020, especially pp. 117–121.

ventions. The synthetic approach, however, holds that the true quality resides in the original idea and in the general aesthetic impression or artistic gesture; it is more an architectural than an historical manner of thought. In this regard, it is perfectly legitimate to repeatedly renew and repair what has been damaged, up to the point of providing a remake (or copy, which may not be possible in the strict sense when the original is not materially complete any more, as in the case of the Marian Column). As in the previous case, Czech post-Communist art history could – thirty years after the fall of the regime – grasp the opportunity this presents to enter into the latest theoretical debates, to revise the paradigmatic categories of modern art history, and to accept 'historical memory' as a proper art-historical term.[20] It seems, however, that the field lacks the inner energy, theoretical background and intellectual courage to do so. Without addressing these intrinsic problems, art history will also lack the theoretical equipment that it should be able to bring expertly into the public debate.

Expert roles for art historians have a long-standing tradition in Czech culture. The birth of modern scholarly art history in the country can be traced back to an appreciation of the architectural value of Old Prague and its defence against widespread modernizing demolitions around the year 1900. After the eviction of three million Germans from the country of fifteen million in the years 1945–1946, art historians made enormous efforts to save the extensive artistic heritage confiscated by the state from those expelled from decay and neglecting. During the four decades of Communist rule, art historians and their organizations often offered their expertise to support opposition against technocratic mismanagement of cultural heritage. Yet the prevailing mood in the field during the last three decades has been one of public non-engagement. The idea of 'pure and objective scholarship' has gained predominance and today forms a decisive part of local art historical identity across the generations.[21] 2020 has seen, however, an intersection between this kind of restrained behaviour and the spread of general distrust towards scientific discourse, with potentially dangerous results for the scholarly field's ability to meet the neoliberal criteria of usefulness. When it comes to public monuments being removed or rebuilt, I have tried to suggest that there may indeed be a point at which specialized scholarship can still play its proper role in a democratic political debate without having to surrender its critical capabilities.

20 For such debate, see MILENA BARTLOVÁ, *Where Does an Art Historian Look From? Central European Art History and the Post-Colonial Discourse*, Umění 69/2021 (in print).

21 M. BARTLOVÁ, *Dějiny českých dějin umění* [History of Czech Art History].