

Preface

Historic wooden architecture is one of the most unique types of built heritage. Erected of organic material, wood, it stays in harmony with the natural surroundings and captivates subsequent generations with its particular charm. Because of its specificity it directly depicts the richness of traditional building solutions developed in different parts of the world and at the same time it contains a record of spiritual values that were important for those by whom the architectural structures were erected.

Therefore, we should strive to ensure that this valuable part of the world's cultural heritage is properly protected. Bearing in mind the impermanence of wood as a building material, wooden architecture requires a special approach for its preservation. It is significant that diverse cultures over the centuries have developed not only their own methods of extending the lifetime of these structures, but also, in a different way, understood the authenticity of the historical wooden building transmitted in time. And it is this last aspect, namely the issue of authenticity, which seems to be the key to capturing the character of a wooden building and the issue of its proper preservation.

This monograph discusses the issue of authenticity in the preservation and protection of historical wooden architecture from the perspective of contemporary conservation thought regarding architectural heritage. It contains five papers that show different aspects of the problem. The first text, which is also the theoretical introduction to the whole monograph, discusses the issue of understanding authenticity in relation to the adopted conservation doctrines and the consequences resulting from those doctrines for the application of the practical solutions.

Subsequent texts analyze the authenticity of the wooden architectural object using examples of specific conservation solutions and treatments implemented on selected historical log houses in the American South (the case studies come from the Appalachian region to the river lands of West Tennessee). These buildings, as important objects of architecture due to their historical and cultural values, are also structures that determine the identity of the communities in which they were erected. Conclusions and observations resulting from the examination of particular case studies are a contribution to the critical discussion of conservation methods and methodologies used in the area of western culture and their impact on the authenticity of a historical architectural structure.

The monograph particularly focuses on the considerations relating to the method of protection and conservation of wooden buildings as a form of specific historical interpretation, as well as the issue of reconstruction and translocation of a wooden historical building with regard to the level of its authenticity. In addition, analyses of the essence of historical modifications and the methods of maintaining and displaying wooden structures in relation to the requirements determining their historical and architectural authenticity are presented and discussed.

Therefore, the monograph as an important voice in the discussion on appropriate methodologies and methods of the preservation of wooden architecture, is at the same time an attempt to face the problems resulting from rapidly progressing globalization and the disappearance of local building traditions. Showing various aspects of the authenticity of a wooden building and discussing them using specific examples, it provides a rich material for further reflection and thus it is a major contribution to understanding wooden architectural heritage from a new perspective.

Prior to acceptance, the final manuscript has been reviewed by Associate Professor Klaudia Stala, Director of the Institute of History of Architecture and Monument Preservation, Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology, Poland, and by Professor Carroll Van West, Director of the Center for Historic Preservation, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN, USA.