

## Writing a Biography of a Missing Character: Friedrich Weinwurm (1885–1942?)

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### Abstract

This article introduces the life and work of Friedrich Weinwurm (1895–1942?), an architect who played a pivotal role in shaping interwar architecture in Slovakia but has remained largely absent from scholarly discourse. It outlines the methods employed in investigating his biography and oeuvre, and provides a critical overview of both key and peripheral sources, highlighting their interconnections. The findings are situated within

both the broader historical context and the current state of knowledge. Furthermore, the article explains the circumstances that motivated the author to prepare the monograph *Friedrich Weinwurm Architect* (Bratislava, 2014), situating it in relation to other monographic studies on Slovak architects active during the first half of the 20th century.

## Introduction

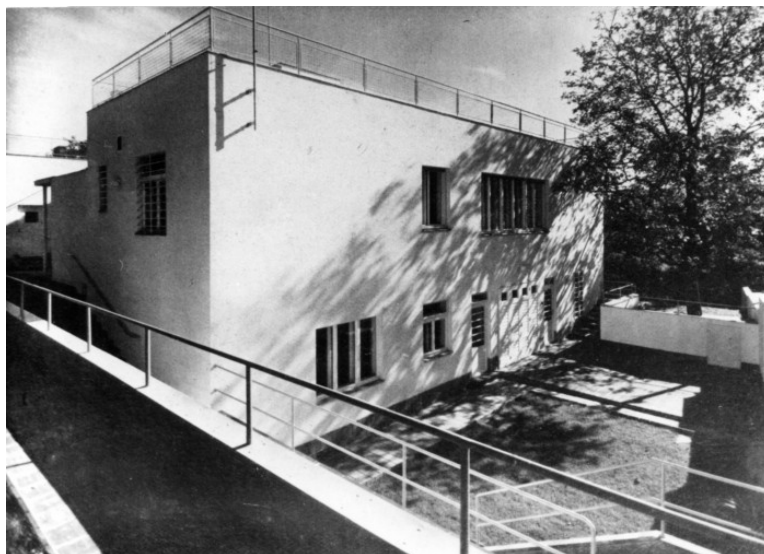
[1] Friedrich Weinwurm, one of the most noteworthy architects of Slovakia, can be ranked among the leading representatives of the Central European architectural avant-garde in the interwar period. His legacy of several dozen designed and completed office buildings, single-family houses, villas, and housing complexes forms an oeuvre that today attracts admiration (Figs. 1-3).



1 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Housing complex Nová doba (New Age), Bratislava, 1932. Bratislava City Archives (photograph: Josef Hofer)



2 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Department store Schön, Bratislava, 1934. Bratislava City Archives (photograph: Josef Hofer)



3 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Villa Pfeffer, Bratislava, 1935. Bratislava City Archives (photograph: Josef Hofer)

[2] His progressive social programme and clear principles for architectural design influenced the Slovak architectural scene of the 1920s and 1930s more than the work of any other architect. Yet, the captivating figure of Friedrich Weinwurm has almost entirely vanished from architectural history after World War II. Many factors played a role, such as the wartime persecution of Jewish citizens by the Slovak state, the latent anti-Semitism persisting in Slovak society even after 1945, the deliberate reduction of the role of individual personalities in history as promoted by the programme of Marxist art history, the post-Communist blanket condemnation of the left-wing avant-garde or Modernism in general, and no less the standard European historiography with its exclusive focus on Western centres, ignoring what emerged on the supposed fringes of the 'cultural world'. The elaboration of a multi-layered picture of the creator's personality and work presupposes a sufficient number of primary sources, such as surviving works or at least certain realized buildings, along with designs, self-written texts, correspondence or personal memoirs, and additionally the memories of contemporaries. Precisely on account of the absence of a major portion of these sources, a biographical study of Friedrich Weinwurm appears problematic.<sup>1</sup>

[3] This contribution presents the methodological tools that were used in the process of research and interpretation of Weinwurm's life and work. It summarizes the approaches of individual authors to Weinwurm. Finally, it juxtaposes my monograph on Friedrich Weinwurm with the most recent monographs on two of his contemporaries, Dušan Jurkovič and Emil Belluš, who are generally regarded as the most important representatives of Slovak architecture in the first half of

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<sup>1</sup> The murky situation surrounding Weinwurm is well characterized by the fact that his first name was given differently as the political situation changed. Until 1918, the architect's first name was given in two versions, the German *Friedrich* and the Hungarian *Frides*. After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the Czech spelling *Bedřich* or the Slovak version *Bedrich* or *Fridrich* became common in the professional literature. Shortly after the establishment of the wartime Slovak state, the architect began to use a completely new first name, *Alfred Jozef*.

the 20th century; these monographs were published a few years earlier by the same publishing house Slovart Publishing, Ltd.<sup>2</sup>

## Key personalities of Slovak architecture

[4] At the threshold of the 21st century, the first comprehensive monograph on 20th century architecture in Slovakia was published, written by Matúš Dulla and the author of this paper.<sup>3</sup> As explained in the introduction to that book, the narrative was basically structured chronologically. However, there were also large overlaps in it, which resulted from the nature of the material examined. The course of events, the work of individual personalities or development trends in Slovak architecture of the 20th century do not necessarily follow each other logically or chronologically, but are layered in often contradictory manifestations. Therefore, the principle of chronological development was combined with the biographical-monographic one: The book includes separate chapters with extensive biographical studies of three "key personalities of the Slovak architectural scene",<sup>4</sup> Dušan Jurkovič (1868–1947), Emil Belluš (1899–1979) and Friedrich Weinwurm (1885–1942?). The reason for that choice was the impressive opus of all three architects, in terms of the scope and quality of the work, but also in terms of their influence on the local scene. When writing the biographies of Jurkovič and Belluš, the authors could rely on the works of previous biographers, but in the case of Friedrich Weinwurm, the situation was more complicated.

[5] At the time of the preparation of our architectural overview, there were already several reflections on the life and work of Dušan Jurkovič and Emil Belluš, compiled in different historical periods and under different social circumstances. The first biography of Dušan Jurkovič was written already during his lifetime in the late 1920s. Its author was the renowned Czech art historian František Žákavec, who was lecturing at the Comenius University in Bratislava at the time. Responding to the general social effort to strengthen national consciousness in the first Czechoslovak Republic, he portrayed Jurkovič as the bearer of the national tradition in architecture and literally canonized him as the first Slovak architect.<sup>5</sup> The second biography of Dušan Jurkovič was created in the early 1990s. The architect's completed work, which was already generally recognized at the time, and the longer time gap allowed Dana Bořutová, the author of the monograph, to conceive the book in a more comprehensive and complex way. She was thus able to emphasize aspects of his work other than the national-emancipatory and formal ones.<sup>6</sup> Along with the book, the Slovak National Gallery prepared a large exhibition supplemented by an

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<sup>2</sup> Henrieta Moravčíková, *Friedrich Weinwurm: Architekt/Architect*, Bratislava 2014 (bilingual edition, Slovak and English); Dana Bořutová, *Architekt Dušan Samuel Jurkovič*, Bratislava 2010; Matúš Dulla, *Architekt Emil Belluš*, Bratislava 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Matúš Dulla and Henrieta Moravčíková, *Architektúra 20. storočia na Slovensku*, Bratislava 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Dulla and Moravčíková (2002), 8.

<sup>5</sup> František Žákavec, *Dílo Dušana Jurkoviče*, Prague 1929.

<sup>6</sup> Dana Bořutová, *Dušan Samo Jurkovič*, Bratislava 1993.

extensive catalogue.<sup>7</sup> Both works confirmed Jurkovič's unique position on the Slovak architectural scene.

[6] The biographical reflection of Emil Belluš took almost the same course. The first biography was prepared by the prominent Slovak architectural historian Martin Kusý shortly after the architect's death in 1979.<sup>8</sup> Although it was a less extensive work as in the case of Jurkovič, this too canonized Belluš as a founding father of Slovak architecture. In order to avoid the ideological context of the time, Kusý focused on the internal architectural issues of Emil Belluš's work and more or less ignored its social circumstances. Dulla also pointed this out later when he reflected on his work on the monograph on Belluš.<sup>9</sup> Five years later, in 1989, the Slovak National Gallery organized a monographic exhibition entitled "Emil Belluš: Architectural Work".<sup>10</sup>

[7] An important role in the process of canonization of both architects was also played by the fact that their personal archives were processed and stored in national institutions, in the Slovak National Archives and in the Slovak National Gallery. These archival materials were thus a reliable starting point for the books and exhibitions. In addition to the indisputably significant work, their ethnicity, confession, and apolitical lifestyle played a certain role in the process of canonization of both architects. Both Jurkovič and Belluš were of Slovak nationality, Protestants, and were never directly involved in politics. In addition, both lived to a great age and received social recognition during their lifetime. Taken together, these factors contributed to the recognition of the two architects as the principal figures of Slovak architecture throughout the second half of the 20th century.

[8] References to Friedrich Weinwurm, on the other hand, can only be found scattered in the professional literature as mere mentions in connection with selected works. The reason for this obvious discrepancy is quite complex. There were many factors at play: antisemitism in Slovakia before and after 1945, Marxist art historiography in the time of Communism and after 1989, the identification of Modernism as politically left-wing and, last but not least, the myth of Slovak national culture, which was built in the course of the 20th century. However, Weinwurm's absence from Slovak architectural historiography was primarily due to the sheer lack of standard sources.

[9] The first and, in the 20th century, only attempt at a more comprehensive reflection on the life and work of Friedrich Weinwurm took place in 1993. The Slovak architect and architectural historian Štefan Šlachta organized a modest exhibition at the Slovak Architects Association, which was accompanied by a catalogue entitled *Friedrich Weinwurm, Architect of the New Era*.<sup>11</sup> In this slim booklet, Šlachta compiled a list of works and a biography of the architect for the first time and interpreted his architectural work. He emphasized the influence of Adolf Loos, and

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<sup>7</sup> Dana Bořutová, Anna Zajková and Matúš Dulla, eds., *Dušan Jurkovič*, exh. cat., Bratislava 1993.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Kusý, *Architekt Emil Belluš*, Bratislava 1984.

<sup>9</sup> Matúš Dulla, "Interpretation by Monograph. The Biographical Genre in New Scholarly Publications on Important Slovak Architects", in: *Architektúra & Urbanizmus* 49 (2015), 45-63: 47.

<sup>10</sup> Klára Kubičková, ed., *Emil Belluš: Architektonické dielo*, exh. cat., Bratislava 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Štefan Šlachta, ed., *Fridrich Weinwurm – Architekt novej doby*, exh. cat., Bratislava 1993.

Weinwurm's "strict functionality and antipathy to ornamentation [...] his desire for a truthful purist expression, derived from the functional essence of the building". Nor did Šlachta forget about the social dimension of Weinwurm's work, recalling that the architect "saw in social utility the highest mission of architecture". However, less attention was paid to Weinwurm's early work, the influence from the architectural debates in Germany, or his Marxist and radical left-wing views, as reflected in the clear record of his social activism. Due to the state of knowledge at the time and the small scope of the catalogue, the list of works remained incomplete and there were also many blank spaces in the architect's biography. It was not clear where and with whom he studied, where he started his professional career and how it ended. His fate during the Second World War remained shrouded in mystery, and it was not possible to find out the date, place, and circumstances of his death. Even back then, however, it was obvious that another key figure had entered Slovak architectural historiography.

[10] During the preparation of our monograph on the 20th century architecture of Slovakia, however, it became clear how long the road to the canonization of Weinwurm as a key personality would be. It turned out that there is no, not even a fragmentary legacy of the architect, that almost no fellow contemporary was still alive, and that not even the notes from Štefan Šlachta's (1939–2016) previous research have been preserved. The research questions relating to the life and work of Friedrich Weinwurm indicated that the answers would also illuminate the blind spots in the image of the Slovak architectural scene, especially in connection with the emergence and complexity of the Modern Movement. In 2002, therefore, the idea arose to carry out a more focused and comprehensive research on the life and work of Friedrich Weinwurm. With a few interruptions, it took 12 years to complete the manuscript of the biography.

## How to write a biography of a missing character?

[11] Standard biographical research generally involves several methodological procedures. Basically, it is a reconstruction of the character's arc of life. Situating the person's biography in the context of the time is directly related to this. Another important procedure is the inventorization of the person's work and its subsequent interpretation. This is directly followed by the identification and interpretation of the character's overall legacy. Constructing a compelling narrative is just as important to a good biography. If the person's life story is attractive enough, an ambition or desire to create not only a scientific study but a real literary work may appear. All these procedures are based on primary sources, such as the archived personal estate, archival materials, existing works, but also contemporary reflections on the person and his works. In writing the biography of the missing character of Friedrich Weinwurm, this methodological structure was used, but slightly modified due to the absence of most of the usual standard sources. My approach could therefore be described as follows: approaching by side paths, assembling puzzles, and storytelling. The methodology included standard and, let's say, less standard or non-standard approaches. Some of them deserve a closer look, as they yielded interesting results.

## Approaching by side paths

[12] A literature review is generally considered a standard research tool. However, finding any mention of Friedrich Weinwurm or his work was extremely difficult. There was no bibliography referencing articles published by or about Weinwurm. It was thus a more or less intuitive search for mentions of Weinwurm. Nevertheless, this data mining was very successful thanks to the advanced digitization of library and archive collections. It revealed that during the first half of the 20th century, Weinwurm was featured in the professional press not only in the then Czechoslovak Republic, but in several European countries such as Austria, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. These findings helped to complete the list of the architect's works, not only in terms of architectural designs and realizations, but also in terms of his own texts. Among the most interesting discoveries was Friedrich Weinwurm's 1924 article for the Viennese bimonthly *Moderne Welt*.<sup>12</sup> Not only can it be considered the first manifesto or creative credo of the architect, but with its radically modern language it also deviated completely from the general tone of the magazine. Equally remarkable was Weinwurm's analysis of the design for the new development of Bratislava Castle Hill, which was to replace the historic structure destroyed by fire in 1913, published in the daily *Pressburger Presse*.<sup>13</sup> Weinwurm, who was then working in Budapest, formulated his opinion on the modern reconstruction of Bratislava Castle Hill and modern town planning for the first time in this article.

[13] Archival research is another standard tool for any biographical research. In the case of Friedrich Weinwurm, it was the most time-consuming part of the investigation. However, it was the only way to retrieve the original drawings and plans of the completed buildings. The research was carried out in all city and district archives in today's Slovakia that contain material on localities where Weinwurm's works were presumed to be. The archive of the Slovak National Bank also proved to be an extremely useful source of information, as it holds archival material from banking institutions that granted loans for the construction of new buildings in the interwar period. Among other documents, this even contains original drawings, execution plans and written communication between banks and investors, which shed new light on the architectural side of the building projects.

[14] The Slovak National Archives, in turn, were the only source of personal data about Weinwurm, his family, and his colleague and closest collaborator Ignác Vécsei (1883–1944). It was mainly the police force's fund of identity cards and passports, the data from the census conducted in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 1930s, and also the tax administration fund that yielded information about Weinwurm's education, family relationships, foreign trips, but also relatively surprising information about his financial situation. An inventory of Jewish property from 1940 revealed that, despite the vast amount of work done in the 1920s and 1930s, Weinwurm owned no real estate, apartment or family home, and his architectural office was in the red. The most disturbing findings, however, appeared in the fund of the secret police. Using minutes from police

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<sup>12</sup> Fritz Weinwurm, "Zeitgemäße Baukunst", in: *Moderne Welt. Illustrierte Halbmonatsschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Mode* 6 (1924), no. 10, 19-20.

<sup>13</sup> Fritz Weinwurm, "Zur Bebauung des abgebrannten Teiles in Pozsony", in: *Pressburger Presse*, 30 June 1913, 2.

investigations, it was possible to trace the police surveillance of left-wing activists from the beginning of the 1930s and later the repression of the Jewish population by the fascist Slovak state in the 1940s. It turned out that Friedrich Weinwurm was among the monitored left-wing activists, and it was these activities that led to his imprisonment in 1940. His Jewish origin eventually caused him to be deported to a labour camp in 1942.<sup>14</sup>

[15] During the 12 years of research on Friedrich Weinwurm, I realized other research topics in parallel. These investigations into 20th century architecture, which are not directly related to Weinwurm, also yielded interesting and unexpected or even accidental findings about his personality and oeuvre. While working on a book about the architecture of theatres in Slovakia,<sup>15</sup> Weinwurm's competition proposal for the House of Culture in Banská Bystrica (1926) came to light. During the research on the large functionalist office building of the Coburg steelworks in Bratislava (1937), the design of which was attributed to Emil Belluš, it became clear that Friedrich Weinwurm had a significant influence on the shape of the building – a fact that was not acknowledged by Emil Belluš or any of his biographers. Another interesting discovery are the original plans of the Bratislava garden city of Schattlerberg (1919), which were found in the archive of the Slovak National Gallery in the fund of the architect Endre Szőnyi. In addition to Endre Szőnyi (1885–1968) and Klaudius Madlmayr (1881–1963), Friedrich Weinwurm was one of the three architects who designed the garden city. Its shape clearly showed the contribution of Friedrich Weinwurm and the influence of the experience he had gained during his studies at the Technische Hochschule Dresden with Heinrich Tessenow (1876–1950), who at that time realized his design for the garden city of Hellerau.

## Assembling puzzles

[16] The process of assembling puzzles developed in parallel during all the years of research. As in the case of a real puzzle, the individual pieces of knowledge obtained were of different sizes and meanings. However, the process eventually led to a more or less complete picture of the architect and his work. The frequent appearance of Weinwurm's architecture and texts in local, national, and international periodicals of the time helped to identify more than 100 works that were commissioned directly from him and realized in dozens of places throughout Slovakia and in the territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary. This allowed us to consider Friedrich Weinwurm as an important architect. His multiple activities in leading positions in professional associations, unions, or clubs of the time, his position as one of the most cited members of the Municipal Regulatory Commission in Bratislava and as a board member of the School of Art in Bratislava (Škola umeleckých remiesel: ŠUR, the so-called Slovak Bauhaus) revealed him to be an influential public figure. The analysis of the architect's work, of its formal characteristics, layout solutions, constructions, materials, technologies, his ideological argumentation as well as his relationship to the German scene (Leo Adler, Adolf Behne, Walter Kurt Behrendt, Martin Dülfer, Heinrich Tessenow) indicated Weinwurm's closeness to the Neue Sachlichkeit movement. This was also confirmed by the reflection of his work in the German professional press. Research on

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<sup>14</sup> Moravčíková (2014), 193-199.

<sup>15</sup> Henrieta Moravčíková and Viera Dlháňová, *Divadelná architektúra na Slovensku*, Bratislava 2011.



Weinwurm's clients, all influential figures in the local Jewish community and major Jewish social institutions, and the fact that Weinwurm and his office never received any commission from a state institution, indicated to us that Weinwurm was marginalized by state authorities already during his lifetime. There could have been several reasons for this, ranging from the Pragocentrism in the First Czechoslovak Republic to Czechoslovak nationalism and to anti-Semitism. The fact that he nevertheless managed to realize more than 100 works confirmed the social status and economic power of the Jewish clientele in interwar Slovakia. Weinwurm's contributions in the social-democratic press, his involvement in the organization of workers' meetings, his contacts with Slovak, Austrian and German leftists, a visit to the Soviet Union in 1934, police surveillance of his person from 1938 and his imprisonment in 1940 due to anti-Fascist activities allowed us to consider him a left-wing activist. The architect's personal life, how he changed educational institutions in his youth, how he got divorced and lived as a single man with no commitments, how he owned no real estate but at the same time drove a red cabriolet and led an active social life, including hobbies such as tennis, swimming, skiing and tourism, suggests that he could be considered a modern bohemian.

[17] Finally, there was one last puzzle – the mystery of Weinwurm's death. Unfortunately, there was no reference to it in local or international archives, neither in the archives of the concentration camps (Auschwitz, Bełżec, Majdanek, Sobibór, Treblinka) to which Jews from Slovakia were deported from 1942 onwards, nor in the archive/collections at Yad Vashem. The only document illuminating the last months of the architect's life was a postcard mentioned by Weinwurm's former friend Anna Stahlová:<sup>16</sup> The architect had sent her a postcard from Košice in the summer of 1942. Košice was part of Hungary at the time, and Anna Stahlová was convinced that the postcard confirmed the architect's successful escape from the Slovakian Nazi state. However, this postcard has been lost. The last evidence of Friedrich Weinwurm's life is therefore an official document from March 1942, which confirms his detention in the Jewish labour camp in Nováky. The last part of the puzzle is still missing.

## Storytelling

[18] It is clear and obvious that narratives and compelling stories make architectural historiography more accessible and attractive to the public. Nevertheless, it is equally important not to compromise the scientific objectivity in the storytelling process. The narrative of my monographic study on Friedrich Weinwurm (2014) is based on three main pillars: his personal journey, the interpretation of the most important periods of his life and work, and a catalogue of his works. The structure of ancient tragedy served as a distant inspiration for the construction of the story. The figure of the ancient hero in permanent conflict with society and dying tragically seemed to provide an apt parallel to our architect. My monograph on Weinwurm partly balances on the edge between non-fiction and fiction. At the same time, however, the monograph was supposed to offer a serious basis for further research, which will hopefully deepen and expand the

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<sup>16</sup> The personal testimony of Anna Stahlová was recorded by Štefan Šlachta in the 1980s. Šlachta also stated that Anna Stahlová showed him the very postcard that Weinwurm had sent her from Košice during his flight. Interview of Štefan Šlachta by Henrieta Moravčíková, June 2011.

narrative and possibly complete the missing pieces of the puzzle. Since the publication of the monograph in 2014, several researchers have already provided me with new information. Thanks to the findings accompanying their own research, further works by Weinwurm are now known, and information about his fate during the Second World War has been added. Through a chance discovery by the Bratislava antiquarian Viliam Šimek, I obtained a certificate issued to Weinwurm by the Ministry of the Interior in March 1942, confirming his work as a technician in the Nováky labour camp and at the same time serving as a travel document.<sup>17</sup> The document was found in the estate of a Jewish family from Košice, which the antiquarian had bought. This discovery thus lends credibility to the scenario of Weinwurm's escape from Slovakia and encourages further research within the Hungarian context.

## Completion of the Slovak 'architectural triumvirate'

[19] The Slovak publishing house Slovart played a key role in the canonization process of Friedrich Weinwurm. Shortly after the publication of the monograph *Architektúra 20. storočia na Slovensku* (20th Century Architecture in Slovakia) in 2002, which experts and the public received very positively, the publishing house presented a plan to establish a biographical series dedicated to the most important architects of the 20th century in Slovakia. With this step, the publishing house confirmed its artistic focus and at the same time established itself as an important player in the field of Slovak architectural historiography. The series was launched in 2005 with a monograph on Dušan Jurkovič, the only widely known architect in both the local and the international context. Both the subject of the monograph and the author commissioned to write it were obvious choices, as Dana Bořutová had already (co-)authored the two earlier publications on the architect in 1993.<sup>18</sup> The second biographical study, on Emil Belluš, was a logical continuation given the role that the previous biographer had attributed to the architect in the development of Slovak architecture. The monograph on Belluš was published in 2010.<sup>19</sup> Both titles indicated that the concept of the series was based on the structure of the book *Architektúra 20. Storočia na Slovensku* (20th Century Architecture in Slovakia). This opened up the possibility of finally adding a personality to the ranks of the most influential architects who represented a different and equally important approach to architecture – Friedrich Weinwurm.

[20] In the conclusion of my monograph on Friedrich Weinwurm, I tried to work out the differences between his work and that of Jurkovič or Belluš. Friedrich Weinwurm's oeuvre, though unpretentious in form, is yet boldly tackling the great ideas of Modernist discussion. In its essence, it is free of ethnic and provincial concerns. Its innovative strength influenced the generation of his contemporaries. It is evident that Weinwurm's oeuvre forms a very substantial part of the complex portrait of not only the Slovakian, but also the wider European architectural landscape. If Jurkovič provides a "fairy-tale romantic" reminder of Slavicism, and Belluš embodies

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<sup>17</sup> Certificate no. 187/1942 issued for Alfred Jozef Weinwurm, born 30 August 1885, resident of Nováky, by the Ministry of the Interior, State Administration for the Construction of Quarters for Jews in Nováky, 12 March 1942, in: personal archive of the author.

<sup>18</sup> Bořutová (2010).

<sup>19</sup> Dulla (2011).

the "architect of subtle emotions" with a "hand and eye for attractive proportions", then Weinwurm brings into the picture the additional dimension of artistic and social movements that arose long before, yet culminated in legacies such as the Modernist avant-garde of the interwar period or the subsequent anti-Fascist resistance. Weinwurm's non-conformism, his courage to stand up for his own convictions and his typically modern focus on the search for truth can still be inspiring today, when it comes to overcoming local limitations, opportunism, or blinkered thinking. In this sense, at least, Weinwurm's legacy – although only a small number of his buildings have survived – can still be regarded as relevant.<sup>20</sup>

## Conclusion

[21] Matúš Dulla, admittedly one of the authors of these monographs, stated in 2015 that these "three large monographs meant such a powerful contribution to the biographical genre within Slovak architectural historiography that they fundamentally changed the proportions of works in this field".<sup>21</sup> At the same time, they offer the opportunity to compare their different interpretive positions. Just as architectural works naturally respond to contemporary requirements and the interpretation of these works is also conditioned by contemporary preferences and value systems, so the interest in certain authors and the need to reflect on their lives and works could be seen as a reflection of the respective current social situation. The first biography of Dušan Jurkovič<sup>22</sup> was written during a period marked by intense debate over Slovak national self-determination and the consolidation of the Czechoslovak nation-state. The second monograph of Jurkovič<sup>23</sup> was produced in the period immediately after the fall of the authoritarian regime in Czechoslovakia, which once again raised the question of Slovak national culture. In the case of the last monograph,<sup>24</sup> which was created at the beginning of the new millennium, Bořutová's attention was focused not only on supplementing knowledge about Jurkovič, but also on placing his work in a wider European context.

[22] The interest in the biography of Emil Belluš<sup>25</sup> was preceded by the recognition of Slovakia and its culture within Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, which resulted in the federal organization of the state. During this period, it was necessary to highlight the founding fathers, who were also loyal to the authoritarian communist regime. The latest monograph on Belluš from 2011<sup>26</sup> builds on this interpretative framework, adds to the knowledge and confirms Belluš's position as a founding personality of Slovak architecture.

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<sup>20</sup> Moravčíková (2014), 207.

<sup>21</sup> Dulla (2015), 48.

<sup>22</sup> Žákavec (1929).

<sup>23</sup> Bořutová (1993).

<sup>24</sup> Bořutová (2010).

<sup>25</sup> Kusý (1984).

<sup>26</sup> Dulla (2011).

[23] The critical reflection of socialist historiography and the uncovering of hitherto marginalized phenomena and personalities led to the interest in Weinwurm in the early 1990s. The interpretative framework also reflected the mood of the time after the fall of the Iron Curtain. In the case of Jurkovič, emphasis was placed on national aspects, in the case of Belluš on the complexity and unifying power of his personality. In the case of Weinwurm, the elegance of the works designed for his bourgeois clientele was initially the main focus. It was a way of recalling the values of the first republic shortly after the regime change of 1989. Only later did attention turn to his work as part of the Jewish cultural heritage and to the left-wing dimension of his personality and his work. This was conditioned by the consequences of the neoliberal transformation at the beginning of the 21st century, which provoked a renewed discussion about the left-wing focus of the avant-garde.

[24] In conclusion, we can state that this 'triumvirate of architects' and the investigation of them illustrate not only the development of Slovak architectural historiography, but also the social debates in Slovakia over the past 100 years. However, these three architects are certainly not the only important personalities on the Slovak architectural scene of the first half of the 20th century. Thanks to a series of biographical studies that have been produced since the end of the last century, this scene is populated by other remarkable people. Attention has been paid to Michal Milan Harminc (1869–1964), who was the longest-serving architect and builder of the last century, with over 300 buildings completed. The work of Czech architects Alois Balán (1891–1960), Jiří Grossmann (1892–1957) or Josef Marek (1889–1965), who were active in Slovakia in the interwar period, was examined in detail.<sup>27</sup> An extensive biographical study has been written about the most important representative of Košice Modernism, Ludwig Oelschläger (1896–1984).<sup>28</sup> Attention was also paid to several Jewish architects, such as Ferdinand Silvan-Silberstein (1902–1983), who miraculously survived the Holocaust in Slovakia, or Eugen Rosenberg (1907–1990) and Josef Konrad (1899–1974), who emigrated to Great Britain in 1939.<sup>29</sup> A biographical study was also carried out on the only Slovak architect to graduate from the Bauhaus in Dessau, Ladislav Foltyn (1906–2002).<sup>30</sup> All these biographical investigations are like interconnected threads that strengthen each other and together form the fabric of Slovak architectural Modernism. Their deepening may result in the canonization of further personalities and eventually lead to an expansion of the current 'triumvirate of architects'.

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<sup>27</sup> Matúš Dulla et al., *Zapomenutá generace Čeští architekti na Slovensku*, Prague 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Adriana Priatková and Peter Pásztor, *Architekt Oelschläger – Ůry*, Košice 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Klára Kubičková, *Osudy Silvanovcov*, Bratislava 2002; Janka Kramáriková, "Eugen Rosenberg – slovenský, český a britský architekt", in: *Architektúra & urbanizmus* 42 (2008), 143-158; Henrieta Moravčíková, "Architekt Josef Konrad", in: *Projekt 37* (1995), 55-57.

<sup>30</sup> Iva Mojžišová, *Ladislav Foltyn's Photographic Études*, Bratislava 2002.

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### Special Issue

Ruth Hanisch, Richard Kurdiovsky, Bernadette Reinhold and Antje Senarclens de Grancy, guest eds., *Architekt:innen-Monographien. Kanonisierung, Kontextualisierung, Kritik*, in: *RIHA Journal* 0326-0334 (30 September 2025), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/riha.2025.2>.

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