



Arhiteksture

Vzorčnost Plečnikove arhitekture

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Plečnik, zgodovina in postmoderna

Dejstvo, da je mednarodno odkritje Jožeta Plečnika – ne po naključju – sovpadlo z vzponom postmoderne, danes mladi generaciji arhitektov ne olajšuje ocene njegove arhitekture. Teoretska in estetska prepričanja postmoderne se nam danes zdijo površna; kritike hegemonsko delujoče moderne so bile sicer upravičene, toda predlogi, danes izpeljani iz njih, se raztapljajo v historizmu, vse preveč navdušenem nad citiranjem. Zdi se, da se ob pogledu nazaj povezovanje Plečnika s postmoderno izkazuje za usodno odločitev. V tem prispevku me nikakor ne zanimajo tisti vidiki recepcije Plečnika, ki so povezani z *brandingom*, temveč vprašanje, ali je Plečnik dokončno postal nekoliko nenavadna figura arhitekturne zgodovine ali pa njegova arhitektura kljub svojemu oblikovnemu jeziku, obremenjenemu s sklicevanji na zgodovino, še vedno daje ustvarjalne impulze sedanosti. Eden od razlogov za navdušenje postmoderne je bilo Plečnikovo ravnanje z urbanim kontekstom. Čeprav je imelo na začetku zgodovine tega gibanja – kot je pokazal Charles Jencks v *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* – bistveno vlogo zanimanje za popularno kulturo, je to navdušenje kasneje prekril precej banalen historizem tipa Roberta Kriera. Kontekst je postal udarno geslo – s katerim naj bi udarili po arhitektih moderne. Vendar zadostuje, da si pogledamo Plečnikove posege v praškem gradu ali v Ljubljani, pa razumemo razlike med njegovim razumevanjem zgodovinskega konteksta in razumevanjem Roberta Kriera ali Charlesa Moorea.

Zgodovina je postmoderna pomenila pripoved s trdnimi referencami, »mojstrsko disciplino«. Naj je šlo za Rossijevo »razlago« tipologij historičnega mesta ali za Venturijevo poznavalsko interpretacijo preteklih arhitektur v njegovi *Complexity*

Arhitectures

Patternedness in Plečnik's architecture

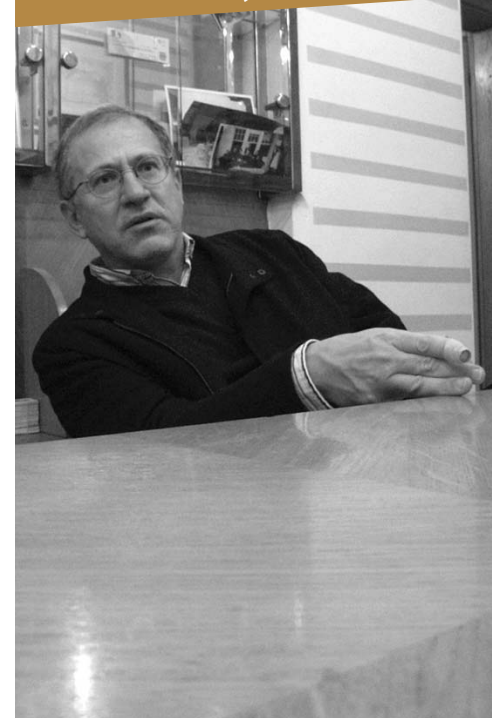
Ákos Moravánszky has been Professor of the Theory of Architecture at the Institut gta (Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture) of ETH Zurich since June 2005. Born in Székesfehérvár, Hungary, he studied architecture at the TU Budapest. He received his doctorate at the TU Vienna in 1980. He was a Research Associate at the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich and at the Getty Center in Santa Monica, California. From 1991 until 1996 he was Visiting Professor at the MIT (Cambridge, Mass.). In 2003/2004 he was Visiting Professor at the University of Applied Art in Budapest. The main areas of his research are the history of East and Middle European architecture in the 19th-20th centuries, the history of architectural theory, and the iconology of building materials and constructions.

Plečnik, History, and the Postmodern

The fact that the international discovery of Jože Plečnik coincided - not by coincidence - with the rise of the Postmodern, doesn't make it any easier for the younger generation of architects to assess his architecture today. Postmodern theoretical and aesthetic principles appear superficial to us nowadays; criticisms of the hegemonious Modern were definitely justified yet the proposals that derive from them today are dissolved in historicism, all too eager to quote. In hindsight, linking Plečnik to the Postmodern appears as a mistake. In this article, I'm not at all interested in those aspects of Plečnik's reception that have to do with *branding*, but rather in the question whether Plečnik has ultimately been relegated to a minor curiosity of architectural history, or is his architecture, despite its language of forms burdened with historical references, still giving off creative impulses for the present.

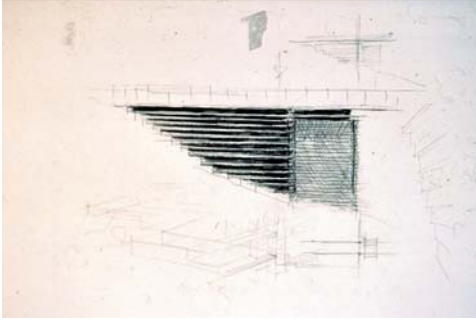
One of the reasons that the Postmodern was so enthusiastic about Plečnik was his treatment of the urban context. Although the beginning of the movement was strongly characterised by interest in popular culture, as shown by Charles Jencks in *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, this enthusiasm was later overshadowed by a rather banal kind of historicism in the vein of Robert Krier. The context was turned into a catchphrase used to attack Modern architects. But we only need to look at Plečnik's interventions at the Prague castle or in Ljubljana to see the differences between his, and Robert Krier's or Charles Moore's understanding of historical context.

For the Postmodern, history was a story with solid references, a "master discipline". Whether it was Rossi's "reading" of historic city typologies or



When I saw the procedure, something set off a revolt inside of me. After that, I no longer felt the architecture of the church in Šiška as viscerally as I would've done if all of this had been more of an intertwined growth.

Dušan Grabrijan in his book *Plečnik in njegova šola* (Plečnik and his school, published 1968) how he saw that the brick columns in the church in Šiška are merely decorative, laid over the concrete base



1a

Slika 1 a, b: Hiša dr. Trouga, Gugalun pri Versamu, Peter Zumthor, 1990-1994
Figure 1a, b: Dr. Troug's house, Gugalun near Versam, Peter Zumthor, 1990-1994.



1b



2

Slika 2: Plečnikov oblikovni spopad z rimskim in srednjeveškim obzidjem v Ljubljani.
Figure 2: Plečnik took on the challenge of Roman and Mediaeval walls in Ljubljana.

Že pred leti smo lahko slišali oceno, da je bil Plečnik mladostno svež in velikemu evropskemu razvoju sodoben na Dunaju, v Pragi zelo močan, v vrsti ljubljanskih del pa samo še monumentalen. Lahko je v tej oceni nekaj pretiravanja, toda na splošno ji bo najbrž le mogoče pritrditi. Poleg tega je znano, da so se v zadnjem času njegova dela močno nagnila v dekorativnost, da so se izpraznila, da so postala nekam gluha. Nace Šumi v Naših razgledih leta 1972

and Contradiction, vedno je bilo jasno, katera so tista dela, ki konstituirajo zgodovino. Za postmoderno je bila zgodovina dana; bila je preprosto tu, kot zaloga relevantnih tekstov, zgrajenih mest in njihovih stavb.

Za Plečnika zgodovina ni bila na razpolago v tem smislu. Mesta in stavbe so sicer tu, vendar so dani samo v »genetskem« smislu. Ni jih mogoče preprosto »dekodirati«; da bi jih razumeli, sta potrebna preučevanje in intuicija. Ne gre za uporabo nekaterih arhitekturnih elementov, kot so stebri, kapiteli ali ornamenti, kot zgotovljenih »besed« nekega jezika, temveč je potrebna razlaga, ki ureja njihovo uporabo. Jožetu Plečniku so takšno razlago dajali Semperjeva teorija, pa tudi lastna razmišljanja in domišljija. Že Semper je kritiziral zgolj empirično raziskujoči, arheološki pristop k zgodovini: »Arheologija lahko še tako ostro opazuje in prodorno čuti, na koncu vseeno vedno ostane pridržano samo božanskemu umetniškemu čutu, da iz okrnjenih preostankov antike rekonstruira celoto.«¹

Pletemo naprej

Ta Semperjeva opomba označuje kot nalogo umetnika, da iz fragmentov realnosti oblikuje sintezo, enotno pripoved, narativ. »Božanski umetniški čut« je sicer predstava, ki korenini v romantiki, vendar ne nasprotuje današnjim teorijam zgodovine, denimo Ricoeurovemu konceptu narativnosti kot spletnju dogodkov iz preteklosti v osmišljajočo pripoved.

Razmišljati o »vzorčnosti« Plečnika ne pomeni samo poudarjati tega, da so njegove stavbe vzor drugim, ampak tudi pokazati njegovo iskanje skupnih vzorcev v historičnem bogastvu form arhitekture in predmetne kulture. Plečnik ni videl svoje naloge v golem antikvarnem sistematiziranju najdb, temveč v tem, da dane vzorce »plete naprej«.

O »nadaljevanju pletenja« je govoril Peter Zumthor, in sicer v zvezi s prenavljanjem in širitvijo stare kmečke hiše v Gugalunu pri Versamu, v grabündenskem Bergnu (1990-1994). Zumthor je ohranil in očistil zgornji del stare lesene stavbe in ji s sodobno tehniko gradnje v lesu dodal nov del iz horizontalno slojenih, toplotnoizolacijskih elementov. Načinu gradnje, s kakršnim je bila postavljena stara hiša, pravimo »pletanje«; da bi preprečili razmikanje zidov, so namreč horizontalne prečnice vstavili v vdolbine pravokotno spodaj ležečih leg in jih tako prepletli. Zumthor je sprejel motiv pletenja in dolge horizontalne deske uporabil kot nosilne niti tkanja. V nasprotju s prevladujočimi modeli spomeniškega varstva, ki si prizadevajo za čisto ločevanje med starim in novim in zato posvečajo posebno pozornost oblikovanju ločevalnih stikov, tu tekstilna analogija s pletanjem omogoča formalno povezavo, »pripletanje« namesto ločevanja. Ključ do rešitve je povezava med staro in novo leseno fasado, dobesedno stičišče dveh pletenih vzorcev.

Venturi's knowledgeable interpretation of architectures of the past in his *Complexity and Contradiction*, it was always clear which works are the ones that constitute history. For the Postmodern, history was given; it was simply there as an inventory of relevant texts, built cities and the buildings they contained.

Plečnik did not see history to be available in this sense. Cities and buildings are there, but they're only given in a "genetic" sense. It wasn't possible to simply "decode" them - in order to understand them, research and intuition were required. It wasn't about the use of certain architectural elements, such as columns, capitals or ornaments as ready-made "words" of a language; instead, an explanation that regulates their use is needed. Plečnik drew this explanation from Semper's theory, as well as from his own reflections and imagination. Semper himself was critical of the archaeological approach to history, based only on empirical study: "Archaeology may turn out the sharpest observations and sense most astutely but in the end, it is up to the divine artistic sense alone to make the scattered remains of Antiquity whole again."¹

Knitting-on

This remark by Semper makes it an artists' task to fashion the fragments of reality into a synthesis, a uniform story, a narrative. The "divine artistic sense" may be a notion rooted in Romanticism, yet it is not thwarted by contemporary theories of history, such as Ricoeur's concept of narrativity as the weaving of events from the past into a meaningful story.

When we think about patternedness in Plečnik, we not only need to emphasise that his buildings served as examples to others but also draw attention to his search for common patterns within the wealth of historic forms in architecture and the culture of objects. Plečnik saw his task in going beyond the bare antiquarian systematisation of finds, i.e. in knitting on of the given patterns.

Peter Zumthor talked about "knitting on" in connection with the renovation and expansion of an old farmhouse in Gugalun near Versam in the Graubünden mountains that took place between 1990 and 1994. Zumthor kept and cleaned up the upper part of the old wooden building and added a new wooden part of horizontally layered heat-insulating elements using contemporary building techniques. The building technique that was used to build the old house is called "knitting"; in order to prevent the walls from unbinding, the cross pieces were inserted into recesses in the beams underneath, thus interweaving them. Zumthor took up the idea of knitting and used the long horizontal boards as the warp threads. Unlike the prevalent models of heritage protection that encourage separation between the old and the new and put a lot of emphasis on designing separation joints, the analogy with textile allows a formal connection, a knitting-on instead of separation.

Plečnikov oblikovalski spopad z rimskimi in srednjeveškimi zidovi v Ljubljani je zreden primer takšnega »nadaljevanja pletenja«. Povsem v nasprotju z didaktičnim razlikovanjem med »vrednoto starega« in »sodobnega« je Plečnik nadaljeval zidove in zaznamoval stičišča s tanko linijo malih kamnov.

Antični in bizantinski zidovi ter cerkvene fasade na Balkanu dajejo mnogo primerov, kako površina zidu postane oblačilo oz. obloga, ki ga je mogoče namesto s strukturno členitvijo s pilastri ali stebnimi vrstami obogatiti denimo z glaziranimi keramičnimi zatiči, vstavljenimi v maltne stike. Te stavbe se v korist homogenega učinka zidnega tkiva odpovedo fasadi, strukturirani z odprtini in kiparskimi dodatki. Grški arhitekt Dimitris Pikionis je v drugi polovici petdesetih let na griču Filopap v bližini atenske akropole okolico male bizantinske cerkve uredil s peš potjo, vhodnimi vrati in drugimi malimi dozidavami. Arhitekt je tu še bolj kot Wright deloval kot »tkalec«, ki je pokrajino, tisto, kar je našel v njej, in novosti stkal v pisano pripoved. Podobno je naredil Carlo Scarpa s historičnimi fragmenti zidov in novimi sloji v Castelvecchio v Veroni. Tudi Dominikus Böhm, Rudolf Schwarz ali Heinz Bienefeld so uporabljali dekorativna zidna oblačila, pogosto s poševnimi ali ovitimi sloji in prekinitvami, da bi poudarili neodvisnost lupine od zidave. Fasada Plečnikove Narodne in univerzitetne knjižnice v Ljubljani (1936-1941) je v tem pogledu mojstrovina prepletlosti različnih »vzorcev pletenja«, kot imaginarna in imaginirana arheologija zgodovine.

V takšnih delih komaj lahko razlikujemo ornament in detajl. Slojenje kamna in opeke značilno ponazarja konstrukcijski princip dela, »eksemplificira« način izdelave, če uporabimo pojem umetnostnega zgodovinarja Nelsona Goodmana. Ne gre za simbolni pomen, temveč prej za nekaj, kar lahko primerjamo z natančnejšim opazovanjem vzorca blaga – tudi če ne vemo, kako je ukrojena celotna obleka, lahko nekaj sklepamo o njenem značaju.² Gledano tako je detajl tudi »vzorec« celote, zgled, poskusni »primerek« in »okrasek« hkrati, ustrezno dvojnemu pomenu »vzorčenja«.³

Pattern recognition

Cayce Pollard, junakinja romana Pattern Recognition Williama Gibsona, je coolhunter - »lovka na skuliranost«, ki ji hipermoderna senzibilnost omogoča, da odkriva trende v kulturi⁴. V zrcalnih svetovih New Yorka, Londona in Tokia je prepoznavanje nekaterih skupnih vzorcev v stalnem toku podob pomembno za preživetje; tu ni nobenega znotraj in zunaj, edina opora je slutnja o formalnih povezavah. Tako lahko izpolni svojo nalogo, tj. najde avtorja na videz nepovezanih delčkov video posnetkov.

To je samo en primer prisotnosti vzorcev v vsej današnji kulturi, od grafitov in telesnih tetovaž do fasad Herzoga in de Meurona ter slik Philipa Taaffeja.

The key to the solution is the connection between the old and new wooden facade, which is a proper interface of two knitting patterns.

The way Plečnik approached the challenge of building upon Roman and Mediaeval walls in Ljubljana is an early example of such knitting-on. In total contrast with the didactic differentiation between the value of the old and the value of the contemporary, Plečnik carried on with new walls where the old ones ended and made the interface with a with a narrow line of small stones.

Classical and Byzantine walls and church facades in the Balkans provide plenty of examples how the surface of a wall becomes a cladding that may be enriched by inserting glazed ceramic pegs into the mortar joints instead of structurally articulating them with pilasters or rows of columns. To achieve the homogenous effect of the wall tissue, these buildings forgo their facade structured with apertures and wall sculpture. In the second half of the 1950s, Greek architect Dimitris Pikionis did landscaping work on the Philopappos Hill near the Acropolis of Athens. Around the small Byzantine church, he created a walkway, the entrance and various other minor extensions. Even more than Wright, the architect here acted as a "weaver" that wove the landscape, that which was there before, and that which he added himself, into a colourful tale. Carlo Scarpa did a similar thing with the historical wall fragments and new layers in the Castelvecchio in Verona. Dominikus Böhm, Rudolf Schwarz, and Heinz Bienefeld also used decorative wall cladding, often introducing slanting or wrapped layers and surface breaks so as to emphasise the shell's independence from the structural masonry. In this regard, the facade of Plečnik's National University Library in Ljubljana (1936-1941) is a masterpiece of interweaving different weaving patterns as an imaginary and imagined archaeology of history.

When it comes to such works, it becomes very difficult to be able to tell the ornament and the detail apart. The layering of brick and stone typically demonstrates the construction principle of the work - it exemplifies the manner of production, to use the concept by art historian Nelson Goodman. This is not symbolic significance but rather something that can be compared with a detailed observation of a tailor's swatch - even if it doesn't tell us anything about the tailoring of the suit, we can infer some information about its character from it.² From this perspective, a detail is also a "sample" of the whole, an example, a "test piece" and an embellishment all at the same time, which corresponds to the double meaning of "patterning".³

Pattern Recognition

Cayce Pollard, the protagonist of William Gibson's novel Pattern Recognition is a coolhunter whose hypermodern sensibility enables her to spot cultural trends.⁴ In the Mirror Worlds of New York, London,



Slika 3 Oblikovanje poti in obnova cerkve svetega Dimitrija Loumbardiarisa na griču Filopap, Atene, Dimitris Pikionis, 1951-1957, foto Ákos Moravánszky
Figure 3 - Walkway arrangement and Church of St Dimitris Loumbardiaris renovation, Philopappos Hill, Athens, by Dimitris Pikionis 1951-1957, photo by Ákos Moravánszky.



Slika 4 a, b: Fasada Plečnikove Narodne in univerzitetne knjižnice v Ljubljani (1936-1941) je mojstrovina stkanosti različnih »vzorcev tkanja«
Figure 4a, b: The facade of National and University Library in Ljubljana (1936-1941) is a masterpiece of interweaving different "weaving patterns".



Years ago, it was already being said that Plečnik was youthful, fresh, and contemporary to the great European development in Vienna, steadfastly strong in Prague, and merely monumental in many of his Ljubljana works. This verdict may be slightly exaggerated but other than that, it's hard to argue with it. And it is no secret that his final works began to lean strongly towards the decorative, that they have become vacuous and somewhat deadened.

Nace Šumi in Naši razgledi magazine, 1972

3

4a

4b



Slika 5: Mediateka v Sendaiju, Toyo Ito, 2001
Figure 5: Sendai Mediatheque, Toyo Ito, 2001.



Slika 6: Stran iz knjige Gottfrieda Semperja, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik*
Figure 6: A page from Gottfried Semper's *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik*.

Vemo tudi, da ga je vezalo prijateljstvo s kiparko Duczynsko in pozneje z Aliso Masarykovo in da ga je obiskovala v njegovem ljubljanskem ateljeju neka visoka, črno oblečena dama. To je vse, kar vemo o njegovem odnosu do ženske.

Janko Omahen v knjigi Izpoved leta 1976

Če hočemo razumeti genezo teh »vzorčnih jezikov«, moramo preučiti »vzorčnost« Plečnikove arhitekture. Ena pomembnih lastnosti takšnih rešitev je njihova »vzorčnost« v razširjenem smislu – njihova sposobnost, da iz svoje partikularnosti opozorijo na nekaj, čemur bi lahko rekli »vizija« njihovih snovalcev, njihovo zaznavanje »duhovne situacije časa«. Otto Wagner je govoril o »demokratski gesti«, o »praktičnem duhu«, ki daje informacije njegovemu »umetniškemu oblikovanju«. Ornamentalni detajli Carla Scarpe kažejo prisotnost zgodovine kot uprizoritve fragmentov in usedlin. Pri Toyu Ito prepletanje, izginjanje destabilizira tudi tektonsko gotovost, hierarhijo konstrukcije in polnila. Itova mediateka v Sendaiju (2001) je tkanje iz cevi, ki predirajo horizontalne stropne plošče, te pa so prav tako iz jeklenih cevi. Ito si prizadeva za vtis neomejenega, tekočega prostora – kar danes deluje klišejsko; namesto modularne ali rastrske rešitve moderne izbere Ito raztegljivost tkanja, ki dovoljuje tudi popačenja.

Arhitektura kot tkanje – misel poznamo iz teorije Gottfrieda Semperja. Namesto da bi tako kot njegov vrstnik Karl Bötticher izhajal iz dihotomije tektonske forme, kjer je bistvo stavbnega člena določeno z dualnostjo jedrne forme, ki izpolnjuje statično-mehanično nalogo (učinek), in z umetniško formo, ki simbolno izrazi to funkcijo⁵, za Semperja ta dihotomija ni obstajala ali vsaj ne v tej obliki. Njegova »teorija oblačenja« (Bekleidungslehre) pojasnjuje formo v njenem zgodovinskem razvoju – vsakokratne konstrukcijske potrebne forme z razvojem, s prenosom v nov, največkrat trajen material postanejo ornamenti. Da bi arhitektura lahko postala umetnost, mora biti v razmerju napetosti z materialom. Dialektika ornamenta in konstrukcije se nikjer ne pokaže bolje kot v formi vozla, ki je za Semperja »morda najstarejši tehnični simbol in [...] izraz prvih kozmogoničnih idej, ki so vzklicale med ljudstvi«⁶. Vozel je najpreprostejša tehnična konstrukcija, utrditev, in hkrati primarni motiv sistema.

Iz enakomernega nizanja vozlov nastane tekstilno tkanje, element arhitekture, ki določa prostor. Semper obravnava formo vozla hkrati kot »simbol«, ustrezno etimologiji besede simbol – »to, kar je mogoče povezati«, in kot izraz enosti v množtvu. Po Semperjevi t. i. teoriji menjave snovi (Stoffwechseltheorie) je mogoče značilne forme določene materialne tehnike, torej tudi tkanja, prenesti na druge materiale, denimo v opečnato gradnjo. Tehnični detajl je pri tem na novo interpretiran in postane ornament, kar za Semperja ni atavizem, ni »rezervirano mesto« za še neodkrito, primernejšo formo, temveč znamenje kulturne kontinuitete arhitekture, ki mora opustiti vsakokratni neposredni snovni determinizem, če naj postane monumentalna umetnost. Ornament ima pri Semperju značaj strjevanja; začasna rešitev (slavolok kot leseni skelet, okrašen z žrtvenimi darovi in znamenji zmage) doživi »komemorativno ovekovečenje«. Toda tisto, kar je bilo v formi začasnega, v

and Tokyo, the recognition of certain common patterns within the constant stream of images becomes instrumental for her survival; there is no within or without, the only support is the apprehension of formal connections. This way, she can accomplish her task of tracking down the author of the seemingly unrelated video snippets.

This is only one example of the omnipresence of patterns in contemporary culture, from graffiti and tattoos to facades by Herzog & de Meuron and paintings by Philip Taaffe. If we wish to understand the genesis of these "pattern languages", we need to look at the "patternedness" of Plečnik's architecture. An important property of such solutions is their "patternedness" in the broadened sense, i.e. their ability to employ their particularity in order to direct the attention to something we could call their creators' "vision", their perception of "spiritual circumstance of the time". Otto Wagner talked about the "democratic gesture", about the "practical spirit" that informs his "artistic formation". Carlo Scarpa's ornamental details exhibit the presence of history as the enactment of fragments and sediments. With Toyo Ito, the interweaving and the disappearing destabilises even the tectonic certainty and the hierarchy of the construction and the filling. Ito's Mediatheque in Sendai (2001) is woven from steel tubes that pierce through the ceiling panels that are also made of steel tubes. Ito strives to achieve the impression of an endless, fluid space - which sounds clichéd nowadays. Instead of a modular or rasterised solution, Ito chooses the elasticity of weaving that also allows for distortion.

The idea of architecture as weaving is familiar to us from Gottfried Semper's theory. Unlike his contemporary Karl Bötticher, Semper's premise was not the dichotomy of the tectonic form, where the essence of each individual structural element is determined by the duality of the kernel form that performs the static and mechanical role (effect), and the art form, which symbolically expresses this function⁵ - Semper did not recognise this dichotomy, or at least not in this form. His theory of dressing (Bekleidung) explains the form in its historical development: when a new, usually more durable material comes into use, the forms required by the construction up to that point are turned into ornaments. In order for architecture to become art, it needs to maintain a relationship of tension with the material. There is no finer example of dialectics of the ornament and the construction than in the form of a knot, which represents for Semper "perhaps the oldest technical symbol and [...] an expression of the first cosmogonic ideas that sprung up among the peoples"⁶. The knot is the simplest technical construction, the fastening, as well as the primary motif of the system.

An orderly sequencing of knots results in textile weaving, an element of architecture that defines the space. Semper regards the form of a knot simultaneously as a "symbol" in the etymological sense of the word, i.e. "that which can be joined together",



marmorju ne izgine, in ornament je prisoten tako pri Ottu Wagnerju (v obliki pentelj ali zakovic) kot pri Remu Koolhaasu (uporaba »olepšav« popularne kulture). Ornament kot posebno občutljiv in hitro odzivajoč se medij slogov in mode povsem ustreza temu začasemu značaju.

Menjava snovi

Za Gottfrieda Semperja je bila menjava snovi važna za oblikovanje pomena. Kar je bilo za druge atavizem, vrnitev na zgodnejše stopnje razvoja, ki jo je sicer mogoče podoživeti, vendar je konec koncev nesmiselna, je Semper obravnaval kot načelo, ki daje objektom sposobnost spominjanja, kulturni pomen, s tem pa daleč presega vrednost njihove vsakdanje uporabnosti. Kot smo že omenili, je takšna interpretacija že obstajala v idealistični filozofiji (Schelling). Toda Semper je tako kot Plečnik delal z bogatim etnološkim in arheološkim gradivom. Primeri, ki jih je preučeval, naj bi dokumentirali prenos form v trajnejše materiale – tekstila v opeko ali lesa v kamen. Osnova za interpretacijo teh procesov je bil strog sistem štirih postopkov izdelovanja in ustreznih kategorij materialov, ki hkrati ustrezajo štirim delom hiše. Ravno ideja menjave snovi omogoča fleksibilno koncipiranje posameznih kategorij kot matric, tabel, ki jih je vedno znova mogoče napolniti z novimi vsebinami.

Semperjeva matrica pratehnik in snovi ni toga struktura za klasifikacijo objektov umetne obrti, temveč mali »stroj označevanja«, ki snuje poti gibanja, povezuje umetne izdelke in njihove možnosti ter jim pripisuje pomen. Material lahko preskoči v vlogo drugega materiala. Ne gre torej za »materialno resnico«, temveč za proces odmikanja od narave.

Plečnik je v svojih delih na Dunaju, v Pragi in Ljubljani te teme na novo interpretiral in idejo menjave snovi postavil v središče svojega razumevanja arhitekture. »Na novo« tu seveda pomeni, da je virtuosno uporabljal svoje poznavanje arhaičnih stavbnih form – popačenja, potujitve, tisto, kar je našel, in tisto, kar je prosto iznašel, so med seboj v ravnotežju. Fasada Plečnikove cerkve Srca Jezusovega v Pragi (1932-39) je zelo jasno razčlenjena v spodnjo cono, oblečeno v klinker, in v belo ometano zgornjo cono; iz temnega opečnega oblačila se dvigujejo granitni bloki. Rešitev, ki še danes močno prevzame obiskovalca, naravnost izziva ikonografsko zasnovane razlage, toda nobena razlaga ne ustreza izrazu stavbe. To je razlika, ki jo vedno znova zaznamo med čisto ilustrativno postmoderno, ki izhaja iz spominov na formalne predhodnike, in vizionarsko močjo Plečnikovih stavb.

Analogijo s tkanjem (tehnika, ki jo je bilo mogoče, kot vemo, z žakarskimi kartami programirati že na začetku 19. stoletja) danes potrjujejo arhitekti, kot so Bernard Cache ali Gramazio in Kohler; Cache se pri tem sklicuje na Semperjevo teorijo.

and as the expression of unity in multitude. According to Semper's Stoffwechsel theory, the characteristic forms of one material technique, including weaving, can be transferred to other materials, for instance building in brick. The technical detail is then interpreted anew and turned into the ornament. Semper does not see this as atavism, it is not a "placeholder" for a yet-undiscovered, more suitable form but rather a sign of cultural continuity in architecture, which has to rid itself of its material determinism time and again if it is to become monumental art. For Semper, one of the properties of the ornament is incrustation: a temporary solution (a triumphal arch as a wooden skeleton decorated with sacrificial offerings and victory signs) is commemoratively eternalised. But what was used in the form of the temporary is retained in the marble, and the ornament is there with Otto Wagner (in the shape of bows or rivets) as well as with Rem Koolhaas (the use of "veneers" of popular culture). The ornament as a particularly sensitive and responsive medium of styles and fashions is very suitable to this temporary character.

Swapping the Material

For Gottfried Semper, Stoffwechsel, or the swapping of material was important for the constitution of meaning. What others saw as atavism, as a regression to earlier stages of development that may be relived but is ultimately pointless, Semper treated as a principle that gives objects the ability to remember, a cultural significance, and thus a value much greater than that of their regular use. As mentioned above, such an interpretation previously appeared in Idealist philosophy (Schelling). Semper, however, just like Plečnik, worked with a wealth of ethnological and archaeological material and the examples that he researched were supposed to document the carrying over of forms into more durable materials - textile into brick, or wood into stone. The basis for interpretation of these processes was a rigorous system of four procedures of manufacture and of suitable categories of materials that also correspond to four parts of a house. It's the very idea of swapping the material that enables a flexible, matrix-like conception of various categories as a table that can be time and again filled with new content.

Semper's matrix of primal techniques and materials is not a rigid structure for classifying handicraft but a little signifying machine that charts trajectories, connects artefacts and their possibilities and assigns a meaning to them. A material can assume the role of another material. Its focus is not "material truth" but rather a process of distancing from nature.

In his works in Vienna, Prague, and Ljubljana, Plečnik interpreted these themes anew as his understanding of architecture centred around the idea of Stoffwechsel. In this case, "interpreting anew" means that he masterfully used his



Slika 7: Casa da Musica, Porto, Rem Koolhaas, 1999-2005, foto Ákos Moravánszky
Figure 7: Casa de Musica, Rem Koolhaas, 1999-2005, photo by Ákos Moravánszky.



Slika 8 a, b: Fasada Plečnikove cerkve Srca Jezusovega v Pragi, Jože Plečnik, 1932-1939
Figure 8a, b: The facade of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Prague, Jože Plečnik, 1932-1939.



We also know that he was very good friends with Ms Duczynska, a sculptor, and later with Alice Masáryk. In his Ljubljana studio, he was being visited by a tall lady dressed in black. And this is all that is known about his relationship with women.

Janko Omahen in his book *Izpoved (Confession)*, published in 1976

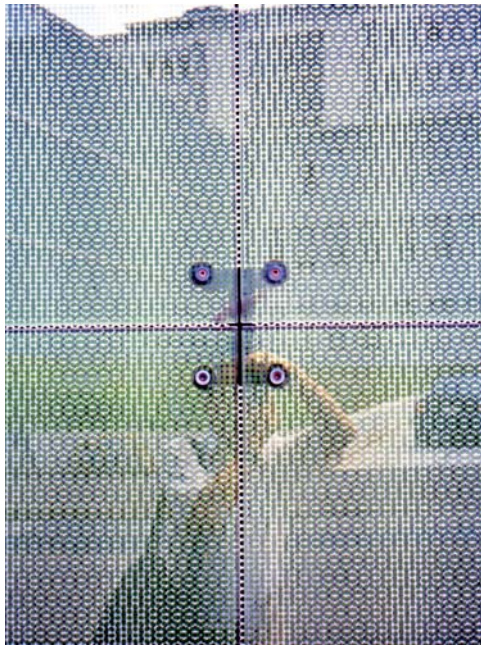
7

8a

8b



9 Slika 9: Opečnati zid, ki ga je naredil robot, Studio Fabio Gramazio, Matthias Kohler, ETH Zürich
Figure 9: Robot-laid brick wall, Studio Fabio Gramazio, Matthias Kohler, ETH Zurich.



10a Slika 10 a, b: Kantonska lekarna v Baslu, Herzog & de Meuron, 1996-1999, foto Ákos Moravánszky
Figure 10a, b: Cantonal Pharmacy in Basel, Herzog & de Meuron, 1996-1999, photo by Ákos Moravánszky.

Nove produkcijske tehnike (npr. robotsko zidani opečni zidovi) ukinjajo subjektivnost ornamenta / detajla, njegovo rokopiesnost; nova, pogosto minimalistično delujoča »skuliranost« oblikovanja odpira vprašanja o ontološkem položaju novih ornamentov. Zdi se nezadostni izrazi, bolj reduktivni kot aditivni, in vendar poskušajo z ikonoklastičnimi sredstvi obnoviti izvorno dostojanstvo »fasade« v njeni ikonskosti. »Vzorčnost« Cacheovih zasnov, ki presegajo čisto ornamentalnost, moramo iskati na eni strani v globalni razpršenosti načrtovanja in produkcije in na drugi strani v brandingu produktov (izvorno vžiganje lastniškega znaka z razžarjenim železnim žigom).

V ateljeju Herzog in de Meuron je raziskovanje materiala tako znanstveno delo kot igra z zaznavanjem. V beton vjedkane slike, fotomehnično izdelani sitotiski, potiskani kozarci z novimi učinki širijo spekter možnosti estetike oblačenja in teorije menjave snovi. Fasada kantonske lekarne v Baslu (1995-1998) z zelenimi točkami odseva nenehno spreminjajoča se svetlobna razmerja in mestni promet podobno kot Plečnikova Zacherlova hiša ali Fabianijeva hiša Portois & Fix sto let poprej na Dunaju – kot stopnje v procesu, v katerem se stereotomična teža in imobilnost vse bolj raztaplata prek tankih in lahkih tekstur, ki jih ustvarjajo stroji. Tu slavi lahkost blaga, ki ščiti pred soncem, vpija vlago, ustvarja prostor in je zato mnogostranski produkt človeške tehnike – trdna gradnja, a zaradi odbojev na bleščeci opni kljub temu v stalnem gibanju.

Švicarski arhitekt Andrea Deplazes sklepa iz tega razvoja, ko govori o novi gradnji v lesu: »Vse večje zanimanje za nove tehnologije gradnje v lesu dopušča tezo, da se v arhitekturni zgodovini prvič pojavlja razvojna težnja od masivne gradnje h gradnji v lesu, ki sodi v kategorijo filigranske gradnje (tektonika). Za primer vzemimo t. i. »teorijo menjave snovi« Gottfrieda Semperja, ki se ne ukvarja toliko s samo tehniko gradnje kot z njenimi posledicami za arhitekturni oblikovni izraz v trenutku preobrata od tektonike k stereotomiji, nekakšnega prenosa gradnje v lesu na masivno gradnjo (temu konfliktu pravim 'tehnoška imanenca proti kulturni permanenci'), ali prve Hennebiqueove armiranobetske strukture, ki so še povsem zavezane tektonskemu sistemu lesene gradnje, s hierarhično razporejenimi sohami, primarnimi nosilci in sekundarnimi legami.«⁷

Tu gre za bistveno višjo raven kot pri postmodernem historizmu, ki določene forme razvršča v določene časovne koordinate. Plečnikova narativnost ima opraviti z izvorom, z nastankom form, povsem v smislu Semperjeve teorije o »štirih elementih arhitekture«. Iz tega vračanja k izvorom ne nastanejo izolirane časovne točke, temveč kontinuiran čas, trajanje. Že primerjava z drugimi pomembnimi arhitekti njegove generacije, kot sta Peter Behrens ali nekoliko mlajši Rudolf M. Schindler, pokaže, da ima vektor Plečnikovega časa drugačno smer; njegove najzgodnejše

knowledge of archaic building forms - distortions, estrangements, the found and the invented balance each other out. The facade of Plečnik's Church of the Sacred Heart in Prague (1932-39) is very clearly articulated in the lower zone dressed in clinker bricks, and the upper zone rendered in white; from the dark brick cladding, granite blocks are seen to be rising. This solution that even today has a profound effect on the visitor, invites iconographically-based explanations, but none do justice to the expression of the building. Here is the difference that is observed time and again between the pure illustrative Postmodern that is based on the memories of its formal predecessors, and the visionary power of Plečnik's buildings.

The analogy with weaving (which, as we know, could be programmed using Jacquard pattern cards as early as in the beginning of the 19th century) is nowadays corroborated by architects like Bernard Cache or Gramazio and Kohler; Cache even references Semper's theory. New production techniques, such as brick walls being laid by robots, doing away with the subjectivity and unique character of ornament/detail; the new "coolness" of design, often acting minimalistically, raises questions about the ontological status of new ornaments. They appear as understatements, more reductive than additive, and yet, through iconoclastic means, they try to restore the original dignity of the "facade" in its iconicity. To find "patternedness" in Cache's designs, which surpass pure ornamentality, we need to concentrate our search on the global dispersion of design and production on the one hand, and on the branding (as in marking with a branding iron to indicate ownership) of products on the other.

In the Herzog & de Meuron studio, material research is as much scientific work as it is a game of perception. Images etched in concrete, photomechanical silkscreening, and printed glasses each expand the spectrum of possibilities for the dressing aesthetic and the Stoffwechsel theory. The facade of Cantonal Pharmacy in Basel (1995-1998) with its screenprinted green dots reflects the ever-changing relationship of light and the city traffic, similarly to the way Plečnik's Zacherl Palace or Fabiani's Portois & Fix did in Vienna a hundred years earlier, i.e. as stages of a process in which the stereotomic weight and immobility increasingly dissolve by means of thin and light machine-made textures. This is a celebration of lightness of a fabric that gives protection from the Sun, absorbs moisture, creates a space and is as such a multifunctional product of human technology - a solid construction that is nevertheless in constant motion thanks to the reflections on the shiny membrane.

Swiss architect Andrea Deplazes uses this development as the basis for his own argument when he talks about new building in wood: "The rising interest in new technologies of wood construction allows for the preposition that for the first time in

Plečnik je danes moderen tudi v tem, da ni urbanist, ampak arhitekt, ki obvlada mesto, še posebej, če pomislimo na jalove izkušnje, ki smo jih imeli v zadnjih desetletjih s to »odrešujočo« disciplino.

Boris Podrecca leta 1983 na Plečnikovih dnevih v Cankarjevem domu v Ljubljani

stavbe, kot je Zacherlova hiša na Dunaju, so bližje estetiki poznih Behrensovih ali Schindlerjevih stavb in obratno.

Pomen lahko nastane samo s ponavljanjem in spominjanjem. V tem mimetičnem ponavljanju se lahko razvijejo temeljni potenciali, kvazi »genetične«, podedovane osnove. Celo v delih, ki bi jih pač komaj povezali s Plečnikom, najdemo to mimetično lastnost, denimo v Koolhaasovi Casi da Musica v Portu v obliki modro oblečenih niš ali v posnemanju imaginarne metropole, ki je v Portu pač ne najdemo.

Pojem menjava snovi, ki je nekoč nastal v kemiji in je bil prenesen na različna področja, je torej še danes sposoben v znanosti, kulturi, umetnosti in arhitekturi ponazoriti tisto, kar je sicer težko razumeti. Gre za idejo spremembe in kontinuitete, za stalno prenavljanje, s katerim v stapljanju nečesa prejšnjega, že tujega, nastaja nekaj novega. V tem smislu je menjava snovi zelo star miselni model, ki pa pomeni stalno prenavljanje. Kar gotovo bolj moti naravoslovce, je nenehno nihanje med gotovim znanjem, pesniškim navdihom in analogijo. Plečnik dela z arheološkimi najdbami, etnografskimi artefakti, domišljjskimi podobami in iz tega naredi tkanje, ne da bi pazil na zanesljivi izvor teh podob. Heterogenost materiala je posebno očitna pri stvaritvah, kot je pokopališče Žale v Ljubljani (1939-1940), kjer se zdi, da ravnanja s prafomami in njihovimi mutacijami ni urejal niti osebni arhitektov rokopis. V nasprotju s sliko, kjer okvir iz vsakega kolaža naredi zaprto celoto, tu heterogeni izvor podob živi naprej kot matrica možnih tvorb.

Plečnik sodi med producete arhitekturnih podob z najbogatejšo domišljijo; to so podobe obrazov, form in vzorcev, odprtih za najrazličnejše pomenne. Atelje MVRDV ali studio UN danes kažete, kako je mogoče takšne tokove podob ustvarjati s pomočjo računalnikov. Obstaja domneva, da je računalnik sposoben iz natančno določenih parametrov ustvarjati s širšo družbenokulturno realnostjo, s pripovedmi o izvorih arhitekture, identiteti, usodi in kraju. Njegovo »produkcijo podob« je oblikovalo znanje, njegovo zaznavanje resničnosti. Na koncu je bila domišljija tista, ki z zgoščevanjem podob iz arheologije, ljudskega izročila, arhitekturne in umetnostne zgodovine iz središča Ljubljane ali praškega gradu ni naredila idiosinkratičnih konstruktorov osamljenega individua, ampak delo družbenega subjekta. slike ali celo krmiliti orodja, ki potem izdelujejo gradbene elemente. Vloga arhitekta se s tem krči na avtomatično dejavnost. Plečnikovo ravnanje s podobami nas pelje dlje od tod; Plečnik je bil povezan s širšo družbeno in kulturno stvarnostjo, s pripovedmi o izvoru arhitekture, identiteti, usodi in prostoru. Njegov način »ustvarjanja podob« je oblikovalo njegovo znanje in njegovo razumevanje stvarnosti. V končni fazi so Plečnikova domišljija, zgoščenos podob iz arheologije, folklorne in arhitekture tisto, kar je preprečilo, da bi središče

history, there is a development tendency from solid construction to wood construction, which belongs to the category of fine construction (Filigranbau), i.e. tectonics. Let's take Semper's 'Stoffwechsel theory' as our example, which doesn't deal as much with the construction technique as it does with its consequences for the architectural expression of form in the moment of switch over from tectonics from stereotomy, a kind of transfer from wood construction to solid construction (I call this conflict 'technological immanence vs. cultural permanence'), or the first reinforced concrete structures by Hennebique, which are still completely bound to the tectonic system of wood construction, with hierarchically ordered stanchions, primary beams, and secondary joists."⁷

This is a much more advanced level than it is the case with Postmodern historicism that assigns particular forms to particular time co-ordinates. Plečnik's narrativity has to do with the origin, the genesis of forms, much in the spirit of Semper's theory of "four elements of architecture". Going back to the basics in this way does not generate isolated points in time but a continuous time, a duration. A comparison with other important architects of his generation, such as Peter Behrens or the slightly younger Rudolf M. Schindler, already shows that the vector of Plečnik's time has a different direction: his earliest buildings, such as the Zacherl Palace in Vienna, are closer to the aesthetics of Behrens's and Schindler's later buildings, and vice versa.

Meaning can only be generated through repetition and remembrance. Through such mimetic repetition, basic potentials, quasi-genetic, inherited fundamentals can be developed. Mimetic properties of this kind can be found even in works that could hardly be linked to Plečnik, such as in Koolhaas's Casa de Musica building in Porto and its niches dressed in azulejo tiles, or indeed in the emulation of the imaginary metropolis that is not to be found in Porto.

Even today, the concept of swapping the material that originated in chemistry and was introduced into several other disciplines, possesses the ability to illustrate in science, culture, art, and architecture that which is otherwise difficult to understand. This is the idea of change and continuity, of constant renewal that in the constant amalgamation of the existing, the extraneous, gives birth to something new. In this sense, the swapping of the material is a very old thought pattern signifying constant renewal itself. Natural scientists are no doubt most bothered with the oscillation between certain knowledge, poetic inspiration, and analogy. Plečnik works with archaeological finds, ethnographic artefacts, fantasy images and weaves them together without paying too much attention to a verifiable origin of these images. Heterogeneity of material is particularly striking when it comes to creations such as the Žale cemetery in Ljubljana (1939-1940), where it feels as if handling of primal forms and their mutation hardly bears even the architect's



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Slika 11: Zacherlova hiša, Dunaj, fasada, Jože Plečnik, 1903-1905
Figure 11: The facade of Zacherl Palace, Vienna, Jože Plečnik, 1903-1905.

Plečnik's modernity shows today also in him being not an urban designer, but an architect that is comfortable with the city - especially if we reflect on the poor experience that we've been having with this "liberating" discipline in the past decades.

Boris Podrecca at Plečnik Days 1983, held in Cankarjev dom, Ljubljana



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Slika 12: Casa da Musica, Porto, Rem Koolhaas, 1999-2005, foto Ákos Moravánszky
Figure 12: Casa da Musica, Rem Koolhaas, 1999-2005, photo by Ákos Moravánszky.



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Slika 13: Pokopališče Žale, Ljubljana, Jože Plečnik, 1938-1940, foto Ákos Moravánszky
Figure 13: Žale cemetery, Ljubljana, Jože Plečnik, 1938-1940, photo by Ákos Moravánszky.

Ljubljane ali Hradčani postali idiosinkratski konstrukt osamjenega posameznika namesto dela družbenega subjekta.

Opombe:

- ¹ Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik*, Frankfurt na Majni, 1860, 1. zv., ponatis Mittenwald, 1977, str. XVIII.
- ² Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, Hackett, Indianapolis, 1976, str. 52 in nasl.
- ³ Prim. geslo »vzorec«, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen*, DTV, München, 1995, str. 902.
- ⁴ William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition*, Berkley, New York, 2003.
- ⁵ Karl Bötticher, *Die Tektonik der Hellenen*, Ferdinand Riegel, Potsdam, 1852.
- ⁶ Gottfried Semper, n. d., str. 180.
- ⁷ Andrea Deplazes, »Indifferent, synthetisch, abstract – Kunststoff. Präfabrikationstechnologie im Holzbau: aktuelle Situation und Prognose«, v: *Werk, Bauen+Wohnen*, št. 1-2, 2001, str. 10-17.

own hallmarks. In contrast to a picture, where there is always a frame to confine any collage to a whole, the heterogeneous origin of images lives on as a matrix of possible formations.

Plečnik was one of the most imaginative producers of architectural images, dynamically woven into faces, forms, and patterns open to all kinds of meanings. Nowadays, architectural offices such as MVRDV or UN Studio show how similar streams of images may be created by means of computers. Assumingly, computers are capable of generating images according to exact parameters and can even drive tools which then manufacture the structural elements. The role of the architect is thus reduced to automatic operation. Plečnik's way of dealing with images, however, takes us further: Plečnik was in touch with a wider social-cultural reality, with tales of the origins of architecture, identity, destiny, and the place. His "image production" was shaped by knowledge, by his perception of reality. In the end, it was imagination, the concentration of images from archaeology, folklore, and architectural and art history, that prevented the centre of Ljubljana or the Prague castle from being made into idiosyncratic constructs of a isolated individual but rather into a work of a social subject.

Notes:

- ¹ Semper, Gottfried, 1977. *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik*. Vol. 1. Mittenwald, p.XVIII. (First publication 1860, Frankfurt am Main)
- ² Goodman, Nelson, 1976. *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Indianapolis: Hackett, p.52ff.
- ³ cf. entry "Muster", *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen* 1995. München: DTV, p.902.
- ⁴ Gibson, William, 2003. *Pattern Recognition*. New York: Berkley.
- ⁵ Bötticher, Karl, 1852. *Die Tektonik der Hellenen*. Potsdam: Ferdinand Riegel.
- ⁶ Semper, Gottfried, op.cit., p.180.
- ⁷ Deplazes, Andrea 2001 Indifferent, synthetisch, abstract - Kunststoff. Präfabrikationstechnologie im Holzbau: aktuelle Situation und Prognose. *Werk, Bauen+Wohnen* 1-2, 10-17.

Plečnik je imel stebre čez vse rad...Ker ni bil nikoli oženjen, so mu bili stebri in stebrički kakor prijatelji, ki tudi trpijo kot on.

Anton Suhadolc leta 1985 v knjigi Plečnik in jaz