



Schubböck Christian, *Otto-Wagner-Spital "Am Steinhof" ein potentielles UNESCO-Welterbe*. [Otto Wagner Hospital "Am Steinhof" A potential UNESCO World Heritage Site], Vienna, Alliance for Nature, 2013, 152 p.

As the author explains, the impulse for writing this book was an initiative of the citizens of Vienna to protect the former Lower Austrian regional hospital "Am Steinhof" (today the Otto-Wagner-Spital, named after the famous architect) and its Jugendstil church "Hl. Leopold" from destruction, and to preserve them for future generations. Since provisions at the national level for their protection have proven insufficient, for years it has been under consideration to place the Otto-Wagner-Spital under international protection as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Since no decisive steps had been taken from the political side, the citizens' initiative "Preserve Steinhof" turned to the association for landscape protection known as "Alliance For Nature" with the request to carry out a comparative feasibility study. The purpose of this study was to verify whether "Am Steinhof", together with its associated church "Hl. Leopold," had a realistic chance and fulfilled the prerequisites in order to be taken up into the UNESCO World Heritage List.

To this end, a comparison was to be undertaken with other, similar sites that had already been declared as UNESCO World Heritage. In addition, it was to be determined what was necessary to obtain a nomination and eventual declaration as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The study came to the conclusion that the Otto-Wagner-Spital simultaneously fulfilled several criteria of the UNESCO World Heritage rules. In August 2012 the study was presented on the occasion of a press conference, and in September 2012 it was officially handed over to the Vice Mayor of the City of Vienna. In the spring of 2013 the summary conclusions of the study were transformed word for word into a petition of the citizens' initiative "Preserve Steinhof" to the Vienna City Council, with the support of thousands of citizens of Vienna.

Afterward, the idea arose of writing a book based on the study, in order to bring this extraordinary hospital, together with the most significant Jugendstil church in Vienna, before the eyes of everyone in Vienna. This splendid picture book, filled with sketches, plans, and graphics, as well as historical and contemporary photos, illustrates the history and evolution of the former Lower Austrian hospital "Am Steinhof" into one of the most important hospital complexes in the world at the beginning of the 20th century. It also illuminates the artistic features of the Jugendstil church "Hl. Leopold" and presents a comparison with the hospital institutions in Guadalajara, Mexico and in Barcelona, Spain that are already part of the UNESCO World Heritage.

The book cover shows the sketch of the church that Otto Wagner prepared for the Lower Austrian Parliament in order to acquire the contract. The "Hl. Leopold" church, named for the patron saint of Lower Austria, is acknowledged today as a "masterpiece of human creative powers". The Jugendstil church, specially constructed with the needs of sick and fragile people in mind, represents a high point of architecture in the Belle Epoque. The book and the eponymous stamps may be obtained at the "Alliance for Nature" (A-1160 Vienna, Thaliastrasse 7) and at

www.AllianceForNature.at.

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