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**Our Slav Acropolis: Architecture and Governance at the Prague Castle, 1918-1939**

Royal palaces continue to exist once the monarchies they housed have ceased to do so. Their potency as public symbols can remain undiminished, whether as reminders of rejected institutions or, in the case of Prague Castle, as alternatives to them. What is the appropriate republican response? Neglect? Re-use? Reverence as historic landmarks? Dr Murray described how, in the years following the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, Thomas Masaryk, as the first president of the new republic, set out to transform Prague Castle into both a suitable presidential residence and *the* national monument. A site which had previously been an ambivalent emblem of Habsburg rule was reclaimed and reinterpreted by him for Czech democracy. Assisted by his daughter, Alice, and employing the Slovenian architect, Josip Plečnik, Masaryk therefore oversaw a substantial remodelling of many of the castle buildings and, even more importantly, of the gardens surrounding them. Yet this was not an exercise in mere nostalgia. No attempt was made to recreate (or even invent) a 'Czech' style. Plečnik instead designed in a strikingly contemporary idiom, using stripped Classicism with Art Deco overtones. What was being evoked were deeper traditions, of greater antiquity than those associated with any specific moments in the national past. AB