

Summary

CEZARY WAS (University of Wrocław) / Controversies around the concept of “style” in the architecture of the 20th and 21st centuries

The term “style” was associated with the periodization of art and architecture in Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s work *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764). Despite the passage of time, many elements of Winckelmann’s theory in hidden form remained valid in the following epochs. The influence of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s philosophy led to the belief that the circumstances of the creation of a work of art affect its forms and contents. This view was argued by art historians in the late 1960s. Criticism of historicism in humanistic research was initially carried out under the influence of the philosophy of science of Karl Raimund Popper. At that time, the beliefs about the existence of ideological values of subsequent epochs that determine the forms and content of works of art were rejected. Another form of criticism of historicism stemmed from the philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer, who recognized that a work of art actualizes the message of tradition in contact with the viewer. A critique of historicism in architecture, based on Popper, can be found in the work of David Watkin. The errors in the historiography of modernist architecture were characterized by Panayotis Tournikiotis. He showed contradictions in the definition of avant-garde modernism that occurred in the first two generations of his historians. Today, however, the concepts of styles still contain threads of thought reaching back to Winckelmann and Hegel. The basic feature of the functioning of contemporary styles in architecture is their historicism reaching beyond history, and therefore not so much imitation of old forms, but rather a critical examination of the intellectual foundations of architecture.