

TERRASSA - VI 2010

Ágnes Katalin SÜLE (Budapest)

Budapest, Hungary
sule_agnes@yahoo.de

ON THE FUNCTIONS OF FLORAL DECORATIONS IN THE HOUSES OF BUDAPEST ART NOUVEAU¹

Social Construction Projects: The Bárczy Programme

The paper has been peer reviewed

Abstract:

The population of Budapest grew rapidly at the end of the 19th century. The Hungarian capital and outskirts reached a million inhabitants by 1910. In the hopes of achieving a better standard of living, many peasants and members of the lower-middle class moved from rural areas to the capital, where a new housing shortage had arisen. An attempt was made through private and municipal social building programs to satisfy the new demand.

Tenements and settlements were built for the new workers. By creating homes for new denizens of the city using traditional floral motifs and material of folk architecture in the decoration, the architects attempted to represent the life of the country and the natural environment inside and outside the buildings. The façades were painted and sculpted with ceramic floral ornaments, the staircases decorated with flowered stained-glass windows and wrought-iron floral banisters, and the floors of middle-class citizens' apartment buildings, villas and city gardens tiled or paved with garden-like motifs.

The present paper deals with the different types of floral decorations in the buildings of Budapest. Through analysis of their stylistic types (floral and geometrical ornaments and elements of Hungarian folk art), I introduce the social relationships between the buildings and areas where these decorative patterns were used and the functions of floral elements (the garden as a home, as a symbol of life and as an aesthetic value).

1. Introduction

Industrialization at the end of the 19th century led to swift population growth in Budapest that transformed the city into a metropolis with over a million inhabitants by 1910. The majority of the people moving to the city came from rural areas in pursuit of a better standard of living. The construction of traditional one-family homes would have been inadequate to address the growing need for housing, so capitalist investment and modern urbanization across Europe – including Budapest – led to the spread of the apartment building. Multi-story apartment houses were built in the interests of turning a higher profit; building density was high, leaving little space for gardens or courtyards. The architects of the Art Nouveau movement therefore attempted to include something from the countryside, in other words, the natural environment, in the buildings themselves. Those who arrived were greeted by colourful or painted decorations, floral ceramics, or colourless plaster flowers on the façades. The floral motifs of the carpet-like flooring and the wrought-iron blossoms of the banisters were intended to recall a garden on each floor.

¹ The English version of this paper was supported by the Pro Renovanda Cultura Hungariae "Klebsberg Kuno" Foundation.

Numerous reference books have dealt with the Hungarian Fin-de-Siècle, most frequently concentrating on Budapest. Several publications treat the architecture of Budapest of this period, including private and state-funded housing programs. However, the social housing programs have seldom been analyzed by scholars in the field of art history. Some monographic essays have been published, but the buildings have not been analyzed from the point of view of their ornamentation. This text examines the Art Nouveau architectural decorations in Budapest in the 1910's from the perspectives of art history and socio-history, with particular emphasis on ornaments in social housing programs.

2. Urbanization and the Architecture of Budapest

The turn of the century was one of the most flourishing periods in the history of art in Budapest. In 1867, Hungary became part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and the favourable political-economic-social circumstances contributed to the growth of a thriving artistic and intellectual life and the further development of the city.² 1896, the year of the Millennium celebrations - the 1000th anniversary of the arrival of the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin – signified a remarkable year for Hungary.³ The opening of the Museum of Applied Arts, which was designed by Ödön Lechner (1845-1914), a key figure of Hungarian Art Nouveau architecture, was of almost monumental importance. Lechner's primary objective was to create a Hungarian national style. He thought that the Hungarian style could not be created by imitating former styles, rather it should consist of specifically Hungarian elements. Lechner adopted the general view of the era, according to which the Hungarians were of Asian origin. Thus, alongside vivid colourful floral ornaments, he incorporated motifs from Oriental and Indian art into the Museum of Applied Arts. He often used overlaid decorations and the attics were ornamented with moulding. Motifs from folk art (e.g. flowers, tulip-like motifs) play an important role in his works. Lechner's influence predominates in the works of the so-called Lechner followers (Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab; Albert Kőrössi; Géza Márkus; Zoltán Bálint and Lajos Jámor; and Béla Lajta).⁴

Urbanization also had a negative impact on construction: the dwindling number of empty building lots drove up prices, which gave way to land speculation. The construction rules of 1894 did not help the process. One could raise a three or four story house in the suburbs or in the city centre. They allowed building in such high densities that there was very little space left for courtyards. Dark, humid, mine-like courtyards and unhealthy apartments were built. In

² In 1873, the three previously separated cities (Pest, Buda, and Óbuda/Altófen) were united into Budapest. In Pest, which was earlier characterized by classicism, new roads were built to form the civic structure. On the model of Viennese urban planning, the central boulevard was created. On the Grand Boulevard (Nagykörút), which was built over the course of several periods (1872-1906), town houses as well as public buildings and hotels (the Western Railway Station, Comedy Theatre, Hotel New York, Hotel Royal) were built. Another major task that defined the cityscape involved the establishment of the broad street, known today as Andrásy Avenue (Sugar Avenue) (1872-1886). On the urbanization of Budapest in this period, see Preisich (2004) pp. 111-269.

³ The underground train – the first of its kind in Continental Europe – had also been constructed for the Millennium celebrations.

⁴ Instead of turning to the Asian design, the so-called Young architects (Dezső Zrúmeczký, Lajos Kozma, Béla Jánszky, Lajos Tátray, Dénes Györgyi and Valér Mende), under the leadership of Károly Kós, explored Hungarian folk art, especially the traditions of Kalotaszeg, a region in Transylvania.

In addition to architecture (Emil Vidor), the influence of French and Belgian Art Nouveau was also significant in the applied arts (Frigyes Spiegel).

We can notice the influence of Vienna Secessionist Art and modern innovations in the works of the Vágó brothers, József and László. István Medgyaszay's art reflects the synthesis of the Vienna Wagnerschule and Hungarian national aspirations. See Gerle; Kovács and Makovecz (1990).

some parts of the city centre, the population density was becoming unnatural because of the density of construction.

After the turn of the century, private and governmental or institutional building projects were launched in Budapest.⁵ Wealthy owners built their villas far from the crowded city centre, such as the villa of Béla Sipeki Balás (architects Ödön Lechner, Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab, 1905). The decoration of the main façade of the villa is composed of separate fields formed with recessed lines in the plaster. The peculiarity of the street front is the winter garden with its decorative wrought iron structure with leafy-floral ornaments that widens towards the garden and concludes in a quarter sphere. Another example is the József Somló's two-story villa (architects Béla Jánosky and Tibor Szivessy, 1911–1912) with a tulip-like motif on the banister of the bay window that is reminiscent of folk art.

Multi-story apartment houses (apartment palaces in contemporary terminology) were mostly built with private capital: the owner's apartment was situated on the first or second floor (piano nobile), while smaller flats on the upper floors were rented out, so that the owner could make a profit off the rental fees. A good example is the Walkó's House designed by Albert Kőrössi (1869-1955), the façade of which is decorated with Art Nouveau floral and fauna motifs, rather than the usual architectonic elements.

Governmental or other institutional interventions were intended to provide housing for specific social groups (e.g. workers, employees of a certain factory). The underlying primary reason was to protect these groups: the buildings raised for them were supervised by the building firms (the state or some other organization) in order to prevent speculation. Many apartments were built as part of such organized projects.

A beautiful Art Nouveau example is the Gutenberg Home (architects József and László Vágó, 1906-07), the apartment house of the Association of Hungarian Typographers and Type Casters. The multifunctional house included a café on the ground floor, a restaurant and a theatre, offices for the trade union staff on the mezzanine, and 38 spacious apartments on the upper four floors. József Vágó himself used to live on the top floor, where the Vágó brothers also shared a studio. Ödön Lechner also lived in the building. Vágó wanted to achieve a harmony of Art Nouveau elements and modern elements on the façade and in the ground plan. He was a hearty supporter of socialism and he coupled with his art a socio-political vision intended to improve the lives of the poor. The colourful majolica ornaments on the façade, figural decorations on the floor (insignias of Labour), and floral Tiffany ornaments on the banisters in the stairway are still visible (Lambrichs, 2005).

Several housing estates were built by different institutions outside the densely built-up central areas. Their overall building structure closely relates to the idea of a garden city; the first housing estates in Budapest were built by state-run companies to accommodate their employees or by civil servants for their own use (Tisztviselőtelep/Civil Servants' Garden City, 1883–1930; Wekerle estate, 1909–1926) on the model of Ebenezer Howard's English garden city (Ferkai, 2005).

⁵ Art Nouveau is not a consistent style of this period (1896-1914). 19th century styles and the conception of historicism prevailed in architecture. However, tendencies of Secession, Jugendstil, Art Nouveau and efforts of modern architecture prior to functionalism were gaining more and more ground, partly under the influences of examples from abroad. In addition, visions of creating a Hungarian national style continued to be formulated.

3. Social Municipal Housing Project, the Bárczy Programme

3.1. Description of the project

By the early 1900s the housing shortage had become a major problem in Budapest. There were 160,000 flats in the city, of which only 307 (0.2% of the total) were vacant. This rate was dramatically worse than that of other cities at that time (where it was usually around 3%). Therefore, the city, under the leadership of Mayor István Bárczy, set up a major housing development programme to address housing shortages in Budapest. As part of the project, 23 apartment houses, 19 small apartments estates (a total of 6,000 apartments), and 55 schools (including 24 nursery schools) were built between 1909 and 1912 in 3 cycles. The housing development program also consisted of three types of buildings with other functions: the people's hostel, which provided sleeping quarters for male workers; the people's domicile as a social institute managed by the charity association of the district responsible for hiring the unemployed; and the artists' studio house, where craftsmen could rent workshops and housing.

To implement the programme in Budapest, the city managed to get the support of Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle: the government passed the act of 1908/48 on the development of the city of Budapest. The houses built under this scheme were exempted of state taxes until the rental fees covered the costs of construction. Thus, homes would be reimbursed and the city would not have any expenses. Due to the exemption, the rentals were better and the apartments could be rented at a price 25-30% lower than the average. In March 1909, the City Council adopted Bárczy's three-year programme.

The main criteria for the selection of suitable sites for building and parcelling were good accessibility (public transportation, tram) and favourable location from the point of view of hygiene. Private architects planned to build three to five-story apartment houses with a healthier approach to construction in mind. Several types of housing were built under the Bárczy programme **1.** Houses with courtyards opening onto the street and street front flats (for example the three-story buildings on Hegedűs Gyula Street; the apartment houses on 21-25 Fiumei Street and 16-18 Angyalföldi Street, 87 Váci Street, 4, 6 Frangepán Street, 119 Üllői Street and buildings in Dózsa and Tüzér Streets) **2.** Houses with private streets (for example Vajda Péter Street, Haller Street) **3.** Garden city-like development with free-standing pavilions (for ex. the block of 6 houses at the intersection of Hunyadi, Juranics, and Szörény Streets). Apartments in apartment houses mostly had two or three rooms and a bathroom, or, in other accommodations, a shared bathroom was available on each floor. Several common spaces were designed in the houses (stairways, side-stairs, elevators, basements, laundry rooms). Every apartment house had water, gas and electricity. Apartment houses were already rented during the construction. The social policy department was responsible for selecting prospective tenants. Mainly industrial workers, factory workers, clerks, postmen, and railway workers with a good income were able to afford to live in the new apartments.⁶

3.2. Buildings and Ornaments

One can distinguish a number of trends in the architectural style of the apartment houses, people's hostels and people's domiciles, from Art Nouveau to more specific or mixed styles.

⁶ For more on the programme see Kabdebó (1913) pp. 5–35. (He also gives a list of houses and architects who participated in the programme.); Ferkai (1980) pp. 6–63.; Umbrai (2008) pp. 109–136.

The Art Nouveau influences came from different directions. Its designers were Hungarian architects and many of them had previously worked in the spirit of Historicism. Some of them were followers of Ödön Lechner; others were influenced by the new pre-modern trends. On some buildings, Art Nouveau influences are noticeable only in ornaments, while on others a specifically Art Nouveau decorative method is present: a pattern runs through the entire building, creating coherence between different materials.

The apartment house built in the Art Nouveau style at 119 Üllői Street was designed by the architect Jenő Hübner (1863-1929), who was trained in Vienna and who designed the building for clerks. Playful geometrical ornaments and animal motifs dominate the baroque formal elements of the house. The same motif appears in several versions and materials. Baroque forms and Art Nouveau ornaments decorate the building of 94 Hegedűs Gyula Street (architects: Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab).⁷ The façade of the house at number 92 on the same street, designed by Károly Habicht, is decorated with popular Hungarian floral motifs. Vernacular Art Nouveau elements can also be seen on the façade of the building at 7-15 Alföldi Street, which was designed by architects Zoltán Bálint and Lajos Jámor.⁸

To attempt to address the problems that arose as a consequence of the night-lodger system, which was widely prevalent, the government created people's hostels.⁹ The first such building in Budapest was designed by architects Lajos Eberling and Béla Schoditsch and was erected in the city's industrial district.¹⁰ Workers were accommodated on three upper floors in large halls, which were divided into 440 separate cell-like roomettes (4.5 m²) and 44 small rooms (6m²). Two or three alcoves shared a bathroom and eight or ten had a common toilet. Men above the age of 14 could rent the hostel's roomettes and they could purchase lunch as well. Strict rules prohibited the consumption of alcohol. Tenants could also opt for free medical treatment. Luggage storage, a closet for each alcove, a dressing room, a cloth and shoe-cleaning room, bathrooms (with tub, shower and foot-pan), a laundry room, a sterilization room, a hairdresser, and a tailor were located in the basement. During the daytime, tenants could stay in the common areas on the ground floor (restaurant, kitchen, smoking area, lounge, non-smoking lounge, reading room, library, writing room, sick bay and doctor's room). Official premises were also located on the ground floor (caretaker's office and apartment, visitors' room, ticket office). The restaurant, which sat up to 360 people (420m², 6.10m high), was the most richly decorated room. Maria Undi's (1877-1959) Art Nouveau wall-paintings, which depicted Hungarian customs and trades, decorated the wall. Three ceramics fountains (from the Zsolnay ceramics factory) with ornamentation of scenes from

⁷ The architects, Marcell Komor (1868-1944) and Dezső Jakab (1864-1932) studied at the University of Technology in Budapest, trained at Ödön Lechner's office, then worked together and shared an office between 1897 and 1918. Their most important works include the Black Eagle Hotel in Nagyvárad (Oradea, Romania, Fekete Sas Szálló, 1907-1908), the Szabadka Town Hall (Subotica, Serbia, 1908-1910), and the Culture Palace in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureş, Romania, 1911-1913) with decorations done by members of the Gödöllő Artists' Colony.

⁸ Zoltán Bálint (1871-1939) and Lajos Jámor (1869-1955), who studied at the University of Technology in Budapest, worked together between 1897 and 1934. They were followers of Lechner, for whom Jámor's office was working. The Hungarian Pavilion at the Paris World Expo can be considered their most important work.

⁹ The designers, Lajos Schoditsch (1872-1941) and Béla Eberling (1881-1950) studied at the University of Technology in Budapest and then worked together until World War II. For biographies of the architects mentioned in this part see: Gerle; Kovács and Makovecz (1990).

¹⁰ This type of building could be compared with the "Maison du Peuple" in Belgium and France. Social architecture see below: Moravánszky (1998) Chapter 10.

TERRASSA - VI 2010

folk-tales can still be found in the hall (Kabdebó,1913; Schoditch and Eberling,1914; Győri and Sass, 2003).



Figure 1: Zsolnay ceramics fountain, people's hostel (architects: Lajos Eberling and Béla Schoditsch) (photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

The furnishing's bentwood pieces were made by the company of the Thonet brothers. Secessionist motifs merging into a united paradigm of patterns and stylized floral elements (stylized flowers, tree of life-motifs, spiral symbols) are in prominent positions on the façade, the doors, in the corridors, and in the former restaurant.

The people's domicile designed by Ambrus Orth (1871-1931) and Emil Somló (1877-1939) was intended for the hiring of the unemployed and care of unattended children.¹¹ In addition, the domicile operated as a regional cultural centre, a common kitchen, and the workers' dining room. The kitchen, which could serve 1,500 people a day, was located on the ground floor, while the public dining-room was on the first floor. There were separate work places and accommodations for men and women. The children's accommodation consisted of a nursery, a kindergarten, and a day-care centre. The lecture hall, reading room, lounge, library, public advisory rooms, and Sunday lectures contributed to the children's education and

¹¹ The architects, who studied at the University of Technology, worked together between 1904 and 1914.

improvement. Since it was a charity domicile, unlike the people's hostel, the capital invested did not generate income (Kabdebó,1913). Unfortunately the interior of the people's domicile has been completely altered and the building is now used as a school. Ornaments of the façade are similar to those on the people's hostel, with stylized flower-motifs in polygonal frames, like column capitals.

3.3. Iconography of Ornaments

Stylized or naturalistic (realistic) floral ornaments can be found in various parts of the buildings. The street façade is usually the richest in decorations, which are either ornaments on the surface of the wall (recessed or applied on top of the surface), a figural *relief*, or a decorative row on the pediment. Ornamentation around the openings – decoration of the window-frames and the motifs of the flower-box rails – also play a significant role. Stone motifs on the balconies and, in most cases, iron banisters contribute to the harmony of the façade. The wooden parts, iron elements and also the upper parts of the doors are decorated. The first representative space of the buildings' interiors are the foyers usually located behind the main entrances; there one finds plaques in honour of the Bárczy program, mentioning the date of construction and the name of the architect. The foyers were fully decorated with flooring, decorative tiles and painted ornaments on the walls and stucco on the ceiling. In the staircases, the banisters attract attention, as do the metal parts of the elevators. Window panels that give light to the staircase were made of blown glass. In many cases, motifs of the door trellis recall those of the banisters of the building. The banisters of the corridors facing the inner courtyard help to create an architectural and visual unity. In the case of houses built for social functions, most decorations were focused in the common spaces, such as halls and dining rooms.

Floral ornaments are either flat, statuesque or spatial, colourful (painted) or monochrome, isolated or repeated in series. They were made of various materials: stone, wood, iron (bar), plaster, tile, glazed ceramic tile, stucco or painted decoration.

Ornaments that appear in buildings constructed under the Bárczy program can be classified by form and significance into the following groups:

Rosette

The most common motif is the rosette, the stylized flower. Used in Antiquity, the rose in a frame was the model for the stylized flower heads in the banisters, doors, and floor patterns of the apartment houses. The iron bars of the banister or the floor sections' dividing lines comprise the frame of the rosettes. The motif is often symmetrical, with four petals, but occasionally it appears as a flower with an odd number of petals. The rosette can be found in positive and negative variations, reflecting each other here and there (for ex. 2 Frangepán St.). In some places the simplistic geometrical forms on the iron banisters only adumbrate the flower in its previous form.

Stalk with flower head

The vertical form of the single, lank flower nicely follows the form of the iron banisters. Compared with the rosette, in addition to its decorative role, its function, which derives from its form, is also important. Panes of the banisters are divided by the long stalks with stylized flower heads on the top. At 94 Hegedűs St., the motif follows the same shape, the top of the flower caving down. One can find their simplistic form in the people's hostel – a quadrangle

TERRASSA - VI 2010

flower with angular stalks, as well as at 88-90 Hegedűs St., where the motif recalls the form of a stalk with a flower head.



Figure 2: Banister, people's hostel (photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

Flowers

These floral decorative elements were designed from various materials and in different forms. In many cases they do not represent specific flower species, but refer to a general flower.

The flower is a pristine symbol of love and the symbol of genesis. Its articular centre also refers to the shape of the uterus.

The flower with petals flaring out of the centre originates in the pomegranate. The pomegranate fruit has complex significance, as it is the symbol of rebirth and immortality. With its fiery red flowers, it is also the symbol of love and matrimony; and finally, with its numerous seeds, the symbol of birth, fertility and fruitfulness (Pál and Újvári, 1997).

The form of the tulip in Hungarian folk art derives from this pomegranate-type. The calyx iris and the lily – both appreciated by the Secession artist – are based on a similar form.

Here and there one can identify the form of a bluebell on the buildings. The bell was interpreted as a tool to prevent corruption and its combination with the pomegranates expresses productivity.

We can find Hungarian floral motifs reminiscent of folk embroidery on the façades of the houses. They are often symmetrical and cover the entire available space (wall-pane, banister-pane).



Figure 3: Motifs in a row, 7-15 Alföldi Street (architects: Zoltán Bálint and Lajos Jámor)
(photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

At 18 Alföldi St., a pair of pigeons with floral motifs in a trapezoid field; at 92 Hegedüs St., a floral motif in the horizontal field of the banister.



Figure 4: Floral motive in the horizontal field of the banister, 92 Hegedüs Gyula Street
(architect: Károly Habicht) (photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

TERRASSA - VI 2010

Some flat overlays contrast with the vertical wall surface because of their colour and material (92 Hegedüs St.).



Figure 5: Floral motive on vertical wall surface, 92 Hegedüs Gyula Street (architect: Károly Habicht) (photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

Their surface is not convex, but flat (94 Hegedüs St.).



TERRASSA - VI 2010

Figure 6: Floral motive on vertical wall surface, 94 Hegedüs Gyula Street (architects: Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab) (photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

Using motifs reminiscent of folk embroidery on the façades harmonizes with Lechner's idea of creating a Hungarian national style. József Huszka's research and subsequent publications on folk art, which proclaimed the eastern origin of Hungarian ornaments, had a profound effect on architecture at the beginning of the 20th century (Huszka, 1898). Dezső Malonyay created a collection of folk art in Transylvania and in Hungary and published it in five volumes under the title: *A magyar nép művészete/The Art of the Hungarian People* (Malonyay, 1907–1922; Bodor, 1985).

Among the decorations we can find more geometrical and simple forms than floral elements, for example the bars of the entrance and the façade decorations of the people's hostel and the people's domicile.



Figure 7: Motifs on capital of a column, cultural centre (architects: Ambrus Orth and Emil Somló) (photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

Tree of Life

This complex motif appears in several places. A long stalk with leaves and a flower head on top grows out of the roots. The leaves have the form of decorative line. The shape of the leaves, with volutes turning inwards, is sometimes reminiscent of Ionic columns.

TERRASSA - VI 2010



Figure 8: Tree of Life motif, people's hostel (photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

The leaves of the tree of life on the façade of the people's hostel form heart-shaped spirals.



Figure 9: Tree of Life motif, 7-15 Alföldi Street (photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

On top of the stalks, different kinds of flower heads appear (pomegranate, tulip, rose). Among floral symbols, the tree has the most complex meaning as a universal symbol. Used in Antiquity, this motif is the symbol of life and death, perpetual development, indeterminate growth and renewal. According to the tree of life myths, the hermaphrodite flower represents productivity, and the flower root and foliage connect terrestrial and celestial worlds (Szegő, 1996). The destiny of a tree of life is symbolically intertwined with the life of the individual. The tree of life was also the antecedent to the emergence of the family and genealogical trees. On the façade of 7 Alföldi Street, the tree of life motif was fashioned in a recessed manner, recalling another technique from folk art, namely engraving, and the Hungarian runic script. Horizontal stalks make up the motif's stylized roots and foliage. The leaves' volutes, which turn inwards, recall the shape of a heart. There is a tulip on top of the motif.

The complex pattern of motifs on the people's hostel door-bars is an excellent example of this. The stalk sprouts from a decorative spiral in a semi-circular frame. This spiral also appears as the mound on top of which the tree has been planted. Leaves of the stalk end in volutes, bending outwards, and the flower head is a stylized pomegranate motif.

The Spiral

On several buildings the rolled-up spiral leaf stem appears on its own. The perfect spiral is a universal, primary symbol of motion. It is centred in the core and moves outward, unfolding

TERRASSA - VI 2010

or closing according to opposite interpretations. In addition to decorations, its form, reminiscent of nature's creatures, is also used in architecture as a structure (e.g. spiral staircases, depictions of the Tower of Babel, the spiral form of the Guggenheim Museum in New York). This symbol of creative power and eternal cycles of development may also represent the uterus and evoke productivity. It can be the root of the tree of life (as a reference to a snake). The coiling snake keeps the world going, it is the fountain of life. It represents vegetation and dynamism in Art Nouveau artworks (Biedermann, 1996; Pál and Újvári, 1997). In front of the main façade of Olbrich's Secession Building in Vienna the scroll motif appears on the surface of the flower vessels.

Use of the scroll motif is particularly conspicuous in the decoration of the people's hostel. This pattern also appears with a golden surface on the fountain and functions as a motif frame in the foyer.



Figure 10: Scroll motif, 16 Alföldi Street (architect: Károly Rainer) (photo: Ágnes Katalin Süle)

A simplified version of the scroll motif proved to be an appropriate element in decorative floor tiles. The Vitruvian scroll, also known as the running dog pattern, originating in Antiquity, consists of a repetition of scrolls that resembles waves in the water. Its form can merge with the leafy stalk of the motif of the tree of life (119 Üllői St., 88-90 Hegedűs St.).

TERRASSA - VI 2010

Festoon of leaves

The festoon of leaves often appears alone. The leaf represents life and yearly renewal, and its green colour refers to productivity (94 Hegedűs St.).

Other elements

In addition, other decorative elements appear on the facades of houses, such as waves, imaginary creatures from the world of dreams and fables, stylised animal figures, such as owls, monkeys, pelicans, swans, bats, squirrels, bears, dogs, etc. The animals keep watch. At 36-38 Angyalföldi Street, the animal ornaments dominate the entrance doors: each door is guarded by an animal (pelican, monkeys, swans, bats). The pelican is the symbol of devotion. One of the favourite animals of Hungarian folk art is the peacock, a symbol of immortality and completeness (18 Alföldi St.). Imaginary creatures also appear in several places at 119 Üllői St.

4. Conclusion

When assessing the role of floral ornaments in the social housing estates of the Bérczy program, it becomes evident that while ornaments were richly used in private properties, decorations played a surprisingly important role in the municipal social housing program as well. Despite the historicist style of the buildings as a whole, in many cases the floral motifs of banisters, trellises, and flooring patterns can be associated with the French and Belgian Art Nouveau movement. In other cases, Secessionist geometrical forms dominate the ornamentation of the entire building. Often these styles are combined with Hungarian floral motifs reminiscent of folk embroidery on the façades of houses.

Architects of the Bérczy program were careful to provide the residents with a high quality of life. As opposed to the former densely built tenement housing developments, gardens and plantations were more and more connected to these areas. The symbolism of floral motifs also consolidates this idea: universal, general symbols, and vital, life symbols connect the buildings to one another.

Both Art Nouveau ornaments, which express or recall the elements of nature, and garden city-like social estates that are not densely built suggest that Nature - which had gradually been disappearing from people's housing - should be an essential part of everyday life.

Bibliographical References

- Bagyinszki, Z. and Gerle, J. (2009) *Alföldi szecesszió / Art Nouveau in the Alföld* (Debrecen: Tóth Könyvkereskedés és Kiadó) (bilingual: Hungarian, English).
- Biedermann, H. (1996) *Szimbólumlexikon* [Encyclopedia of symbols] (Budapest: Corvina).
- Bodor, F. (Ed.) (1985) *A Malonyay Hagyaték – The Malonyay Bequest* (Gödöllő: Gödöllői Művelődési Központ).
- Erdei, Gy. (1995) A mintaadó polgármester. Bérczy István beruházási programja (1906-1914) [The model mayor. István Bérczy's investment project (1906-1914)], *Budapesti Negyed* [Budapest quarter] 3/1995, 3 (9)
- Éri, Gy. and Jobbágyi, Zs. (1989) *A Golden Age: Art and Society in Hungary 1846-1914* (Budapest: Corvina, London: Barbican Art Gallery, Miami: Center for the Fine Arts) with essays by Berend, T. I.; Németh, L.; Sármány-Parsons, I.

- Ferkai, A. (1980) Szociális lakásépítés Budapesten a századfordulón [State funded construction of apartments in Budapest at the turn of the century], *Magyar Építőművészet* [Hungarian Architecture] 1980, 4, pp. 6-63.
- Ferkai, A. (2005) *Housing estates* (Budapest: Budapest Főváros Önkormányzata Főpolgármesteri Hivatala).
- Gábor, E. (1997) *Villas in Budapest from the compromise of 1867 to the beginning of World War II* (Budapest: Fővárosi Önkormányzat) (German edition: *Budapester Villen von der Zeit des Ausgleichs bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*).
- Gellér, K. (1990) Hungarian Art Nouveau and Its English Sources, *Hungarian Studies* 6. 1990, 2, pp. 155-165.
- Gellér, K. (2004) Mariska Undi (1877-1959) painter and an artist from the applied arts field, in Németh, Zs. (Ed.) *Women at the Gödöllő Artists' Colony. Glasgow School of Art Mackintosh Gallery, 4 to 27 March 2004*, pp. 24-32. (London: Hungarian Cultural Centre).
- Gellér, K. and Keserü, K. (1987) *A gödöllői művésztelep* [The Gödöllő Artists' Colony] (Budapest: Corvina).
- Gellér, K.; G. Merva, M.; Öriné Nagy, C. (Eds.) (2003) *A Gödöllői Művésztelep, 1901-1920 / The Artists' Colony of Gödöllő* (Gödöllő: Gödöllői Városi Múzeum) (bilingual: Hungarian and English).
- Gerle, J. (1992) *The turn of the century* (Budapest: Fővárosi Önkormányzat) (Also French: *L'art nouveau a Budapest* and German version: *Die Jahrhundertwende*).
- Gerle, J. (1998) Hungarian Architecture from 1900 to 1918, in: Wiebenson, D. and Sisa, J. *The Architecture of Historic Hungary*, pp. 222–243. (Cambridge, Massachusetts-London, England: The MIT Press).
- Gerle, J.; Kovács, A.; Makovecz, I. (1990) *A századforduló magyar építésze* [Hungarian architecture at the turn of the century] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi-Bonex) (Introduction translated into English and German).
- Győri, P. and Sass, L. (2003) A Népszálló története I. [The history of the people's hostel I.] 1912 – 1990, in: Győri, P. and Tatár, B. (Eds.) *Népszálló. Otthontalanul... Tégy az emberért!* [People's hostel. Homeless... Act on behalf of humankind!] Budapest: Menhely Alapítvány, Budapest Módszertani Szociális központ és Intézményei. At: <http://www.bmszki.hu/otthontalanul/nepszallo> (accessed 05/19/10)
- Hornig, D. and Kiss, E. (Eds.) (1996) *Vienne - Budapest, 1867-1918: deux âges d'or, deux visions, un empire* (Paris: Autrement).
- Huszka, J. (1898) *Magyar ornamentika* [Hungarian ornamentation] (Budapest: Pátria).
- Kabdebó, Gy. (1913) *Budapest székesfőváros építkezései* [Building construction in the capital city of Budapest] (Budapest: Pátria).
- Keserü, K. (1990) Art contacts between Great Britain and Hungary at the turn of the century, *Hungarian Studies* 6, 1990, 2, pp. 141-154.
- Lambrichs, A. (2005) *Vágó József* [József Vágó] (Budapest: Holnap).
- Malonyay, D. (1907–1922) *A magyar nép művészete I–V* [The art of the Hungarian people I–V] (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat).
- Moravánszky, Á. (1998) *Competing visions: aesthetic invention and social imagination in Central European architecture, 1867-1918* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press).
- Pál, J. and Újvári, Edit (Eds.) (1997) *Szimbólumtár* [Collection of symbols] (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó)

TERRASSA - VI 2010

- Preisich, G. (2004) *Budapest városépítésének története: Buda visszavételétől a II. világháború végéig* [The history of city planning of Budapest: from the recapture of Buda to the end of World War II.] (Budapest: Terc)
- Ritóók, P.; Fehérvári, Z.; Hajdú, V.; Prakfalvi, E. (2004) *Magyar építészet a szecessziótól napjainkig* [Hungarian architecture from the Secession to the present day] (Budapest: Kossuth).
- Schoditsch, L. and Eberling, B. (1914) A Budapest székesfővárosi VI. kerületi népszálló. [People's hostel of Budapest's VIth district] *Mérnök és Építész Egylet Közlönye*
- Szegő, Gy. (1996) *Teremtés és átváltozás/ Schaffung und Metamorphose/ Creation and Metamorphosis* (Budapest: HG& Társa) (trilingual: Hungarian, German, English).
- Umbrai, L. (2008) *A szociális kislakásépítés története Budapesten 1870-1948* [The history of state funded small dwelling construction in Budapest 1870-1948] (Budapest: Napvilág).