

Definitive abstract for paper presentation at the *coupDefouet* International Congress

Strand 1: Art Nouveau Cities: between cosmopolitanism and local tradition

National endeavour or local identity? Art Nouveau town halls in Hungary

In central and Southern Hungary fast urban development began in the 19th century and accelerated at the turn-of-the-century as a striking phenomenon comparing to the urban centers in the Northern Hungary. With the arrival of the Art Nouveau urban landscape has radically changed in the region. Newly built town halls re-organized city plans and reshaped urban structures in terms of local identity and city infrastructure. Even though the quest for architectural modernism seemed to be a national endeavor, state visions and local self-government's aspirations differentiated. While historicism remained the unique inspiration source for buildings related to the notion of *étatique*, manifested mainly in schools, railway stations and post offices all around the country, local government related buildings, especially town halls represent a high variety of turn-of-the-century tendencies ranging from late-historicism to international Art Nouveau. The lectures aims to discuss possible answers to this phenomena.

The town halls of Marosvásárhely and Szabadka followed the path of the Kecskemét town hall in terms of the modernization of Hungary. The restructured national administration needed new, functional buildings which included a highly educated and linguistically Hungarian public administration, the inclusion of the newest infrastructural solutions in the building, and the modernization of the national architectural language. The representation of Hungary at international exhibitions focused at the issues of recognition of the country as a historical great power. This had been ensured by ephemeral buildings in new modern national architectural language

with a mixed vocabulary of international art nouveau tendencies and vernacular ornamental decoration. The presence of the reorganized Hungarian State administration in-between national borders had to face problems of loyalty and reconnaissance in multi ethnic urban communities: the mixture of vernacular and art nouveau architectural language expressed a culturally innovative and modern aspect of the county.

Key words: art nouveau, town hall, urban architecture, international exhibition, State representation, vernacularism, modernization, national administration

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