The peacock symbolism is a recurring theme in Christian tradition, stemming from earlier beliefs that peacocks' flesh did not decay after death. In early churches peacocks are found as carvings, mosaics and paintings, like the twelfth-century floor at St Maria and St Donato in Murano, Italy.

The poster for the 2012 Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition “The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860–1900” showed Lord Leighton’s Pavonia (1858) – a woman with a vase of peacock feathers behind her. If, as Elizabeth Aslin suggests in her book The Aesthetic Movement: Prelude to Art Nouveau (1969), the Aesthetic Movement was the prelude to Art Nouveau, then using the peacock as a symbol of beauty may have moved into Art Nouveau consciousness from that. Peacocks from Japanese art and design would have been another source. Two influential “aesthetic” interiors foregrounded the peacock: George Aitchison’s designs for 15 Berkeley Square, London (1873) included Albert Moore’s peacock fireplace; Thomas Jeckyll’s room in Frederick Leyland’s Palace Gate, London house was completed as The Peacock Room by James Whistler (1877), sumptuously decorated with peacocks in gold and turquoise, and now in the Freer Gallery, Washington.

In Hungary the ocell was part integral of the tradition popular, and is found on all kinds of objects.

For Christians it symbolises the resurrection, stemming from earlier beliefs that peacocks’ flesh did not decay after death. Peacocks are found as carvings, mosaics and paintings in early Christian churches. The floor mosaic from St Maria and St Donato (Murano, Italy, 1141) is typical: two peacocks face each other across a drinking vessel. Here they are asymmetrical, but they are frequently symmetrical. And the male bird, with its brilliant blue body feathers and stupendous tail, has always been an exotic symbol of beauty everywhere.

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Through such design initiatives, the peacock became a common element for architects and designers working in the crossover areas of the Aesthetic and the Arts and Crafts Movements and Art Nouveau. There are famous examples, like the carpet by William Morris, Peacock Room (1880), now in the Morris Gallery at Walthamstow, or fabrics like Peacock Feathers by Arthur Silver (1884, for Liberty). Also, paintings (The Peacocks by William Degouve de Nuncques, 1896, now at Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; book illustration (The Peacock Skirt by Aubrey Beardsley for Oscar Wilde’s Salome, 1894); mosaics (Peacock Reredos by L. C. Tiffany, 1896, now in the Juhász collection © David A. Hill;

The peacock symbolism is a recurring theme in Christian tradition, stemming from earlier beliefs that peacocks’ flesh did not decay after death. In early churches peacocks are found as carvings, mosaics and paintings, like the twelfth-century floor at St Maria and St Donato in Murano, Italy. The peacock symbolises the resurrection in the tradition cristiana, a partir d’una antiga creença que la mort del paó no es podria descarregar. AIXA EXPLICAR QUÉ ES EL PAÓ COTIDIAN en tota mena d’objectes

The peacock was an important symbol in many different cultures from Asia, where the bird originated, to Europe. In ancient Greece it was Hera’s bird, the one-hundred-eyed blue tail feathers symbolised heavenly and its stars. For Hindus it is Kartikeya, the god of war’s mount; its tail is the shape of the sacred Omkar syllable, too. The Persian Shahs sat on the Peacock Throne. For Christians it symbolises the resurrection, stemming from earlier beliefs that peacocks’ flesh did not decay after death. Peacocks are found as carvings, mosaics and paintings in early Christian churches. The floor mosaic from St Maria and St Donato (Murano, Italy, 1141) is typical: two peacocks face each other across a drinking vessel. Here they are asymmetrical, but they are frequently symmetrical. And the male bird, with its brilliant blue body feathers and stupendous tail, has always been an exotic symbol of beauty everywhere.

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La casa de l'arquitecte Albert Körössy, a Városligeti Fasor, 47 (1899), que presenta uns paons significativa. Els paons es van realitzar usant els següents materials: onze de metall (un d'ells inclou vidre), quinze de guix, un de ceràmica i un de ciment modelat i mosaic. En els cinc primers edificis, el paó com a element decoratiu és sempre naturalista. El més antic és la Casa Lindenbaum, a Izabella Utca 94 (Frígyes Spiegel i Fülöp Weinréb, 1896—1897). La façana és un pla rectangular simple, però decorada amb cinc llansos de relleus de guix que rellotgen les més característiques de la ciutat. En el segon començant per baix, hi trobem quatre paons daurats internamentals amb parelles de verge, quines i dues d'orius nus també daurades.

Els dos edificis següents són obra d'Albert Körössy. Un és la pròpia vila de l'arquitecte, a Várselgírv Fasor, 47 (1899), que presenta uns paons de guix situats simètricament a banda i banda de la finestra circular del primer pis, l'altre és la Casa Walkó, a Aulich Utca, 3 (1901), amb un façana decorada amb diversos elements animals en relleus de guix i amb parelles simètriques de paons definitament modelats sota els tres balcons del segon pis. El quart d'aquesta sèrie es la casa pròpia d'Emil Vidor, a Várselgírv Fasor, 33 (1904—1905). Els edificis més recentes de Vidor utilitzarien l'aixetaire per jugar amb les línies i els volums, així que coneixer un únic paó de guix al balcó enfrontat de la planta baixa. Els últims paons d'aquesta sèrie estan ubicats simètricament davant la porta d'entrada de la Casa Neuschloz.

En Ingleterra, peacocks were generally known through their Christian symbolism, and as creatures of colourful beauty. In Hungary, however, the bird was an integral part of the on-going folk traditions, found on all kinds of products from embroidery to metalwork. Additionally, the peacock’s tail and the ‘eyes’ blend well with the floral shapes used in the Hungarian tradition. As elsewhere, Hungarian Art Nouveau designers studied local folk traditions for inspiration. Various major figures like Aladár Körösfo-Kriesch, Sándor Nagy i Ede Toroczkai Wigand were involved in the influential cataloguing work published by Frígyes Spiegel and Fülöp Weinréb, 1896—1897. The façade is a simple rectangular plane, but decorated with five bands of the strangest plaster reliefs in the city. On the second-lowest, four gilt peacocks are interspersed with other motifs. However, others did, and this article will examine the twenty-eight Art Nouveau buildings I have found in Budapest with significant peacock decoration. The peacocks were produced using these materials: eleven metalwork (one including glasswork), fifteen plasterwork, one ceramic and one moulded concrete and mosaic. In the five earliest buildings the peacock decoration is always naturalistic. The oldest is the Lindenbaum House at Izabella utca 94 (Frígyes Spiegel and Fülöp Weinréb, 1896—1897). The façade is a simple rectangular plane, but decorated with five bands of the strangest plaster reliefs in the city. On the second-lowest, four gilt peacocks are interspersed...
with pairs of snakes, foxes and two gilt nude women! The next two buildings are by Albert Körössy. The architect’s own villa at Városligeti fasor 3 (1906—1908) has its façade decorated with various wildlife in plaster relief and, under the three second-floor balconies, symmetrical pairs of delicately modelled peacocks. The fourth of this series is Emil Vidor’s own house at Városligeti fasor 33 (1904—1905). Vidor’s best buildings use asymmetry to play with lines and volumes, so unsurprisingly he perches a single plasterwork peacock on the rusticated ground-floor balcony. The final peacocks in this series are symmetrically placed above the doorway of the Neuschloss House at Báthory utca 5 (Ignác Alpár, 1904—1905). These rather aggressive-looking birds have a reptilian appearance, and were designed to fit with other medieval elements of the decoration.

The second group of buildings all feature metalwork. The Piatschek House at Aradi utca 57 (Béla and Sándor Löffler, 1907—1908) has the most complete peacock-themed details of all Budapest Art Nouveau buildings. It starts with a remarkable wrought-iron street door. Two highly stylised peacocks are symmetrically placed on either side of the small windows, which effectively become their bodies, while the angular form of the tail continues the lozenge shape of the window. In the entrance hall, the window glass above the courtyard doors displays acid-etched peacocks. The design of the bird and surrounding tree and flowers are geometrically stylised. Finally, the stair railings have a repeat design from bottom to top, with peacocks perched amidst foliage. The enormous Trombitás House at Szilágyi Erzsébet fasor 17—21 (Emil Bauer and Gyula Guttmann, 1911—1912) also carries its peacock theme from entrance doors to stair railings. The door birds are naturalistic and symmetrical, recalling the Christian or folk format, while the small birds on the stair railings have different forms as the stairs climb. The apartment block doors at Balassi Bálint utca 7, of unknown architect and date, have two small reversed symmetrical panels of beaten copper in them. The bird is so stylised that it resembles a mechanical robot peacock.
La Casa Piatschek, a Aradi Utca, 57 (Béla i Sándor Löffler, 1907-1908), presenta el conjunt de detalls amb el tema del paó més complet de tots els edificis modernistes de Budapest. Comença amb una porta d'entrada de forja destacades, on dos paons molt estilitzats se situen a banda i banda de les finestres, que es converteixen en els seus cossos, mentre que la forma angular de la cua continua la forma romboidal de la finestra. Al vestíbul, la vidriera davant les portes del jardí presenta uns paons gravats a l'àcid. El disseny de l'ocell i de l'arbre i les flors que l'envolten segueix una estilització simètrica. Finalment, en les baranes de l'escala s'hi repeteix de dalt a baix un disseny amb paons posats en el ramatge. També a l'renomada Casa Trombitás, a Szilágyi Erzsébet Fasor, 17-21 (Emil Bauer i Gyula Guttmann, 1911-1912), hi trobem el paó com a motiu, des de les portes d'entrada fins a les baranes de l'escala. Els ocells de la porta són naturalistes i simètrics, evocant el format del simbolisme cristian o de l'art popular, mentre que els petits ocells de les baranes prenen formes que varien a mesura que l'escala s'inclina. Les portes del bloc de pisos de Balassi Báthory Utca, 7, d'arquitecte i data desconeguts, compten amb dos petits panells simètrics oposats de coure batut. L'ocell és tan estilitzat que sembla un robot mecànic de ciència ficció! Un altre exemple de mestria en el treball de la forja el trobem als balcons del segon pis de la casa de
A contrasting example of the wrought-iron worker’s skill is found on the two second-floor balconies of the apartment block at Pannónia utca 6 (Zsigmond and Dávid Jónás, 1909). Pairs of peacocks perched on the balcony walls, face each other across a basket, which is actually the balcony railing – a neat piece of design. They also recall the symmetrical Christian or folk arrangement. Beaten copper panels are set over the striking iridescent Zsolnay tiled façade of the ex-Jónás Hecht shop at Szent István tér 14 (Béla Lajta, 1906–1907). They repeat an elongated peacock design that owes something to the Hungarian folk tradition. And finally come the two large, beautifully restored, wrought-iron gates on either side of the Gresham Palace (now the Four Seasons Hotel) at Széchenyi tér 5 (Zsigmond Quittner and József Vágó, 1905–1907) with their three peacocks, two in symmetrical profile and one facing us.

We conclude with three very different peacock designs. Two are on the same apartment and retail block at Váci utca 78–80 / Un dels dos paons de motllura de ciment que guarden la porta d’entrada del carrer Váci 78–80 / One of the two moulded concrete peacocks that guard the entrance of Váci Street 78–80 / Uno dei due pannelli in mattonelle di cemento che guardano la porta d’ingresso del viale Vaci 77–80 / Un dels dos paons de motllura de ciment que guarden la porta d’entrada del carrer Vaci 78–80. / Un dels dos paons de motllura de ciment que guarden la porta d’entrada del carrer Vaci 78–80.

Two pairs of reversed symmetrical moulded-concrete peacocks set on gold mosaic backgrounds. On the top floor, almost invisible from the narrow street, are two pairs of gorgeous colourful mosaic panels with peacocks facing each other across the rooftop flats’ windows. And to close this overview of the use of peacocks in Budapest Art Nouveau architecture, a design which returns us to the beginning of the article. On the apartment block at Molnár utca 21 (architect and date unknown) are two identical panels which are very close to early Christian designs – a pair of symmetrically positioned plasterwork peacocks drinking from a vessel.