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PhD THESIS

The eclectic architecture of buildings with housing functions in Transylvania
from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century

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This paper aims to discuss two distinct architectural typologies named *residential palaces* and *hotels*. Both of them are a conversion of preexisting architectural programs, awoken between 1867-1918. The *residential palaces* are a new topic for the history of architecture which treats them only regionally, although they were a true phenomenon in dualistic period.

The thesis is divided into five chapters that seek to address the topic in a profound manner that speaks about the historical context in which the palaces were built.

The first chapter opens the dissertation topic by presenting the historical context that prevailed in the dualist Empire between 1867-1918. Once submitted this framework, we initiated a short analysis of Transylvania that discloses the demographic, political and ethnic premises that have influenced the path through modernization, speaking about the role that the Dual Monarchy had in the industrial development and agriculture. The period 1867-1918 is known to be an important one because of the development that defines Transylvania in all fields of activity, from the industrial progress in reviving capitalist supporting loans to support private investment. The society is witnessing a change that includes two new social classes, the bourgeoisie and the workers in the factories that seen as specific urban social classes. Although Transylvania was not ready in terms of technological and social modernization actions to cope with the modern changes, they have permanently influenced the historical reality of the region.

A second chapter defines *eclecticism* as current that was controversial because of its stylistic richness that was considered to be inappropriate in relation to the historical reality existing in the Transylvanian towns that were just beginning the road to modernity. The style was the official one used in dualistic architecture and was promoted in the construction of public buildings based on the separated functions, creating special architectural programs dedicated to culture - theaters, operas, administrative palaces-headquarters counties, municipalities, banks, buildings dedicated to education- schools , universities, libraries. In the same chapter, we introduced the first forms of modern

European urbanization in Paris or Budapest as they were the urban regeneration model for the cities of Transylvania.

In chapter three we discuss the palaces and the hotels that are the subject of the research. The palaces are known for their residential and rental functions, standing out as *Miepalast*, *Zinpalast*, *Wohnunpalast*, *Mietkasarne*, *Miethauser*. At the same time we try to define the importance and uniqueness of residential architecture by capturing aspects of how the individual and the social community are related to the building. In this context, we state one of the purposes of these study, which is to show how a *house* turns into a *home* and how subsequently crosses the privacy are by becoming the bearer of a social message to public communities.

The ground floor of such a building is made up of commercial spaces which are rented, and the floors are divided into residential apartments. Until the nineteenth century rental housing and renting spaces were not common architectural program. That is why this study proposes a reconfiguration of the aspects of housing that invite city dwellers to live in flats and not just in houses. The innovation of these palaces that were ubiquitous built consists in the fact that the new construction brought the two worlds of the individual's life, *the working place* and *family dwelling* under the same roof.

In developing the present research we chose report alongside the residential palaces the eclectic hotels, that are known to be a special category of buildings, because they are used for private travel. Although there is a discernible difference between residential estate and hotels we propose an analysis that is less addressed in the specific historiography, elaborating the hypothesis that between the hotel and the *Mietpalast* there are functional, sociological and aesthetic matches

Chapter IV is devoted to the social aspects of eclectic architecture aimed to identify the sociological functions of the buildings. Based on the information contained in the bibliography we target the cognitive, connotative and denotative functions of architecture that becomes the bearer of a message of social status of the owner of the building to the urban community members. It is believed that architecture validates the individual and based on this statement we initiated a short study into semiotic theory that exposes the architecture's symbolic meanings. Architecture is more than just the outer shell that we all grasp, because it includes a range of social meanings, and

anthropological ones that are defined by the historical period and geographical context in which the building was built. The concept of housing introduces a set of concepts that involves analyzing the impregnable connection between the dwellers and the dwelling itself by revealing all aspects of social, economic, cultural content.

In the case study we discuss the two cities Cluj and Oradea through a historical, urban and stylistic approach. The focus lies in the detailed presentation based on unpublished sources such as interview or original documents in the archive that reveal information like inventories and leases, name, social status and profession of the owners and the tenants. In Cluj we identified four buildings that we have analyzed.

Babos Palace was built at the initiative of its owner Sandor Babos in 1889. Elian Palace, on the other side of Somes was built in 1890 as a replica of another private owner named Elian Viktor. The similarities of the two buildings is remarkable on aesthetic level, because they were both built in eclectic style in order to mark their social status as a bourgeois. They built the palaces for the same reason, to legitimize their status in the community of Cluj. They also intended promoting their businesses in their own shops situated on the ground floor of the buildings and to achieve a long-term profit by collecting apartment rents. According to the same economic reasons were built also the palaces belonging to the Roman Catholic Diocese.

New York hotel was built in 1894 and its resemblance to the palace Babos is more than obvious, and the reasons of this can only have social implications which indirectly mark the recognition and social importance of Babos in the community to which he belonged.

Although we could not study the same documents certifying lists of the names of tenants of buildings for Oradea, we presented a case study based on the typical bibliography. We noticed that the housing needs faced by the dwellers contained the fact that it was a common practice to relocate in the center of the city, contracting rents in apartments palaces that were still being planned or under construction. Lifting a *Wohnpalast* proved to be one in these conditions, of the best businesses in which bourgeoisie and nobility could invest in order to receive an almost immediate profit.

In analyzing the buildings in Oradea, we wanted to highlight the unique aspects of each program of local architecture. Since the number of the architectural buildings is limited to four buildings in Cluj and Oradea has too many examples, we consider that a

comparative study per say would not be suitable. For Cluj, we chose to highlight the social functions of architectural palaces because the archival support has allowed us this and that building of the estate was not considered to be a phenomenon itself. There were only three such report palaces and hotels, and the strong correlation of them stressed the importance of each one. Oradea however, experienced urban modernization much later stage, after 1900, and the pace in which it were raised has contributed significantly in creating a new appearance of the city.

Conclusions constitute a review of research highlighting the extent to which I answered the question which I started out with.

Annexes integrate the illustrative descriptions on which buildings have developed their listing plans and pictures of vintage and contemporary images of the original architects' drawings.

This study represents an approach through which we intend to further examine the issue of private eclectic buildings that have not enjoyed the importance it deserves. We are aware that the work is only the beginning of the research and we hope we can continue in the future, highlighting key aspects of residential architecture eclectic Transylvania.