

The Houses of the Library
of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences between 1827 and 1988
– The Architectural Profile of an Institution

Is it possible for an institution to project its profile by architectural means? How can a building or architectural space express the role a national scientific organization plays in the intellectual life of a society or city?

I wish to examine these questions by looking at the different buildings which have housed the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

THE BEGINNING

The story begins at the 1825-27 Diet of Pozsony, (today Bratislava) Here Count József Teleki, the deputy of Szabolcs County, made a gesture of vital importance. This member of the Diet, who had been brought up in the spirit of the Enlightenment by his aristocratic family, offered his family library inherited from his father to the Hungarian Learned Society (*Magyar Tudós Társaság*) on 17 March 1826.

The letter of donation instructed that the representatives of the Learned Society and the Hungarian National Museum should receive the family library and ensure its housing and access to it. Thus, the private library of the Teleki family provided the foundation of the Academy's library in a similar way to how the collection of books of another nobleman, Ferenc Széchenyi, formed the basis of Hungary's National Library, which today bears his name.

The diploma of donation said, that the Library should take over by the representatives of the Academy and the Hungarian National Museum, and provide its housing and disclosure. The Hungarian National Museum did not have its own home that time. That is the reason why the process to build a new home for the National Museum had been connected with the housing problem of the Academy and the Teleki Library. These different ideas did not realize at last.

The Academy began functioning in Pest in 1831. As it did not have its own premises or building, in the early years its meetings were held at the Teleki family's palace in Pest. The presidium was elected and the Count who made the donation was appointed president. The Academy hired few rooms in Deron House on the bank of Danube, at the so called



1. The building of the Diet of Pozsony, (today Bratislava, University Library)

2. Miklós Barabás:
Count József Teleki, 1837.
 (etching, HNM,
 TKCs Inv Nr 4389)



Rakpiac place for its offices and the collections. From April until September 1831 there were two rooms used by the Academy and from April 1833 has been hired further rooms, too. The Library remained in the Teleki Palace because of the tight space in the Deron House.¹

3. Joseph Fuchsthaller:
Szervita Place.
 The Teleki Palace is on the right.
 (Kiscelli Múzeum,
 Inv. Nr 14.777 M 762)



4. Carl Vasquez:
Deron (later Nákó) House, 1837
 (Kiscelli Múzeum,
 Inv Nr. 28234.3)

The family library donated to the Academy remained in the home of the Teleki family.

The meetings of the Learned Society were also held in the palace in the early years. We can all imagine the informal milieu where the host received learned guests in his own home. They talked, discussed and planned. The poet János Arany recalled the mood of these early meetings decades later in this way: “Every week a few honorary members, eight to ten ordinaries, men of belles-lettres, and the odd corresponding member came together. They consulted and arranged affairs.”

The building was a three-story late Baroque palace on the northern side of today's Szervita Square. The edifice is no longer there as it was demolished after the Second World War.

Use of the library was very restricted at that time, opening twice a month on the first and the fifteenth between 9 am and 1 pm. Furthermore, the palace did not have a reading room to facilitate regular library use. Lending was difficult as no systematic catalogue of the books was available, hindering access to the material.

The collection of the Library had been increased with current materials. First of all, that meant scientific journals from England, France and Germany. The newest issues were placed in the public room beside the general assembly room.² Beside the new issues of journals the library gained books, too. These arrived to the library through purchases, gifts and exchanges.³

Due to the difficulties of using the library, scholars also used material available at other libraries, like University Library, Library of the National Museum and of the National Casino.

The books were stacked on old oak shelves, which were retained after the move as well.

THE ACADEMY IN TRATTNER-KÁROLYI HOUSE

The Learned Society had made an agreement with the owner of the Trattner-Károlyi House in today's Petőfi Sándor Street in November 1832.⁴ From the spring of 1833 the Learned Society hired rooms in Trattner-Károlyi House. This lease arrangement lasted far longer than intended. The Academy operated there until 1865.

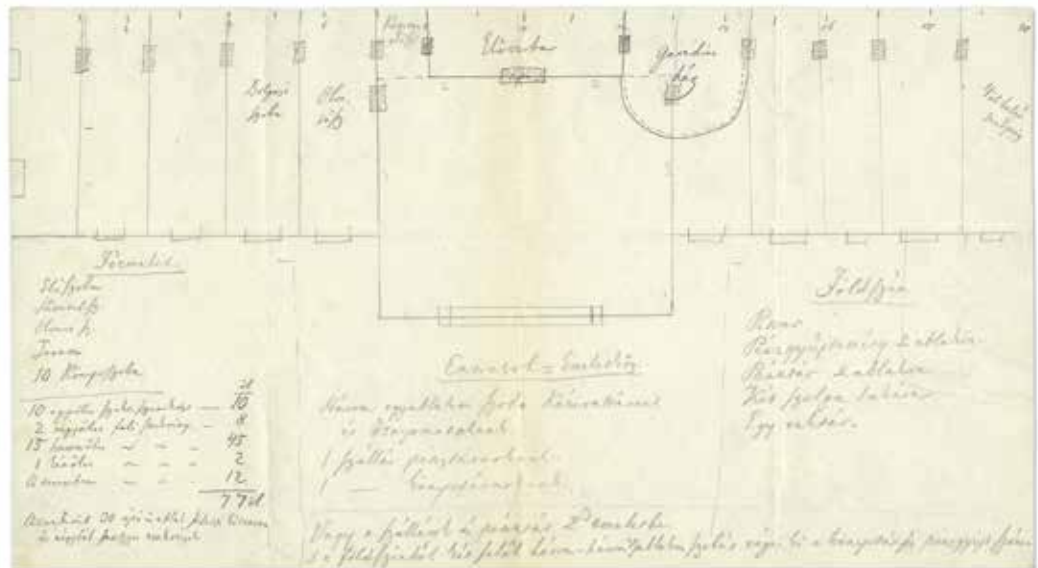
The preparation works before the housing began at spring of 1833, but went slower than expected as Ferenc Toldy the Secretary of the Academy wrote in his report to József Teleki in September 1833 about the works in Trattner-Károlyi House.

There is a list which has been made in all probability in connection with this letter to Teleki likely by Ferenc Toldy. This list counts the rooms for the Learned Society (the Academy) and the rooms for library use with its dimensions and dispositions, too.⁵

1. Papp, Gábor György, A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia épített öröksége. In: *Épített örökség a magyar tudomány szolgálatában*, Papp, Gábor György (Ed.), Budapest, 2010. 11–47; Papp, Gábor György – Ugrý, Bálint: Carl Vasquez Pest, Buda, Óbuda térképe a nevezetesebb épületekkel. In: *150 éves a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia székháza. Épület-, intézmény- és gyűjteménytörténet*.

Bicskei, Éva – Ugrý, Bálint (Eds.), Budapest, 2018, 24. ■ 2. F. Csanak Dóra, «Az Akadémiai Könyvtár története a szabadságharcig» *Magyar Könyvszemle* 75-1 (1959), p. 47-73 (59). ■ 3. see: Csanak 1959. ■ 4. Edvi Illés Pál; Rexa Dezső, «A Gránátos-utca és épületei» *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából* 10. (1943) p. 177–208. (186-187)

Into a larger room with pictures on its walls, would be filled with bookshelves later on. There is a journal-room in the list, eighteen small rooms in the main floor and the mezzanin. Also appears in this list a workroom for librarian, a reading room, and a storage in the first floor. There had been designed a flat for the librarian on the third floor. Furthermore the author signed an office for the secretary, a numismatic collection, a cashier's office, two flats for assistants and a storage for publications of the Academy. Together with this list should have been made a detailed sketch for the placement and disposition of the different collections of the Academy assessing the number of rooms required for the Learned Society. (Fig. 5)



5. A detailed sketch for the placement and disposition of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Trattner-Károlyi House (by Ferenc Toldy), MTA KIK Kt Vegyes 2r. 40. I. VI.

In this sketch there is a part of a plan which shows a building with a main axis in the centre.⁶ Behind the risalit there is a large room (cca 7,3x11 meter, about 80 m2) with windows. Beside the main room on the both side there is a row of 5-5 small and narrow rooms.

In his comments for the sketch Toldy wrote the amount and dimensions of the bookcases (likely for the library), too.

It took years to furnish the rooms and communal halls. At the meeting of the governing board on 3 November 1833, Count István Széchenyi himself proposed that the general assembly hall be equipped with carpets, curtains, chandeliers, a bell and a clock. In response the Society requested the Count to arrange the acquisition of these necessary objects.

It took several years for the furnishing of the rooms to be completed in 1837 Ferenc Toldy asked Teleki to procure new book cases.

Our book cases having gotten cramped that it is very problematic to search for things in them and all the archives are confined to one single closet: I ask your Excellency's permission to order a third oak cabinet, that we had already talked about, one that is similar to the two standing in the President's alcove; this third one would also stand there, Thus the books would have more space and the archives also two walnut cabinets.

Apart from the assembly room, the offices and the collections (the coin and medal collection, and the archives), the quarters of the cashier (Mihály Helmechzy) and the

librarian as well as two service apartments were furnished in the building. Later, in addition to the first floor, the second floor of the courtyard wing was also rented.

In the 1830s the Library had been increased with gifts and foundations. József Teleki brought the Library of Ferenc Kresznerics for the Academy in 1834. The library of Márton Marczibányi had been gifted by Livius Marczibányi to the Academy (1835).

Count István Sándor in his inheritance gifted for an Academy of Sciences (1814). One part of the bequest had been moved to the National Széchényi Library and other parts to the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (in the 1840s). The Library of the Noble Family Batthyány was given through the inheritors Gusztáv and Kázmér Batthyány to the Academy. The private Library was moved to the Trattner-Károlyi house in 1839, but because of the problems of locations it had been stored in the court of the house. Batthyánys gave bookshelves to the Academy, too, which kept in storerooms in Main Street (today Arany János Street).⁷ Because in the Trattner-Károlyi house the limited space was a constant problem, an other storeroom for the publications of the Academy was hired in Kecskeméti Street from 1845, too.⁸



6. Trattner Károlyi House Courtyard.
(Museum of Hungarian Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center, Photo Collection Inv. Nr. 133484 N)

THE TELEKI LIBRARY IN TRATTNER-KÁROLYI HOUSE

In 1836 a committee appointed for the same purpose, made notes about the prospective sum required for moving the Teleki library. On this occasion, they asked Széchényi, the vice president “to take on the job of finding an appropriate place, the closest possible to the premises of the society.” So at this point it was not clear yet where the Teleki Library would be permanently housed but the phrasing shows, that no one considered that the the National Museum could serve for these purposes.

At a board meeting held on the 17th of June 1838 a proposal was accepted regarding the method of the handover of the Teleki Library The proposal stated that the library be handed

■ 5. Writings of Ferenc Toldy concerning the Hungarian Learned Society (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) 1832-1838, MTA KIK Kt Vegyes 2r. 40. I. VI. ■ 6. Writings of Ferenc Toldy concerning

the Hungarian Learned Society (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) 1832-1838, MTA KIK Kt Vegyes 2r. 40. I. VI. ■ 7. Csanak c.f. 1959, 64. ■ 8. Meeting of the Directorate in June 9. 1845. No. IX.

over by a representative of the family and accepted by the librarian of The Learned Society and a representative of the National Museum appointed by the palatine. The handover should take place in the presence of two scribes. Proposals are also made concerning the opening times and the lending process. The response from the palatine who favored housing the library together with the museum was delayed until 1841, while the director of the museum, Ágoston Kubinyi tried to delay the moving of the library to the museum.

In 1844 the Teleki family handed over their library to the Academy through the offices of the lawyer István Károlyi and it was moved to Trattner House. The books together with the shelving of the Teleki library (the oak bookcases between the windows) were taken to Trattner House.⁹ Upon receipt, the number of books held by the Academy increased to between fifty and sixty thousand volumes.

The opening took place at the General Assembly's meeting on 23 December 1844.¹⁰

A marble statue of the founder of the library, József Teleki, carved by István Ferenczy and commissioned by the Learned Society, was positioned in one of the communal halls.¹¹ Secretary Ferenc Toldy led the academicians on a tour of the new rooms. Mihály Vörösmarty wrote his poem *Thoughts in the Library* in memory of this event.

A few weeks before the siege of Buda in 1849, the most valuable items from the library were moved from the second to the first floor. The building was hit on 9 May 1849 and the roof burnt down but fortunately the library was not harmed.



7. István Ferenczy:
Count Teleki József, 1845
(Library of the Hungarian
Academy of Sciences)

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PALACE OF THE ACADEMY

The foregoing events strengthened the need for a new home to be found for the library and other collections, as the space was becoming increasingly tight.

In May 1860 the Academy of Sciences purchased a plot for its own home – on the northern side of a market square known as the *Rakpiac* in the most dynamically developing part of the city.

With the assistance of the art historian Imre Henszlmann, the management of the Academy prepared a design program for the construction of the palace, which covered the division of the building and necessary rooms as well as the architectural style to be chosen.¹²

At the time classical Greek and Renaissance architectural forms were being used for the buildings of academies across Europe. The main reason for this was that in Europe these institutions were regarded as the bearers of democracy and democratic values created by the

■ 9. Csanak c.f. 1959, 61. ■ 10. Schedel Ferenc, «Az academiái könyvtár rövid története és mibenléte» *Magyar Tudós Társaság Évkönyve*, 7, 1846, p. 86-91.; Bajza József, «A Telekiek tudományos hatása», *Magyar Tudós Társaság Évkönyve*, 7, 1846, p. 92-129. ■ 11. ld. Viszota, Gyula, «Teleki József mellszobra», *Akadémiai Értesítő*, 18, 1907, p. 305-317. ■ 12. Szabó, Júlia (Ed.), *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia palotájának pályázati tervei. 1861. Bewerbungspläne für den Palast der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1861*. Budapest, 1996; Papp, 2010. 11-47; Kemény, Mária, *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia palotája*, Budapest, 2015, Sisa, József (Ed.), «Motherland and Progress» - *A Concise History of Hungarian Architecture and Design 1800-1900*, Basel, 2016; Bicskei, Éva – Ugry, Bálint (Eds.), *150 éves a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia székéből*.

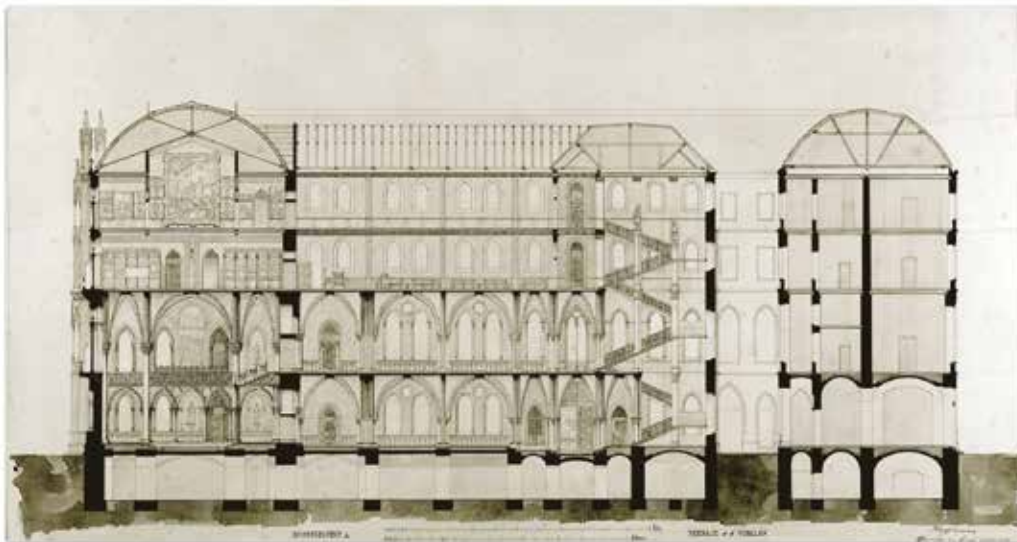
Épület-, intézmény- és gyűjteménytörténet. Budapest, 2018. ■ 13. Henszlmann Imre, «Minő stílyben építsük a M. Tud. Akadémia épületét?» *Budapesti Szemle*, 12, 1861, p. 375. ■ 14. Boncz, Hajnalka – Kemény, Mária (Eds), *Ybl Miklós, az Akadémia bizalmi építész. Kiállítás születésének 200. évfordulója alkalmából*, Budapest, 2014; Papp, Gábor György, «Vezessük be minél előbb nemzeti hagyományainkat a modern világba». A nemzeti építészet fogalmának változásai az építészeti szakirodalomban Magyarországon» *Korall*, 62, 2015, p. 167-189; Papp, Gábor György: Present Constructed from Past. Attempts to Shape Hungarian National Architecture in 19th Century. In: *Cultural Nationalism in a Finnish-Hungarian Historical Context*. Gyáni, Gábor – Halmesvirta, Anssi (Eds), Budapest, 2018. p. 146-163.

Greeks. This is demonstrated by the example of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, which is almost contemporary with the Academy in Pest.

The question of style was not so evident in Pest. Domestic public opinion regarded the Hungarian Academy of Sciences as a national institution. For this reason, the national character of the institution appearing in the form of the building was emphasized when announcing the contest. Henszlmann wished to provide very precise guidelines on this matter, indicating the Gothic style as the preferred form.¹³ This was supported as follows:

- the Gothic structure, as opposed to the classic structure, affords the designer greater licence from the aspect of spatial arrangement and spatial connections. “We can find in this style everything we need; the most perfect system of arches, the most perfect system of stores the most perfect lighting system and the greatest liberty in both organizing grouping and forming the features of the building.” Then he continues as follows: „ Its only worth combining the Academy’s palaces with a tenement house if the architect is allowed the greatest liberty in organizing, grouping and forming everything.”
- academic institutions with long history, such as Oxford and Cambridge, are built in this style,
- “We need no longer forget that the golden ages of our national history went hand in hand with the Gothic style. [...] This French architecture was introduced here by king Béla IV and his family; in the 14th century king Charles Robert built his castle in Visegrád in the pointed-arch style, and this style was used by king Louis of Luxembourg and finally king Matthias at the Buda Castle.”¹⁴

Henszlmann himself, in cooperation with two fellow architects, Károly Gerster and Lajos Frey submitted a medieval style design to the contest. However, their concept did not bring undivided success, although they (not in a completely above-board manner) had their competitors promise that they would also submit Neo-Gothic designs.



8. Henszlmann, Imre – Frey, Lajos – Gerster, Károly: *Design for the Palace of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*. Section, 1860. (Museum of Hungarian Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center, Collection of Designs Nr. 58434)

Henszlmann's choice of style did not convince the evaluating committee, which in the end chose the neo-Renaissance style. Neither were the rooms of the palace arranged as he envisaged. On the one hand, the central core of the palace was transposed to the central axis of the southern wing facing the square as opposed to the original concept of it being on the axis of the eastern wing. On the other hand, space was allocated for the library on the ground floor whereas in earlier concepts the library was located on the second floor.

Two more architects, Leo Klenze from Munich and Friedrich August Stüler from Berlin, were invited to participate in the second round of the contest.

In the end, the palace was erected in the Florentine-Venezian Neo-Renaissance style according to the designs of Friedrich August Stüler from Berlin. A heated debate about which style best suits the Hungarian nationality began in newspaper columns in connection with this competition. It is noticeable that at this time the majority of writers in the field put their weight behind the Gothic. Although we see that while the theoretical works linked the idea of the nation with the Gothic style, the works that were realized often bore the forms of the Italian Renaissance, following the utilitarian considerations for the modern metropolis that was being formed (for example, the construction costs of a Neo-Renaissance building were significantly lower than a Neo-Gothic building). Another reason why the Gothic style was not willingly employed at this time to express national self-awareness was that it was then considered a fundamentally German style and therefore was not fitting to a majority of architects for a building that would express the independence of the nation, as opposed to the Italian Renaissance, which symbolized freedom.



9. Zsigmond Pollak: *View of the Palace of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences* (designed by Friedrich August Stüler), 1865 (*Emlékkönyv a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia megnyitási ünnepségére*, 1865.)

Construction began in 1862 and was completed at the end of 1864. The building works were overseen by Miklós Ybl and a former Hungarian student of Stüler, Antal Szkalnitzky, rather than the aging Berlin architect. The furnished palace was inaugurated at a ceremony in December 1865.

After this the offices and collections were moved in.

Moving the library was directed by the then keeper of the library, Pál Hunfalvy. The move was linked to the establishment of the new cataloguing system and, in conjunction with this, merging the Teleki library, which had been managed separately until then, with the Academy's library. During this process, the library ceased to function from the autumn of 1864 until 1868, when the final arrangement of the books was completed.

The move itself took place in December 1865 and the books, which had been previously packed in wooden crates, were carried by horse and cart in snow and rain to the new palace.

The new library occupied the row of rooms on the western side of the palace facing the Danube and the north wing. Later, as we shall see, the ever-expanding holdings demanded more rooms.



10. The Library of the Academy
(photo Erdélyi, Mór, about 1900,
MTA KIK Kt Ms 10754)

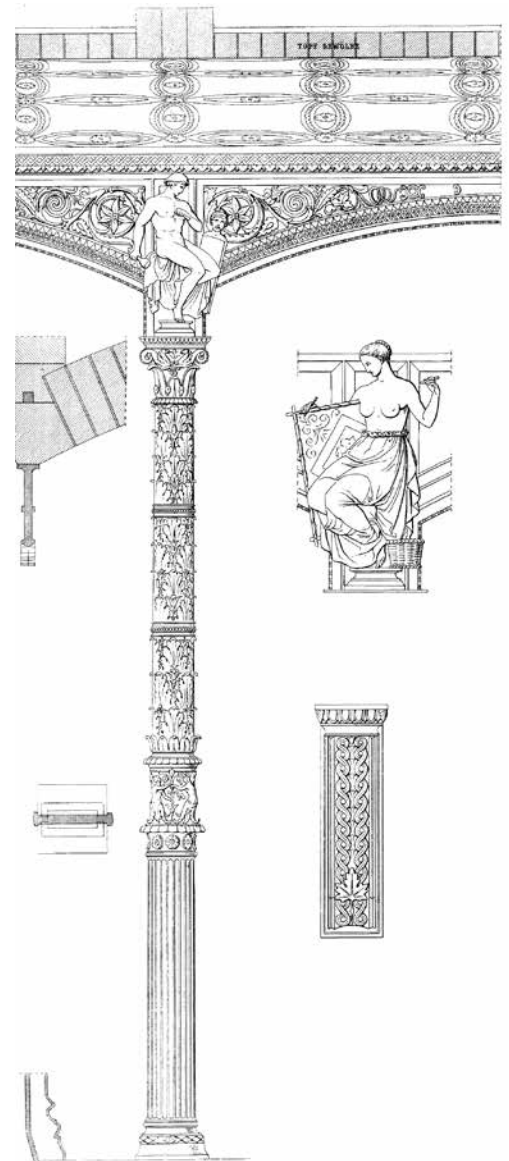
The decoratively painted vaults of the impressive row of rooms along the Danube were supported by pairs of coloured iron columns. The architectural layout of the rooms echoes that of Stüler's other buildings. For example, the cabinets on the second floor of the Neues Museum in Berlin have iron columns resembling those in Pest. (Fig. 11a-b).



11a. Iron column in the former Library of the Academy (photo Hámori, Péter, 2017)

The stencils for the wall paintings are also likely to have been brought from Berlin. Several sources relate that the stucco ornaments in the library and elsewhere in the palace were brought from Berlin and were cast using Berlin moulds.¹⁵

The furnishings for the library were made by Hungarian craftsmen. It is known, for instance, that Antal Szkalnitzky in fact drew the design of the bookcases using unspecified Berlin examples.



11b. Iron column in the Neues Museum, Berlin
(see: *Das neue Museum in Berlin: Vierundzwanzig Tafeln* / von Friedrich August Stüler, Berlin, 1862)

CHANGES IN THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE LIBRARY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH AND FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURIES

In retrospect we can declare that the first few decades of the existence of the library of the academy were in part taken up by the Board trying to fix the legal stand of the library corresponding to the ideas of its founder. The collection that in the meantime was naturally growing in various different ways made a successful move towards turning from a nobleman's private collection to being a public academic library of national importance. This prestigious collection of the country's leading academics was able to establish itself in the ensuing years as an equal partner to other academic libraries of Europe.

Thanks to Stüler's prize-winning design, a building of superb quality, moreover the first in the neo-Renaissance style, came into being in Pest, which benefitted not only the development of the city. The prestige of both the Academy and its library increased through the palace's architectural values.

In the last third of the 19th century new collections were added to the Library and housing them created increasingly large problems for the management. Space seems not to have caused any mayor problems for about thirty years. The first complaints regarding this issue appear in the mid-1890s. Four major expansion had taken place until the first world war. In 1898 the journals that had hitherto been stored in a great warehouse out on the yard were in part handed over to the library of the National Museum, and the room, thus emptied was remodeled to serve as a storage place for books.¹⁶ In 1901 additional shelves were added to the book-stands in the main storage room.¹⁷ In 1909 the library acquired a lodging hitherto set aside for employees and fitted it with iron stands to make a new storage room.¹⁸ In 1911 the four room flat designed for the chief librarian was converted into a storage room too.¹⁹ All these means of expansion provided only a temporary solution however. A greater-scale expansion of the storage-space took place in 1925 due to an offering made by György Károlyi, the owner of a printing-house and distributor of the publications of the Academy. He handed over three of the rooms he had been renting in the Academy's tenement house for the use of the library.

By the end of the 19th century the palace housed collections that were handled separately from the library but were later included in the inventory of the Library. The most notable of these were the Goethe Collection and the former Széchenyi Museum. (Fig. 12-13)

Other commemorative rooms were also located in the building: housing the repository of the Kisfaludy Society from 1865, and the Kálmán Mikszáth memorial room from 1910.²⁰

It is important to realize that remembrance and honouring predecessors were a natural part of the Academy's self-image – and also had an effect on the part it played in Hungarian public life.

While, till the middle of the 19th century, the Learned Society had acted as the catalyst of our country's intellectual life, by the end of the same century it had in most people's view turned into a self-regulated, closed institution. This is mostly so in the case of literature and fine arts. On the contrary the Library was able to remain a high-level academic institution an intellectual centre

During the first decades of the 20th century, the academy was unable to remain independent, as it had to rely on a significant amount of funding and benefits from the state. This was regulated by the first article of 1923, that set regular annual funding for the institution.

In this situation the last will of Count Ferenc Vigyázó proved particularly important, which left his family heritage of the Podmaniczky's and the Vigyázós to the Academy in 1928. Significant artworks also formed part of this inheritance along with properties, land and



12. The Széchenyi Museum in the Academy (about 1900, MTA KIK Kt Ms 4410/24)

■ 15. Bicskei, Éva – Ugry, Bálint (eds.), *150 éves a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia székháza. Épület-, intézmény- és gyűjteménytörténet*, Budapest, 2018. 58-62. ■ 16. Akadémiai Értesítő 9, 1898. 104. 231-232; 1899.

224-225. 1. ■ 17. Akadémiai Értesítő 13, 1902. 243.1. ■ 18. Akadémiai Értesítő 21, 1910. 254.1. ■ 19. Akadémiai Értesítő 23, 1912. 266.1. ■ 20. András-Bicskei-Papp, 2006. 49-56; Bicskei-Ugry, 2018. 96-101.

13. The Goethe Collection in the Academy (photo Erdélyi, Mór, about 1900, MTA KIK Kt Ms 10754)



money. This was the most important donation that the Academy had received since its founding. It was also a large help towards gaining independence for the Academy and the library from any possible government again. Due to this donation enabled the Academy to buy and acquire new items, it was still unable to embark on any significant developments

THE ACADEMY LIBRARY DURING AND AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The most valuable parts of the Library were removed before the front reached Budapest. The most valuable codices and the incunabula were taken in 30 chests to the Storages of the Hungarian National Bank in Veszprém and to the basement of the Hungarian National Museum Budapest.²¹

At the turn of 1944-45 the building and its various collections kept there – above all the library itself – were seriously damaged. The Danube wing suffered the most and its roof collapsed.

Serious losses were caused to the holdings of the Széchenyi Museum and the Vigyázó Collection. In March 1945 preservation and restoration works began, which continued in the following years.

The status of the library changed in the early 1950s in connection with the restoration of the building and the rooms of the library. Its role increased noticeably, which is



14. Assembly room in the first floor of the West wing of the palace, 1945 (MTA KIK Microfilm Collection D 2632)

■ 21. Berlász, Jenő – Sz. Németh, Mária, *Az Akadémiai Könyvtár múltja és jelene*, A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtárnak kiadványai 2. Budapest, 1956, 15-16.



15. Reading room of the Library in the first floor of the west wing of the Palace of the Academy, about 1970 (MTA KIK Microfilm Collection Inv Nr. 721480)

demonstrated by the decision to absorb the museum collections that used to be managed separately (the Széchenyi Museum, the Goethe Collection, the Repository of the Kisfaludy Society, the Mikszáth Room and the Vörösmarty Collection) into the stock of the library. In conjunction with this, the Department of Manuscripts and the Rare Book Collection was established from the oldest volumes held by the library and the old Academy manuscripts. The former rooms of the secretary general's suite on the first floor of the northern wing were converted in 1951 to house the collection. The layout of the interior design follows classical forms whose stylistic features reflect not only the taste of the mid-20th Century but also the idea of the style associated with academic behaviour.



16. Interior of the Manuscript and Rare Book Collection of the Academy (photo Seidner, Zoltán, around 1951, MTA KIK Kt Ms 5075/291)

17. Interieur of the Oriental Collection of the Academy, 1972
(Archive of the Academy
Nr. P7260234)



In parallel with this, material treated as separated units containing Oriental manuscripts and books – most of which were acquired by the Academy by donation – was removed from the large library holdings. For the Oriental Collection, the ground-floor rooms that once housed the Goethe Collection were given Eastern furnishings reminiscent of Moorish, somewhat Mudéjar style in the beginning of 1951.

18. Outside storage in the 1960s
(MTA KIK Microfilm Collection
Nr. D 5209)



These reorganisations and the installation of a new store room in the third floor of the north wing of the palace in 1955/56, however, did not solve the problem that the building was becoming increasingly cramped for the library.²² The first storage place outside the main building was set up in 1954 and by the 1980s it had a total of four outside storages to keep the books.²³ From the 1950s onwards various plans were conceived to relieve or solve this situation.

First using parts of the building neighbouring the palace to the north was proposed. This building was designed by Miklós Ybl and built between 1862 and 1864 as an apartment block for the Academy, and in its style and external appearance it matched the Stüler's palace. While the building had functioned as rented accommodation

until the Second World War, originally it was used by both independent organizations and associations connected with the Academy, too.

In the 1950s moving not only the library stacks but also the offices of the Academy into this building was considered.

In the first half of the 1960s larger scale plans also affecting the cityscape were conceived for relocating the library. One suggestion was to use part of the still battle-scarred royal palace in Buda Castle for the Academy's library and its collections. Similarly, grand but better prepared and more detailed plans were drawn up in the 1960s for the development of the vacant plot to the south of the today Széchenyi square, where once the Lloyd palace had stood. The design competition took place in 1966 and the plans were exhibited along with feasibility studies, descriptions of the artworks and even models.²⁴ A group consisting of architects from KÖZTI (the architectural firm the work had been assigned to) and the board of the library went on a number of study trips, to get impressions for the new library building.²⁵ Thereafter, "emergency" solutions were conceived. Now there was no trace of a unified concept, let alone one that represented the architectural expression of the erudition and spirit of the library.

In the early 1970s parts of the library stacks were relocated to rooms that had seen better times on the third floor of the palace. These rooms had originally been designed for museum purposes and had functioned in this capacity until 1944.²⁶ (Fig. 21a) In the mid-1980s the hope arose for the first time that parts of the building might be restored to their original museum use. It was then that the decision was reached to fully reconstruct the palace and the former apartment block. (Fig. 21b)

Before the renovation works began, in May 1978 preliminary studies were conducted to determine whether the private building next to the Academy's palace, Arany János street No. 1 could be made appropriate for housing the library. Part of the library had long been settled in that tenement-house: a significant number of its storages and some of its workrooms were already located here. In 1980 ministry funding were set aside for the purposes of this investment (May 21, 1980.), that enabled the Academy to Commission KÖZTI to implement the designs. This made the possibility of relocating the library collections and their keepers operating in increasingly unsuitable conditions to more dignified surroundings in the former apartment block. The conversion of the building for its new purpose lasted from 1984 to 1988. (Fig. 22a-b)

When the library moved, with the utilization for other purposes of the historicizing neo-Renaissance rooms that had been designed for library use, the mutual relationship between the building radiating the elegance of the sciences and the library safeguarding the ethos of classical scholarship, which had lasted over a hundred years, disappeared.

■ 22. Jelentés az MTA könyvtárának helyzetéről 1955-ben; Jelentés az MTA könyvtárának helyzetéről 1956-ban. ■ 23. Jelentés az MTA könyvtárának helyzetéről 1982/83-ban. ■ 24. Rózsa, György, «Az Akadémiai Könyvtár új székházáról», *Magyar Tudomány*, 73, 1966. No. 5. p. 322-325; Kasznár, Zoltán, «Méltó otthon a tudomány-nak. Új épületet kap az Akadémiai Könyvtár», *Közalkalmazott*, 1966. No. 11. p. 3; «Kiállítás az Akadémiai Könyvtár új épületének homlokzati terveiből», *Magyar Tudomány*, 73, 1966. No. 11.p. 716.; «Milyen lesz az Akadémia új könyvtára», *Magyar Nemzet*, October

3, 1966 p. 7; «Telex kéri, lift szállítja a könyveket. Felépül az Akadémiai Könyvtár új székháza a Roosevelttéren», *Népszava*, June 12, 1966.; Csapodi, Csaba, «Kiállítás az Akadémiai Könyvtár épületerveiből», *Magyar Könyvszemle* 83, 1967. No. 2. p. 156.

■ 25. MTA Könyvtár kiadványai, Munkabeszámolók, jelentések, 1966. ■ 26. *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia és a művészetek a XIX. században*. (Eds. Szabó, Júlia – Majoros, Valéria) Budapest, 1992; András-Bicskei-Papp, 2006; Papp, 2010; Bicskei-Ugry, 2018.



19. The north façade of the former tenement house of the Academy (today the library building), about 1984 (MTA KIK Microfilm Collection Inv. Nr. D 8170)



20. Czebe, István: Scale-modell of the design for a new building of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1966. (MTA KIK Microfilm Collection Inv. Nr. 1890/001)



21a. The rooms of the former museum of the Academy as the storages of the library (Bertalan, Vilmos, about 1987 Photo Collection of the Institute for Art History of the RCH of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Inv. Nr. 54972)



21b. The rooms of the Art Collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, (Szelényi, Károly, 2005)

Not quite thirty years ago, the designers at the time were given a rare opportunity to create or rather reformulate the relationship between the space and this institution with a prestigious past.

Looking back today, it can be judged to what extent the designers were able to generate a new relationship between the architectural space and the institution, and through this how much they contributed to redefining the role of the library at the end of the 20th century.



22a. The staircase of the tenement house of the Academy (about 1980, MTA KIK Microfilm Collection Inv Nr. D 8551)



22b. The staircase in the Library of the Academy (Papp, Gábor György, 2018)