Nancy as a Center of Art Nouveau Architecture, 1895-1914

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Nancy as a Center of Art Nouveau Architecture, 1895-1914

Abstract
The small city of Nancy, France, is arguably the center where Art Nouveau architecture had the most lasting impact. Nancy's Art Nouveau was a divergent form of modernity that was defined by regionalism and a distinct sense of place, which its proponents championed as the key elements of an authentic architecture, allowing Nancy to challenge Paris as the dominant French artistic center in the two decades before World War I.

Most of Nancy's architects were graduates of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and grounded in the language of classicism and its associated professional standards. Much of Nancy's Art Nouveau had a conservative character that garnered praise from the national architectural press. Nancy's architects were also disciples of Emile Gallé, the founder of a regional association of artists, industrialists, and designers called the Ecole de Nancy, dedicated to the promotion of Art Nouveau. Nancy's architects freely collaborated with other artists of the Ecole on their buildings, and a sense of pride in their province led them to study local flora, the and regional legends and politics, using the iconography of plants and narratives to make architecture legible to a wide public.

The rooting of the work of Nancy's architects in their region and the alliance they formed with local industry were successes that Parisian Art Nouveau architects were never able to match. Consequently, in Paris, Art Nouveau was quickly discarded, while in Nancy it was celebrated as an integral piece of regional identity and an important national achievement until 1914.

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NANCY AS A CENTER OF ART NOUVEAU ARCHITECTURE, 1895-1914

Peter Clericuzio

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History of Art

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NANCY AS A CENTER OF ART NOUVEAU ARCHITECTURE,
1895-1914

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Philadelphia, 12 November 2011
ABSTRACT

NANCY AS A CENTER OF ART NOUVEAU ARCHITECTURE,
1895-1914

Peter Clericuzio
Advisor: Dr. David B. Brownlee

The city of Nancy, France, is, paradoxically, the least-well-known European center where Art Nouveau architecture developed, yet arguably the city where the style had the most lasting impact. Nancy’s Art Nouveau was a divergent form of modernity that was defined by regionalism and a distinct sense of place, which its proponents championed as the key elements of an authentic architecture, allowing the small city to challenge Paris as the dominant center of French artistic production in the two decades before 1914.

Nancy’s architects positioned themselves strategically in the contemporary French discussions about architecture, art, and politics. They were attuned to both the artistic cultures of the capital and their region of Lorraine. Most were graduates of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and imbued by their teachers with a sense of classicism and the professional standards associated with it. As a result, much of Nancy’s Art Nouveau had a conservative character, using elements of French Renaissance, Rococo, and Baroque, and it won the approval of the national architectural press.
Nancy’s Art Nouveau architects were also disciples of Emile Gallé, who, in 1901, founded the regional association of artists, industrialists, and designers called the Ecole de Nancy, dedicated to the promotion of Art Nouveau and the applied arts. Nancy’s architects collaborated with the other artists of the Ecole, creating architectural Gesamtkunstwerks that showcased exquisite craftsmanship. The artists’ strong regional pride led them to study local flora and landscape as well as historical legends and regional politics, drawing heavily on the iconography of plants and narratives to make architecture legible to a wide public.

The rooting of the work of Nancy’s architects in their region and the alliances they formed with local industry and the public were achievements that Parisian Art Nouveau architects, the design vanguard in the capital, were never able to match. Consequently, in Paris, Art Nouveau was quickly discarded, while in Nancy it was celebrated as an integral piece of regional identity and a nationally important cultural achievement until after the outbreak of World War I.
# Nancy as a Center of Art Nouveau Architecture, 1895-1914

Peter Clericuzio

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At the dawn of the twentieth century, Art Nouveau was the newest craze in European architecture and design. Its whiplash curves and references to nature in motifs of flowers, vines, and leaves promised to break free from the tropes of past styles that had dominated nineteenth-century architecture, such as the Gothic, Baroque, and Romanesque, and launch a “new art” of the future. Art Nouveau briefly flourished in many large European cities, such as Brussels, Vienna, Barcelona, Paris, Munich, Turin, and Glasgow. In most of them, Art Nouveau disappeared within a decade, the victim of a combination of factors. By 1910, changing tastes demanded a return to an elegant and universally admired classicism; natural forms came to be perceived as incongruous within an architecture based on modern technology; and, in some places, nationalist sentiments condemned the style as being a foreign import.

Art Nouveau did survive for nearly two decades, however, in the small city of Nancy, in eastern France, an unusual place for a cosmopolitan style to develop. There, decorative artists and architects created a distinctive strand of Art Nouveau, which resonated with the values and political and artistic beliefs of the residents of the city and surrounding region, garnering it a large and enthusiastic following. Nancy’s unique brand of Art Nouveau possessed a very complex character, which attempted to merge local and national cultural traditions with progressive developments in technology and industry, and new political geographic and demographic realities, instead of attempting to make a clean break with the past.

Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture is remarkable for several reasons, but chiefly because it did become the dominant style of building there around
1900 and remained so until the outbreak of the First World War. It was also one of the few centers where Art Nouveau achieved nearly universal acclaim not only within the region of Lorraine around Nancy but also on national and international levels. Furthermore, Nancy achieved such prominence and distinction with its own strand of the style as such a small city (with a population of just over 120,000 in 1911, it was, and still is, the smallest of all the major metropolitan areas where Art Nouveau developed). Art Nouveau in Nancy was pioneered by a group of about fifteen architects and dozens of decorative artists who formed a bloc of designers and craftsmen united in their dedication to the style and the improvement of regional art and architecture on dual historicist and progressive terms.

Scholarly recognition of the blending of old traditions and progressive developments in the shaping of modernity is not new, not even within the historiography of French modernism at the dawn of the twentieth century. Over the past two decades, Paul Rabinow, Rosemary Wakeman, and, most recently, Jean-Michel Rabaté have all acknowledged the contributions of both tradition and progress to this evolutionary process in France, one which lasted well into the twentieth century.1 In Nancy, the notion of an authentic modernity required a rooting in political geography and regional economic, social, and cultural concerns. On a formal level, the architects of Nancy drew from a wide variety of sources—local, national, and international—in creating their brand of Art Nouveau, but politically and rhetorically they

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maintained staunch allegiances to regionalist and nationalist concerns. Such a strategy, with its explicit attention to place, vaulted this local brand of Art Nouveau to prominence as the symbol of both Nancy and the surrounding region of Lorraine, ensuring its survival from the mid-1890s until the outbreak of World War I. This development of an enthusiastic regional and national following allowed Art Nouveau architecture in Nancy to become one of the most successful strains of modernism of the belle époque.

**Modernity, Industrialization and the Problem of Building Types**

Several aspects of late nineteenth-century European society were seen as hallmarks of modernity. Chief among these was the Industrial Revolution, as evidenced by the development of iron, steel, and—near the end of the century—reinforced concrete as mass-produced building materials suitable for use on a large scale, materials that were vital for the development of Nancy’s Art Nouveau and popular among the city’s architects. The 1889 World's Fair in Paris, sometimes cited as a landmark event for the birth of Art Nouveau, was a celebration of the possibilities of this new industrial age, crowned by the iconic Eiffel Tower. The pavilion at the exposition that best exemplified this sentiment was Ferdinand Dutert and Victor Contamin’s Galerie des Machines, a huge hall that was constructed of iron and glass and spanned 111 meters, the largest undivided interior space in the world at the time [Fig. 1-1]. The structural system consisted of great hinged arches, like a series of parallel bridge spans, which were entirely encased in glazing. The framework thus opened up the entire interior space to allow such flexibility

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that it was reused for the 1900 World’s Fair\(^4\) (albeit with a greatly altered façade) before finally being demolished in 1910.

Dutert and Contamin’s huge span also exemplified some of the new building types invented over the course of the century, for which new forms had to be created. The structure, shape, and scale of the Galérie des Machines resembled greatly the span of a great arched, glazed railway shed, an invention of mid-century that covered the tracks at train stations, developed in response to technological changes in transport. In Nancy, which was the center of the heavily-industrialized area of Lorraine, the design of train stations—and particularly the huge arched train shed—played a major role in shaping the city’s new architecture at the turn of the century.

At the same time, the use of large spans of iron and glass was famously exploited by a few wealthy retailers, who used them to house their increasingly vast array of mass-produced goods, thus giving birth to the department store. Beginning in 1869 with Aristide Boucicaut’s Bon Marché in Paris, with its iron frame and huge glass-covered atrium encased in a façade of stone, these multilevel palaces of consumption spread across Europe and the United States to become a nearly-ubiquitous feature of the Western urban landscape by 1900.\(^5\) The negotiation of these new building types—particularly department stores—and their purposes became a vehicle for the experimentation with Art Nouveau all over Europe, and they played a pivotal role in the development of Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture within the city and its spread throughout the surrounding region.


The Equality of the Arts and the Modern Gesamtkunstwerk

The possibilities brought by new materials in nineteenth-century construction likewise extended to the manufacture of the decorative arts, crafts, and smaller household goods, and it was in this field where Nancy’s Art Nouveau first appeared and where it initially gained great renown and respect. Designers faced the challenge of how to use iron and steel on a smaller scale to improve the usefulness, durability, and artistic merit of such objects for mass production. Artists working in these fields, however, faced the established hierarchy of visual media during the mid-nineteenth century, which segregated the arts from one another. This arrangement, precipitated by economic and political factors, privileged the “high arts” of painting and sculpture at the expense of lesser, manual arts—mostly architecture and the applied arts such as woodworking, furniture, interior design, glasswork, ironwork, tapestries and other fabric-based arts, all usually associated with utilitarian purposes.6

The English art critic John Ruskin, whose ideas influenced many Art Nouveau artists, lamented these developments as damaging and unnatural to the way that artwork operated to enrich human existence, noting that Raphael’s murals, like the School of Athens, were paintings that drew much of their aesthetic and communicative power from the fact that they were located within the ensemble of artistically-shaped interiors within the Vatican apartments.7 In France, the integration of the arts into a cohesive ensemble had a long and proud history. Under Napoleon, for example, the architects Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine had played

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7 Ibid.
a prominent role in the Imperial administration designing furniture, festival sets, and other decorative works. In their *Recueil de decorations intérieurs comprenant tout ce qui a rapport à l’ornement* (1801),\(^8\) whose plates of designs in the applied arts laid the foundations for the Empire Style, the pair demonstrated the power of ornament in architecture and decorative arts to convey both explicit and implicit messages about the philosophical and political importance of reason and order, key themes emphasized by Napoleon’s administration.\(^9\)

Ruskin and other artists and critics wished overthrow this tradition of artistic segregation, arguing that the equality of the arts made them more accessible to the public and therefore more democratic. Equality would also spark creativity by encouraging collaboration and the sharing of ideas between artists working in different media. One of the means to bring artists together was through the creation of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or a "total work of art," that required the collaboration of several artists working in diverse fields, a strategy that became one of the hallmarks of modern design, and especially Art Nouveau. Such cooperation encouraged artists to coordinate their designs for individual parts of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* to create an ensemble that exuded a unity of style.\(^10\) In Nancy, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the harmonious collaboration among multiple master craftsmen on one building had been encouraged by the city’s architects long before 1900,\(^11\) and

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\(^8\) In English, *Collection of Interior Decorations Including Everything Relating To Ornament*. It was reissued several times between 1801 and 1827.


in turn, it became one of the conspicuous aspects of Nancy's Art Nouveau architecture, particularly its most lavish structures.

Art Nouveau became a style well-suited for the program of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. It was, as Paul Greenhalgh has noted, the first style that "attempted to self-consciously transform modern design" through a variety of different media—lithography, architecture, ironwork, stained glass, jewelry, painting, woodworking, sculpture, tapestries, leatherworking, and so on. Often used in interior design, Art Nouveau invited the collective use of these arts to shape entire spaces and wall surfaces, ceilings, floors, and windows, to provide a unity of furniture and décor. The first Art Nouveau buildings, such as Victor Horta's Tassel House, built in Brussels in 1893 [Fig. 1-2], and Henry van de Velde's home, Bloemenwerf, erected not far away in Uccle in 1895-6 [Fig. 1-3], had unified interiors in which the style was expressed in various media. Horta's famous staircase of the Tassel House unites twisted rails and strips of iron that resemble the stems of plants with the echo of swirling, whiplash-curved tendrils in the floor mosaic as well as the stenciled wall designs. At Bloemenwerf, on the other hand, the simple clean lines of the wood furniture harmonize with the frank use of exposed beams and white plaster in the walls and ceiling.

These strategies found much sympathy in Nancy and in Paris, where, in 1896, several Art Nouveau designers, architects, and artists formed a group called L'Art dans Tout, which was dedicated to the production of harmonious interior ensembles of furniture and the decorative arts. The group lasted until 1901. Many members of L'Art dans Tout were already

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12 Ibid., 18.
well-known, accomplished artists. Charles Plumet (1861-1928), for example, was one of the group's founding members and a successful architect originally from Cirey-sur-Vezouze, a tiny town in Lorraine near Nancy; he frequently collaborated with the interior designer Tony Selmersheim (1871-1971), who joined the group in 1898. The young architect Henri Sauvage (1873-1932), quickly making a name for himself through several fashionable designs of Parisian cafés, joined the group in 1898. Metalworker Jean Dampt (1854-1945) and the woodworker Alexandre Charpentier (1856-1909) also counted themselves as members.

The artists of L'Art dans Tout were greatly influenced by the writings of the English Arts and Crafts designer William Morris (1834-1896), a well-known Socialist who believed that the design of unified interior ensembles could make the arts more accessible to the working classes in Britain and provide them with a spiritually uplifting environment that contrasted with the harsh industrialized world in which they worked. His ideas of artists committed to social reform had been disseminated in France through the writings of the critics Jean Lahor and Gabriel Mourey. They were closely aligned with the writings of the rationalist architect Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, who in the 1870s had written extensively on the social role of the design of French housing. Viollet-le-Duc believed that the attachment to hearth and home was directly connected to the love of diligent work, order, and economic prosperity, and the question of comfort was a problem that rationnel pour un 'art social,” in Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français (2001): 351-87. The size of the group varied along with its name; at the outset, the five members called themselves Le Cinq. With the departure of Henry Noq and the new adhesion of Selmersheim and the painter Etienne Moreau-Nélaton in 1898 they became Le Six; later that year, with the addition of Sauvage and several other artists, they became L'Art dans Tout, under which name they operated for the rest of the group's existence.

15 Lahor was the pseudonym of Dr. Henri Cazalis, a physician who was also a symbolist poet. Mourey wrote for various art journals of the period and was chiefly responsible for the dissemination of developments in Parisian art circles in the British periodical The Studio.
architecture desperately needed to solve.\textsuperscript{16}

At the time, harmonious sets of furniture were thought of as exclusively the purview of the lower classes, who could not afford to assemble their own personal collection by buying expensive individual pieces drawn from the work of various designers.\textsuperscript{17} As rationalists and admirers of Viollet-le-Duc, the designers of L'Art dans Tout emphasized the simplicity of furniture construction while embellishing it with floral motifs that followed the structure [Fig. 1-4], and intended for their ensembles to be used as models for industrial mass production.

While L'Art dans Tout's members met periodically to discuss artistic matters, their main activity was the presentation of their works at a series of exhibitions over their five-year existence. In 1900, they presented a proposal to the city of Paris for a large ensemble called the \textit{Foyer Moderne} at the World's Fair, which they planned as a visual demonstration of their ideas (Plumet wrote a manifesto to accompany it). Soon after this project was rejected, the group dissolved, the victim of various forces, including a Parisian public that still preferred the pastiches of Rococo to Art Nouveau, and its members' inability to forge alliances with industrialists willing to produce their work serially. Many of its members continued to work in Art Nouveau for a few years afterwards (especially the team of Plumet and Selmersheim), but their collective effort at social reform through Art Nouveau had met with failure. Nancy artists were acquainted with the work of L'Art dans Tout, as some Nancy artists were close friends of members of the Parisian group. As we will see in the next chapter, L'Art dans Tout almost certainly served as the primary inspiration for the formation of the

Nancy group of decorative artists, architects, and industrialists launched in 1901 called the Ecole de Nancy, an organization that lasted until 1914.

**Nationalism, Art Nouveau, and Interior Space**

The transformation of interior space via the decorative arts was part of a larger preoccupation with comparative cultural vitality and artistic prowess between late-nineteenth century European nations. The consolidation of many smaller kingdoms and principalities into larger nation-states in the 1860s and 1870s produced a set of great European powers that competed with each other for political and cultural superiority. In France, the situation was exacerbated by the events of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870-71, which had been a military disaster, and split the nation into hostile political camps. The independent-minded socialist leaders of the Paris Commune finally capitulated to the newly-formed national government of the Third Republic in May 1871. The events of the “année terrible” were viewed as a national trauma, from which it would take time to recover, and the preoccupation with recovery was, as we will see, especially acute in Nancy and eastern France, where the memory of the war remained most vivid.

In 1872 the architectural theorist Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc began the seventeenth lecture in the second volume of his famous *Entretiens sur l’Architecture* with a very long acknowledgement of the catastrophic events of the Franco-Prussian War and an urgent call for regeneration of the French nation: “Crushed beneath the weight of our errors, our indifference and moral weakness, overborne by an enemy whose power equals his animosity, it is from ourselves that we must look for retaliating power by means of education, instruction, and labor.” He believed architectural education was one of the keys to achieving this regeneration, under a new republican system of government. As well-educated men, it was architects’
responsibility to advise their clients of what was wise, necessary, and tasteful, and not be slavish executors of their patron’s wishes.\textsuperscript{18} For Viollet, France could avoid the decline of the Latin race that had been exposed by the Franco-Prussian War only if architecture contributed to this program of national regeneration.

The shame resulting from the disaster of the Franco-Prussian War prompted a wave of anxiety about France’s place within the rivalry among nations, and awakened fears about national degeneration,\textsuperscript{19} a concern that was exacerbated by the inevitable comparison of the industrial products of nations made possible by successive world’s fairs. It was evident at the 1878 Exposition Universelle in Paris that France’s superiority in craft production was being seriously challenged, and it was clear that other nations viewed this competition as a culture war. Frenchmen could not forget Kaiser Wilhelm I’s words at the opening of the Berlin Kunstgewerbemuseum (Decorative Arts Museum) in 1881: "We defeated France on the field of battle in 1870; now we want to defeat her again in the fields of commerce and industry."\textsuperscript{20} In response, the French art critic Marius Vachon issued his own plea for reforms in art production and education, arguing that "we are in retreat: the moment is critical; we must energetically take up the offensive again if we don’t want to be defeated, wiped out."\textsuperscript{21} Vachon was attempting to

\textsuperscript{18} Viollet-le-Duc, \textit{Entretiens}, 2:247-49. After the Franco-Prussian War, Viollet attempted to distance himself from the work he had performed for Napoleon III’s government. He became especially active in republican politics late in life, being elected to the Municipal Council of Paris in 1873 and serving until his death six years later. For more on his political activities, see Malcolm Clendenin, “Hector Guimard, Political Movements, and the Paris Metro: Natural Sympathies, Governing Harmony, and Social Change,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2008), 139-43.


\textsuperscript{20} The emperor was quoted in Edmond Plauchut, "La Rivalité des industries d'art en Europe," in \textit{Revue des Deux Mondes} 40 (May-June 1891): 643.
use this rivalry to spur a program of national regeneration, not just to achieve cultural superiority, but to preserve the arts in France altogether.

In the 1880s French officials and designers began to address the German challenge by looking abroad, especially to Japan, at methods of production in the decorative arts, and by sponsoring a revival of the eighteenth-century Rococo style as an emblem of national patrimony [Fig. 1-5]. They faced a stumbling block, in that France was unable to expand its general industrial production due to a lack of natural resources, and so they used governmental agencies such as the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs, founded in 1864, to encourage artisans to turn out luxurious items for an upper-class clientele, based on an organic Rococo aesthetic, that would uphold France’s reputation as the producer of the finest-quality craft goods. The goal was for individual designers to create objects and interiors that emphasized the purpose of domestic space, inspired by the curves of natural forms, as a refuge from industrial society.22

Although Debora Silverman has argued that France was able to achieve these goals by 1900,23 Nancy Troy has shown that France’s return to superiority in this realm was far from settled. The very favorable critical reception given to the German pavilion at the 1900 World’s Fair in Paris, which had been created by the most advanced designers and manufacturers in the German version of the Art Nouveau, revealed that other nations had kept pace with the advances that France had made.24

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23 Silverman, ibid., 284-314.

In 1899 Vachon published a new book, *Pour la défense de nos industries d’art*, in which he compared the systems of instruction in the decorative arts and architecture in several European countries, and concluded that the centralized system of decorative art schools then in place in France was inadequate. The book was favorably received; the critic Julius Meier-Graefe agreed that France's main rivals in artistic production, Germany and England, had both demonstrated noticeable improvements in this area at the 1900 Fair. In particular, he argued that Germany's government had, with material generosity and a patriotic spirit, directed "money, men, and intelligence...to good ends." He recommended that everyone working in artistic production in France should have a copy of Vachon's book in hand. Others agreed that the situation at the exhibition of 1900 and in the teaching of French industrial arts was deplorable, and that the French public, with its preference for pastiches of eighteenth-century styles, was to blame. Such critics gave the French exhibits of decorative art at the 1900 Fair unfavorable reviews, with one arguing that the entire nation's enterprise had deteriorated since the eighteenth century, while other countries, including Britain, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, had forged ahead. The "battlefield," which in the early 1880s had been a clear allusion to the Franco-Prussian War, had now expanded to include the rest of Europe.

Despite general agreement about the crisis in French artistic production, the Parisian artistic community could not agree on a particular style with which to express the new revitalizing spirit they sought. Clearly,

by 1900 the revival of the Rococo was not the answer. Some critics had given the French section at the 1900 Fair favorable reviews, especially in comparison to the showing from abroad. Others viewed Art Nouveau with great enthusiasm, both in France and abroad, and identified Emile Gallé, Louis Majorelle, the brothers Antonin and Auguste Daum, and other Nancy artists who had exhibited as among the best French practitioners of it.  

Vachon, however, despised Art Nouveau, calling it an "awful bastardization, operated by multiple crossings of vicious and contradictory influences"—and hoped that it would be banished forever by the French artistic community.  

In the middle were those who favored the Art Nouveau style cautiously, warning that, while it was not originally French, it seemed like a good approach to artistic form and color, particularly in the absence of alternatives.

Among the chief venues where the applied arts of Art Nouveau were introduced to the French public were the two Parisian shops opened by promoters of the style, Siegfried Bing’s *L’Art Nouveau*, which lasted from 1895 until 1904, and Julius Meier-Graefe’s *La Maison Moderne*, which opened in 1899 and closed the same year as Bing’s [Fig. 1-6]. Both men were Germans by birth who had moved to Paris, and both initially saw Art Nouveau as a key to revitalizing French production in the decorative arts. Both also first acted as middlemen, marketing the works of Art Nouveau designers, such as Henry van de Velde, who was largely introduced to the French public through Bing’s shop. After Bing dropped his middleman status just before 1900 to concentrate on in-house production of designs by artists

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30 Vachon, *Pour la défense de nos industries d’art*, 79-82.
31 Marcel, 11-12.
such as Georges de Feure and Eugène Gaillard, Meier-Graefe, who was the founder and one-time editor of the magazine *L’Art Décoratif* and its German double, *Dekorative Kunst*, picked up van de Velde’s Art Nouveau work to sell in his store, along with the work of other French and German designers.\(^{32}\)

Despite their German origins, by the 1890s Bing and Meier-Graefe had become enthusiastic supporters of the French artistic community and its mission to preserve French superiority in craft production. Bing had been commissioned by the French government in the late 1880s and early 1890s to study the applied arts of Japan and report on what could be learned from Japanese methods, becoming, in the process, one of the foremost purveyors of Japanese art in France. He moved in circles that included Louis de Fourcaud, Professor of Aesthetics at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and Roger Marx, the Inspecteur-Général des Musées Provinciaux.\(^{33}\)

In 1904, however, both Bing and Meier-Graefe’s shops were forced to close, mostly due to declining sales. From the outset, French critics had been suspicious of van de Velde’s Belgian roots, and both outlets were identified as importers of foreign styles and designs. Meier-Graefe was known as a promoter of German methods of mechanized mass production that necessitated an alliance between industrialists and artists, which was seen by many in France as a threat to traditional French handcrafts, which glorified the name of the individual designer. It was widely known that Bing

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was Jewish, and in the tense political climate surrounding the Dreyfus Affair, beginning at least as early as 1894 and not subsiding until after 1906, this fact contributed to the French public’s mistrust of his enterprise. The relatively large number of objects sold by Meier-Graefe and Bing that now reside in museums and collections outside France suggests that, from the beginning, a large percentage of the sales from their shops were to foreign, not French, patrons. Bing died in 1905, and Meier-Graefe, disenchanted with Art Nouveau and drawn to the simple industrial style then being turned out by machine manufacturing in Germany, abandoned his hope of changing the French system of craft production, closed *La Maison Moderne* and moved to Berlin in 1904.34

The debate over a "national style" in France continued even after the close of Bing and Meier-Graefe’s shops. Nonetheless, the pastiches of Rococo from the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI remained—at least temporarily—the most popular furniture among the Parisian public at the beginning of the new century. In part this was because of its past success in the marketplace: the furniture could be produced with cheap veneers, largely using mechanization, and it sold well. In Paris, Art Nouveau and other styles were more difficult to produce because there (unlike in Nancy) designers such as those of *L’Art dans Tout* had not been able to persuade industrialists to adapt large-scale mechanization to the production of their designs. On a second level, as Leora Auslander has observed, it was also due to the makeup of French republican society, which fostered heterogeneity and diversity in taste. In a democratic society, stylistic preferences could not be simply

imposed from above, but invited differences of opinion.\(^{35}\) Even after 1905, by which time Art Nouveau had fallen out of favor with much of the Parisian public, it still counted numerous supporters among the nation's artists and designers, such as Hector Guimard and Frantz Jourdain in Paris—though they were fast becoming a minority\(^{36}\)—as well as all of the leading Nancy artists and architects, who, as we shall see, attempted, with tangible success, to differentiate their strand of the style from the type practiced in Paris.

The Development of a Regionalist Discourse

The differentiation established between Nancy and Paris in the artistic level mirrored the international revival of regionalist and local themes across Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, in both the broader political and cultural spheres. This was not a new development in France; the dichotomy between Paris and the provinces had a long and nuanced history that extended back at least to the seventeenth century.\(^{37}\) Under Louis XIV and during French Revolution, France had undergone increasing centralization of society, politics and culture, centered upon Paris. At the end of the eighteenth century, this took several different forms: the move, for example, to abolish regional languages such as Provençal and Occitan in favor of a uniform French dialect, and the establishment of eighty-three *departments* of relatively equal area, creating a more defined, orderly French political geography, over which Paris had a tighter grip. These reforms also produced a greater sense of unity among the French, for whom greatness could be


\(^{36}\) As shown by Clausen in *Frantz Jourdain and the Samaritaine*.

measured by the prestige of their capital.\textsuperscript{38}

However, the centralizing policies of the national governments between 1789 and 1848 were unable to quell the pervasive myth, held in the provinces, that the \textit{Ancien Régime} had been a “golden age” of provincial freedoms. Supporters of this view pointed to the previous independent status of many of France’s territories; Brittany had joined France in 1532, Alsace in 1648, Artois and Roussillon in 1659, Franche-Comté in 1678, and Lorraine in 1766. Their incorporation into France had been subject to the condition that France would honor each province’s peculiar freedoms, including the exemptions of cities and duchies from taxation and the representation for local notables in the regional \textit{parlements}.\textsuperscript{39}

Culturally, during the nineteenth century the Parisian metropole came to assume a cosmopolitan character, in contrast to the uncultured naïveté that was associated with the provinces. Indeed, the seductiveness of Paris enabled it to rob the provinces of talented citizens and strip new arrivals of their backward, conservative moral and social sensibilities, a sentiment expressed repeatedly by residents of Nancy.\textsuperscript{40} This association of the capital with power and prestige, well-known at least since the reign of Henri IV, was intensified by the extensive renovations carried out at mid-century by Napoleon III and Baron Haussmann, including the city’s expansion, sanitation, and beautification and by the continued functioning of Paris as the main hub for the nation’s railroad network. Predictably, Paris became the

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 434-36.


measuring stick by which other cities in France judged their modernity.41

A few counter-movements to the centralization of French society gained strength in the waning years of the Second Empire. On the one hand, these movements sought to reassert that the regions and provinces were entities with distinct identities, with particular histories, languages, religions, and cultures; on the other, their supporters sought greater political independence in the form of greater local democracy and less interference from the central government in local business. In 1865 in Nancy, a group of municipal and departmental councilors were among the first to call for decentralization, arguing for more financial powers and a permanent executive commission to administer departmental affairs.42 Sometimes, the call for decentralization would take on an anti-leftist tone. Local leaders, remembering the debacle of the Paris Commune of 1871, argued for more local control over regional and municipal affairs in order to avoid the imposition of socialism by the French capital.43

In March 1900, regionalists came together under Jean Charles-Brun, an academic from Montpellier, to organize the Fédération Regionaliste Française (FRF). They espoused a platform that called for devolved control and restored interest in regional customs, culture, and traditions.44 Their plan, influenced by the work of French geographers like Paul Vidal de la

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Blanche, embraced the idea of the region as a distinct geographical entity anchored by a sizeable metropolitan center such as Dijon, Bordeaux, Nantes, Toulouse, and Rouen. This project would combat the drain on the human and material resources of the regions. Regionalist politicians and writers such as Maurice Barrès, the Lorrainer whose 1897 novel *Les Déracinés* marked him as a leading exponent of regionalism and decentralization, embraced these points enthusiastically.45

Regionalism drew supporters from many sectors of French society, including art critics and architects. Supporters of regionalism believed that it would be beneficial to the French nation, as it would allow architects to develop their own genius, and that of their race as well, aiding France in the cultural competition among European nations. Some, like Roger Marx, a Nancien by birth and close friend of Emile Gallé, also saw regionalism as a means to make modern art more accessible to people of all classes, because it would communicate to them through familiar, traditional forms.46

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Regionalism increasingly attained international significance among architects in the late nineteenth century. To some extent, this success grew out of the publication of travelogues and tourist and travel guides, beginning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Many travel writers began to recognize and demarcate distinct regions within Europe, whose people practiced similar customs, spoke similar dialects, and shared similar myths and stories. Such collections of travel anecdotes predictably helped give rise to stereotypes and the entrenchment of specific traits and habits with such regions’ identity. British travelers, for example, wrote in the early

45 Gildea, *op. cit.*, 177-82; and Thomson, *op. cit.*, 210-11.

nineteenth century about the disputed Rhine region between France and Germany (including Alsace), describing it as rich in wine production, but also noting the many picturesque ruins created by the destruction of architectural sites during the Napoleonic wars. One traveler characterized the Rhine as a specifically “German river,” which served as a buffer for the Germans against French aggression.47

The importance of tourism to regionalism grew with the unification of new nation-states in the middle of the century. Historians such as Alan Confino have outlined the problem of countries like Italy or Germany that faced the task of creating one unified state out of many disparate regions. In Germany, for example, the concept of Heimat emphasized the dual and interchangeable importance of local heritage and national community. The survival and flourishing of both the nation and region depended on each other: the nation was constructed from a set of regional identities; in turn, regions received recognition of their individual distinctiveness and protection of that heritage from a nation proud of its pluralistic identity.48 Continued promotion of tourism by groups such as the Touring-Club of France, an organization supported vigorously by Jean Charles-Brun, helped reinforce such concepts as travelers began to appreciate the various customs of different areas of one country, and increasingly viewed local inhabitants as


important members of a diverse national community.49

As one of the markers of regional cultural differences, architecture naturally played a significant role in the construction of local identities. In Barcelona, the members of La Nova Escola Catalana were instrumental in the growth of the Catalan nationalist movement and the strengthening of a regional identity in northeastern Spain during this time period, which they helped develop through their own interest in tourism and its use in identifying local building traditions. In Germany, the interest in Heimat combined with the construction of a mythical past encouraged by National Romanticism led many architects and designers to form, in 1904, the Bund für Heimatschutz, a national organization devoted primarily to the preservation of historical monuments, but which also protested against the kind of rampant industrial development that did not take into account local building traditions. Led by Paul Schultze-Naumberg and others, the Bund promoted the building of simple, well-crafted dwellings in line with the basic needs of their inhabitants. For them, the ideal historical models was the ideal of Biedermeier architecture of “about 1800,” whose contemporary manifestations could be seen in, for example, the naturally-lit, rectilinear, unornamented design for the Riehl House by Mies van der Rohe in Berlin from 1907. The Bund’s ideal urban development was the picturesque, decentralized Kleinstadt, a small city of twenty to sixty thousand people, along the lines advocated by Camillo Sitte in his influential 1889 city-planning tract Der Städtebau. The Bünd’s ideas were very popular, and helped fuel the growth of many other planning associations and groups, such as the German Garden City Movement.50

49 Bausinger, ibid., 45-47. Also consult Vigato, L’Architecture Régionaliste, 58-60.
French interest in regional architecture is often traced to César Daly and his periodical, the *Revue Générale de l'Architecture*, published between 1840 and 1893. Annoyed by the pastiches of classical and medieval elements that dominated nineteenth-century French architecture and (as he saw it) were institutionalized by the teaching of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Daly attempted to reinvigorate French architectural education through the injection of authentic, regional practices. The *Revue Générale* and Daly’s other publications thus regularly showcased such diverse models of housing from all regions of France, particularly small picturesque villas, which he thought demonstrated a connection to nature and the local landscape [Fig. 1-7]. This was, he argued, because the villa’s humble status demanded a sort of tranquility and honesty that he believed was often absent from the pretentious country residences of the bourgeoisie. Daly was convinced that through the study of regionalist examples, the modern French architect would become more cosmopolitan and skilled due to the wider range of building traditions from which he could draw.51

Daly’s interests in regionalism paralleled those of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc during his late-career preoccupation with housing. In the entry “Maison” from his *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture* (volume 6, published in 1860),52 Viollet-le-Duc took care to note that vernacular residences in different parts of France did not resemble each other in terms of form or construction; he then went on to develop a classification of houses based on regional geography, arguing that their formal aspects were directly related to the contours of the landscape, climate, and natural resources.

51 On Daly and his ideas, see Yves Schoonjans, “Regional Architecture as an Element of Cosmopolitanism in César Daly’s Vision of Eclecticism,” in Linda van Santvoort, Jan De Maeyer, and Tom Verschaffel, eds. *Sources of Regionalism in the Nineteenth Century: Architecture, Art and Literature* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2008), 32-47.

52 The *Dictionnaire* was published in ten volumes from 1854 to 1868.
available to their builders. Significantly, Viollet compared the traditional housing of the mountainous Vosges region in southern Lorraine to the Swiss chalet, with its boxlike post-and-lintel construction of wood (sometimes mixed with stone), embellished with lengthy exterior balconies and carved gingerbread, and topped by a hipped roof with shed dormers; he also examined this type in his publications from the 1870s, such as the novel *Histoire d’un maison* (1873), and the plates in *Habitations modernes* (1875) [Fig. 1-8]. In the entry “Architecture” in the *Dictionnaire* (volume 1, published in 1854) Viollet-le-Duc also emphasized (as he did in the entry “Flore,” from 1858) the practical need, especially during the eleventh and twelfth centuries in France, for buildings to make use of local materials and typical vernacular forms so as to harmonize with the natural environment and climate.

Viollet’s words found resonance with many French architects in the early years of the twentieth century; several prominent designers, including Charles Plumet, Louis Bonnier, and Maurice Storez became some of the most vocal supporters of this view. Between 1906 and 1914, French architects interested in regionalist ideas even published a magazine, *La Vie en Campagne*, which promoted the use of local materials and motifs in residential design. They filled the journal with articles calling for structures that were attentive both to the simple needs of their inhabitants and the particular characteristics of the environment and building traditions. Architects in Nancy, as we will see, enthusiastically toured eastern France and western Germany in search of new vernacular structures to serve as

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54 Viollet-le-Duc, *ibid.*, 1:121.

55 See, for example, Plumet’s article “L’Architecture et le Paysage,” in *L’Art et les Artistes* 5, no. 28 (July 1907): 228-31; also consult Vigato, *L’Architecture régionaliste*, 43-51.
inspirations for their designs.

From the 1880s, French tourism and regionalism grew together out of a fascination with far away rural regions that were distinctly different from the crowded urban landscape of Paris. These locations included, most notably, the resort areas on the country’s seacoasts, such as Normandy, the shores of the Mediterranean, and the southwestern Basque country along the Bay of Biscay. The development of regionalist architecture in France (and similar currents in Belgium and the United States), borrowed heavily from architectural elements and design traditions common to balneal or seaside buildings.56 These included half-timbering; steeply pitched rooflines; non-symmetrical, picturesque massing; and rough-hewn, random-coursed stone. Such features can be traced to Norman models, although they were certainly not exclusive to Norman architecture—half-timbering, for example, was also a hallmark of Alsatian designs [Fig. 1-9].57

The popularity of the balneal aesthetic grew rapidly in the first decade of the twentieth century, such that regionalist architecture soon came to be welcomed as a genuine example of rustic taste regardless of where it was built. The diffusion of models through magazines, functioning almost like pattern-books, no doubt also encouraged this general sentiment. By 1910, one could see similar half-timbered or rough-hewn stone “regionalist” residences being built in such diverse locations as the Basque coast, in the central

56 On Belgian seaside architecture, see Ogata, *Art Nouveau and the Social Vision of Modern Living*, 147-68; developments such as this in the United States have been labeled under the general terms of “stick style” and “shingle style,” as described most notably by Vincent Scully. See his *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style, Architectural Theory and Design from Downing to the Origins of Wright*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

départements, or even the suburbs of Paris [Fig. 1-10].

On the eve of World War I, regionalism in many respects had become a general term for rustically-inspired architecture.

Regionalism and Art Nouveau maintained an uneasy relationship. At the turn of the century, some critics saw Art Nouveau as a modern method of putting regionalist ideas into practice, especially because it relied on nature for its visual vocabulary. Enthusiasm for Art Nouveau, however, faded among regionalists as they increasingly sought architecture that was simple and functional, not necessarily tied to any particular style. To many French regionalists, the architecture of the English Arts and Crafts movement, such as the work of Hugh M. Baillie Scott, was a better model. Furthermore, Art Nouveau, whose very name suggested that it was divorced from tradition, contained no inherent ties to regional architecture.

Art Nouveau did not survive the First World War, and in most of France it was dead long before then. Regionalism, on the other hand, was seen by many as an ideal theoretical model for post-war rebuilding programs, and, indeed, regionalist ideas often underpinned the new designs for reconstructed areas. It was, however, controversial: though many in France lauded it as the natural outcome of Viollet’s rationalist outlook and the epitome of what it meant to be modern, others decried it as a nostalgic episode that should be discarded in favor of more innovative ideas of design and construction techniques. The popularity of regionalism in France, however, allowed it to serve as an alternative to the International Style and Art Deco in the interwar period, and during World War II its adoption by Vichy as the regime’s preferred mode of cultural expression gave it official

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58 Toulier, op. cit., 103-07.
59 Vigato, ibid., 21-7, 36-73.
sanction. Regionalism maintained a powerful influence on French architectural and cultural thought throughout much of the twentieth century.

**Rationalists and Classicists in French Architectural Theory**

Architects in Nancy—who were trained in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, then the leading architectural school in the world—also recognized that, from a theoretical standpoint, the architectural community in France in 1900 was a fractured one, split largely between supporters of a progressive rationalism and an eclectic, more conservative classicism advocated by most of the Ecole’s faculty. Rationalism, the belief that form should be dictated by structure, was promoted by Viollet-le-Duc, who admired very much the work of Gothic architects in his capacity as Inspector of Historic Monuments under Napoleon III, and Henri Labrouste (1801-1875), the architect of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève (1838-50) and Bibliothèque Nationale (1862-68), buildings whose frank use of a lightweight iron structure were seminal in the development of large open ceiling spans undergirded by minimal supports [Fig. 1-11].

Both Labrouste and Viollet were influenced by the work of the determinist philosopher Hippolyte Taine, who would succeed Viollet-le-Duc as holder of the chair of aesthetics at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1864. In his *Entretiens sur l'Architecture*, published in two volumes in 1863 and 1872,

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Viollet demonstrated much affinity for Taine's work, arguing that art was instrumental in the construction of civilization, particularly when it responded to a particular race, its customs, and traditions, which would help produce a coherent culture. He believed that cultural and biological differences determined a “national art” in each country, and that architecture, as part of culture, had to respond to the conditions under which it was built, including climate, customs, and traditions.

Viollet recognized the links that the nineteenth century was forging between a wide variety of disciplines, including the sciences, philosophy, and history, and he instructed his students to study the developments of both the past and the present, because it would allow them to see that in the past, architects had designed according to the needs, circumstances, and material conditions of their times. In his view, each historical period possessed a unity, or harmony, in the conception and details of structures, which he termed its “style.” He believed that the nineteenth century was still searching for its own style, and that it was the main challenge for French architects to discover it.

Viollet hoped that his students would take advantage of the material and technological advances of the era in their designs. While performing restoration work on French Gothic churches for the Service des Édifices Diocésains in the 1840s and 1850s, he had acquired a vast knowledge of the building techniques of medieval architects, and believed that French builders of the thirteenth century, better than architects of any other period, achieved harmony between structure and ornament, wherein the ultimate form was


63 Ibid., I:244 and 345.

64 Ibid., I:449, 474, and 484.
dictated by the logical requirements of the building.\textsuperscript{65} Viollet was convinced that the Gothic represented the most advanced structural system that had been invented before the Renaissance had "reverted" to more basic ones. He promoted iron as the successor to Gothic structural vaulting and thus as a material of the modern age.\textsuperscript{66}

Viollet's attachment to medieval architecture made him many enemies, among them most of the architects who taught at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the late nineteenth century. When he was appointed chair of aesthetics at the Ecole as part of the French government's attempt to reform the school in 1863, the students, led by Julian Guadet, revolted because they (mistakenly) believed that Viollet was fond exclusively of the architecture of the Middle Ages, not the full range of styles available to designers; as a result, Guadet and his cohort believed that Viollet's teachings in the history of architecture would create a doctrinal climate at the Ecole detrimental to artistic freedom and creativity. Once the students' revolt ousted him from his position at the Ecole in 1864 after only a few months, Viollet and his followers acquired the pejorative label of "medievalists" from their opponents at the Ecole, and although Viollet's works became well-known to most French architects, who read his \textit{Entretiens} assiduously in the closing years of the century, in official circles his name remained an anathema, even after his death in 1879.\textsuperscript{67}

Guadet, who won the Prix de Rome in 1864 and became professor of theory at the Ecole in 1894, had published his famed \textit{Eléments et Théorie de}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[Ibid., I:281-84.]
\item[Clausen, \textit{Frantz Jourdain and the Samaritaine}, 61-3.]
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
l'Architecture, a compilation of his teaching at the school, between 1901 and 1904. Guadet continued to claim that Viollet had encouraged the teaching of medieval architecture to the exclusion of all other styles, and maintained a hatred of Viollet until his death in 1908. For Guadet, classicism remained the first "style" that should be taught to students as the foundation of their education. However, his conception of how architecture should be practiced was closer to Viollet's ideas than he would admit. Both men recognized the changing nature of architecture with new building types, new purposes, and new materials, and insisted upon the need of architects to adapt their designs to meet these requirements; Guadet in particular placed emphasis on the primacy of the program and the role of the architect as a problem solver for his client. Guadet also agreed with Viollet in the Eléments when he stated that modern architecture needed to reflect the society around it.68 Nonetheless, Guadet did not encourage the use of modern materials just because of their newness and the fact that society had entered a modern, industrial age, as Viollet had. Rather, Guadet's belief in absolute artistic freedom meant that he encouraged architects to choose any style or materials he felt appropriate for the project, including an archaic classicism, in order to develop their own personal aesthetic.69

Guadet’s beliefs reflected those of many architects who were trained at the Ecole during the late nineteenth century. By the 1870s, French academic architecture had entered the “era of Charles Garnier” as described by David Van Zanten, so called because of the looming presence the architect of the Paris Opéra (1861-75) held in the national architectural community.

Forsaking the logical rationalism of Viollet-le-Duc, Garnier, Guadet, and their supporters were convinced of the architect’s own intuitive genius to compose spaces decorated to have a certain effect on their inhabitants, regardless of whether the interior or exterior appearance of the building expressed such honesty of construction or ornament. The result would be a building that was composed of a series of spatial tableaux, ornamented by a synthesis of historical motifs, classical or Gothic, according to the designer’s sensibilities.70

The great *patrons* of the Ecole’s ateliers, where most architects in Paris and Nancy at the turn of the century honed their skills, had passed through the Ecole at the same time as the failed reforms of 1863-64 had been enacted and the rationalist/classicist debate was gathering full steam. The *patrons* practiced in the shadow of this divide, and their completed commissions suggest where their stylistic preferences lay, even if they neither formally declared which side of the debate they favored nor demanded that their students do so. Some, like Victor Laloux (1850-1937), who trained hundreds of French and foreign architects, were steadfast classicists, who embodied the Guadet wing of the Ecole’s faculty [Fig. 1-12]. Others, like Jean-Louis Pascal (1837-1920), were more moderate, advocating that their students take full advantage of all the historical styles available to them, and vacillating between styles depending on the commission. Pascal’s School of Medicine at Bordeaux (1876-88), for example, shows his proficiency in a Renaissance-inspired classicism; yet he was also known for his cultivation of a rusticated, regionalist aesthetic in his designs for provincial chateaux [Figs. 1-13 and 1-14]. Still others, such as Emile Vaudremer (1829-1914) revealed their

attachment to rationalism and forms from the Middle Ages much like Viollet-le-Duc [Fig. 1-15], eventually developing their own personal style.\textsuperscript{71}

**Parisian Art Nouveau Architecture**

Six architects—Hector Guimard (1867-1942), Frantz Jourdain (1847-1935), Xavier Schoellkopf (1870-1911), Charles Plumet (1861-1928), Jules Lavirotte (1864-1928), and Henri Sauvage (1873-1932)—became well-known in Paris for extensively using Art Nouveau. Like many of their teachers, they did not consider themselves to be aligned with either the rationalists or classicists—although Guimard probably would have enjoyed being called a rationalist and Jourdain was labeled one derisively.\textsuperscript{72} None of them received a *diplôme* from the Ecole, suggesting that they did not actively seek the approval of Guadet and his fellow classicists, then in charge of the school.\textsuperscript{73} The diversity of their work and architectural philosophies testifies to the fractured, diverse nature of Parisian architectural practice at the turn of the century and the inability of practitioners of Art Nouveau in the capital to unite into a cohesive movement that itself might be seen as a truly “national style.” They could be divided roughly into three groups: rationalist-socialists, Rococo-inspired classicists, and rationalist-regionalists.


\textsuperscript{72} Clausen, *Frantz Jourdain*, 58.

\textsuperscript{73} Delaire, *op. cit.*, 286-87, 303-04, 314, 400, 401. Only Jourdain among them was known to have later joined the Société des Architectes des Beaux-Arts, the school’s alumni association, which he was only able to do upon the recommendation of friends, after several protracted attempts in order to gain acceptance by the architectural community in the capital. See Clausen, *op. cit.*, 13-14, 24-25.
Guimard and Jourdain were the two Parisian Art Nouveau architects most closely associated with rationalism. Both men were very individualistic, and had very different types of careers despite the fact that they clearly supported the same kind of architecture. Like Viollet-le-Duc, both Jourdain and Guimard were fascinated with iron. Jourdain was deeply impressed by the material when he visited the 1889 World’s Fair and hailed the exposition, with its all-iron-and-glass pavilions, as the dawn of a new, modern age. Like many other champions of Art Nouveau, he believed the innovative ways that iron could be used would continue to win over new enthusiasts for it. For him, Art Nouveau was an ideal vehicle for bringing this new technology to a mass public. His La Samaritaine department store, built between 1905 and 1910, demonstrated the possibilities of iron-frame construction, using metal and glass at every opportunity, and embellishing the structure with red-and-white-striped awnings and panels of floral motifs, brightly colored in red, yellow, white, and orange. It was a multicolored jewel in the sea of beige Haussmanian buildings [Fig. 1-16].

Though an architect, Jourdain achieved more fame as a theoretician, and was a frequent contributor to every major architectural publication in France in which he was a staunch advocate of rationalism. The Samaritaine was his only major architectural commission, completed for one of his very few clients—for whom he served as the house architect—at the very end of Art Nouveau’s popularity. Jourdain’s contentious, colorful personality, and his progressive leftist political and artistic philosophy kept him from attracting more clients and followers, and his fondness for Viollet-le-Duc’s

74 Ibid.
75 In fact, as Clausen has argued, Jourdain was the most important Art Nouveau theorist in France. See Frantz Jourdain, XVIII and 2.
ideas earned him many opponents. In spite of all this, Jourdain won respect within the capital's architectural elite, managing to gain entry to the Société des Architectes des Beaux-Arts, even without a Ecole diploma, and serving as one of two legal advisors to the Tribunal to the Tribunal Civil and Conseil de Préfecture de la Seine—alongside none other than Julian Guadet.76 Though Jourdain’s architecture had little influence in Nancy, his 1902 article on Henri Sauvage’s Villa Jika, the first Art Nouveau residence in Nancy, helped generate enthusiasm for the new style in Lorraine.77

Guimard, we have recently discovered, was a socialist, like many members of the Paris City Council at the time, and hoped to use Art Nouveau as a means to bring disparate groups of people together to achieve social harmony through the sympathetic celebration of their differences. His designs for the Paris Métropolitain subway entrances (1899-1900), a commission that he received in part because of his socialist views, were perfect expressions of such a political philosophy [Fig. 1-17]. The twisted iron branches rose out of the sidewalks and seemed to sprout into the red glass candelabras, whose light bulbs pulsated when trains pulled into the station below. The mysterious forms beckoned the curious pedestrian—regardless of his class—into the unknown underground world. They simultaneously referenced natural plant forms, the energy of the new technology, and the capacity of public transport to bring, physically, different people together.78 Guimard’s artistic method was similar to that of Victor Horta, who had advised him to seek inspiration from foliage, but to “seize the stem” while “banish[ing] the flower and the leaf.”79 Before matriculating at the Ecole des

76 Clausen, Frantz Jourdain, 25.
77 See Chapter 3 for more on this building and Nancy’s residential architecture.
79 As related by L.-C. Boileau in “Causerie: L’Exposition des oeuvres de Guimard dans les
Beaux-Arts, Guimard had also studied at the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs with one of Viollet’s disciples, Victor-Marie-Charles Ruprich-Robert (1820-1887), who had instilled in him a similar love of natural forms, including the whiplash curve. If Guimard made reference to historical forms in his work, it was nearly always with features such as steeply-gabled roofs that revealed his fondness, like Viollet-le-Duc, for medieval architecture.80

Like Jourdain, Guimard had left the Ecole des Beaux-Arts without a degree. He, however, was attracted to the lessons of his teachers, such as Charles Genuys and Gustave-Laurent Raulin (1837-1910), whose atelier he joined. (Raulin had inherited his atelier from Emile Vaudremer, the rationalist whom Guimard greatly respected.) A quiet, reserved personality, Guimard cultivated a small group of faithful clients who provided him with the commissions that would make his reputation, including the Castel Beranger (1895-98) [Fig. 1-18], various private residences in the sixteenth arrondissement, and several country houses just outside Paris. In the latter, such as the Castel Henriette (1899) and the Castel Orgeval (1904) [Fig. 1-19] he employed picturesque towers, conical roofs, and shed dormers derived from medieval buildings, as well as rusticated exterior walls that reflected an interest in regional and vernacular forms encouraged by Viollet. Like Jourdain’s work, Guimard’s architecture was often controversial, and many of his most significant buildings were destroyed during the twentieth century, reflecting Art Nouveau oft-maligned status in France.81 Though virtually no


80 Clendenin, op. cit., 144-45, 224-30.

81 See Clendenin, 138-59, 184-87, 206-220, as well as Jean-Pierre Lyonnet, Bruno Dupont, and Laurent Sully Jaulmes, Guimard Perdu: Histoire d’une Méprise (Paris: Editions Alternatives, 2003). Some of Guimard’s buildings, such as the Ecole Humbert de Romans
communication has surfaced between Guimard and any of the architects in Nancy, as we will see, their designs reveal that he exerted a substantial influence on many of them.82

The Rococo Inspiration of Schoellkopf and Lavirotte

Little study has been devoted to either Xavier Schoellkopf or Jules Lavirotte, the two Parisian Art Nouveau architects who were trained by staunch classicists. Schoellkopf’s work emerged from this tradition, as he entered Julian Guadet’s atelier at the Ecole and remained there after the latter ceded direction of it to Edmond Paulin in 1895 upon becoming the Ecole’s professor of design. Schoellkopf’s buildings, such as his town house for the singer Yvette Guilbert (1901), show the influence of the white pavilions of the 1900 world’s fair, like Paulin’s own Chateau d’Eau and Palais d’Electricité [Figs. 1-20 and 1-21]. Schoellkopf hoped to create a personal “genre” of architecture adaptable to modern needs that would also capture “the raw character of building” which he claimed was lost when the structure was “finished.” To achieve this, he sought inspiration from the variety of natural forms such as the rounded contours of trees, rocks, and the human body.83 As a result, his buildings, like the Guilbert House, use swirling, billowing cloudlike shapes that give the impression of a wedding cake molded in stone while clearly recalling the arabesques and light, airy shapes of the eighteenth-century Rococo. Schoellkopf’s work resembles very strongly that of the more conservative architects in Nancy, who drew extensively on their

Concert Hall (1898-1901), widely considered his masterpiece and originally intended to be opened for the 1900 World’s Fair, disappeared as early as 1905.

82 As will become clear in Chapter 4.

83 Schoellkopf described this method himself to one interviewer, who later published their conversation as part of J., “Le modernisme dans l’architecture,” in L’Art Décoratif 3, no. 29 (1901), 190; quoted in Franco Borsi and Ezio Godoli, Paris 1900: Architecture and Design (New York: Rizzoli, 1979), 247.
own eighteenth-century provincial Rococo traditions.

Jules Lavirotte's experimentation with Art Nouveau was gained through collaboration with his neighbor on the Avenue Rapp, the ceramicist Alexandre Bigot, who also worked with Hector Guimard. He trained at the Ecole in the atelier of Henri Blondel (1821-1897), who between 1885 and 1889 famously remodeled Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières’ Halle au Blé into a monument of overwrought, ornamental classicism, the Bourse de Commerce. Lavirotte’s work, such as the apartment houses for Bigot on the Square Rapp (1900-01) shows classical borrowings from the Baroque and Rococo, with balanced façades that make extensive use of arabesques in the carved stone and ironwork, classical columns, and elaborate segmental pediments above windows [Fig 1-22; see also Fig. 3-46]. Clad in copious amounts of Bigot’s tile, Lavirotte’s Square Rapp houses show off a durable, water-resistant surface decoration. Further, Lavirotte was interested in the overt eroticism of Art Nouveau’s sensuous lines, including representations of several scantily clad female figures on his buildings and designing the window mullions of the entry of an apartment house in the shape of an erect phallus. His work resembles the work of Nancy architects the least of any Parisians.

The Rationalist-Regionalists: Plumet and Sauvage

Charles Plumet and Henri Sauvage are best described as rationalists and regionalists, and among Parisians they exerted the most influence on the Art Nouveau architects of Nancy. Charles Plumet was probably the most successful and widely respected Parisian Art Nouveau architect. He never attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but received architectural training from a disciple of Viollet-le-Duc and displayed his rationalism as one of the leading members of L’Art dans Tout. There he achieved a modicum of success working in tandem with the furniture designer Tony Selmersheim until the
two men parted ways in 1904, completing several apartment buildings and private residences in a medievalist vein, with arched loggias and tall tapering spires [Figs 1-23 and 1-24].

But Plumet was much more than a mere follower of Viollet. He often balanced his buildings’ façades around a central axis and employed classical elements such as columns under projecting cornices, and unlike Guimard (but like many Nancy architects) he frequently made use of recognizable floral ornament. These endeavors won him praise from the Parisian architectural press, who liked his injection of historical forms and motifs into the new style, thereby “guiding French taste towards the future along the road of logic and reason, while remaining within the national tradition.” By the end of the first decade of the new century, Plumet, who was born near Nancy in 1861, had become an advocate of regionalism and the use of local design features and materials, an interest that may have developed from the close ties to the architectural community in Lorraine he cultivated. When news of his activity in Paris reached Nancy, local periodicals in the province would often mention his achievements with a message of continued good luck and success. Nancy’s Art Nouveau architects knew his work intimately and were frequent borrowers of elements from his designs.

Henri Sauvage was the only one of the six Parisian Art Nouveau architects to work in Nancy or to have direct contact with the city’s artists. Trained by Jean-Louis Pascal, who was known for his rusticated, regionalist residences, Sauvage left the Ecole in 1895 when he began to garner his own

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85 Franco Borsi and Ezio Godoli, Paris 1900, 227-46.

commissions with his longtime partner, Charles Sarazin. His Villa Jika, built for his friend, the prominent Nancy Art Nouveau designer Louis Majorelle between 1898 and 1901, was significant as it launched Sauvage to fame as a leading French Art Nouveau designer and spurred many Nancy architects to experiment further with the style. Yet this was to be essentially his sole Art Nouveau building, aside from a few Parisian café interiors done between 1899-1900 in collaboration with Majorelle. His next commission, the Villa Oceana (1903) in Biarritz on the southwest coast, was a picturesque mix of Arts-and-Crafts simplicity and French rustic forms, with simple stone arches and exposed heavy wooden beams [Fig. 1-25]. Thereafter Sauvage, who must have noticed the objections to Art Nouveau in the capital as a “cross between a sheep’s mouth and a noodle,”87 increasingly moved to a more austere, rigid, and geometric aesthetic. His stepped-facade apartment building on Paris’ Rue Vavin from 1912, entirely covered in white subway tiles, was welcomed enthusiastically as a model hygienic, modern residence, and inspired Sauvage to further develop this aesthetic in pyramidal designs for high-density urban housing in the 1920s [Figs. 1-26 and 1-27].88

**Contributions to Scholarship**

The examination of the Art Nouveau of Nancy expands the understanding of the architecture of this period in three significant ways. First, it clarifies our definition of modernity at the end of the nineteenth century. One of the major challenges for architects in 1900 was to discover a new style that would reflect the rapidly changing world. The new style,

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however, needed to be authentic—that is, it needed to express the values of the society that erected it and the specific place where architecture was built. In Nancy, architects succeeded in creating a brand of Art Nouveau that recalled and celebrated its locale. Nancy’s architects also created a style that engaged deeply with the political questions and economic issues that constantly confronted the citizens of Lorraine and those of nearby territories; it expressed the status of provincial artistic and architectural culture in relation to art and architecture in the capital in a way that located Nancy’s place within a larger European architectural, cultural, and economic landscape. For the citizens of Nancy, Art Nouveau architecture was modern because it was a symbol of them as they aspired to be in the new age. Their continued support made it an enduring and successful emblem of modernity as it was understood at the end of the *belle époque*.

* * *

Furthermore, an investigation of the architecture of Nancy confirms that Art Nouveau was a highly fragmented phenomenon, a view of the style that most current literature has canonized by dividing discussion of the style into sections devoted to each of the different centers where it appeared. Increasingly, it is clear that in most of these centers, the way that key artistic issues were confronted by architects diverged greatly. The relationship between art and industry was among the issues that were dealt with differently from place to place. In Barcelona, Vienna, and Nancy, the practitioners of Art Nouveau viewed the style as working in concert with the growing industrial production that accompanied the expansion of the modern metropolis. Industrial technology aided artists in creating artwork in the new

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style, and in return, artists and architects cultivated industrialists as some of their most important patrons. In Nancy especially, art and industry—and artists and industrialists—enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. The strong connections between artists and industrialists and among artists working in different media—including architecture—allowed the modernist aspiration of the unity of the arts to be realized.\(^90\)

Nancy stood in contrast to Belgium, Germany, and Paris, where such successes were never achieved in part due to the ambivalence of designers with regard to industry. In Belgium, for example, some Art Nouveau architects, including Victor Horta, championed industrial materials and techniques with a frank use of iron and large spans of glass, as well as the glorification of the industrial worker in structures like his Maison du Peuple in Brussels (1895-99) [Fig. 1-28]. Other Belgian Art Nouveau designers, such as Henry van de Velde and Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, saw in the style an opportunity for a rural, crafts-based reaction to the harshness of industrial and urban life.\(^91\) Years later, after Van de Velde moved to Germany, he and other designers in the German Werkbund, along with Prussian government officials, would become embroiled in a longstanding national debate over whether artistic freedom would be controlled and curtailed by an industrial complex that demanded adherence to a standardized design principles.\(^92\) And

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in Paris, Art Nouveau was in part prevented from becoming a “national style” due to its designers’ inability to create alliances with industrial enterprises willing to mass-produce their work or adequately furnish the physical materials and capital needed to build their structures.

In the United Kingdom, meanwhile, the relationship between art and industry grew to be antagonistic. There, the Arts and Crafts movement, guided chiefly by the socialist designer William Morris (1834-1896), openly disdained the expansion of industry, arguing that it had denigrated the individual and separated workers from the pleasure of performing their work by hand. Morris and his followers hoped that the spread of Arts and Crafts practices and the movement’s passion for simple living would restore enthusiasm for manual labor and high-quality utilitarian products.93

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This study of turn-of-the-century Nancy also complicates our understanding of Art Nouveau in France considerably. It was more than merely an “interior design style,” as claimed by Debora Silverman, or a craft-based movement in artistic production that was specifically anti-German in its political leanings, as argued by Nancy Troy.94 The Art Nouveau unity of the arts demanded the inclusion of architecture, reflected in both the interiors and the exteriors of buildings. In Nancy, the alliance formed among architects, artists, and industrialists reflected the collective alignment of


these groups towards a singular goal of creating an authentic modernism, one that recognized and celebrated their time and place. While deeply imbued with regionalist political concerns—including, but not limited to, decentralization—and the ongoing cultural competition with Germany, Nancy’s Art Nouveau architects did not eschew the possible artistic lessons that they could take from Paris or abroad.

This dissertation builds on the work of Meredith Clausen and Malcolm Clendenin,95 who have established well the rationalist-based branch of Art Nouveau in Paris and its place within the debates with more conservative instructors at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Parisian architectural establishment, as well as the links between Jourdain and Guimard and socialist politics in the capital. I seek to place Nancy’s architects within this context, showing that, in general, they had more in common with the more conservative teachers at the Ecole, under whom virtually all of them had trained, eventually receiving their diplômes, unlike the Parisian Art Nouveau architects who did not. For Nancy Art Nouveau architects, the embrace of this tradition was a mark of professionalism and fundamental to establishing their careers. Only a few of them sought to break from this tradition and embrace more rationalist design. Nancy’s Art Nouveau architects remained solidly supportive of the republican regime that arose after the collapse of the Second Empire, but, along with the city’s decorative artists, they repeatedly used the style as an emblem of their support of regionalist issues, such as the burning desire for the reunification of their region of Lorraine under the French flag after its division in the Franco-Prussian War—issues that never really concerned Art Nouveau architects in Paris.

This study expands our conception of French Art Nouveau by establishing that it had two distinct centers, each with a different cultural climate, which greatly affected the ways in which the style was received in each city. In Paris, the artistic environment was fractured and highly contentious with respect to Art Nouveau, with strong opinions dividing individuals who supported it and those who did not, particularly over the question of whether it was a “national style,” but also whether it was politically too far left, or antithetical to the French artistic traditions of classicism and the Rococo. First appearing there with the 1889 World’s Fair, it struggled to convert its detractors and by 1905 new experimentation with it had virtually stopped save for a few isolated works by Jourdain and Guimard. Nancy, on the other hand, welcomed Art Nouveau wholeheartedly as an expression of civic and regional pride and values. There, unified support for Art Nouveau among artists, architects, critics and intellectuals, industrialists, civic leaders, and the general public helped make the style the symbol of the city and province between 1889 and 1914.

Finally, it is important to understand that the differences between the two French centers of Art Nouveau did not indicate artistic divergence. Despite the desires of Nancy’s artists for decentralization and increased regional control over local cultural and political affairs, they maintained strong ties to the Parisian architectural establishment and sought regularly the support and artistic influence of their brethren in the capital. This was unlike the other provincial centers of Art Nouveau—Barcelona, Munich, or Darmstadt—whose artists and architects did not seek the approval of Madrid or Berlin and managed to operate independently of national cultural and political concerns. Nancy’s Art Nouveau artists and architects sought—and received—a significant amount of Parisian support for their variety of Art Nouveau, in hopes perhaps that it would rise to the level of a truly “national
style” from merely a regional one. These ties that Nancy’s artists cultivated, however, made it impossible for them to create a style that was both native to Nancy (and, by extension, independent of the capital’s influence) and worthy of being followed by Parisian artists—at least until 1909, far after enthusiasm for the style had collapsed outside Lorraine.\(^6\) Moreover, any such aspirations by Nancy artists for their strand of Art Nouveau to become a national style were quashed by the staunch refusal of the Parisian public to acknowledge the Art Nouveau produced in the capital itself as an appropriate paradigm for modern French art.

**Conclusion**

In *1913: The Cradle of Modernism*, Jean-Michel Rabaté writes of the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, finished in the eponymous year and designed by the Perret brothers and Henry van de Velde, that “modernism was the result of collaborations that [deflected] the original intentions of the creators,...freely mixed forms taken from various vocabularies, and...ended up reconciling tradition and modernity.”\(^7\) A similar characterization might be made of the modernism of Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture, with a few modifications: (1) the intentions of collaborating Nancy architects and artists were clear from the beginning of each project, (2) the designers’ aims were inextricably linked to their firm sense of place and history, and (3) they achieved success with the reconciliation of tradition and newness at least a decade before Perret and Van de Velde.

Nancy’s architects, in concert with their fellow craftsmen, planned

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\(^6\) Parisian suggestions that Nancy’s strand constituted the “appropriate” and “French” evolution of Art Nouveau did appear, but not until the capital’s writers covered the 1909 Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France, held in Nancy. See Chapter 5 for further information about this event and its architecture.

buildings that announced their association with entrenched French and regional artistic vocabularies. While they certainly cultivated the explicit symbolism imparted to them by Laloux and Gallé, they also simultaneously created a more universal vocabulary that sympathetically could connect with a larger, more general audience, even those from outside Lorraine or France itself. Their buildings were meant to demonstrate their commitment to nationalism and the reunification of their province, but they also were meant to exude a sense of cultural refinement and inspire respect for both their artistic skill and the strength of their region’s industry. This kind of language, seen in the choice of materials for their work and the ways that it was treated and arranged as opposed to how it was stamped with iconic motifs, was progressive and as such harmonized with the ideas of Parisian designers like Guimard and Jourdain. The ability of Nancy’s architects both to recognize the importance of this tripartite formula to their city, region, and the nation as well as their success in achieving these intended effects allowed Nancy’s Art Nouveau to last far longer than any other variety of modernism at the dawn of the twentieth century.
The Ecole de Nancy and Nancy’s Artistic Scene, ca. 1889-1914

In the years 1889-1914 artistic activity in Nancy reached its apex. During this time period, the city became renowned for its burgeoning output in the decorative arts—principally furniture and glasswork, but also other media such as ironwork, painting, leatherwork and bookbinding, sculpture, and embroidery and fabrics. The artistic community was close-knit, and frequently Nancy’s artists collaborated with one another on individual works [Fig. 2-1]. The quarter-century preceding the First World War in Nancy was most notably marked by the activity of the Ecole de Nancy, an organization founded in 1901 and dedicated to the production of high-quality decorative arts and architecture in the region of Lorraine. The works of its members established Nancy as one of the leading centers of artistic and architectural production in Europe.98 Nancy’s artistic scene developed rapidly between 1870 and 1914, when World War I abruptly and permanently halted its expansion.

Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture grew out of this activity in the decorative arts. The artistic community in Nancy was led by the energetic and forceful glassmaker and furniture manufacturer Emile Gallé, who became its theoretical and political voice by the late 1880s and founded the Ecole de Nancy. The idea of the unity of the arts in Nancy most certainly included architecture, both on a theoretical level and in practice, and Nancy’s

98 This chapter does not, however, purport to be the definitive history of the Ecole de Nancy. For a more comprehensive look at the group, see Christian Debize, Emile Gallé and the “Ecole de Nancy,” trans. Ruth Atkin-Etienne (Metz: Serpenoise, 1999); Claire Aptel, et. al., Nancy 1900: Rayonnement de l’Art Nouveau (Thionville: Gérard Klopp, 1989), and Françoise Thérèse Charpentier, et. al., Art Nouveau: L’Ecole de Nancy (Metz: Denoël/Serpenoise, 1987); and Alain Dusart and François Moulin, Art Nouveau: l’Épopée Lorraine (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue/Editions de l’Est, 1998).
architects, who lacked any leading artistic theorist and were sympathetic to Gallé, followed him in his efforts to organize the artistic community there. This development had two main consequences for Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture. It was inextricably linked to the decorative arts and thus became one of the successful brands of modernism to achieve this harmony. On the other hand, however, that meant that Nancy’s architecture struggled to find a clear identity as a medium, and its fortunes rose and fell with the success of the city’s decorative artists.

Nancy’s Artistic Heritage Before the Nineteenth Century

Even though Nancy’s artistic reputation blossomed as never before around the turn of the twentieth century, the city had a long and proud tradition of artistic and architectural prowess, as well as regional pride. In the seventeenth century, the city garnered attention as the home of the engraver Jacques Callot (ca. 1592-1635), whose series of prints *Les Grandes Misères de la guerre* (1633) and its unfinished companion *Le Petites Misères* contained some of the most potent images of the horrors of the Thirty Years War (1618-48). They were executed just after Louis XIII of France had invaded and occupied Nancy, previously the capital of the independent duchy of Lorraine. Nineteenth century, the city garnered attention as the home of the engraver Jacques Callot (ca. 1592-1635), whose series of prints *Les Grandes Misères de la guerre* (1633) and its unfinished companion *Le Petites Misères* contained some of the most potent images of the horrors of the Thirty Years War (1618-48). They were executed just after Louis XIII of France had invaded and occupied Nancy, previously the capital of the independent duchy of Lorraine. In an apocryphal display of regional patriotism, when the king asked Callot to compose a set of prints of his latest exploits, Callot refused to dishonor his own country, saying, “I’d rather cut off my own thumb.”

In the eighteenth century Nancy experienced impressive architectural

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changes. The city, which had existed since about 1050, had become heavily fortified by the 1600s, and as Nancy had outgrown its old defenses, it was divided into two districts. Together they were encircled by a protective moat and star-shaped system of walls [Fig. 2-2]. The *vieille ville*, or old city, was (and still is) a maze of narrow winding medieval streets, while the *ville neuve* (new city) consisted of a more rational grid plan laid out in 1588 by Duke Charles III. The two districts remained separated by a large open space that was virtually unused.\textsuperscript{101}

In 1736, Stanislas Leszczynski (1677-1766) abdicated the throne of Poland during the War of the Polish Succession, and in compensation, became Duke of Lorraine. He ruled in that capacity until his death some thirty years later, at which time the duchy lost its independent status and became the preserve of his son-in-law, Louis XV of France. Although he himself settled into a large château at Lunéville, a small town southeast of Nancy, Stanislas sought to make the capital of his new domain fit for someone of royal stature.\textsuperscript{102} He united the two sectors of Nancy through the construction of two large squares, the Place de la Carrière and the Place Royale (now the Place Stanislas), and commissioned the architect Emmanuel Héré de Corny (1705-63) and the ironworker Jean Lamour (1698-1771) to construct them.\textsuperscript{103} Built between 1751-55, they provide two of the city’s most prominent public spaces.


\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 226-27.

The buildings of the Place Stanislas, which are characterized by an ornate, Rococo classicism, contain several features that have influenced Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture [Fig. 2-3]. First, the structures surrounding the square consist of three-story pavilions articulated by long rows of repetitive bays, rusticated on the ground floor and articulated on the upper floors by fenestration that alternates with colossal pilasters. The Hôtel de Ville, or City Hall, represents the pinnacle of this classicism, as its long façade on the south side of the square is anchored in the center by a three-bay pavilion topped successively by a pediment and clock. These elements give the ensemble a sense of order and gravity, such that their sedate masses must rely on a vocabulary of a wealth of encrusting, playful sculptural details to animate their forms.

The ornament of the stonework is echoed in the gilded ironwork of the large gates that guard the various entrances into the square [Fig. 2-4]. On the gates, the ornament consists of curling leaf forms and architectural scrolls, which connect and frame the various iconographic motifs and utilitarian bars that comprise the central parts of the décor. For example, in the northeast gate, above the fountain of Amphitrite, these gold leaf forms surround and highlight the central medallion of three fleur-de-lis (formerly a thistle), symbolizing the Bourbon royal house of France and itself encased by a banded wreath. Below this medallion hangs a Maltese cross and five banners, and the entire central ensemble is surmounted by a crown decorated with fleur-de-lis, no doubt representing the French royalty, to whom Lorraine passed after Stanislas’ death.\footnote{And to whom Stanislas was related by marriage; recall that Louis XV was his son-in-law, having married Marie Leszczyńska in 1725.} One can see that this plethora of scrolls, leaves, stems, and plant forms that are bent back on each other in whiplash, spiral, and S-curves are mounted on an iron framework that is largely
rectilinear in elevation. Some art historians characterize this ornament as a mélange of French and Italian baroque elements from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, brought together by Héré and Lamour to create a “Lorraine style” of decoration, thus presaging the regional attachment to artistic forms that characterized Nancy’s architecture at the end of the nineteenth century.

Despite the impressive artistic reputation that Nancy built during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for much of the nineteenth century, Metz, until 1870 slightly larger than Nancy and located a mere thirty-five miles to the north, was more important in terms of artistic and industrial production. In 1861, Metz hosted a world’s fair, at which Nancy’s major artistic firms—including those of Charles Gallé and Auguste Majorelle, whose sons would become leaders of the Ecole de Nancy—were judged to be at best mediocre in comparison with other French and foreign manufacturers. And at the Paris world’s fair of 1867, the Municipal Design School in Metz won a bronze medal, while the city’s industrial products achieved international recognition, paving the way for them to break into markets abroad alongside Parisian designs. For the three decades prior to the Franco-Prussian War, one could even speak of an “Ecole de Metz” of painters, interior designers, glassmakers and stained glass artists, although they were not organized like the artists in Nancy of thirty years later.


106 Which, by the way, is pronounced “Mess.”

The Aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 was a short conflict, but its effects reverberated for nearly fifty years. Nowhere were these aftershocks more pronounced than in Lorraine. Located in the eastern part of France between Champagne and Alsace, and bordering Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg, the region witnessed a large share of the fighting, including the Battle of Mars-la-Tour (after which the Prussians forced the French army back into the fortress of Metz, where they were besieged) and the Battle of Gravelotte, the war’s largest engagement. Many Lorrainers who served in the war, including the artists Emile Gallé and Antonin Daum, never forgot their experiences. The geographic, demographic, and political changes that took place in Lorraine in the years immediately after the conflict profoundly influenced the lives of residents until the end of the First World War.108

Geographic, Demographic, and Economic Changes

In the Treaty of Frankfurt, signed on 10 May 1871 and enforced eight days later, the newly-formed German Empire levied an indemnity of five billion francs against the French, occupied several cities in eastern France, including Nancy, until the indemnity was paid off in 1874, and annexed virtually all of the region of Alsace (except for the city of Belfort) and the northern third of Lorraine [Fig. 2-5]. These were French territories that the Germans believed to be empirically populated by German-speaking peoples.109 In the months leading up to the war, the German states of Baden and Bavaria had wished to annex French territory on the west bank of the

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109 These lands now comprise the French départements of Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, and Moselle.
Rhine to protect themselves from French attack. (They remembered well the
invasions of Napoleon from a half-century earlier.) German Chancellor Otto
von Bismarck, who had recently been forced to provide major concessions of
political autonomy to these states in order to coax them into union with
Prussia in the new empire, therefore committed himself to the annexation of
Alsace-Lorraine just after the outbreak of the war in September 1870. He was
hesitant to demand that the French relinquish the area around Metz, but
was persuaded to do so by his victorious generals, who wanted more territory
than the final settlement eventually negotiated for the Germans. Even so,
Bismarck is known to have personally had misgivings about the annexation
of Alsace-Lorraine, knowing that it would provoke a lasting enmity among
the French towards the new German Empire.\textsuperscript{110}

The sudden transfer of territory from France to Germany in 1871
predictably triggered a substantial shift in population, which itself had
significant implications for economic and artistic development in Lorraine
and Alsace. The Frankfurt Treaty gave the residents of the "lost provinces"
until 1 October 1872 to decide whether they wanted to retain their French
citizenship and emigrate or to remain in the region the Germans now called
"Elsaß-Lothringen." Hélène Sicard-Lenattier estimates that by that date,
70,000 people from Alsace-Lorraine had opted for immigration to Meurthe-et-
Moselle, the French \textit{département} of which Nancy was the prefecture (capital).
21,000 of those settled in the Nancy metropolitan area. Even after this
"deadline," when immigration became more difficult, the influx of people from
Alsace-Lorraine to France continued.\textsuperscript{111} Although it is difficult to be precise,
official estimates place the number of immigrants to France between 1870

\textsuperscript{110} Dan P. Silverman, \textit{Reluctant Union: Alsace-Lorraine and Imperial Germany, 1871-1918}

\textsuperscript{111} Hélène Sicard-Lenattier, \textit{Les Alsaciens-Lorrains à Nancy: Une Ardente Histoire 1870-1914}
(Haroué, France: Gérard Louis, 2002), 56.
and 1910 at around 460,000 people, out of an 1870 population of Alsace-Lorraine of some 1.6 million. (Of course, during the same period, many Germans also moved into Alsace-Lorraine to replace them.)\footnote{Silverman, \textit{Reluctant Union}, 69; Charles Hazen, \textit{Alsace-Lorraine Under German Rule} (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1917), 5-6; and Pignon-Feller, “L’Art nouveau de Nancy à Metz,” 263.} Nancy experienced a huge population boom: in 1866, the city counted only 49,993 inhabitants, but that number grew to 102,559 according to the census of 1901, and to 119,949 by 1911.\footnote{Pierre Barral, Françoise-Thérèse Charpentier, and Jean-Claude Bonnefant, “La Capitale de la Lorraine Mutilée (1870-1918),” in Taveneaux, dir., \textit{Histoire de Nancy}, 393.} Metz, the largest city in the German-annexed part of Lorraine, only grew from 54,817 residents in 1866 to 68,598 in 1910; while Strasbourg (now called Straßburg), the largest city in Alsace, counted 85,654 inhabitants in 1866 and 178,891 residents in 1910.\footnote{See Paul Vidal de la Blache, “Évolution de la population en Alsace-Lorraine et dans les départements limitrophes,” in \textit{Annales de la Géographie} 25, no. 135 (1916): 167, 179; and Philippe Dollinger, “Une réelle prospérité,” in Dollinger, ed., \textit{L'Alsace de 1900 à nos jours} (Toulouse: Privat, 1979): 57.}

Historians have made much of the economic resources that France lost in ceding Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, including the substantial deposits of coal and the textile factories of Alsace.\footnote{Consult Dan Silverman, \textit{Reluctant Union}, 32-3; and Marilyn Brown, “Franco-American Aspects of Degas’ \textit{A Cotton Office in New Orleans},” in Gail Feigenbaum, ed., \textit{Degas and New Orleans: A French Impressionist in America} (New Orleans/New York: New Orleans Museum of Art/Ordrupgaard/Abrams, 1999): 56.} But despite the fact that France was forced to surrender its economic interests in the lost provinces, it gained a sizeable number of prominent industrialists and businessmen among the émigrés from Alsace-Lorraine. They wished to remain in France rather than deal with a new set of German trading regulations and, with the population shift, a different clientele. Some wanted to educate their children in French schools. Several of these economic leaders moved to Nancy, where they re-established their enterprises just outside the established central core,
particularly to the east and south along the Meurthe River and its canal, eventually encircling the city with a ring of factories [Fig. 2-6]. The newcomers were engaged in a variety of industries and trades: the cotton manufacturer Emmanuel Lang came from Waldinghofen in Alsace; the glassmaker Jean Daum transferred his factories to the east side of Nancy from the town of Bitche, in the part of Lorraine annexed by Germany; the barrel-maker Adolphe Frühinsholz and the printer Oscar Berger-Levrault brought their companies to Nancy from Strasbourg; and the ironworks of Fould-Dupont, which would be responsible for the material for the Eiffel Tower at the 1889 World’s Fair in Paris, was relocated from Ars-sur-Moselle, just outside Metz, to Pompey, a few miles north of Nancy.116

The Politics of Alsace-Lorraine

During the debate in the National Assembly over whether or not France should accept the Treaty of Frankfurt, Edgar Quinet warned his countrymen that ceding Alsace-Lorraine would mean a "war always latent and imminent in the nature of things,"117 implying that in the coming years France would be constantly looking for an excuse for a conflict that would allow them to regain those provinces and exact revenge for the defeat of 1870.

Quinet was only partly right. Indeed, Franco-German political and


cultural relations remained somewhat tense over the next four decades, and the French desire to regain Alsace-Lorraine was at times so pervasive that it even found its way into the nation's colonial policy, with some officials suggesting the exchange of overseas possessions like Madagascar for the regions lost during the war. But these tensions also experienced ebbs and flows; by the 1890s, diplomatic relations had reached a thawing point, and for about ten years preceding the eruption of the Dreyfus Affair in 1894, the French and German governments got along rather cordially.

In consonance with improving Franco-German relations, increasingly in the years after 1871 many French citizens did want to forget about the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. French artists were some of the most notable members of this group. While French painters in the 1870s used the Franco-Prussian War as subject matter as a way to help "heal" the nation's wounds, artists who came of age in the 1880s and 1890s did not know the war firsthand, and felt less connection to the conflict. The chief national political question of the 1870s remained whether or not France would be a republic or a monarchy; the constitutional laws of the Third Republic were finally promulgated in 1875, but two years later the country was rocked by President Patrice Mac-Mahon's failed attempt to seize monarchical power in a coup d'État. Distracted, the government shelved the ideas of revanche and regaining the "lost provinces" indefinitely, which only contributed to this apathy. In the late 1880s, the dashing ex-general Georges Boulanger's support for revanche briefly returned the policy to the forefront of national attention, but this quickly dissipated after his failed attempts to take control of the national

118 Schivelbusch, The Culture of Defeat, 179.
government and subsequent flight and conviction-in-exile for treason.\textsuperscript{120}

By the turn of the century, the official French national foreign policy was to pursue internal "unity through peace with progress," attempting to avoid armed conflict. The French had gained a newfound respect for German military prowess, and were worried by the looming specter of war that was brought up by every colonial conflict with the Germans. A war of reconquest and \textit{revanche} looked less desirable than ever in the first decade of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{121} By the start of the First World War, many observers, both in France and abroad, came to accept the permanent loss of the eastern territories, due to an erroneous assumption that Alsace-Lorraine had become economically and culturally integrated into the German Empire. In reality, in spite of efforts to "Germanize" them, many writers claimed that the citizens of Alsace-Lorraine remained enemies of Germany and still cherished their French heritage, although this attachment was becoming a memory.\textsuperscript{122}

With international tensions rising after the various Balkan conflicts starting around 1910, and especially with the outbreak of war in 1914, the literature on Alsace-Lorraine and the demands for its return to France proliferated exponentially. Suddenly the memory of the German annexation


\textsuperscript{121} Nolan, \textit{op. cit.}, 84, 86 n.48.

of Alsace-Lorraine became fresh again in the minds of both Frenchmen and foreigners. The literature of 1910-1914 reiterated the argument that there were strong ethnic and cultural ties between Alsace-Lorraine and the rest of the French nation. These writers cited many instances in which the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine had resisted integration with the rest of Germany; they claimed that the Germans had treated the region as a conquered territory, not a province on equal footing with the other states within the German Empire (which was true);123 and they proposed various solutions.124 The memory of the entire debate—indeed, history—of the Alsace-Lorraine question was rehashed, as if the proverbial unhealed wounds of the French nation were laid bare for the world to inspect.

Nancy in the Aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War

The terms of the Treaty of Frankfurt had unique and memorable consequences for Nancy. The subsequent occupation by the Germans (until the French indemnity was paid off in 1874) constantly reminded Nancy's residents of the recent war. Even after they left, Nancy remained barely fifteen miles from the German frontier, which left it militarily vulnerable [see

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123 Alsace-Lorraine was administered, until 1911—when it was granted a measure of political autonomy within the German Empire—as a conquered province directly from Berlin, not as a state on par with others such as Bavaria or Württemberg.

Fig. 2-5]. The French government responded by placing a permanent military garrison at Nancy, which necessitated the construction of several barracks and other military grounds in the southwestern part of town [see Fig. 2-6]. In 1881 Nancy’s residents included some 3,600 regular troops, a six-fold increase from the 600 soldiers stationed there in 1866, and this garrison grew to more than 10,600 in 1913. The desire of the national government to fortify the city was so strong that local architecture and construction journals only half-jokingly suggested in 1899 that Nancy would soon be encircled by massive fortresses, just like the ones the Germans were supposedly building on the other side of the border. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Nancy citizens frequently predicted the imminent outbreak of another war between France and Germany, and drew up projected timelines laying out the events of such an imagined conflict. Nancy's residents were constantly reminded of the fate that had befallen their nation and their province as a result of the Franco-Prussian War and of the potentially-explosive antagonism between France and Germany.

However, the influx of refugees from Alsace and northern Lorraine after 1871 helped to entrench the memory of the war. In general, Nancy natives welcomed these newcomers with open arms and helped them integrate into their new environment. One Nancy architecture critic addressed the newcomers in a piece that argued that Lorraine had never had ties to Germany. "To our friends, exiled on their own native soil, all our cheers and encouragements," he wrote, and hopefully predicted that, despite

125 Barral, Charpentier, and Bonnefant, op. cit., 394.
127 "Organization et Défense des Frontières," in La Vie Illustré 371 (24 November 1905): 1. The plans that were laid out in this piece in a Parisian periodical apparently held a particular fascination for a Nancy citizen named Louis Marin.
the Franco-Prussian War, the two parts of Lorraine would eventually be reunited under the French flag.\textsuperscript{128} The sudden influx of immigrants, however, was not easy to accommodate. For many Nanciens, the appearance of so many newcomers from outside Lorraine (many of whom did not even speak French) was unsettling, but the resulting prosperity that the city experienced in the decades that followed produced a sense of pride, as well as a renewed sense of patriotism for a resurgent French nation.\textsuperscript{129} The presence of so many people who had been drawn from the "lost provinces" after 1871 by their desire to remain French also helped reinforce the war's memory within the minds of Nancy citizens. They could not forget that many of their city's good fortunes at the turn of the century were at least in part due to the misfortunes of their fellow Lorrainers and Alsaciens.

Third, Lorrainers who wished to see their provinces reunited had to deal with the fact that many fellow Frenchmen wanted to forget about the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. Despite this indifference, Nancy's residents refused to accept that the loss of the territory was permanent. They argued that Alsace-Lorraine was, and always had been, culturally aligned with France, and that the Germans were outsiders who were ruling a people and occupying territory to which they had no connections. The novels of Maurice Barrès (who himself was a native of Charmes, in the Vosges, south of Nancy), such as \textit{Les Marches de l'Est} (1909) and \textit{Au service de l'Allemagne} (1905), portray the Germans as barbarous to an almost unbelievable extent in an attempt to

\textsuperscript{128} Leduc Violet (pseudonym for Nancy architect Lucien Humbert), "Aux Exilés...sur la terre lorraine," in \textit{L'Immeuble et la Construction dans l'Est} 9, no. 33 (6 January 1895): 260. The pseudonym is a play on words from the name of famous French architect and theorist Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879).

\textsuperscript{129} Paul Vidal de la Blache, \textit{La France de l'Est (Lorraine-Alsace)} (Paris: Librarie Colin, 1917), 167. The large numbers of newcomers from Alsace-Lorraine, many of whom would end up competing with established Nancy residents for jobs, must have stimulated some resentment among the local population initially. See Barry, \textit{op. cit.}, 250-56.
awaken the rest of France to the need to regain the lost provinces. Likewise, the visual portrayals of Alsace-Lorraine by artists allude to the grim view that most Lorrainers took of the situation surrounding the lost provinces. The frontispiece of *L'Alsace Sous le Joug* (1914),\(^{130}\) by the critic Emile Hinzelin [Fig. 2-7], one of the ardent supporters of the Ecole de Nancy and its regional brand of Art Nouveau, personifies Alsace as a clearly distressed woman dressed in the province’s traditional costume,\(^{131}\) with her hands and feet bound and mouth gagged by a German soldier standing behind her. In 1910, the city of Nancy erected in the Place Saint-Jean, one of the most prominent downtown public spaces, the statue *Le Souvenir d'Alsace-Lorraine* [Fig. 2-8] by the sculptor Paul Dubois. The bronze piece depicts two young women seated on a block of granite from the Vosges Mountains, which formed the new (post-1871) frontier between France and Germany. The larger figure, dressed in traditional provincial costume, represents Alsace, with her head lifted and gazing at the ridge of the Vosges, waiting patiently for her deliverance by the French fatherland. The younger girl, representing Lorraine, leans on the Alsatian girl, her head bowed in sadness. With her left hand, the Alsatian girl clasps the Lorrainer’s right one in her lap to reassure her companion. Dubois’ work provided a place where “faithful Lorrainers... [would] come to protest, without reproach and without fear, the ever-so-cruel mutilation of their land.”\(^{132}\) It allowed Nanciens to express both their memory of the terrible events of the Franco-Prussian War and their dedication to the recapture of the lost provinces.

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\(^{130}\) One will notice that the image of the cover of this book shows the “11th edition,” although I have not been able to find any editions of this work published before 1914.

\(^{131}\) Nolan, *op. cit.*, 73-80.

Emile Gallé and Artistic Theory

Emile Gallé was the visual artist in Nancy who was the most widely published as a writer, and burned with the desire to see Alsace-Lorraine returned to France. He served as the energetic and forceful president of the Ecole de Nancy until his untimely death from leukemia in September 1904, and much of the artistic and political attitudes of the group and its individual members, especially early on, can be linked to him. After his death, Gallé became a sort of cult figure for Nancy’s artistic community. A famous portrait of him working in his studio and surrounded by various species of plants, painted by his close friend and presidential successor Victor Prouvé in 1892, was displayed prominently in the Ecole de Nancy’s pavilion at the city’s Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France in 1909.133

Gallé’s father’s estate, La Garenne, in the southwestern part of Nancy, included extensive gardens, and Emile developed a love of the natural world there. In lycée (high school) in the early 1860s, Gallé had a professor named Dominique-Alexandre Godron, who was the author of the studies *La Flore Française* and *La Flore Lorraine*.134 He became an active member of the Société Centrale d’Horticulture de Nancy, often contributing articles of his own research to its journal, including several pieces that documented135 his own travels and descriptions of flora that he encountered in eastern France, Alsace, Switzerland, and Italy in the late 1870s and 1880s. Later, Gallé presented his research on polymorphism in orchids native to Lorraine at the International Congress of Botany held in Paris in conjunction with the 1900

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133 See Anne-Laure Dusoir, L’Ecole de Nancy à L’Exposition Internationale de l’Est de France en 1909 (Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Nancy II, 2005), 84.
135 The journal was the *Bulletin de la Société d'horticulture de Nancy*, and many of Gallé’s articles were republished in 1908 in the collection *Ecrits pour l’art* (see subsequent notes).
World's Fair, and even designed a cover for the published proceedings of the conference.136 One famous photograph of Gallé shows him on the terrace of La Garenne, surveying the gardens, while in the foreground sit a few pieces of his Art Nouveau furniture, he fruits of his botanical inspiration [Fig. 2-9].

As his reputation as a leading local intellectual grew, in 1891 Gallé was elected a member of the Académie de Stanislas in Nancy, and his lectures there were reprinted in their proceedings. Gallé’s notes that accompanied the works he showed at major exhibitions were also frequently published in leading French literary and art journals. In 1908, four years after his death, his wife Henriette had many of his pieces collected and reprinted in the volume *Ecrits pour l’art*, which contains the core of Gallé’s artistic philosophy.137 Given his dominance as a figure among the members of the Ecole de Nancy, and the fact that virtually none of the other artists or architects of the Ecole published their views on artistic production, it is probably safe to conclude that nobody in the group wavered substantially from his perspective.

According to Gallé, French art empirically had taken its cue from Nature, in the sense that the nation’s artists had found inspiration in the indigenous flora and fauna around them.138 He believed that nature’s influence should be seen in contemporary artistic production in several ways.

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First, he saw the literal vegetal or animal forms as suitable for translation into the structural components of applied art, such as furniture, and that there could be an infinite number of possibilities that could result, just as there were an immense variety of natural species. In this respect he agreed with the rationalist artists of L'Art dans Tout, like Plumet and Selmershiem, who also viewed natural forms as the constructive basis for their pieces. Second, the ornament of such art should also follow the forms of nature, in harmony with the overall structural design and utility of the piece in question. Gallé believed that such ornament should reflect the artist’s contact with nature and be capable of moving others with its beauty, but also responsive to the needs of the user. Because it was a result of an intelligent creative process, the finished product would be logical, useful and harmonious. Finally, he also believed in the symbolic power of ornament as an element of communication. He described a symbol as “a translation, the awakening of an idea by an image,” and floral or faunal ornament was supposed to incarnate an idea or emotion behind it. The ornament thus became the “spirit” of the work of art. Looking at applied art this way, he claimed, would allow the twentieth century to become one of the renovation and regeneration of art and architecture.

Gallé was acutely aware of the controversy surrounding Art Nouveau at the turn of the century, especially since it was a style clearly inspired by nature. Predictably, he sought to ameliorate the position of his own work and fellow Nancy artists who he knew would be grouped with other practitioners of Art Nouveau. When debate surfaced in France around the style at the 1900 Fair, Gallé defended its use, saying that despite the criticisms leveled at its

139 Ibid., 252-53, 262-63.
140 Ibid., 242-43, 258-61.
141 Ibid., 215, 228.
“nightmarish creations” that carried a “grimacing turbulence of movements,”
Art Nouveau’s search for a new, modern system of structure and form in
furniture and décor was preferable to the stagnation of old pastiches of styles
then currently in fashion. Furthermore, he argued, if the critics would look
carefully at Art Nouveau, they would realize that the work done in the style
was in fact founded upon rational principles that emanated directly from
nature—in effect, developing a “style without style.”142 Because of its reliance
on the principles of natural, organic structure and form, Gallé preferred to
call Art Nouveau—and particularly the brand developed in Nancy—the école
naturaliste instead of the usual modern(e) style often used by French critics.

However, as Art Nouveau fell out of favor in France and elsewhere
around the time of Gallé’s death (in 1904), many in Nancy’s artistic
community wished to distance themselves from the style. They declared the
work of the Ecole de Nancy to be not “Art Nouveau” in the usual, “vulgar” use
of the term, which they associated with Belgium, Germany, and other
countries (but not France), where the style had become “artificial…loud…
curious, but bizarre and uncomfortable.” They preferred instead to call their
brand of Art Nouveau Art lorrain (“Lorraine Art”), and exalted it due to
Gallé’s advocacy of the direct observation of nature, which was in turn
responsible for its good taste, logic, harmony, unity, and sobriety.143 In the
years before 1914, the local press in Lorraine frequently dropped the use of
“moderne-style,” “Art Nouveau,” and other monikers to describe Nancy’s
brand of the style in favor of simply Art lorrain, to emphasize its home-grown
character, not simply un-foreign, but specifically regionalist and un-Parisian.

Despite their attachment to place (and not time) in their choice of Art

142 Gallé, “Le Mobilier Contemporain orné d’après la nature,” in Revue des Arts décoratifs
(November/December 1900), reprinted in Ecrits pour l’art, 246-47.
196, 199-200.
lorrain instead of moderne-style as the descriptive title of their work, the artists of the Ecole de Nancy were nonetheless seen as modern by their supporters in Nancy. Louis Laffitte described them in his report on the Exposition Internationale de l'Est de la France in 1912 as “one of the most striking manifestations of our vitality...proof of the creative power of Lorraine genius.” Indeed, the constant support that the Ecole de Nancy received from the elites of the province was the main reason why the group’s brand of Art Nouveau remained popular until 1914.144

**Iconography of the Ecole de Nancy**

The artists of the Ecole de Nancy often relied on a complex set of motifs that served essentially semiotic purposes for their works, much like artists in other centers of Art Nouveau, such as Barcelona.145 Because Art Nouveau often used natural imagery, Nancy artists drew inspiration from a large variety of flora that that was native to Lorraine or which they themselves cultivated. Many of these symbols had meanings or associations that were fairly generic, but could be easily interpreted as relevant to the particular work on which they were depicted. Nancy artists, however, also tended to use a handful of motifs that referenced themes related to the city of Nancy or the regions of Lorraine or Alsace more frequently than the others. Some of these motifs had little relationship to nature, but they usually carried highly sophisticated connotations that had developed multiple layers over time. Their presence thus helps to root the works on which they are

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featured to the particular place and time of their creation, and places the artworks in the line of Nancy and Lorraine's provincial traditions.

**Gallé, Le Rhin, and the Alsace-Lorraine Question**

The issue of Alsace-Lorraine and *revanche* remained a preoccupation with the members of the Ecole much as it did for the rest of the Nancy's citizens. Emile Gallé's artistic engagement with the Alsace-Lorraine question began as early as the late 1870s, but the most famous episode of his involvement with it dates from 1889, when he presented one of his most famous works (done in collaboration with Louis Hestaux and Victor Prouvé), an inlaid oak table called *Le Rhin* ("The Rhine") [Fig. 2-10] at that year's World's Fair in Paris. The frieze that spans the length of the tabletop depicts, in the center, a bearded god, representing the Rhine River, warding off an armed group of Germans, on the right, from a woman that he holds in his arms, representing Lorraine. On the left half of the frieze are an armed group of warriors, representing France, and to whom Lorraine belongs. Inlaid above the scene are the words "The Rhine separates the Gauls [from] all of Germany," a reference lifted from the Roman historian Tacitus.¹⁴⁶ Among the table's legs, Gallé included the words "I cling to the heart of France."¹⁴⁷ Clearly he was referencing the German seizure of Alsace-Lorraine, and claiming that the natural border between Germans and Frenchmen really was along the Rhine, the eastern border of Alsace. Thus, in Gallé's mind, French men and women in Alsace-Lorraine were forcibly living under

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¹⁴⁷ The original inscriptions are in French: on the top, from Tacitus, "Le Rhin separe des Gauls tout de Germanie," and among the table legs, "Je tiens au coeur de France."
German rule. This piece remained a potent icon of Nancy’s artistic production throughout the quarter-century following its completion, and was displayed along with Gallé’s portrait as the centerpiece of the Ecole de Nancy’s pavilion at the Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France in 1909.

The Thistle as a Symbol of Lorraine and Nancy

One of the most prominent motifs used by the Ecole was the thistle, a plant native to Lorraine prominently featured on the coat of arms of the city of Nancy [Fig. 2-11], and the town of Ligny-en-Barrois, in the département of the Meuse in the western part of Lorraine. On the former, it is accompanied by the motto, "Don't touch me; it will sting," while on the latter, three thistles and three crescents are pictured along with the motto, "In my wounds, in my thistles, I will grow." The symbol use of the thistle in Lorraine can be traced back at least to the reigns of the dukes René II (1451-1508) and his successor, Antoine the Good (1489-1544), both of whom used it on coinage and in fabrics as a heroic symbol of freedom and the resistance to oppression. René in particular used it during his campaign of the 1470s when he succeeded in driving the Burgundians under their duke Charles the Bold from Lorraine. Given that Lorraine has suffered the fate of a state that has often fallen victim to invasion by its neighbors, it is not surprising that the thistle serves as an index of Lorrainers’ suspicion of outsiders, a strong

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148 The original (middle French) is, "Ne touchez mie; il poinct," the more common modern French version of this motto quoted by Lorrainers is "Qui s'y frotte, s'y pique" ("He who touches me will be pricked").

149 The original reads, "En mes peines, en mes chardons, je vais croissant."

150 This traditional meaning has been passed down among Lorrainers for centuries, according to Pierre Gérard, former director of the Archives Départementales de Meurthe-et-Moselle in Nancy. See his La Lorraine...Vivante Réalité Humaine... (Nancy: Archives Départementales de Meurthe-et-Moselle, 1972), 9. Also see Léon Germain, Le Chardon Lorrain sous les Ducs René II et Antoine (Nancy: Berger-Levrault, 1885), 1-32.
sense of the “other,” and their tenacity in repulsing enemy aggression.

As the central motif between the legs of Gallé’s table _Le Rhin_ [see Fig. 2-10], positioned just above the words "I cling to the heart of France," the thistle exudes a menacing presence, as if defending the statement carved below it. This fact was not lost on contemporary Parisian observers at the 1889 World's Fair, who made sure to note the connection with the popular modern version of Nancy's civic motto, "He who touches me will be pricked." Gallé's artistic statement implied that Lorraine sought retribution against those who sought to harm her, and specifically, the Germans who had divided the region in the Treaty of Frankfurt. Furthermore, the frieze on the tabletop indicated that retribution would come by the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France and the re-establishment of the Rhine as the border between France and Germany.

_The Monnaie-du-Pape and Alsace_

A third prominent motif in the work of the Ecole was the plant called the _monnaie-du-pape_. Known formally in English as annual honesty, the _monnaie-du-pape_ is sometimes translated more literally as “the pope's coin purse,” due to its similarities to coinage, and, as we will see in subsequent chapters, the artists of Ecole used it several times in part to represent the luxurious qualities of the buildings they built. In one building, the Renauld Bank, where it appears in stained glass and in the iron balustrades for the staircases, its resemblance to coinage is particularly appropriate as a place to safeguard its customers’ savings.

The _monnaie-du-pape_ is also significant, however, as a symbol of

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Alsace, and is found exclusively on buildings associated with the furniture designer and ironworker Louis Majorelle, including Majorelle’s own house, the Villa Jika in southwestern Nancy, which was largely responsible for the establishment of Art Nouveau into Nancy’s architecture.\textsuperscript{152} While Majorelle himself had been born in Toul and grown up in Nancy, where his father had been born, his wife’s family nourished particularly strong ties to Alsace. Majorelle’s father-in-law, Joseph Xavier Emile Kretz, whose wife had given Majorelle the land for his house, had been born in Marckolsheim, in lower Alsace, before the Franco-Prussian War.\textsuperscript{153} Majorelle served as a vice-president of the Ecole de Nancy, and was dedicated to the regionalist issues upon which the organization was founded, including the desire to see the return of Alsace to France. The prominent use of this floral motif thus can be read as representative of his solidarity with this political movement as it aligned with his own family’s heritage.

\textit{The Cross of Lorraine and the Divided Province}

Another prominent symbol Nancy artists and architects incorporated into their designs was the Lorraine cross [Fig. 2-12]. Long recognized as a symbol of resistance by Lorrainers in part because of its use by the medieval Duke of Lorraine, Réné II, who had fended off Charles the Bold (1433-77), the Duke of Burgundy, at the Battle of Nancy in 1477, after the Treaty of Frankfurt the Lorraine cross took on a new meaning. In 1873, the bishops of Metz and Strasbourg led a group of Alsace-Lorrainers to the shrine of Notre-Dame de Sion in the French part of Lorraine south of Nancy. There, they

\textsuperscript{152} Its symbolic reference is noted in Philippe Garner, \textit{Gallé}, 55.

\textsuperscript{153} See the \textit{Liste des Baptêmes, Mariages, et Sépultures} for the Parish of Saint-Vincent/Saint Fiacre, Nancy, 1863-65, no. 67 (Archives Départementales de Meurthe-et-Moselle, Series E, 5 Mi 394/R 184).
placed a plaque inscribed with the Lorraine cross and the words "*Ce name po tojo*"—a patois version of the modern French "Ce n'est pas pour toujours," meaning "It is not for forever." This phrase referenced the division of Lorraine (and, by extension, the separation of Alsace-Lorraine from France) due to the Treaty. Here, the Lorraine cross was reincarnated as a symbol of resistance to Germanization, and in Lorraine the symbol often took on a geographic reference. The upper horizontal bar of the cross came to represent Metz, while the lower bar was understood as Nancy, the two principal cities of the province. Occasionally, the cross would be represented as broken, indicating the legal reality that Metz (or Alsace-Lorraine) was separated from the rest of Lorraine (or France). Thus the Lorraine cross seemed to consecrate every location where it was placed as a "lieux de mémoire," reminding everyone who saw it of the fact that Lorraine was divided because of the Germans' harsh Treaty, and the disaster of the Franco-Prussian War, in which many Lorrainers had participated.

The artists of the Ecole de Nancy used the Lorraine cross quite liberally in their work. The legs of Gallé's table *Le Rhin* are carved as eagles, also a symbol of Lorraine found on its coat of arms and flag, and each of the birds includes a Lorraine cross emblazoned on its chest. Gallé often included a small Lorraine cross somewhere near his signature on many of his pieces of furniture or glasswork. Likewise, the Daum brothers usually signed their

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glasswork with a stylized version of their surname entwined with a Lorraine cross, and some of their earlier pieces before they came under the influence of Art Nouveau are specifically covered with this regional symbol [Fig. 2-14].

Jeanne d’Arc and Lorraine

The members of the Ecole de Nancy were often inspired by myth and legend, and these stories and figures often became focal points of their pieces. One of the greatest achievements of Victor Prouvé, Camille Martin, and René Weiner in artistic bookbinding, for example, is their 1893 collaboration on the cover of Gustave Flaubert’s novel Salammbô,¹⁵⁶ which depicts the title figure in the middle of a famous scene in which she is dancing with snakes.

Perhaps the most significant of the figures used by the Ecole’s artists is Jeanne d’Arc (1410-1431), one of the patron saints of France who has long been associated with Lorraine, having been born in the village of Domrémy (now Domrémy-la-Pucelle), in the département of the Vosges southwest of Nancy. She gained fame after having visions that correctly predicted the military fortunes of the French army during the Hundred Years War, and in the spring of 1429, when the city of Orléans had been surrounded by English forces, the uncrowned dauphin of France, Charles VII, allowed her to lead the French forces defending the city. She managed to lift the siege in nine days, then lead the army onto a series of brilliant victories that by the late summer allowed Charles VII to enter Rheims and be crowned king. But in May 1430 English and Burgundian forces captured her in a skirmish in northern France. When Charles VII refused to pay a ransom for her, the English tried and convicted her of heresy, and she was burned at the stake in May 1431.

Jeanne d'Arc was rarely admired and, in fact, often denigrated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but in the nineteenth century, her reputation improved dramatically. One of the main reasons for this was the return to primary sources made by modern historians, who published her trial records in Latin, French and English at various times between the 1860s and 1880s. This, along with other research, allowed for more serious scholarly study and the verification of her story.¹⁵⁷

During and after the Franco-Prussian War, Jeanne d'Arc returned to favor among the French public, and her visibility grew as it never had before, in poetry, plays, operas, advertisements, statues, monuments, and countless other pieces of visual culture.¹⁵⁸ She also became a focal point of contention between republicans and Catholics in France. The former took her on as a paradoxical icon of triumph and martyrdom after the 1870-71 defeat, while the latter hoped to tap into her image as a model for female religious piety. This “double image” of Jeanne d'Arc persisted in the early years of the Third Republic when it was unclear whether the republic really would be the lasting form of government for the nation. By the 1890s, however, as the republic settled into relative stability, it no longer wished to recall its birth in defeat. Instead, it turned to a more optimistic, secular set of symbols, which included Marianne, the feminine symbol of the republic who had no connections to monarchy or church. Her image appeared on the new coinage that began circulation in the middle of the decade.¹⁵⁹

In Lorraine, however, Jeanne d’Arc became instrumental in the

¹⁵⁸ Winock, ibid., 433-37, and Schivelbusch, ibid., 141.
¹⁵⁹ Schivelbusch, ibid., 140-2. Also see Deborah Silverman, Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France, 172-78, on Marianne and the new French coinage.
construction of a regional identity, and the persistence of her image remained especially strong there. A native of the province, Jeanne has often been termed “La bonne Lorraine,” and during the belle époque she developed a multivalent set of connotations for the region’s inhabitants. In the first place, she was seen as a symbol of French patriotism, “the eternal and highest ideal of national pride in its most noble and most complete conception,” and specifically, “the great historic figure who symbolizes forever patriotism in Lorraine.” In this sense Jeanne was also seen as a uniting force among the French people, in spite of the fact that her image was used for a variety of purposes by many different factions within the country. As the Minister of Agriculture stated at the inauguration of Emmanuel Frémiet’s statue of her in Nancy in 1890, “[a]ll parties are appeased, all are brought closer...before her, and when we celebrate her, we celebrate concord and fraternity.”

Frémiet’s statue in Nancy was a copy of one that he was commissioned to sculpt for the Place des Pyramides in Paris in 1874, and was just one of several statues of Joan that were dispersed throughout Lorraine between 1871 and 1914. Many of these, including the one in Nancy, depict Jeanne on horseback in full armor, ready to ride into battle. Some face eastward towards the 1871 border, acting as a symbol of protection against the German menace and an inspiration to French soldiers who might fight the Germans.

160 Though for a time in the nineteenth century it was hotly contested as to whether or not she was from Lorraine (then technically not a part of France) or from Champagne. See Winock, 446; and Michèle Lagny, “Culte et Images de Jeanne d’Arc en Lorraine 1870-1921” (Thèse de doctorat, Université de Nancy II, 1973), 2:224-30.
162 Anonymous note in the Livre d’Or de Jeanne d’Arc (14 (April 1906). This is the guest book at the shrine to Jeanne d’Arc in her hometown of Domrémy-la-Pucelle. Cited in Lagny, ibid.
164 Incidentally, there are three copies of this statue: in Paris, Nancy, and Philadelphia.
Likewise, Jeanne d'Arc's image served a purpose for the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine after 1871. The pages of the guest book at Domrémy are filled with pleas from residents of the lost provinces asking for a “new Jeanne d'Arc” to “save poor Alsace from the talons of the Prussian eagle.” This restoration of the old frontiers between France and Germany was understood as only possible through another military conflict. In 1889, Gallé sent a vase to the World’s Fair along with *Le Rhin* that depicts Jeanne d'Arc training men for combat, accompanied by the inscription, “The peace that we need is that they return home,” referencing no doubt the soldiers that France would send into a revanchist war with Germany, but also the returning of the lost provinces to their proverbial homeland of France.

Jeanne d'Arc was also the embodiment for some of the French racial essence and identity. This became particularly apparent in the 1890s with the eruption of the Dreyfus Affair. For some, including Maurice Barrès, the regionalist Lorraine politician and writer, Jeanne represented the Catholic, agrarian, Aryan, and especially non-Jewish qualities of France—specifically those qualities that anti-Semites argued made French people a superior race. Barrès was one of the leading elected officials in the National Assembly who pushed for the creation of a national holiday for Jeanne d'Arc. Gallé, who had shared many of Barrès’ regionalist sentiments, eventually broke with him in the mid-1890s because Gallé, who was a member of the local chapter of the League of the Rights of Man, was a staunch supporter of Dreyfus, a move that earned him a few enemies in Nancy. Gallé’s demands for justice for the wrongly-convicted ex-captain even led him to forge a close personal friendship

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166 Ibid., 2:206-8, 219. The original French inscription on the vase reads, “La Paix qu’il nous faut, c’est qu’ils s’en retournent chez eux.”
with Dreyfus and his wife during Dreyfus’ ordeal in the late 1890s. Gallé’s public support for Dreyfus, however, seems to have been solely his initiative, not one that was shared by other members of the Ecole, as none of the other members left any record of their involvement with it.

The Landscape

The symbolism of Jeanne d’Arc was associated with the natural landscape of Lorraine, which emphasized the region’s link to France and its racial qualities, as well as the commonly-held belief that she was a Lorraine native. The critic Emile Hinzelin, a staunch supporter of the Ecole de Nancy, wrote in 1904: “Great peace of the delicate Lorraine nature! The true Jeanne is here…in its sweet valley, near the trees, the vines, [and] in the fecundity of its fields.” Her spirit thus pervaded each aspect of the landscape and helped identify it as a part of Lorraine and France.

The members of the Ecole similarly linked their works to places and species of plants in Lorraine in order to establish a sense of regional identity, even if they did not always specifically extend this connection to Jeanne d’Arc. One of Jacques Gruber’s most famous pieces, for example, is a stained glass window called Paysage des Vosges [Fig. 2-15], showing pine trees and other conifers perched on a precipice in the wooded, mountainous département in the southern part of Lorraine; he often displayed the Paysage at exhibitions of his work. Critics repeatedly praised its depiction as an emblem of Lorraine and hailed its careful study of nature, as advised by

168 Hinzelin, Chez Jeanne d’Arc (Nancy: Berger-Levrault, 1904), 204.
Gallé in *Ecrits pour l’art*. Gruber created one copy that he installed in the villa of Victor Luc at 25, rue de Malzéville in Nancy, while the original eventually was acquired by the state.169

Often the Ecole’s artists referenced very specific locations in their choices of floral decoration. In 1893, Gallé created the table *Flore de Lorraine* that he sent to the Russian delegation at Paris on the occasion of the signing of the Franco-Russian alliance. The table’s marquetry includes a shield showing the Lorraine cross, upon which Gallé superimposed the motifs of myriad species of flowers associated with Lorraine towns, sometimes including their names inlaid in wood nearby; among these were the orchids symbolizing Pompey and Villey, the aquatic plant sagittaria representing Pont-à-Mousson, the eagle fern for Cirey, and the water lily found in the lakes around Gérardmer, in the Vosges. He even included floral motifs representing the annexed part of Lorraine: Metz is identified by the *Rosa gallica*. And, Jeanne d’Arc is implicitly represented by the tiger lily, which recalls her virginity and purity as well as her hometown of Domrémy.170 The presence of all of these motifs underline Gallé’s hopes that the cementing of the alliance would help France eventually recover the “lost provinces” and exact the long-awaited *revanche* against Germany.

Despite their obsession with floral decoration and nature, the members of the Ecole could not forget that Lorraine was a highly industrialized area, and the notion of landscape in their works also brings into play their exaltation of this development. Periodically, the *Revue Industrielle de l’Est*


would publish photos of the factories owned by members of the Ecole, such as the Majorelle furniture ateliers and the printing presses of Berger-Levrault [Fig. 2-17]. The Ecole frequently produced commemorative artwork for the industrialists in Lorraine; the Belgian Ernest Solvay, whose town house in Brussels was designed by Victor Horta, established a major soda-producing factory at Dombasle-sur-Meurthe, near Nancy, and became good friends with Gallé, Majorelle, and other local artists. In 1903, he commissioned Gallé to create two vases celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of his plant in Lorraine. The example now conserved at the Musée de l’Ecole de Nancy [Fig. 2-18] depicts the Solvay factories, with droplets and crystalline forms at the rim and base, respectively, that evoke the process of soda production and the raw material. The Ecole’s artists also celebrated their own industrial achievements. Around 1900, Auguste Herbst, Gallé’s craftsman who designed the Solvay vases, created an inlaid wooden panel depicting the Gallé factories, as well as furniture illustrating the activities of the company’s craftsmen and glassmakers [see Fig. 2-19]. The relationship between nature and industry, for the Ecole’s artists, never seemed to be contradictory or antagonistic. The natural world was used to celebrate industrial development (and vice versa), and the Ecole’s artists’ vision for this duality was one of harmonious coexistence.

171 The Nancy connections to Solvay also include Edouard Hannon (1853-1931), a Belgian who was the supervisor at Solvay’s Dombasle plant from 1877-83. Hannon, a photography enthusiast, commissioned Gallé and Majorelle for the lighting and furniture of his Art Nouveau villa in Brussels, designed by Jules Brunfaut in 1903. The house is now a museum and gallery dedicated to photography and Hannon’s connections with Art Nouveau. On this, see Marcel M. Celis, L’Hôtel Hannon (Brussels: Editions Contretype, 2003).

The Formation and Organization of the Ecole de Nancy

Industrialists were not the only important group to immigrate to the French part of Lorraine after 1870. The artistic communities of Alsace and northern Lorraine also left their native lands in droves. Théodore Devilly, the leading painter in Metz, left for Nancy, where he became a professor at the municipal Ecole des Beaux-Arts and trained several leading Nancy artists, including the future member of the Ecole de Nancy Emile Friant. The stained-glass artist Jacques Gruber’s family moved from Sundhouse in Alsace, where his grandfather had served as mayor, to Nancy, and the family of the woodworker Louis Hestaux left Metz for Nancy after the war. So many residents of Alsace-Lorraine left for France that in the mid-1870s one popular saying was that “Metz is no longer in Metz but in Nancy.”

By the 1890s, the artistic community in the French parts of Lorraine began to take a definitive shape. In the summer of 1894, the Nancy city councilman and architect Charles André organized, under the auspices of the Société Lorraine des Amis des Arts, an exposition on Lorraine decorative art at the Galéries Poirel in central Nancy. The program was straightforward, encouraging the collaborative work between artists and industrialists and their search for a new, modern, and specifically regional artistic style, which would aid France in the national struggle with other countries for superiority in artistic production. This private effort of Nancy’s artistic community predated, in many ways, the regional initiatives in Germany to reform and improve the decorative arts, which only took root under governmental direction in the latter half of the decade and after the turn of the new

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century. But in Germany, such advances took many forms and in many different places, such as the Darmstadt Artists’ Colony and various state-run applied arts schools in central, south, and western Germany and in Prussia, whereas in France, innovative decorative arts production was mostly confined to Paris and Nancy. Although the French may have taken the lead in terms of design reform in the early 1890s, their failure to organize such production further led the Germans to forge ahead a few years later.

The work displayed at the 1894 exposition in Nancy was not, however, revolutionary in a formal sense. Louis Majorelle, who would later go on to become one of the leading exponents of Art Nouveau, exhibited pastiches of Louis XV-style furniture [Fig. 2-20] recalling the region and nation’s Rococo heritage that was popular in Lorraine and in France generally in the 1890s. Eugène Vallin, who would soon become another leading figure of Nancy’s Art Nouveau, displayed furniture that echoed the restoration work on Gothic churches in which he had been trained and furniture from the British Arts & Crafts movement [Fig. 2-21].

Despite (or perhaps because of) its conservative tenor, critics were overwhelmingly positive in their evaluation of the exposition. They hailed it as a landmark event in the region’s artistic development, a “renaissance” that would add another chapter to Lorraine’s artistic heritage. Furthermore, they applauded the efforts of André and the rest of the organizing committee to present the region’s artists as a unique group within the French nation. They noted that the “unity of a great people does not exclude the variety of its elements. Unity, in a word, is not uniformity.” Reviewers called on all Lorrainers to resist the “prejudices, so often frivolous, of Paris.” The more that Lorraine artists took care to recognize their roots, they argued, the more

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success they would enjoy in the capital. The common goals set by the artists at the exposition led Octave Maus, the editor of the Belgian avant-garde journal L'Art Moderne, to dub them informally the “Nancy School,” while he noted that at Metz he saw “nothing but casernes.” No formal association of artists, however, would come about until after the International Exposition of 1900 in Paris, which galvanized them into action.

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The artistic identity of Nancy reached its pinnacle at the dawn of the new century. In February 1901, the glass artist and furniture maker Emile Gallé (1846-1904) joined, along with several other artists and architects, to found an organization called the Ecole de Nancy, alternatively called the Alliance Provinciale des Industries d'art. Their aims were diverse. First, they recognized that the high-quality crafts and decorative arts that were being produced by foreign industries were beginning to invade French markets. They therefore declared it their “patriotic duty” to form an organization to raise the quality of the output of French goods to prevent their “industrial strength” from being “gravely compromised.” It was telling that they named their organization an “alliance,” and not simply a “société,” implying that they had an almost military purpose. From the

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177 Maus, “En passant par la Lorraine...” L’Art Moderne 14, no. 37 (16 September 1894): 292-93. He had specifically visited Lorraine to see the exposition.

178 In English, the “School of Nancy,” and the “Provincial Alliance of Industries of Art.”

beginning, the members of the Ecole de Nancy saw themselves as part of a national effort to combat the decline of France’s status in applied arts, despite the fact that they were not overseen directly by a centralized Parisian bureaucracy. At the same time, however, they saw themselves as part of a movement towards “decentralization and general utility,” and as a furtherance of the tradition of applied arts in Lorraine that had been developing rapidly since the 1894 exposition of decorative arts in Nancy.¹⁸⁰

The founders of the Ecole de Nancy hoped to foster a collaborative effort among artists in diverse fields: glassmaking, furniture, ironwork, bookbinding, leatherworking, architecture, sculpture, tapestries, painting, among others. They aimed to ensure a uniform, high quality of work among artists in the Lorraine region. They claimed that Lorraine stood “at the head of the modern movement” because of its diverse artistic production, and they sought to preserve that status.¹⁸¹ By the use of the term “modern movement,” Lorraine artists showed that they were keenly aware of the popularity of Art Nouveau at the turn of the century and saw themselves as some of the most prominent advocates of the style. They favored Art Nouveau vocabulary for their work, and claimed “the return to nature, to the truth, to the national art” as their principles.¹⁸²

Despite these proud achievements, the members of the Ecole de Nancy recognized that some regional industries still lagged behind in quality and they lamented the “low status” accorded to manual workers in artistic fields and other professions. To combat these twin problems, they encouraged


¹⁸² Gallé, et al., Ecole de Nancy: Statuts, 1.
teaching of the applied arts through regular demonstrations and lectures by the group’s most prominent members and by sponsoring artistic contests open to the public and founding schools dedicated to teaching decorative art. The latter was a direct response to the writings of Marius Vachon on the state of French art education in the late 1890s. They hoped to complement such training programs by showing their own work at major expositions, publishing their methods and work, and founding a permanent museum of Lorraine decorative art, which would house their archives, their work, and a library.\textsuperscript{183}

\textit{Organization of the Ecole de Nancy}

At the first meeting of the Ecole de Nancy on 13 February 1901, the individuals assembled elected Gallé as president and named the furniture manufacturer and ironworker Louis Majorelle (1859-1926), the furniture designer and architect Eugène Vallin (1856-1922), and the glassmaker Antonin Daum (1864-1931) as vice-presidents [Fig. 2-22]. They then began the task of drafting its statutes. They also named thirty-six members (including the four officers above) to the “Executive Committee.”\textsuperscript{184} It is unclear exactly what privileges were enjoyed by members of the Executive Committee; although they most likely had some voice in the major decisions of the group. Other individuals could join the Ecole de Nancy, but would not have had any say in shaping policy.\textsuperscript{185}

The Executive Committee comprised the most talented and important

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 3-5. Also Nicolas, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{184} In the original, the “Comité-Directeur.”

\textsuperscript{185} Emile Gallé, Antonin Daum, Louis Majorelle, Eugène Vallin, et. al., to Monsieur and Madame Victor Georges, n.d. [ca. 1901] (Archives Départementales de Meurthe-et-Moselle, Nancy, 4\textdegree{} N II 65). This was a typed form-letter describing the goals of the \textit{Ecole de Nancy} to prospective members in order to encourage them to join the group.
names in the artistic, industrial, and academic communities in Nancy. Some of the thirty-six, such as Gallé, the brothers Antonin and Auguste Daum (1853-1909), heads of the Daum glassworks, and Louis Majorelle, were artists who were leaders of their own large enterprises, and some of the members, like Louis Hestaux (1858-1919) and Henri Bergé (1870-1937), worked for them. Others, such as Vallin, the stained glass artist Jacques Gruber (1870-1936), the painters Victor Prouvé (1858-1943) and Emile Friant (1863-1932), and the sculptor Ernest Bussière (1863-1913) were independent artists who usually worked alone. The Executive Committee also included many local leaders in publishing, such as Oscar Berger-Levrault (1826-1903), Albert Bergeret (1859-1932), and Paul Royer, the heads of printing firms that produced folios of artists’ works, monographs of regional interest, and postcards of all kinds. They were joined on the committee by journalists, such as the prominent art critics Emile Nicolas (1871-1940) and Emile Goutière-Vernolle (1855-1927), the editor of the local journal *La Lorraine-Artiste*, which kept a close eye on the Ecole de Nancy’s activities. A professor at the Université de Nancy and the conservator at the Musée Lorrain could also be found on the committee. Finally, committee members included several notable architects: Lucien Weissenburger (1860-1929); Emile André (1871-1933); his father Charles André (1841-1928); Paul Charbonnier (1865-1953), municipal architect; Charles-Désiré Bourgon (1855-1915), the départemental architect and president of the Société des Architectes de l’Est; and Henry Gutton (1874-1963).

The Ecole de Nancy was not the only such association in Europe. In Barcelona, the artists of La Nova Escola Catalana had worked in an informal

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186 All of them were listed in the original copy of the *Ecole de Nancy: Statuts*.
187 This was the regional chapter of professional architects from Lorraine who had graduated (received their *diplôme*) from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. It was founded in 1888.
collaborative environment since the late 1880s, and the artists and industrialists of the German Werkbund banded together in 1907. The Ecole de Nancy, like the Werkbund, was a formally chartered organization, with a set of principles and goals. Both the Werkbund and the Ecole de Nancy were founded for nationalistic purposes, attempting to coordinate their artists and industrialists in working toward artistic superiority. The Werkbund, however, was truly a national German organization, while the Ecole sought to create a unique, provincial strand of art. Its artists were largely unified by their devotion to an indigenous style, with individual artistic permutations, whereas a struggle between artistic individuality and the establishment of types was visible from the outset in the Werkbund, and this nearly tore it apart at the start of World War I. As a formal alliance of artists and industrialists, the Ecole can be seen as a forerunner of the Werkbund, but it was a smaller, more focused group of artists who were much more closely allied along philosophical lines.

The most direct inspiration for the Ecole de Nancy, however, may have been the Parisian group L’Art dans Tout, formed in 1896 and dissolved in 1901. The members of L’Art dans Tout, who never numbered more than eight at any one time, had very similar aims as the Ecole de Nancy, and their breakup was mostly due to the fact that they were unable to find funding from and agreement with industrialists to mass-produce their designs.\footnote{Froissart-Pezone, \textit{L’Art dans Tout}, 203-10.} (By contrast, the Ecole de Nancy incorporated a much larger and diverse membership, including industrialists, academics, and museum officials as well as the artists and architects.) The probable links between L’Art dans Tout and the members of the Ecole were numerous. The architect Henri Sauvage, for example, joined L’Art dans Tout in 1898, the same year that he received the commission from his friend Louis Majorelle for the Villa Jika,
the first Art Nouveau residence in Nancy. One of L’Art dans Tout’s founders, Charles Plumet, was from the tiny hamlet of Cirey-sur-Vezouze, in Nancy’s département of Meurthe-et-Moselle, and Emile Gallé specifically incorporated the motif of the eagle fern representing the town in his own furniture. Nancy architects knew Plumet’s work intimately and borrowed extensively from it, as we shall see. The principal founding members of the Ecole de Nancy—Gallé, Victor Prouvé, Majorelle, and Antonin Daum of the Daum Brothers glassworks—were in Paris frequently in the 1890s, and all of them sent examples of their work to the 1900 Exposition Universelle, where they received many positive reviews. The exposition was particularly important as the second Parisian World’s Fair to feature Art Nouveau as the dominant style of architecture, and rekindled the debate over the style and its connection to the continuing competition French decorative arts faced from other nations, a discourse to which Gallé was himself a main contributor. Though no communication between Nancy and Parisian artists has surfaced to confirm the influence of L’Art dans Tout on the formation of the Ecole, it seems highly likely that the Parisian group inspired, at least partially, Gallé and his cohorts to form their own regional association for the applied arts.

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Architects and the Ecole de Nancy

The relationship between the architects on the executive committee and the rest of the Ecole de Nancy was ambiguous but important. They were architects in an organization dedicated primarily to the decorative arts; however, the Ecole de Nancy, as evidenced in part by the diversity of its membership, emphasized the equal status of the various artistic activities of its members, as did artists in many of the other major European centers of Art Nouveau. Some architects on the Executive Committee of the Ecole de Nancy, such as Emile André, also clearly considered themselves decorative artists, as many earlier generations of French architects had, and presented entire ensembles of their Art Nouveau furniture designs at the group’s exhibitions. In this sense, the Ecole de Nancy did not embody a grand break from French artistic traditions, but rather both extended these continuities into modern production and recognized the similarities between their goals and those of foreign initiatives, hoping that such an effort would contribute to the revitalization of French art.

Because Nancy boasted many talented artists in all the fields of the applied arts and because the Ecole de Nancy, an organization which stressed collaboration and explicitly promoted Art Nouveau, it was extremely rare for an Art Nouveau building in Nancy or elsewhere in Lorraine to be designed solely by one architect. It was far more common for three or four (or more) associated artists to tackle the various tasks associated with the design and construction. For example, the architect of the Bergeret House, completed in the southern part of Nancy in 1904, was Lucien Weissenburger, but the stained glass work was finished by Jacques Gruber and Joseph Janin.

Eugène Vallin did most of the interior woodwork, and Louis Majorelle completed the ironwork for the balconies, stairway railings, and the gates over the front door and to the gardens. The collaboration of multiple craftsmen on a single project created a slightly less-unified finished product, but it also meant that a building would be a veritable *Gesamtkunstwerk*, revealing the full creativity of each designer in his specialty medium.

Art Nouveau was not the exclusive preserve of the architects and artists listed on the register of the Executive Committee, however. Other architects in the city used the style quite liberally, even if they were never counted among the group’s leaders. The father-and-son team of Félicien and Fernand César, for example, used the style quite liberally in their apartment house for the brewer Nicolas Kempf (1903), located on a large plaza near central Nancy called the Cours Léopold. Closer to the center of downtown, the architect Lois Déon used the style conservatively for the façade of the Arnoux-Masson Tailor Shop and Flandre Apartments that he completed in 1913 [see Fig. 2-40]. And Joseph Hornecker designed the Villa Marguerite, one of the principal Art Nouveau houses in the garden suburb of Nancy called the Parc de Saurupt, in 1903-04 [see Fig. 2-33]. None of these architects were listed on the Executive Committee of the Ecole or were considered among the leading designers to use Art Nouveau in Nancy. Thus the local influence of the Ecole and its strand of the style extended well beyond its formal membership.

**Parisian Art Nouveau vs. Nancy Art Nouveau**

Despite the fact that they both worked in the same style, the many differences between Parisian and Nancy Art Nouveau architects underscore the different ways in which each group conceived of its function within their respective artistic communities. Parisian Art Nouveau architects tended to be
much more innovative and daring; they were lucky enough to garner small circles of patrons despite never finishing their studies at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Having cleared that hurdle, they relied on a stream of commissions from loyal clients who strongly sympathized with their designs even if they did not appeal to a mass audience. Jourdain, for example, was retained as the house architect for Ernest Cognacq, the Samaritaine’s owner, making improvements to the store’s first location throughout the 1890s before being asked to design the new building in 1903; likewise, Guimard was called upon by the Nozal family for their mansion and an artist’s atelier in the sixteenth arrondissement, their tile and ceramic factories in Saint-Denis, and a country house in Normandy.\textsuperscript{192} This gave Parisian Art Nouveau architects freedom to pursue a more avant-garde, rationalist agenda in their designs. By contrast, only Lucien Weissenburger could be called the house architect for any family in Nancy, and it was only in Paris, where Henry Gutton built the Grand Bazar de la Rue de Rennes in 1906-07, that a Nancy architect attempted to construct anything as daring as an all-iron and glass façade.\textsuperscript{193}

As a result, Parisian Art Nouveau buildings tend to be much more abstract than those in Nancy, with much less legible imagery. Guimard’s own artistic credo of taking the plant, cutting off the flower and exploring the stem was antithetical to the expression of symbolism; the shieldlike forms of the Métro entrance balustrades and their red light globes that look like budding flowers reference no specific plant species. Likewise, the cloudlike curves and wispy tendrils of Schoellkopf’s buildings disclose no distinct


\textsuperscript{193} Weissenburger worked for the Corbin family, who hired him to build most of the branches of their department store chain, the Magasins Réunis, including their flagship store in Nancy. See Chapters 4 and 6 for more on Weissenburger’s work for them and Gutton’s work on the Grand Bazar in Paris.
message besides an exploration of the abstract properties of natural forms, a conclusion that is corroborated by his own words.\textsuperscript{194} The works of these Parisian designers suggest their desire to find a universal architectural language based on nature that was palatable to all viewers. Parisian Art Nouveau architects paid a price for their abstract daring, however. Both Guimard and Jourdain, who succeeded in making viewers stop and notice the differences between their work and conventional Haussmanian architecture, also had to accept the fact that many Parisians considered the twisted forms of Art Nouveau to be grotesque and ugly, and not harmonious with their traditional surroundings. Ultimately, many of their works suffered the fate of being destroyed or severely modified, and in some cases, such as Guimard’s Métro entrances at the Place d’Opéra, the installation of their commissioned works was refused amid public outcry.\textsuperscript{195}

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Nancy’s architects were aesthetically much more conservative than their Parisian brethren. In part this was because Nancy’s artistic climate rewarded those who worked within established cultural and political traditions, especially since the much smaller population of the city meant that there were fewer opportunities for commissions than in Paris. This situation required Nancy architects to align themselves with both national and regional institutions in order to garner widespread public support. The Ecole’s explicit regionalist philosophy quickly achieved virtually unanimous support in Lorraine, and aligned Art Nouveau, its official style, with the city’s cultural leaders.\textsuperscript{196} As such, all of the Art Nouveau architects in Nancy, even

\textsuperscript{194} See Chapter 1.

\textsuperscript{195} Clausen, \textit{Frantz Jourdain and the Samaritaine}, 186-88.

\textsuperscript{196} As stated in its statutes; see above.
those not listed on the executive committee of the Ecole, were staunch supporters of Gallé and the political and artistic tenets of the group.

Making and maintaining connections with the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was another common distinction of all of Nancy’s successful architects. After 1887, when Lucien Weissenburger became the first local architect to be diplômé by the French government, virtually every noteworthy architect in Lorraine—including every architect to work in Art Nouveau—would matriculate to and receive his diploma from the school. In 1888 the small number of graduates for the Ecole in Lorraine and surrounding areas founded their own regional chapter of the Société des Architectes des Beaux-Arts, the alumni association of the Ecole, which excluded most of the Art Nouveau architects in Paris (except for Frantz Jourdain) who had not received a diploma from it. Called the Société des Architectes de l’Est, this organization worked to improve the Lorraine architects’ reputations on both regional and national levels and naturally would have aligned itself with the conservative, classicist wing of the Ecole’s faculty. Their work soon paid off: in the summer of 1901, for example, they hosted the 29th Congress of Beaux-Arts Architects, the annual meeting of the Ecole’s alumni throughout France, which many of the leading architects in Paris attended and saw several Art Nouveau buildings that were then under construction in Nancy, giving them as well as the decorative artists of the Ecole de Nancy very favorable reviews.197 The distinction of being diplômé by the government added a mark of professionalism to Nancy’s architects’ resumes, as many of them already came from families of architects.198 The support of the national architectural establishment thus lent credibility to provincial designers who wished to

secure commissions from a wide range of local and Parisian patrons. Furthermore, such encouraging press coverage from their Parisian brethren gave formal approval to the style Nancy architects used.

On an artistic level, the designs of Nancy’s architects reflected their dual alignment between their region and the capital. Art Nouveau buildings in Nancy tend to use the plastic, legible floral imagery resembling the symbolic forms favored by Gallé, Majorelle, and other artists of the Ecole de Nancy; this ornament is needed on their buildings in order for the regionalist themes to be understood by the local population. Likewise, Art Nouveau ornament in Nancy is more naturalistic and less stylized or abstracted than the decoration preferred by their Parisian Art Nouveau counterparts, which rarely has any indexical political message. The constructive aspects of Nancy’s architecture likewise made use of the prodigious modern technology available in Lorraine—iron, steel, and reinforced concrete, as well as the latest developments in décor such as stained glass. Yet the city’s architects cloaked these innovations with more traditional ashlar façades that used the Euville limestone already common to most buildings in Nancy. In this sense Nancy’s architects resembled more the conservative classicists at the Ecole such as Guadet (who advocated the use of modern technology at the discretion of the architect) than Viollet-le-Duc and Jourdain, who supported the frankly visible use of iron and modern materials as part of the structure for its own sake. It is not surprising, therefore, that most of the Art Nouveau buildings constructed in Nancy, which attempted to fit into a civic tradition, have survived and have served for decades as a major part of the city’s cultural heritage and identity, whereas a large percentage of Parisian Art Nouveau buildings have been destroyed and only recently been protected by the municipal and national governments.
The Architects of Nancy

The Art Nouveau architects in Nancy were a diverse lot, but they were at least united in the manner and place that they were trained, as well as their cooperation with the city’s decorative artists. They maintained a close-knit architectural community both professionally and personally, as many of them collaborated with one another on buildings, even if they were not in a formal partnership, and often spent their leisure time together and with other members of the Ecole de Nancy. Unlike Paris, where such a community remained fractured and sometimes contentious, the fraternal-like aspects of Nancy’s architectural circles helped ensure the growth of the profession throughout the region.

Lucien Weissenburger (1860-1929) was the most accomplished of Nancy’s architects between 1890 and 1914, and the one whose work exemplified most the Art Nouveau architecture of the region [Fig. 2-23]. A Nancy native, he trained in the ateliers of Jules André and then Victor Laloux at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, setting a precedent in this choice that would be followed by most of Nancy’s Art Nouveau architects. He distinguished himself in Paris by winning 400 francs for the second-place prize in the Prix Rougevin, an annual competition on “ornament and adjustment” in the design for a particular building type. Upon receiving his diploma in 1887—the first in Nancy to do so—he immediately became a highly sought-after designer in Lorraine. Within a year he had been hired by the ambitious merchant Antoine Corbin to build the new flagship location of his Magasins Réunis department store in the center of Nancy, thus becoming the unofficial house architect for the Antoine and his family for the next

quarter-century. Building on this success, Weissenburger would go on to design a huge number of buildings of nearly every conceivable type for a variety of clients all over Lorraine and neighboring regions before the First World War, from small cafés to hospitals, apartment houses, theaters, town houses, hotels, factories, low-cost workers’ housing, and even funerary monuments. He was very much respected by his colleagues and well-liked by those he trained: “a master in every sense of the word; an expert teacher who did great things and left brilliant students.” For his efforts, he was regarded in Nancy as a pioneer who “blazed with success the virgin trails that were traced at the beginning of the twentieth century by the school of Lorraine art [i.e., the Ecole de Nancy], and, towards this ideal, every day he added to his circle of admirers.”

Weissenburger was successful in part because he was extremely versatile. He did not work exclusively in Art Nouveau, but many of his buildings include some sort of Art Nouveau details such as floral moldings or symbolic motifs, and his own personal affinity for it can be attested by the fact that most important private buildings—including his own house—use the style. Weissenburger became especially proficient in Art Nouveau between 1899 and 1905, but then slowly receded into a classicism reminiscent of his earliest work from the 1890s—monumental, sedate structures with balanced façades. He did not wholly abandon Art Nouveau, however, frequently reprising his earlier mastery of the style when the occasion


201 See the Liste des Principaux Travaux Exécutés Sous la Direction de Monsieur Lucien Weissenburger, Architecte Diplomé par le Gouvernment à Nancy (de 1888 à 1915). Typed manuscript, 32 pp., n.d. (ca. 1915) (Centre de Documentation, Musée de l’Ecole de Nancy, Nancy).

demanded, particularly when he was working with prominent decorative artists of the Ecole de Nancy.\textsuperscript{203}

Much like Guadet and Laloux, Weissenburger was committed to the principle of designing a building according to the needs of the client; for him, the materials’ tectonic aspects were of secondary importance. From Laloux, Weissenburger learned the value of iconographic motifs,\textsuperscript{204} and by studding several of his buildings with imagery of the monnaie-du-pape and thistles as well as the Lorraine cross he became well-known for his exploration of regionalism. Weissenburger also frequently took excursions with his friends like Louis Majorelle and the architect Pierre le Bourgeois into the nearby countryside, especially Alsace, to explore regional architecture, and the results of these researches were echoed in his residential work. His respected status in the architectural community in eastern France was underscored by his service for two decades as treasurer of the Société des Architectes de l’Est, finally becoming its president in 1921.\textsuperscript{205}

Weissenburger’s nephew, Alexandre Mienville (1876-1959), followed him to Laloux’s atelier. He, however, was much less prolific than his uncle, and struggled to establish his personal style, especially since his known designs from before the First World War were done in collaboration with another architect. After obtaining his diplôme in 1904, he worked with Eugène Vallin on the interiors for the 1904 Exposition of the Ecole de Nancy at the Galéries Poirel in central Nancy [see Fig. 2-35], when Art Nouveau in Nancy was at its height. Their design reflects Vallin’s preferences for wide,

\textsuperscript{203} See Chapters 4 and 5 for more on Weissenburger’s late work.

\textsuperscript{204} Laloux was well-known for this aspect of his work, especially at the Gare d’Orsay in Paris, finished in time for the Exposition Universelle of 1900. See Clendenin, \textit{op. cit.}, 80-88.

sinuous moldings and frames that resembled the trunks of trees. From then on, his work became increasingly classicist, first turning to inspiration both from the Rococo and the buildings of Laloux for two pavilions at the Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France, and later towards a more geometric, Wagneresque vein with his uncle, Weissenburger, on the Brasserie Excelsior/ Hôtel Angeleterre in central Nancy in 1911.

Mienville designed the 1909 exposition pavilions with another Laloux student, Léon Cayotte, who, like him, received his diploma from the Ecole in 1904 and preferred an extremely conservative, classicized version of Art Nouveau, marked by legible, naturalistic ornament. Cayotte completed few Art Nouveau structures, the most notable of which was his 1907 villa for the barrel manufacturer and member of the Ecole de Nancy, Adolph Frühinsholz [Fig. 2-24]. Set on the edge of a garden suburb called the Parc de Saurupt, this house is austere in its use of sparsely-adorned volumes but includes mosaics and stained glass that connect it to the natural surroundings and remind one of the floral species of Frühinsholz’s native Alsace.

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The only architect in Nancy who could match Weissenburger in terms of the uniqueness of his antebellum work was Emile André (1871-1933) [Fig. 2-25], son of the Nancy architect Charles André. Emile received a travel grant from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts upon graduation in 1898, which enabled him to take a sojourn to Tunisia, the Middle East, and Ceylon over the next two years with his classmate, Gaston Munier, where he produced several watercolors of his surroundings. André also matriculated to Laloux’s atelier at the Ecole, and after he returned to Nancy in 1900 he briefly worked with his father and Eugène Vallin. The next year he formed a brief partnership

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206 Delaire, *op. cit.*, 207.
with another young graduate of the Ecole, Henry Gutton, then variously collaborated with Munier and later Paul Charbonnier later in the first decade of the century.\(^{207}\)

André was a committed regionalist, more so than any other architect in Lorraine. As we will see, he became known for experimenting liberally with regional, rural, nearly vernacular aesthetics into his houses, especially rusticated millstone, half-timbering, and wide overhanging eaves for smaller villas and cottages in the garden suburb called the Parc de Saurupt, design choices which inspired several other architects in Nancy to follow suit.\(^{208}\) Paradoxically, he was also the architect in Nancy who was most interested in incorporating foreign ideas into his work. André’s extensive library included not only French periodicals like *L’Art Décoratif, Documents d’Architecture Moderne*, and *Art et Décoration* as well as regional titles such as *Art et Industrie* (published by Jean-Baptiste Corbin, head of the Magasins Réunis) and the *Revue Lorraine Illustrée*, but also German titles such as *Architektur, Moderne Bauformen*, and *Innen Dekoration*, British journals like *The Artist* and *Architectural Review*, and even the short-lived Belgian Arts and Crafts periodical *Le Cottage*.\(^{209}\) André studied these magazines extensively, later incorporating some ideas from them into his designs, especially those of his fellow Lorrainer Charles Plumet in Paris, and even adapted medieval German forms in his monumental commissions, such as the Renauld Bank in

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\(^{208}\) See Chapter 3 for more on these.

\(^{209}\) See the *Liste des ouvrages donnés par Jean-Luc André le 7 août 2002* and the *Liste des ouvrages donnés par Jean-Luc André le 10 septembre 2002*, catalogs of the contents of André’s library given to the Musée de l’Ecole de Nancy by his grandson, the architect Jean-Lue André (Centre de Documentation of the Musée de l’Ecole de Nancy, Nancy).
downtown Nancy, finished in 1910. His method was very much aligned with César Daly’s project in the *Revue Générale* of assembling a collection of rural motifs to enrich the cosmopolitan sensibilities of French architects. In this respect, he may have been the real-life embodiment of Daly’s dreams.

* * *

Georges Biet (1869-1955) graduated from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1896, also having studied under Laloux [Fig. 2-26]. Biet was a complex character; he was known to have disdained what he called the stodginess of his education: on at least one occasion he referred to the Ecole’s emphasis on classicism as the “only conventional” way to design because it was needed “to keep the Ecole’s curriculum within the rigidity of the professional structure necessary to maintain its traditional authority.” On the other hand, Biet excelled under Laloux’s tutelage, winning several medals for his work as well as support from the city of Nancy for his studies. On another occasion he reported having enjoyed the “absolute academic freedom of the Ecole” and the many fond memories of his youthful extracurricular activities in Paris. Biet was known as a bon vivant who spent time with his family and always seemed to carry a large cigar. He showed a personal fondness for nature and enjoyed long walks through the Lorraine countryside west of Nancy. He also cultivated a close professional relationship with architects in and around Nancy, becoming the longtime archivist for the Société des Architectes de l’Est soon after he joined it in 1896. Biet’s penchant for history was borne out

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210 See chapter 4 for more on this structure.

211 Claudine Lehn, “Georges Biet, un architecte nancéien au début du XXème siècle” (Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Nancy 2, 1995), 18-19.

212 Letter from Georges Biet to Bernard Biet, 9 April 1952 (Personal archives of Bernard Biet); quoted in Lehn, *op. cit.*, 32.

213 Lehn, *op. cit.*, 24-32.
in his work, too, as the buildings of his career show that he struggled to find a way to break formally from the conventions learned at the Ecole. Nonetheless, Biet became a pioneer in reinforced concrete construction, using it in his own house, an asymmetrical Art Nouveau apartment property adorned with Gothic-inspired details like crockets and naturalistic branch-like moldings built between 1901-03 in central Nancy. He disguised the structure with ashlar so well, however, that the technique was not discovered until his house was half-destroyed by a German air raid in October 1917.

Biet designed many of his early buildings with Eugène Vallin (1856-1922), who was not trained as an architect, but as a restorer of Gothic ecclesiastical furniture by his uncle. Vallin, who made his name designing and manufacturing his own Art Nouveau furniture in a large workshop, was very much a rationalist, twisting and distorting the details Biet’s classical framework into something more in line with the forms of Hector Guimard. At least one writer has declared that Vallin was “haunted by architecture,” proving to be a much more capable interior designer and woodworker than an architect, as he struggled to develop a consistent personal style in his buildings. For Nancy’s 1909 Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France, Vallin produced, on the one hand, a modest, classically-inspired reinforced concrete pavilion for the Ecole de Nancy and a brilliant rationalism-inspired essay in wood and plaster for the fair’s Pavilion of Mines and Metallurgy. After that he gave up architecture altogether.

Laloux trained six other Art Nouveau architects from Nancy, most of whom demonstrate very strong preferences for an underlying classicism in

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214 Delaire, op. cit., 181; also see Lehn, ibid.
216 See Chapter 5 for the buildings of the Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France.
their work, thereby giving much of the city’s Art Nouveau its conservative character. Paul Charbonnier (1865-1953) was the most notable of these designers, who like Weissenburger was a student of both Laloux and Jules André. Charbonnier’s time at the Ecole, with its emphasis on composition, instilled in him a love of drawing, an activity that he continued in his spare time along with fishing.\textsuperscript{217} In 1900 he became the official Architect of Historic Monuments for the \textit{département} of Meurthe-et-Moselle, no doubt in part because of his affinity for historical forms. His own house at 8, boulevard Albert I\textsuperscript{er} in Nancy is an asymmetrical yet reserved structure ornamented by a few stiff Gothic motifs, such as thin spires with crockets and flattened chancel windows that betray his own personal aesthetic preferences.\textsuperscript{218}

Laloux’s influence on Charbonnier can probably best be seen in the latter’s Maison du Peuple in Nancy (1901-02) [Fig. 2-28], which in both its façade and plan draws heavily on Laloux’s Gare de Tours (1895-98) [Fig. 2-29]—an appropriate resemblance, given the purpose of the Maison du Peuple as a fraternal club for industrial workers. In plan, Charbonnier’s Maison du Peuple is organized around a great rectangular assembly hall at the rear, much like the space where a train shed would cover the stub-end tracks at a terminal railway station. The entrance of the Maison du Peuple, whose great glazed arch under a pediment recalls half of the façade of the Tours train station, leads into a hallway and vestibule that opens into offices for the secretariat and concierge, much like the offices for the railway company would be located inside the headhouse. Finally, the auxiliary spaces of a library, classrooms, and artists’ studios were located on the wings of the

\textsuperscript{217} Paul-Daniel Gérard, grandson of Paul Charbonnier, to Peter Clericuzio, 20 June 2010.

\textsuperscript{218} Delaire, \textit{op. cit.}, 210. Charbonnier’s appointment to the post of Architect of Historic Monuments is noted in G.S., “L’Exposition de la Maison d’Art Lorraine,” in \textit{La Lorraine Artisti}e 18, no. 10 (1 December 1900): 159. His grandson, Paul-Daniel Gérard, still occupies the house.
structure much like the ticket windows might be in a train station. Like Laloux’s Gare de Tours and the Gare d’Orsay [Fig. 2-30], the building’s heavy, sturdy façade is emphasized with blocky horizontal bands of masonry, though here they are interspersed with courses of brick.

The Art Nouveau aspects of the Maison du Peuple also connect to the industrial themes. They include Victor Prouvé’s two façade sculptures: *Free Thought*, an ethereal female figure shrouded in amorphous cloudlike forms that crowns the central arched window, and a seated ironworker over the door, who symbolizes the triumph of human exertion over the brutal, raw material. Inside, Vallin’s sinuous moldings and oak leaf motifs, symbols of longevity, adorn the vestibule. Charbonnier, who was diplômé from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts the same year that Laloux began work on the Gare de Tours, seems to have known his teacher’s commission well and used it as inspiration for his work in Nancy a half-decade later. In his other Art Nouveau buildings in Nancy, Charbonnier predictably treated the style as a mere veneer for a classically-balanced structure.

Lucien Bentz (1866-?) was the best-trained Art Nouveau architect in Nancy, having studied in Châlons-sur-Marne at the local Ecole des Arts et Métiers, the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufacture in Paris, and later, as an engineer at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts under Laloux and Jules André. As with Charbonnier, his affinity for classicism—in this case, a French Renaissance strain—is quite easily visible in his Art Nouveau work, which frequently features deeply carved masonry and symbolic floral motifs.

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219 This is the case in, for example, the Gare de Lyon in Paris, finished in 1900.
221 Renamed Châlons-en-Champagne in 1998; it is located 150 km west of Nancy and 165 km east of Paris.
222 Roussel, *Nancy Architecture 1900*, 2:44.
Occasionally, he would introduce a few Arts and Crafts features into his designs, but these were usually clumsily attached, but by 1914 he had abandoned the new style in favor of a heavy Baroque aesthetic.

The duo of Emile Toussaint (1872-1914) and Louis Marchal (1879-1954) collaborated on every project in their office until Toussaint was killed in the first few weeks of World War I. Both Laloux students, they tended to favor a Rococo-inspired classicism that served them well, as it fit into both the regionalist and nationalist revivals of the style that simultaneously had arisen in Nancy and Paris at the turn of the century. It can be seen in their best works, such as the pavilions designed for the Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France in 1909 as well as their Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Meurthe-et-Moselle (1905-08), the headquarters of the city’s association of business and industry and the Art Nouveau structure in Nancy that most nearly approximates an official government building.

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A final student of Laloux, Henry Gutton (1874-1963), ironically was the sole Nancy pupil of his who did not follow in his footsteps. Instead, Gutton, the nephew of Henri Gutton (1851-1933), a prominent engineer in Nancy who had trained at the Ecole Polytechnique and was well-versed in iron construction, was much more of a disciple of rationalism. In 1901-02, the Guttons collaborated on the Genin-Louis Grain Shop in central Nancy, the first building in the city with an all-iron-and-glass façade [Fig. 2-31]. Soon afterwards the two parted ways for unknown reasons, and Gutton joined Emile André to plan and manage the Parc de Saurupt garden suburb in the southwest part of town, the aim of which was to encourage the avant-garde

\[223\] Delaire, op. cit., 338-39, and 415.

\[224\] See Chapter 5.

\[225\] See Chapter 4 for more on this building.
experimentation in cottage-like, picturesque and avant-garde domestic architecture. When the venture failed, Gutton moved to Paris, where he designed the Grand Bazar de la Rue de Rennes, an all-steel-and-glass façade department store for Jean-Baptiste Corbin, the owner of the Magasins Réunis, in 1906-07; he then gave up architecture to become its manager.\textsuperscript{226}

Around the time Henry left his uncle's practice, the elder Gutton hired a young architect named Joseph Hornecker (1873-1942) [Fig. 2-32], and the two of them collaborated on several Art Nouveau buildings together in Nancy and around Lorraine, though increasingly these seem to be designed mostly by Hornecker.\textsuperscript{227} Gutton retired in 1906, and Hornecker, who had studied at the École des Beaux-Arts under Jean-Louis Pascal but left in 1901 without a degree, took over the firm. Pascal, who had also trained Henri Sauvage, had been interested in regionalist forms but never clearly aligned himself with either the rationalists or classicists. It seems the former interested the Strasbourg-born Hornecker, who struggled throughout his career to find a balance between classicism, regionalism, and a Viollet- or Horta-inspired rationalism so as to develop a mature personal style. Hornecker's various designs (some with Henri Gutton) for apartment houses, department stores, and private residences, as well as the reconstructed theater of Nancy, show his great versatility, but also an occasional clumsiness in the odd juxtaposition of volumes and elements such as windows, doorways, and decorative motifs [Fig. 2-33]. The most unified structures that Hornecker designed show the rationalism favored by Gutton and, in the case of the Hôtel de Ville at Euville (see Chapter 6), a definite medieval character that was

\textsuperscript{226} Delaire, \textit{op. cit.}, 287; Roussel, \textit{Nancy Architecture 1900}, 1:RR. See Chapter 6 for more on the Grand Bazar in Paris.

\textsuperscript{227} For more on Hornecker, see Vincent Bradel, et. al., \textit{Joseph Hornecker : architecte à Nancy, 1873-1942} (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy/Archives Modernes d'Architecture Lorraine, 1989).
likely due to the one-time collaboration of the two men with Eugène Vallin.

**History of the Ecole de Nancy, 1901-1914**

Both the Art Nouveau architects of Nancy and the decorative artists of the Ecole de Nancy enjoyed support among a core group of local elites, most of whom themselves were wealthy businessmen, prominent civic leaders, notable writers, or artists, and many of them were related to members of the Ecole de Nancy. Many of these elites were also émigrés from Alsace-Lorraine, and felt a keen sense of attachment to their native soil as well as their adopted home of French Lorraine. Their continued support allowed the Nancy’s Art Nouveau to remain vibrant through the start of the First World War. Nonetheless, the story of the Ecole de Nancy is not one of constant, unmitigated success. Despite the fact that the group wanted to establish a permanent museum, library, archives, publications, and school specifically for applied art, they were unable to achieve most of these goals. Some of them, such as the museum, only came into existence much later, due to the generosity (or arrogance) of one of its members and patrons, Jean-Baptiste (“Eugène”) Corbin (1867-1952), son of the founder of the Magasins Réunis department store chain, which was based in Nancy.228 By 1909 the group was substantially different than that which it had projected to be in 1901. Its history can largely be traced through a series of exhibitions held during the first decade of the twentieth century, and then its diversification in the five years immediately preceding the First World War.

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Turin 1902

One of the first major opportunities for the Ecole de Nancy came very soon after the group was founded. At one of the first meetings of the Ecole in 1901, Gallé reminded his audience about the debate over the Art Nouveau as a French "national style" and the allegations that foreigners were taking the lead in European artistic production. He then announced that the Ecole de Nancy would "carry the French flag of decorative art," and exhibit its work for the first time internationally, at the First International Exposition of Modern Decorative Art in Turin in 1902. Over the succeeding months, Gallé worked diligently to organize the group's plans for a pavilion and set of works to be displayed. As noted, Emile André produced six different designs for the entrance gate for the pavilion, all of which bear a striking resemblance to familiar iconographical choices by the artists of the Ecole de Nancy [Fig. 2-34]. Many of André's watercolors show his preference for the thistle, the regional and civic symbol, and a few recall the leaves of the ginkgo tree, which had been introduced to France in 1771 and is known for its great resistance to the elements, providing a fitting counterpart to the prickly thistle. Gallé's tasks became somewhat difficult on short notice; Albert Bergeret, the postcard manufacturer, told Gallé that he was not prepared to send any good examples of his firm's work, but he sent 100 francs nevertheless to fund the other members who would go.231 Gallé learned from

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René Lalique in January 1902, however, that the French government had decided not to provide a subvention to artists to exhibit at Turin. The Ecole asked the city of Nancy for 3,000 francs, but the municipal council only voted them a 1,500-franc subvention, which the group decided was insufficient to send anyone, and so returned the money.

Gallé bitterly projected that Siegfried Bing would rejoice upon hearing that the products of his own workshops would be the only representatives of France in Turin, and complained that the exposition would be “a morass of pillaging copies,” where the stage would be dominated by the Germans, Austrians, and Italians. He was disappointed that the Ecole de Nancy would not be seen as the representative of the best of French applied arts and that France would lose ground to other nations in competition for superiority in decorative arts production. Thus the Ecole lost its best chance to exhibit its work on an international stage, and its failure to attend the Turin Exposition marks a major turning point in its history, even as soon as it came after the group’s founding.

Paris 1903 and Nancy 1904

The Ecole achieved its initial widespread attention in two exhibitions held about a year and a half apart. In March 1903, the group was chosen by the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs to exhibit at the Marsan Pavilion in

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234 Gallé to Roger Marx, 26 January 1902; transcribed in Charpentier, op. cit.
Paris, while in September 1904, the Société Lorraine des Amis des Arts invited them to show their work at the Galéries Poirel in central Nancy, the same galleries where the 1894 Exposition of Lorraine Decorative and Industrial Art had taken place.

After the complications with the projected trip to Turin, the Paris exhibition was designed to introduce the world outside Lorraine to the École’s work and purpose, and, supported by a subvention from the city of Nancy, twenty-three members of the École joined to exhibit in the capital. As the catalogues to the exhibition stated, their goal was “to search for the natural documents of methods, elements and proper character to create a modern style of decoration...for objects and modern uses.” This could be contrasted with the imposed, “incoherent and bizarre modern style” because it relied on a certain principled logic that was in keeping with the tradition of French art, but freed from drawing on past styles. But if Gallé’s official framing of the exposition was in nationalistic terms, many of his published colleagues were more frank in revealing the exposition’s real decentralizing message. Emile Nicolas, the journalist on the Executive Committee, proudly declared that

It is good that Lorraine decorative art, with all its suggestions, again reminds Paris that it is one of those places that contains the deepest thought, logic, and truth...[since] in the great city...they have the haughtiness of dictating to the provinces fashions and tastes. The province is carefully pushed aside, especially when it shows its strong personality. It is only through the talent of our fellow citizens that we can claim and they can recognize our influence on the regeneration of the arts in France at the end of the nineteenth century.

235 Conseil Municipal de Nancy, Procès-Verbaux du Délibérations du Conseil, 1903 (Nancy, 1903), 77-8; 83-4.
236 Emile Gallé, “Programme de l’École de Nancy,” in Exposition de l’Alliance Provinciale de Industries d’Art/École de Nancy, Mars 1903 – Catalogue Officiel Illustré, 3-5; and idem., L’Exposition de l’École de Nancy à Paris (Paris: A. Guerinet, 1903), [1-2] (n.p.).
Likewise, Roger Marx, the Nancy native who was now the Inspector-General of Museums, praised the Ecole and Gallé, its “master,” in particular, for their independent work, arguing that “Paris could learn how a province [can] provide an example of a special decorative renaissance.” And despite Gallé’s wish to distance the Ecole’s work from Art Nouveau in general, the editor of the Bulletin des Sociétés Artistiques de l’Est claimed that the Nancy’s group’s “method of immediate originality,” really was the Art Nouveau that other artists had been searching for all along.

The overall reception for the Ecole in the capital, however, was mixed. As the critic for Meier-Graefe’s L’Art décoratif argued, the inspirations for the artists of the Ecole came from farther afield than just the observation of flora in Lorraine; their art had become the product of exchanges between Lorraine and other centers. In fact, he claimed, their art was the product of increasing centralization, meaning that people from diverse places were merely sharing more common experiences. Others argued that the exposition merely showcased the luxury Art Nouveau pieces from Nancy department stores as a purely commercial ploy, not the fruit of the previous decade of serious artistic development in Nancy, as the Ecole and its supporters claimed. Despite their best efforts, the group had failed to unanimously impress the Parisian audience whose support it craved.

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239 “Chronique des Arts,” postscript to Marx, ibid., 65.


The sentiment for the exposition of the Ecole in Nancy in the autumn of 1904, however, was far more positive. The entire Galéries Poirel in Nancy was outfitted with a Eugène Vallin/Alexandre Mienville-designed interior, with individual booths for the exposants [Fig. 2-35], and described by one reviewer as “a marvel of Art Nouveau, reuniting the collaboration of our best artists, architects, painters, and sculptors... everywhere breathes the Lorraine inspiration.”242 He hailed the show as “unique, [one] which you cannot find in Paris or elsewhere,” and promised that it would require several visits to “best understand and assimilate this truly new art.”243

The artists who participated in the Nancy exposition were very similar to those who had sent works to Paris the year before; even the architects Emile André (who had sent drawings and furniture to Paris) and Lucien Weissenburger (who had not) mounted their own architectural displays. André’s was particularly impressive, including a few models in addition to his drawings, many of which came from his work on houses in the Parc de Saurupt, the gated garden community in Nancy that he, Weissenburger and others had planned and begun building three years before [Fig. 2-36]. The exposition had a similar aim as the Ecole’s 1903 Paris show: to demonstrate the achievements of the provincial art industries over the previous decade (since the 1894 Nancy Exposition), as well as the benefits of collaborative efforts of artists to create a unitary ensemble, based on the scientific observations of natural forms as practiced by Gallé. His 1892 portrait by Prouvé hung in the center of the gallery, a reminder of the shadow that Gallé cast upon the group despite the skill and talent of the other members.244

242 The exposition ran from 15 October to 30 November 1904.
244 “L’exposition d’art décoratif,” in L’Impartial de l’Est, ibid.; and See Edouard Bour,
The success of the 1904 exposition for the Ecole was remarkable in part due to the fact that Emile Gallé died in the midst of the preparation for it, on 23 September, after a long battle with leukemia. Ironically, this may have given the exposition a boost of publicity, as over the following several months, numerous obituaries and memorials appeared in newspapers and art publications in France and abroad commemorating Gallé’s life and work. Roger Marx gave a lecture on Gallé’s life at the end of October during the exhibition, praising him for his artistic genius and contributions to French and Lorraine culture. The show’s success could also be explained both by the fact that it received little coverage from Paris itself and by the choice of the writers covering it to abstain from directly trumpeting the Ecole’s efforts at decentralization. Emile Nicolas, who had questioned the capital’s dominance in artistic fashions, now deferred to the remarks of Henri Marcel (1854-1926), the central government’s new Directeur des Beaux-Arts, at the opening of the exhibition. Marcel called the decentralizing programs of Nancy, first proposed during the Second Empire, a “half-success” that Gallé’s Ecole de Nancy had shrugged off in favor of a new “provincial


246 Neither I nor any other scholar researching the Ecole de Nancy has discovered any critical reviews of the exhibition by Parisian publications or writers.

247 See Chapter 1 on this.
patriotism,” which, “far from enfeebling French nationality... multiplies its force of influence and propaganda, [just as] the vitality of a country resides in the vigor and cohesion of groups that compose it.”\(^{248}\) As Nicolas stated, “Mr. Marcel could not have formulated better the program that we defend and propagate.” Perhaps as “proof” of this nationalistic pride, he cited Victor Prouvé’s allegorical painting, *Reunion de la Lorraine à la France*, painted on the ceiling of the large auditorium of the Préfecture in Nancy, celebrating the region’s devotion to the nation since its annexation in 1766.\(^{249}\)

The Shift in Direction, 1905-09

Obviously, the loss of its vocal and charismatic leader was a traumatic blow to the Ecole, and in December 1904 its members elected Victor Prouvé, the painter, bookbinder, and sculptor, to head the group. The choice of Prouvé was significant in that he, unlike Gallé, was not head of his own industrial firm, but a solitary artist; incidentally, while he had served before on the Executive Committee, he had not been a vice-president of the group like Antonin Daum, Majorelle, or Vallin. At the same time, the Ecole drew up a revised set of statutes under which it would operate for the remainder of its existence, which substantially shrank the Executive Committee and altered its composition. Beginning in January 1905, the new Executive Committee counted twelve members, only two of which—Charles André and Eugène Vallin—could even claim to be architects; the rest of the committee consisted of decorative artists—only two of whom, Louis Majorelle and Antonin Daum, ran industrial enterprises (each of the rest ran a simple craftsman’s studio)—

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\(^{248}\) His remarks were printed in “Dicours de M. Marcel, Directeur des Beaux-Arts,” in *L’Impartial de l’Est* 66, no. 3507 (31 October 1904): 2.

two painters, and two journalists. Gone from the board were the city’s main industrial magnates, university and museum employees, and most of the architects. The Committee, however, was elected from the ranks of the members known as the Sociétariat, all of whom were artistic leaders of the region, and it was the Sociétariat members who were involved with policy-making decisions. (They thus seem to have constituted an enlarged version of the Executive Committee without formally carrying the “Committee Member” title.) Below the Sociétariat were members known variously as Adhérents, Donateurs, and Assistants, based on different membership dues, but none of them had input as to the group’s direction.250

By this time, the group had noticed the efforts being put forward in other countries, especially Germany under Hermann Muthesius and other individual states’ officials, towards the creation of applied arts education and the training of professionals in the industrial arts. The 1905 statutes of the Ecole thus declared the education of applied arts workers in the region to be one of its main goals, in accord with a style of its time that was based on scientific observation of the natural world. It reaffirmed its commitment to decentralization and private initiative, as opposed to state direction, and it hoped to create a journal, the *Cahiers de l’Ecole de Nancy*, that would diffuse its ideas to the general public.251

During this period the Ecole began to undertake its educational mission by sponsoring public art competitions, especially those dedicated to

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250 Victor Prouvé, et. al. *Alliance Provinciale des Industries d’Art/Ecole de Nancy* (Nancy: Établissements Albert Barbier, 1905) (Archives Départementales de Meurthe-et-Moselle 4° N II 65 bis). This is a form-letter for prospective adherents of the Ecole, dated 5 January 1905. Also see Prouvé, et. al., *Alliance Provinciale des Industries d’Art/Ecole de Nancy: Statuts* (Nancy: Établissements Albert Barbier, 1905), 5-15. I know of no extant list of the members on the Sociétariat, so it is impossible to know the true scope of which members were the most actively involved with the group’s policies.

251 Prouvé, et. al., *Alliance Provinciale des Industries d’Art/Ecole de Nancy: Statuts*, 1-3, 12.
embroidery, as well as the creation of its own school of decorative art, a project that never came to fruition.\textsuperscript{252} Its orientation towards these activities, and the new composition of the Executive Committee, seemed to signal a favoritism of individual, luxury craftsmanship as opposed to a more mass-produced, mechanized approach to applied art, as well as a turn away from architecture in general. But in the spring of 1908, the \textit{Ecole} organized an exposition in Strasbourg, in an effort to strengthen the ties between French Lorraine and the lost provinces,\textsuperscript{253} as implied by the poster that Victor Prouvé designed for the exhibition, featuring a girl representing French Lorraine offering an apron full of roses as a gift to a traditional Alsatian girl against a backdrop of the skyline of Strasbourg [Fig. 2-37]. In the exhibition, critics noted that the Ecole seemed to be abandoning traditions of French art that it had previously indulged in, such as the marriage of Rococo and Gothic forms, as well as the close observation of nature as Gallé had preached. Instead, their furniture seemed to be turning to a more rigid, simplified, even architectural aesthetic, more reminiscent of the German developments à la Behrens, Olbrich, and Bruno Pankok, and they achieved this despite the fact that no architecture was included in the exhibition.\textsuperscript{254} Though the Ecole continued to produce work of a high quality, its direction relative to its past and contemporary European developments remained unclear.

\textit{The Ecole and the Exposition Internationale de l'Est de la France, 1909}

The Exposition Internationale de l'Est de la France, first proposed to

\textsuperscript{252} Christian Debize, \textit{Emile Gallé and the “École de Nancy,”} 42-3.


the Chamber of Commerce of Meurthe-et-Moselle in 1904 by Henry Fillot, was an exhibition that was designed to show off the development of Lorraine business and industry since the Franco-Prussian War. As the representation of the contributions of provincial industry to artistic production, the Ecole de Nancy was slated almost from the beginning to play an integral part in the Fair. It was assumed that Ecole would have its own pavilion, which would accommodate all the various applied artists of Lorraine who wished to display their work, and that it would occupy a prominent position in the layout of the grounds. Furthermore, there was speculation as to whether or not the group’s pavilion would be a permanent structure, destined to become the museum of the region’s decorative art as planned by the Ecole from its inception. The design of the pavilion, which was the subject of some controversy, eventually went to Eugène Vallin. He erected a rather modest and mostly unadorned reinforced concrete structure, ovoid in plan, which included a central entry space with the exhibits of the individual members of the Ecole arrayed in booths around it [Fig. 2-38]. Crowned with a large sculpture personifying human inspiration by Victor Prouvé, it nonetheless stood in stark contrast to the ornate façades of most of the other pavilions at the fair, as well as most of the other Art Nouveau buildings in Nancy (almost all of which were designed by architects who had been associated with the Ecole).

In some ways the pavilion was a disappointment; its construction fell woefully behind schedule and the building was not opened until the middle of July—some two-and-a-half months after the rest of the fair. Its exhibits did

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255 “L’Ecole de Nancy à l’Exposition,” in L’Immeuble et la Construction dans l’Est 25, no. 44 (1 March 1908): 348. This never came to pass, and the pavilion was demolished several months after the Fair; see chapter 5 for more information.

256 See chapter 5 for images and descriptions of these buildings.

not include those of all the members of the group; in fact, some of them, such as Emile André and Gaston Munier, chose instead to exhibit their work that summer at a separate exhibition of decorative art at the local Ecole des Beaux-Arts. André’s proposal for the Ecole’s own pavilion had been passed over in the selection process in favor of Vallin’s, suggesting, perhaps, that there was a movement of disunion within the Ecole de Nancy. Nonetheless, the opening of the pavilion was trumpeted enthusiastically in a lavish ceremony, with speeches by Prouvé and Ludovic Beauchet, the mayor of Nancy, and was credited with helping to boost the fair’s attendance for the month of July.

But the Ecole’s participation with the fair extended beyond the mere presence of the pavilion and exhibition of its members’ work. Its members also attended several successful conferences and meetings, organized in conjunction with the exposition, that were devoted to political and artistic activity. Victor Prouvé, with Maurice Barrès, attended one meeting at the fair of the Congres Régionaliste that promoted decentralization. In a speech he made in August at the Third Congress of the Union Provinciale des Arts Décoratifs, held at the fair, Prouvé encouraged support for cooperative artistic practices in the French provinces, after which all the attendees toured the pavilion of the Ecole de Nancy. A third conference at the fair

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promoted the teaching of the arts in schools toasted the long-term efforts of the *Ecole de Nancy* to promote the arts, and inspired some Belgian attendees to consider the formation of similar local societies in order to encourage artistic production there—a notable accomplishment considering that Art Nouveau had effectively met its demise in Belgium by 1909.

1909-14: The Eve of the War

Art historians have labeled the 1909 Exposition as the “swan song” of the *Ecole de Nancy*, claiming that in the years following the fair the group essentially disintegrated because of artistic disagreements, and that in August 1914, the association was dissolved after it had gone bankrupt. These authors argue that Nancy’s brand of Art Nouveau was unable to survive because of the changing nature of tastes within and outside France towards a more austere, geometric, and machinist aesthetic that resembled the modern architecture of the 1920s, including, but not limited to, the

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264 Descouturelle, *op. cit.*, 51-2, asserts that (1) Vallin resigned as Vice-President of the group in 1911, and (2) that the Ecole was officially dissolved on 18 August 1914 and its “holdings turned over to a fund for the wounded [of the First World War],” although he cites no documents as proof of these events.

International Style. This last part may be true, particularly after World War I, when the economic situation for France was much less favorable than it was in the several decades preceding the conflict, and a much smaller market existed for the luxury furniture, glassware and objets d’art produced by the Ecole de Nancy.266

However, during the last years of the belle époque, local enthusiasm for the Ecole de Nancy seems to have been as strong as ever, even if the group appeared to be artistically less and less adventurous and its financial situation was weak. In 1913, Emile Hinzelin, one of the group’s major critics, surveyed the economic strength of Lorraine, and wrote, “All France looks towards Nancy and Lorraine...[and i]n terms of art, it suffices to say these words: the Ecole de Nancy, because presently the most gracious and most suggestive images are designed in their spirits.”267

Local artists seem to have continued their collaborative work on several projects. In 1910-11, Weissenburger and Mienville completed the Hotel Angleterre, with its Brasserie Excelsior, whose interior was sumptuously decorated by Louis Majorelle, Jacques Gruber, and the Daum glassworks, and remains a popular and luxurious Art Nouveau landmark in Nancy today.268 The new Vaxelaire & Pignot department store, designed by Weissenburger and Majorelle, opened its doors on the rue Saint-Dizier in downtown Nancy in 1913. A few blocks away, Paul Charbonnier and Majorelle worked together on the “Pharmacy of the Ginkgo,” (so named because of the decorative motifs), which opened in 1915, while Emile André and Gruber collaborated on the villa “Les Pins” for Auguste Noblot in


268 Though it is now owned by the Flo Brasserie chain. More on this building in Chapter 4.
northwest Nancy in 1912 [Fig. 2-39]. During these late years even obscure Nancy architects such as Louis Déon designed Art Nouveau storefronts, such as that for the tailor Arnoux-Masson, finished in 1913 [Fig. 2-40].

The Ecole de Nancy’s continued success after 1909 was due to the circle of long-term committed patrons who supported it. One of these was Jean-Baptiste (“Eugène”) Corbin (1867-1932), the owner of the Magasins Réunis department store chain. Corbin’s patronage of the group seemed to know no bounds. He collected large amounts of Nancy’s Art Nouveau furniture, which he installed in his somewhat modest villa with its aquarium and gardens, all designed by Weissenburger, in western Nancy. Corbin commissioned Victor Prouvé, Gallé’s successor as president of the group, to paint a huge portrait of him and his wife in their home269 surrounded by their furniture and greenery [Fig. 2-41], and the sculptor Alfred Finot later made a bust of him.270

To showcase artistic production in Lorraine, beginning in 1910 Corbin organized trimestrial shows of regional artists, many of whom were directly affiliated with the Ecole de Nancy. These were installed in the third-floor showrooms of the main branch of his department store in central Nancy. Reputedly attended by “the most notable artistic personalities in Nancy,” these shows received glowing reviews in the local press271 and continued to keep the group in the forefront of the public consciousness, even after the war began.

269 Located at 36, rue du Sergent-Blandan, it now houses the Musée de l’Ecole de Nancy.
During the First World War, the literature on the future of Lorraine art and the École de Nancy did not fade away. In 1915, the French architect Maurice Storez published a lengthy article, “Que seront l’Architecture et l’Art décoratif après la Guerre?” in which he proposed that France had lost its artistic superiority to the Germans due to the latter’s commitment to improving its system of education and applied art production by studying methods used elsewhere. He cited their creation of the Werkbund and Peter Behrens’ activities at AEG as the most notable examples of their success. In contrast, France had abandoned the principles that had previously contributed to its dominance in architecture and design, namely the search for forms appropriate to climate, geography, region, and local conditions, as Viollet-le-Duc had counseled. Art Nouveau, including the work of Guimard and the École de Nancy, had been one of these red herrings for French artists, a foreign import that relied on pure fantasy and illogically contorted materials such as stone, wood and iron to lengths not in keeping with their natural properties.

In response, Emile Nicolas, still signing his pieces as a “Member of the Executive Committee of the École de Nancy,” protested against the inclusion of the École in Storez’s critique, arguing that the Nancy artists instead obeyed a certain logic—the observation of natural forms and careful attentiveness to regional climate and geography to create harmonious artistic ensembles. Storez disagreed, believing that the architects of the École, such as Vallin and Emile André, had simply applied natural ornament to architectonic forms without any respect for the logic of the program of the building (Vallin), and tended to transplant designs for the country to urban

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areas (André); Nicolas replied\textsuperscript{274} that the Ecole’s artists were responding to the needs of their region, using their local resources so effectively that they had made the Germans jealous that they had not seen fit to also annex the southern two-thirds of Lorraine in 1871.

Conclusion

Regionalism in Nancy has a long and proud history, stretching back to the seventeenth century. The union of Lorraine with France in 1766 and the centralization of the early nineteenth century only temporarily strengthened Parisian political and cultural dominance over the rest of the country. The events that ended the Second Empire and gave birth to the Third Republic reawakened the latent tensions between Lorraine and the capital. Such uneasiness did not proclaim Lorraine’s disloyalty to the French nation, but rather infused the province with a republican nationalism that demanded a cultural, political—and perhaps even military—renaissance in order to rejuvenate the region and the nation after the Franco-Prussian War. Nonetheless, Nancy residents were frustrated by the lethargy with which the capital dealt with the proverbial wounds inflicted upon them by the Germans and by Parisian unwillingness to acknowledge the benefits of local control over cultural and political affairs. For them, Art Nouveau was clearly one of the ways that they could make their voices heard and their accomplishments visible to a national audience.

The Art Nouveau buildings of Nancy and Lorraine, the subjects of the subsequent chapters, stood alongside the expositions held by the artists of the Ecole de Nancy to demonstrate the fecundity of their collaborative regionalist

\textsuperscript{274} Storez and Nicolas, “A propos de l’art de l’École de Nancy (Suite),” in \textit{La Grande Revue} 89 (November/December 1915): 376-80. This was the publication of Storez’ private letter to Nicolas and Nicolas’ reply in the form of an article.
efforts. Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture thus might be seen as a permanent exhibition of the rise of that regionalist brand of the style between 1889 and 1914. The architects of Nancy’s Art Nouveau buildings attempted to bridge the cultural divide between their province and Paris, at once maintaining their fierce allegiance to regional artistic production while also cultivating the respect of their teachers and colleagues at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the capital. Their use of legible regional motifs and themes was a reflection of both the artistic theory espoused by Emile Gallé as the leader of the Ecole de Nancy as well as the lessons they had learned from their teachers such as Guadet and Laloux. This balance struck between the capital and the provinces, between the cultivation of a regionalist aesthetic and the contribution to French national artistic regeneration, sustained Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture until 1914.
Residential Art Nouveau Architecture in Nancy

The first Art Nouveau structures in Nancy were houses. In 1895, the year that Henry van de Velde began his famous half-timbered cottage Bloemenwerf in Uccle outside Brussels, Eugène Vallin and Georges Biet started Nancy’s first timid experiment with Art Nouveau: Vallin’s new home and studio on the Boulevard Lobau, in the eastern part of the city [Fig. 3-1]. The dominance of academic classicism in their blocky design was tempered only slightly by Arts-and-Crafts-inspired shed dormers, a Gothic lancet staircase window, and Art Nouveau sculptures of the cornice and mail slot [Fig. 3-2]. From this unimpressive start, Art Nouveau residences would grow to become the defining feature of Nancy’s cityscape over the next twenty years.

The architects of residential Art Nouveau architecture in Nancy sought to accomplish several goals. In the first place, they allied themselves with the national program that sought an authentic dwelling appropriate for modern French life. In part this was a response to industrialization, derived from the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain: a search for the type of transformative environment that provide respite from the emotionally and physically taxing world of labor. For both Arts and Crafts designers and nineteenth-century French architects such as Viollet-le-Duc, the home was organized around a hearth that served both a utilitarian function for heating and as a physical and spiritual gathering place for the family unit, providing a measure of comfort and familial solidarity even in times of political, social, and economic

275 The detailing was likewise the only Art Nouveau aspects contemporary observers ascribed to the building. See Emile Nicholas, “Eugène Vallin et son Oeuvre,” in La Lorraine Artiste 22, nos. 17-18 (1 and 15 September 1904): 267-8; and Emile Badel, “La Maison d’un artiste à Nancy,” in L’Immeuble et la Construction dans l’Est 10, no. 19 (15 September 1895): 146.
tension. The home in French society was viewed as especially important because it metaphorically gave birth to the nation’s future. It was there that children were born, inculcated with familial customs and cultural traditions. This was linked to the desire for national regeneration after the disaster of the Franco-Prussian War; home was where the arts and crafts—which, in the larger scheme of competition among nation-states were considered an indexical element of cultural production—were actually put to use. It was only logical then that the environment in which they were used should complement them and nourish the culture that badly needed amelioration in a time of crisis. In this vein, in Nancy Art Nouveau was seen as an antidote to the ordinary, unattractive, or even unhealthy industrial architecture that had come to dominate the region’s landscape following the post-1871 population boom.276

As other scholars have pointed out, however, there was a difficulty in creating a “national domestic aesthetic” in republican France, due to the diversity in taste that a pluralistic society—divided geographically, economically, and socially—demanded.277 Unity in aesthetics could realistically only be accomplished on a regional level. This view was both implied and acknowledged by Arts and Crafts theorists and Viollet-le-Duc, and widely disseminated in France. These writers wanted an architecture that would use materials from the locale where it was built and harmonize


with its surroundings and the natural world. They hoped that this modern architecture would connect to a sense of regional traditions that together would form a sense of identity through the construction of an idealized or romanticized past, not unlike the National Romanticism and construction of national identities that swept the newly-formed German and Nordic countries at the close of the nineteenth century. They also recognized the differences between Parisian tastes and vernacular and regional preferences that had developed in the provinces. The difficulty in creating a national or even regional domestic style was further complicated by the absence of a picture of what that style should look like. Examples featured in César Daly’s Revue Générale d’Architecture, by intention of the magazine’s editor, were intended to showcase an eclectic mix of influences—classical, Gothic, rustic and vernacular, and so on; Art Nouveau was but one of the styles added to this mix beginning in the 1890s [see Fig. 1-7].

In Nancy, there was likewise no agreement about what constituted the “regional style” that architects were seeking to define, a problem that resulted in the great variety of regionalist Art Nouveau. Clients of different classes had different needs and desires for their residences, but the desire to express a unitary regional cultural identity led Nancy’s architects to try to use Art Nouveau for all types of housing. With its emphasis on luxurious craftsmanship, and the city’s wealth of highly skilled decorative artists, it was easy to adapt the style to the houses of the region’s elites, who commissioned sumptuous mansions—as Viollet-le-Duc in his Entretiens had counseled was necessary for a well-functioning republic. Artists and other bourgeois clients demanded small one-family cottages whose use of

278 Yves Schoonjans, "Regional Architecture as an Element of Cosmopolitanism in César Daly’s Vision of Eclecticism," in Sources of Regionalism in the Nineteenth Century, 32-47; Barbara Miller Lane, National Romanticism and Modern Architecture in Germany and the Scandinavian Countries; and Viollet-le-Duc, Histoire d’un maison (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1873).
indigenous materials connected with the local landscape. Multistory
apartment houses, a new type of middle-class housing imported from Paris,
were adorned with local floral motifs so as to add an element of distinction.
Upper-middle-class clients, usually the most conservative of all groups, built
town houses that the city’s architects embellished with a few Art Nouveau
details to indicate discreetly the residents’ solidarity with the regional
political alliance. Finally, Art Nouveau in its most economical and pedestrian
forms was applied to the row houses that accommodated working-class
citizens.

Perhaps in part because of the timidity of Vallin and Biet’s early foray,
Art Nouveau did not take a firm hold of Nancy’s architectural scene until
1898, when the Parisian Henri Sauvage was invited by Louis Majorelle to
build a new villa on the western outskirts of town. Sauvage’s building, which
was overseen by the local architect Lucien Weissenburger, ignited great
enthusiasm for Art Nouveau in Nancy, and for the eight years after
Sauvage’s arrival, the city’s architects experimented with the permutations of
Art Nouveau that could seen in Paris, Belgium, Germany, and elsewhere (but
stamped with their own politically-charged regional motifs), creating in the
process some of the most sumptuous residences in Lorraine. In 1906,
however, the passion for flamboyant residential Art Nouveau architecture in
Nancy began to wane following the economic failure of the city’s Art Nouveau
garden suburb, the Parc de Saurupt, and the realization that the style was
already virtually extinct elsewhere. Over the next five years, Nancy’s
architects turned towards a much more conservative historicism for new
residences, but an overlay of Art Nouveau details proclaimed their continued
dedication to the local and regionalist art. By the eve of World War I, only a
few Nancy architects remained willing to build Art Nouveau residences,
using scattered remnants of its once-exuberant décor to adorn row houses for
working-class families.

The First Models: The Industrialist Villas

The best residential examples of what Nancy’s architects could achieve with Art Nouveau are the sumptuous houses they built for the city’s most affluent citizens. Many of Nancy’s elites were industrialists who had recently acquired their wealth through fast-growing enterprises or had relocated their businesses from the lost provinces. Virtually all of them were close to the artists of the Ecole de Nancy, if they were not themselves members of the group, and were enthusiastic patrons of Art Nouveau and the city’s decorative arts scene. They spared no expense in building their new homes, giving the architects and industrial artists they employed almost carte blanche over the commissions. As a result, the designers of these villas could exercise their creative powers to the fullest, making the residences Gesamtkunstwerks, with each associated artist leaving his clear imprint on the finished product. Both aesthetically and technically speaking, then, the industrialists’ villas became the most experimental and innovative residential buildings in Nancy.

The industrialists’ villas were some of the most overtly politically charged buildings in Nancy. Since the clients, artists, and architects belonged to the same artistic and political organization dedicated above all to regional interests, cultural and political decentralization, and the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, the symbolic motifs the designers used in these commissions reflected their commitment to these goals. Needing to satisfy only the patron, they knew from the start that they not only had his approval, but also the admiration and support of the general public in Nancy and Lorraine.
The Villa Jika for Louis Majorelle

The first of the industrialists’ Art Nouveau villas to be built was the Villa Jika [Fig. 3-3], designed between 1898 and 1900 by the Parisian architect Henri Sauvage (1873-1932) for Louis Majorelle, one of the most prominent members of the Ecole de Nancy. The Villa Jika—the French pronunciation of the initials of Majorelle’s wife, Jane Kretz—represented a watershed in the history of Nancy’s architecture; before its construction, Art Nouveau had remained confined to the decorative arts. Even before the Villa Jika was completed in 1902, Nancy’s architects had begun to incorporate the house’s undulating curves and floral motifs into their designs and to experiment with combining these into a form of regional expression. Majorelle’s house thus became a catalyst for an architectural trend that would survive in Nancy and the surrounding region until 1914.

One of the most prominent decorative artists in Nancy, furniture designer and manufacturer Louis Majorelle was well-connected in Paris, where he designed interiors of several cafés, restaurants and shops in the 1890s.279 On one of these, the Café de Paris (41, rue de l’Opéra, 1898), Majorelle collaborated with the young architect Henri Sauvage, whom he knew through his friend, the fellow furniture designer and craftsman Alexandre Charpentier, who was Sauvage’s father-in-law. Majorelle had also studied with Sauvage’s brother at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the 1870s.280


Majorelle became enamored with Art Nouveau, quickly mastering the style and using it for all his firm’s designs and publicity, and saw in Sauvage a comparable enthusiasm for the style.

Majorelle was well-acquainted with the architecture then being built in Nancy. In 1897 he had hired Lucien Weissenburger, already one of the most respected architects in the city, to design his firm’s new factory complex at 6, rue du Vieil-Aître, to the west of the central business district. Though no exterior or perspective images of the ateliers are known to survive, the structure was a metal-frame, five-story, six-bay building. Interior photographs indicate that the factory was designed as little more than a functional industrial loft, lit by large expanses of inclined windows to provide sufficient natural light for the shaping and finishing of the furniture [Fig. 3-4].

For his own home, Majorelle wanted something far different from both industrial architecture and traditional French villas, even though these models already provided Sauvage with a wealth of design choices. French suburban houses at the time often drew from the English picturesque tradition, with an emphasis on asymmetry and varied façade designs, but Sauvage could also select from many chateaux with their turrets and mansard roofs, medieval castles with crenellations and towers, or even a neo-


See the Liste des Principaux Travaux Executés Sous la Direction de Monsieur Lucien Weissenburger, Architecte Diplomé par le Gouvernement à Nancy (de 1888 à 1915), 32 pp. (Inventaire Général de la Lorraine, Nancy, Dossier Weissenburger); also see Francis Roussel, Nancy Architecture 1900 (Metz: Serpenoise, 1992), 2:72; and Duncan, op. cit., 117.

282 The factories, enlarged in 1912, were destroyed by accidental fire in 1916, along with virtually all the Majorelle firm’s archives. Despite extensive searching, I have been unable to locate any exterior images of the complex before its destruction.

Moorish pavilion with pointed arches and delicate tracery. While Majorelle may have been satisfied with Weissenburger’s work on his factory, he thought no architect in Nancy was yet capable of realizing his desire for a modern villa imbued with the spirit of nature through the Art Nouveau. Sauvage’s relative inexperience (he had never designed an entire building on his own) may have been seen by Majorelle as an asset, because Sauvage was not encumbered by any preference for past styles. Since Sauvage lived in Paris, Majorelle appointed Weissenburger as the supervising architect.

Majorelle owned a large plot across the street from his new factories, on the fringe of Nancy’s western development. This land had been given to him in 1896 by his mother-in-law. As was typical for most designers of French suburban or rural villas, Sauvage chose an eclectic strategy for the Villa Jika. The large, three-story structure is characterized by an irregular grouping of projecting and recessed masses. The emphasis is on the vertical elements: the tall windows and long balcony brackets on the main (north) façade and the steeply-angled roof [see Fig. 3-3]. Several prominent elements indicate Sauvage’s Gothic inspiration, including the roof gables, the delicate corbelling of the upper level of the bay enclosing the staircase, the undulating shapes of the windowsills and frames, and the tall, slender chimneys topped by ceramic crockets. A few features recall a Baroque sensibility, particularly the undulating curves of the wooden third-floor balcony on the west façade

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287 Roussel, *op. cit.*, and Bouvier, *op. cit.*

288 Lemoine, *op. cit.*, 36.
and the iron canopy covering the main entrance. These curves are echoed in the plan with the shape of the steps leading up to the main entrance and the contours of the terrace [Fig. 3-5].

The Villa Jika embodied a union of several influences on Sauvage, including the architectural climate of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and his own understandings of rationalism and regionalism. Frantz Jourdain, a notorious opponent of the Ecole's teaching style, declared that Sauvage had not drawn on any aspect of his training at the Ecole—which, Jourdain argued, would have included a riot of disparate classical and Gothic elements sewn together into an illogical, cacophonous pastiche. But here Jourdain was in error. The plan of the Villa Jika unmistakably shows Sauvage's sensitivity to the needs of the client and thus, the program given to him by Majorelle—the key aspect of design that Guadet had instructed the students at the Ecole that they needed to satisfy. The home is no larger than is needed to house a distinguished artist, his wife, and their son comfortably. It promotes easy circulation between the spaces by using a typical plan for French villas of the period, with an oblong central hall around which the main rooms and staircase are grouped. The more public parts of the house, including the spaces for entertainment, namely the salon, offices, kitchen, dining rooms, and terrace, occupy the ground floor, while the private quarters are located on the second level, with Majorelle's workspace on the third. Indeed, Jourdain had to admit that Sauvage had created a dwelling neither sumptuous, nor steeped in vanity...[but] the house of a sensitive and busy artist with a cultivated mind and delicate eye, who is seldom preoccupied with the judgment of others and who desires to only to live a proper life in a well-mannered, intelligent, and

289 Jourdain, op. cit., 246-47.

290 Guadet, Eléments et Théorie de l'Architecture, 1:1-10.
pure atmosphere.\textsuperscript{291}

The house, therefore, was as much a compliment to Majorelle as it was to Sauvage, and a testament to Majorelle’s respected standing within the French artistic community.

In a rationalist, frank manner, Sauvage used modern materials, such as the ironwork manufactured by Majorelle’s new foundries, established while the house was under construction, and Bigot’s massive ceramic balustrade for the terrace. As Frantz Jourdain would note in his review of the house, the structure and the layout are clearly visible on the exterior, exemplified by the placement of the studio on the third floor and its illumination through the giant window needed to admit the most amount of northern natural light as possible.\textsuperscript{292} The shape of the roof, with its steep sloping gables, recalls not only Gothic forms but also the kind of roofline used by Guimard for buildings such as the Castel Beranger in Paris, finished the year that the Villa Jika was designed (1898) and his Villa Berthe, a private villa in Le Vésinet, a garden suburb outside Paris, whose surroundings were not much different than Majorelle’s estate [Figs. 3-3 and 3-27].

The rationalism of Viollet-le-Duc and many Parisian supporters of Art Nouveau, as noted earlier, dovetailed with the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement, which wished to connect architecture as much as possible with its natural surroundings. In this respect, the Villa Jika extends these principles to their logical conclusion. Sauvage and Majorelle employed a formidable team of Parisian and Nancy decorative artists to cover the house in myriad types of natural imagery. These included the adornment of the balustrade of the oak staircase with carved motifs of ivy leaves on vines, which also could

\textsuperscript{291} Jourdain, 245.

\textsuperscript{292} Jourdain, “La Villa Majorelle à Nancy,” 245-46.
be found on the large ceramic railing by Alexandre Bigot that fronted the
terrace on the main façade [see Fig. 3-5]. The iron downspouts and brackets
for the main entrance likewise used vine-like imagery, a reference, perhaps,
to the ivy that was associated with covering the (sometimes artificial) ruins of
Gothic structures in English gardens. Bigot also designed and produced the
ceramic crockets for the chimneys, which resemble budding flowers. His
small decorative tiles adorning the window surrounds carry images of orchids
in bloom; these floral motifs referenced spring, and, given the recent
foundation of the Ecole de Nancy, can be read as a celebration of the birth of
the floral Art Nouveau as the official style of Nancy’s artistic scene and the
triump of Nancy’s decorative arts (including those by Majorelle) at the 1900
Paris Exposition Universelle.

In the salon, the room’s furniture and permanent wall décor was
unified by pine needle and cone motifs covering virtually every surface [Fig.
3-6]. The center of the dining room was dominated by Bigot’s huge ceramic
fireplace and chimney in the shape of a tree trunk and roots [see Fig. 3-5],
while the furniture was decorated with appropriate motif of ears of wheat, a
pattern that Majorelle offered for sale through the firm’s furniture catalogue.
The dining room also featured a large band of eight canvases painted by
Francis Jourdain showing game birds, pigs, and rabbits in a setting of
flowerbeds, pumpkins, cabbages, mushrooms, shrubs, and fruit trees.
Gruber’s stained glass windows in the dining room also depicted numerous
melons and other fruits. Pine trees, symbols of wealth and fecundity, were
eminently appropriate for Majorelle, one of the city’s wealthy citizens who
produced furniture and ironwork for a wealthy clientele, and the vast array of
fruits, vegetables, and grains (as well as the edible animals) recalled nature’s
bounty, which nourished humanity.

The terrace, meanwhile, took the theme of water, where blue ceramic
tiles by Bigot used a theme of duckweed; paintings on canvases by the Nancy artist Henry Royer, a friend of the Majorelle family, showed a landscape of flowers and peacocks, with a scene of two couples, young women, and an infant, symbolizing the awakening of the senses by nature, and, by extension, the awakening of French decorative art to the achievements of Nancy’s artists’ refined handling of natural forms. On the third floor, the muntins and mullions of the huge arched window to Majorelle’s personal studio were described as the branches of a tree, with the brackets undergirding the balcony that fronted the window as the arboreal roots.

Period photographs of Majorelle’s house just after its completion reveal a substantial yard dotted with trees and surrounded by a large rocky stone and iron fence, as if to underscore these natural connections [see Fig. 3-3].

The Villa Jika demonstrates that Sauvage—a student of the regionalist Jean-Louis Pascal—was committed to artistic regionalism, but in a manner that aligned such beliefs with nationalist concerns. While the many of the natural motifs detailed may have indicated merely generic references to prosperity and fecundity, others held specific significance for Nancy’s regionalist program. Majorelle chose as a dominant motif the flowers of the monnaie-du-pape, the symbol of Alsace, which he featured on the grilles for the main entrance, the coat racks and wall stenciling in the vestibule, the stained glass and curtains between the vestibule and the main foyer, and the large stained glass windows that adorned the grand staircase [Fig. 3-7]. The Alsatian connection held particular significance for Majorelle.

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295 The property (and the fence) has now been greatly reduced and reconfigured since the Majorelle family sold off much of the land in the 1930s.
296 Philippe Garner, Gallé, 55.
was born in Toul and grew up in Nancy, the birthplace of his father, his wife’s family had particularly strong ties to the neighboring region. Majorelle’s father-in-law, Joseph Xavier Emile Kretz, whose wife had given Majorelle the land for his house, had been born in Marckolsheim, in lower Alsace, before the Franco-Prussian War.\(^{297}\) As a vice-president of the Ecole de Nancy, Majorelle was dedicated to the regionalist issues upon which the organization was founded, including the return of Alsace to France. The prominent use of this floral motif indicates Majorelle’s solidarity with this political movement and alignment with his own family’s heritage. In other aspects, too, the house demonstrated Sauvage’s meticulous attention to regional concerns: the stone used for the house was the local Euville limestone common to most structures in Nancy, and the steep gables and the chimneys—equipped with spiky ceramic crockets—are useful for deflecting the snow away, thereby avoiding any extra stress to the roof during the cold Lorraine winters.

If the Villa Jika carried regionalist connotations for Majorelle and others in Nancy, in the capital it represented the nationalistic regeneration of French art. The Parisian art critic Gabriel Mourey, a personal friend of Emile Gallé,\(^{298}\) declared the house to be “a modern house, in the good sense of the word, and what is more, a modern French house...I do not find any formula borrowed from foreign styles of domestic architecture.” Sauvage was among “the architects most capable of affirming the rights of modern architecture to be modern, to liberate itself from the slavery of past styles, to become the

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\(^{297}\) See the *Liste des Baptêmes, Mariages, et Sépultures* for the Parish of Saint-Vincent/Saint Fiacre, Nancy, 1863-65, no. 67 (Archives Départementales de Meurthe-et-Moselle, Series E, 5 Mi 394/R 184).

\(^{298}\) Gallé and Mourey frequently exchanged letters on both artistic matters and personal affairs; Gallé, for example, sent Mourey gossip from his trips to spas while receiving treatment for leukemia as well as extensive gardening tips (Letters from Emile Gallé to Gabriel Mourey, 12 July 1902 and 8 June 1903. Getty Research Institute Department of Special Collections, Los Angeles: Gabriel Mourey Letters Received 1887-1913, bulk 1898-1906, Series II, Box 1, Folder 2.)
expression of our thoughts, our mores, our special way of understanding life.” Mourey was no doubt familiar with the debates in France over Art Nouveau as entwined with the search for a new national artistic style in the wake of the 1900 World’s Fair. Repeatedly referring to Sauvage, who was not yet thirty years old, as “young,” Mourey saw the Villa Jika as an example of the new direction in which Art Nouveau should lead the country’s architectural establishment.

Indeed, the regenerative properties of the house resonated with the most progressive of Parisian architects, who also viewed it as an ideal model for the type of interior space that would shelter the future of the nation. Frantz Jourdain called attention to the expression of this ideal as it became rationally visible on the exterior, using the example of Sauvage’s medieval-looking chimneys, remarking that they had

not only the purpose of breaking the roofline and silhouetting their bold pinnacles against the sky; no, they wish more to stoke the fire drawn from the hearths around which the family gathers in the evening to chat, read, work, play in the sweet tranquility of leisure after a bountiful day’s work, while the snow of Lorraine blankets the countryside with its heavy and cold overcoat.

The Villa Jika was thus a respite from both the industrialized world as well as the harsh effects of nature during the most inhospitable seasons. For Jourdain, the chimneys served not only the practical function of releasing smoke from the fireplaces, but they were the external signifiers of these hearths, centerpieces of the therapeutic qualities of modern domestic architecture.

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300 Jourdain, “La Villa Majorelle à Nancy,” in La Lorraine Artiste 20, no. 16 (15 August 1902): 249; this article was reprinted from L’Art Décoratif 4, no. 47 (August 1902): 202-8.
Both Mourey and Jourdain readily agreed that Majorelle’s house marked the debut of Sauvage as an important architect. This sentiment was echoed by the architect and prolific critic Louis-Charles Boileau (1837-1910) in his review of the Villa Jika, which he thought revealed Sauvage to be “an innovator in the best sense of the word.” Sauvage himself considered the house a major work, later acknowledging his debt to Majorelle by referring to the Villa Jika as the commission that had jump-started his career. He immediately reused the design for the large ironwork gates to the property on his Villa Oceania at Biarritz (1903) [see Fig. 1-25], a more conventional expression of regionalism as an example of balneal architecture, influenced almost entirely by the simplicity of the Arts and Crafts movement, with its rocky walls and exposed, heavy wooden beams. Yet, perhaps ironically, the Villa Oceania signaled Sauvage’s departure from Art Nouveau, as he moved after 1903 into a much more austere, rectilinear aesthetic, following the current tastes in Paris. He remained a committed rationalist-regionalist, however: his most famous work, the stepped-level apartment block on Paris’ rue Vavin (1912-14), is an essay in hygienically-conscious housing, attempting to bring natural light and fresh air into each unit while emphasizing the cleanliness of the building by covering it with white Parisian subway tiles [see Fig. 1-26]. Perhaps fittingly, the connection to nature was

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303 On this house, see François Loyer, “Sauvage, or the Renunciation,” in Culot and Grenier, *Henri Sauvage 1873-1932*, 43-7, esp. 45 for a photograph of the gate.
emphasized by the spaces for greenery outside each apartment’s façade.

*The Bergeret House*

Sauvage’s Villa Jika exerted a great influence on architects in Nancy, who began using the style in earnest, including Lucien Weissenburger, who had not previously used Art Nouveau. After being named supervising architect for Majorelle’s house, however, Weissenburger took up the style with enthusiasm. His factories for the Royer (1899-1900) and Bergeret (1901) printing firms each combined industrial loft spaces with Art Nouveau signage, and his branch of the Magasins Réunis built in Pont-à-Mousson in 1901 was crowned by a bulb-shaped sign encased in a frame of sinuous curves [see Fig. 6-4].

The residence that Weissenburger completed for the postcard magnate Albert Bergeret (1859-1932) in 1904 was a veritable *Gesamtkunstwerk* in the Art Nouveau style that marked the pinnacle of Nancy’s residential architecture in the first decade of the twentieth century [Fig. 3-8].\(^{304}\) It proved that Nancy’s architects could construct a distinguished residence for an elite client without drawing on Parisian influence. Located on the rue Lionnois in the southeastern part of Nancy, adjacent to his factories, the Bergeret house signaled the passion that its owner felt for his trade. Born in Gray, in the *département* of Haute-Saône in Burgundy, Bergeret had become interested in printing and publishing at an early age, as his father had owned a bookshop. In 1886 took a job with the Royer printing firm in Nancy, opened in 1868. Bergeret experimented with many new printing techniques being developed at the time and in 1898 left Royer to form his own company, Albert

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Bergeret et Compagnie, specializing in the production of postcards. The demand for this media soared; between 1902 and 1904 Bergeret tripled production from 25 million to 75 million cards annually, and in 1905, Bergeret merged his firm with two other printing houses in Nancy to form the Imprimeries Reunis, which along with Royer became one of the two most prominent postcard manufacturers in France, and remained so until after Bergeret’s retirement in 1925.305

By 1901 the enterprise had outgrown its original home in a former brewery, and Bergeret hired Weissenburger to build him a new facility on the rue Lionnois [Fig. 3-9], just across from the recently-completed St. Pierre Church.306 This factory, like the Majorelle ateliers, was a large industrial structure naturally lit by sawtooth skylights. Its façade consisted of two hip-roofed corner pavilions joined by a long wing. The façade’s central section was framed by two pilasters terminating in finials decorated with the motifs of umbels. Between them, an attic story bore an Art Nouveau sign for the firm. It served as the main branch of the company’s production until it closed in 1936, and was demolished two decades later.307

The location of Bergeret’s factories and house just across the street from St-Pierre’s Church may have influenced Weissenburger’s design. The dormers and large gable of the Bergeret House are crowned by pinnacles that echo the spires and crockets on the church, and these features have led some


306 Descouturelle, op. cit., 13-14, 31; Roussel, ibid.

architectural historians to label them as “neo-Gothic,” and the expression of the structural aspects of the various projecting oriel bays on the exterior likewise begs comparison with the emphasis on verticality in Gothic architecture. But in making this comparison, historians tend to ignore the plan of the house, which might equally be influenced by the presence of the church [Fig. 3-10, 3-11]. The interior is arranged around the elongated stair hall, which is aligned with the length of the house, much like the nave of a church; the rooms that open off of it resemble side chapels that open off the nave. The gable might be read as analogous to a tall bell tower rising next to the entrance of a church, and the massive stained glass window depicting roses and seagulls in the stair hall by Jacques Gruber suggests a large expanse of stained glass often seen in a cathedral façade. The religious connotations of the house are underscored by the fact that it sat on the edge of a tract of land formerly owned by the Sisters of the Order of St. Charles, which around 1900 was transferred to the city of Nancy for the establishment of a medical school and anatomical institute.

The plan and the ornament also seem to show more similarities with a house built by Victor Horta than Parisian Art Nouveau architects. Indeed, like many of Horta’s residences for wealthy clients in Brussels, the Bergeret House sits on a compact plot, directly fronting the street, forcing the architect to work within a more confined space; Weissenburger, like Horta, solved this problem by constructing the house around the great stair hall, onto which virtually all the rooms open. In the stairway, the ornamentation of the balusters with the monnaie-du-pape motif (see below) is representational, but the curves of Majorelle’s railing tend to bend back on themselves, in a jerky sort of configuration that is closer to Horta than the more free-flowing,

308 Descouturelle, op. cit., 36 and Roussel, op. cit., 2:56.
gentler curves of say, Hector Guimard’s designs.310

Bergeret’s house, like the Villa Jika, was a Gesamtkunstwerk in part because it required the work of so many specialized artists. Aside from Weissenburger, Louis Majorelle provided all the ironwork and the salon—the same models that he had used in his house; Eugène Vallin completed most of the interior woodwork, including the luxurious dining-room fireplace, done in precious woods such as mahogany; Jacques Gruber and Joseph Janin did the impressive stained-glass windows; and Victor Prouvé painted a fresco on the ceiling of the main hall depicting four women in a wooded glen. Significantly, all of these men were local artists, not Parisians, who were members of the Ecole de Nancy.

The break from Paris was most evident in the choice of the interior floral motifs. In the stained-glass window that opens onto the second-floor terrace, Gruber chose to use the motifs of white viburnum flowers set into a carved wooden frame by Vallin, mimicking the branches of the plant as if it were growing from the doorway, and through it the gardens at the rear of the house could be seen [Fig. 3-12]. The salon seating and woodwork were decorated with pine cones, a symbol of the wealth that Bergeret had recently come into with the rapid rise in popularity of his postcards [Fig. 3-13].

Bergeret’s study, located on the west side of the house, contained a huge arched window partially filled with stained glass that included motifs of water lilies, reeds, and pine cones [Fig. 3-14]. The lily had become quite popular in France with the recent popularity of the poet Mallarmé, and the unveiling of Monet’s water lily paintings in 1899 and the critically acclaimed of water-lily furniture by Majorelle at the 1900 World’s Fair had contributed

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more to this plant’s stylishness.\footnote{Ibid., 74.}

Other important regional references are visible in the main hall, where Jacques Gruber placed a huge stained-glass window over the staircase. The window depicts a pair of flowering rose shrubs surrounding a group of six seagulls, flying above a tempestuous sea [Fig. 3-15]. While the roses are a plant common to Lorraine,\footnote{And symbolic of the city of Metz.} the seagulls appear at first glance to have no local connection. Frédéric Descouturelle, however, has suggested that the seascape may reference the stormy economic conflict in Lorraine over wages that resulted in many strikes in 1904-06; in this context, the seagulls symbolize the hope by Bergeret and other industrialists that they might weather the storm. Nancy, however, remained calm during the unrest in the region, but as a precaution, a protective screen was placed on the exterior of this window.\footnote{Ibid., 52.}

The emphasis on luxury and regional politics is evident in the ironwork by Louis Majorelle. Both he and Weissenburger reprised the theme of the *monnaie-du-pape*,\footnote{In English, the plant is called “annual honesty.”} and featured this everywhere, including on the grilles to the main entrance, the balcony railings, the floor mosaics, and the massive gates that opened into the rear garden [Fig. 3-16], whose sweeping iron curves recall the wings of a bird in flight and whose tips are studded with floral blooms. The *monnaie-du-pape* ironwork that Majorelle used for the interior staircase and hall balustrades had garnered such acclaim that in 1904 an example was bought by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris [Fig. 3-17]. Here the *monnaie-du-pape* might here also take on a meaning closer to the literal translation of its French name, the *monnaie-du-pape*, or “Pope’s
coin purse,” since in the balustrade the fruits of the plant are gilded to emphasize their similarities to coinage. They underscore the luxuriousness of the residence, which cost approximately 50,000 francs to build (about $2.09 million in 2009). With the Bergeret house, the Art Nouveau in Nancy’s residential architecture had reached its peak; after this, nearly all the houses the city’s architects designed for their wealthiest clients became more austere and increasingly influenced by classicism.

The Cottage and Bourgeois Villa

The most experimental type of house built by Nancy’s Art Nouveau architects was the small cottage or bourgeois villa. The cottage was a type derived from English vernacular architecture and the Arts and Crafts tradition. During the 1870s it had been promoted by Viollet-le-Duc as an example of the northern European tradition in habitation, and he saw it as the key model for addressing the needs of the individual family, rather than the rented apartment or the chateau. Though Viollet noted that the French had a superior tradition in monumental architecture, he argued that other countries, such as Great Britain, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland, had more successfully served domesticity and family life by adopting the cottage model for the home. Viollet and others, such as Hermann Muthesius and Robert Dohme, were drawn to the cottage because of its modest size, privacy and comfort, and saw it as the architectural expression of restored vernacular


316 Figure quoted in Barbian and Sauter, *op. cit.*, 32; they claim that this translates into approximately 10 million francs in 1999. I have calculated the current U.S. dollar figure using the algorithm developed by Lawrence Officer and Samuel Williamson, "Purchasing Power of Money in the United States from 1774 to 2009," <http://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppowerus/>.

traditions and values in the bourgeois home.318

Periodicals such as The Studio, Art et Décoration, and Julius Meier-Graefe’s twins L’Art Décoratif and Dekorative Kunst helped disseminate these ideas and the exemplary work of English architects, such as H. M. Baillie Scott and C.F.A. Voysey. In the 1890s, French and Belgian architects, theorists, and engineers, including Paul Hankar, Henry van de Velde, Victor Horta, and Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, began to adapt the English cottage for bourgeois housing and for artists and upper-class clients. Many of their designs, such as Hankar’s Cottage Buysse (1899) [Fig. 3-18], emphasized the frankly rustic aspects of cottage interior design, including the natural qualities of materials such as wood, brick, and stone; they used exposed beams, floral wallpaper and friezes, and reserved a prominent place for the hearth.319 Most of the cottage-type houses and bourgeois villas in Nancy from the turn of the century were built by Emile André, the architect who was the most sympathetic to the Arts and Crafts movement and foreign designs. The cottages and bourgeois houses that he produced between 1901 and 1907 illustrate these currents.

The Villa Lejeune and the Huot Houses

Two commissions that André received successively in 1901 and 1902 illustrate his experimental conception of the cottage. The first was a house for his friend, the painter Armand Lejeune, which he built on the rue Sergent-Blandan in the developing southwest part of town [Fig. 3-19]. Lejeune needed a studio and general living space on a modest budget of 35,000 francs.320

318 A good overview of Viollet’s involvement with cottage architecture and his influence on others can be found in Ogata, Art Nouveau and the Social Vision of Modern Living, 62-78.
319 Ogata, ibid., 80-87.
320 “Une villa d’artiste à Nancy par Émile André, Architecte,” in Le Cottage 2, no. 4 (15 April 1904): 142-9; and Roussel, 3:78. This sum also included the cost of a separate gatekeeper’s
André’s design merged these spaces into a simple rectangular plan, placing the studio at the rear (north) end of the house, with a taller roof than the living space, and lit by a large square window. The high studio roof allowed for a mezzanine, which gave access to the bedrooms and was reached by an exterior stairway [Fig. 3-20]. The rest of the ground floor of the house was divided into a set of square spaces, nearly uniform in size, for the kitchen, living room, dining room and an extra bedroom.

André designed the house with a rustic aesthetic. He used traditional materials—wood, stone, and brick, and brought their tactile properties into full view inside. There was a handcrafted feel to the interior resembling the work of British Arts and Crafts architects, with intricate carving of the woodwork used for brackets, support columns, and balusters; extensive brickwork around the fireplaces seemed to be carved from monolithic blocks [Fig. 3-21]. On the exterior, the large, tiled gambrel roof with kicked eaves blanketed the house much like a giant tortoise shell or the thatched roof of a peasant cottage. The local art critic Emile Nicolas likened it to the scales of a fish, and the curves of the roof could be compared to the undulating rooflines used by Antoni Gaudí a few years later in his Casa Battlò in Barcelona, which were said to evoke the scaly skin of a dragon [Fig. 3-22]. The large surface area of the roof gives it a draped quality that makes the house appear smaller, thus emphasizing the simple cottage-like aesthetic.

Lejeune had even hoped to build his house on another, more heavily forested quarters, but not the land itself.

321 Not unlike the types of plans produces by C.F.A. Voysey in many of his Arts & Crafts Houses. Compare the plan of André’s house with those of Voysey shown in Davey, The Architecture of the Arts & Crafts Movement.

322 Which today, unfortunately, has been replaced by a blank wall.

323 Nicolas, “Une maison moderne de M. Émile André,” in La Lorraine Artiste 22, no. 7 (1 April 1904): 102.
plot, but “unforeseen circumstances” forced him to reconsider “in order to save the integrity of the project.”324 Had he succeeded in finding a parcel with more foliage, the house would have resembled even more the “studio in the wilds” so valued by Nordic cultures.325 Even though the exterior was stuccoed, a connection with nature remained through the depiction of a flock of birds in flight on the main façade. The rustic aspect of the house dovetailed with Lejeune’s sense of décor; he collected antique vernacular Lorraine furniture as well as curiosities from the Middle East, such as sabers, textiles, and furniture [see Fig. 3-21].326

Although it was a relatively modest commission, the Villa Lejeune became significant in Nancy. As Emile Nicolas noted, it was one of the first examples where Nancy joined Paris as one of the two French centers of Art Nouveau, breaking from the “reserve” that characterized building in the rest of the country. Nicolas observed that Nancy had already been under the influence of Art Nouveau in the decorative arts for several years, but he argued that the house’s construction highlighted the desire of the city’s residents to have an entire environment to go with the modern furniture turned out by the city’s craftsmen. The efforts up to that point had been somewhat crude, but now, Nicolas claimed, André’s work had revealed the shift in the city’s architectural “taste towards something simpler and more logical,”327 a more modestly-scaled counterpart to the Villa Jika, completed the same year.

But even as Nancy had joined Paris as a center of French architecture, the Villa Lejeune illustrated the preoccupation of the city’s architects with

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324 Nicolas, _op. cit._, 104.
325 On this concept, see Lane, _National Romanticism_, 83ff.
326 Ibid.; also see “Une villa d’artiste à Nancy,” 147.
327 Nicolas, ibid., 101.
rusticity and regionalism. The exterior, Nicolas noted, had the air of a
Scandinavian residence, or something that might be seen in the more
mountainous regions of southern Lorraine, in the *département* of the Vosges,
“where the snow is abundant, and [the house] is well-disposed to deal with
these inconveniences.” The roof shape, Nicolas claimed, was perfectly logical
and derived from nature; it was the most advantageous solution with a “strict
minimum of materials.” André’s designs, which included sliding doors to open
up the studio space to the parlor and dining room, allowed\(^{328}\) for the “loss of
obstacles blocking the intimate life of the family.” Here one could connect the
Villa Lejeune to the French character that was expressed earlier in Sauvage’s
Villa Jika: the reward for a day’s labor with a warm, intimate dwelling for
the comforts of family life, sheltered from the harsh exterior elements. By
addressing these regional and national concerns, André had created a
modern house, precisely along the dictates of Viollet-le-Duc in the *Entretiens*
and other writings.

Nicolas’s article was reprinted almost in its entirety in the Belgian
periodical *Le Cottage* a mere two weeks after it appeared in Nancy. Although
a short-lived magazine, *Le Cottage* was at the forefront of the development of
Belgian residential cottage architecture, oriented towards Art Nouveau and
the Arts and Crafts movement. It counted Van de Velde, Horta, and
Serrurier-Bovy among its supporters, viewed *La Lorraine Artiste* (where
Nicolas’s article had appeared) as one of its sister publications, and aligned
itself with the Belgian Workers Party and its search for healthy, affordable
housing for people of all classes.\(^{329}\) *Le Cottage* hailed Gallé’s work with the

\(^{328}\) Ibid., 104, 102. Others have conjectured that there are similarities between André’s house
and buildings in Weimar, Germany, although they have not bothered to substantiate these
*Art Nouveau: L’École de Nancy*, 293.

\(^{329}\) See Ogata, ibid., 130-40.
Ecole de Nancy as an example of how Europeans could look towards local traditions in order to build pride in their national cultures.\textsuperscript{330} It saw the cottage as the ideal foundation for new garden-city residences, and specifically saw the Villa Lejeune as a solution to the problem of affordable housing.\textsuperscript{331} Emile André owned most of the issues of \textit{Le Cottage} (which was published only for a period of two years),\textsuperscript{332} and must have followed its support for simple, economical design closely, later adopting many strategies of cottage housing into his work for the Parc de Saurupt.

\textit{The Huot Houses}

André’s exploration of the bourgeois villa continued in the double houses he built in 1903-04 for Frédéric Huot, a young but wealthy land speculator, on the quai Claude-le-Lorrain in Nancy [Fig. 3-23]. In these, André again revealed his knowledge of foreign designs and fondness for eclectic experimentation. The houses’ steeply-pitched roofs with their kicked eaves and shed dormers derive from Gothic models, while the woodwork, including the roof brackets and the second-floor balcony on 92bis, recall the Arts and Crafts details seen in the Lejeune House. He used Rococo details as well, such as the segmental arch over the main door of 92bis and the flattened arches of the tall windows surrounded by sculpted leafy motifs, a feature often seen in contemporaneous Parisian residences. André also borrowed from German Art Nouveau architects in Dresden for his floral designs for the chimneys [Fig. 3-24].\textsuperscript{333}

\textsuperscript{331} “Une villa d’artiste à Nancy,” 143-44.
\textsuperscript{332} André’s collection is conserved in the archives of the Musée de l’Ecole de Nancy in Nancy.
André recycled motifs that he had used on other buildings. In the Fernbach House of 1902-03 he had inserted a giant horseshoe window topped with a tall thin spire directly into the plane of the exterior wall [see Fig. 3-31]. Now, in each of the Huot Houses, he brought an arched window crowned by a spire out and placed it on the roof, extending the spire and embellishing it with floral carvings. At the same time, he placed another horseshoe window, encased in colorful turquoise tiles, in the façade. Here, as well as in many of the other arched windows on the main façade, he used the same Y-shaped window muntins seen in the Fernbach house, derived from André’s collaboration with Eugène Vallin on the interior paneling and exterior window frames of the Vaxelaire & Compagnie Department Store in downtown Nancy in 1900-01 [see Figs. 4-12 and 4-14].

The Huot house is noteworthy for its frank and ubiquitous motifs of flowers and plants in bloom and the way that these seem to emerge almost seamlessly from the tectonic planes and surfaces of the façade and other elements, such of the chimneys. The tall spires of the façades mimic bulbs about to sprout, while the floral motifs crowning the gables appear as compact, stylized flowers in a bouquet. The design of the main door of the house at 92bis resembles the extending branches of a tree, while the curve of the horseshoe-shaped window on its façade is lined with stained-glass panels of blossoming magnolia flowers. The reliefs of pine needles and cones over the entrance to 92bis can be read as symbols of fecundity and wealth.334 With the Huot Houses, André marked the height of his experiments with Art Nouveau, and celebrated the Ecole de Nancy’s deep reverence for nature.

The Parc de Saurupt as a Garden Suburb

The early twentieth-century architectural ideal of a cottage or

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bourgeois villa nestled a natural setting found its most complete expression in Nancy in the Parc de Saurupt, a short-lived garden suburb created in 1901 in the southwestern part of town. A combination of events in Nancy provided the impetus for its development. First, rapid population growth after 1871 had prompted a significant expansion of the city, mostly into the undeveloped sectors west of the Paris-Strasbourg rail line, which now divided the city along a north-south axis [Fig. 3-25]. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the city grew haphazardly; a maze of winding, narrow privately-developed streets lined with cramped, stuccoed row homes made up much of the new quarters of the city to the south and west. The city government, lacking adequate funding, made little effort to assemble any plan or set of regulations for the city’s expansion, as it had no means to enforce them or make its own improvements.335

Nancy’s problems were symptomatic of those endured by other major urban centers in Europe during the late nineteenth century. Between 1870 and 1900, the number of cities in Europe with populations of 100,000 or more grew from about seventy to nearly 200. These new large cities, ill-equipped to deal with such rapid growth, became places where poverty and disease spread rapidly and frequently, and public health reforms to address these problems were slow in coming. Observers often associated the growth of these new metropolises with degeneration and sickness, and viewed them as generally undesirable places to live. Taking retreats in the undeveloped countryside, where there was fresh air and a pleasing landscape, was viewed as one means to escape the congestion and dirtiness associated with city

The Art Nouveau interior could be seen as a place that tempered the harshness of the industrial nineteenth-century city with the regenerative, calming effects of the natural landscape.

* * *

The notion of a garden suburb was not new in France. Over forty years before, in 1858, the industrialist Alphonse Pallu, an advocate of social reform, and Paul Lavenne, Comte de Choulot, had created the Parisian suburb of Le Vésinet, which exerted a powerful influence on Nancy’s architects in their own layout of a garden suburb called the Parc de Saurupt at the beginning of the new century. Choulot was an experienced architect and landscape designer, who was intimately familiar with the plans for the Bois de Boulogne and other parks around Paris that Napoleon III had entrusted to Adolphe Alphand. Through Alphand’s influence, Choulot also knew the work of American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead. Le Vésinet, located about eighteen kilometers west of the capital on a bend in the Seine, had a long history dating back to the Middle Ages, which included the 1479 establishment of a chateau and the planting of a large, planned forest in a semicircular pattern, focused around an open circular field, from which paths radiated outward through the trees. In the 1830s, the region around Le Vésinet was linked to Paris by a railway line, and the verdant surroundings prompted Napoleon III to establish an asylum there in 1855.

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337 Le Vésinet has long been recognized as a precedent for the Parc de Saurupt. See Michèle Maubege, *Nancy Mémoire* (Saint-Etienne: Edi Loire, 1995), 82; and Francis Roussel, *Nancy Architecture 1900*, vol. 3: *de la rue de Malzéville à la Cure d’Air Trianon* (Metz: Serpenoise, 1992), 60.

Pallu and Choulot laid out Le Vésinet as an immense parkland on the site of the medieval forest punctuated by artificial lakes and streams [Fig. 3-26]. The new streets essentially followed the layout of medieval paths that crisscrossed the woods, and lots along them were sold to individual buyers, who developed them as single-family residences. The focal circular field became the intersection for many of the major streets, while a winding boulevard ringed the outskirts of the city plan. Le Vésinet also included a church and a designated open-air market square. The city grew steadily, with the first lots sold in 1874 and about three-quarters of the planned area developed by 1910; during this same period, the population increased from about 1,500 to over 11,000 residents.

Le Vésinet became a hotbed of experimentation in bourgeois residential architecture. It attracted an eclectic mix of structures, ranging from the half-timbered designs characteristic of the Norman beachside developments at Trouville and Deauville, to turreted Gothic Revival structures, to residences inspired by French baroque chateaus. Hector Guimard was commissioned to design the large Art Nouveau Villa Berthe there in 1896 [Fig. 3-27]. Some houses took on a specifically rustic or regionalist aesthetic, with rough-hewn stone and low, shingled roofs or with rough logs used in both the structure and ornament [Fig. 3-28]. In many cases, these turn-of-the-century residences were decorated in an mélange of different styles—a “Gothic dining room, the Louis XV salon, other pieces Art Nouveau” —to satisfy the various tastes of the bourgeois and upper-class clientele who wanted a retreat or primary residence not far from the capital.

For a detailed look at the area’s history up to the eighteenth century, see Louis Bigaud, Les Seigneurs du Pecq et du Vésinet (Versailles: Léon Bernard, 1925).


Quoted in Cueille, 78.
In keeping with the parklike layout, Le Vésinet’s houses were ensconced within foliage and trees that obstructed the views between them in order to create enclosed yards and gardens. Most lots were surrounded or at least fronted by a wall with a gate to emphasize privacy. Nancy’s architects tried valiantly to emulate these precedents, and their layout and designs for the Parc created a set of regulations and structures that, while building in the suburb continued, adhered to these ideals.

* * *

In Nancy, Jules Villard341 sought the help of the city before launching the Parc de Saurupt venture. He lobbied the municipal council to lengthen the Boulevard Jean-Jaurès as the new avenue d’Alsace-Lorraine (now the avenue Clemenceau), which formed the western boundary of the twenty-hectare property. Soon after the street’s opening by the council’s decree on 22 May 1901, a new tramway line was constructed along the rue du Montet (now the avenue du Général Leclerc), the northern boundary of his property, thus providing access to downtown. Villard was able to establish a set of regulations for development, which allowed for the construction of individual bourgeois houses and forbade the installation of commercial establishments. The property would be closed off to public traffic by the placement of gates at the intersections of its private streets with the municipal routes, and access to the subdivision was overseen by a concierge who resided in a small house next to the entrance to the Parc from the rue du Montet.342

341 Villard owned the land through his wife, the land’s titular owner, who, according to the regulations of the Parc, was supposed to exercise most of the powers held by the developer. See the “Parc de Saurupt: Clauses, Charges, et Conditions,” in Emile Badel, Le Parc de Saurupt: Hier, Aujourd’hui, Demain (Nancy: Royer, 1906; reprint, 1998), 37-47. These were set up when the Parc was laid out in 1901.

Villard was building on a parcel of land that, like Le Vésinet, had extensive aristocratic associations, and the local press made note of the property’s noble lineage. The name “Saurupt” means “willow creek,” which the area took from the Nabecor Creek that ran near its southeastern edge. The land was first developed in the thirteenth century by Raoul, the Duke of Lorraine, who constructed a chateau and surrounding gardens as his own country retreat. After his death at the Battle of Crécy during the Hundred Years’ War, the structure fell into ruin, to be rebuilt several times over the next few centuries as a castle with towers, crenellations, and battlements, until it was finally destroyed in the late seventeenth century. Nonetheless, the site’s attachment to Dukes of Lorraine had given it permanent legendary status. At the dawn of the twentieth century, Nancy residents fondly referred to the Saurupt chateau as “the Versailles of the house of Lorraine,”343 their counterpart to the palace of the Bourbon kings of France.

In 1901, Villard approached Emile André and Henry Gutton, two young architects who had just formed a partnership, with his ideas and asked them to come up with a plan for the project. The two obliged, and by August they had produced a scheme for the suburb [Fig. 3-29], said to be mostly Gutton’s design, although André’s personal stamp is the only one to appear on the document.344 They conceived of a neighborhood of some eighty-eight lots for picturesque (but not necessarily Art Nouveau) single-family houses, each of which would feature a different plan and would be surrounded by an

343 Emile Badel, Le Parc de Saurupt: Hier, Aujourd’hui, Demain (Nancy: Royer, 1906; reprint, 1998), 5-12. This part of Badel’s text was reprinted as “Le Parc de Saurupt,” in L’Immeuble et la Construction dans l’Est 23, no. 35 (30 December 1906): 257-9. In the early seventeenth century, the chateau’s accommodations were so comfortable that both Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu were said to have lodged there on a visit. Unfortunately, French troops under Marshal François de Créquy destroyed the building when they occupied Lorraine in 1671 during the preparations for the Franco-Dutch War (1672-78).

344 Badel, Le Parc de Saurupt: Hier, aujourd’hui, demain, 27.
ample yard dotted with trees. Despite its picturesque buildings, the Parc de Saurupt used a simple street configuration in order to maximize the number of lots on the property, with one road tracing the contour of the property and a cluster of straight streets radiating from a traffic circle in the middle.

André and Gutton became the managers of the development, an unusual task for two architects who had no prior experience in real estate. They headed a larger governing body of architects for the Parc, the “Commission de Surveillance” which, aside from Gutton and André, included Gutton’s uncle Henri, Lucien Weissenburger, and Charles Désiré-Bourgon, the future municipal architect. Each of these men would design at least one house in the Parc, and their commission not only had to approve all façade plans and “profiles” of new houses, but it had the power to grant exceptions to the regulations for building heights and other structural details.345

The compact governing the Parc de Saurupt laid down specific conditions for its development. Although privately developed, the streets were open to the public except when the gates were closed, making it slightly different than a gated community of today. The owners of individual lots were required to encircle their property with walls that could reach a height of 2.5 meters, and to close the driveway onto the street with gates up to 2.2 meters high. Houses could not rise more than fourteen meters from the ground, and the only types of houses that could be built were individual single-family homes, villas, or cottages, and they had to be constructed of rock brick or other “durable materials.”346 Trees on the property had to be between three and five meters high. Unlike at Le Vésinet or other garden suburb developments, the regulations for the Parc de Saurupt forbade the establishment of businesses or industrial buildings. Nor could there be any

345 See the original poster for the Parc and the “Clauses, Charges et Conditions,” 40-1, 45.
346 “Parc de Saurupt: Clauses, Charges et Conditions,” 40-41.
space reserved for a concert or public entertainment; however, hospitals, clinics, schools, and sport associations could be constructed with the consent of the neighborhood association and the subsequent approval from the commission of architects.\footnote{Ibid., 42.}

The most important facet of the Parc’s compact, however, was its prescription of who could reside there. The development was established specifically for merchants, business owners, industrialists, people of independent means, officers, or those employed in the “liberal professions.” Properties could not be rented or sold to people whose morality or profession might “create an unfavorable public impression.”\footnote{Ibid.} Although it was intended for there to be some differences between the houses built, with some ostensibly “rich and luxurious,” and others “modest and simple,”\footnote{Emile Jacquemin, “Le Parc de Saurupt,” in \textit{L’Immeuble et la Construction dans l’Est} 17, no. 30 (24 November 1901): 233.} in essence, the Parc de Saurupt was a development for a certain middle- and upper-class clientele, and its developers sought to keep out anyone who was not part of this echelon of society.

The entrance to the Parc illustrated the complexity of its conception. To the right of the entrance from the rue du Montet, André designed a two-room, hip-roofed concierge house, built of rusticated local stone [Fig. 3-30]. A modest cottage for the gatekeeper, it evoked perfectly the simplicity of an Arts and Crafts house. Like André’s other houses in the Parc, it used arched windows with thick stone heads and sills, and the rough-hewn stone clearly recalled the regionalist aesthetic of the mountainous rural areas to the south and east of Nancy. By 1903, the gates at the Parc’s entrance from the rue du Montet had been added, which consisted of two great iron lattices whose
shape mimicked the wings of a butterfly. The side gates for pedestrians used the abstracted motif of a flower with its buds, stems and leaves. As if to emphasize the green, natural setting of the Parc, the wings of the butterfly gates gathered the visitor into their folds and enclose him in a private, guarded world that provided escape from the noise and dirt of the industrial city.

_The Villa “Les Glycines” (The Fernbach House)_

The first house built in the new Parc de Saurupt was designed in 1902-03 by Emile André for the leather merchant Charles Fernbach at 5, rue des Brice [Fig. 3-31]. Here, André continued his work in the cottage type that he had begun with the Villa Lejeune. Though it rises two stories, the Fernbach House uses a compact design, with a very simple ground floor plan [Fig. 3-32]. The living space and dining room dominate the ground level, with little separation to delineate them from each other, almost creating a fully open floor plan. Such an unorthodox floor plan was rare in Nancy, and used almost solely for experimental structures, such as the Villa Lejeune, the artist’s cottage that broke with the more conventional plans of the Villa Jika and the Bergeret House, clustered around a central stair hall. The upper floor, on the other hand, is divided into three bedrooms. The house’s footprint roughly forms a square, with the exception of an oriel bay and the projecting staircase on opposite façades. Its compactness and simplicity are emphasized by the simple half-hipped, red tile roof supported by brackets, as well as the yellow Euville stone that cloaks its walls. The home bears some resemblance to the rather simple Villa Rosen built by Josef Maria Olbrich at Darmstadt in 1900 [Fig. 3-33].

André’s exterior details of the Fernbach House, however, were drawn from a variety of sources other than Darmstadt. The triple windows capped
by tiled arches on the upper level of the main façade recall the arched windows with tapered surrounds from Sauvage’s Villa Jika, as does the terracotta orange-and-yellow Euville stone exterior color scheme. The Y-shaped muntins used on the façade windows echo the designs André and Vallin had used just the year before for the window frames and interior furniture of the Vaxelaire et Compagnie store on the rue St-Jean in downtown Nancy, and he continued this form inside in the dining room furniture. André also searched his library for ideas, selecting ironwork by the Parisian architect Maurice Dufrène published in the folio Documents d’Architecture Moderne as the model for the fences surrounding the property [Fig. 3-34].

On the back of the house, he placed a rectilinear wooden balcony that recalls the handworked quality of Arts and Crafts design and resembles the one he simultaneously installed on the Huot houses. Likewise, the prominence of the fireplace in the interior open plan, and the floral wallpaper and cottage aesthetic with the frankness of wood beams and furniture clearly locate André’s design within a domestic setting informed by northern European cottage architecture.

The Villa Les Roches

André pursued a similar design strategy in his next project in the Parc, the house he built for himself as a rental property between 1902 and 1904 at 6, rue des Brice, directly opposite the Fernbach House. His first tenant was Charles Royer, the head of the Royer Printing House, for whom Lucien

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350 See the Liste des Ouvrages donné par Jean-Luc André le 10 septembre 2002, a catalogue of books and journals owned by Emile André and donated by his descendants to the Musée de l’École de Nancy (Archives of the Musée de l’École de Nancy, Nancy). André’s design for the Fernbach house fencing was taken from Plate 68, “Maurice Dufrène, Paris -- Détail de grilles en fer forgé,” in Documents d’Architecture Moderne 1, no. 9 (September 1902).

351 This house was modified slightly in 1924 by a new owner to include a third story, so that now its appearance is not quite the same as the original construction was.
Weissenburger designed the first Art Nouveau factory building in Nancy in 1899.\textsuperscript{352} (Royer’s firm would also publish Emile Badel’s \textit{Le Parc de Saurupt: Hier, aujourd’hui, demain}, a publicity pamphlet for the development, in 1906.) This house was soon nicknamed “Les Roches,” because of the rusticated stone used for the exterior construction [Fig. 3-35], and its differences from the Fernbach House point to André’s attempt to create a picturesque ensemble of residences.

The Villa Les Roches chiefly drew on examples from Le Vésinet and the types of examples of French regionalist and Italianate forms that were popular in the mid-nineteenth century and used on buildings at Le Vésinet. Most generally, the rusticated construction, combined with the simple wooden brackets, balustrades and balconies, recall the Swiss chalet aesthetic popular with regionalists and Viollet-le-Duc; it also mirrors the construction used for the concierge’s house at the Parc’s entry. The massing of the house, with a three-story block abutted by a smaller two-level wing, with each topped by a relatively shallow hipped roof, resembles the belvedere-like towers of Italianate villas that were popular in Europe and the United States in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The resemblance to the belvedere form was magnified by the frieze of floral motifs that originally sat below the topmost roofline. André extended the natural imagery with the abstracted mullions of the arched window on the ground floor that recall the trunk and branches of a tree or the structure of a leaf.

As he had with the Fernbach house, André showed with the Villa Les Roches that he was influenced by architectural designs elsewhere. The architectural historian Francis Roussel argues that André must have visited Le Vésinet, and without question he knew the Parisian suburb intimately. The dining room bay window on the north façade was a motif copied from the

\textsuperscript{352} See Chapter 4 for more on this building.

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architect Grandpierre’s 1900 design for 10, avenue de Belloy, at Le Vésinet [Fig. 3-36], while the red brick arches that André uses on the rear and lateral façades of Les Roches were borrowed from Alexandre Maistrassse, another architect who worked at Le Vésinet [Fig. 3-37]. Meanwhile, the covered entrance gate to the property, with its austere, rough stone and simple linear wood construction, recalls the butterfly gates André designed at the entrance to the Parc and was also been inspired by the design for a property gate at Le Vésinet [Fig. 3-38].

Henri Gutton and Joseph Hornecker’s Eclecticism

The emphasis in the Parc de Saurupt on the picturesque and varied architectural design was evident in designs by other Nancy architects. The engineer and city councilman Henri Gutton and his associate, the Strasbourg-born Joseph Hornecker354 designed two houses in the Parc. Their now-demolished house at 1, rue des Brice [Fig. 3-39], underscores an architectural eclecticism that draws heavily from past styles and typifies the conservatism of Nancy’s brand of Art Nouveau. The house rivals Emile André’s work in the diversity of source material and shows the closeness of the Parc to Le Vésinet in its planners’ attempts to create a landscape of houses with a wide array of designs. Gutton and Hornecker’s buildings do not reveal that they were cognizant of building trends from outside France.

The house at 1, rue des Brice rose two stories and used a fairly conventional pinwheel plan for French houses that joined the house’s four

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353 Roussel, op. cit., 3:70.

rectangular wings of the house at the center [see Fig. 3-39]. Several aspects of its construction recall the regionalist aesthetic, particularly the rusticated infill of the exterior walls. The rooflines, which use gambrels and kicked eaves supported by an intricate system of brackets, look much like the gingerbread of Swiss chalet-style residences. These aspects are complemented by Gothic-derived elements, which include a tall, steeply-pitched gable, like that seen on Hector Guimard’s Villa Berthe, built in Le Vésinet in 1896 [see Fig. 3-27], the leafy and floral motifs in the carved stone, the thin colonnettes, and the projecting window sills that mirror those seen on Sauvage’s Villa Jika.

Gutton and Hornecker’s house appears in many ways to be a picturesque mountain chalet outfitted with eighteenth-century details. The latter is visible in the many classically-derived elements added to the house. The steeply pitched roofs sit atop friezes consisting of bands of chunky blocks that create a rhythm reminiscent of triglyphs and metopes; these are supported by corbels that appear from a distance like guttae that in classical designs would hang from the frieze over an architrave. The balcony ironwork, with its curves and central symmetry, recalls Baroque or Rococo designs common to Nancy’s eighteenth-century buildings. Finally, the tall chimneys with prominent cornices recall those seen on classical Second-Empire buildings. The most distinctly Art Nouveau aspects of the entire house were the iron entrance gates to the property, with their asymmetrical twists that resemble vines and exploit the style to the fullest. This highly eclectic design can be explained by the fact that the house was built on speculation and sat vacant while a buyer was found;\footnote{See Roussel, Nancy Architecture 1900, 3:64-5.} this may have induced Hornecker and Gutton to evade a firm stylistic commitment in order to appeal to a broader client base.
The Villa Lang

The last house built before the Parc de Saurupt opened to public development also emphasized the picturesque qualities found in the other houses in the gated suburb. The Villa Lang [Fig. 3-41] was built by Lucien Weissenberger for Henri-Emmanuel Lang, a cotton magnate whose father had moved the family business to Nancy from Waldinghofen, Alsace, after 1871. Completed in 1905, it stands at the western edge of the Parc where the rue du Montet (now the avenue Clemenceau) intersects the boulevard d’Alsace-Lorraine. Weissenburger

Like other buildings in the Parc, it uses a relatively simple massing of two adjoining rectangular pavilions. Compared to other houses, however, the Villa Lang is an enormous structure, with the thin block containing the staircase rising four stories and topped by a huge, steeply-pitched roof with kicked eaves.

Many aspects of the Villa Lang point to a deep connection felt by both the Lang family and Weissenberger himself with Alsace. To begin with, the steep pitch to the roof of the tower on the Lang House and the gambrel shape of the roof covering the main structure emulate the shape of many traditional Alsatian rooflines. The colored bands of red and yellow brickwork and the diamond patterns on the exterior recreate the patterns of dyed fabric like the clothing or textiles produced by the Lang’s cotton mills. The brickwork resembles several contemporaneously-built structures in Strasbourg [Fig. 3-41]. Likewise, the corbelled supports for the balconies on some Strasbourg buildings mirror the one found under the balcony on the west façade of Weissenburger’s structure. The half-timbering on the Lang residence likewise references Alsatian architecture; the half-timbered shorthand would be repeated on the houses built in Nancy for the Alsatian Village at the 1909 Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France [see Fig. 5-44].
The Lang family’s connections to Alsace indeed ran deep. When the family moved the company to Nancy, it brought many employees from Alsace, and continued to hire Alsatian immigrants after 1871. Beginning in 1901, the Langs housed many of their workers in a complex known as the Cité Lang, a group of structures also designed by Weissenburger in the southern part of Nancy not far from the textile mills. Weissenburger was from Nancy, but his name in German references Weissenburg (or Wissembourg), a city at the northern edge of Alsace, where some members of the Lang family had previously been employed. The Lang House reflects a serious personal interest held by both the Lang family and Weissenburger in their Alsatian roots and regional traditions, and their hope to keep that heritage alive even after the Langs were exiled from their native soil in 1871.

Failure and Reorganization

By 1905, Villard’s Parc de Saurupt venture had stalled. Only eight lots had been sold out of the nearly ninety projected in the original plan. To promote sales, Villard and his architects enlisted Emile Badel, a prolific writer on Lorraine history and culture, to produce Le Parc de Saurupt: Hier, aujourd’hui, demain, a pamphlet that contained many of the articles Badel had published in the local press over the previous several years recounting the history of the site and exhorting the advantages of the healthy, verdant, natural surroundings and modern amenities of the development. Badel had predicted repeatedly that the Parc de Saurupt would soon become an urban

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357 Roussel, op. cit., 3:60-1.
landmark rivaling the nineteenth-century parks in London, the Parc de Monceau in Paris, the fashionable Avenue Louise in Brussels (home to some well-known Belgian Art Nouveau houses by Victor Horta), and Fifth Avenue in New York City.\(^{358}\)

Even before Badel’s publication appeared in print, Villard took steps to integrate the community into the regular urban fabric.\(^{359}\) First, the gates to the Parc were dismounted from their posts, and the streets were opened to the public.\(^{360}\) Second, the configuration of the streets within the property was greatly altered from the half-traffic circle to a set of straight orthogonals and cross-streets.\(^{361}\) The undeveloped lots were divided into smaller parcels for the construction of row homes. These new lots especially became attractive for those wishing to create more affordable middle- and working-class housing, with small gardens at the rear instead of a large yard.\(^{362}\) In the end, Villard finally admitted, the undeveloped lots originally planned for the Parc de Saurupt were simply too expensive,\(^{363}\) and although Nancy had grown substantially over the thirty-five years since the Franco-Prussian War, it did not have the wealthy citizens needed to support such an ambitious project.

The Art Nouveau Apartment Building In Nancy

The Haussmannian multistory apartment houses appeared in Paris


\(^{360}\) As per Villard’s request to the Municipal Council in August 1905. See Roussel, ibid.

\(^{361}\) Ibid.

\(^{362}\) More on these houses later on in this chapter.

during Napoleon III’s transformation of the French capital in the middle of the nineteenth century, but in Nancy, such buildings only became popular around the turn of the century. By 1900, Nancy’s burgeoning population included a class of bourgeois citizens who preferred the amenities offered by modern apartment buildings. Some of Nancy’s architects, including Georges Biet and Lucien Weissenburger, recognized this desire and constructed income-generating apartment houses with their own residences on the ground floor.

Like the other types of housing in Nancy, its Art Nouveau apartment houses showed an initial dominance by Parisian models until the city’s architects began to modify them through decoration of regional motifs. The Parisian influence was especially evident in apartments’ plans and elevations. The buildings typically accommodated one residence per floor, stacking nearly identical apartments one on top of each other. Their plans were often arranged around a courtyard at the rear. This space abutted the main spiral staircase connecting the levels, which might also contain an elevator. As partial compensation for the long staircase climb to their apartment, inhabitants of the upper floors were generally rewarded with a balcony or loggia fronting the street. Nancy’s architects usually included the family living spaces, such as the salon and dining room, along the main façade. The apartments were designed to house large families, with three to five bedrooms, along with kitchens, full bathrooms, and sometimes office


spaces, often linked by long hallways.

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Two of the first Art Nouveau apartment buildings in Nancy were developed by Jules Lombard and Jean-Baptiste France-Lanord at 69 and 71, avenue Foch, just west of the train station, in 1902-3 [Fig. 3-42]. Rising six stories, these were some of the first structures in Nancy to use the Hennebique system of reinforced concrete construction, but like contemporaneously-constructed concrete buildings in Nancy, they disguised this fact behind finely-dressed Euville stone façades, which made them seem as if they used traditional load-bearing masonry walls.  

André's designs for these two buildings clearly indicate the influence of Parisian designers, most notably the Lorraine native Charles Plumet. Indeed, the plans of these apartments mirror very closely those in Parisian apartment houses, with The most notable feature André borrowed from Plumet is the loggia found on the fourth floor of 69, avenue Foch, which bears striking similarity to those Plumet used on the upper floor of his apartment houses at 36, rue de Tocqueville (1897) and 50, avenue Victor Hugo (1901), as well as on a large private residence he built at 114, avenue Malakoff (1900), all in Paris [see Figs. 1-23 and 1-24]. All of these buildings appeared in French art and architectural journals to which André subscribed, where they received very encouraging reviews. Likewise, the A-B-A rhythm of the

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366 Before World War I, however, the street was known as the rue du Faubourg St-Jean.

367 Roussel, 2:15. Construction on these two apartment buildings started while Georges Biet and Eugène Vallin were finishing Biet’s apartment house at 22, rue de la Commanderie (built 1901-03), which also used the Hennebique system and was the first reinforced concrete structure in Nancy. It also disguised the fact that it was built of concrete behind an Euville-stone veneer.

arches André used for the loggia on 71, avenue Foch mirrors that employed by Jules Laviolette on the upper floor of his well-known apartment building at 29, avenue Rapp in Paris (1901),\(^\text{369}\) which won the Parisian Concours de Façades that year [Fig. 3-43]. The general shape of André’s doorway surround for the main entrance at 69, avenue Foch likewise recalls that used by Plumet on 50, avenue Victor Hugo.

André built these apartment houses at the same time that he was designing the Huot duplexes at 92-92bis, quai Claude-le-Lorrain [see Fig. 3-23 from which he adapted many of the patterns. The basic form of the main entrance at 92bis, for example, with its two “eyelet” windows above the double doorway, mirrors that of the main entrance at 69, avenue Foch,\(^\text{370}\) while the projecting front gable on 92bis is nearly identical to the gable that crowns the France-Lanord apartments at 71, avenue Foch [see Fig. 3-42]. These two gables are both very similar to the chimney-and-gable combination on the façade of Weissenburger’s own apartment house on the boulevard Charles V [see Fig. 3-49], designed just after André’s apartments were completed, and all three examples make use of the popular seaweed motif.

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André’s penchant for recycling architectural elements extended to his work on the apartment house for Charles Ducret at 66-66bis, rue Jeanne d’Arc (1905-10), a collaboration with Paul Charbonnier where André reused the ironwork patterns for the balcony railings on 71, avenue Foch [Figs. 3-44, 3-45 and 3-46]. This building, with its high, but straight, mansard roof,
continuous wraparound fourth-floor balcony, and corner location, also has a massiveness that arguably resembles the classic Haussmannian examples in Paris even more than the avenue Foch buildings. The Ducret apartments, however, show a distinct shift towards regional themes that are largely absent in the earlier apartment houses.

Charles Ducret was a merchant who sold paints and was well-known among those in the local building and artistic industries. He was originally from Alsace and moved to Nancy in 1896, locating his business just down the street from the site where he built his apartments. He himself occupied the second floor, just above street level. While some of the motifs used on the building, such as the seaweed, seem devoid of symbolic connotations, others directly refer to the politics of *revanche*. Over the main doorway, Georges Janin created a stained-glass window depicting Jeanne d’Arc [Fig. 3-47]. Jeanne carries a sword and is surrounded by a wide wreath of lilies, symbols of virginity, purity, and her hometown of Domremy. The rays of light in the background that emanate from behind her head emphasize this association, and bestow on Jeanne the notion of holiness or sainthood, important because of the contemporaneous French movement for her canonization, which was finally achieved in 1921. To the left of her image is a sword interlocked with a crown and flanked by two fleurs-de-lis, a set of symbols representing her military service for the dauphin of France, Charles VII. To the right is a Lorraine Cross and a thistle, symbols of regional solidarity and *revanche*. Here the two symbols are intertwined, suggesting thus that these two goals are inherently connected. The entire window thus implies that Jeanne, who once saved France from foreign invaders, will return again to reunite Alsace-Lorraine with France.

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372 See Chapter 2 for more on Jeanne d’Arc and regional symbolism.
The Ducret apartments allude to Nancy through their interior décor. Here, André and Charbonnier decided not to embellish the apartments with Art Nouveau motifs; instead, they chose to use geometric patterns adorned with delicate carvings and moldings [Fig. 3-48]. The living room ceiling, for example, is decorated with a ring of floral patterns, and the mirror and corners of the ceilings each employ an elaborate, almost baroque set of vine and leaflike imagery that recalls Nancy’s eighteenth-century Rococo past. The references to the Rococo are continued in the combination of gentle curves and straight lines in the symmetry of the fireplaces and the hatched moldings of the ceilings. These choices give the apartments an air of luxury appropriate for an upper-middle-class bourgeois clientele, exactly the class of people whom Ducret attracted as residents: aside from him, the upper floors were rented to a civil engineer, a doctor, and a company manager. But the interiors also reflect the Rococo as a symbol of national craft patrimony at the end of the nineteenth century, one to which an educated and professional class of French citizens was specifically attracted. The combination of Rococo and Art Nouveau in the design thus provides a bridge between local and national political and artistic concerns.

Lucien Weissenburger: Pragmatism and Politics

In 1903, Lucien Weissenburger began designing his own apartment house on the north end of the Cours Léopold at the corner of the boulevard Charles V and the rue des Glacis [Fig. 3-49]. Weissenburger desired an income-generating property, with an office and living space for himself on the ground floor and rented apartments on the upper levels. Though an enthusiastic convert to Art Nouveau as early as 1899 (when he designed the

\[373\] See Chapters 1 and 2 for a discussion of Rococo’s connections both to French craft revitalization around 1900 and Nancy’s own eighteenth-century heritage.

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Royer Printing House in Nancy after being named Majorelle’s supervising architect), Weissenburger was more reserved in his design for his own house, and this reflects probably a certain pragmatism due to his need to appeal to a wide variety of clientele, a trait he would exhibit many times over in his career, designing many types of buildings for the private use of magnates as well as for civic purposes.374

At first glance, Weissenburger’s house does not appear to be a typical apartment building in the Parisian sense. In part due to its corner location, the building consists of two simple rectangular pavilions topped by mansard roofs and joined at an angle. It rises a mere three stories, unlike the five-to-seven-story apartment houses built in Paris or those in Nancy by Emile André. The plan of the building uses the traditional U shape of apartment houses, wrapping around a courtyard at the rear, but its ground plan is a bit unusual [Fig. 3-50]. Eschewing any traditional governing Beaux-Arts axis of movement, it forces residents of the first floor to turn left after entering and snake down a hallway to reach the salon that opens to the rear court.

Like Emile André, Weissenburger was not hesitant to borrow designs from other Art Nouveau architects. The tall chimney with vegetal ornament over the front façade dormer was clearly borrowed from Emile André’s work on the Huot Houses, which were finished the same year Weissenburger began designing his house. Its spire reveals Weissenburger’s use of Gothic influences, which are also evident in his incorporation of chancel shapes for the dormers. Weissenburger had also learned much from his work as Sauvage’s supervising architect for the Villa Jika. From a compositional standpoint, his apartment building consists of a set of volumes that are

374 See the Liste des Principaux Travaux Executés Sous la Direction de Monsieur Lucien Weissenburger, Architecte Diplomé par le Gouvernement à Nancy (de 1888 à 1915), 32 pp. (Inventaire Général de la Lorraine, Nancy, Dossier Weissenburger.)
characterized on the lower levels by repetitive sets of windows; but the
overall massing, taking advantage of the angled corner site, is asymmetrical,
punctuated by terraces and balconies. Like Sauvage, Weissenburger created
a picturesque rooffline with varied dormers and chimneys, one of which is
striped like that on Majorelle’s villa. The structure as a whole more
resembles the luxurious residence of an upper-class or bourgeois citizen, than
an apartment building.

The reserved, plastic and naturalistic vegetal décor common to Nancy’s
Art Nouveau structures also identifies the Weissenburger House within the
style. The décor of the stonework, iron railings, and ceramic tiles consist only
of the imagery of leaves of seaweed. This motif is continued on the interior
moldings, where it is curiously accented by imagery of crabs [Fig. 3-51]. An
exception to the vegetal décor is seen on the main doorway, which uses a U-
shaped frame for the stained glass, which is highly geometric and devoid of
any explicit natural references. The interior ornament, meanwhile, is limited
to the mirrors, decorated with umbel motifs, and ceramic fireplaces, all of
which were produced in series [Fig. 3-52]. The Art Nouveau fireplaces and
the exterior tiles were models created by the Société Anonymes des
Céramiques at Rambervillers, a leading ceramic manufacturer in the Vosges
département in southern Lorraine, and sold through their own catalog, while
the ironwork was created by Louis Majorelle.375 By taking advantage of mass
production, Weissenburger accomplished the rare feat of designing an Art
Nouveau building that was targeted to a more modest, bourgeois public,
while maintaining the appearance of a luxurious residence.376

375 Roussel, *Nancy Architecture 1900*, 1:64.

376 Incidentally, the name “Weissenburger” means “from Weissenburg,” a moniker for a
location that can literally be translated from German as “white castle.” Weissenburger’s
house is built from the beige local Euville stone common to Nancy architecture, thus giving
him the distinction of living in a building that could be described eponymously after its
Meanwhile, Weissenburger's political alliance with the city's wealthy elites and the artists of the Ecole de Nancy is borne out in the iconography of the house. On the rue des Glacis façade, he created a huge dormer whose spandrels and mullions come together in the form of a Lorraine cross [Fig. 3-53], emblem of his revanchism against Germany and desire to see the lost provinces of Alsace-Lorraine recaptured. While the Lorraine cross is a fairly common motif in houses in Nancy, it usually appears in discreet locations, such as metal basement vents or small-scale façade tilework. By contrast, Weissenburger chose to make the Lorraine cross the crowning motif of his house, an imposing, permanent part of the structure. It functions as a billboard that both advertises Weissenburger's political convictions and exhorts fellow Lorrainers to join the cause.377

Professionals' Conservative Town Houses

Art Nouveau became so preferred in Nancy that it found its way into even the most conservative type of residence—the French hôtel or urban town house [Fig. 3-54]. In Paris, the number of these houses constructed during the belle époque was sizeable, but they were not nearly as popular as the contemporaneous apartment buildings that were constructed with great zeal. Town houses were commissioned by wealthy clients, perhaps not as rich as the industrialists who hired Nancy’s Art Nouveau architects to create their most recognizable works, but respected bourgeois professionals nonetheless—doctors, lawyers, engineers, even forest rangers and professors.378 Such

377 On the notion of the “billboard” quality of Art Nouveau façades as derived from posters, see Meredith L. Clausen, “Architecture and the Poster: Toward a Redefinition of the Art Nouveau,” in Gazette des Beaux-Arts 106, no. 1400 (September 1985): 81-94.

378 These include, for example, Lucien Weissenburger’s townhouse for Dr. Louis Spillmann, a physician (34, rue Saint-Léon, 1908); Bourgon’s house for Fernand Loppinet, the Inspector of Water and Forests (45, avenue Foch, 1902-03); Biet’s house for Dr. Léon Hoche (16, rue
clients could afford fashionable residences, and probably some of the
exquisite Art Nouveau decorative pieces and furnishings sold by Nancy’s
industrial artists, but not an entire Art Nouveau house. They may have been
professionals, but they did not occupy leadership positions in the city’s major
commercial or artistic associations or local government. None of them, for
example, sat on the boards of the Société Industrielle de l’Est, or the
Chambre de Commerce de Meurthe-et-Moselle, the major civic organizations
of business leaders, nor were they members of the executive committee of the
Ecole de Nancy.

In Paris, the hôtels typified the “popular” strain of Art Nouveau that
appeared in the 1890s and dominated the design culture in the capital,
particularly in their wealth of encrusted ornament. This variant had
dominated the 1900 Exposition Universelle, with its shimmering white
“wedding cakes” of classicism overlaid with a playful, sculptural Neo-Rococo
style of decoration [see Fig. 5-12 and 1-21]. Likewise, they tended to use a
rather conventional plan for Parisian town houses, with a main hall off of
which a number of compartmentalized rooms opened, organized around a
central axis. They recalled the technical virtuosity of eighteenth-century
craftsmen that, as Deborah Silverman has outlined, modern French
designers had tried to recapture in the last decade of the nineteenth century
as part of the government-driven program of craft revival.379

Charles Désiré Bourgon (1855-1915) was the most popular townhouse
architect in Nancy. His designs rarely incorporated aspects of Art Nouveau,
but he was quite proficient in the Neo-Rococo and Neo-Baroque styles, and
because of this (and the generally conservative nature of Nancy’s Art

Emile Gallé, 1907). On these, see Roussel, Nancy Architecture 1900, 3 vols. (Metz:
Serpenoise, 1992), as well as individual dossiers on these buildings at the Service Régional
de l’Inventaire General, Nancy.

379 Silverman, Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France, esp. 142-269.
Nouveau), he was often grouped with the rest of the city’s Art Nouveau architects by the Parisian press as one of the “modern” architects in the city [Fig. 3-54].\(^{380}\) If town-house clients in Nancy did not hire Bourgon, they usually commissioned the Laloux students Paul Charbonnier, Lucien Bentz, or Lucien Weissenburger.\(^{381}\) The town houses these men produced show few traces of Art Nouveau, almost adding it as an afterthought as a token emblem of regional solidarity.

**The Paul Jacques House and the Renaudin House**

The Dr. Paul Jacques House by Charbonnier [Fig. 3-56], like many of his other buildings, illustrates well the most conservative strand of Nancy’s Art Nouveau. Constructed in 1905-07 for a physician, the Jacques House has a very traditional type of massing common to French classicism, with a central pavilion containing the main entrance that rises above the two flanking wings. Its basement features large, rough-hewn blocks that give the appearance of rustication, while the upper levels are constructed of smooth ashlar and terminate in a cornice and steep roof, like most Parisian town houses. The balustrade over the entrance follows a symmetrical, Baroque curve that projects in the center, and the escutcheons at the roofline recall the eighteenth-century Rococo decoration popular in Nancy. The roof resembles that of a French Renaissance chateau with substantial height, a


\(^{381}\) As reported in a note at the end of G.S., “L’Exposition de la Maison d’Art Lorraine,” in *La Lorraine Artiste* 18, no. 10 (1 December 1900): 159.
balustrade, finials, and a blocky chimney topped by a cornice. The building’s plan, set on a strong, central axis, references the Beaux-Arts classicism that Charbonnier favored [Fig. 3-57].

The Paul Jacques house is not, however, a textbook classical building, due to the Gothic details that Charbonnier included. The third floor includes a lancet window, and the roof includes several dormers. The building even has a subtle asymmetry, as the western bay of the main façade is wider than the one to the east of the central pavilion. The Art Nouveau aspects are confined to a few details of the exterior décor: the hairpin curves at the base of the roof gable of the central pavilion, the Y-shaped branches of the window mullions, and the gentle arches of the window heads with ear-shaped lights that flank the main window. The house demonstrates Charbonnier’s command of the style as a purely decorative veneer. Art Nouveau only penetrated other parts of his buildings when he worked in concert with other architects, such as Emile André.

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Lucien Bentz’s house for the landscape painter Alfred Renaudin (1866-1944), built in Nancy in 1907, more directly recalls the Rococo revival that was still popular in France and especially in Lorraine [Fig. 3-58]. The balanced façade, with a centrally-placed entrance, is disrupted from complete symmetry by the tall, high-roofed, French-Renaissance-style tower that contains the staircase. Symmetry and balance, despite the playfulness and delicacy of the décor, is echoed in many of the details. The window mullions and the naturalistic designs for the stained glass, for example, are symmetrical around central axes, as is the balcony ironwork. The quoined

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382 For an example of Charbonnier’s use of classicism, see “Concours d’Oloron: Caisse d’épargne par M. P. Charbonnier,” in La Lorraine Artisté 19, no. 8 (15 April 1901): 164-65.
corners of the building, meanwhile, bring a sense of classical stability to the structure, complementing the massive presence of the staircase tower. The absence of any Art Nouveau elements not tinged with Rococo reveals the extreme conservatism of some strands of Nancy’s Art Nouveau, especially after the Parc de Saurupt opened its gates to the public in 1906.

**Art Nouveau and Working-Class Housing**

A final architectural use of Art Nouveau in Nancy was in working-class and lower-middle-class housing—perhaps appropriate given its association with socialist and working-class causes in Belgium and Paris and the style’s roots in the Arts and Crafts movement. In Nancy, however, the enthusiasm for the style was so great that it even filtered down to this type of residence rarely associated with high design. Art Nouveau row homes in Nancy were, like row homes elsewhere, a speculative development, built in nearly-identical series to the design of one architect. Art Nouveau appeared in these structures mostly after 1909, though in some cases the style appeared as early as 1903.

The Art Nouveau row houses of Nancy were constructed in the new suburban, almost exclusively residential districts on the southwestern edges of town, partially occupying the southern part of the former land of the Parc de Saurupt on the rue du Maréchal Oudinot and rue du Maréchal Gérard. Just to the west of the Parc Sainte-Marie, where the 1909 Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France would be held, a plethora of working-class and bourgeois row houses were built on the rue Félix Faure. A great many of these were designed and built by César Pain (1872-1946), who was known primarily as a land developer and not as an architect. Nonetheless, Pain adopted many of the facets of Art Nouveau that were used by other innovative architects in Nancy. Virtually all of his houses include arched
casement windows decorated with colorful tilework above their arches and below their sills. Several row homes feature tall, thin doorways with sinuously contoured carved panels, with stained-glass windows over the main entrances and elaborate ironwork. A few prime examples, some graced with the title “Villa,” display intricate natural imagery, such as birds, flowers, and vines, stenciled onto the façades [Fig. 3-59]. Many of Pain’s earlier row houses dating from 1903 and 1904 are constructed from rocky, random-coursed stone and include rectilinear wooden balcony railings, gingerbread and elaborate wooden brackets along their steeply hipped roofs, [Fig. 3-60], all of which resemble the Swiss chalet or Arts and Crafts aesthetic simultaneously used by Emile André, Henri Gutton, and Joseph Hornecker in their designs for the Parc de Saurupt [see Figs. 3-32, 3-36 and 3-39]. Each of Pain’s little homes is graced with a two-toned ceramic Art Nouveau plaque bearing his name and the date of construction [Fig. 3-61].

Art Nouveau was far from the only style used for such modest houses in Nancy. It was, however, a very popular choice, and César Pain was far from the only such architect to use it. The row houses of southwestern Nancy contain many Art Nouveau details, in balconies, rooflines, brackets, tilework, stained glass, and even the carving for main entrances [Fig. 3-62]. The survival of Art Nouveau in lower-class residential architecture in Nancy long after the style had fallen out of favor elsewhere in Europe (and, arguably, in the larger upper-class residences in Nancy as well), can be explained by its acceptance as a marker of local tradition, seemingly always be an approved mode of design. It also may be attributed to an attempt to enliven these row houses and break up the relentless monotony of such identical-looking buildings. In Nancy, row houses tend to be built in a very austere and sober manner, with façades that use the local yellow Euville stone or stucco, thereby making them hardly distinguishable from one another. The Art
Nouveau details injected a more picturesque character into these neighborhoods.

Conclusion

The recognition of differences in taste and the respect accorded to citizens of all classes were, as Malcolm Clendenin and Meredith Clausen have shown, one of the main goals of Art Nouveau architects in Paris such as Hector Guimard and Frantz Jourdain. The fractured cultural climate of Paris, however, made the celebration of such differences and the search for a universal language that could unite people across class lines impossible; in the end these divided sentiments were instrumental in the rejection of these two men’s designs, particularly Guimard’s. In Nancy, however, the ability of Art Nouveau architects to adapt the style to a great variety of housing types was instrumental to its ability to become dominant. In other cities—Paris, Brussels, Darmstadt, Vienna, Barcelona, and others—Art Nouveau was preferred by an elite group of patrons aligned with a (usually small) circle of artists and designers. But in Nancy it found an enthusiastic following across class lines, as architects expanded or diminished the use of the style according to the aesthetic tastes and income level of their patrons.

Residential Art Nouveau architecture in Nancy was, however, essentially imported from Paris just before the turn of the century by one of the most daring and avant-garde architects of the day. The Villa Jika was a confluence of Sauvage’s training at the Ecole with the larger themes of rationalism and regionalism, and it also reflected the national preoccupation with creating a modern French dwelling that would provide a respite from industrial life, nourish the family unit, and provide a suitable place for the raising of children as the nation’s future. To achieve this national goal, however, required a successful appeal to a regional audience, and the
injection of legible regional motifs such as the *monnaie-du-pape* and the Lorraine cross into the decorative program of these buildings helped ensure that it would flourish in Nancy. The reliance on conservative, familiar naturalistic tropes and local iconography helped to entrench Art Nouveau architecture in the minds of Nancy’s citizens as “their” modern style, which unmistakably represented the political, social, and economic goals of their region of Lorraine, and the ways in which these aligned with the national interests.

Nancy’s architects and artists may have fallen short of their aspirations and never completely developed an *art lorrain* separate from Paris, but their unique iconographic markers allowed them to claim ownership of this strand of Art Nouveau. Moreover, although Nancy’s Art Nouveau architects never fully broke free from Parisian influence in residential designs, their continued experimentation with forms and elements garnered from other centers provided them with a measure of independence that, at least temporarily, allowed them to evade the capital’s artistic dominance.
Art Nouveau and Commercial Architecture in Nancy

As Art Nouveau became the preferred style for the residences of Nancy’s elites by the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century, it concurrently rose to equal dominance in the city’s commercial architecture. Large-scale commercial development in Nancy began around 1890, before Art Nouveau began to infiltrate the city’s residential architecture. Commercial buildings in late-nineteenth-century Nancy were typical of other French cities. Most were monumental neo-Baroque structures influenced by the architecture of the Second Empire, with business premises on the ground floor and apartments above. They were interspersed with more austere three- or four-story buildings with similar mixed-use floor plans, whose façades displayed large signs bearing the names of businesses [Fig. 4-1].

Commercial development continued virtually uninterrupted until the outbreak of war in 1914, after Art Nouveau had ceased to dominate domestic construction. Predictably, most of Nancy’s new commercial architecture was clustered in the city’s downtown core, just east of the train station [see Fig. 3-26]. This prodigious building activity, into which Art Nouveau was inserted starting in 1899, established the city’s public identity as a bold, modern metropolis shaped by an artistic vision that wedded nature and industry. Despite wartime destruction and changing public taste over the past century, Art Nouveau structures remain the lynchpins of Nancy’s cityscape today.

The growth of the central business district in the 1890s, responded to several contemporary problems. The first was Nancy’s rapid population growth, which transformed the city from a small provincial city to a bustling regional center—the largest in Lorraine, by far, in 1910. Population growth
was in part fueled by industrial expansion, which created jobs and attracted much investment from abroad, particularly from highly industrialized countries including Belgium, but also from Paris itself.\textsuperscript{383} Indeed, several of Nancy’s leading commercial institutions, including a few of the largest department stores and banks, were headquartered elsewhere. This population growth prompted the expansion of established commercial enterprises and the creation of others, along with distinctive new buildings to house them, which that were shaped at least partly by competition between rival establishments.

Second, the development of a regional center with a strong economy and leading citizens who conceived of themselves as equal to those in Paris arguably required evidence of cultural and artistic achievement and refinement. It was not enough for Nancy’s artists simply to produce exquisite decorative art that could furnish interiors, but the city needed to define itself with an architecture that would rival that seen in the capital. Furthermore, Nancy, like other smaller European metropolitan areas in the last half of the nineteenth century, had contributed to the problem of the city as a dirty, unhealthy, and generally unattractive place, and Nancy was no exception to these trends.\textsuperscript{384} The order and stateliness that had characterized the central part of Nancy before the nineteenth century, with its orthogonal street grid and Place Stanislas, had given way to a city that by the 1880s and ‘90s expanded haphazardly along winding, dark and narrow streets marked by few imposing structures, particularly in the new residential areas west of the train station, as well as the inability of the city to do much to regulate it

\textsuperscript{383} See Chapter 2 for an overview of Nancy’s population growth between 1866 and 1911.

before 1914. This was no city that even approached the urban metropolis that might rival Napoleon III's Paris, blessed with myriad improvements.

Finally, as Nancy’s artists and architects aspired to rival Paris at least on an artistic level—or, at the very least, divert attention from the capital as the only artistic center in France—they needed to establish a distinctive regional style. This required labeling of their brand of Art Nouveau as different from the type developed in Paris. Nancy’s architects and decorative artists were able to do this because of they practiced a closer fidelity to natural forms in their work, in line with Gallé’s credo, than did their Art Nouveau counterparts in Paris and Belgium, whose work was much more abstracted and stylized. Thus, even though Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture was actually derived from conservative Parisian Beaux-Arts traditions, it could be distinguished from the capital’s brand of Art Nouveau and identified as the regionalist “art lorrain.”

Commercial Art Nouveau architecture in Nancy helped address all of these issues. The new department stores, banks, restaurants, hotels, and pharmacies expressed the city’s teeming vitality by combining its artistic spirit and industrial strength, thus creating a brand of “Lorraine art.” The location of the new buildings was no accident. Placed between the central train station, where most visitors entered the city, and the medieval _vielle ville_, the central business district occupied an area marked by the rational grid plan laid out by the duke of Lorraine Charles III (1543-1608) in 1590, and which adjoined the city’s grand eighteenth-century spaces exemplified by the Place Stanislas. Within this framework, Art Nouveau tantalized the general public and instilled in Nancy’s citizens a sense of pride in their city.

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and region. The apex of this development was the new Chamber of Commerce of Meurthe-et-Moselle, which also served as the headquarters of the Société Industrielle de l'Est, the main association of the region’s business and industry leaders. This building, built from 1905-08 and dedicated while Nancy hosted the Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France in 1909, demonstrated the command that Nancy’s business leaders exercised over civic affairs and their collective, coordinated commitment to a program of civic beautification.

**Department Stores as Temples of Commerce**

The first, largest, and most important commercial buildings to use Art Nouveau in Nancy were its department stores. France, and specifically Paris, was where the department store had been invented as a distinct architectural and commercial entity during the mid-nineteenth century. Louis-Charles Boileau had opened the new Bon Marché store for Aristide Boucicaut and his wife Marguerite in 1869, and the design model soon spread to other stores.386 By the 1880s, the French department store had developed into a recognizable building type,387 and by the turn of the century, department stores had become so well-established that Julian Guadet, the professor of design at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, included a section devoted to them in his *Eléments et

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Department stores—called *grands magasins* in French (literally, “great stores”)—often occupied an entire city block. Their buildings usually rose three or four stories, and their long rows of windows admitted light into the large interior space. On the street level, the façades were often entirely open, with windows set in thin, iron frames—in essence long rows of shop windows that displayed wares to entice potential customers. These window shoppers would be shielded from inclement weather by an awning or projection over the sidewalk. The street-level windows were often arch-headed, because a ground floor arcade traditionally signaled a building connected with commerce.

The roofline of the French department store was also distinctive, with a cupola above the main entrance that served as a daymark among the city’s other rooftops; this form was perfected in Paul Sédille’s Printemps [Fig. 4-2] in 1883, and it was a popular model even outside France, as seen in several branches of the Jandorf department store chain in Berlin built between 1890 and 1905 [Figs. 4-3 and 4-4]. At the Printemps, Sédille crowned the building with two tall, egg-shaped domes. His monumental twin-towered design invited comparisons with a cathedral westwerk, and the monikers “cathedral of consumption” and “temple of commerce” came to describe the department store. The form was widely emulated by the other Parisian chains, and it would reach Nancy in 1894.

The interior of the department store was no less important in defining the type. As the exterior of the building was carefully designed to seduce and entice throngs of customers, the interior was intended to hold their attention

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by means of an impressive display of space and structure, and to provide
them direction so as to facilitate order. The designs of department store
buildings were often influenced by the temporary structures at international
exhibitions, whose purposes were quite similar: to attract and to order the
public. The large, multistory building also demanded a design that would
continue to impress customers. By the end of the century, the new materials
of steel and glass allowed these buildings to be constructed on a framework of
strong metal piers connected by beams, between which the floors were
stretched.

At its center, the French department store contained a huge atrium
that rose the full height of the structure and was capped by a large glass roof
that let in light as well as functioned as a dramatic, luxurious touch. The
varied wares sold by the company were organized into departments, much
like the categories of products were displayed at a world’s fair. The drama of
the interior continued to unfold on the grand staircases that connected the
levels of the store, as well as on the catwalks that crisscrossed the atrium to
encourage circulation and facilitate browsing. These features could also be
seen in foreign department stores, most notably Wertheim’s in Berlin,390
where these catwalks traversed the atrium space high above the floor,
encouraging customers to ascend to the upper floors where they could not
only experience the ever-changing views of the edifice and activity going on
below and around them, but also be noticed in their fashionable clothing by
other patrons.391 The architects of department stores usually spared no

390 Kathleen James, “From Messel to Mendelsohn: German Department Store Architecture in
Defence of Urban and Economic Change,” in Crossick and Jaumain, eds., Cathedrals of
Consumption, 262-3.

391 Arguably, these features also made it easier for store officials to see the activity going on
below in one glance. See Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” in New Formations 4
(Spring 1988): 81; also see John William Ferry, A History of the Department Store (New York:
Macmillan, 1960), 20-21. The problem of theft and the need for control and security of goods
expense, either, in designing the interior décor, installing the most sumptuous stained glass and ironwork to make the consumer confident about the strength of the company and to entice him to continue to explore the depths of this wondrous space that was typically more luxurious than his own home. Nancy’s own Louis Majorelle was hired to design and manufacture the ironwork for many of the leading chains in Paris, including the Galéries Lafayette.

_Antoine and Eugène Corbin and the Magasins Réunis_

The first, and most important of Nancy’s department stores was the flagship store of the Magasins Réunis, the Nancy-based department store chain that was the only such business to originate and be based in the provinces, not Paris. The Magasins Réunis was founded by the local merchant Antoine Corbin in 1885, who in 1890 hired the Nancy native Lucien Weissenburger to combine the cluster of storefronts that he owned on the Place Theirs, opposite from the city’s train station on the Paris-Strasbourg rail line [Fig. 4-5]. The store was Weissenburger’s first major commission. As Corbin and his son, Jean-Baptiste (“Eugène”), who took over the company upon Antoine’s death in 1901, gradually bought up all the land on the block over the next two decades, Weissenburger was repeatedly called upon to enlarge and remodel the premises. The store began to take its final antebellum form beginning in 1894, when Corbin and Weissenburger started construction on a grand façade. This eventually required the demolition of the old structures, so that in its finished form (whose

_became a major issue, particularly with respect to female shoppers, around the turn of the century, both in France and Germany. For more, see Lisa Tiersten, “Marianne in the Department Store: Gender and the Politics of Consumption in Turn-of-the-Century Paris,” and Uwe Spiekermann, “Theft and Thieves in German Department Stores, 1895-1930: A Discourse on Morality, Crime and Gender,” both in Crossick and Jaumain, eds., _Cathedrals of Consumption_, 116-30 and 131-59._
construction required the import of a huge steam derrick from the United States and was completed around 1907)\textsuperscript{392} the store occupied the entire block, like the grandest Parisian stores.\textsuperscript{393} It remained the principal branch of the chain as the company expanded over the two decades preceding 1914.\textsuperscript{394}

The new Magasins Réunis store that Weissenburger designed starting in 1894 was a demonstration of the principles that he had digested at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts under Laloux and Guadet and which would be elucidated in less than a decade in the latter’s published lectures [Fig. 4-6]. It was a four-story building with rows of glazing on each level. The ground floor elevation consisted of a series of large arch-headed windows, and an iron and glass canopy ran around the entire block, interrupted in the center of each façade, where it rose into a segmental arch over the entrances, much like Frantz Jourdain would later do at La Samaritaine [Fig. 4-7; see Fig. 1-16]. On the west side of the building, closest to the train station, the façade was framed by two corner towers, each of which rose the full height of the building and was crowned by a monumental high ovoid wrought-iron dome lit with skylights that was topped by a cupola and balcony. Below that, each tower was emblazoned with a huge panel celebrating the commercial activity

\textsuperscript{392} The façade’s completion was announced by “Aux Magasins-Réunis,” in \textit{L’Immeuble et la Construction dans l’Est} 25, no. 20 (15 September 1907): 156.

\textsuperscript{393} Coley, ibid., 230-6; and Bouton-Corbin, 34-41.

At the base of the towers were grand entrances to the store underneath the iron and glass canopies. The exterior décor mirrored the eclectic neo-Baroque or Rococo-revival styles then being used on department stores in Paris, with escutcheon-shaped attic window frames and domes decorated with iron motifs of garlands and festoons.

The interior likewise reflected Weissenburger’s intimate knowledge of Parisian department store design [Fig. 4-8]. The final prewar incarnation of the Magasins Réunis was a steel-framed building arranged around a central atrium. The floors that ringed this court were fronted with intricate iron railings and connected by catwalks on the second floor. The floors were linked vertically at one end by grand iron staircases, and the atrium was topped by a huge stained-glass ceiling designed by Nancy’s leading Art Nouveau stained-glass artist, Jacques Gruber.  

Most of the exterior detail of the Magasins Réunis was not Art Nouveau, but the addition of many Art Nouveau features over the first fifteen years of the twentieth century helped add to the store’s symbolism and uniqueness, especially among Nancy retailers. The Magasins Réunis eventually grew so large that Corbin opened an annex just across the rue Mazagran (reachable by underground tunnel) for the corner ground-floor entrance, finished around 1912, Weissenburger collaborated with engineer Frédéric Schertzer (a frequent consultant on large-scale Art Nouveau ironwork in Nancy) to design a vast iron and glass structure [Fig. 4-9]. Its riveted frame was frankly exposed, like the steel piers inside, resembling a

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395 Unfortunately, I have not been able to identify the precise nature of these scenes.


thorny or burled tree trunk. It carried stained glass panels depicting leaves--perhaps gingko or spiky thistle. The crown of the structure, resembling a pair of butterfly wings, was ornamented by stained-glass panels that depicted thistle plants, the symbol of Nancy and Lorraine. One can also read the composition anthropomorphically: the butterfly wings are eyes, the trapezoidal clear glass panel below is a nose, and the entrance opening is a mouth; the store becomes a huge beast devouring the customers who nourish it with the capital it needed. The impressive entrance, along with the décor visible among the displayed goods just inside, was a curious advertisement.

The store’s interior décor displayed Art Nouveau style much more prominently. Louis Majorelle, who executed the decorative ironwork before 1909, modeled the staircase lamps into wiry plantlike forms that recalled the mysterious entrances to Hector Guimard’s Métro in Paris [Fig. 4-10; cf. Fig. 1-17]. These enticed visitors to come closer, ascend, and explore the upper levels of this jungle of merchandise, which most people had probably only imagined. The ironwork around the balconies was clearly and repeatedly emblazoned with pine cone motifs, a symbol of wealth and prosperity as well as a tree native to Lorraine. The names of the various departments were announced by Art Nouveau stained glass signs, adding to the luxurious character of the store. Customers were reminded of the economic strength of Corbin’s company by panels around the base of the glass atrium ceiling that bore the names of all the cities in France where branches of the Magasins Réunis could be found.

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398 Coley, op. cit., 236.
399 Ibid. Also see Bouton-Corbin, 34-5. This seductive design was a hallmark of drawing customers into department stores. See Rosalind Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 66-70.
400 Bouton-Corbin, 30-41; also Nicolas, op. cit., 144-52.
The uppermost level of the store was specifically set aside by Jean-Baptiste Corbin for the Lorraine art that he patronized. There, the visitor could find refreshment in a tea room entirely furnished by Louis Majorelle’s woodworking firm [Fig. 4-11], and explore exhibitions of the latest work by leading local Art Nouveau artists, including the painter Emile Friant and Victor Prouvé, the president of the Ecole de Nancy.401 In a manner not unlike Wertheim’s department store in Berlin, which projected the heroic National Romanticism then popular in Germany (but which did not include Art Nouveau402), the Magasins Réunis’s architecture and décor were conceived with the goal of shaping and directing the region’s taste and identity. Such an enterprise helped convince Lorrainers of the vitality of their own province’s economic and industrial base and the close relationship between that base and the city’s artistic scene and the beautification the central core.

The Belgian-Parisian Influence in the Magasins Vaxelaire

If the Corbins’ enterprise represented the importation of Parisian models to Nancy, the Vaxelaire & Compagnie department store showcased Belgian Art Nouveau. François Vaxelaire was a Lorraine native from Wissembach, in the Vosges, who had made his fortune as a department store executive in Paris and Belgium before founding his own chain, which by 1900 had branches in Charleroi, Antwerp, and Liège, as well as Besançon, Pontarlier, and Epinal. In Nancy on the rue St-Dizier, near the center of downtown, he co-owned a store with the Longwy-born merchant Léon Pignot. In 1899 he commissioned Charles André, his son Emile, and Eugène Vallin to


402 James, “From Messel to Mendelsohn,” 260.
design a new women’s clothing store on the rue St-Jean, the main artery that ran east from Nancy’s train station through the central business district [Figs. 4-12 and 4-14].403

The Andrés and Vallin designed a department store that could be rightly compared to both Plumet and Selmersheim’s Roddy Haberdashery404 on the Boulevard des Italiens in Paris from about 1898-99 [Fig. 4-13] and Paul Hankar’s Niguet Haberdashery in Brussels (1896) [Fig. 4-15]. On the ground floor, the Vaxelaire store was almost entirely glazed with large, arched panes; while on the second floor, an intricate web of curved iron spandrels and mullions organized in heart-shaped bays seemed to sprout like branches from the vertical window frames below [see Fig. 4-14]. Above these heart-shaped frames were signs with stylized lettering announcing the products the store sold, sandwiched between iridescent peacock-feather-shaped escutcheons in the spandrels. The entire façade thus strategically functioned as a display case for the merchandise inside, and furthermore revealed the structure behind, a steel frame designed by Frédéric Schertzer. This tactic, along with the elaborate iron-and-glass canopy sheltering the sidewalk, set the department store apart from other stores on the rue St-Jean, and it was favorably viewed by Parisian critics such as Louis-Charles Boileau.405

Such critics may have been attracted to the Vaxelaire store because of its resemblance to Plumet and Selmersheim’s Roddy Haberdashery in Paris, where the arcuated first floor windows similarly were held together by a


404 As one can see in the illustrations, the store advertised that its proprietors were tailors, shirt merchants, and hatters—essentially, men’s outfitters or haberdashers.

delicate framework. The Roddy store featured a corner sign that announced the name of the store in stylized lettering above the entrance, set against a background of delicate, whiplash tendril-shaped designs; the Vaxelaire store likewise used a sign with the name of the enterprise in Art Nouveau lettering set into the corner of its iron-and-glass canopy, which was flanked by reliefs resembling thin leaves, flowers, and stems. Though the schematic strategies used in both stores are similar, the comparison highlights some of the essential formal differences between Paris and Nancy Art Nouveau: the capital’s artists used much flatter, abstracted, and stylized natural imagery, while the Nancy architects favored a more plastic and naturalistic type of ornament. In each store, an intricate metal grille featuring abstracted floral motifs sat in front of the recessed main entrance [Figs. 4-16 and 4-17], and in both buildings, the storefronts provided a sharp contrast with the classically-inspired apartment blocks of the upper floors, which made increased the stores’ visibility from the street.

The comparison of the Vaxelaire store with Belgian models was also appropriate, though not quite as striking. The thick, curved frames of the glazing on the Vaxelaire store façade owed much to the designs for the entrance and display windows of Hankar’s Waucquez shop, and even resembled Victor Horta’s thick iron frames for the all-glass façade of L’Innovation in Brussels, completed in 1901 [Fig. 4-18]. It seems certain that the André and Vallin were at least aware of Hankar and Horta’s work in Brussels from the 1890s when they began designing this store in Nancy.

Once they were drawn into the store by the Vaxelaire store’s transparent street-level façade, customers found themselves in an environment of luxury. Vallin, who was responsible for the interior, furnished the store with wood cabinets, doors, and paneling of exotic woods designed to harmonize with the glass façade [Fig. 4-19]. The curves of this furniture, such
as the doors to the dressing rooms, included stained-glass panels that used the same heart-shaped designs as the second-floor storefront, a design that demonstrated Vallin’s knowledge of the similar interior paneling of the Roddy store [Fig. 4-20]. Vallin and Jacques Gruber, who did the stained glass, emblazoned the woodwork and glass with a clematis motif, a local flower, thereby firmly connecting the store’s aesthetic with the Lorraine landscape. The forms of the façade, inspired by Parisian and Belgian precedents, thus gave way to a more familiar, elegant, locally-inspired interior décor.

Vaxelaire and Pignot proved to be committed to this new, modern aesthetic fervently as much as the Corbin family. In 1913, they hired Weissenburger, the Corbin’s house architect, and Louis Majorelle to remodel their men’s store on the rue Saint-Dizer, which had been built by Charles André in 1896. Elevation drawings reveal that the new store was assembled from several older structures, much like Corbin’s Magasins Réunis had been in its original form. Also like Corbin’s store, the Vaxelaire, Pignot, & Cie building adopted a prototypical department store layout: a large, rectangular hall, surrounded by multiple gallery levels, connected by double staircases and bridges (on the second floor only) [Fig. 4-21 and 4-22]. The interior was, like Corbin’s department store, crowned by a huge glass ceiling that flooded the space with natural light. As Pierre Duroc described it,

What to say now of the interior: so clear, so gay, so shimmering, with its large galleries, its spacious staircases...suspended in air, its speedy elevators, its solid piers, its armored escutcheons, its delicate frieze which runs under an immense glass ceiling by Jacques Gruber. Among the flowers, gold, colors, and light so wisely sifted, customers can think that they themselves are in a true Palace of Wonders, a long exhibition hall, where they can leave themselves to go

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without fear to all temptations, all seductions, all their whims.\footnote{Duroc, “La Maison Vaxelaire-Pignot,” in \textit{Nancy-Illustré} 1, no. 10 (November 1913): 208.}

Weissenburger had created a modern space that was sure to impress the store’s patrons and induce them to spend their money on fine clothing. He managed to do so, however, without much use of Art Nouveau, as by this time in his career, he had returned to an eclectic classicism. Since the Vaxelaire & Pignot store was sandwiched into the row of buildings on the rue Saint-Dizier, Weissenburger compressed the elements of the now traditional department store exterior into its smaller façade [Fig. 4-23]. The arcuated and glazed lower two floors, with an elaborate iron-and glass canopy, recalled the “display-case” façade of the company’s women’s store on the rue Saint-Jean, and these, combined with the fenestrated upper stories, signaled that it was a department store. Since the store did not sit on a corner, the corner towers were replaced on each end of the façade by gables bearing the company logo crowned by a tall finial. Like the rue Saint-Jean store, the building was also topped by a sign bearing the company name in huge letters.

Unlike the Magasins Réunis, the Art Nouveau features were only found on the exterior: in the gently-arched spandrels of the framework for the glazed lower floors of the façade; the flat-topped arches on the fourth floor windows that recalled Eugène Vallin’s Pavilion of Mines and Metallurgy at the Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France in 1909 [see Fig. 5-29]; the intricate leafy ironwork adorning the face of the sidewalk canopy, and the company logo on the gables at each end of the roof [Fig. 4-24].

Weissenburger’s Art Nouveau interpretation of the corporate logo was important in establishing and advertising the company’s identity. The design, centered around an interlocking “V-P,” incorporated the symbolic head of a lion, “a tradition of 27 years, who witnesses more and more the incontestable
power of the premier clothing retailer for men and children in all of the East of France,” and was emblazoned with the motto, “Ma Loyauté fait ma Force” (“My loyalty makes my strength”). These elements were framed by thistles, symbols of Lorraine and Nancy. The logo assured the public that the company’s economic strength derived from fidelity to its customers and the province. Although Vaxelaire had made his fortune in Belgium, he and his partner Pignot remained devoted to their birthplace of Lorraine. These patriotic and regionalist sentiments resonated with Weissenburger, Majorelle, and Gruber, close friends who were all prominent members of the Ecole de Nancy and deeply committed to growth of the province’s economy and its reunification wholly within France.

Art Nouveau and Nancy’s Banks

Even more than department stores, banks sought to inspire consumer confidence. Banks were the financial cornerstones of Nancy’s economic prosperity, and they served as promoters of corporate taste. By the end of the nineteenth century, the bank was a well-established building type with many specific requirements, which Guadet spelled out in the *Eléments*. As a commercial establishment, banks often had an arcaded ground floor or entrance. Here was the large, central banking hall, which usually rose the full height of the building and was amply lit by a large glass ceiling. The hall contained cashier windows where customers could conduct their business. The décor of the public space of the bank was designed to instill trust in the clientele, and almost always included luxurious paneling, fixtures, and furniture, embellishments for which French Art Nouveau was especially well

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409 Ibid.

suited. Luxurious materials and smart design suggested to customers that such taste and refinement were accessible to them; not only were customers surrounded by luxurious furnishings whenever they entered the bank, but the financial expertise of the bank’s employees could help its patrons afford to outfit their own homes with such fine décor. In this way, banks might shape consumer taste.

These features could be seen in Nancy’s banks before the city’s financial institutions enthusiastically turned to Art Nouveau after the turn of the century. Representative of this formula was the main Nancy branch of the Crédit Lyonnais, completed in 1901 by the father-and-son team of Férnand and Félicien César, which uses a heavy, monumental, and rusticated neo-Baroque classicism that exudes the strength befitting a reliable financial institution [Fig. 4-25]. Its small frontage on the rue Saint-Georges was too short for a full arcuated base, but the huge arched entrance made its presence felt. Inside, the large central banking hall is covered by an enormous Art Nouveau stained-glass ceiling by Gruber [Fig. 4-26], which adds a sense of opulence to the space. The hiring of Gruber signified the bank’s recognition of the city’s emerging decorative arts community. While it was an institution from outside Lorraine, Crédit Lyonnais willingly paid homage to local traditions and developments.

Eugène Vallin, Georges Biet, and the Société Générale

The first bank building in Nancy to embrace Art Nouveau architecture fully was the Société Générale on the rue Saint-Dizier, a six-story, mansard-roofed structure designed and built in 1902-05 by Georges Biet and Eugène

Vallin for the physician Henri Aimé, who rented out the upper floors as apartments [Fig. 4-27]. The Société Générale was based in Paris, but its choice of a building designed by two of Nancy’s Art Nouveau architects suggests the desire of the bank’s executives to use every means at their disposal to ingratiate their company within the community, a tactic that is also suggested by the fact that the Nancy branch’s director occupied the building’s fourth-floor apartment.412

The Société Générale building represents a rather traditional French design for an apartment building and a bank enlivened by the ornament of Art Nouveau. This was an appropriate design for Biet, who was trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts but was searching for an alternative architectural vocabulary to classicism, and Vallin, the Gothic-inspired decorator who sympathized with rationalism. Biet and Vallin designed a four-bay façade that was symmetrical around a central axis. The masonry piers between each bay rose without break through most of the height of the building, which accentuated its verticality. With its distinct first floor for the bank and curved mansard roof, above the cornice, it appeared much like a cross between a Sullivanesque office building and a pavilion for a Second-Empire Parisian government structure. The commercial façade’s traditional arcuated lower level was modified into a pair of asymmetrical half-arches, separated by a central column that projected out beyond the plane of the façade like a solitary Gothic pier removed from a cathedral. On the balconies, curved railings discreetly adorned with spiral iron tendrils and floral motifs injected the flavor of the local brand of Art Nouveau. Vallin was probably responsible for this part of the exterior as well as much of the interior, which was much

more rationalist in tone. There, the architects frankly revealed the steel piers and their exposed rivets, and a delicate iron framework held the thin glass panels separating the service windows in place [Figs. 4-28 and 4-29]. The double-height central banking hall was crowned by a hipped glazed ceiling held together with an iron framework [see Fig. 4-28]. Only the wooden paneling, with its wide, arched panels, softened the character of the space, which paid homage to the prodigious modern industries of Lorraine in both iron and fine wood furniture.

The Renauld Bank

The most remarkable Art Nouveau bank building in Nancy was the Renauld Bank, built at the corner of the rue Chanzy and rue Saint-Jean between 1907 and 1910 by Emile André and Paul Charbonnier [Fig. 4-30]. A tall, but well-proportioned building that carefully balanced its two façades around a conical corner tower, its stately aspects were both complemented and animated by the plethora of florid Art Nouveau ornament. The bank’s design incorporated strategies and architectural elements from such diverse types as department stores, apartment buildings, and town houses, and from local, national, and international models. Most of the design should be attributed to Emile André, the most daring and experimental architect in Nancy, who collaborated on the structure with Paul Charbonnier, one of the city’s most conservative designers. Their originality prompted Nancy’s progressive building journal, L’Immeuble et la Construction dans l’Est, to herald its opening more enthusiastically than it had done for any other building in the city.413

413 Emile Badel, “Le Nouvel Immeuble de la Banque Renauld.” L’Immeuble et la Construction de l’Est 28, no. 23 (17 July 1910): 267. The building’s opening was so noteworthy that it required a full-page article with a large photograph of the new structure.
The Renauld Bank had the advantage of a prominent location in Nancy’s business district. To the west, across the rue Chanzy, was the Place Saint-Jean, a large square bordered by other financial institutions. On the far side of this square stood the Magasins Réunis and several hotels. The south façade opened onto the rue Saint-Jean, the main artery between downtown and the train station [Fig. 4-31]. André and Charbonnier exploited this by giving the building a corner tower, like Weissenburger had done on the Magasins Réunis, which made the bank one of the tallest buildings in the city. The base of the tower is marked by a distinctive triple arcade that signaled its status as a commercial structure. The unique design of the tower uses a prominent third-floor balcony with tapering balusters that support the oriel structure above. The tower is capped by a tapering cone pierced at three different levels by dormers, making it resemble a cathedral spire covered by crockets, and this neo-Gothic vocabulary is accentuated by the tapered dormers around the attic story. The uniqueness of the design in Nancy prompted Émile Badel to speculate that André had derived the design from German medieval architecture, suggesting it recalled a “Nuremberg style” of building. Ironically, André may have been inspired in his search by Charbonnier, whose early sketches for the tower included an onion-shaped dome reminiscent of German Renaissance examples [Fig. 4-32]. The tapering Neo-Gothic spire is nonetheless appropriate for a bank, given the nineteenth-century associations of Gothic with notions of honesty and morality, values particularly relevant for an institution that handles and secures its patron’s money. Much as the Magasins Réunis in Nancy could be described as a “cathedral of consumption,” the Renauld Bank looked every inch like a cathedral of banking.

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414 Now the Place Maginot.
415 Badel, op. cit.
If the Renauld Bank also bore a strong resemblance to other French and foreign models, it also drew on examples from Nancy’s residential Art Nouveau architecture. André, who often reused architectural elements from his earlier projects, based the gables that pierce the roofline on the gables from the Huot Houses and Lombard Apartments [see Figs. 3-23 and 3-42], both from 1902-3. These two buildings most likely also provided the inspiration for the Renauld Bank’s steeply-pitched roof.

The bank’s location on the sloping rue Chanzy was also fortunate for the architects. The base of the tower was arcuated, but because the ground beneath it was uneven, as the sidewalk sloped downhill it required a series of steps up from street level. This gave the bank an additional seductive quality as it drew the customer in, transporting him up from the pedestrian world into a separate realm of high finance and careful money management. This gave the bank a sense of impregnability—which secured customer confidence—but also reinforced the notion of social and economic mobility, as the potential customer could easily move between these two spheres, an experience that no other bank in Nancy offered.

Just as André and Charbonnier devised a distinctly inviting entrance, they were able to impress the bank’s patrons with the interior design. The nearly-square interior hall was not immense, but it was crowded with exquisite Art Nouveau décor, including fine wood paneling and intricate ironwork by Louis Majorelle, polished stone, and a large stained-glass ceiling by Jacques Gruber adorned with thistle motifs. Majorelle’s *monnaie-du-pape* motifs appeared virtually everywhere: in the ironwork for the staircase, in the sculptural details of the moldings, the woodwork of the banking hall, and even the stained glass located above the doorways into individual offices [Figs. 4-33, 4-34, and 4-35].

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416 In English, the plant *monnaie-du-pape* is known as “annual honesty.”
The staircases to the basement below and the mezzanine above gave a clear sense of organization; public space was on the ground floor while the private chambers of the bank’s officers and meeting rooms were on the upper level. The basement, logically, was the location of the vaults and safes below ground, as Guadet had counseled his students at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts for such commissions.\textsuperscript{417} The design thus facilitated surveillance, order, and control, qualities that provided comfort to professionals who daily attempted to navigate the speculative and often-unpredictable world of markets and finance. The interior order of the bank also surely served as a welcome haven from the bustling traffic on the streets outside, a secure repository for clients’ hard-earned money. Unbeknownst to customers, the idea of surveillance and control was further underlined by the location of Renauld’s own office and apartment in the upper levels of the building, where his family frequently entertained visitors [Fig. 4-36].\textsuperscript{418}

The Art Nouveau features of the Renauld Bank served three strategic functions. The first was to emphasize the economic function of the institution. On the exterior façade, around the entrance arcade, André and Charbonnier placed iron plaques adorned with images of gingko leaves, an exotic plant that had been introduced to Lorraine in the eighteenth century and that was a symbol of wealth.\textsuperscript{419} The gingko furthermore displays extraordinary resistance to the elements, especially frost,\textsuperscript{420} particularly fitting as the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{417} Guadet, \textit{op. cit.}, 2:413-18.
\item \textsuperscript{418} Pierre Lescanne to Peter Clericuzio, 29 July 2006. The problem of how to provide order to the throngs of potential customers was one that many business owners, especially those of large enterprises, confronted at the end of the nineteenth century. See J. W. Ferry, \textit{op. cit.}, 20-23; Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” 81; and Miller, \textit{Bon Marché}, 177.
\item \textsuperscript{420} Ibid., and Laurence Picard, “L’art et les plantes: les plantes inspiratrices de l’Ecole de Nancy” (Thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris 5, 1996), 109.
\end{itemize}
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symbol for a bank. Majorelle, Gruber, André, and Charbonnier chose ferns as a decorative motif on the furniture, the exterior stonework, Renauld’s office furniture, and the ceiling of the titles hall. Ferns are toxic to cold-blooded animals and help to ward off parasites,\textsuperscript{421} thus making them, like the ginkgo, a fitting motif for a bank. The annual honesty plant, also used by Majorelle on the Bergeret House, is known in French as the *monnaie-du-pape* (the pope’s coin purse), because of its’ fruit’s resemblance to coinage,\textsuperscript{422} clearly a reference to the money that flowed through the bank’s coffers and cash windows. Its placement everywhere in the bank’s décor was a reminder of the substantial economic means of the enterprise. (Renauld’s bank constantly advertised that several million francs underwrote its operations.) The stained glass by Gruber also included pine cone motifs, used by Nancy artists as a symbol of both wealth and Lorraine itself.

Demonstration of the Renauld bank’s devotion to local interests and regional concerns was the second function of its Art Nouveau décor. The use of Art Nouveau and four prominent artists of the Ecole de Nancy signaled this general allegiance, and many of the particular Art Nouveau floral forms chosen revealed specific connections to local themes. The thorny thistle, a symbol of Nancy and Lorraine, crowned the spire and its dormers to proclaim by synecdoche the fiery and defensive nature of the province’s inhabitants. This was an apt symbol for Renauld’s bank, which pledged to safeguard tenaciously its customers’ savings and investments.

The *monnaie-du-pape* had deep roots in medieval Lorraine legend. According to one story, Duke René of Lorraine and Bar was taken prisoner in battle, and while waiting to be released he picked some branches of the

\textsuperscript{421} Picard, ibid., 103.

monnaie-du-pape and sent them to his subjects as a signal of his disapproval for their slowness in ransoming him; the monnaie-du-pape was consequently nicknamed l’oublié, referring to the forgotten duke.423 As Louis Majorelle had shown at the Villa Jika, the use of the monnaie-du-pape was a powerful symbol of his devotion to the recapture of Alsace-Lorraine, even though support for this policy had waned in the rest of France. This political meaning was reinforced by the placement of Paul Dubois’ statue Le Souvenir424 outside the bank on the Place Saint-Jean [see Fig. 2-8], a large symbol of Nancy’s dedication to the reunion of the two colonies with France.

On a third level, the use of Art Nouveau was a symbol of the bank’s commitment to modernity. In the banking hall, Paul Charbonnier designed the signs for the cashiers’ windows with a font reminiscent of the lettering on Hector Guimard’s Paris Métropolitain a decade before [Figs. 4-37 and 4-38]. Lorraine industrialists were proud of their connections with the technologically-advanced Métro: the steelworks at Pont-à-Mousson proudly displayed a huge iron ring at the 1909 Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France, having fabricated the iron ring framework for the Métro’s tunnels running under the Seine.425 Homage to Guimard among Nancy artists was not unusual, although their admiration for his work was not one that they ever recognized in print. The doorway of ironworker Lucien Collignon’s house in northwest Nancy was a near-exact replica of the gate to Guimard’s Castel Béranger [Figs. 4-39 and 4-40]. This was probably an advertisement of his metalworking skill, and at least one house in Nancy used balcony railings of

423 Verneuil, op. cit., 132. "Oublier" is the French verb meaning "to forget."
424 See Chapter 2 for more on Le Souvenir and its connection with the Alsace-Lorraine issue.
the type that Guimard had designed for apartment houses in the sixteenth arrondissement of Paris [Fig. 4-41]. Guimard even served in an unknown and probably small capacity as a consultant for Nancy’s 1909 Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France. The use of Art Nouveau by Nancy architects and commercial clients was a means to advertise their familiarity with and proficiency in using the most modern, advanced technologies in building design and construction available.

Restaurants and Hotels

Nancy’s enthusiasm for Art Nouveau could be seen most frequently in the city’s restaurants and hotels, businesses that relied heavily on visual appeal to seduce often very transient customers. These establishments needed to demonstrate their adherence to the most up-to-date trends in design and décor. In Paris, the style enjoyed such an ephemeral popularity that only a few examples of Art Nouveau were created among the hundreds of shops and restaurants. In Nancy, however, Art Nouveau’s appeal endured in local consciousness, and it became the preeminent style for Nancy’s downtown shops and other businesses [Figs. 4-42, 4-43, 2-31, and 2-40].

Hotels and restaurants lent themselves readily to the use of Art Nouveau because of their few requirements. In outlining the program for restaurants in the Eléments, Guadet remained very brief, mentioning only that a café needed to have a strategic placement of the dining room to give

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426 Letter from Hector Guimard to the Administrateur de l’Exposition de Nancy, 14 April 1909 (Archives Municipales de Nancy, (a) R2-23, fiche “Architectes divers”). The letter only notes that Guimard agrees with the decision of the addressee regarding the exposition, but the precise subject of their exchange is unknown.

427 Not surprisingly, however, due to the fact that many such small businesses in Nancy have ceased operations or moved, as well as the ephemeral nature of the popularity of commercial architectural styles, most of these smaller Art Nouveau-décorated storefronts and cafés no longer exist.
dining patrons a pleasant view, for which ample windows would help. The interior, meanwhile, merely needed to provide privacy among parties, but still allow staff members to service them efficiently.\footnote{Guadet, \textit{Eléments et Théorie}, 3:33-34.} Exactly how the architect achieved these two ends remained susceptible to his and his client’s preferences.

\textit{The Brasserie Excelsior/Hôtel Angleterre}

The most noteworthy of Nancy’s Art Nouveau hotels and restaurants is the Brasserie Excelsior/Hôtel Angleterre [Fig. 4-44], on the eastern edge of the Place Thiers directly opposite the central train station. One of the city’s last Art Nouveau structures, it was designed by Lucien Weissenburger and his nephew Alexandre Mienville (1876-1959), both Lalouxstudents at the \textit{Ecole des Beaux-Arts}.\footnote{Edmond Delaire, \textit{Les Architectes Elèves à l’Ecole des Beaux-Arts 1793-1907} (Paris: Librarie de la Construction Moderne, 1907), 349.} By this point, both men had abandoned the florid arabesques that had characterized Weissenburger’s Bergeret House and Mienville’s work on the \textit{Ecole de Nancy}’s 1904 exhibition [see Figs. 3-8 and 2-35]. The two conceived of a structure marked by a regimented geometric linearity. Its chamfered corner, which contains the main entrance to the restaurant on the ground floor and, at its summit, pierces through the cornice to two tall finials, resembles the corner towers of a department store. The height of the corner bay is accented by the stacked horizontal balconies projecting from each of the upper floors. The verticality provides it with some of the eye-catching power that Weissenburger had captured previously with his tall domes of the \textit{Magasins Réunis}, just a few steps away [see Fig. 4-6]. Weissenburger’s use of double pylons above the roofline likewise recalls his design for the roof of his \textit{Maison des Magasins Réunis} pavilion at the
Exposition Internationale de l'Est de la France in 1909 [see Fig. 5-34], which also used two towers above the main entrance.

Weissenburger and Mienville planned the façades of the brasserie and the hotel above using the familiar features of department store design. The arcaded ground-floor windows of the brasserie indicate the commercial purpose of the structure, and are shielded by an elaborate iron-and-glass metal canopy designed by Majorelle. More importantly, these large windows, which provide diners with a wide view of the surrounding streets and plaza, function much like the display-case windows of department stores (such as Weissenburger's own Magasins Réunis literally just a few steps away), seductively displaying dining to passersby. Unlike a department store, however, the building does not impress the viewer with an overbearing and heavily ornamented monumentality. Its austerity can be seen in its plain, yellow stone façades punctuated at nearly regular intervals by a grid of rectangular windows and projecting balconies. At the roofline this governing matrix is made more explicit with the coupled columns separating each bay, topped by the projecting cornice above. The broad canopy at street level seems to seal off the restaurant from the hotel, as if to make the upper floors float in a world removed from the bustle of passers-by, a welcome respite for the weary traveler. The well-organized upper façade, pierced by its tall, thin, windows and small balconies, conveys a sense of privacy and order that potential lodgers would expect in a well-run hotel. On the upper floors the floral imagery is kept to a minimum, neatly patterned on the ironwork and structurally integrated into the corbels under the coupled columns. Above the columns, an-otherwise bare architrave bears the flat stamp of sunflowers, recalling the flat geometric sunflower stenciling of Austrian architects over a decade earlier [see Fig. 5-28]. Weissenburger and Mienville had moved from the florid French curve to the ruled lines of Otto Wagner.
The governing grid of the hotel is relaxed considerably for the brasserie on the ground floor, however, in order to introduce a sense of envelopment by nature. This is made possible by the wide projections of the iron canopy, which rationally separates the two parts of the building into different realms. The canopy’s delicate ironwork, which features pine cone and pine-needle motifs much like those in Majorelle’s ironwork for the Magasins Réunis [Fig. 4-45], filters natural light, creating the effect of standing in a cluster of trees, and like tree branches, the canopy and the large, arching corbels supporting it seem to reach to shelter people on the sidewalk [Fig. 4-46]. The clear dining-room windows are framed by Gruber’s stained glass that uses leafy imagery, giving both the interior and exterior spaces a natural air.

The imagery of nature is even more evident on the Excelsior’s interior [Fig. 4-47]. There, the floral motifs evident in Gruber’s stained glass are echoed in the chandeliers by Majorelle and Daum. The Excelsior’s ceiling is defined by broad, low, horizontal arches covered with ferns that mimic the forested effect of the canopy outside; the spandrels of the arches resemble tree branches, and the light fixtures read as budding flowers [Fig. 4-48]. The wood wall paneling reminds one of the tree trunks that support this canopy.

The imagery of the interior décor strategically evokes warmth and pleasure. The ferns are a felicitous choice as they are known in some contexts as symbols of endurance and revelry, which are appropriate for the hours of enjoyment that many patrons seek by visiting a bar.\footnote{Pillard Verneuil, op. cit., 59, 76, 157.} The ferns also have the air of exoticism in their giant scale and spread overhead on the ceiling, in a manner not unlike palm fronds, thus suggesting the transport of the bar’s patrons to another pleasure-filled world brought on at least in part by their intoxication with alcoholic beverages.

At the time the Excelsior was built, Art Nouveau was still in vogue in
Nancy. The local population was now familiar with this civic and regional brand of Art Nouveau, with its plastic, naturalistic ornament and sinuous arabesques; yet they welcomed the Excelsior building with caution and curiosity. As *L'Immeuble et la Construction dans l'Est* commented, it was “very original” and “produced an interesting effect”:

> It is certain that these two Nancy architects have searched for something new and novel in Nancy. Is this *style moderne*, or a Carolingian style, with these heavy cutaway balconies, with these florid “corbels” supporting these coupled columns, in white stone and with gilded capitals, themselves undergirding the richly gilded beams, while the façades are so severe, so soberly ornamented, and the pilasters are sensitively covered with a slight amount of foliage?

The building seemed to strip down the structure to its functional essence, something, the reviewer claimed, that many other architects would not have done. It was a welcome change, he declared, from the many Louis XV-style buildings in the city, but, he predicted, this difference would be sure to “confuse some people in Nancy.” As a result, it would ‘draw the eye’ and invite the passer-by to embark on a long contemplation or ‘dissection,’ which [would] be very favorable to...these two establishments.”

Indeed, *L'Immeuble*’s critic believed that the austere, classicized exterior would set it apart from other Nancy buildings and draw customers into the restaurant and hotel. This part of the building was welcomed with unanimously positive coverage, which viewed it as evidence of civic pride and architectural achievement. The critic for *L'Est Républicain* declared that

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431 Another term used in France at the time for Art Nouveau.


There is room to congratulate this beautiful architectural ensemble of the Grand Café Excelsior and the Hôtel Angleterre, the well-known Nancy architects Mr. Weissemburger [sic] and Mr. Mienville, who have finished their first successful commission.

... 

Olympus is the right word, since this will be a true paradise. Excelsior, higher, always higher, in the senses of beauty and goodness.

And beginning on Sunday, the crowd of Nanciens, the crowd of visitors, will want “to come to the Excelsior” like it is a magical sanctuary from which, once it is entered, no one wants to leave, since one will find there the feast of the eyes, the feast of the palate, the delight of comfort, of luxury, and—that which cannot be sneezed at—the friendly welcome and the charming conversation among friends.434

Such a building thus provided a picturesque quality to the city’s downtown district, a unique structure that would dazzle and impress both Nancy residences and visitors alike. The exterior contrasted with Nancy’s Art Nouveau structures—many of which had been influenced by the Rococo in vogue during Louis XV’s reign—and retreated in terms of plasticity from the classicism of Laloux in which both Weissenburger and Mienville had been trained, and to which both of them had increasingly turned after 1905. Even this vocabulary had been distilled down to a more sober, flattened aesthetic that emphasized the essence of forms rather than their decorative qualities. These aspects were reserved for the interior, which recalled the familiar naturalistic forms and symbolism of the Ecole de Nancy and created a much warmer, lively atmosphere.

Art Nouveau Pharmacies, Science, and Public Health

Pharmacies were consistently built in the Art Nouveau style in Nancy and Lorraine. At the turn of the century, pharmacists were one of the few professions to be directly concerned with medicine and public health, and

they had evolved from the medieval and Renaissance apothecaries, who had often created treatments for illness and disease from plants and their fruits. In Nancy, pharmacists were held in high regard as skilled professionals, and had a significant history as artists and documenters of plants and fruit species, activities that several local historians in the early decades of the twentieth century were beginning to investigate.435

Julian Guadet included pharmacies in his discussion of facilities that are a part of hospitals, but he did not discuss free-standing shops. In Nancy the typical Art Nouveau pharmacy was unaffiliated with any institution. The architectural requirements for pharmacies were not extensive, but they were fairly specific. As Guadet noted, pharmacies demand a main shop space, with cabinets to hold medicine and counters at which to serve patrons and receive payment. In the rear, the pharmacy needs a laboratory for the preparation of medicines and an office for the pharmacist.436

Pharmacies, like most shops in Nancy, almost always occupied the ground floor of an apartment building. Victor Jacques’ Pharmacy at 55, rue Jeanne d’Arc, designed by Lucien Bentz in 1903, exemplifies this type of structure [Fig. 4-49]. Bentz, as noted earlier, was the best-educated architect in Nancy, by far, and was influenced heavily by conservative French academic architecture. Educated in Guadet’s own atelier at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts,437 he adopted his teacher’s penchant for an eclectic classicism, which he used in the many public buildings he designed.

Bentz’s design for the Jacques Pharmacy comprises two multistory


436 Guadet, 2:589 and 3:4-7.

437 For more on Bentz, see Chapter 2, also consult Roussel, op. cit., 2:44-45; and Delaire, op. cit., 174.
façades punctuated by arcades of windows and joined by a corner tower; it mirrors the department store strategy used on other contemporaneous Nancy commercial buildings. The building’s verticality is accented by its extremely steep mansard roof crowning the tower and the monumental piers between the façade bays. The florid sculpted ornamentation at the top and banded masonry at the base of the piers gives the illusion of classically-inspired pilasters, an image that is strengthened by the heavy modillions and cornice just below the attic story. The building thus assumes a stately, towering, and imposing presence; its second-level balcony, supported on a pair of massive, sinuously curved corbels, impresses itself on pedestrians. The soffit of the corbelled balcony is richly carved with peculiar, nearly baroque floral reliefs, which entice the passerby into the pharmacy, whose presence is signaled in part by the snakes of the caduceus featured in the soffit sculpture. Such floral motifs serve to give the façade a more pronounced plasticity and forceful presence, evoking a sort of living quality with some floral motifs seemingly growing out of the balusters of the balcony railings [Figs. 4-50 and 4-51]. Indeed, the sense of motion executed by the local carver Auguste Vautrin (1868-1921), resembles strongly the ornament of another Gaudet student, the Parisian Art Nouveau architect Xavier Schoellkopf. Bentz was probably also influenced by a similar design used by Henri Gutton and his nephew Henry, who just two years before had designed the Genin-Louis Grain Shop on the rue Saint-Jean, one block away from the Renaud Bank, with its tall, boldly-painted corner tower and corbelled steel-framed oriel that is lavishly enlivened with multicolored glass floral patterns [see Fig. 2-31].

The interior of the Jacques Pharmacy displayed and stained glass by Jacques Gruber and woodwork by Eugène Vallin that also employed plant motifs [Fig. 4-52]. These represented a plethora of species, including foxglove,

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438 Which has now been entirely lost.
ivy, poppies, buttercups, mistletoe, oak, and waterlilies, many of which have medicinal properties or produce well-known chemical effects on the human body. Even a small business such as a pharmacy would aspire to harness the symbolic language of high art, particularly in Nancy, where such symbolism played a major role in constructing the city’s identity. Bentz’s use of both this legible imagery and French Renaissance classicism displayed a connection with not only the established conventions of the Ecole in the capital but also the deep-seated traditions of the regional artistic community around Nancy. The high degree of craftsmanship required for such an ensemble quietly underscored the professional success of the pharmacist in being able to afford such furnishings for his shop.

**Summation: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

The pinnacle of Art Nouveau in commercial architecture in Nancy was the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Meurthe-et-Moselle, designed by Emile Toussaint and Louis Marchal and built between 1905-08 [Fig. 4-53]. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry building resulted from the intersecting ambitions of two organizations: the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Meurthe-et-Moselle, located on the Place de la Carrière, which represented enterprises in the *département* around Nancy; and the Société Industrielle de l'Est, an even more powerful association of some 600 industrialists and businessmen in French Lorraine, each of which wanted to build a new headquarters.

The Chamber of Commerce charged Antonin Daum, the glassmaker and vice-president of the Ecole de Nancy who sat on both associations’

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boards, with directing the construction of a new building. He conceived of the double headquarters of these two groups as a means of uniting business and industry in the province, which he thought would benefit national economic development, particularly French competition with other European countries, not least Germany. He also saw it as a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Chamber’s founding in 1855.\textsuperscript{440} Daum thus asked the departmental architect Albert Jasson to draw up a set of plans and find a suitable location for the new building; he hoped to build it near the Place Stanislas on the site of the old Saint Julien Hospital. At the same time, the Société Industrielle de l’Est asked their treasurer, the engineer Henri Gutton, an experienced Art Nouveau architect, to draw up his own set of plans for a new building for them on the rue Stanislas, near most other major corporations’ headquarters in Nancy’s central business district. The city of Nancy refused to cede the old site of the hospital; and Gutton refused to modify his plans for the Société Industrielle de l’Est to accommodate both groups. Daum thus proposed a competition for a new building housing the two institutions on a site between the rue Stanislas and the rue Henri Poincaré in the business district near the train station.\textsuperscript{441}

The new Chamber of Commerce was intended to function as a commercial and stock exchange and as an administrative office building, and so had several requirements. The exchange needed a large hall, preferably lit from above by a glass ceiling. It also required meeting rooms, equipped with table and chairs, with sober décor such as portraits or history paintings. The


\textsuperscript{441} Roussel, \textit{Nancy Architecture 1900}, 2:26; and Bouvier, Moyne, and Roussel, ibid., 93-109.
building would also contain libraries and archives for both the Chamber of Commerce and the Société Industrielle de l'Est. Finally, it needed to house administrative offices for both organizations and the offices for the *Revue Industrielle de l'Est*, the major periodical on business and industry in the region. These, as Julian Guadet advised in his *Eléments*, were best housed in a large, rectangular block with long rows of large windows that would admit substantial amounts of natural light. The offices for each department would be grouped together in order to facilitate cooperation among employees.442

The competition specified a building of 1,250 square meters, and was limited to architects from Lorraine and the neighboring department of Ardennes. The contest attracted five entries, although only two, those by the Epinal Art Nouveau architect Louis Mougenot (1862-1929) and by Nancy natives Emile Toussaint (1872-1914) and Louis Marchal (1879-1954), were considered as feasible. Mougenot, Toussaint and Marchal had all been trained at the national Ecole des Beaux-Arts; Toussaint and Marchal, both of whom were Laloux students, had distinguished themselves particularly, having received scholarships from Nancy's Ecole des Beaux-Arts to study in Paris. There they compiled impressive records, between them winning thirteen first-class medals. In 1897, four years before his graduation, Toussaint won the competition to design the Caisse d'Epargne in Pont-à-Mousson, which was completed according to his plans shortly thereafter.443

Perhaps sensing their fortunes would be better in the capital, Toussaint and Marchal set up practice in Paris after graduation, but nominally, as of 1905, had an office in Nancy as well. That spring, Mougenot,

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442 Daum, ibid., 3. Also see Guadet, *op. cit.*, 2:413-29.

443 “Caisse d'Epargne” literally translates to “Savings Bank,” but in France it is also the formal name of a financial institution. See Bouver, Moyne, and Roussel, *op. cit.*, 104-13. For more on these three architects' training, consult Delaire, *Les Architectes Élèves à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 1793-1907*, 338-9, 355, and 415.
perhaps a little too inspired by regional patriotism—or, more likely, merely an opportunist—argued before the Chamber of Commerce that Toussaint and Marchal were not architects from the region, as the competition guidelines had specified, and should be disqualified. The Chamber, despite its dedication to regional interests, rejected his protest, citing the fact that the two architects had been born in Nancy, trained there before their stint in Paris, and had built structures elsewhere in Lorraine before returning to Nancy. Undaunted, Mougenot renewed his objections in 1907, but was again turned down.444

An “Official” Building

The Chamber of Commerce was among the few permanent structures built in Nancy during the Art Nouveau period that approached civic or governmental status. The only other major civic building that was built in Nancy around the turn of the century was Joseph Hornecker’s new municipal theater (1906-12), located on the Place Stanislas, which was a replacement for the original eighteenth-century structure that had burned down in 1906.445 As the old building had been an integral piece of Héré’s grand ensemble, its replacement’s baroque-Rococo design was virtually a foregone conclusion. The Chamber of Commerce building offered the only real


opportunity for Art Nouveau to leave its mark on Nancy’s official architecture.

As built, the Chamber of Commerce building was somewhat different from the submission that Toussaint and Marchal turned in to the competition jury, which published it in *Concours des Façades* in 1904. The building was finished in 1913, when the mansard attic of the long façade was added,446 and it has all the characteristics of an official governmental structure. The structure consists of a compromise between conservative tastes in French academic architecture, referencing the classicism of the Second Empire, and the local, symbolic floral elements of Art Nouveau. This was a predictable solution, perhaps, to the balance that most Nancy architects sought between the classicism of the conservative wing of the Ecole and their own region’s reliance on exuberant naturalistic décor. The main entrance pavilion recalls the form of a triumphal arch, as if to convey a sense of power, authority, and elite status, not unlike the pavilions of Hector Lefuel’s Louvre additions from the 1850s, which also use a high, curving mansard roof [Figs. 4-54 and 4-55]. The imposing iron gate by Louis Majorelle’s factories underscores this elevated status; its ostentatious aqua color belies elegance, and its flamboyant glass canopy invites the viewer into the building. The impressive three-bay pavilion conveys its importance as the entrance to the large exchange hall directly behind it; these arched entrances were a feature common to bourses, such as Hendrik Petrus Berlage’s new Bourse in Amsterdam (1897-1903) [Fig. 4-56], and René Dardel’s Bourse in Lyon (1856-57) [Fig. 4-52]. A monumental façade was necessary because the exchange was designed to serve the growing—and already very powerful—economic interests of the entire region of Lorraine. Toussaint and Marchal placed this pavilion at one end of the façade’s long frontage on the rue Henri Poincaré.

446 Bouvier, Moyne, and Roussel, ibid., 131.
While this was unorthodox, it aligned the entrance with the rue Chanzy. This decision simultaneously made the Chamber of Commerce visible from a long distance away and provided its occupants a clear view of an important part of the city’s financial district [Fig. 4-58] (including the Renauld Bank), as if to suggest a sense of surveillance and control.

Toussaint and Marchal recognized the multiple functions of the building, and their plan divides its spaces accordingly. The building consists of two wings set perpendicular to each other, joined by the main pavilion at the southeast corner, which contains the main staircase. Such a compositional strategy was a hallmark of Beaux-Arts design.447 The main entrance leads into one wing and the large, rectangular exchange hall, while the other wing, set parallel to the rue Henri Poincaré, houses the offices of the two institutions. The Société Industrielle de l’Est is on the ground floor, surmounted by the Chamber of Commerce on the second level [Fig. 4-59]. The rear of the square-shaped parcel of land is devoted to a walled garden.

The interior of the Chamber of Commerce, particularly in its gathering spaces, exudes a sense of luxury befitting the capital of a growing, economically vibrant region. The building was appointed with the finest Art Nouveau features that could be turned out by Nancy’s major craftsmen, including the Daum factories. In the main exchange hall [Fig. 4-60], the Lorraine thistle was the dominant motif. Daum’s glassworks provided the glass shades for the three-branched thistle-shaped sconces, whose ironwork was furnished by Majorelle. The great glass ceiling by Jacques Gruber, now dismounted, contained a huge image of a thistle; to complement it, Nancy’s coat of arms, which bears the thistle, hung at the far end. The plasterwork

included seaweed motifs, a symbol of uncertainty that perhaps recalling alluded to fluctuation of market conditions.  

The eighteenth-century tradition of Rococo decoration in official Lorraine architecture prompted Toussaint and Marchal to make much use of this décor by including ornate moldings. In the meeting rooms and elsewhere, the thistle motifs dominated the ornamentation; they were in the ceramic tiles as well as Eugène Vallin’s woodcarvings for the doorways and fireplaces [Fig. 4-61]. Nonetheless, in more private areas of the building, such as the meeting rooms, this decoration remained discreet, in line with the dictates of Guadet for such parts of the building. It also reflected the conservative character of Nancy’s Art Nouveau, which connoted a reserved floral décor charged with local symbolism applied to a classically- or Gothic-inspired structure (as opposed to flamboyant biomorphic structural forms). Toussaint and Marchal also specified ceiling moldings that resembled the stems of flowering plants, with light sockets in place of the bulbs, a feature that was simultaneously used in the Hôtel de Ville at Euville, the only governmental Art Nouveau building in Lorraine, whose interior was also outfitted by Eugène Vallin. Thus, both the stately aspects as well as the decorative touches of the building aligned it with the conventions of official French architecture as practiced both in Lorraine and in the capital.

The Functions of Art Nouveau

Art Nouveau serves two primary functions in Nancy’s Chamber of Commerce. First, its ornament emphasizes the elite status of the structure and its exquisite craftsmanship. On the exterior, for example, the main

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448 Pillard-Verneuil, ibid., 6, 93, 94.

449 See Chapter 6 on the spread of Art Nouveau outside Nancy for more on this building.
pavilion bears three cartouches emblazoned with the legends “Agriculture,” “Commerce,” and “Industrie,” each of which is surrounded by ivy leaves. Two other cartouches bear the interlocking letters “CCN” for “Chambre de Commerce de Nancy,” each wreathed by oak leaves. These resembled the laurel wreaths on seals and other classically-inspired official designs [Fig. 4-62]. Despite the fact that many contemporary (and modern-day) observers remarked upon the “discreet nature” of the use of Art Nouveau at the Chamber of Commerce as befitting a commercial structure, the exterior seems to be drenched in Art Nouveau ornament. Much of the ironwork, for example, is covered by maple leaves and fruit. This motif is entangled among the twists and turns of the extravagant marquee over the main entrance, as well as in the balcony railings, which was meant to showcase the talent and craftsmanship of Lorraine’s ironworkers. The Art Nouveau ornament is a sample of the economic might and technical prowess of the region.

Second, the Art Nouveau of the Chamber of Commerce ties it intimately to Nancy and Lorraine. On the ground floor of the main façade, facing the rue Henri Poincaré, Jacques Gruber installed five huge stained-glass windows in 1909, each of which recalls a familiar provincial scene [Figs. 4-63, 4-64, 4-65, 4-66, and 4-67]. For the periodicals room of the Société Industrielle de l’Est, Gruber created two windows depicting a Lorraine village and the mountainous countryside of the Vosges. These revealed the natural beauty of the region, the close attachment to it that Lorrainers felt, and the status of the natural world as a source of inspiration for the province’s artists. The Vosges countryside scene, notably, was financed by

Henri Boucher, a prominent paper manufacturer from Epinal (the préfecture of that département) who became a senator. Boucher engineered the 1898 law that named the regional Chambers of Commerce as the administrators of provincial economic development, and was an enthusiastic admirer of the Ecole de Nancy. This window contains two small images of factories, meant to symbolize Boucher’s manufacturing plants there.⁴⁵¹

Next door, in the Chamber of Commerce meeting room, Gruber installed three windows that depicted industry in Lorraine. The first, dedicated to the steel industry, shows a young worker pushing a cart of iron ore against a background with a canal, a railroad, and steelworks with blast furnaces and chimneys spewing smoke, modeled on the forges at Jarville, just south of Nancy. It was funded cooperatively by nine different iron and steel plants from throughout the province.⁴⁵² The central window represented the chemical industry, showing a man at a laboratory table working on production of soda; the man is specifically supposed to represent Ernest Solvay, the Belgian whose soda plant at Dombasle-sur-Meurthe, near Nancy, had been one of the world’s leading producers of soda for some thirty-five years. Solvay, who was an enthusiastic supporter of Gallé, Majorelle, and Victor Horta, underwrote this window.⁴⁵³ The last window depicts a worker firing a piece of glass in a furnace; it was funded by Lorraine firms such as Daum’s, and some of Nancy’s leading banks, including Charles Renauld’s.⁴⁵⁴ Each of the windows depicts an industry that had intimate ties to Nancy’s Art Nouveau, demonstrating the dual concern that the artists and architects

⁴⁵¹ Bouvier, Moyne, and Roussel, op. cit., 154-5.
⁴⁵² Ibid., 156-7.
⁴⁵³ See Bouvier, Moyne, and Roussel, op. cit., 156-7. Horta designed Solvay’s famous town house in Brussels. See Chapters 1 and 2 for more on Solvay and his associations with Art Nouveau in Nancy and Belgium.
⁴⁵⁴ Bouvier, Moyne and Roussel, op. cit.,160-1.
had for both the preservation and admiration of the natural world and industrial progress and economic gain. The pines, maples, thistles, and oaks in Art Nouveau décor of the building also reflect regional interests, as these plants are native to the province. Some of these, of course, carry symbolic meanings—thistles suggest the defiant character of Lorrainers and pines signify the wealth accumulated through economic progress.

The mélange of Art Nouveau ornament is arranged on the façade of the Chamber of Commerce in an orderly manner. On the entrance pavilion, the cartouches, garland motifs, and marquise are aligned to a central axis, helping to emphasize the stateliness of the building. Likewise, the hoods over the dormers of the long (and symmetrical) administrative block rise to a peak that, despite their distinctive curves, resembles a classical pediment. Toussaint and Marchal capped each of the spandrels between the arched windows on the third floor with high-relief Art Nouveau oak leaves and acorns, which are nestled between the bulging, sinuous corbels over each window. The windows thus seem to be separated by a set of pilasters topped by Corinthian capitals. Alternatively, the repetitive pattern of oak leaves in the spandrels appears much like a long frieze stretching behind the windows. The references to shapely, Rococo decoration recall the rich sculptural detail seen on Nancy’s eighteenth-century administrative buildings on the Place Stanislas like the Hôtel-de-Ville [Fig. 4-68], emphasizing the vitality of Art Nouveau as a natural successor to the exuberance and flowering of the arts in Lorraine during the Age of Enlightenment. In concert with the bustling commercial activity that took place inside the building, the architecture of the Chambre de Commerce symbolized a robust and prosperous regional economy.

But for all of its florid decoration, the building’s monumentality and massiveness also exuded a sense of weight and order, much like the Rococo
structures on the Place Stanislas. The rusticated base of the Chambre’s entrance pavilion and the building’s clear horizontal organization between base, upper stories, and roof recalls a similar division of elevation on the Hôtel-de-Ville. In the same way that the Hôtel-de-Ville reflected the well-ordered eighteenth-century city that wisely encouraged the advancement of politics and culture, Nancy at the dawn of the twentieth century flourished because its’ economy was well-organized and well-ordered, and built by men dedicated to their professions.

Conclusion

By 1914, Nancy may not have grown to approach the geographic or demographic size of Paris, but artistically it had achieved a renown that rivaled the capital both within France and internationally. The city’s commercial architecture was one good example of that development. Nancy’s prominent merchants and leaders in business and industry took advantage of the influx of immigrants, industrial development, and economic prosperity of the region of Lorraine at the end of the nineteenth century. Their ambition to make Nancy the most important city in eastern France prompted them to build new structures that announced to the rest of the world both the newfound status their city enjoyed as well as the distinctive culture they saw that had developed there.

Ironically, the architectural expression of Nancy’s newfound cultural prominence had been accomplished not because of a complete break with the influence of the metropole, but through a conscious borrowing of design strategies from various sources. These included the conservative Parisian establishment of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, with its favored classicism, but also the rationalist currents of Art Nouveau in Paris and Brussels. In rare cases, the most adventurous architects looked even farther afield, to German
examples, or closer, borrowing elements from their own work. The major The melding of these lessons with the regionalist décor of the associated artists of the Ecole de Nancy both celebrated the region’s natural beauty and glorified the ordinary worker, providing their structures with a legibility that resonated with the local population. As a result, it ensured the architects and their patrons of an enthusiastic following until the First World War.
The Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France, 1909

From virtually every possible perspective—be it economic, cultural, or political—by 1909, Nancy had emerged fully as the leading metropolis in the eastern part of France. While the rising status of the city had been apparent for several years, it was in the middle of the first decade of the new century that Nancy’s civic and economic leaders decided to hold an exposition that would confirm the role that Nancy now played as one of France’s premier cities. The Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France would be a landmark event for Art Nouveau architecture—and arguably, the entire history of modern architecture—even though today it is rarely ever mentioned in the history of Art Nouveau or its buildings, even in France.

Ironically, by the time the exposition was held, Art Nouveau architecture in Nancy was already in decline. In residential architecture, the initial enthusiasm for the style between 1898 and 1905 had begun to slip away one could already see a shift among Nancy’s architects towards a more conventional Beaux-Arts classicism, particularly in terms of the conception of interior space. Art Nouveau, in turn, was relegated to a decorative veneer, though even in this role it clearly carried symbolic political importance. By 1909, the only new residences using Art Nouveau in Nancy were the row houses built in the southwestern part of town.

Nancy’s commercial architecture, on the other hand, had at the dawn of the twentieth century consistently presented the department store as its epitome. In this, Art Nouveau functioned as a system of technically brilliant décor, usually infused with regional patriotism, which would entice customers into the shop or restaurant. In some cases, such as in Jean-
Baptiste Corbin’s Magasins Réunis, Art Nouveau was explicit in expressing the new technological language of steel and concrete construction, while in others, like the Renauld Bank, it hid the advanced structure behind a sculpted stone skin that was often inspired by various sources, such as Rococo, Renaissance, or Gothic.

Despite the fact that it produced almost no permanent structures (nearly all of its buildings were torn down less than a year after the exposition closed), the fair was important for Nancy and early twentieth-century architecture. For the most part, the buildings of the exposition jettisoned Nancy’s Art Nouveau for an established Beaux-Arts classicism, thus confirming it as the international standard for exposition design. As the Americans had done in Chicago in 1893, regional modes of expression were shunted aside in order to legitimize Nancy’s fair as a major exposition. Art Nouveau was relegated to the secondary role of decoration, but in a few cases it was showcased where it helped glorify local and regional accomplishments in technology and industry.

Although the architecture of the fair made use of a more universal vocabulary, regionalism was nonetheless the fair’s ubiquitous main theme, and it was specifically highlighted in the surrounding discourse. The regionalism of the fair’s architecture did not, however, generally incorporate Art Nouveau, but used original, traditional Alsatian buildings to emphasize the political and cultural connections between Nancy and the lost provinces. The emphasis on regional unity placed Nancy’s Art Nouveau squarely in the middle of the discourse of national regeneration and international cultural competition, giving it a more visible place in the spotlight than it had ever enjoyed, but also generating much controversy about the authenticity of its local character.

Overall, the architectural legacy of the exposition was the re-
entrenchment of Beaux-Arts classicism in Nancy’s monumental buildings and urbanism. Art Nouveau remained a key part of Nancy’s cityscape and new construction, and an important local symbol of regional politics, but the days when it dominated the city’s architectural community were over.

Conception and Planning

The Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France was conceived at least as early as 1904 by Emile Jacquemin, the architect and editor of L’Immeuble et la Construction dans l’Est.455 His idea soon caught the attention of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Meurthe-et-Moselle. Antonin Daum, who along with his brother Auguste, headed the Daum Brothers’ glassworks, was one of the vice-presidents of the Ecole de Nancy, as well as a member of the Chamber of Commerce board, supported the idea of an exposition celebrating the industrial and economic achievements of the city and region. He was initially hesitant, however, about holding it so soon after the Ecole de Nancy’s exhibition at the Galeries Poirel in late 1904. Daum believed that holding an “exposition universelle et coloniale” in Nancy in 1905 was not feasible given the resources the group and its supporters had committed to the 1904 show, and he was also concerned that it would conflict with an exhibition to be held in Liège, in northeastern Belgium, in 1905.456 The date of the exposition, in the face of such concerns, delays, and conflicts, was revised three times, to 1906, 1907, and 1908. A magazine reporting on the exposition planning was founded under the name L’Exposition de Nancy en 1908, but then it was discovered...

that another exhibition would be held in London that year, and so the date was pushed back finally to 1909 (thus permanently changing the magazine’s name). 457 1909 was a fortunate choice, as officials in Brussels had decided to hold an international exposition in 1910 dedicated to the development of contemporary art. 458 The exposition in Nancy would preempt that event and confirm the city’s importance—not just in France, but in all of Europe—as a preeminent industrial and cultural center.

Universal, Regional, or International?

The question of how the city of Nancy precisely wanted to brand the scope and stature of the exposition also remained to be answered. Though Nancy had experienced a remarkable period of growth over the preceding forty years, it was nowhere near the size of Paris—nor, for that matter, a city as large as Lyons or Marseilles. 459 While it might attract visitors from several European countries, the exposition was unlikely to command an audience from overseas. Nonetheless, the exposition’s proponents did consider and advocated the fair’s “universal” nature, though in the sense that it would


offer exhibition space for all kinds of products, materials, and curiosities. As one planner imagined, it would display “all that is produced by nature and man, everything that is transformed by machine or handiwork, all that intelligence, talent, and art creates, develops, and perfects.”

The exposition was conceived geopolitically as having a “regional” and “cross-border” character. These were, in fact, two different ideas; a regional exposition positioned the city of Nancy and region of Lorraine as the focal point. Emile Jacquemin explained that the fair was designed to show how the region had developed over the past forty years, and particularly to be “a decentralizing manifestation,” excluding especially any products that came from Paris, in order to show that Nancy could “produce and furnish it just as well, if not better than the capital.” Within France, the fair was intended as an example for how local control over politics, culture, and economics was ultimately beneficial to the nation, as it allowed the provinces to develop their own vitality and strength. If the ideas of decentralization had been submerged when the Ecole de Nancy had exhibited in Nancy in 1904, here they resurfaced in a form just as persistent and determined as they had been when Gallé had articulated them for the 1903 exhibition of the Ecole de Nancy in Paris.

The exposition’s organizers also intended it to have a “cross-border” theme. By this, they meant that it recognized Nancy’s geographic position on the frontier, and specifically the special relationship that the city and region had with the surrounding regions and countries of Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. The exposition was intended to foster good


462 See chapter 2 for more on these two expositions of the group.
relations with neighboring countries, and the city's leaders understood that some of the industrial prowess of Lorraine did rest on foreign investment, such as the Belgian Solvay Company’s soda plant located just south of Nancy. In particular, they hoped to strengthen the ties between French Lorraine and Alsace-Lorraine, no doubt in order to remind both the central government in Paris (and the Germans) of their festering desire to see the lost provinces returned to France. Jacquemin predicted with confidence the complicity of Alsace-Lorrainers in this scheme, since they, “so numerous and so happy to see France, will never pass up coming to Nancy when there are festivals, and...are always determined to prove that many foreigners have two countries: their own and France!”

463 Jacquemin, op. cit., 69.

**Directing the Exhibition**

At first, a certain E.-O. Lami, who was originally not from Nancy, was recruited by the city’s mayor, Ludovic Beauchet, to be the director of the exposition. He was officially charged with working with the Municipal Council on organizing the fair in February 1907, and construction on the grounds began a year later. But after a year and a half, the progress made towards putting the fair together continued to be very slow. Construction was stalling; there were difficulties attracting exhibitors and raising funds, and the general dissatisfaction with Lami’s management of the fair continued to mount. Beauchet decided to let a new committee take over the responsibility of directing the exhibition. In the spring of 1908 Lami resigned and on 9 June was replaced by Louis Laffitte (1873-1914), who had served for the previous two years as the Secretary-General of the Chamber of Commerce of Meurthe-et-Moselle. He was joined by a committee representing the Chamber of
Commerce, the Société Industrielle de l’Est (a regional association of corporations), the Université de Nancy, and the Municipal Council. Laffitte was known to have a seemingly inexhaustible amount of energy, and his devotion to the exposition dramatically sped up the work towards its completion, allowed almost all of the preparation to be completed on schedule so that the exhibition could open as planned on 1 May 1909.\footnote{E. Collin, op. cit., 13-14. Also see Dammame-Gilbert, op. cit., 3.} An official inauguration by Louis Barthou, the Minister of Public Works, was celebrated on 20 June, attracting great fanfare.

The Team of Architects

City officials and business leaders assembled a team of architects to design the pavilions and grounds of the exhibition. All of them were renowned as architects who had worked in Art Nouveau in Nancy. They included Emile André, Gaston Munier, Louis Marchal, Emile Toussaint, George Biet, Louis Lanternier, Lucien Bentz, Charles Désiré Bourgon, Paul Charbonnier, and Lucien Weissenburger. Not all of these architects were named to design the major pavilions: Weissenburger, for example, was only hired to design pavilions for private companies. The choice of these architects as the ones for the main buildings was very strategic: as the magazine 
*L’Exposition de Nancy en 1909* reported in late 1907, “the group of architects affirms its’ artistic sympathy for the Ecole de Nancy, [such that] none of [the architects] remain indifferent regarding the Ecole’s work.”\footnote{Lucien Humbert, "Chez les Architectes" in *L’Exposition de Nancy en 1909* 2, no. 21 (July 1907): 167.} Even if not all the fair’s architects were formally members of the Ecole, all of them were artistically and politically aligned with the principles and beliefs of the group.

The architects worked on six main pavilions for the fair. In most cases

\footnote{E. Collin, op. cit., 13-14. Also see Dammame-Gilbert, op. cit., 3.}
two or three of them were assigned the responsibilities for a single building. They were also allowed to trade assignments on specific structures; if one of them felt that he was better-suited or more interested in working on a different structure, he could switch responsibilities with another architect working on the one he would rather design.466 Several of the architects ended up changing assignments from the ones initially chosen for them. Ultimately, Georges Biet, Louis Marchal, and Emile Toussaint were responsible for the Main Building467 and the Palace of Electricity; Louis Lanternier and Eugène Vallin designed the Palace of Mines and Metallurgy; Lucien Bentz designed the Textiles Pavilion; Alexandre Mienville and Léon Cayotte were charged with the Palace of Liberal Arts and the Food Pavilion. These were the major collective pavilions located on the Blandan grounds (named for the street bounding the exposition to the west, the rue du Sergent-Blandan). Of the other notable buildings, Charles-Desiré Bourgon designed the pavilion for the Brewery Consortium; Toussaint, Marchal, and Biet designed the Pavilion of the Chambers of Commerce of the Region of the East; Weissenburger designed the Gas Pavilion; and Emile André and Gaston Munier designed the Alsatian Village and Lorraine Farm.468

The choice to have several architects design the pavilions had the advantage of a division of labor that would avoid burdening one firm with the entire task. It also encouraged the architects of the pavilions on the Blandan grounds to compromise on a style that was recognizable and harmonious to most audiences, and avoided the use of one architect’s own personal style

466 Ibid.
467 In French, it was the “Palais des Fêtes,” which translates literally to “Palace of Festivals,” though this terminology is obviously awkward in English. Since this structure was where most of the large conferences, meetings, lectures and celebrations during the fair took place, I refer to it simply as the “Main Building.”
468 Collin, op. cit., 14-23.
that did not truly reflect the general values of the city’s architectural community. The architects who designed pavilions located in the wooded parkland, however, assumed much more free rein, most probably in order to emphasize the picturesque qualities of this section of the fairgrounds.

*Plan of the Exposition Grounds*

The plan of the 1909 exposition had much in common with those of the great world’s fairs of the turn of the century. The fair was held on twenty-two hectares of the Parc Sainte-Marie, a piece of land situated in the growing southwestern part of Nancy, which the city had acquired in 1903. On the east, south, and west it was bounded by city streets, while on the north it abutted a few residential lots. Paul Charbonnier, in collaboration with all of the other architects of the exhibition, drew up a preliminary plan for the grounds as early as the middle of November 1907. Over the next year and a half, individual details of the specific location of pavilions changed, but the general layout remained intact.469 It was laid out in three distinct sections [Fig. 5-1]. From the entry gate, located at the eastern end on the rue Jeanne d’Arc, the visitor followed a long, straight promenade past the Alsatian Village and the local Ecole des Beaux-Arts (a permanent building).

At the end of the promenade the visitor entered the wooded parkland that contained the Ecole de Nancy’s pavilion and most of the smaller exhibition structures, which were laid out along winding paths. This part of the fair housed official services, a café, and the attractions for pure amusement, including a water chute, a children’s puppet theater, and a miniature railroad that encircled the grounds [Fig. 5-2]. This was a similar

strategy to the one used by Daniel Burnham’s team of architects in Chicago in 1893, which had also laid out an amusement zone in a picturesque manner.\textsuperscript{470} Like many of Nancy’s architects who were trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Burnham and his team were greatly influenced by the Beaux-Arts system and hoped to satisfy the Western architectural establishment by using it to guide their design for the Chicago fair.

Finally, the visitor entered the Blandan grounds [Fig. 5-3]. This area contained a plaza, or cour d’honneur, surrounded by a U-shaped array of the seven major exhibition pavilions—the Palais des Fêtes (Main Building) in the center,\textsuperscript{471} flanked by the individual themed structures: the Pavilion of Mines and Metallurgy, the Electricity Pavilion, the Textiles Pavilion, the Food Pavilion, the Pavilion of Liberal Arts, and the Transportation Pavilion. At the center of the plaza was a small garden. The layout for the Blandan grounds echoed the U-shaped court or lagoon around which the major structures were arranged at both the 1889 and 1900 world’s fairs in Paris and the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago; at each of these fairs the main (or administration) buildings were placed at the juncture of the two wings of the U [Figs. 5-4, 5-5, and 5-6], as in Nancy in 1909.

**Architecture of the Fair**

Construction on the fairgrounds proceeded fairly quickly once Louis Laffitte took over as director of the exhibition. The progress of building the individual structures was well-documented, as a wealth of photographs still exist of the process of clearing the parkland, the framing of the pavilions, and


\textsuperscript{471} Known in the original as the “Palais des Fêtes” (literally, “Palace of Festivals”), though obviously this term is somewhat awkward in English. The Main Building was the site of all the major celebrations and conventions held during the fair.
the completion of their façades and roofing [Fig. 5-7]. This process was itself some sort of a celebration of the industrial strength of the region of Lorraine, as the photos of the construction process were featured in local construction journals and even on postcards [Fig. 5-8]. Like most exposition structures then and now, these pavilions were essentially large boxes built merely to house temporary exhibits. Although Art Nouveau was popular in Nancy, the city predictably could not afford the extra expense of ornamented interiors for buildings that officials knew would be torn down almost as soon as the fair closed. Even the pavilion for the École de Nancy, which was built of reinforced concrete and proved difficult to tear down a year after its completion in July 1909, had a stark interior befitting only a temporary exposition structure.

The Main Gate

The main entrance gate to the exposition, designed by Charbonnier, likewise was a crystallization of the influences of previous exposition design on Nancy’s architects. This skeletal steel structure, designed by Paul Charbonnier [Fig. 5-9], took the form of two tapering pylons some twenty-three meters high, flanking a horseshoe arch crowned by the coat of arms of the city of Nancy and six French flags. The entire gate was built by the Fould-Dupont steelworks in Pompey, the same company that had supplied the iron for the Eiffel Tower in 1889 [Fig. 5-10], and despite obvious differences in overall design and scale, the Nancy structure no doubt recalled the Parisian tower from twenty years before: visitors similarly had entered the southern portion of the 1889 Fair by passing underneath Eiffel’s arches. Formally, however, Charbonnier’s gate invited a much closer comparison to René Binet’s monumental entrance gate to the 1900 World’s Fair [Fig. 5-11], which consisted of an ornate three-legged horseshoe arch flanked by two
obelisk-like pylons. In this sense the 1909 fair could be seen as a hybrid of these two previous manifestations of French Art Nouveau. The 1889 fair, held at the dawn of the style’s existence, had likewise celebrated the triumph of modern industry; while the 1900 fair had heralded the return to traditional, French craftsmanship by injecting the style with a Rococo-inspired classicism with organic, naturally-inspired décor. The undulating scrolls crowning the arch further suggested the gilded curves of the ornament covering Emmanuel Héré and Jean Lamour’s Rococo iron gates for the Place Stanislas from the 1750s [see Fig. 2-3], thereby placing the design’s roots in line with Nancy’s own rich industrial and artistic heritage.

Observers, however, ignored any such connections that Charbonnier’s gate exhibited with models from either Paris or previous eras. According to Louis Laffitte, the director of the 1909 Exposition, the gate symbolized “the power and boldness” of Lorraine’s steel and iron industries, while one Parisian observer was struck by the way that the gate was “picturesquely decorated with corrugated iron, folded rails, cartwheels, towing bars, [and] V-shaped iron pieces; in short, all the pieces which a great steelworks produces.” For contemporary observers, the importance of the architecture of the Exposition lay primarily with its aspects that linked it to the region’s recent accomplishments, not with the capital, whose influence clearly also had contributed to Nancy’s success.


473 Laffitte, Rapport general, 3.

Pavilions on the Blandan Grounds

Just as Charbonnier had looked to previous exhibitions for the overall plan of the 1909 Exposition and the design of its main gate, many of his compatriots also derived their use of ornament from these fairs, décor that could hardly be described as Art Nouveau. The pavilions in Nancy were iron-framed, wooden structures disguised by a covering of white stucco, and the ones surrounding the cour d’honneur were decorated with flamboyant Baroque- or Rococo-inspired ornament that roughly resembled the structures at the 1900 World’s Fair in Paris [Fig. 5-12], the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago [Fig. 5-13], and the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis [Fig. 5-14], but on a much smaller scale. But for all their similarities with the buildings from these fairs, in Nancy in 1909 the main exposition structures remained somewhat more reserved, both in terms of their scale and decoration. For example, they relied less on a riot of encrusted ornament than the exposition buildings in Paris in 1900 (although they certainly made use of it), and more on a combination of forms derived from classicism, industrial structures, and the unusual curves of Art Nouveau. Most of the Blandan grounds buildings also included thematic sculptures or exterior paintings related to the pavilions’ purposes.

Alexander Mienville and Léon Cayotte, both former students of Victor Laloux at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts who respected their mentor’s use of classicism, designed both the Palace of Liberal Arts and the Food Pavilion475 on the south side of the cour d’honneur. Resembling huge white Rococo railway stations, these structures illustrate well the design strategies used by the fair’s architects [Fig. 5-15]. The three-gabled design of the Palace of

475 Some of the pavilions were referred to as “pavilions” and some as “palaces,” in both the official and unofficial literature surrounding the fair. I refer to the fair’s buildings using the language of the period sources.
Liberal Arts, which was illuminated by day by rows of skylights on its hipped roof, begs comparison with the roofs of train sheds for Parisian stations such as the Gare Saint-Lazare [Fig. 5-17]. The front of the pavilion, with its heavy modillions and molded cornice, recalls the gabled façades of the Gare de l’Est and Nancy’s own main train station [Figs. 5-18 and 5-19]—buildings that were pivotal travel points for most visitors to the exhibition. Meanwhile, the barrel vault of the Food Pavilion, which also relied on skylights, resembled a common structural form used by contemporaneous architects for train sheds and main station concourses as well as for exhibition buildings.

Mienville and Cayotte’s tutelage under Laloux, meanwhile, may have also been formative for their design. As we have seen, some eight years earlier, a third Laloux student, Paul Charbonnier, based his design for the Maison du Peuple in Nancy, an important structure for the city’s industrial workers, on Laloux’s Gare de Tours (1895-98) [see Figs. 2-28 and 2-29]. The resemblances between the Liberal Arts building and Laloux’s station, with its white stone façade and multiple gables, each of which is flanked by stout tapering pylons and is entered through the center of each gabled bay, are indeed striking. The completion of the Tours train station was undoubtedly instrumental in Laloux’s selection by the same railway company (the Paris-Orléans) for their new Gare d’Orsay in Paris, and was undoubtedly well-known to his students. Equally significant, however, were the similarities between Mienville and Cayotte’s Palace of Liberal Arts and German and American models. The two tall tapering towers flanking the Palace’s façade recalled the campaniles often attached to German-designed railway stations, such as those nearby at Colmar and Metz (in Alsace-Lorraine), or farther afield in Luxembourg, Cologne, Hamburg, or Basel [Figs. 5-20, 5-21, 5-22, 5-23, and 5-24]. Most importantly, however, the overall composition of the three-gabled Palace with its flanking towers may have derived from the influence of railway station
architecture on the architect E.L. Masqueray, who used a three-arched scheme topped by two pylons for the Transportation Building at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair [Fig. 5-25], and according to Carroll L. V. Meeks, appears to have been attempting to design an “ideal station.”476 Seen in this light, Mienville and Cayotte’s pavilion thus appears to show their recognition of the prowess of these two nations as the leaders at the dawn of the new century in industrial architecture and material production. It may also have been an attempt to show the familiarity of Nancy’s architects with some of the latest architecture of Alsace-Lorraine. Despite such striking resemblances, however, none of these connections were made in print by either the directors of the exhibition or the attendees.477

An even more eclectic marriage between classicism, religious and industrial architecture, and Art Nouveau could be seen in both the Palace of Textiles and the Palace of Electricity [Figs. 5-26 and 5-27], which were located to the south and north of the Main Building, respectively. Like Mienville and Cayotte’s pavilions, these two buildings, which used hipped roofs pierced by skylights, derived their primary forms from industrial train sheds. The gables were flanked by stubby towers, much like the design for a church’s westwerk or, possibly, a department store façade; in both cases the towers evoked the idea of a temple to industry. In Bentz’s case the religious connotations are reinforced by the large tympanum-like Art Nouveau horseshoe arch covering the doorway under the gable and another topping the main doorway on the west façade. The former contained the name of the pavilion in an Art Nouveau font, while the latter contained the painted

476 Meeks, The Railroad Station: An Architectural History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956; reprint, 1975), 130-1; for a more comprehensive picture of the development during this period, see pp. 125-42.

477 I have found no primary sources that link the Nancy structures with the design of railway stations or specific previous exhibition buildings.
spinning thread on a wheel, much like the allegorical sculpture usually placed in a church’s tympanum.\textsuperscript{478}

In Biet’s Palace of Electricity, on the other hand, the references to classicism are more clearly evident with the consoles and frieze that undergird the projecting cornice of the roofline. Appropriately for Nancy’s Art Nouveau, Biet combined classicism with references to nature and modern industry in the rest of the décor. His frieze and the four towers incorporated large flattened floral stenciling, appearing almost like sunflowers, which were supposed to recall the bright lights of electrical appliances. These motifs bore a strong resemblance to the floral patterns used a decade earlier by Otto Wagner on the façade of his Karlsplatz station for the Vienna Stadtbahn [see Fig. 5-28], another structure that celebrated the use of electricity, though in that case for the double purpose of transport and for the illumination of dark underground spaces such as subway platforms and tunnels. Biet’s awareness of architectural developments abroad, however, was tempered by his use of familiar elements. The double arched doorway for the building was likely inspired by Biet and Vallin’s entryway for the main branch of the Société Générale bank on the rue Saint-Dizier (1903-5) [Fig. 4-27]. This cosmopolitan character of these structures helped to make them familiar for visitors to Nancy and legitimate the fair as a major world’s exposition.

The connection between art and industry in Lorraine was most explicitly celebrated, however, in Louis Lanternier and Eugène Vallin’s Pavilion of Mines and Metallurgy [Fig. 5-29], the structure on the Blandan grounds that justifiably attracted the most attention. This building occupied the entire north side of the central court, and, like the other major pavilions, used a rectangular, open plan and hipped roof. Its Art Nouveau façade, however, clearly set it apart from the others. Vallin was responsible for its

\textsuperscript{478} Identified in E. Collin, \textit{op. cit.}, 23.
design, which consisted of five elongated sections of gridded windows usually seen in factories set into a framework of flat-topped arches. These arches were separated by spandrels decorated with the exaggerated imagery of chimneys rising above the pavilion’s long horizontal roofline. The ends of the façade were marked by stout, multi-sided pylons that were also supposed to evoke the forms of tall chimneys at a steel mill. Vallin had originally imagined these pylons and the spandrels to hold functional torches [Fig. 5-30], and in the final design they were equipped with modern lamps that at night glowed red like the fiery exhaust from factory smokestacks.479 Vallin’s son Auguste, meanwhile, painted several panels at the base of the façade that showed the steps in the fabrication of iron, leaving no doubt about the inspiration for the building’s design. Observers marveled at the connections that the building drew with the industrial architecture of the region, and indeed, the pavilion essentially inverted the strategy used elsewhere on the Blandan grounds.480 Instead of hiding the industrial character of the structure behind a stucco covering, here Vallin allowed the true nature of the building to pierce through the white skin and become manifest on the exterior.

In contrast to the other structures, the Main Building (Palais des Fêtes), designed by Biet, Emile Toussaint and Louis Marchal, exuded little connection with industry, instead appearing to be more influenced by Gothic and classical forms [Fig. 5-31]. Its symmetrical, axial composition, with the


480 Martin, “Comment l’Exposition de Nancy” (8 June 1909), 3.
main entrance in the center at the top of a flight of stairs, mirrored the front of a church or temple. The Gothic resemblances could explicitly be seen in the open tower above the structure, with its elongated ribs. The entrance itself was apsided, not unlike the concave space created by the archivolts of a Gothic church portal, but on a much larger scale. Capped by a semi-dome, this space, like the tympanum above a Gothic church, was decorated by a large, colorful fresco by the painter Louis Guingot (1864-1948), member of the Ecole de Nancy who, with Jean-Baptiste Corbin, would later invent camouflage for use in wartime.\footnote{For more on Guingot, see Philippe Bata, \textit{Louis, Henri et Mercédès Guingot: une dynastie d'artistes vosgiens} (Tournéville: Illustra, 2009); Un Passant [surely a pseudonym], “Chez le décorateur Guingot,” in \textit{L’Est Républicain} 7979 (29 March 1909): 2; and Raoul Wagner, \textit{Dictionnaire Biographique Illustre de Meurthe-et-Moselle} (Paris: Flammarion, 1910), 375-7.} Called \textit{The Pantheon of Lorraine Glory}, the painting depicted several prominent Nancy citizens in the diverse fields of the sciences, arts, and industry, including the organizers of the fair [Fig. 5-32]. They were clustered around a giant central feminine figure draped in luxurious robes and crowned by a laurel wreath, personifying the city of Nancy. Though a proud reminder to all who entered of the city’s achievements since the disaster of 1870-71, its representation of famous Nancy personalities became the object of many humorous jabs from the local residents.\footnote{Descouturelle, \textit{op. cit.}, 123.} A molded cornice ringing the structure, together with escutcheons adorned with garland motifs, recalled Nancy’s Rococo past.

Views of the interior of the Main Building reveal a fairly simple exposed wooden structure consisting of a main hall ringed by a mezzanine balcony [Fig. 5-33]. It was lit by a skylight that pierced its hipped roof fourteen meters above the floor. Indeed, in its overall design strategy and appearance, the Main Building resembled very much a church, built for the worship of Lorraine’s prodigious industrial growth. Critics praised its

\textit{Pantheon of Lorraine Glory}.
“graceful and bold appearance and... harmonious proportions,” most likely a comment on the clever juxtaposition of classical and Gothic references, and the architects’ elevations of the pavilion appeared in most of Nancy’s newspapers.483

Pavilions Outside the Blandan Grounds

The pavilions built outside the cour d’honneur of the Blandan grounds occupied the central wooded parkland, where there was less need for architectural unity. Instead, the creation of a picturesque landscape was seen as a much more desirable goal for this section of the fair, and so architectural variety was thus encouraged. The varied character of these pavilions attest to this aim on the part of the exposition’s architects.

Some of these pavilions explicitly celebrated the union of art and industry, like most of the structures on the Blandan grounds. One pavilion that did so was the “Maison des Magasins Réunis,” the building for the Nancy-based department store Magasins Réunis [Fig. 5-34]. The company was headed by the Art Nouveau patron Jean-Baptiste Corbin, who had built the chain into a commercial empire of more than a dozen stores throughout Lorraine, northern France, and Paris.484 Designed by Lucien Weissenburger, the company’s house architect, the rectangular pavilion was fronted by a


stairway leading up to an arched doorway flanked by two towers, each terminating in a webbed metal sculpture. This design recalled not only the twin-towered scheme for department stores\textsuperscript{485} such as the Magasins Réunis in downtown Nancy, but also mimicked a cathedral façade (which led to the use of the nicknames “cathedrals of consumption” and “temple of commerce” for department stores). The religious connotations were extended by Weissenburger’s use of an allegorical sculpture of commerce above the pavilion’s main entrance, again like a tympanum over the main doorway of a church. Inside were several model rooms furnished for modern living, equipped with items that were sold in the store’s branches, including Art Nouveau furniture, vases and stained glass designed by members of the Ecole de Nancy [Fig. 5-35]. Thus the pavilion not only used Art Nouveau as a means to advertise the industries of clothing and interior décor, but the use of the style in furnishings reminded visitors of the extent to which Art Nouveau permeated the everyday life of the residents of French Lorraine and remained the hallmark of the newest, most fashionable designs produced there.

The picturesque quality of the architecture of this part of the fair was underscored most dramatically by the inclusion of the Gas Pavilion, also designed by Weissenburger [Fig. 5-36] and a striking example of how the leader of Nancy’s Art Nouveau could, on occasion, demonstrate his proficiency in the style after he had begun to return to the classicism learned under Laloux. The Gas Pavilion adjoined the lake into which the water chute fell, and exhibited the latest advances in gas-powered domestic appliances. Though a relatively small structure, it’s unusual design was intended to

fulfill two purposes. The formal aspects of the building were supposed to
showcase Nancy’s architects’ familiarity with and delight in the incorporation
of regional styles within their work. The building was constructed entirely in
wood, in an Art Nouveau manner that evoked the architecture of the
mountains of Norway,486 with wide, overhanging eaves supported by
elongated brackets, a spire and a steeply-pitched gable. This choice recalled
the need for gas as a heating fuel in colder climates. The regionalist
associations assumed a specifically local character as well, as the coats of
arms of major cities in Lorraine were emblazoned on the frieze just under the
roofline. The pavilion was also intended to symbolize the union between local
art and modern industry, as Weissenburger was assisted by many artists and
firms associated with the Ecole de Nancy. These included the Schwartz and
Gauthier & Poinsignon companies, who provided all the interior furniture, as
well as the Daum Brothers’ glassworks, Jacques Gruber for the stained glass,
Louis Guingot for paintings, and a few other regional ceramic firms.487 Their
coordinated efforts at the decoration of this structure emphasized the
collaborative nature of the Ecole de Nancy’s work and, like the Maison des
Magasins Réunis, marked it as a virtual Gesamtkunstwerk among the fair’s
pavilions.

The Ecole de Nancy Pavilion

The most-anticipated pavilion of the fair was the one constructed
specifically for the Ecole de Nancy. The group’s showcase was separate from
the one inside the new Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the decorative arts that

486 Collin, op. cit., 17.

were shown in the Palace of Liberal Arts on the Blandan grounds. Emile André and Gaston Munier were named the architects for the Ecole’s pavilion, and produced plans for the building as early as October 1907. In early December, the Ecole issued a statement describing the general character of the structure, which promised that it would “assume the air of a real [individual] house, more or less luxuriously furnished, outfitted, and decorated in all its details by the personal works of the diverse exposants.”

The preliminary drawings made by André and Munier in late 1907 confirm this initial description [Fig. 5-37]. From the beginning, André and Munier conceived of a pavilion whose main perspective appeared to be a sizeable three-level villa for a wealthy client, complete with a corner tower. Behind the house stretched a large, double-height hall. The architects conceived of the pavilion in two distinct parts. The front, in the “villa” section, consisted of a series of rooms that in large part mirrored the individual rooms of a house—a dining room, office, salon, bedrooms, boudoir, and bathrooms, clustered in two floors around a large entry hall. These spaces were intended to be display spaces for entire room ensembles. At the rear, the double-height exhibition hall was reserved for displays of painting and decorative arts. Individual small adjacent rooms around the hall’s perimeter were reserved for glasswares, bookbinding, drawings, embroidery, and the entries from the Ecole’s sponsored public contests.

488 “L’Exposition de Nancy en 1909,” in L’Impartial de l’Est 69, no. 4573 (25 October 1907): 1. This article announced that the architects of the exhibition had submitted their building plans to the Director-General of the exhibition; presumably this included André and Munier’s plans for the Ecole de Nancy’s pavilion.

In February 1908, André and Munier submitted their final drawings to the exhibition director [Fig. 5-38].\textsuperscript{490} The façades of the pavilion reveal that they intended it to be a palace for Nancy’s decorative arts. The pavilion looked like the juncture of an oversized picturesque villa with a train shed, intended to evoke the union between the decorative arts in Nancy with the region’s industry. Many of the structure’s elements resembled those used in André’s cottage and villa commissions. The main gable of the pavilion was a near carbon copy of the one André used on his double Huot Houses on the quai Claude le Lorrain five years earlier [see Fig. 3-23]. The tile roof and brackets recalled those used for the Villa “Les Glycines” that he had built in the Parc de Saurupt in 1902-3. The pylons of the balconies likewise resembled those on the Renauld Bank that he was concurrently designing with Paul Charbonnier. (In fact, one drawing by André in the Archives Départementales de Meurthe-et-Moselle includes a sketch of the Renauld Bank on one side with one for the Ecole de Nancy Pavilion on the other.)

Like André’s other work, however, the design for the Ecole de Nancy pavilion draws on a wide range of other sources. The great arched doorway, with its carved semicircular surround, begs comparison with a number of sources, including the portal to Louis Sullivan’s Transportation building at the 1893 World’s Fair [Fig. 5-39] as well as semicircular entrances for private homes in Strasbourg [see Fig. 6-95]. The belvedere tower, a unique feature not seen elsewhere in André’s work or in Nancy, uses a bell-shaped roof with kicked eaves much like his Villa Lejeune from 1902. Its projecting eaves and tapering shaft vaguely resemble the towers from the 1897 designs by Joseph Maria Olbrich for the city of Vienna’s pavilion at the festival celebrating the

Golden Jubilee of the reign of Emperor Franz Josef of Austria [Fig. 5-40]. The building would have been constructed of the local beige Euville stone common to buildings in Nancy, and would have required elaborate stonework for the sculptural details, such as the garland and wreath motifs adorning the tower [see Fig. 5-31].

Later that month, Antonin Daum, Louis Majorelle, André and Munier, along with the adjoint director of the exhibition, Mercier, and the mayor, Ludovic Beauchet, went to the Parc Sainte-Marie to survey the projected site of the pavilion, and all agreed that the architects’ building would have a “truly marvelous” effect on the exhibition grounds. Beauchet seemed favorable to keeping the pavilion as a permanent museum dedicated to decorative art. The only question left was cost, as the local newspapers estimated\(^\text{491}\) that a temporary structure for the Ecole’s pavilion would only cost 85,000 francs, while a permanent structure to house the future museum would cost some 225,000 francs. Anticipating that the structure would be very expensive, in December 1907 Jean Grillon, a deputy in the National Assembly from Nancy wrote to Henri Dujardin-Baumetz, the Undersecretary of State for Fine Arts for support for a subvention for the pavilion, which the Undersecretary refused to provide.\(^\text{492}\) In March, the Executive Board of the exposition wrote\(^\text{493}\) André and Munier to inform them that they had decided that the Ecole de Nancy pavilion would last only for the term of the exhibition, and asked them to modify their designs accordingly. Emile Lami, the first director of the exhibition, then wrote to the Undersecretary in late

\(^{491}\) Ibid.

\(^{492}\) Jean Grillon to the Undersecretary of State for Fine Arts, 17 and 30 December 1907, and the letters from the Undersecretary of State to Grillon, 28 December 1907 and 8 January 1908 (Archives Nationales F21 4070 VI).

May 1908 for the authorization from the Minister of the Interior to introduce a lottery to come up with 100,000 francs to support the construction of a veritable “modern castle” for the Ecole de Nancy pavilion, which was also refused. In late June 1908 the city of Nancy voted the Ecole de Nancy a subvention of 40,000 francs for the structure, well short of the total needed. One month later, officials again asked André and Munier to reduce the size of their pavilion, but they declined to make modifications to the design.

It thus appears that André and Munier’s design for the pavilion was discarded not for aesthetic reasons, but because the city simply could not afford to build it. Some historians have claimed that André, bitter about the rejection of his design, refused to allow his watercolors to be exhibited in the pavilion for the Ecole that was eventually built. They argue that his actions indicate that a rift had surfaced within the Ecole and led to the breakup of the group soon afterwards. It is true that André hung his paintings in the art exhibition held that summer in the local Ecole des Beaux-Arts on the fairgrounds’ main avenue. However, no evidence suggests that he did so out of spite or anger; moreover, André was not the only member of the Ecole to exhibit his work outside of the group’s own pavilion, as Louis Majorelle and the Gauthier-Poinsignon firm each decided to exhibit their work in the Decorative Arts section in the Palace of Liberal Arts.

After this, the directors of the exhibition turned to Eugène Vallin and

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494 E.-O. Lami to Dujardin-Baumetz, 27 May 1908, and the letter from Dujardin-Baumetz to Lami, 11 June 1908 (AN F21 4070 VI).
496 Letters to André and Munier, 28 July 1908 and 5 August 1908 (Archives Muncipales de Nancy (K) R2-19).
asked him to submit a new proposal for the Ecole’s pavilion. Vallin’s design drew much inspiration from classicism, with a symmetrical façade of two wings that extended outward from a cavernous doorway in the center [see Fig. 5-41]. This entrance was surmounted by a large tympanum, reserved for Victor Prouvé’s sculpture of human inspiration. The lozenge-shaped building was ringed by a cornice that stepped in and out with a series of ressauts, and large arched windows at each corner provided some natural light. The pavilion’s main illumination, however, came from a skylight in the central rotunda. Unlike André’s imposing, exuberant structure, Vallin’s pavilion exuded a sense of humble stability in harmony with the wooded Lorraine landscape, which seemed to obediently recede to allow an open glade among the trees specifically for the pavilion to stand.

Around the perimeter of the pavilion’s interior stood the booths of the individual members’ exhibits, while, in homage to the Ecole’s founder, Gallé’s table Le Rhin occupied the central space below the rotunda, and Prouvé’s 1892 portrait of Gallé was installed to the right of the main entrance; together they reminded everyone who visited of Gallé’s enormous influence over the group, even five years after his death. In contrast to Vallin’s sculptural decoration of the 1904 exhibition at the Galeries Poirel, his 1909 pavilion used an austere interior, with a flat floral frieze around the base of the rotunda serving as the only wall décor [Fig. 5-43].

When the drawings for the elevation of Vallin’s pavilion first appeared in newspapers in October 1908, critics were cautiously optimistic, noting that he was a “conscientious artist” and that the effect of the building within the woods of the Parc Sainte-Marie would be “the most gracious.” They made

499 Antonin Daum, “L’École de Nancy à l’Exposition de 1909,” in Bulletin des Sociétés Artistiques de l’Est 16, no. 9 (September 1910): 101. Daum’s piece was reprinted as simply “L’Ecole de Nancy,” in Mengin, op. cit., pp. 98-106; in the latter it is accompanied by photos of the interior of the pavilion showing the installation of these two artworks.
sure also to note its construction in reinforced concrete. However, the fact that Vallin had been asked to design the structure in the late summer of 1908 meant that there was much less time to finish his pavilion before the exhibition opened than there was to build the other structures. Bad weather in the spring of 1909 further slowed construction, and in April work stalled because of a shortage of specialized stoneworkers needed to complete it. The pavilion was not finished by the time of the opening of the exposition on 1 May 1909, and some observers worried that if the workers did not pick up their pace, the pavilion would not be completed by the time the exhibition closed at the end of October. Meanwhile, in his periodic updates on the progress of construction, Louis Laffitte attempted to placate the general public’s anxiousness for the completion of the building by insisting that it would demonstrate the Ecole’s success in its efforts towards the regeneration of French art.

The pavilion was finally inaugurated with great excitement and fanfare on 13 July 1909. Emile Hinzelin described the celebratory mood as it was encouraged by Prouvé’s sculpture for the building [Fig. 5-42]:


At this moment, the pavilion of the Ecole de Nancy is the joy of the Exposition de l'Est. All white and all floral, this pavilion is crowned by a bas-relief sculpted by Victor Prouvé. The artist wanted to represent the entire Art, that is to say at the same time the inspiration and the labor, the genius and the patience. An eagle, symbol of inspiration, flies toward the sky. A woman, symbol of genius, follows the superb eagle with her eyes. On the pure and charming visage of this woman, on all her beautiful body and long veils, passes the spirit of enthusiasm. At the woman’s side, a man closely studies his carton of drawings: this is the symbol of study, of the opinionated observation. Outside of this, nature deploys the resources and forms of the colors from which it ought to draw: leaves and flowers without name read to him the secrets of grace.…The visitor is taken by the living truth of nature. The Temple of Tomorrow is noteworthy for its many radiant materials: glass, faience, metals, wood, etc.\footnote{Hinzelin, “L'Art en Lorraine,” in \textit{Idées Modernes} 3: Nancy and Lorraine (July 1909): 196-7.}

Hinzelin’s words explained that, for the Ecole, the concepts of artistic inspiration and creation were drawn from nature, which furnished not only the idea but also the materials and colors for the production of art. It was this credo that guided the Ecole’s artists and the fruits of such research were borne out in their Art Nouveau work inside. Nonetheless, the pavilion remained incomplete. At the last minute some parts of Vallin’s original plans had to be eliminated. Originally designed to have two levels, the upper floor, which was supposed to consist of a balcony-like mezzanine around a rotunda open down to the ground level, had to be entirely eliminated. The space for the grand staircase, which was supposed to contain a large stained-glass piece by Jacques Gruber, was now occupied by the Daum Brothers’ booth showing their glasswork. The group intended to forge ahead with the plans for two fountains on the lawn in front of the building and a band of mosaics to cover the arched main entrance after the dedication, but it is unlikely that these were ever carried out.\footnote{Prouvé, “École de Nancy: Inauguration de son Pavillon d’exposition,” in \textit{Bulletin des}}
Both Victor Prouvé and the mayor, Ludovic Beauchet, addressed the crowd assembled for the dedication. Prouvé waxed about the achievements of the Ecole de Nancy over the previous five years, adding that their hard work had created “a way [working worthy] of emulation, or propagation, and emancipation,” and that local industry had “answered [their] call” by their collaboration in the efforts of the group. He reaffirmed the importance of Gallé’s goal of regenerating decorative art by allowing the artisan to re-enter the scene of production, in order to create an art accessible to all. He proudly proclaimed that the exposition was living proof that the Ecole was continuing this mission boldly, confidently, and successfully, and thereby was maintaining “the prestige of Lorraine decorative art.”

Prouvé also described a conversation between Vallin and the mayor when the architect had first presented his plans the previous autumn. During their meeting, Vallin had described how he always had imagined the pavilion as a permanent structure, because, to him, the money spent on the building for the Ecole “should not be wasted as it is ordinarily on the [temporary] structures for the exposition, because that would be immoral…Time is too precious, the effort for us is too painful, the concept too complex, for us to resign ourselves to build something ephemeral.” The efforts of the city and region’s Art Nouveau artists and architects were too important to erect merely a temporary shed for their artwork. Instead, Vallin was committed to building a permanent exposition space for the group’s work, and for that reason he chose to build the pavilion in reinforced concrete. He cited the fact

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Sociétés Artistiques de l’Est 15, no. 8 (August 1909): 89. Also see P.V., “Exposition de Nancy: Ee [sic] pavilion de l’Ecole de Nancy” in L’Impartial de l’Est 71, no. 5264 (1 October 1909): 1-2. This last article implies that these plans were never carried out, and no photograph of the structure that I have found shows the building with the improvements added, so I assume that they were never finished.

507 Ibid., 89-90.
that the material had the advantages of the “unity of [its] material and the harmony of lines” that he had been seeking for a long time.\textsuperscript{508} The issue of keeping the pavilion as a permanent structure was important, for although the members of the Ecole de Nancy had created many movable artworks and many private, commercial, and even industrial buildings in Art Nouveau, there was no building that was specifically dedicated to them. The need to establish a museum for the display of their artwork was central to cementing their role in the construction of the city and region’s permanent identity.

For his part, Beauchet expressed his own admiration for the “elegance and taste” shown by the Ecole, and compared the collection of artworks in Vallin’s building to the “alveoli where bees come to deposit their loot.” He, like many other Nancy citizens, hoped that the building would remain as a permanent fixture of Lorraine’s decorative arts scene and a living monument to the artists of the city and region. However, he mentioned that he was but one member of the thirty-six-man city council who would ultimately decide the fate of the structure. Antonin Daum declared\textsuperscript{509} that it was “one of the rare application of the art of building which had been made up until now along the lines of the Ecole,” and praised its “suppleness, the powerful model of great woody vegetation, rendered in a single curve, without obtrusive junctures, by a simple modeling of reinforced concrete.” Other observers likewise agreed that the building and exposition of the group’s achievements represented “the power of the artistic genius of the province, and above all, the influence exercised by men committed to the duties of their association”


and that it should remain as a permanent museum.510

Obviously, although the Executive Board had initially declared that the Ecole’s pavilion was to be merely a temporary structure, Vallin’s words and the enthusiasm generated by his design had allowed the debate over the ephemeral status of the structure to resurface.511 Again, it was a question of money. Eventually, city officials decided to demolish it, and in March 1910, they notified Vallin of their decision.512 No sooner had they done so than a storm of protest arose. The local critic Pol Simon was the most vociferous of several voices that lamented the building’s demolition. As he declared,

This pavilion was a temple….The carelessness with which the Pavilion of the Ecole de Nancy—painstakingly constructed—was willed to destruction is disconcerting. It seems that such a decision was made while sleeping.

The effect is nothing less than a funeral. It is French art itself that is wounded. They can raze its house in Nancy, where it welcomed visitors under the fresh ornament of Lorraine, with its young and bright smile.

Have they accomplished the work of death?

... 

If we are not mistaken, perhaps the cry of indignation will, in time, be powerful enough to surprise the indifference and restrain itself in its gesture, the sacrilegious hand.513

Even pleas by the region’s art critics to establish a permanent exhibition space dedicated to Lorraine art in the municipal theater in Nancy (which was


511 P.V., op. cit, 2.

512 “Pavillon de l’Ecole de Nancy,” Letter to Eugène Vallin, 12 March 1910 (AMN (K) R2-19).

then being rebuilt after a recent fire) fell on deaf ears.\textsuperscript{514} Despite the public outcry, the city went ahead with the demolition, which, due to the sturdiness with which the pavilion was constructed, became a protracted process that was only completed in July 1910, almost a year after the structure had been dedicated.\textsuperscript{515} Only the main building of the Alsatian Village remained as a permanent reminder of the exposition a year before and the work of the architects of Nancy.

\textbf{Regionalism and the Alsatian Village}

Emile André’s Alsatian Village was one of the most significant parts of the exposition, as it demonstrated the explicit association of the region’s premier artists with the Alsace-Lorraine question [Fig. 5-35]. The Village consisted of a cluster of half-timbered buildings near the entrance to the fair, set in front of a large faux backdrop of wooded hills and mountains that was supposed to evoke the countryside of the neighboring region. The central structure, known as the Zutzendorf House, was an actual building brought from the eponymous town in northern Alsace and re-erected at the fair.\textsuperscript{516} Inside many of the buildings of the Village were genuine Alsatians dressed in traditional costume performing the everyday tasks of the region’s rural residents. Many visitors observed\textsuperscript{517} that the regional ensemble


\textsuperscript{516} Today, this building is the only surviving structure remaining from the 1909 Fair, and can be seen in the Parc Sainte-Marie. The tiny town of Zutzendorf, meanwhile, is now part of the modern commune of Obermodern-Zutzendorf in Alsace.

“reconstituted with a perfect art [and] with authentic materials...a little bit of Alsace transported to French territory.” The aim was to recreate the Alsatian landscape and regional architecture as closely as possible, implying that French citizens were innately familiar with Alsatian traditions and customs and that Alsace was naturally a part of France, not Germany, even if the legal reality indicated otherwise.

Indeed, the Alsatian village helped to reawaken for many French visitors a sense that the issues surrounding the lost provinces remained unfinished political business. A newspaper from Bordeaux acknowledged the “panorama of striking authenticity” the village created, “giving the illusion that the [Zutzendorf] house had continually been there for the a hundred years, with its pointed gable, its washed flat tiles, small tiles, its awnings, blackened shutters, its balconies decked with the traditional geranium.”518 The effect was moving:

Those who enter the old house take off their hats once they cross the threshold. They have serious expressions, and, looking at all these objects, they are reminded of all of them, especially if they are from the lost provinces. Yesterday, an old man came with a young boy. He took a long time touring the house, and, after having visited it, his voice trembling, his eyes filled with tears, said to the boy, “You see, this was just like what we had, which was taken from us, and what I and your mother used to tell you about when you were so young...”. Then they left for Vienne, from which they had come specifically to see this.519

Indeed, the Alsatian Village might be seen as a lieu de mémoire, a repository for the memories of so many people displaced by the settlement of the Franco-Prussian War and continually mined by those who visited it. Those who could remember the 1870-71 conflict were filled with the sadness of being forced to


519 Ibid. Vienne is a city in France southwest of Nancy near Lyons.
leave their homeland afterwards. This was no doubt mixed with the painful realization that Alsace-Lorraine would almost certainly remain permanently separated from France as the war faded further and further into history, as well as some anger that the French government had not taken at least some steps to reclaim the lost provinces in the intervening thirty-eight years.

The tribute to Alsace-Lorraine went beyond the thinly-veiled claim that the region should be returned to French control, however. As we have previously seen, Nancy's citizens realized that the growth and vitality of their city after 1871 was in large part due to the influx of immigrants from the lost provinces. According to one observer,

> You know what has happened in Lorraine since the mutilation of 1871. Prosperity has flowed to heal the wound. We say “heal,” and not “close.” A great number of those from the lost provinces, wanting to remain French, brought to Meurthe-et-Moselle their home, their genius, their industriousness. A marvelous amount of work has been accomplished at the extreme frontier of the country. These are the fruits of this labor that they present us, in a sort of great basket.

In some ways, therefore, Nancy’s residents viewed the exposition (and particularly the installment of the Alsatian Village) as a means of thanking their brethren for their contributions to the city’s newfound prosperity. It was even reported that since many of the members of the Ecole de Nancy had come from the lost provinces and “their patriotic exodus had only further imbued them with the qualities of the [French] race,” their experiences thus served as the inspiration for the erection of the Alsatian Village as a means to commemorate this “fecund alliance of fraternal efforts.” The Village thus

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520 Refer to chapter 2.


acknowledged that the heritage of the lost provinces was now an integral part of the construction of the city’s identity, in a way that had never really been apparent before 1871. The recognition of this “mixed” heritage extended to the celebrations that punctuated the exhibition’s run. Frequently, musical groups from Alsace-Lorraine were invited to perform at the exhibition, and one day of festivities even involved a parade of several people dressed up as characters from Lorraine history, including Jeanne d’Arc [Fig. 5-36], who, as we have seen, was popularly viewed as a protector of Lorraine and symbolized the hope for reunification of the northern part of the province with France.\footnote{Sicard-Lenattier, “L’Exposition en Fête,” in Frédéric Descouturelle, et. al., Nancy 1909: Centenaire de l’Exposition internationale de l’Est de la France (Nancy: Editions Place Stanislas, 2009), 129-32.}

**Reactions to the Fair**

Upon visiting the fair, the critic for *Les Annales Littéraires et Politiques*, Max Durand, wrote:

This summer, Nancy is a favorite destination for pilgrimage and excursion. One comes to learn, to be amused, to enjoy the natural beauty of a marvelous country, and to admire the fruits of its artistic, commercial, [and] industrial efforts.

... The [exposition’s] promoters, men of goodwill and progress, motivated by the strongest patriotism, have drawn on the traditions of art and elegance which have made the former capital of [the duchy of] Lorraine a stylish and seductive city, among other things; but they have wanted also to show that the region of the East...has re-established its material prosperity and its prestige on new and durable foundations.\footnote{Durand, “Nancy, II: A Travers l’Exposition,” in *Les Annales Politiques et Littéraires* 27, no. 1363 (8 August 1909): 129.}

Durand’s words summarized well the sentiments of many of the 2.2 million
people who visited the exhibition between May 1 and October 31, 1909. If the fair was profitable for Nancy in an economic sense, on a national level it was also highly successful in projecting an image of the city and region that confirmed the regional identity that the Exposition’s organizers had set out to mold. This success was mostly due to the enthusiastic Parisian response, which emphasized both the admirable example that Nancy set for the rest of the nation to follow as well as the contributions that Nancy and Lorraine had made to the French nation.

Significantly, both the national and regional press associated the exposition’s “home-grown” character with the issue of Nancy’s artistic progress over the previous forty years. As one publication insisted,

For those who know how to look, see, and appreciate, [Nancy] is more than simply a banal modern city loaded with all the advantages of hospitality. It is a home of art, a perfect poem of architecture and history of which all the edifices, all the monuments, all the stones recall a period or write a page in the annals of the city.525

The respect Nancy’s artists had shown for the city’s history was one of the keys to creating a modern and vibrant artistic movement. Nancy’s modernism was laudable precisely because it was not a complete break from the past, but fit into a sense of tradition. This was different from the search for modernism in parts of Germany, for example, where Peter Behrens sought to derive a modern architecture from the artist’s inner sense of the spirit of the age, or where Hermann Muthesius sought to import a modern sensibility from the Arts and Crafts models in Britain. It was also different from the attempts in Italy, Austria—and in some cases, Belgium and France—to break completely with historical styles in order to discover a new

expression of modernity. But it did resonate with the attempts in Catalonia and parts of Germany and Scandinavia to look inward, towards history and the local tradition to find an architecture that expressed the modern spirit. It was, according to one Parisian observer, the regional character of Nancy’s artistic development that had allowed its brand of Art Nouveau to succeed where that of the capital had failed:

It is in Nancy that the “modern style,”526 after its somewhat-too-timid manifestation at the Paris World’s Fair, in 1900, seems to have found its voice...and in recalling the memories which it borrows from a visit to the galleries of the esplanade des Invalides, the amateur who travels to the real exposition at Nancy—the Palace of [Liberal Arts], the exposition of decorative arts, the Gas Pavilion, the various installations, and above all, the pavilion of the Ecole de Nancy—can measure the distance that has been established between an intense, yet too hasty effort...and the logical deduction of rational and fecund principles.

...The principle of “Lorraine art” is the same from which the “modern style” proceeded: the interpretation of nature; but from this premise, against its predecessor, it draws the rational consequences, with this practical sense, this taste, this measure, this equal aversion for that which is complicated and vulgar, which are the mother qualities of the Lorraine spirit.527

The careful devotion to the scientific study of nature, and the rational and practical application of the forms and designs of the natural world, as originally advocated by Gallé, had produced the admirable Lorraine brand of Art Nouveau. These qualities had resonated with Nancy’s residents and allowed it to overtake Paris as the leading center of Art Nouveau in France by the end of the first decade of the century.

Even more importantly, Parisian writers described the fair as a celebration of national unity and pride. The press jubilantly noted the

526 “Modern-style” was another name commonly given at the time to Art Nouveau.
527 Martin, “Comment L’Exposition de Nancy” (3 August 1909), 3.
patriotic oration made by Louis Barthou, the French Minister of Public Works, at the inauguration, which was received by a thunderous ovation. The Revue de Tourisme declared that “Nancy can offer to the artist, the observer, and to the tourist, an altogether complete and harmonious ensemble of the evidence of the genius of the race.” As Jean Lefranc concluded in Le Temps, “The friends and the admirers of Lorrainers—that is to say, all Frenchmen—have no more dear desire than the perpetuation of this entente.”

It is surprising that Parisian observers were complimentary and seemingly unconcerned by this cultural challenge. One critic from Le Matin were so far as to suggest that France needed to look to Nancy’s example to find the revitalization of its art, thus indicating that the authentic—and hence modern—had to be gleaned from local sources. However, as Nancy Troy has shown, in 1909 the French remained deeply worried about their empirical predominance in cultural—and particularly artistic—production among European countries, a position that had been growing ever-more precarious over the previous thirty years. The French rivalry with the German-speaking countries was especially intense, and foreigners were well-aware of the historical tendency in France towards centralization and the complicated relationship between Parisians and the provinces. As the Frankfurter Zeitung declared, “When one speaks of France, ninety-nine

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times out of a hundred one means to say ‘Paris.’” Some in Germany viewed the fair as evidence of growing decentralization, and documented the prodigious growth of Lorraine industry. They believed that because Parisians were worried about their cultural and economic dominance within France, they had purposely ignored such developments, an oversight that, the Nancy critic Pol Simon surmised, the Germans hoped would prove detrimental to the French nation.533 It thus seems likely that, in emphasizing the issue of French decentralization, the Germans were attempting to drive a wedge between Paris and the provinces so as to thwart any such coordination of French industrial, economic, and cultural interests.

The Germans also credited the advances in Lorraine art and industry not to the French themselves, but to many of the Alsace-Lorrainers who had immigrated after 1871.534 One reviewer from the Viennese paper Die Zeit argued that there was nothing interesting about the fair at all, as it was really merely the work of Germans who had moved to territory that had only a tenuous claim to being French.535 Nancy critics dismissed the Austrian’s assessment as the work of a “pan-Germanist” who refused to give the French credit for their own progress,536 but it seems that the writer was influenced by other concerns. The critic Eugène Martin began a review of the fair by recalling a 1904 piece from the Heidelberg revue Korrespondenz aus Südwestdeutschland that had expressed dismay over the fact that Nancy had grown so rapidly since 1871 that by 1900 it overshadowed both Metz and

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Strasbourg, the two major cities in German-controlled Alsace-Lorraine, as the undisputed “artistic capital of the entire region.” The Germans were dismayed that France had benefited from the loss of territory in 1871 because most of the economic assets of the lost provinces had been transferred to the other side of the border. The reviewer for Die Zeit may thus have been hoping simply to downplay the entire exhibition altogether so as to assuage the German fears that the development of Alsace-Lorraine had not been as prodigious as the economic growth on the French side of the border.

**Late Art Nouveau in Nancy**

Historiography has tended to interpret the 1909 Exposition as the “swan song” of the Ecole de Nancy and Art Nouveau in the city. This is a convenient excuse for explaining the disappearance of the style during World War I by insisting that Art Nouveau was already on its inevitable decline or had completely been dropped from the artistic canon before the conflict ever began. It also allows the Art Nouveau in Nancy to neatly fit into the trajectory of the style that has been traced in other European centers, where it did disappear long before 1914.

As the previous chapters indicate, however, Art Nouveau did not “die out” in Nancy before the war, in either the decorative arts or architecture,


although the formal aspects of Art Nouveau design underwent changes that demonstrated that Beaux-Arts classicism was regaining the popularity it had held before 1900. Weissenerburger’s Hotel Angleterre/Brasserie Excelsior, for example, demonstrates his attempts to devise a simpler, more sober aesthetic instead of the exuberant curves that he used on the Bergeret House earlier in the decade. But he could still put this older aesthetic to good use, as on the façade of the Vaxelaire, Pignot, and Compagnie department store of 1913, where the moldings of the ground-floor windows and the ironwork above the second floor mimic the forms of those used by Emile André for the façade of the Vaxelaire Department Store on the rue Raugraff twelve years earlier.

One unique area in which Art Nouveau was poised to play a serious part in Nancy on the eve of the war was city planning. By this time, the city had been expanding rapidly for close to a half-century, and its population, which stood at barely 50,000 in 1866, had reached 120,000 residents.540 The decades since the Franco-Prussian War had seen virtually unregulated expansion of the city’s new districts, particularly in the southwestern part of town, often known in the local press as “Nouveau Nancy.” This had led to a rather haphazard warren of narrow city streets that ran through a jumble of cramped and insalubrious housing.

During the 1909 Exposition, the famous colonial planner Louis Agache had held a series of conferences at the Chamber of Commerce of Meurthe-et-Moselle in Nancy on the prospects that the future afforded French expertise in city planning to solve such urban problems.541 Inspired by Agache’s efforts,

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541 See especially Lucien Weissenerburger, “Quatrième Conférence: Allocution de M. Lucien
in 1913, many of the city’s prominent architects staged an exhibition at the Chamber of Commerce of Meurthe-et-Moselle called the “Exposition de la Cité Moderne.” In it, they proposed a wide-ranging set of changes to the city’s existing layout. Chiefly, these included the construction of an entirely new, mostly residential sector to the west of the existing city. It was supposed to include an immense plaza 500 meters long and 250 meters wide, intended to serve as a stage for all major ceremonies, festivals, and exhibitions befitting Nancy’s rising stature. This was pierced by a forty-meter-wide boulevard running north-south through it but which curved around the northwest and southwest edges of the city, and a shorter fifty-meter-wide boulevard leading eastward back towards the center of town [Fig. 5-37]. Other small streets would radiate out from it, thus creating a space reminiscent of the Place d’Etoile in Paris.

The bulk of the new sector was to be composed of large Haussmannian apartment blocks arranged around central courtyards graced with green space. Two districts were to be set aside for “garden cities”—presumably large suburban plots for single-family houses, which would have allowed Nancy’s architects to continue to explore the cottage theme with which they experimented a decade earlier in the Parc de Saurupt. The area would include new schools and accordingly would be constructed with the most modern conveniences, including complete electrification and widespread installation of telephone services. The plan relied explicitly on the

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542 In English, “Exposition of the Modern City.”
544 See Chapter 3 for more on this development.
cooperation of many of the leading industrial companies in Lorraine, most of whom had exhibited at the 1909 Fair, to aid in its execution. The 1913 exposition celebrated the artistic and architectural heritage of Nancy and other cities in Lorraine; its intention was to design the new constructions so as to harmonize with the ornament and décor of the eighteenth-century parts of Nancy, much as the Art Nouveau constructions of the previous two decades had done.

The plans of the Exposition de la Cité Moderne, though designed for Nancy, were some of the last in a long line of city planning efforts that predated World War I. The large, tree-filled boulevards were inspired by Baron Haussmann’s reconfiguration of Paris under Napoleon III. Likewise, the main semicircular boulevard lined with apartment blocks and interrupted by a series of squares bore a strong resemblance to the Ringstrasse in Vienna. The work of planners in France and Austria had also influenced many at the turn of the century who had tried to improve American cities as part of the City Beautiful Movement. In the United States, these efforts usually included the large-scale construction of monumental classical Beaux-Arts public buildings along grand axes, plazas, and planned landscapes as in Washington, Denver, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, and many other cities. Otto Wagner used a similar strategy in his 1911 plans for the expansion of Vienna that divided the city into districts of 100,000 to 150,000 people, each of which was organized into orthogonal streets interspersed with

545 Ibid. Also see Laffitte, op. cit., 244-51.
parks and centered upon an axial government complex [Fig. 5-38].

Unlike these efforts, which were largely driven by government initiatives, Nancy’s architects sought to implement their plans principally through private means. These new districts would not have included any new government buildings, structures that had been critical to the Ringstrasse in Vienna and the driving force for many of the City Beautiful plans. This was mainly because Nancy’s eighteenth-century public buildings, crowded around the Place Stanislas, remained some of the key architectural reference points for these new developments. The lack of governmental patronage had been a hallmark of Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture precisely because there had been no need for new public buildings to be built.

As the architectural historian Vincent Bradel points out, however, the plans shown in the Exposition de la Cité Moderne, while certainly projecting an increase in the number of comfortable housing units in Nancy, failed ultimately to address the problems of housing and unsanitary conditions in the existing city. It was, at its core, a utopian scheme, many parts of which (such as the mammoth plaza at its center) seem difficult to fathom as appropriate for a city of Nancy’s size. In some ways it was more of an exercise in Beaux-Arts academicism rather than a practical or reasonable solution to the pressing problems for Nancy. Due to the fact that war broke out in August 1914, the sweeping changes that Nancy’s architects proposed were never carried out.

The First World War was, however, to prove catastrophic for the Art


Nouveau in Nancy, perhaps more so than anywhere else that the style appeared. Because of the city’s geographic proximity to the Franco-German border, it was virtually assured from the beginning of being caught in the conflict along the Western Front. For most of the war, the lines of the two armies remained just on the French side of the 1871 frontier, only a few kilometers from Nancy. The city became the target of air attacks, and in October and November 1917, German air raids dropped a series of bombs on the central part of town, which destroyed entirely the Majorelle Frères store on the Rue Saint-Georges and a part of Georges Biet’s house on the other side of the railroad tracks [Fig. 5-39].

The new headquarters of the city’s leading newspaper, L’Est Républicain, designed in 1912 by the Art Nouveau architect Pierre Le Bourgeois, was also hit by bombs in late 1918 and had to be rebuilt. Some of the city’s prominent architects joined the army in 1914 and served throughout the conflict. Emile Toussaint, who had collaborated on the Chambre of Commerce of Meurthe-et-Moselle and several of the fair’s pavilions, and Louis Laffitte, the director of the 1909 Exposition, were both killed in the first few months of the conflict.

Even without the actual ravages of combat, wartime remained perilous for the city’s Art Nouveau structures and firms. In January 1916, an accidental fire burned the main branch of Jean-Baptiste Corbin’s Magasins Réunis to the ground, and that November, a similar conflagration

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549 Author’s interview with Mme. L. Maret, granddaughter of Georges Biet, 13 May 2006.
551 Emile André also served in the war, and later took an active role in designing structures for the reconstruction. Toussaint was a member of the 20th Corps of Lorraine. See "Société des Architects de l’Est de la France," in Bulletin Artistiques de l’Est 20, no. 1 (April 1921): 2-3. Also see Dammame-Gilbert, 12; Louis Laffitte was her grandfather.
552 These events were well-covered by the local press. See “Formidable Incendie à Nancy: Les Magasins Réunis sont détruits,” in L’Impartial de l’Est 78, nos. 7483 and 7484 (17 and 18 January 1916): 2 and 2; “Violent Incendie à Nancy: Les Magasins Réunis sont détruits,” in
consumed Majorelle’s furniture and iron factories on rue du Vieil-Aître literally right across the street from his villa. Although the factories had been closed since the beginning of the war, and Majorelle had tried to find work in Paris, the fire, which burned for about seven and a half hours before it could be brought under control, destroyed all of the firm’s archives, models, awards, and records from the time that Louis took over the firm after his father’s death in the late 1870s. Nonetheless, the legacy of Nancy’s Art Nouveau remained intact, although its visibility in artistic circles and its physical presence in Nancy’s cityscape had declined precipitously, never to fully recover. As most of these destroyed monuments were reconstructed in Art Deco, the symbols of Nancy’s prosperity during the *belle époque* were soon consigned to the records of history and the vagaries of individual and collective memories.

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Disseminating Art Nouveau Architecture From Nancy

Art Nouveau shaped Nancy’s civic identity at the dawn of the twentieth century, and the influence of the city’s avant-garde preferences also affected architectural and artistic developments elsewhere. Nancy wielded this influence despite the fact that, unlike other centers of Art Nouveau, it was not a long-established, internationally-recognized center of progressive art. In 1900, despite its phenomenal recent growth, it still only counted some 100,000 residents. But in short order, Nancy achieved artistic comparability with other cities and challenged Paris as a French cultural metropole.

Emile Gallé recognized Nancy’s wider cultural territory, and in 1901 he strategically gave the Ecole de Nancy the alternate title of the “Provincial Alliance of Art Industries,” seeking to attract members from all corners of Lorraine. The regional character of the style became evident most strikingly in the influence exerted by the Art Nouveau of Nancy over nearby architectural developments. Impressive enthusiasm for Art Nouveau can be detected in the many small towns that dot the countryside in both the French and German sectors of Lorraine. In French Lorraine, Art Nouveau buildings were built in Lunéville, Epinal, Pont-à-Mousson, Toul, Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, Saint-Mihiel, Longwy, Verdun, Rambervillers, Commercy, Euville, and a handful of other locations [Fig. 6-1]. Some of these Art Nouveau buildings were the work of Nancy’s own masters of the style, but several local architects also adopted Art Nouveau for a wide range of residential, commercial, and civic structures. This distinguished Nancy from other

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554 See Chapter 2 for the development of Nancy between 1871 and 1914.
centers of Art Nouveau, particularly Paris, Barcelona, Vienna, Darmstadt, Glasgow, Munich, and even Brussels, where Art Nouveau appeared only in the metropolis and its immediate suburbs, often as the purvey of an adventurous, liberal, and progressive class of private patrons.

Not only did Nancy’s Art Nouveau become a genuinely regional phenomenon, but its significance also is confirmed by the comparable developments in the German cities nearby. In the lost provinces—northern Lorraine and Alsace—Art Nouveau also found an interested following among architects and designers, although it never attained the dominant status that it enjoyed on the French side of the border. Especially in Metz and Strasbourg, the two largest cities in the lost provinces, Art Nouveau remained a notable undercurrent among other preferred styles of design, asserting a subtle resistance to the Wilhelmine attempts to “Germanize” the region in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. In Strasbourg, such sentiments mixed in a cosmopolitan atmosphere; many of the city’s architects were trained elsewhere and they not only returned with lessons they had learned, but—in part due to the strategic location of Strasbourg on major transportation routes—also kept pace with architectural developments in Germany and abroad.

The Regionalist Spirit in Lorraine

The sense that Art Nouveau was a specifically “Lorraine art” was apparent in the decorative arts and furniture produced in and around Nancy, but its vaunted status became clearer through its regional impact. As the discourse surrounding the exhibitions organized by the Ecole de Nancy shows, after 1901 the members of the group and their followers frequently

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555 Again, see Chapter 2 for a more detailed overview of this history.
referred to their work as “Art lorrain” in order to distinguish it from the much-maligned “mainstream” Art Nouveau of Paris and other centers.\footnote{This was particularly clear in the descriptions of the group’s exhibitions in 1903 in Paris and 1904 in Nancy, as well as the reviews of the Exposition Internationale de l’Est de la France in 1909. See chapters 2 and 5 for more of this commentary.} This gave it a more favorable and local character. The elevated status of “Art lorrain” was evident in the residences built for private individuals in various small towns around Nancy, and it was most visible in the commercial architecture of these villages, in the shops of large retailers and local companies.

**The Commercial Empire of the Magasins Réunis**

Antoine Corbin, the founder of the Magasins Réunis\footnote{See Chapter 4 for the development of the Magasins Réunis in Nancy.} department store in Nancy, was, by the mid-1890s, not content with a purely local operation. Between 1897 and 1914, he and his son, Jean-Baptiste (“Eugène”) Corbin, who succeeded him as head of the company after his father’s death in 1901, established no fewer than ten other branches of the Magasins Réunis in Lorraine and nearby areas, and gained control over two other similar department stores in Châlons-sur-Marne (in Champagne)\footnote{Officially known as Châlons-en-Champagne since 1998. The store that Corbin came to control there was known as the Grand Bazar de la Marne, and it was remodeled in 1913 by Weissenburger. See the *Liste des Principaux Travaux Exécutés Sous la Direction de Monsieur Lucien Weissenburger, Architecte Diplômé par le Gouvernement à Nancy (de 1888 à 1915)*, 32 pp. (Inventaire Général de la Lorraine, Nancy, Dossier Weissenburger)} and Paris.

Corbin’s Magasins Réunis empire quickly extended to most of the small towns in Lorraine surrounding Nancy and even beyond. These included larger centers such as Troyes (1898), Toul (1905), Longwy (1905), Charleville, Pont-à-Mousson (1901), Lens, Lunéville (1910), Alençon, and Epinal (1908-9), as well as tiny hamlets like Vaucouleurs (1897), Saint-Mihiel, Neufchâteau
(1898), Charmes, and Joeuf (1910), the last of which was strategically located just across the new Franco-German border not far from Metz559 [Figs. 6-2, 6-3, 6-4, and 6-5]. From this location, the Magasins Réunis could serve a clientele in the lost provinces without having to go through the trouble of establishing a branch in foreign country.

To design most of these branches, the Corbins again commissioned Lucien Weissenburger, Nancy’s leading Art Nouveau architect, who had built their flagship store there in stages between 1890 and 1912. In some cases, such as in Lunéville or Joeuf [Figs. 6-6 and 6-7], Weissenburger merely remodeled unremarkable two- or three-story buildings, usually attaching a storefront to the ground floor. The more ambitious branches of the Magasins Réunis, however, chronicle the evolution of Weissenburger’s style. Just as in Nancy, this long-term, multi-part project allowed him to modify and add stylistic elements to create an eclectic result, these projects meant that he tinkered with the character of the company’s image. In some of the earlier branches from the 1890s—for example, at Troyes—Weissenburger’s designs reflect the strong influence of his Parisian training. The multi-story block in Troyes looks much like his design for the Nancy store or Paul Sédille’s Printemps in Paris [see Fig. 4-2], with a tall mansard roof, a long set of repetitive bays, grayish stone façade, and corner tower with its entrance at the base and an egg-shaped dome for its crown. The interior appears to have used an exposed iron structure surrounding an open-plan central atrium, probably lit from above by a skylight [Fig. 6-8]. At the outset of his work for the Corbins, Weissenburger thus borrowed from established models that remained popular in the capital.

559 Liste des Principaux Travaux de Lucien Weissenburger (see previous note); and Catherine Coley, “Les Magasins Réunis: From the Provinces to Paris, from Art Nouveau to Art Deco,” in Cathedrals of Consumption, 237-9. Also see Philippe Bouton-Corbin, Eugène Corbin: Collectionneur et Mécène de l’Ecole de Nancy, 42-44.
The appearance of the rationalist current of Art Nouveau in department store architecture, however—in both Nancy and Brussels—changed Weissenburger’s mind. Many of his later designs for the provincial branches of the Magasins Réunis suggested that he had grown much more comfortable with the use of Art Nouveau. The 1904 branch built fifteen miles west of Nancy, at Toul, the birthplace of Louis Majorelle, demonstrates a firmer commitment to the style, with whiplash curves outlining the dormers, delicate linear ironwork adorning the façades and following the gentle curve of the roofline over the main entrance, vegetal motifs affixed to the cornice, and panels between each bay of the façade that recall the peacock motifs used by Vallin in the interiors of the Vaxelaire store in Nancy in 1901 [see Fig. 6-3]. Nonetheless, the Toul branch retains a whiff of traditional Beaux-Arts classicism: the curved mansard roof, repetitive bays of the main façade, and colonnettes are elements of French Second Empire architecture. The Toul store thus should be read as a paradigm of Nancy’s traditionalist Art Nouveau, making use of floral and vegetal designs but retaining the reserved nature of the Lorraine brand of the style. The increasingly favorable attitude that Weissenburger developed towards Art Nouveau is also evident in his work on the main branch at Nancy, where numerous features of the interior and exterior designed by him and fellow members of the Ecole de Nancy after 1900 reveal a predilection for whiplash curves and other strange, fanciful shapes, the free use of iron, glass, and other industrial materials, and ornament based on flora and other natural motifs with local connections.560

A few Magasins Réunis branches outside of Nancy demonstrated an even bolder, and arguably more cosmopolitan, use of Art Nouveau. The branch at Epinal, sometimes called the Grand Bazar des Vosges and designed in 1908-09 by Joseph Hornecker [see Fig. 6-5], carried an elaborate wrought

560 Again, see Chapter 4 for Weissenburger’s work on the main branch at Nancy.
iron railing atop the cornice. The ironwork was shaped in vegetal forms and bore flag poles and sign panels that advertised the multitude of items for sale in Art Nouveau lettering. This device had been used by Victor Horta on the Maison du Peuple in Brussels (1895-99)\textsuperscript{561} and the Nancy architect Henry Gutton in 1906 on his Grand Bazar de la Rue de Rennes in Paris, which was affiliated with Corbin’s chain and managed by Gutton [Fig. 6-9].\textsuperscript{562} The masonry surfaces of Hornecker’s building were ornamented by an elaborate and colorful set of stenciled floral patterns that could have derived from a number of sources: the wallpaper produced by Ecole de Nancy artists such as Charles Fridrich, the stenciled naturalistic designs used by César Pain on the façades of working-class Art Nouveau housing in Nancy, and the decoration devised by Otto Wagner a decade earlier on his Vienna Majolikahaus apartment buildings of 1899 [Fig. 6-10]. The extensive and frank use of metal and ornament can probably be explained by Hornecker’s time as the protégé of the Nancy engineer Henri Gutton (Henry’s uncle) between 1901 and 1906. The Magasins Réunis in Epinal was one of Hornecker’s first commissions after Henri Gutton had retired from his practice and turned it over to him. Hornecker’s penchant for exploring various styles, traditions, and motifs previously used by other architects as shown here resembles the adventurousness of Emile André, and highlights the way that he, like André, embodied the ideal cosmopolitan, eclectic architect of César Daly’s dreams,

\textsuperscript{561} Horta, however, emblazoned the signs mounted on an iron framework at the Maison du Peuple with the names of famous leftist philosophers, not commercial products.

\textsuperscript{562} Upon becoming the manager of the Grand Bazar de la Rue de Rennes, Gutton temporarily abandoned architecture, but after the First World War, he founded a construction company and realized eighteen low-cost housing projects for the reconstruction. He later became one of the pioneers of industrially-manufactured construction. See Bernard Marrey, \textit{Les Grands Magasins des Origines à 1939} (Paris: Picard, 1979), 265. The idea of using Gutton, trained as an architect, as a manager for a commercial enterprise seems strange, but it was not without precedent in Nancy, where Jules Vuillard had made Gutton one of the managers for his real estate venture at the Parc de Saurupt between 1901-6 (see Chapter 3). More on Gutton’s Grand Bazar in Paris below.
though, as noted in Chapter 2, Hornecker had difficulty getting these diverse strands to coalesce into a recognizable personal aesthetic.

As Catherine Coley has argued, the use of Art Nouveau on these branches of the Magasins Réunis did not constitute a unified company style per se, but a strategy to make Corbin’s brand regionally recognizable.\(^{563}\) The Magasins Réunis identified itself with Nancy at each of its locations. On many branches, the main sign announced the enterprise as the “Maison des Magasins Réunis de Nancy,” and the tower of the Troyes branch\(^{564}\) was emblazoned with the names of its major locations in Nancy and Paris. Mapping the locations of the Magasins Réunis [see Fig. 6-1] reveals that the company’s expansion mirrored the contemporaneous regionalist vision of Paul Vidal de la Blanche,\(^{565}\) with a prominent center (in this case, Nancy), surrounded by a network of smaller dependent towns. In one sense, the Magasins Réunis were a symbol of regional unity and an emblem of Lorraine as a bastion of French economic and artistic prowess.

In 1905, Eugène Corbin, perhaps impressed by Henri Gutton’s work on Genin-Louis grain shop in Nancy (1902), located just a few blocks from the Magasins Réunis’ main store, asked the architect to remodel an eighteenth-century neoclassical building that his father had purchased on the rue de Turenne in Paris into a department store. Gutton did so by gutting the two-level interior and setting a framework of steel columns inside the shell, much like other department stores of the time. This kept the space fully open and divisible as the needs of the store demanded. Pleased with the result, Corbin asked Gutton to construct a new Parisian store, called the Grand Bazar de la


\(^{564}\) This building, which still exists today as a branch of the fnac electronics chain in Troyes, can still be seen with the “Nancy-Paris” lettering prominently carved into its façade.

\(^{565}\) See Chapter 1.
rue de Rennes (1906-7), which became Gutton’s best-known work [Figs. 6-9, 6-11, 6-12, and 6-13].

The Grand Bazar de la Rue de Rennes was hailed as the “manifesto in Paris of Art Nouveau from Lorraine” by the national press, though in reality, it was not typical of the regional brand of Art Nouveau architecture practiced by most architects in Nancy, where most Art Nouveau structures, even if they used modern reinforced concrete or steel frame construction, were cloaked in a stone veneer. Gutton’s building, with its exposed steel frame, curtain walls and a flat roofline that supported an elaborate iron railing carrying signage, and punctuated by flag poles, bore much more resemblance to Franz Jourdain’s Samaritaine (which was under construction at the same time), and Victor Horta’s A l’Innovation in Brussels, completed some six years before. Its design was supposed to counter the bizarre undulating Art Nouveau concrete forms used by Paul Auscher just across the street for the Felix Potin department store in 1904 [Fig. 6-14].

Unlike most department stores, Gutton’s Grand Bazar in Paris, though located at an intersection, did not use a corner tower; instead, to attract customers, it relied on the distinctiveness of its metal superstructure, the stacks of goods lining the awning-covered sidewalk, and the huge expanses of exterior glass on the upper stories, which revealed hundreds of products. The thin wall spaces, said to be brick covered by black glass panels, were studded with metal pine-cone and pine needle motifs, symbols of wealth. The interior

566 Marrey, ibid., 141-42.

567 As reported in Roussel, Nancy Architecture 1900 1:40; also see Coley, “Les Magasins Réunis,” 239. This is probably due to the fact that the Parisian press made sure to identify Gutton as being from Nancy when discussing the building. See A.-L.-R., “Bazar de la Rue de Rennes,” in La Construction Moderne 22, no. 24 (16 March 1907): 281.

568 A fact that has been noted by others; see Meredith Clausen, “La Samaritaine,” in Revue de l’Art 32 (1976): 66.

569 Marrey, ibid., 142-43.
mirrored those of other French department stores, including Weissenburger’s Magasins Réunis, with several gallery levels encircling a glass-lit atrium and hung from a point-support steel frame, leaving most space open for the displays of goods. In the center, a grand metal staircase linked the floors.

The only other Magasins Réunis store that even slightly resembled the exterior of Gutton’s branch in Paris was the branch in Epinal, with its iron railing and rooftop signage. Gutton’s building thus did not accurately represent Lorraine Art Nouveau to a Parisian audience, although it presented the capital with a department store substantially different than any previously built. Although not an embodiment of the regional style, the Grand Bazar was an advertisement for Nancy’s Art Nouveau, which enticed customers to see for themselves. In that sense, it was a triumph of the provincial style in the capital, winning approval from a public that had previously ignored Nancy’s efforts with the new style.

*Parisian Enterprises Bowing to the Provinces*

Parisiens were deeply impressed by the vitality and devotion to “Art lorrain” exhibited by the architecture of eastern France. By the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century, many companies based in the capital, which looked to establish branches in and around Nancy, realized the importance of bowing to the artistic trends of the province in order to build a clientele there. The branches of the Société Générale bank in eastern France provide good evidence of this strategy. As noted earlier, its Nancy branch [Fig. 4-27] generally conformed to the Parisian models of multistory apartment buildings, which had commercial establishments on the lowest floors and apartments on the upper levels. Like many Parisian apartment houses, the building presented a rectangular façade topped by a mansard roof and only tinged by the gentle curvilinear and floral décor of Art Nouveau.
The interior of the banking hall, with a glass ceiling above a central atrium, conformed to the typology of banks developed by academic architects in Paris.

Some other eastern branches of the Société Générale echoed this modest application of Art Nouveau features to otherwise conventional buildings. In Châlon-sur-Saône, Burgundy, bordering Lorraine to the southwest, the interior woodwork and the stained-glass windows of the Société Générale building were touched by the undulating curves of Art Nouveau, while the exterior was carved with garlands and festoons with cherubs above the main entrance. Ovoid dormers of vaguely gothic form punctuated the roof. Many of these features were inspired by eighteenth-century Rococo décor [Figs., 6-15, 6-16, 6-17, 6-18, 6-19]. In Rambervillers, in the Vosges, the Société Générale commissioned a three-story building on a trapezoidal site. While the general conceit was classical, including heavy quoins and a prominent cornice, very conspicuous were the Rococo-influenced Art Nouveau details. These consisted of curved balconies, corbels, window surrounds, and iron railings [see Figs. 6-18 and 6-19].

These buildings looked markedly different than the Beaux-Arts or Renaissance-inspired classical branches that the bank built elsewhere in France. Their designs often centered on a pavilion, supported by columns or pilasters and topped by a steeply hipped roof [Fig. 6-20]. The Société Générale used Art Nouveau and hired architects known for working in that style precisely to conform to the fashion of building in eastern France.

A similar strategy was employed by the Caisse d’Epargne for its banks in Lorraine, particularly those in the Meuse, west of Nancy. For buildings in the small towns of Vaucouleurs and Saint-Mihiel, the company hired Gaston Périn, an architect based in Saint-Mihiel. At Vaucouleurs, he designed a three-story building [Fig. 6-21], completed in 1909, that borrowed the popular commercial strategy of placing the main entrance and tallest part of the
structure at the corner, which fronted an intersection. Art Nouveau can be seen in the decoration. The stained glass over the main door and the ironwork for the balconies exhibit whiplash curves, while bright, sea-green-glazed tiles with leafy imagery fill panels above the arched windows [Fig. 6-22]. The curved, vaguely gothic dormers are crowned by spires that resemble those created by Emile André and Lucien Weissenburger in their domestic architecture in Nancy [Fig. 6-23, see also Figs. 3-23 and 3-49]. The building was constructed during an era of economic prosperity, and to celebrate this, Périn emblazoned\textsuperscript{570} the façade above the main entrance with both the arms of the city of Vaucouleurs and a beehive, the symbol of busy activity [Fig. 6-24].

For the Caisse d’Epargne at Saint-Mihiel, finished in 1906, Périn employed a more eclectic blend of classicism and Art Nouveau [Fig. 6-25]. But his iconographic program remained similar. The corner location of the bank invited him to surmount the main entrance with an escutcheon of the city’s arms and a beehive, and to flank the bay with elaborate carvings. On the left, agricultural products such as wheat and fruit, as well as an anvil and plump money bag, capped with the word “Pax,” while the right-hand carving shows a set of gears and industrial equipment as the background to the image of a ship with a caduceus superimposed upon it, all of which is topped by the slogan “Labor” [Fig. 6-26]. The frieze above displays terracotta plaques depicting workers: a locksmith, a woodworker, a haymaker, a carpenter, and a blacksmith [Fig. 6-27]. The choice of a local architect was very strategic: Périn, who knew the types of people who lived and worked in this industrial (and agricultural) province, used Art Nouveau and an iconographic program that was designed to endear the national company to the residents of the region. In Lorraine, it was not enough for a national company to be a

\textsuperscript{570} Letter from the Office de Tourisme de Vaucouleurs to Peter Clericuzio, 12 May 2008.
powerful and financially sound corporation to attract new customers. The province’s citizens demanded proof that the Parisian-based enterprises had their interests at heart and were sympathetic to their issues and daily concerns.

Other Art Nouveau Commercial Architecture in Lorraine

Commercial buildings in other small towns in Lorraine also showcased Art Nouveau. Some of these structures were short-lived, like the branches of the Magasins Réunis (many of which were destroyed in World War I or later remodeled). Others have endured. As early as 1901, the Verdun architect Paul-Nicolas Chenevier (1848-1921), a graduate of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, began to work in Art Nouveau in the remodeling the interiors of a bakery [Fig. 6-28] and the Hôtel Coq-Hardi in Verdun; both were received enthusiastically by the artistic press in Nancy, but both landmarks were destroyed during World War I. Chenevier was elected president of the Société des Architectes de l’Est, in 1913. In Toul, which was largely untouched by the wars of the twentieth century, the Grand Café de la Comédie became an enduring major landmark in the central business district [Fig. 6-29], and, even though it no longer serves its original purpose, remains a fixture of downtown.

In Epinal, the préfecture (capital) of the Vosges département, Art

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Nouveau was supported warmly by the residents, many of whom felt that their accomplishments with the style were being overshadowed by the work in Nancy.\textsuperscript{573} The city’s commercial architecture was rich in examples of Art Nouveau, one of which was the Grande Taverne, a restaurant and bar designed in 1911 by E. Vuillemin, a local architect. Its décor was said to recall “the age of Francis I,”\textsuperscript{574} although the design seems much more eclectic than that. The three conical spires on the roof look vaguely Gothic, the garlands carved into the façade that seem to derive from Baroque or Rococo decoration, and the triumphal arch motif used for the ground floor bays offer a whiff of classicism [Fig. 6-30]. The lynchpin of the design, as the reviewer for Nancy’s \textit{L’Immeuble et la Construction dans l’Est} noted, was the extensive use of tile produced by the Fabrique des produits céramiques de Rambervillers,\textsuperscript{575} one of the largest makers of ceramics in the region, whose directors were members of the Ecole de Nancy and renowned for their architectural tiles and other decorative work in the Art Nouveau style.\textsuperscript{576} Jacques Gruber had been called in from Nancy for the stained glass, and many of the associated artists on the Grande Taverne had trained in the workshops and studios of members of the Ecole. The easy-to-clean tile, used for many of the interior surfaces as well as the entire second floor balcony, was praised both for its aesthetic beauty and for its hygienic quality. The


\textsuperscript{574} Ibid., 291. The building for the Grande Taverne still stands today, and the upper parts of the façade still proudly show the original Art Nouveau details, although the interior and the lower levels have been greatly modified and the structure is no longer used for its original purpose as a restaurant and brewery.

\textsuperscript{575} Translated, the “Rambervillers Factory of Ceramic Products.”

building, though disguised by its many finely-crafted features, also employed modern concrete. The enthusiastic reception the Grande Taverne thus highlighted many aspects of the region’s Art Nouveau: it was created through the collaborative efforts of several local artists; it made use of the products of the wide variety of modern industries based in Lorraine; it celebrated the region’s food and beers; and its ornament employed the floral motifs that paid homage to the natural beauty and artistic traditions of the region.

_Art Nouveau and Residential Architecture in Lorraine_

Eye-catching Art Nouveau was popular for residential architecture throughout Lorraine. In Toul and Lunéville, less than thirty kilometers from Nancy, many of the bourgeois villas built between 1900 and 1914 have moldings with odd whiplash curves, gambrel roofs, horseshoe-shaped window heads, colorful tiles, twisted ironwork, and curved window mullions as seen in Nancy [Figs. 6-31, 6-32, 6-33, and 6-34]. Some of these were designed by members of the Ecole de Nancy, notably as Lucien Weissenburger. In many cases, however, these were merely decorative details stamped on otherwise rather dull and ordinary houses, for which Art Nouveau was an additional indicator of wealth rather than a more deeply meaningful symbol. Indeed, the unimaginative suggest that if the style did carry any particular symbolic properties for these residences, it was merely a general support for regional building traditions, which were now revived and made popular by a group of talented designers.

Art Nouveau’s popularity in residential architecture was strong in part because it was the preferred style for local architects’ own houses. Louis Mougenot, a graduate of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts from Epinal in the Vosges,

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577 Ehr., _op. cit._, 291, 293. One designer, a Mr. Gigoux, was a former student of Eugène Vallin.
built his home in a flamboyant interpretation of Art Nouveau in 1906 that assembled a clumsy combination of elements [Fig. 6-35]. The bracketed dormers, which recall Arts and Crafts structures, are topped by crockets reminiscent of Gothic revival architecture [Fig. 6-36], while the lower floors of the house are embellished with delicately sculpted details resembling the tendrils of plants or curls of hair. Their sinuous curves are mirrored in the ironwork of the fence and in the mullions and moldings of the arched windows [Fig. 6-37]. The cornice, exterior sculpture, and balanced façade recall Lorraine’s eighteenth-century Rococo classicism. Mougenot’s aim, it appears, was to place the Art Nouveau décor of his own home in line with all of the strains of the province’s architectural heritage, perhaps believing that historical allusions would prove his talent. Mougenot’s use of Art Nouveau thus functioned not only as an indicator of his respect for the artistic and political traditions of the region, but also as an advertisement of his professional abilities. Moreover, the style was a status symbol, demonstrating that Mougenot was prosperous enough to afford a meticulously crafted house.

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In Nancy’s suburbs, Art Nouveau architects experimented with the style in building villas for the city’s wealthiest citizens, and this artistic exploration continued outside the city limits. In 1904, for example, Charles Masson, the brother-in-law of Jean-Baptiste “Eugène” Corbin and a high-ranking executive of the Magasins Réunis, decided to build a retreat for his family on a large piece of land acquired by the Corbin family in 1886 just outside the tiny town of Liverdun, northwest of Nancy. The estate was called variously “La Garenne,” or “Les Eaux Bleues” [Fig. 6-38], the latter probably from the azure waters of the nearby Moselle. There, Lucien Weissenburger remodeled an existing house, built in 1897, into a sumptuous country home.
The design was Weissenburger’s gift to Masson, his close friend.

The Château de la Garenne is the sole example Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture in a rural setting. If structures such as the Villa Jika and the Bergeret House epitomize Lorraine Art Nouveau in the suburbs, the château is a comparable example in the countryside. At least three members of the Ecole de Nancy collaborated on its design and construction. Like many other Nancy residents, Masson was from Alsace, and he wanted a house and grounds that reminded him of his native region. Because he oversaw the Magasins Réunis stores in Paris, he occupied the house only between 1 July and 1 November each year; the rest of the time he lived in an apartment in the capital.578

Weissenburger designed the house to connect with the natural world and blur the boundary between interior and exterior space as much as possible. The three-story structure is built of rough-hewn, irregular stone that recalls the construction of a castle or fortress and differs sharply from the smooth yellow Euville stone used for most of the villas and multistory apartment buildings in Nancy and surrounding towns. A large porch on the entrance façade is covered by a large glass canopy on a metal frame, whose whiplash ironwork evokes birds in flight [Fig. 6-39]. To the right of the hall located just inside the main entrance was Masson’s study, which opens onto the porch. Weissenburger designed all its doors and windows to open in order to dissolve the interior/exterior boundary.579

578 For most of the information on Masson, the Corbins, and Les Eaux Bleues, I am indebted to Jean-Paul Mourot, a historian of the estate who shared his knowledge of the building and grounds with me at Les Eaux Bleues on 4 July 2008. The house, occupied by the Gestapo during World War II and sold by the Corbin family in 1944, later served as a regional arts center and was eventually abandoned, but now serves as an assisted-living center for the physically handicapped. See also Michel Mazerand, Liverdun (Metz: Serpenoise, 1995); and J.-M. Pierron and M. Lechien, Le domaine de la Garenne à Liverdun (Metz: Direction régionale des affaires culturelles, 2006).

579 Author’s interview with Jean-Paul Mourot, 4 July 2008.
Weissenburger designed the house to showcase ostentatiously the wealth and elevated status of his patron. On the other side of the foyer is the conservatory, a large rectangular room pierced by numerous large windows and decorated with green and blue mosaics of seaweed motifs by Jacques Gruber [Fig. 6-40]. Here Masson installed many exotic plants, in part to show off his wealth and in part because he, like many of the members of the Ecole de Nancy, was interested in horticulture and the cultivation of new species. Gruber also designed a large, colorful stained-glass window (since lost) for the staircase at the back of the main hall, a feature that resembled closely the luxurious staircase that Weissenburger built simultaneously in the Bergeret House in Nancy. Masson, who loved to hunt, further extended the exterior/interior connection by hanging many of his taxidermied animal-head trophies in the stairwell.

Masson’s study begins a sequence of three rooms running from the front porch to the back of the house. These are outfitted lavishly with wood paneling and moldings by Eugène Vallin. The parlor [Fig. 6-41], directly behind Masson’s study, was a prototype for the décor Vallin designed for the first-class staterooms on the ocean liner *France* (1910), one of the nation’s premier transatlantic passenger ships. The curved cornice woodwork gives the room an almost streamlined appearance that seems to presage Art Moderne; similar window heads [Fig. 6-42] innovatively hide the rolled-up shades. Behind the parlor is the billiard room, where fishscale tilework in the fireplace recalls Masson’s other pastime, fishing. Neither of these rooms reveal much engagement with Art Nouveau. Instead, their furnishings more recall the classicism of French Renaissance chateaux, and, indeed, as a country summer residence for a wealthy patron, the Château de la Garenne invited comparison with these noteworthy French precedents.

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580 Originally intended to be done in stained glass.
The exterior and grounds of the château likewise emphasize its connections with the natural world. The back wall of the house is plain stucco wall punctuated by arched windows with large orange shutters and a door with half timbering, and the roof sports intricate lacelike iron cresting on the ridges and eaves and downspouts shaped like gargoyles, recalling the rich Gothic heritage of Alsace and Lorraine [Figs. 6-43]. Each of the four façades of the house is different and many of the exterior walls are covered with ivy in order to give it a picturesque character [Fig. 6-44]. The estate included an orangerie with many varieties of fruit trees, as well as outbuildings for raising cattle and producing butter and milk, which Masson shipped to his apartment in Paris. Supplementing the plant-filled conservatory, Masson also kept a large greenhouse, the remains of which can still be seen, to satisfy his passion for horticulture.

However, industrial innovation was integrated with nature in the estate, in line with the philosophy of the Ecole de Nancy. On the hill in front of the house, Weissenburger designed a system to pump water from the Moselle into an artificial stream that fed a large fish-filled pond, where Masson could indulge his fondness for angling. Meanwhile, in the woods behind the house, Weissenburger installed a large artificial grotto [Fig. 6-45]. Water was mechanically pumped from the Moselle, to which the water returned after cascading over the rock formation in a dramatic waterfall. These aspects of Masson’s estate demonstrated the Ecole’s harmonious view of nature and industry: the two complemented each other to produce creations that were more beautiful and useful than either produced by itself.

*The City Hall at Euville*

Arguably the most important Art Nouveau architectural expression of the regionalist spirit of Lorraine was the city hall of the tiny town of Euville,
nestled right next to the city of Commercy in the département of the Meuse west of Nancy. Euville’s Hôtel de Ville or Mairie is the only governmental structure in eastern France to be built in the style, a curious fact given the enormous popularity of the style during the quarter century of economic prosperity and growth preceding the First World War. The unique status of Euville’s town hall can probably be explained by the fact that most other cities in Lorraine already had buildings that adequately housed local and regional government. Nancy’s impressive Hôtel de Ville, for example, built on the Place Stanislas by Emmanuel Héré in the 1750s, was a revered monument of the region’s glorious Rococo, from which most of the rest of the city’s later architecture, including its Art Nouveau structures, took its cue. Euville’s need to construct a city hall came about because of its newfound prosperity at the end of the nineteenth century. The town’s population had grown healthily from 463 residents in 1874 to 814 in 1889 and finally 1,331 in 1906, of whom 300 were Italian immigrants. The main reason for Euville’s growth was the increased demand for the eponymous yellow limestone from nearby quarries, which was the building material for structures all around Lorraine, but also such noteworthy Parisian structures such as the Opéra Garnier (1861-75), the Gare de l’Est (1849, enlarged 1885), and the Alexander III bridge (1898). Quarrying had brought the city a substantial amount of wealth, as well, with revenue of 167,000 francs in 1901 (equivalent to about $916,600 in 2010). The city hoped the new structure

582 As the alert reader will have noticed, most of the Art Nouveau buildings in Lorraine are constructed from Euville stone, as are many other historic structures in the province, such as the cathedral of Toul, the basilicas at Saint-Nicolas-de-Port and Domremy-la-Pucelle, and the buildings around Nancy’s Place Stanislas. Euville stone is also used (along with granite) in the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor.
583 The annual revenues in French francs are taken from typed notes in the Archives of the
would accommodate all of its local government functions as well as the local primary school, whose First Empire-era quarters had grown dark, cramped, and humid by the 1890s. Euville’s officials began discussing acquiring the land for building a new city hall as early as 1896, and in 1900 they hired Henri Gutton, the Nancy engineer, who, with the assistance of Joseph Hornecker and Eugène Vallin, submitted plans in March 1901.

Although Gutton was one of the leading designers in Nancy to advocate the use of a metal frame, he gave a traditional appearance to Euville’s City Hall [Fig. 6-46], which made extensive use of the city’s famous limestone. As built, Gutton’s building was a slight modification of the original 1901 plans, but the overall conception remained intact. The building is symmetrical on the exterior, with a central pavilion that projects forward slightly from the rest of the rectangular structure. Seven tall, narrow arched windows rise above the central entrance, lighting the main reception hall on the first floor [Fig. 6-47], and their soaring height recalls the Gothic. Above the windows, the seven social virtues—order, work, liberty, equality, brotherhood, duty, and justice—are ensconced on shields surrounded by wreaths of oak and olive leaves, symbols of peace obtained through might [Fig. 6-48]. The oak and olive leaves continue in the sculptural details encircling the structure under the roof cornice. The high roof is pierced by two chimneys at the ends of the great hall, as in late Gothic French chateaux and public buildings.

The ground floor and basement contain the primary school and living
quarters for the teachers, while the second level includes the offices of the city’s bureaucracy. In the center a monumental iron staircase rises to the upper floor, embellished by a huge, three-panel stained-glass window by Jacques Gruber depicting a Lorraine landscape of trees and a lake dotted with water lilies. The building projects a sober and stately appearance, and the prominence of the second-floor windows, with their colored glass by Emmanuel Champigneulle, a master glass artist from nearby Bar-le-Duc, invite viewers to enter.

The main reception hall [see Fig. 6-47] is the centerpiece of the structure. It is reached by the main staircase, whose iron balustrade by the Parisian Edgar Brandt mirrors the exterior sculpture with its intricate oak leaf motifs [Fig. 6-49]. Although the stairs are lit by fine floral fixtures made by the Daum and Majorelle, they hardly prepare the visitor for the great hall. This room spans much of the length of the second floor, and the upper panels of its seven tall windows are filled with plant imagery in stained glass. Sinuous moldings by Eugène Vallin spring from the wall planes, and blossom in the corners in branches of chrysanthemums, each of which is lit by a light bulb [Fig. 6-50].

The iconography of the decoration at the ends of the reception hall is political. On the ceiling, two figures flank a shield emblazoned with the letters “RF” (République française)\(^{586}\) located above bundled fasces, symbols of political power, and surmounted by the Gallic cock. This ensemble is again mounted over a background of olive and oak leaves [Fig. 6-51]. Above the fireplace, a bust of the personification of the Republic fronts a mosaic depicting the rays of the rising sun, and sits above another shield reading “RF” and surrounded by oak and olive branches [see Fig. 6-47]. Wall panels are carved with chrysanthemums, and the floor is oak and mahogany.

\(^{586}\) For “République Française.”
In the City Hall of Euville, Art Nouveau serves and symbolizes government on the local, regional, and national levels. The floral motifs of chrysanthemums recall Lorraine, and six of the seven artists on the project lived and worked in Lorraine, but the plethora of republican iconography suggests an overarching nationalist purpose: demonstrating harmonious allegiance to the Republic, not decentralization.

The rich program was not lost on critics when the Mairie was completed in 1909: while some criticized its extravagance, others judged that it was fitting that those who could embellish it so well had been called upon to do so. The expense, some 378,000 francs (over $2 million in 2010), was compared with the vast sums the city had expended on its church seventeen years before. Over the course of the building’s construction, France had officially become a secular country, cutting ties with the Catholic church and legally separating church and state. In 1872, Viollet-le-Duc had defended the Appropriateness of luxurious residences for the political and economic elites of a republican nation, and at Euville, Nancy’s artists and architects took Viollet’s dictates to their logical conclusion. The “home” of a municipal government that enthusiastically supported the secular Republic was now a sumptuous, stately structure befitting a thriving community. The visibility of Euville’s City Hall reinforced the establishment of a secular authority that was of equal, if not greater, importance than the church in France. The Republic, supported by the area’s modern industries, was the foundation for the city, region, and nation’s future prosperity.

**Architectural Relations with Alsace-Lorraine**

In the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, the Germans viewed the

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conquered territories of Alsace-Lorraine as frontier provinces reclaimed from centuries of French influence. Due to the location of these lands on the border with France, the Germans also sought to fortify and militarize them, much as the French were simultaneously doing in southern Lorraine. The architectural developments of the cities in Alsace-Lorraine from 1871 to 1918 reflected these twin goals—cultural reclamation and defense.

**Northern Lorraine (Metz and Thionville)**

The principal cities in the northern part of Lorraine that the Germans acquired in 1871 were Metz and Thionville (which they renamed Diedenhofen). After the Treaty of Frankfort was signed, the demographic situation in northern Lorraine changed dramatically as a very large number of French inhabitants, who wanted to remain French citizens, opted to move across the new border, where they settled in the southern two-thirds of the region. This was especially true for most of the prominent members of Metz’s cultural scene, including many of the city’s artists, so that by the turn of the century, a popular saying was that “Metz is no longer in Metz but in Nancy.”

The exodus meant that for at least the first several years that Metz and Thionville were subject to German rule, neither city could boast a well-organized and home-grown artistic community like the one that coalesced into the Ecole de Nancy. Both Metz and Thionville, however, experienced a net increase in population between 1871 and 1914, because many Germans moved in to replace the French-speaking residents who had fled. In 1905, forty percent of Metz’s population was composed of natives of the lost

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provinces, while more than fifty-three percent were from states that made up Germany before 1870. As a result, both cities expanded beyond their 1870 borders, but the architectural scene in these cities came to be dominated by immigrant German architects and designers.

The Germans expanded Metz towards the south beginning in 1903. New districts were crisscrossed by broad, tree-lined boulevards much like those constructed in Paris under Haussmann, in the 1859 extension plan for Barcelona, in the Ringstraße in Vienna, or in the contemporaneous development of the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin [Fig. 6-52]; many of these new streets met at large open plazas or squares. In the decade preceding the First World War, the Germans populated these districts with banks, hotels, office buildings, shops, large single-family villas and multistory apartment houses. These were built of stone in a variety of styles, among which a heavy, ornamental Rhenish Romanesque was especially popular, as it was elsewhere in the Reich [Fig. 6-53]. In some cases, the German architects applied Art Nouveau features, such as angular, twisted railings and stenciled floral motifs on the façades [Fig. 6-54]. The residential and institutional architecture showed similar decorative strategies, sometimes taking them to the extreme. The new main post office, designed by Jürgen Kröger and built from 1908-11, is a strong example of Romanesque revival architecture, with round arches, squat columns, clustered colonnettes, and hipped roofs [Fig. 6-55], recalling the architecture thought to be in vogue at the time of Otto I’s

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First Reich of the tenth century.\textsuperscript{592}

Kröger’s Rhenish Romanesque train station [Fig. 6-56] is a similarly massive structure that took seven years to build, beginning in 1901. Its scale, which seems rather unnecessary for a city of merely 65,000 inhabitants, was due to the strategic importance of the city, which planned to host a 20,000-troop garrison in the event of the anticipated military conflict with the French. Kröger brashly celebrated German militarism and nationalism in the column capitals on the train station. With their imagery of speeding locomotives and nomadic settlers, these allude\textsuperscript{593} to the strength of the German railway network and William II’s dreams of further territorial expansion.

Despite the ubiquitous presence of Wilhelmine German architecture in Metz, the city was not devoid of Art Nouveau influences from France. Indeed, Nancy’s artistic dominance in the region was such that its artists were able to receive a few commissions in Metz during this period. Eugène Vallin built two structures across there: the Wattrinet apartments and the Café Moitrier [Figs. 6-57 and 6-58]. These are exemplars of Nancy’s Art Nouveau: in the Café Moitrier, Vallin’s signature sweeping moldings, which resemble tree trunks, enliven the interior surfaces, while the gentle, wide curves of the ground floor of the Wattrinet building and its pointed, neo-Gothic arches give evidence of Vallin’s training as a designer and restorer of church interiors. Vallin was able to obtain these commissions because his patrons were among the wealthy, longtime Lorraine residents who opted not to move when the territories were annexed by Germany. For many of them, the use of Art Nouveau was a silent cultural protest against the German architecture that


flooded the city.\footnote{Pignon-Feller, \textit{Metz 1848-1918}, 451-52 and 542-43; idem., “L’art nouveau de Nancy à Metz, des allers-retours nostalgiques et ambigus,” 266-70. The Wattrinet building still stands, but the Café Moitrier was unfortunately destroyed by fire in December 1969.} Despite the efforts to Germanize the lost provinces and strengthen their ties to the Wilhelmine Empire, the new border remained quite permeable, and many cultural influences from France penetrated there.

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Thionville, which, like Metz, lies on the banks of the Moselle River, had been a fortified city, protected by a star-shaped ring of walls until the 1870s. In expanding the city the Germans demolished the old fortifications, replacing them with a double ring of broad avenues, which intersected with straight boulevards that radiated outward to the north, west, and east from the old city [Fig. 6-59]. On these streets German architects constructed rows of multistory apartment buildings in an ornamental, eclectic mixture of Rhenish Romanesque and Gothic [Fig 6-60]. The main post office, built in 1907, is a neo-Renaissance building that recalls German architecture of the sixteenth century, with stepped gables adorned with long, thin crockets and large volutes, and topped by a cupola [Fig. 6-61]. This building, with \textit{putti} over the arched entrance carrying a letter and a telegram, was modeled on the post office for the Neu Köln district in Berlin, built in 1906, and is indicative of the Second Reich’s cultural unification.\footnote{Van Joest, \textit{op. cit.}, 54-8; Decomps, \textit{op. cit.}, 58-63. Also see Decomps, Sylvain Chimello and Dominique Laglasse, \textit{Thionville (Moselle): Urbanisme et Architecture, 1900-1939} (Metz: Serpenoise, 1996), 12-18.}

Unlike in Metz, where the only trace of the \textit{moderne-style} are the French-flavored projects by Eugène Vallin, some German architects in Thionville were themselves attuned to the rise of Art Nouveau, and, despite the location of Thionville on a railway line between Nancy to the south and...
the Belgian cities of Liège, Antwerp and Brussels to the north and northwest, the Art Nouveau architecture of the city testifies to the influence of the Jugendstil of the German-speaking countries. The apartment house at 7, rue d'Angleterre (1903), for example, evinces the architect Gustav Bergmeier's reliance on geometric shapes and parallel lines for the stylized ornament [Fig. 6-62], and echoes the work of Otto Wagner and his circle in Vienna.

The visible Germanization of the newer sectors of Metz and Thionville was a component of the Second Reich's promotion of political and cultural unification. The imagining of a glorious but fictional Germanic past was undertaken as part of the justification of the establishment of the modern, a movement known as National Romanticism. Germans were successful in transplanting many of their cultural models to these newly-acquired territories. German Art Nouveau arrived in the lost provinces with the large influx of German residents after 1871, replacing French citizens who fled German rule. Such Germanization thus did not constitute the political conversion of the indigenous residents but merely the drastic change in the ethnic profile of Alsace-Lorraine.

Art Nouveau in Strasbourg and Alsace

The architectural and greater cultural situation in Germanized Alsace, particularly Strasbourg, was more complicated than it was in the German parts of Lorraine. The distinct regional identity of Alsace, with a unique heritage, traditions, and customs, had a long history, and came to the forefront soon after the Franco-Prussian War and the annexation. This paralleled the revival of regional traditions around Nancy on the other side of

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596 The most comprehensive account of this phenomenon is Barbara Miller Lane’s National Romanticism and Modern Architecture in Germany and the Scandinavian Countries (New York/Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Also see van Joest, op. cit., 54-7.
the new Franco-German border.

The revival of Alsatian regionalism in the 1870s and 1880s, sometimes called the “Alsatian Renaissance,” was spearheaded by the artist Charles Spindler, a German-trained Alsatian furniture-maker, much like Emile Gallé or Louis Majorelle. He was one of the few representatives of Alsatian art to exhibit at the Parisian world’s fairs at the turn of the century. His work was much admired in Nancy, where he exhibited many of his pieces at the main branch of the Magasins Réunis.\(^{597}\) Spindler wished to promote an Alsatian identity that was faithful to local cultural traditions and distinctly Alsatian -- not stied to France or Germany. His platform was the *Revue alsacienne illustré* [Alsatian Illustrated Review], a bilingual French and German magazine that he founded in 1898 and which continued publication until 1914. At first, the *Revue* published many articles on Alsatian folk art, history, and culture, but in 1901 Spindler ceded editorial control to the Paris-educated doctor Pierre Bucher, who set it on a more Francophilic and anti-German track. Bucher invited Maurice Barrès, the fervent French nationalist, writer, and one-time representative of Lorraine in the National Assembly to contribute articles on the “true” Alsatian spirit. Barrès was an advocate of the reunification of Alsace-Lorraine with France, although he had to accept the reality of German control.\(^{598}\)

Many Alsatians resented their status as an imperial Reichsland, a conquered province administered directly from Berlin, and wished for greater

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autonomy within the German Empire on a par with that of other German states. Throughout the period of German control, many—like Bucher and Barrès—yearned for the return of French rule. They illustrated their choice of national holidays: the celebration of the victory in the Franco-Prussian War as seen as boring and pompous, while Bastille Day was one of the happiest days of the year (especially by children), when they traveled across the border to partake in the festivities in Nancy, where they received a warm welcome from the Lorrainers. Their claims that Alsatian heritage was tied to French heritage grew louder and more impassioned after the outbreak of World War I.

Unlike Lorraine regionalism, however, Alsatian regionalism was not a united movement. Spindler, who had retired from the editorship of the Revue alsacienne illustrée to concentrate full-time on his art, never accepted the magazine’s shift in political allegiances toward Francophilism. One of Otto von Bismarck’s objectives in annexing Alsace-Lorraine was to unite all German-speaking people outside of Austria under one regime, and many Germans who moved to Alsace were devoted to studying the German heritage of the province and proving its Teutonic heritage. They rewrote Alsatian history, arguing that the real annexation of the province was Louis XIV’s conquest of the area in 1681, while the redrawing of the borders in 1871 was its liberation. It was felt that the region’s residents—many of whom spoke the Alsatian language, a dialect of German—were more strongly tied to Germany than France, but that their culture should be celebrated as unique within a German Reich.

599 Ibid., 36-44.


601 Fischer, Alsace to the Alsatians?, 26-28. Alsatian is still a prominent spoken dialect in the region today, especially in rural areas, though French seems to predominate in Strasbourg.
Others believed that Alsace harbored a dual heritage—racially German, but political culture and other features derived from France. Werner Wittich, a professor at the University of Strasbourg at the turn of the century, was a main proponent of this view, which he expressed on more than one occasion in the *Revue alsacienne illustrée*. He argued that Germanization would be slow because upper-class German immigrants to Alsace refused to mingle with the native residents, while bourgeois French speakers would continue to resist incorporation into the German social body. Some took the distinctiveness of Alsace to an extreme, arguing that the region was *neither* French nor German, but possessed unique heritage, customs, and culture that was unfortunately sandwiched between two larger nation-states that quarreled over territory. Such Alsatians deplored both the French and Germans, but they had difficulty defining a clear conception of an Alsatian state wholly separate from either country.602

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The architecture of Alsace, and particularly Strasbourg, during the period of German rule reflects these varied conceptions of the region. Traditional Alsatian architecture, supposedly free of both French and German influence, was characterized by distinctive half-timbering, street-side windows, and a propensity for emblazoning philosophical sayings on the façades. It was one of the aspects of Alsatian culture promoted by its residents [Fig. 6-63].603 But not all the buildings built in Strasbourg at the turn of the century, including the Art Nouveau structures, reflected regionalist aspirations. Rather, they represented the region’s location at a crossroads of cultural identities and influences.

602 Ibid., 6-10 and 29-36.
603 Ibid., 24.
Strasbourg had been besieged by the Germans in September 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War, and consequently had suffered serious physical damage. It was clear to the victorious Prussians, however, that even though at the time of the 1870-71 war Strasbourg barely housed 90,000 residents, it was the largest and most important metropolis in the provinces that they had just conquered, and the political and cultural center of Alsace. Over the quarter-century following the conflict, therefore, the imperial government rebuilt much that had been destroyed, opened new areas to the north and east of the central core to new residential and commercial development, and constructed new official buildings befitting the capital of a state in the Second Reich. These government structures included the new Kaiserpalast (1884-89; built to house the German emperor when he visited Strasbourg),\textsuperscript{604} the National Theater (1888-99), the National and University Library (1895),\textsuperscript{605} and the central train station (1883) [Figs. 6-64, 6-65, 6-66 and 6-67]. Each of these buildings has a colonnaded central pavilion flanked by wings or backed by a rectangular multistory stone block, a plethora of Baroque sculptural details, and heavy rustication that together recall the official Beaux-Arts classicism of many contemporaneous Imperial German government structures, such as Paul Wallot’s Reichstag in Berlin, finished in 1884 [Fig. 6-68].

When the Imperial government was not using the Baroque style in Strasbourg, it often turned, as it did in Metz, to a Rhenish Romanesque, Gothic Revival or German Renaissance style. The new Main Post Office

\textsuperscript{604} This structure, which accommodated William II on twelve occasions during his reign, was used as a military hospital during World War I. Since then it has served a variety of purposes, most recently as the headquarters for the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine, which still occupies the building.

\textsuperscript{605} The acronym comes from its French name, the \textit{Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg}.
(1899), a Gothic Revival structure of red sandstone common to many buildings in Strasbourg, was designed, like so many historicist buildings in Alsace-Lorraine, to appeal to German National Romanticism.

The need for new official Imperial German buildings had been largely satisfied by 1900, and Strasbourg architects experimented with other stylistic developments in domestic, institutional, and commercial architecture. German National Romantic styles were popular for these types of structures [Figs. 6-69 and 6-70], and Art Nouveau—while still a very visible style among the city’s buildings—was just one of several options from which architects in Strasbourg could choose. Unlike in Nancy, it was never the dominant mode of design.

Some of the Art Nouveau in Strasbourg reflects Belgian and French models, including those from Nancy. The firm of Jules Berninger and Henri-Gustave Krafft was the most prominent adopter of this strategy. Berninger and Krafft were both born in Strasbourg when the city was still a part of France, and had been trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Krafft wished to keep these French ties strong, and upon graduation from the Ecole became a member of the Association Amicale des Architectes Diplômés par le Gouvernement, founded in 1877, and then its successor, the Société des Architectes Diplômés par le Gouvernement (SADG), the alumni association of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, organized in 1895. The two men developed a

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607 See Membership Report #132 of the Association Amicale des Architectes Diplômés par le Gouvernement, n.d. [ca. 1890]; Membership Report #136 of the SADG, 27 October 1907; and a letter from Krafft to Georges Poupinel, Treasurer of the SADG, 26 October 1907 (all in Henri-Gustave Krafft dossier, Musée d’Orsay Centre de Documentation, Paris). Refer to chapter 2 of this dissertation for more information on the training of Nancy’s architects.
very eclectic style that was based on the classicism of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the conventions of Parisian architecture, but they remained open to the insertion of other traditions' elements of décor, such as onion-shaped domes developed by German Renaissance architects.

The Knopf department store in downtown Strasbourg (1898-99) shows that Berninger and Krafft digested well the lessons that they had learned at the Ecole. Like Lucien Weissenburger’s Magasins Réunis in Nancy, the Knopf store reveals the strong influence of Parisian department store design [Fig. 6-71]. The iron-framed building rose four stories, used repetitive rows of large shop windows, and located its entrance at the foot of a tall-domed corner tower. The open-plan interior, organized around an atrium and supported on iron piers, contained a dramatic central staircase whose intricate whiplash ironwork beckoned customers to climb to the upper levels [Fig. 6-72]. At the foot of the staircase stood a giant rooster sculpture, an apparent Gallic cock, and tree-like candelabras reminiscent of those created by Louis Majorelle in Nancy [Fig. 6-73]. As in French stores, the central atrium was lit by an expansive dome of colored glass.

The peculiar ornament of the Knopf store included whiplash ironwork on the doors and windows and stenciling on walls and ceiling surfaces [Fig. 6-74], giving the impression that the structure was encrusted with twisted vines. This resembled the ironwork Victor Horta, Henry Van de Velde [Fig. 6-75], Hector Guimard, and Nancy’s architects, notably Henri Gutton and Louis Majorelle. The adoption of French Art Nouveau by Berninger and Krafft was recognized by contemporary observers, who compared the ironwork from another of their department stores, in Frankfurt, with the entrance gate of Gutton and Hornecker’s villa at 1, rue des Brice (1904) in Nancy’s Parc de Saurupt [Fig. 6-76]. The Strasbourg architects had apparently crossed the border and seen some of the developments in Lorraine.
Berninger and Krafft were aware of the powerful regionalist movement in Alsace, and local building traditions surfaced in many of their designs. The apartment house they built for A. Weiger in 1904-05 [Fig. 6-77], for example, makes use of the distinctive half-timbering common to the region, and the sinuous, wispy curves of the balcony ironwork resemble plant tendrils, a motif seen on such Art Nouveau buildings in Nancy as Lucien Bentz’s pharmacy for Paul Jacques [Fig. 6-78; cf. Figs. 4-50 and 4-51]. Such plantlike motifs are repeated inside Berninger and Krafft’s Schutzenberger villa [Figs. 6-79 and 6-80], built in 1897-1900 for a brewery magnate in Strasbourg. Its overall massing is indebted to the perennially popular Italianate style. The marble stairway in the main vestibule welcomes visitors with a balustrade that nearly copies the whiplash curves seen in the Knopf department store. Above, the ceiling is covered with reliefs of long grasses and realistic moldings Easter lilies, the flower that is often said to be the basis for the French *fleur-de-lis* [Fig. 6-81]. The lilies and grasses are found throughout the building’s décor and are featured prominently on the main façade, where they crown many of the arched windows and fill the panels between the roof brackets [see Fig. 6-79]. Werner Wittich considered the Schutzenberger House to be an exemplary “modern Alsatian villa,” while Parisian critics, perhaps realizing the reference called it a “highly successful manifestation of Art Nouveau applied to architecture.”

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608 See chapter 3 for more on this building.

609 A fact that was noted by contemporary observers; this caught the eye of a reviewer for *Die Architektur des XX Jahrhunderts* in 1902, whose remarks are quoted in Sarah Grotrian, “Art Nouveau Architecture in Strasbourg,” in *The Connoisseur* 199, no. 800 (October 1978): 90.

610 Ibid., 90, 92-93.

Other Strasbourg architects drew more direct inspiration from Nancy. Auguste Mossler (1873-1947) was trained in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the atelier of Louis Bernier. After receiving his diploma in 1901, he returned to Strasbourg and formed a partnership with Auguste Müller. In 1907, the pair designed the seven-story apartment building at 22, quai St.-Nicholas [Fig. 6-82], which, with its wide, projecting central section flanked by two thinner bays and a roof pierced by dormers, resembles the Société Générale in Nancy by Georges Biet and Eugène Vallin [see Fig. 4-27], built four years earlier. The details of Müller and Mossler's building also bear comparison with architecture in Nancy, as the window grills are nearly identical to those on Biet and Vallin’s bank [Figs. 6-83 and 6-84]. Although Strasbourg was not a leading center of Art Nouveau, its architects had learned from the pioneering Belgians and French, including architects in Nancy, and would produce respectable examples of it.613

Other Strasbourg architects were influenced by several different strands of Art Nouveau and often combined them on the same building. This is especially true of the work of architects who moved to Strasbourg from other parts of Germany. François (Franz) Lütke (1860-1929) and Heinrich Backes (1866-1931), German-trained architects from Cologne and Billburg, respectively, built the apartment house at 56, allée de la Robertsau for Georg Cromer in 1903 [Fig. 6-85]. This structure, which also housed Lütke and

Nation, Identité,” 227.

612 These similarities have been noted by Shelley Hornstein-Rabinovitch in her “Tendances d’Architecture Art Nouveau à Strasbourg.” (Thèse de 3e cycle, Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg, 1981), 58.

Backes’ offices, exhibits many similarities with structures by Josef Maria Olbrich at Darmstadt and with Otto Wagner in Vienna. In Olbrich’s Sezession Building in Vienna (1897) and his Franz Joseph Haus in Darmstadt (1900-1), portions of the façades are covered in a tight-knit low-relief pattern of floral and plantlike ornament that emphasizes the plane surfaces [Figs. 6-86 and 6-87]; much like the base of the Cromer Apartments’ oriel bays are covered in low-relief patterns. Such decoration contrasts sharply with the more plastic floral ornament often seen in Nancy.

In the Cromer apartment house an air of classicism is created by the fluted pilasters interspersed between the upper-story windows, much like the pilasters that Wagner frequently employed on his buildings [see Fig. 6-85]. The upper portions of the central sections of the façade, meanwhile, are covered in floral-patterned tiles much like those seen on the upper parts of Wagner’s Majolikahaus of a few years before [see Fig. 6-10]. Finally, several of the windows are crowned by wide semicircular arches, and in several places the ornament and structural elements (such as the balcony corbels) rely on motifs created by multiple parallel lines, as often seen in Austrian Art Nouveau [Fig. 6-88; cf. also Fig. 6-62].

While Cromer’s building is preponderantly German and Austrian in its lineage, a few features remind one of French Art Nouveau. The plastic, high-relief moldings over the windows on the third and fourth floors and the flattened, bell-shaped curves of the window sashes recall the Rococo-influenced Art Nouveau of Nancy and Châlon-sur-Saône. Likewise, the three escutcheon-shaped dormers of the Cromer apartments appear quite similar to those created by Weissenberger for the Magasins Réunis in Nancy. Finally, the concrete balconies adorned with twisted ironwork can be compared with the contemporary Kempf apartment house (1903) built by Fernand and

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614 On Lütke and Backes, see Reiger, et al., ibid., 166, 169; and Hornstein-Rabinovitch, 50-53.
Félicien César in Nancy [Fig. 6-89]. Although Lütke and Backes seem to have drawn heavily on the Jugendstil of the German-speaking countries, they were clearly aware of Art Nouveau developments taking place to the west.

In Strasbourg, the use of architectural models from Germanophone nations was not limited to Art Nouveau, and frequently Jugendstil would be combined eclectically with other styles. Lütke and Backes (1866-1931 also designed the Jakob Stempel House at 4, rue Erckmann Chatrian [Fig. 6-90], built in 1902-3, for an executive with the Deutschland General Insurance Company. The Stempel House suggests Lütke and Backes’ intricate knowledge of eighteenth-century German religious architecture as well as the buildings at the Darmstadt Artists’ Colony, completed just a couple of years before. The residence’s squat rectangular cupola is crowned by an inverted funnel-shaped glass roof, while the cupola’s base is pierced by round windows capped by projecting eyebrow cornices. The design seems to derive from the stone and copper construction of square German Broque and neo-Baroque towers from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century secular and ecclesiastical buildings. Such towers usually were crowned by onion-shaped domes that are topped by a funnel-shaped finial, and their structure often includes a round window or clock on each side of the tower, capped by a segmental cornice [Figs. 6-90, 6-91, 6-92, and 6-93]. The stepped concave gables of the Stempel House clearly recall the types of gables used on German Renaissance buildings [Fig. 6-94]. Among the inspirations for the main doorway, with its semicircular arch and its reliance on parallel lines and abstract floral imagery [Fig. 6-95], are the doors of Olbrich’s Franz-Joseph-Haus and Dieters House at Darmstadt [Fig. 6-96].

The use of traditional German forms was not limited to buildings designed by Strasbourg’s most prominent firms. In many bourgeois houses, like those like those on the rue Jules Rathgeber, Art Nouveau ironwork,
moldings, and sculptural patterns mix with German baroque rooflines and late-medieval onion domes [Figs. 6-97 and 6-98]. This eclecticism balanced the exploration of the new style and the reverence for older Germanic traditions that was the hallmark National Romantic architecture.

Strasbourg’s location, on major transportation routes between central and western Europe and in Alsace, a region that was very conscious of its identity, marked it out as a center for the exchange and mixing of ideas and traditions during the two decades before the First World War.

Conclusion

By 1914, Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture had garnered international renown as well as an avid following that stretched from Paris to Strasbourg. Through the Corbin family’s generous patronage and aggressive advertising, the contacts and friendships made by Nancy architects, and the work of other less-well-known actors, the Lorraine brand of Art Nouveau became the dominant building style of the region and its emblem. For Lorraine residents, the style inspired confidence in their province’s strength in commerce and industry, as well as its important heritage of cultural progress and artistic development; it instilled a sense of reverence for the natural beauty around them; and reminded them of the desire to reunify the region and restore Alsace-Lorraine to French rule.

For Nancy, the push to establish a regional following for “Art lorrain” made the city the epicenter of a new artistic community, distinct from Paris and, in the end, its rival in terms of national and international prestige and influence. The stores of the Magasins Réunis marked each city in Lorraine and a number of other cities with the significant, if not ultimately dominant, imprint of Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture. In Lorraine this encouraged architects, designers, and patrons to take up Art Nouveau for their stores,
restaurants, residences, and, in the one instance where they required a new public edifice, a city hall.

After 1900, architects outside France began to take inspiration from Nancy rather than Paris. Nancy’s regionalist architectural scene flourished alongside a regionalist movement in Alsace and friendly relations were established with fellow Art Nouveau designers there. In Metz and Strasbourg, the use of Art Nouveau in commercial and domestic architecture became a symbol of resistance to the attempts by the Germans to embed their own cultural traditions and policies in territories that had enjoyed French rule for centuries before 1871. Germanization ultimately enjoyed limited success as a result.

By the eve of World War I, Nancy had come into its own as a center of modern architecture. It modeled a vision of authenticity founded on a very complex foundation. The arrival of a core group of heavy industries helped furnish the materials and capital needed for an artistic renaissance. Nancy artists used the most modern technologies of the time, and, firmly committed to reginal cultural and political aims, collaborated with each other to produce dazzling visual manifestations of these ideas. The culminations of these efforts were the Gesamtkunstwerks of Lorraine’s Art Nouveau architecture, where every aspect of a building was imbued with this regional identity and character. These creations openly beckoned the rest of the French nation and nearby territories to follow Nancy’s lead in inventing a group of successful, regionally-based strains of modernism.
Art Nouveau and the Ecole de Nancy remained key parts of Nancy’s civic identity and cityscape up until World War I, despite the fact that, in architecture, it became increasingly conservative. Most of the Nancy architects who had used Art Nouveau before 1905 eventually reverted to a neoclassicism reminiscent of their teachers at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. This transition was not sudden, however; after that date, Lucien Weissenburger, the city’s leading Art Nouveau architect, would on occasion reprise his earlier fondness for Art Nouveau, and certainly considered it the appropriate vehicle for the expression of his own regionalist political beliefs. At least on a rhetorical level, as late as two years into the First World War, Nancy’s artistic community, centered around the Ecole de Nancy, staunchly maintained that it had established a new “art lorrain” that definitively broke with the Parisian metropole. Indeed, while Art Nouveau struggled to maintain a foothold in the city’s new architecture, the regionalist spirit that had given rise to it remained as strong as ever.

During World War I, however, the death knell sounded for the last remnants of Art Nouveau in Nancy. Louis Majorelle closed his furniture factories and iron foundry on the rue du Vieil-Aître at the beginning of the conflict and moved his family to Paris for the duration, as did Jacques Gruber, who would never return. Two years later, in 1916, Majorelle’s factories would burn (in an incident apparently unrelated to the war), and a year after that a German air raid on Nancy leveled the building containing

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615 See Chapter 2 for the late history of the Ecole de Nancy.
616 “L’Atelier Parisien de Jacques Gruber,” recent article in Bulletin Monumental.
his shop on the rue St-Georges. Jean-Baptiste Corbin's Magasins Réunis bore the brunt of the destruction; the flagship store in Nancy burned to the ground in January 1916, and most of the chain's other locations around Lorraine were also lost to German bombing raids. Other structures near the center of Nancy, such as the headquarters of L'Est Républicain and the home of Georges Biet, received serious damage from German attacks, but were rebuilt according to their previous designs after the war.617 This reckoning does not include the personal cost; Emile André served in the French army for the duration of the war, and Emile Toussaint was killed in action in August 1914 not far from Nancy.618

The vitality of the belle époque in Nancy was gone. In 1972, the Surrealist writer André Thirion (1907-2001), whose family moved to Nancy from nearby Baccarat in 1918, reflected on the city as it stood two years after the armistice:

The Ecole de Nancy had exhausted all of its creative powers by 1914, but no one realized it. In 1909, at the very moment when this group of artists was in triumph...at the Exposition Internationale de l'Est de la France, the tide of fashion was turning, and the younger generation was beginning to find Art Nouveau a joke. Most members of the Ecole were skilled craftsmen...and were hardly disturbed by the aesthetics of the Ballet Russes....The Munich Exhibition of 1911 had strengthened their feelings that they alone possessed the truth and represented French taste, whose grace and poetry were imperiled by Germanic heaviness and the barbaric simplicity of crude materials and plain contours.

By 1920 Munich taste and Arabian Nights Orientalism had carried the day. Abstract art had also begun, borrowing its vocabulary from Cubism. The leaders of the Ecole de Nancy, most of them mature by 1910, had survived the war, and nearly all of them had found secure positions....[T]he people of Nancy were no longer interested in ordering

617 See chapters 2, 3, and 4 for more on these developments.

Art Nouveau furnishings or objects....Afraid to risk the divine follies which customers no longer wanted, the cabinetmakers, architects, glass blowers, typographers, bookbinders, and wallpaper manufacturers simplified their ornamentation but still preserved the characteristic modulations of the noodle style. All they managed to produce, however, were wretched objects that were as old-fashioned as they were ugly. Everything in Nancy—shop signs, typefaces, vases, ashtrays—was now “modern,” ad nauseam. Five years after the war, arts and crafts in Lorraine had lost their originality.

...Our lively family discussions about the choice of furniture, wallpaper, architecture, woodwork, cast iron, and what not made me realize the extent to which Nancy had become a city devoid of artistic resources and creative spirit. After leaving Baccarat, which had had nothing, I had been dazzled by the capital of Lorraine, by the turn-of-the-century houses as well as the Place Stanislas. But I soon recognized that nothing much was happening amid all this sublime architecture; the entire populace was living in another age. Nothing seemed modern in this town, and the mustiness of the Ecole de Nancy was really oppressive....I developed an aversion toward the ten or twenty poignant floral constructions, with harp-shaped windows and tulip-shaped chimneys, that can fortunately still be seen in neighborhoods dating from the 1900s. I came to understand the value and charm of these dream houses a few years later when I reacted against the impoverished projects of Le Corbusier and André Lurçat, which I viewed with great distaste.619

Thirion acknowledges that his youthful perspective may have clouded his judgment of the achievements of Nancy’s Art Nouveau artists and architects in the early 1920s. But he did perceptively notice the dramatic changes in taste that came after 1914, embracing the simplified, angular, and geometric forms that would eventually evolve variously into Art Deco and the International Style. Nancy designers realized that to produce applied art that continued the prewar aesthetic would be unprofitable. The Daum glassworks and the Majorelle factories modified their production to take advantage of

619 Thirion, Revolutionaries Without Revolution, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Macmillan, 1975) [1972], 50-52. These are Thirion’s memoirs, and this passage begins the chapter “Nancy in 1920.”
these new developments [Figs. 7-3 and 7-4]. In architecture, the building most emblematic of these trends was Pierre Le Bourgeois’ new Magasins Réunis, completed in 1925, which adopted the smooth curves and rectilinearity of Art Deco [Fig. 7-5]. Nonetheless, the memory of Art Nouveau remained fresh in the minds of Nancy architects, and several designers still incorporated wide curved arches and floral ornament reminiscent of the Art Nouveau era in their postwar buildings [Figs. 7-6 and 7-7]. In 1936, Jean-Baptiste Corbin, who had amassed a prodigious number of Art Nouveau objects and furniture by Nancy designers, bestowed on the city his entire collection. The city initially had no space to display this testament to the antebellum vitality of its decorative arts, and it took some twenty-eight years before the city was able to install the collection permanently in Corbin’s own villa on the rue Sergent-Blandan. It was finally opened as the Musée de l’Ecole de Nancy in 1964.

In the century since the First World War, Nancy did not remain immune from the campaigns against Art Nouveau, which were often brought about by the champions of modernism and modern architecture, both in France and elsewhere, as well as by the pure bad luck to which Art Nouveau architecture frequently seemed to fall victim. The destruction of Victor Horta’s Maison du Peuple in Brussels in 1965 and the fire that gutted his L’Innovation department store in 1967, along with the condemnation of


various Guimard structures, including the most elaborate Parisian Métro terminals, have been well-documented. Several Art Nouveau structures in Nancy also disappeared in the intervening years, most notably various small storefronts, the large Vaxelaire establishments in downtown Nancy, and a few private villas. But by and large, the city managed to preserve its Art Nouveau buildings at least as well as most other centers of the style, and it remained a major part of its civic identity.

**Regionalism as an Architectural Philosophy**

The regionalism that underscored Nancy’s Art Nouveau architecture derived from longstanding French theoretical positions as well as strong local cultural and political traditions. On one hand, the cultivation and rediscovery of regional aesthetics was something that French architects throughout the nineteenth century viewed as necessary for the rejuvenation of an authentic national architectural culture. Daly’s *Revue Générale de l’Architecture* and Viollet-le-Duc’s *Histoire d’un Maison* filled many French architects with a respect for the local, indigenous, and vernacular forms and materials that became the backbone of regionalist aesthetics. The love of Nancy’s architects for their own region of Lorraine was a second vital component of the city’s culture, passed down from Gallé, Maurice Barrès, and other writers, who instilled in them a respect for the symbols, legends, and the natural landscape.

In Nancy, Art Nouveau came to embody the sense of regional identity and solidarity that only grew after Lorraine was divided in the settlement of the Franco-Prussian War. Nancy’s artists and architects accomplished this despite the fact that the sources that they drew on for creating a distinct

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622 For example, see Roussel, *Nancy Architecture 1900*, 1:34-35; 2:42-43; and 3:16-17, 64-65.
variety of Art Nouveau varied widely, revealing no common thread that would link all of them as logical inspirations for Nancy’s architects. Nancy’s architects’ choices for these sources were influenced by Lorraine’s location at the geographic intersection of various regional and urban themes. These included the spread of Arts and Crafts simplicity from Britain (and, by extension, Germany); the knowledge of Alsatian architecture, gathered from their own tourism and travel; the rusticated mountain chalet aesthetic from the Vosges and Switzerland; the rationalism of architects such as Jourdain, Guimard, and Sauvage and the artists of L'Art dans Tout; and finally, by the formal education they received at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, which favored various strands of classicism—Baroque, French Renaissance, and Rococo—the latter of which also reflected Lorraine’s own eighteenth-century artistic heritage.

The shared preoccupation of Parisians and Nanciens with the Rococo parallels the quality of Nancy’s Art Nouveau as both regionalist and nationalist. Indeed, their efforts were part of a national program to reclaim France’s vaunted cultural supremacy, which was being challenged by other nations in the late nineteenth century, and to regenerate a French population that had been weakened by the Franco-Prussian War. The attempted renewal was in part motivated by the search for regional variations and the strengthening of local traditions through political and cultural decentralization. This, César Daly had hoped, would help renew the architectural profession. In Nancy, as elsewhere, regionalism in architecture remained loosely defined (although it was assisted by the organization and statutes of the Ecole de Nancy). Moreover, as other scholars have shown, this was not the only regionalist movement within France at the turn of the

century.

The search for an authentic regionalism that was derived from the vernacular architecture of eastern France was tempered by a strong sense of the longstanding French tradition of a regular, ordered classicism, most recently passed down through Guadet, Laloux, Jules André, and other leading architects with whom Nancy’s architects trained. Nancy’s architects chose by and large to strengthen these bonds with the Parisian architectural establishment, continually touting their membership in the Société des Architectes de l’Est as a badge of their professional status, and ultimately reverting to the classicism of their mentors. For them, advancement was to be achieved by working within the norms of the profession, not as maverick designers who fought the entrenched order. That attitude predisposed them to recognize that universal classicism had dominated the major World’s Fairs since the 1890s, and when they were called upon to design their own exposition for Nancy in 1909, they looked to these precedents (as well as those for industrial buildings) as their models.

In the end, the balance between innovation, tradition, and place allowed Nancy’s architects to sustain Art Nouveau more widely and for a longer time than their counterparts in Paris. Nancy’s architects made use of modern technology, such as reinforced concrete and robust steel-frame construction, choices that were only possible because of the alliance that they struck with the prodigious industrial firms in Lorraine. Parisian Art Nouveau architects, many of whom relied even more on the frank use of industrial materials, were never able to form such lasting cooperative relationships. Likewise, Nancy’s architects were able to find an unusual concordance between nature and industry, wherein each concept was used to celebrate the other, instead of treating them as antithetical, as was the case at the turn of the century in Belgium, Germany, Austria, and Great Britain.
Nancy’s architects also benefitted from a local political and cultural climate that was highly unified across class lines. Their use of legible symbolic motifs easily resonated with vast majority of their region’s population, who both respected the area’s glorious past and sought to reunite the province (and recapture neighboring Alsace) in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. Their sympathy for such locally-sensitive political issues likewise highlighted their support for decentralized control of artistic and economic concerns. They thus avoided, unlike several Art Nouveau architects in Paris, giving support for potentially controversial political views, such as socialism. Art Nouveau architects and artists in Nancy made the style inclusive and accessible to citizens at all levels of society, from workers to the wealthy privileged elite. And unlike in Darmstadt or within the German Werkbund, the collaborative nature of their work prevented the development of rivalries among artists.\textsuperscript{624} Whereas Art Nouveau elsewhere sparked controversy and deepened differences among people, in Nancy the style successfully represented regional harmony and social stability in the midst of an increasingly tense and uncertain world.

\textsuperscript{624} On this, see John Maciuika, \textit{Before the Bauhaus}, especially chapters 6 and 7.
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[Map of Alsace-Lorraine showing different periods and countries]

Legend:
- Yellow: Alsace-Lorraine (Germany, 1871-1918; France, pre-1871 and post-1919)
- Orange: France
- Purple: Other Countries
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