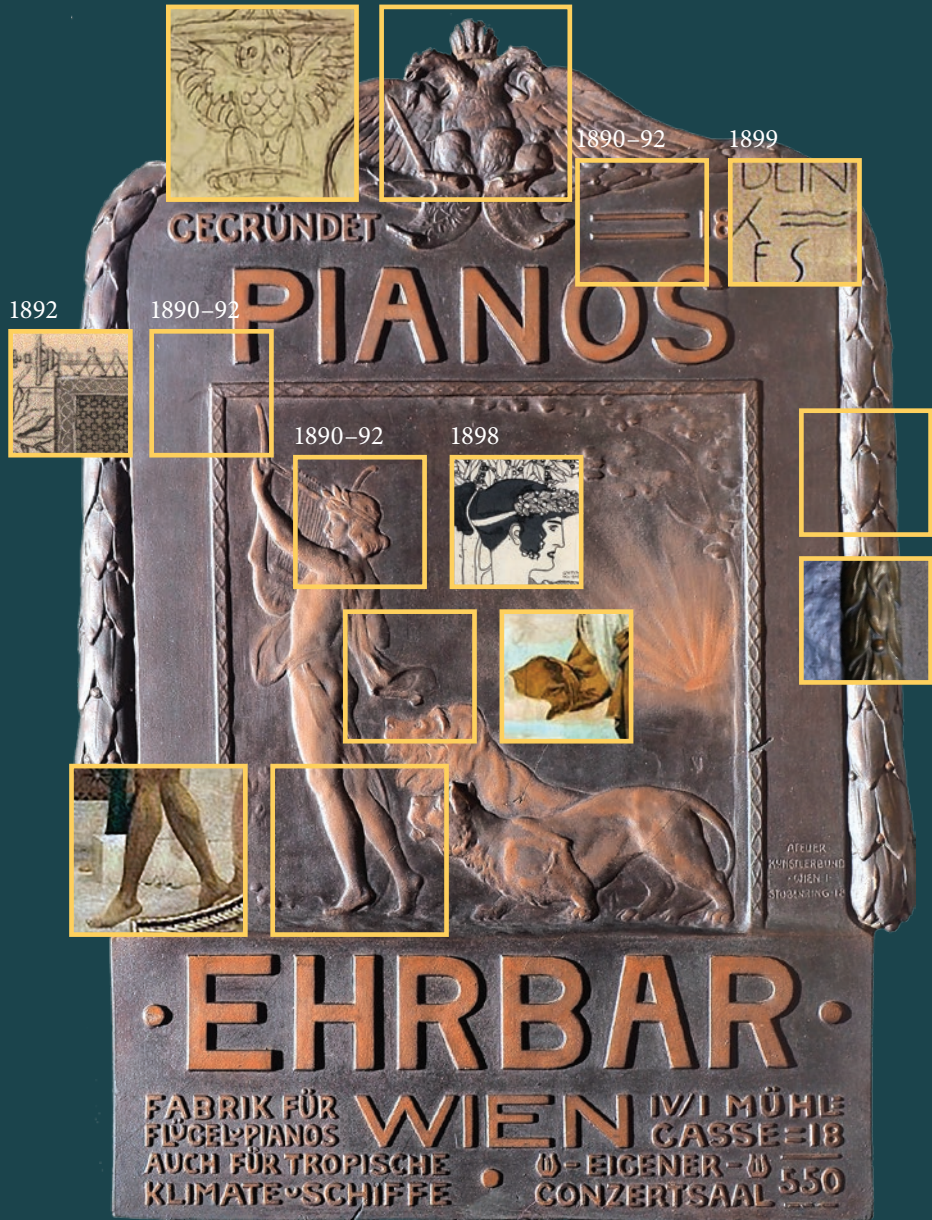


• THE EHRBAR RELIEF • A WORK ATTRIBUTABLE TO KLIMT



György Selmeczi

GYÖRGY SELMECZI

THESIS I

THE EHRBAR RELIEF

A WORK ATTRIBUTABLE TO KLIMT

THESIS II

HIDDEN STRUCTURES IN
KLIMT'S PICTURES

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Fig. 1. The Ehrbar Relief,
Dimensions: 88.8 × 61 × 4–6 cm,
Material: Plaster of Paris with old gold and patinated bronze finish,
© 2018. Selmeczi, Budapest

THESIS I

THE EHRBAR RELIEF

A WORK ATTRIBUTABLE TO KLIMT

I.1 Introduction

The Ehrbar Relief offers a multitude of information suggesting tips for dating, identifying its makers, and the customer who had ordered the plaque.

The Relief is unsigned, and the company indicated also appears unknown, but the year in which the plaque was created may be put between **1890-92 based on changes in the address of the Ehrbar concert hall**. The hall was given the number it still uses in 1894, but an earlier address is indicated on the Relief, presumably used before Mühlgasse was extended (integrating Mühlbach Gasse). This has led us to assume an extremely early date and this would also explain the “incorrect” address on the plaque.

This study is based on the assumption that the Ehrbar Relief is an extremely early Art Nouveau work made before 1894.

Given the early date, it can be presumed that its maker was the inventor of Art Nouveau typography, and the name Künstlerbund Wien may appear on this plaque for the first time.

The Relief appears to be the first piece in the line of Vienna Sezession works to apply a quadrangular composition, thus being the starting point of the cubic Würfelstil. This is the first example of a composition with the central figure placed on the bottom line, gazing out of the picture parallel with the composition’s plane, a feature so characteristic of Klimt’s later works.

The Relief presents Apollo as an androgynous figure, with no precedent in Klimt’s art, but with a series of similar portrayals to follow.

This is the first portrait with a headband variant typical of Klimt: just a few bay leaves in front, with a broad ribbon at the back. Other artists never applied that combination.

These characteristic features and the composition rules detailed later in this study will invariably be found in Klimt’s works, the study offering ample analogies.

The study also contains further, detailed assumptions such as related to the aetherial posture of Apollo in the Relief. The secret of that effect is that the artist drew his model lying flat on his front, then rotated the image by 90 degrees.

The Relief’s border composed of intertwined serpents is the same, novel structure as in Klimt’s design for the Gulden banknote made at the same time, in both cases

applied in the same way, on three sides of the composition. The lyre, incorporated in the text on the Relief, will also reappear in Klimt works.

The Relief was composed in line with the rules of silver section. Klimt applied the same rules when making his Junius design (1896) and other works, especially those of a geometric nature.

The customer could not have been other than piano maker Friedrich Ehrbar, owner of Vienna's second largest concert hall. He probably requested that the composition, intended as advertisement, should appropriately represent his prosperous factory and the Ehrbar Saal, an emblem to be used at his outlets, with special regard to Budapest, a city already preparing for the Hungarian Millennium in 1896.





Ehrbar's approaching Klimt's firm, working just across the street at this time (Stubenring 3) rather than an unknown plaster maker is a tempting idea. At the same time it also appears logical that Klimt, already a renowned artist, will not sign a commercial piece to which his associates also contributed.

Atelier Künstlerbund, as indicated on the Relief, may have been formed to include Klimt's brother Georg after the earlier Künstler Compagnie was terminated in 1892. At this time Klimt, who was familiar with the cooperation of Art Nouveau artists in Munich, was typically working in such cooperative groups and would in the future contribute to similar artists' communities, too. The artists working together seek integrating different branches of art; the Relief, incorporating a work of fine art, being a product of emerging applied arts.

Introduction

A comparative summary of facts and aspects

Ehrbar Relief	Gustav Klimt
<p>1. The Relief's maker: Atelier Künstlerbund Wien, Stubenring 18, a sculptors' studio in 1890–92.</p>  <p>The Franz Joseph barracks and riding school, to be dismantled in 1900, at the same address. The building used to house various other artistic events, too.</p>	<p>The studio of Gustav Klimt and his fellow artists in the 1880s was in the Museum für angewandte Kunst (MAK) Wien, Stubenring 5, (3.). The 1888–1890 Lehmann register indicates the group as „Gebrüder Klimt“. I assume this refers to a cooperative artistic venture by Gustav Klimt, Ernst Klimt and Georg Klimt.</p>  <p>Das MAK am <u>Perspektivplan der Innenstadt</u> aus dem Jahr 1887.</p>
<p>2. There is a striking similarity of composition.</p> 	<p>Gustav Klimt: Junius, 1896 – composed on the same principle. Klimt is the first proponent of quadrangular composition in Vienna art.</p> 

Ehrbar Relief	Gustav Klimt
<p>3. Intertwined snakes applied as an internal border are a unique feature in Klimt's art.</p>  <p>None of Klimt's contemporaries applied this motive. It is remarkable that the snakes appear on both sides of the Stubenring at the same time.</p>	<p>Gustav Klimt: <i>Gulden</i>, 1892. Snake motive, symbolising trade, applied as an internal border.</p>  <p>Both works are associated with trade.</p>
<p>4. The snake border is applied on three sides only. Neither design has it on the bottom line.</p> 	<p>Klimt: 1892, <i>Gulden</i> design with the internal snake border. The snakes appear at the top and on both sides, not at the bottom.</p> 

Ehrbar Relief

5. Lyre motive, made of cattle horns and the shell of a tortoise, in line with mythological references. Both works are supposed to have been made between 1890–92.



The figure of Apollo and the lyre motive were favourite subjects for Klimt, often appearing throughout his career.

Gustav Klimt

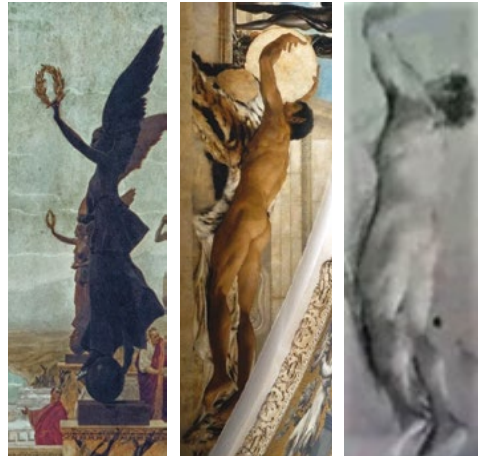
Klimt: *Die Allegorie der Skulptur*, 1889. Lyre composed of horns. The drawing was made when „Gebrüder Klimt“ were already publicly known.



6. Aetherial Apollo figure



Gustav Klimt: *Burgtheater*, 1886–1888.



Ehrbar Relief

5. The floating veil has the same structure as the cloak of Klimt's 1885 Apollo – sculpted just across the street, at Stubenring 18.



The floating arch, the pointed end and the lower protrusion of the drapery also suggest a sequel to the Apollo theme of the 1880s.

Gustav Klimt

Gustav Klimt: Apollo. 1885. A detail of the cloak suggests the same artist for both works. It could have been designed at Stubenring 3, reportedly Klimt's studio at the time.



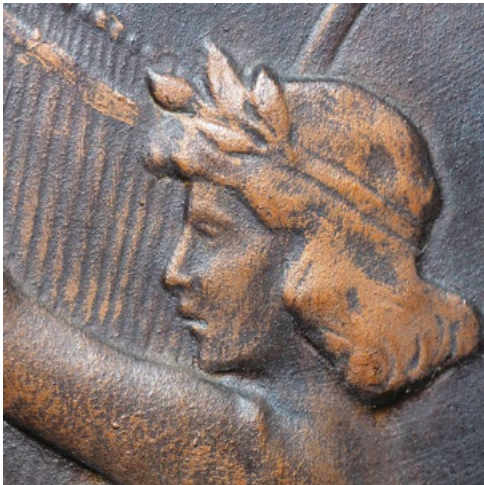
In both compositions Apollo is depicted with his lyre. In both pictures Apollo has the same cloak with exactly the same positive and negative forms.

Ehrbar Relief

8. Headband with bayleaves and half-open lips – features applied by no other artist around 1890-92.

The special bay wreath – a headband with a few leaves – is a surprising evidence. It is a composition of the traditional wreath and headband, applied by Klimt in a unique way.

It also appears on the Relief, for the first time ever, which adds to the Relief's significance.



Gustav Klimt

Gustav Klimt: 1895, 1898, 1898, 1902.

Gustav Klimt: Music 1895.



Gustav Klimt: Fair drawing for the initial D. 1898.









Gustav Klimt: Profile of Girl's Head Facing Left, 1898.



Gustav Klimt: Poetry, Apollo in the Beethoven Frieze, 1902.

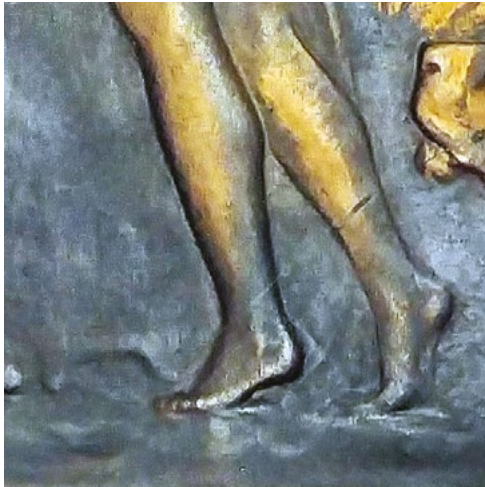


Ehrbar Relief	Gustav Klimt
<p>9. 1890-92. Probably the first androgyneous Apollo figure in Art Nouveau</p> 	<p>Gustav Klimt: Music, 1895. Apollo's godly beauty is embodied in the figure of a "boyishly slim, modern woman" in Klimt's art.</p> 
<p>10. Simplified lyre as a decoration in the Relief's text, 1890–1892.</p> 	<p>10. Klimt: Simplified lyre decoration in a design for the Crown banknote, 1900.</p> 
<p>11. The rays of the Sun in bunches, a similar composition to Klimt's drawing. The rays are seen on one side only, the other side is hidden.</p> 	<p>Klimt, 1898. Sun rays in bunches. Almost all components of this sketch are present in the Relief. The arrangement of the bunches, seen on one side only, is similar to those in the plaque.</p> 

Ehrbar Relief	Gustav Klimt
<p>12. Similarities in the depiction of the fabric are evocative of Klimt's works in the 1880s.</p>  <p>Wrinkles in drapery could be depicted in an infinite number of ways, however, the composition of these two details is exactly the same.</p>	<p>Gustav Klimt: <i>Die reiche der Natur</i>, 1882. The arrangement of the fabric is strikingly similar.</p> 
<p>Details of fabric</p> 	<p>Gustav Klimt: <i>Studies in textile</i>, 1885.</p> <p>The same structure is applied in one or two other drawings by Klimt but not by other artists.</p> 
	

Ehrbar Relief

13. The feet suggest a weightless floating, similarly to portrayals by Klimt in the same period.



Gustav Klimt

Gustav Klimt: *Taormina; Thespiskarren*, Greek Theatre; Burgtheater, 1888;

It was Klimt's own invention to draw his models lying in a horizontal position, with no weight on the feet. In a vertical position, therefore, the figure seems to be hovering above the ground.



Ehrbar Relief

Gustav Klimt

14. The structure of the wings

Klimt: *Opera*, 1883.



The artist presents two “knees” rather than claws.



Pallas Athene, 1898.

Ehrbar Relief

15. Stubenring 18.

Apollo, symbolism of the lyre and lions.



Gustav Klimt

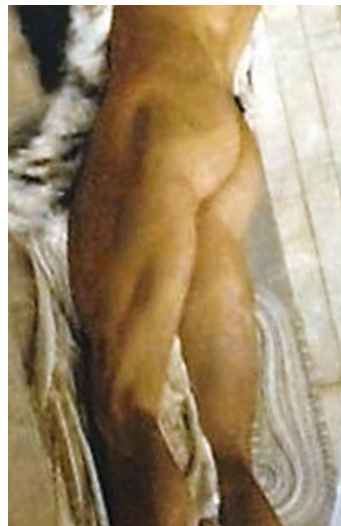
Stubenring 3. Gustav Klimt: 1882, 1883



16. The positive and negative forms are the same, as well as the viewer's angle.



Klimt: Burgtheater, 1888.



Ehrbar Relief

Gustav Klimt

17. The Ehrbar Relief brings about the birth of Art Nouveau typography around 1890–92.



Ernst (!) Klimt's traditional typography in 1891.



18. Novel typographic tools in the Ehrbar Relief, 1890-92. Probably the **first** appearance of this kind of lettering.



Gustav Klimt: *Nuda Veritas* typography in 1899.

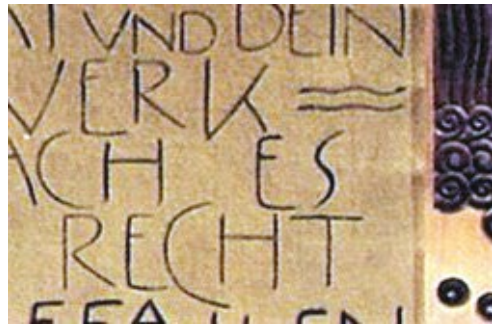


19. Double dashes, 1890–1892.



Gustav Klimt: *Nuda Veritas*, Similar lettering in 1899.

The artwork is in between text fields at the top and bottom, just like in the Relief.



The parallel lines are a typographic novelty.

Ehrbar Relief	Gustav Klimt
<p>20. Art Nouveau ligature between the letters L and I, and the new form of the letter R – perhaps for the first time ever!</p> 	<p>Gustav Klimt: Art Nouveau ligature, with a period closing the line – nine years later.</p> 
<p>21. A letter G resembling C. Early Art Nouveau ligature.</p> 	<p>Gustav Klimt, Letter G, 1890, Letter R, 1898.</p> 
<p>22. An unprecedented letter Ü, which could have been uniquely applied by the company.</p> 	<p>Klimt removes the umlaut from its conventional position. Another example is yet to be discovered.</p>
<p>23. Parallel lines for symmetry, and undadorned, empty fields.</p> 	<p>Gustav Klimt: <i>Nuda Veritas</i>, typography in 1899</p> 

Ehrbar Relief

24. Ornaments topping a text field, just like in a sketch made at a later date.

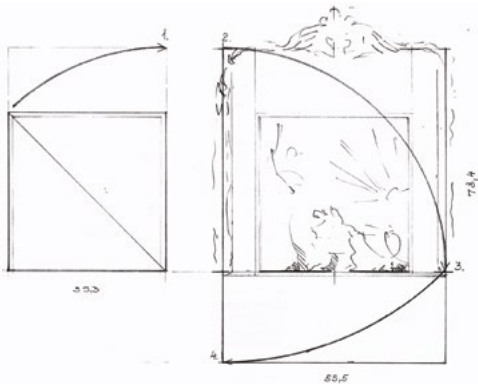


Gustav Klimt

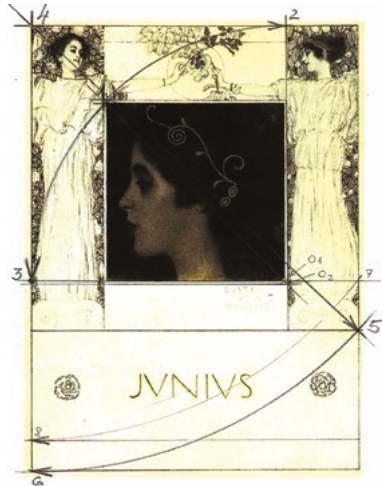
Gustav Klimt, Study of a Nude Old Woman and Two Decorative Objects, c. 1901, detail, which could have been a sketch for the Relief.



25. Structural sketch of the Relief, constructed according to the rules of silver section, 1890–1892.

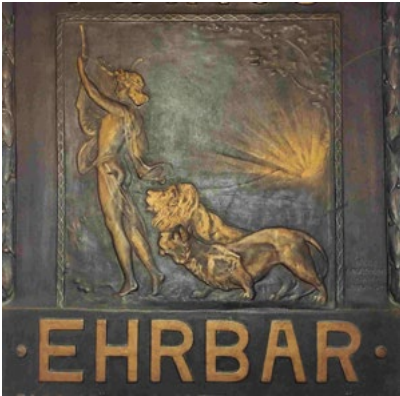


Gustav Klimt: *Junius*, Published in Gerlach's *Allegorien*, 1896, also applying silver section.



Ehrbar Relief

26. Quadrangular composition above an inscription between two dots.

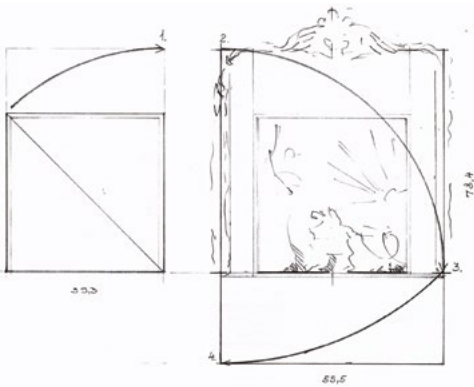


Gustav Klimt

Gustav Klimt: *Januar*, 1901 and *Junius* 1896 having the same structure.



27. Composition divided into three parts, with the novel feature of leaving the two sides unadorned. Composition



Gustav Klimt: *Liebe*, 1895. Three-part composition, with nearly unadorned side fields. Silver section.



according to silver section.



DECORATIVE PLAQUE FOR EHRBAR'S REPRESENTATIVE SHOPS

Dimensions: 88.8 × 61 × 4–6 cm

Material: Old gold and bronze coloured plaster

Date: between 1890 and 1893 based on addresses in the Lehmann register and contemporary maps

Maker: “Atelier Künstlerbund Wien I. Stubenring 18.”

(Not to be mixed up with the Künstlerbund – 1906. group, or the Atelier Künstlerbund Wien” group 20 years later). Based on my research, the artist drawing the Apollo composition and designing the Ehrbar Relief was **Gustav Klimt** (1862-1918). The actual plaque could have been produced in cooperation with brother Georg, or even with Ernst, who died in 1892.

A representative display of Klimt's artistic means suggest that the Relief is one of his early pieces. At the beginning I attributed only the design of the plaque to him, but a number of details support the assumption that the main Apollo composition could not have made by a different hand. It is usually pointless to try and isolate individual contributions to the works of groups of artists, but in this case Klimt's hand is unmaistakeable. It is even more difficult to detect the work of the others. The Relief is likely to have still belonged to his symbolist period, soon to give way to the new style: Art Nouveau.

I assume that the Relief is an early Gustav Klimt work, made between 1890-92 or in 1893 the latest, produced by his art group.

The existence of that group is verified by the appearance of Gebrüder Klimt in the Lehmann register in 1888, when the brothers make their group official.

There are some written references about Klimt trying his hand at sculpture. In one of his articles Alfred Weindinger quotes from the recollections of Fritz Wärndorfer:

“When I one day paid a visit to Klimt, I saw him with hammer and chisel chipping away at a virtuoso-worked head”¹

“We know of heads sculpted by Klimt: a completed head of a woman located in the Erich Lederer collection and an apparently unsuccessful project still owned by the Primavesi family”²



Fig. 2. Gustav Klimt: Head of stone from the property of the Lederer family (probably destroyed in 1945) Foto.³

¹ Karl Moser, „Unbekannte Briefe Gustav Klimts. Wie der grose Maler schuf,“ Neues Wiener Journal (January 5. 1932), 10.

² Moser, „Unbekannte Briefe.“

³ *Gustav Klimt / Josef Hoffmann, Pioneers of modernism*, Ed. Agnes Husslein-Arco / Alfred Weindinger, Prestel 2011. p. 212.

I.2 About the makers and dating the Ehrbar Relief

The plaque was commissioned by Friedrich Ehrbar, a renowned piano manufacturer, and owner of the Ehrbar Saal concert hall in Vienna.⁴

For the Ehrbar Saal, official registers only indicate its older address – Mühlgasse 6, and the subsequent one – Mühlgasse 28, (30). The address indicated on the Relief – Wien IV. Mühlgasse 18. confirm that the plaque could not have been made later than 1893. See the next (I.3.) chapter for details.

In 1892 Klimt, his brother Ernst, and Matsch discontinue their cooperation in which they have been furnishing artistic decorations for theatres and building facades since 1883.

At that time, the Künstler-Compagnie is registered as Atelier in der Kunstgewerbeschule, **Wien 1, Stubenring 3.**

It is logical to assume that after the former cooperation terminates, they seek another facility in the neighbourhood in the years 1890–92 and find one just across the street. They may have been leasing it already, as a workshop for plasterwork. Klimt needs a studio for painting, while separate workshops are necessary for casting plaster and metalwork. This could be the facility at the address on the Relief: “Atelier Künstlerbund **Wien I. Stubenring 18.**”

(On an 1893 map of Vienna the side of the Stubenring with even numbers had been divided up into construction sites, but the building there today was not erected until 1900. The Lehmann Register does not indicate a Stubenring 18 in 1890.)

Military registers indicate the Franz Joseph Kaserne (barracks) on the even side at this time: Stubenring 2 – 16. This suggests that the building, no longer used as a barracks or the adjacent riding school could have housed the studios.)



Fig. 3. Signature on the Relief

⁴ https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Friedrich_Ehrbar

„Friedrich Ehrbar was a piano manufacturer in Vienna, Austria. Friedrich Ehrbar (1827–1905) took over the company in 1857 after the passing of Eduard Seuffert (1819–1855). In 1876 he had the Palais Ehrbar with its own concert hall constructed.” He then led this important family tradition of piano and organ making under his own name and handed the directorship over to his son, Friedrich Ehrbar Junior, in 1898. In this buildings was founded as a music school in 1905 the Prayner Conservatory for Music and Dramatic Arts, one of the most historically significant conservatories in Vienna.

Its unadorned fields and distinct typography suggest that the Relief is an early work of Art Nouveau.

There is written reference that Klimt had earlier taken commercial orders such as the design for the Gulden or drapery and other decorations for theatres.

For the new cooperative Gebrüder Klimt, an order from a rich factory owner to produce a plaque to be copied and put out in Ehrbar piano shops could have posed a new and different challenge.

Friedrich Ehrbar's patronage over Klimt is also demonstrated by his, and later the younger Ehrbar's continually placing advertisements in the art magazine *Ver Sacrum*, of which Klimt was an editor.

The Relief, of an extremely high artistic quality, should have been signed by any of Klimt's contemporaries. Klimt, who at the time had already been awarded by the emperor's prestigious Kaiserpreis (a sum of 400 gold Florins, an equivalent of 25,500 euros today) for his picture *Der Zuschauerraum des alten Burgtheaters*, was no longer in a position to sign a commercial piece.

Klimt's later Beethoven Frieze, was also made of plaster. It is typically a "provisional" piece, using his earlier experience with architectural decorations. The Ehrbar Relief is complete with gilded surfaces, which could be associated with Klimt's later „goldene Periode“.

Also, it difficult to conceive that Vienna's richest piano maker should not contract the best artist but a second-rate follower. In the period 1890-1893 there is no other artists' group than that of the Klimt brothers. Franz Matsch seems to have quit, that might be the reason for the new name Atelier Künstlerbund.

The group must have had at least two members, Georg and Gustav. The presence of the third brother, Ernst, could be suggested by a more relaxed representation of male figures. Later, after Ernst dies, Klimt's portrayal of the male changes.

In the 1890s, Stubenring 18 could have been the southern entrance to the defunct Franz Joseph barracks, and when that building was dismantled, around 1900, the studios had closed.

Later formations, such as the Österreichischer Künstlerbund, of which Klimt was president from 1912, could be excluded from this discussion.

The Apollo figure itself, judging from the hardly recognisable feminine feature, suggests Klimt's own hand.

I.3 Dating the Ehrbar Relief

Based on the concert hall's address as indicated in the composition, the Relief could be dated before 1894, the year when the street was extended towards the inner city. The significant change in the concert hall's address excludes any later date. The Ehrbar Saal for decades to come will be found at Mühlgasse 28, (30).

Considerations around the address of the EHRBAR CONZERTSAAL

Inscription in the Relief: „WIEN IV / I Mühlgasse – 18”

EIGENER CONZERTSAAL – 550



Fig. 4. Inscription on the Relief „WIEN IV / I Mühlgasse – 18”

The address indicated cannot be a mistake. Mühlgasse 18, however, could never have been the concert hall's official address, at least it is not shown in the Lehmann Register. Mühl Gasse was extended in the direction of the inner city in two phases: first up to Mühlbach Gasse, as shown on a map from 1893, then from 1894 on, when this street was also called Mühl Gasse in line with the new plans.

It is logical to think that the new number, Mühl Gasse 18, was given proactively, because numbers at that time started from Mühlbach Gasse. The **Ehrbar Saal never moved**, though the numbering could have changed, or modified on an interim basis, leaving us with Mühlgasse 18 around 1890-93.”

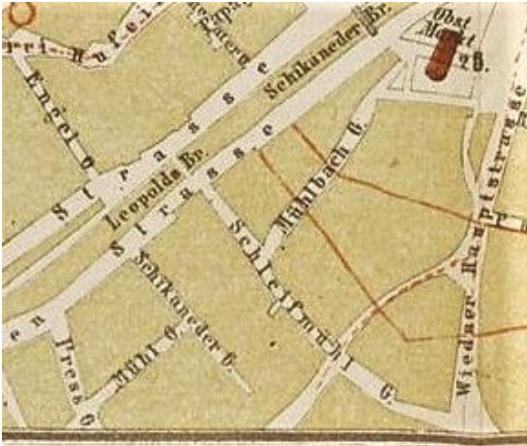


Fig. 5. Mühlgasse 6, at a time when the numbers started at Schikaneder Gasse

The Ehrbar company's address before Mühlgasse was extended and re-numbered as indicated in Adolf Lehmann's register in 1890.

Numbers increased from the inner city towards the outskirts, and the changes indicate the streets continual extension. This, fortunately, makes it easier to date an actual address.



Fig. 6. Map from 1893 with a broken line indicating the extension of Mühlgasse, but in which Mühlbach Gasse is still a separate street.

Mühlbach Gasse is a small alley across from Schleifmühl Gasse.

<https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/wbrobv/content/pageview/1824893>



Fig. 7. Planned reconstruction of Mühlgasse, 1893.

The map was printed in 1893. Considering the time for surveying the land, planning and printing time, in 1891-92 the new numbers may still not have been publicly known.



Fig 8. Ehrbar advertisement in Ver Sacrum, a periodical founded by Gustav Klimt, in 1899, indicating the new address: Mühlgasse 28.

This advertisement, published in Ver Sacrum nine years later, no longer has the symbolic Apollo figure. Friedrich Ehrbar seeks to sell pianos rather than art in general, though the artist might have acknowledged with some resentment that his piece, with deep symbolic meaning, has been replaced by a mediocre sketch. This drawing is signed, the artist probably not feeling humiliated by the fact that his work was used commercially.

The syrupy image of a young lady at the piano, in an even cheaper form, appears in the letter head of Ehrbar's Budapest representation.

Another important piece of information in this advertisement is a different – but not final – address for the Ehrbar Saal **Wien IV. Mühlgasse 28**. By 1899, therefore, the earlier plaque is finished from at least two aspects. Gone is the earlier address and gone is the symbolism. There was probably no point in making copies of the Relief any more.

This may be the reason why no other copies have been found not even in photographs.

As part of my research, I interviewed the director and general secretary of the Ehrbar Saal (2017), who said that they were not familiar with the Relief and could not comment on its maker nor on the information it conveys.

Salon u. erwarb sich Verdienste als Künstlermäzen. E. ließ sich 1876/77 durch Bmstr. Josef Weninger ein Palais erb. (4, Mühlg. 28; heute [ebenso wie das 1911 für F. E. jun. err. Nachbarhaus 30-30A, Ecke Preßg. 28, mit seinem Großen Saal] Konservatorium für Musik u. dramat. Kunst; Eingang in die „E.-Säle“ Mühlg. 30, Inschriftfeld am Haus „F. E., kais. kön. Hof u. Kammer Clavier Fabri-



Friedrich Ehrbar.
Foto.

kant 1877“), in dem ein Festsaal eingeplant war (Eröffnung 1877); die Firma besaß auch Räumlichkeiten im Palais Leitenberger (1, Parkring 16). 1898 übergab E. die Ltg. der Fa. seinem gleichnam. So.

Lit.: Biogr. Jb.; ÖBL; Riemann; F. E., in: Zs. für Instrumenten-

Fig. 9. The biographical dictionary only indicates the last two addresses.

Under Ehrbar, Friedrich, the dictionary indicates the changes in address briefly, in brackets. Neither Mühlgasse 6 nor Mühlgasse 18 are mentioned:

„(4, Mühlg. 28; heute /ebenso wie das 1911 für F. E. jun. Err. Nachbarhaus 30-30A, Ecke Presg. 28, mit seinem Grosen Saal/ Konservatorium für Musik u. dramat. Kunst; Eingang in die „E.-Saale“ Mühlg. 30, Inschriftfeld am Haus „F. E. kais. Kön. Hof u. Kammer Clavier Fabrikant 1877“) - ”

., V. **Chramfeld, f. Nikolaus v. Chramfeld.**
Ehrbacher Otto, städt. Lehrer, Währing
 Cottageg. 33.
Ehrbar Friedrich, f. l. Hof- u. Kammer-Clavierfab., E., S., Compt. IV. Mühlg. 6, Fab. IV. Preßg. 28 u. X. Sagenburgerstr. 39.
Ehrenbacher Alfred, Einspänner-Eigenth., Adlsh. Dreihausg. 33.
 — **Josefa, Einspänner-Eigenth., Adlsh. Dreihausg. 33.**

Fig. 10. Lehmann Register, 1890. Mühlgasse 6. / Ehrbar, Friedrich

<https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/wbrobv/periodical/pageview/68235>

Verbesserung der Beleuchtung 1730
 — IV. Bezirk:
 — Mühlgasse, Gestattung der Anbringung einer Vogel-
 lampe seitens des F. Ehrbar am Hause Nr. 28 . . . 1683
 — Obstmarkt, Verbesserung der Beleuchtung desselben
 und der Zufahrtsstraßen 600

Fig. 11. Vienna's gazette, 1895 Mühlgasse 28. The Ehrbar Saal's new address, to remain unchanged for decades.



Fig. 12. Lehmann, 1895. Mühlgasse 6.



Fig. 13. Lehmann, 1896. Band 2. p. 192.⁵ The Ehrbar Saal's new address.

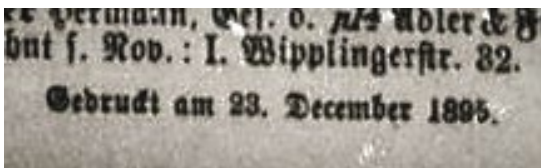


Fig. 14. Lehmann, 1896, printed in 1895.

<https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/wbrobv/periodical/structure/110322>

1. The first address, until 1894, is Mühlgasse 6, according to the Lehmann Register. The biographical dictionary does not even mention that address under the heading Friedrich Ehrbar, though there are references to address changes. At this time the numbers start at **Schikaneder Gasse**.

2. Mühl Gasse 18 must have been the second address, perhaps not official, the number given in anticipation based on plans to extend Mühl Gasse up to **Schleifmühl Gasse**. The street section on the other side will continue to be called Mühlbach Gasse until 1894. At this time it is just an alley with the Frei Haus complex.

3. The third address is already indicated in the lexicons: Mühlgasse 28. The 1896 Lehmann Register, printed in 1895, and Vienna's municipal gazette at the same time refer to **Mühlgasse 28 in connection with the Ehrbar Saal** (see Suppl. 2.)

This proves that the Relief could not have been made later than 1893!

⁵ <https://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/wbrobv/periodical/pageview/75562>



Ref. 15. Advertisement with the address used since 1894

Internet quote concerning the history of Mühlgasse:

„Mühlbachgasse (4, Wieden), benannt nach einem Mühlbach, einem künstlichen Nebenarm des Wienflusses, vorher Schmidtgasse; seit 7. November 1894 (Stadtrat) in die Mühlgasse einbezogen.“⁶



Fig. 16. The Ehrbar Saal, built by piano maker F. Ehrbar in 1877



Fig. 17. The anticipated – but incorrect – house number around 1890

⁶ [https://www.wien.gv.at/wiki/index.php?title=M%C3%BChlbachgasse_\(4\)](https://www.wien.gv.at/wiki/index.php?title=M%C3%BChlbachgasse_(4))



Fig. 18. The new and final house number published in Ver Sacrum in 1899



Fig. 19. Advertisement in Ver Sacrum in 1899 with the new address: Mühlgasse 28.

The neo-renaissance concert hall and the Relief were ordered by the same customer. It is not very likely that rich industrialist Friedrich Ehrbar should knock on the door of an unknown decorator to discuss Apollo with the plaster maker. It is much more probable that he will seek the best artist of his time to place an order.



Fig. 20. Marble plaque on the Ehrbar concert hall

A vintage advertisement for Friedrich Ehrbar, enclosed in a decorative border. On the left is a heraldic eagle emblem. To its right, the name 'F. EHRBAR' is printed in large, bold, black letters. Below the name, it reads 'K. U. K. HOF- UND KAMMER- KLAVIER-FABRIKANT' followed by four small circles. The text continues with a list of royal and imperial appointments: 'KAMMERLIEFERANT SR. MAJESTÄT DES KAISERS UND KÖNIGS, KAMMERLIEFERANT DES ERZHERZOGS OTTO, HOF-LIEFERANT DES SULTANS DER TÜRKEI, DES KÖNIGS VON GRIECHENLAND, DES KÖNIGS VON SERBIEN, DES KÖNIGS VON PORTUGAL ETC. ETC.' This is followed by 'KONZERTSAAL, COMPTOIR UND HAUPTMAGAZIN' and the address '--- WIEN, IV. MÜHLGASSE 28. ---'. At the bottom, it lists other locations: 'FABRIKEN: IV. MÜHLGASSE 30, PRESSGASSE 28, X. LAXEN- BURGERSTRASSE 39.' and 'LONDON, 28—30 WIGMORE STREET.'

Fig. 21. Advertisement, 1905, Mühlgasse 28.

II.1. Description of the Ehrbar Relief, analogies

The composition is divided into three fields under the „small” coat of arms of Austria with the double-headed eagle, with a text field underneath. The double-headed eagle is included in the country’s coat of arms until 1917. The federal coat of arms later has an eagle with a single head. The composition is flanked on either side and above with a wreath of bay leaves.

The two vertical side fields are unadorned, a very novel feature at the time. The central, square field portrays Apollo, details of which reveal a full inventory of the attributes of the god. A few years earlier Klimt had studied mythology in Italy, so that he can make creditable use of it in his art.

Apollo, the god of the Sun, the muses and the arts, has his lyre in his hand, holding it up to the sky. Behind him there are lions, now tamed. The right side of the composition is filled with broad sunshine with foliage above. Apollo’s wearing a bay leaf wreath, the Sun, and the animals all suggest an accurate knowledge of ancient mythology.

Beautifully portrayed Apollo has muscular thighs and buttocks, while his chest is more evocative of small female breasts than manly muscles. Apollo, the embodiment of male beauty, is transformed into a feminine figure in Klimt’s art only. (Similar in this sense is Fig. 25. – *Kopf des Apollo*, 1894).

This Apollo figure showing feminine features is probably the first such portrayal, but it will later reappear in Klimt’s art. The composition has no actual space, while the hardly perceptible horizon is above the lower third of the composition, which makes Apollo almost look as if he is hovering in the air. The rays of a setting sun lend contrast to the figures, and the handling of light is that of impressionism.

Klimt handles light in the same way in his painting *Schubert am Klavier* (1891) where the same effect is created by way of candles. The contrast between the bulging muscles of the wild animals ready to jump and the ethereal figure creates a tension of the moment. The dichotomy of dynamism and submission in the depiction of the lions suggest an artist with unparalleled talent.

The artist was using the material with extreme skill; using gold he only highlights the important components, creating complete harmony between colour and form. Within the Relief as a whole, it makes a balanced, quadrangular composition.

Looking at the Relief’s dimensions, one finds that its total height and its width under the wreath are in line with rules of golden section:
 $88.8 \text{ cm} / 55.5 \text{ cm} = 1.6$; which cannot be a chance result.

The internal proportions of the composition suggest similarities with one of Klimt’s later works.



Fig. 22. Makers' mark on the Ehrbar Relief



Fig. 23. Apollo, the god of the Sun and the muses with a lyre, bayleaves and tamed lions. Vienna, 1890–1892. (Ehrbar Relief detail)

II.1.2 Klimt selects his favourite **quadrangle** for this composition. Similar to his other works, Apollo is portrayed as a statue-like figure attracting an allegorical retinue. The figure is godly beauty itself, its eroticism counterbalanced by the celestial instrument and the floating of the fabric, which hardly covers the body, yet making it appear lofty and enigmatic.

II.1.3 Placing his figures on the bottom line of the structure rather than inside offer associations of the principle Klimt will apply in his later compositions. It will appear in the *Beethoven Frieze – Poetry (Apollo)* or in case of the figures decorating Villa Stoclet. Another Klimt feature is that there is no communication between the figure and his viewer: Apollo looks sideways out of the composition.

II.1.6 Klimt uses the Apollo-lyre-lions symbolism rather than a direct reference to pianos, maybe on instruction from Friedrich Ehrbar.



Fig. 24. Klimt: *Die reiche der Natur*, 1882. The artist, only 20 years old at the time, chose a similar topic: a male figure with drapery, a lion, and nature.

II.1.4 The quadrangle in the middle offers no room for more but a few symbolic images. Klimt gives up the use of space and places his figures on the bottom line. This important decision will influence his whole career. The plaque is characterised by strict order, symmetry, and beauty, anticipating Art Nouveau. This composition is a lot more limited than murals, the huge surfaces of which would be a greater job. Just a few components put in a tiny place to create a new message of art and music.

II.2 Analogies and comparison with other Klimt pieces

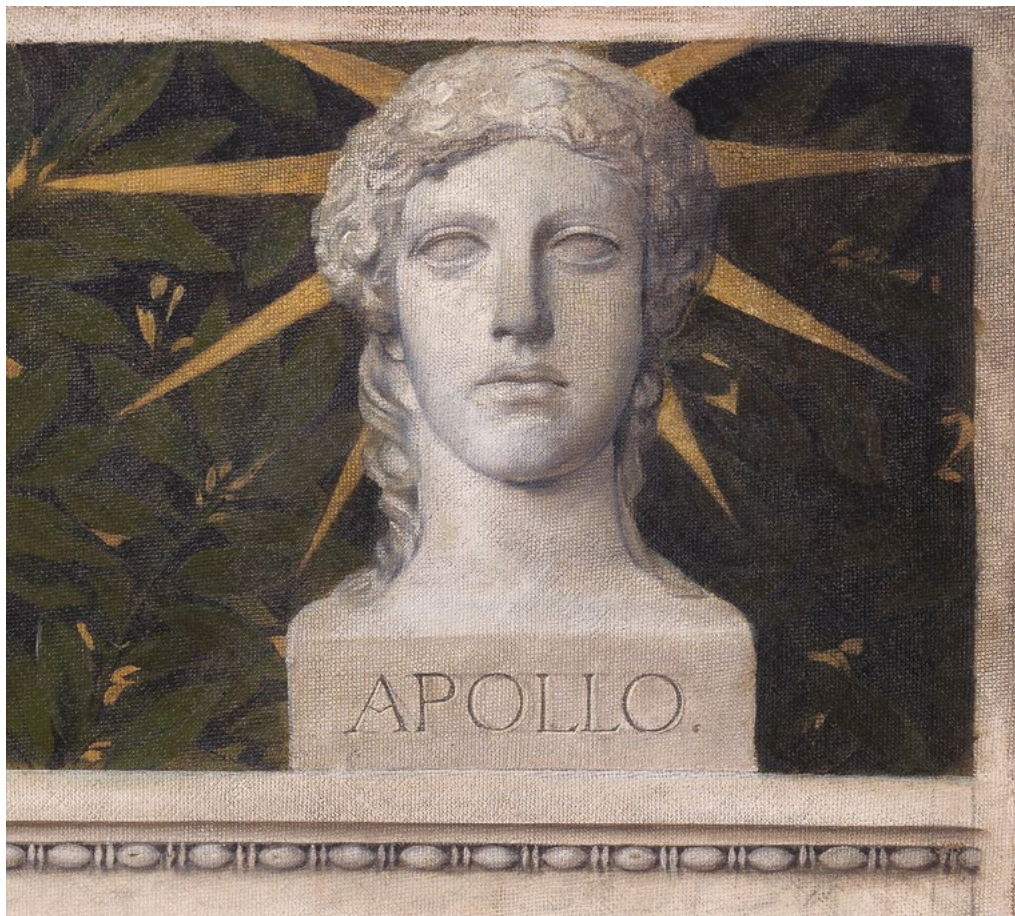
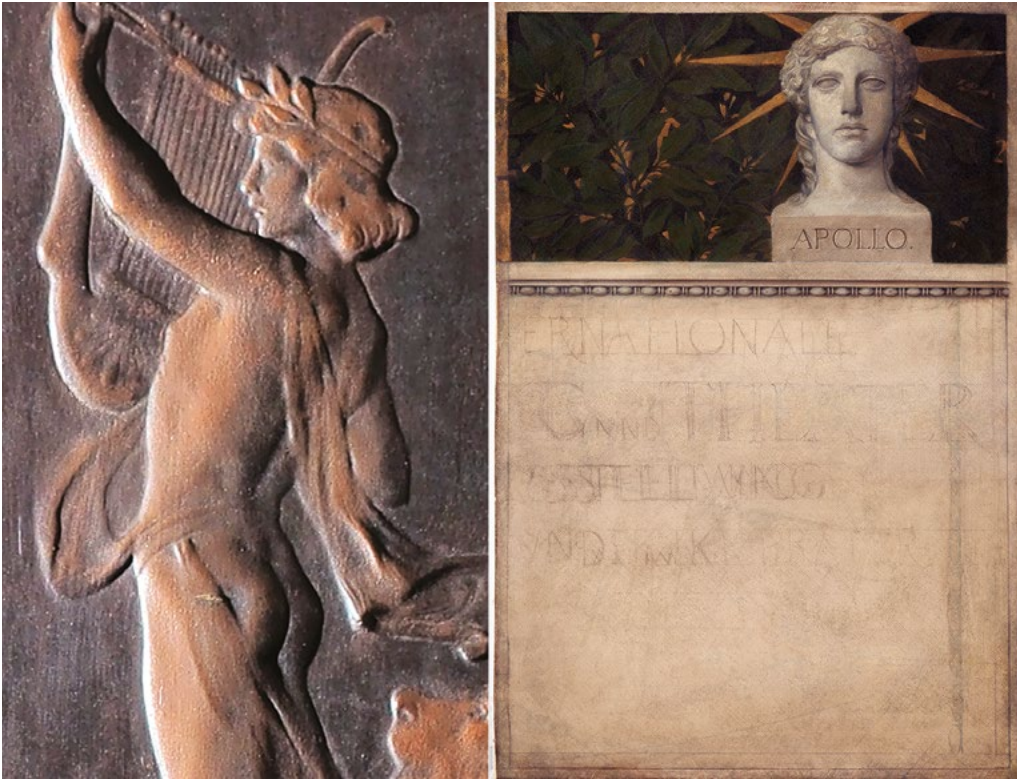


Fig. 25. Klimt's Apollo in this picture is a boyishly beautiful girl. *Kopf des Apollo*, 1892. Here again, the Sun appears behind Apollo.

„The instinctual becomes the subject of Klimt's painting *'Die Musik' (Music)*. Here, the young girl, depicted as tragic muse, is playing the kithera — instrument of Apollo, god of light and music — but her song is Dionysian (Friedrich Nietzsche had used the same symbols in *“The Birth of Tragedy”*).”⁷

⁷ <http://www.interlude.hk/front/the-vienna-secession-in-art-and-music/>



Figs. 26–27. Two Apollos exhibiting feminine features, made in the same year, 1892.

II.2.1 The Apollo theme is recurrent in Klimt's art, appearing in several of his works



Fig. 28. Gustav Klimt, *Musik* 1895.



Fig. 29. Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze, Poetry (Apollo)* 1902.

The materials used and the way of composition are the same as in the Ehrbar Relief: both are of plaster, with painted and gilt surfaces. The main figure is standing on the bottom line in both cases.

„Just as – Klimt’s Beethoven Frieze was painted in situ with the involvement of assistant, the production drawing and tracings for the Stoclet Frieze were the product of numerous hands.”⁸



Fig. 30. Gustav Klimt, *Musik II*, 1898

„*Musik II* by Gustav Klimt represents the music competition between Pan and Apollo.”⁹

⁸ Alfred Weidinger in: Gustav Klimt Josef Hoffmann. Belvedere, Viena, 2012. p.: 234.

⁹ <http://thomas-michel-contemporary-art.de/gustav-klimt-allegory-of-music/?lang=en>

The Ehrbar Relief, indeed, has defects. The address indicated is wrong, while Ehrbar, Jr. will also prefer a young lady playing music, to Apollo for an advertisement.

At the same time, despite 130 years of oblivion, the Relief did change the directions of art, similarly to all great pieces. It is in the Relief that the boyishly slim modern woman appears for the first time. He/she is wearing a simple head band with just a few leaves rather than the traditional, affected bay wreath. In my research I have not found any other artist applying the same headdress on their figures.

The Relief's Apollo may be the first attempt at depicting the ideal of the modern woman.

As Berta Zuckerkandl says "Klimt created the ideal Vienna woman, a boyishly slim modern figure. He painted enigmatically exciting women. At that time we did not have the concept of the vamp. Klimt, however, created the type of Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich long before was embodied".



Fig. 31–32. The slightly girlish bosoms of the Relief's Apollo, and Klimt's Nude with a masculine chest, Wien Museum.

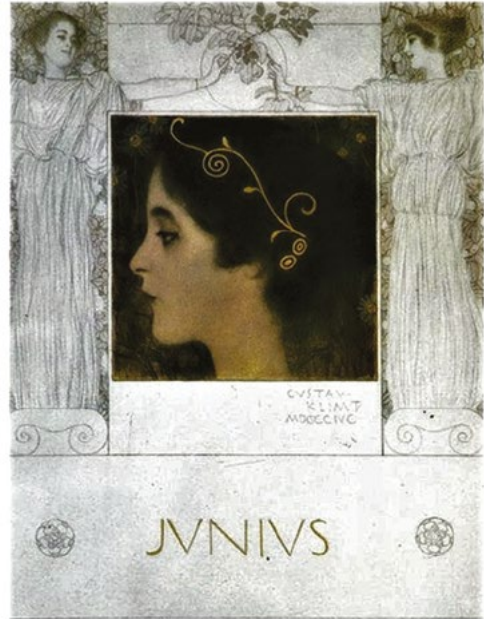


Fig. 33. Gustav Klimt: *Die Fabel*, 1883.

It appears as if the Ehrbar relief were a re-worked version of *Fabel* made in 1883, but filled with liveliness. The central figure of the Relief is playing music rather than just musing. The drapes covering his body are no longer hanging down like those in *Fabel*, but are blowing in the wind. The dark areas are now illuminated, melancholy is now replaced by a kind of optimism. The lonely lion in *Fabel* is now with its female, following the godly figure. In the Relief all figures are dynamic. It is an important novelty in the composition that while the figures of *Fabel* are placed in space, the Relief is two-dimensional, its figures standing at its bottom.

The Relief is like a so far missing link in the chain, connecting earlier and later compositions in Klimt's work.

II.3. The Relief could have been a forerunner to the Junius design



Figs. 34–35. Gustav Klimt, *Junius* 1896. The *Junius design* was made at least 4–5 years later, for the Gerlach publications.

The structure of the design is the same as that of the Relief. The composition is divided up in three parts, with the head in the typical quadrangular field in the middle, and the lower field is nearly without any decorations. The inscription is in between two dots on either side, just like the Relief's central word EHRBAR. It is to be noted that the *Junius design* was made at least three years later than the Relief.

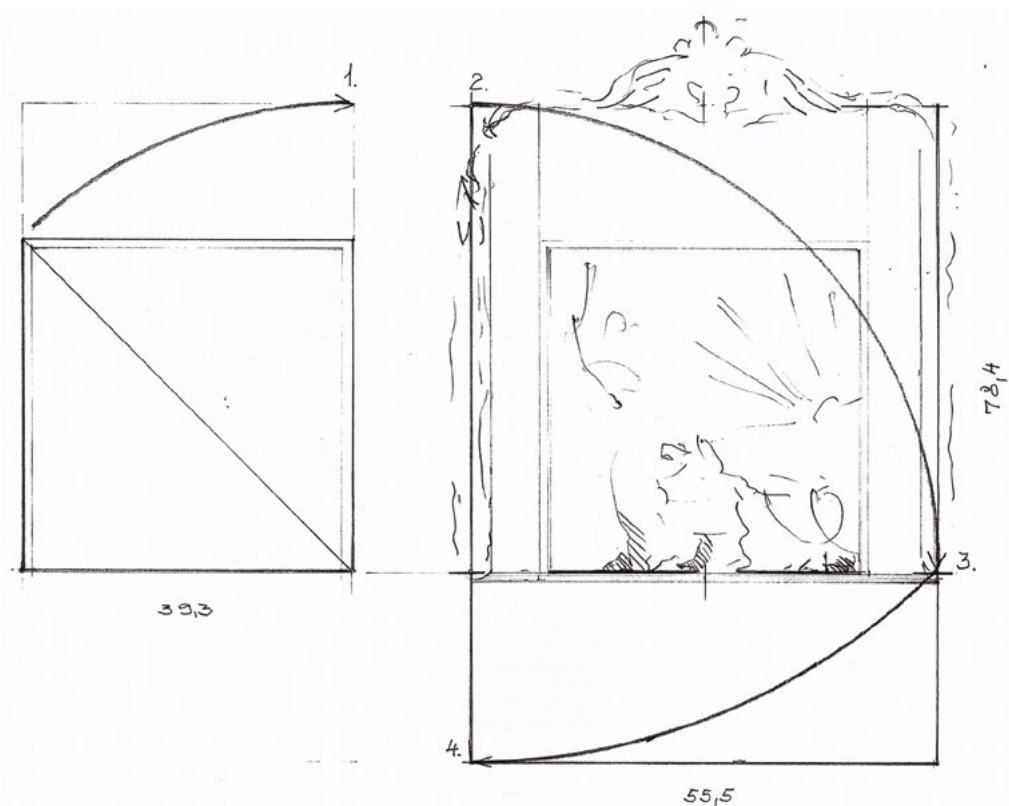


Fig. 36. The Relief's construction by way of silver section

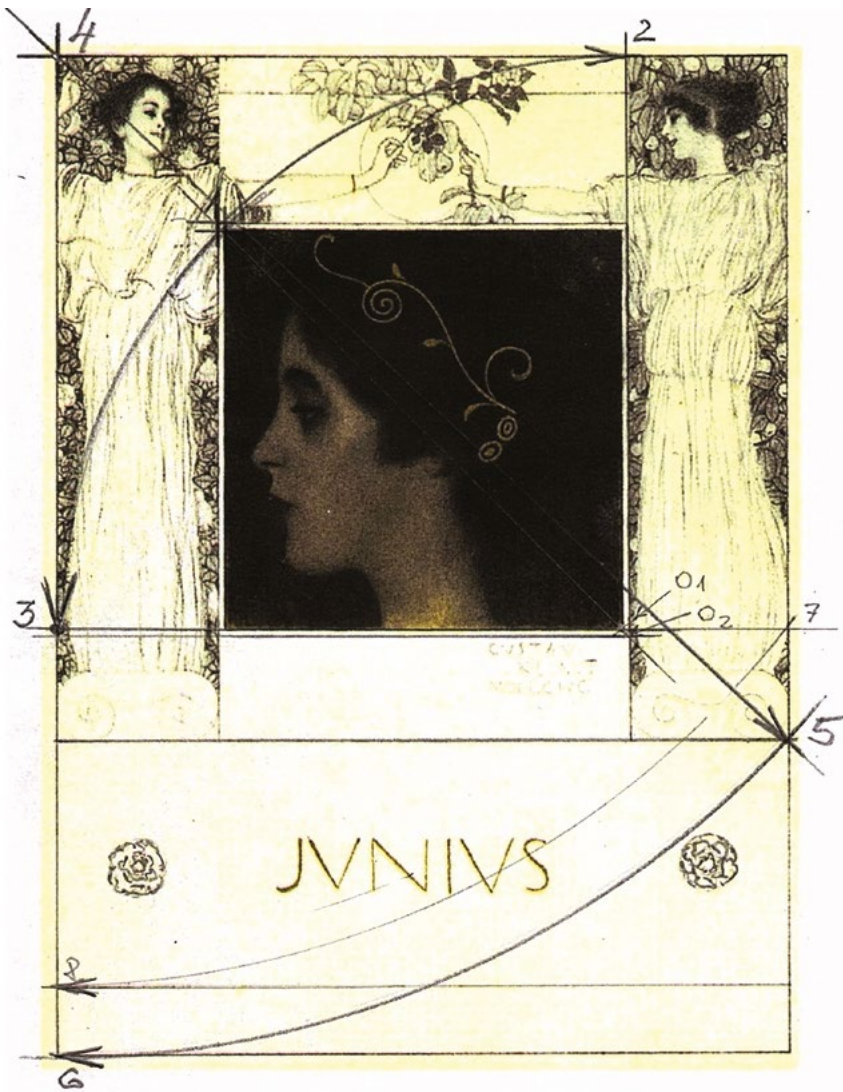


Fig. 37. Gustav Klimt, *Junius*, 1896. The principle of composition is the same as the formula for the Relief.

It is important that the Relief and the Junius design were constructed along the same principles.

The quadrangle framing the profile defines the width of the fields at the top and at the sides in line with the rules of silver section. In the final version – similarly to the Relief – the side fields are tapered and the diagonal of the upper quadrangle defines the height of the composition. This – so far neglected – way of composition was probably applied by Klimt exclusively in his early period. The slim structure of the side panels could also be considered as the artist's unique signature.

II.4 Whether pianists or pianos, Klimt will invariably paint Apollo with his lyre

For a portrait of pianist, teacher and composer Joseph Pembauer, Klimt also applied his preferred Apollo and lyre theme. The portrait was ordered by the famous pianist's enthusiastic students, the Pembauer Society, in 1890 (?).

We do not have the original order, but the Society probably expected a piano in the portrait. Klimt, however, was not to be told what to paint.

The order for the Relief probably arrived a year later from Friedrich Ehrbar, for whom the inclusion of a piano could have been important for commercial reasons, but he, also, had to content himself with Apollo and lyre. As early as 1898, he replaces the god with a girl at the piano, as seen in *Ver Sacrum*, and we cannot blame him.

Comparing the Relief and the Pembauer portrait, made nearly at the same time, we will find that the earlier portrait has no new typography yet, its structural composition – as opposed to that of the Relief – is not clear.

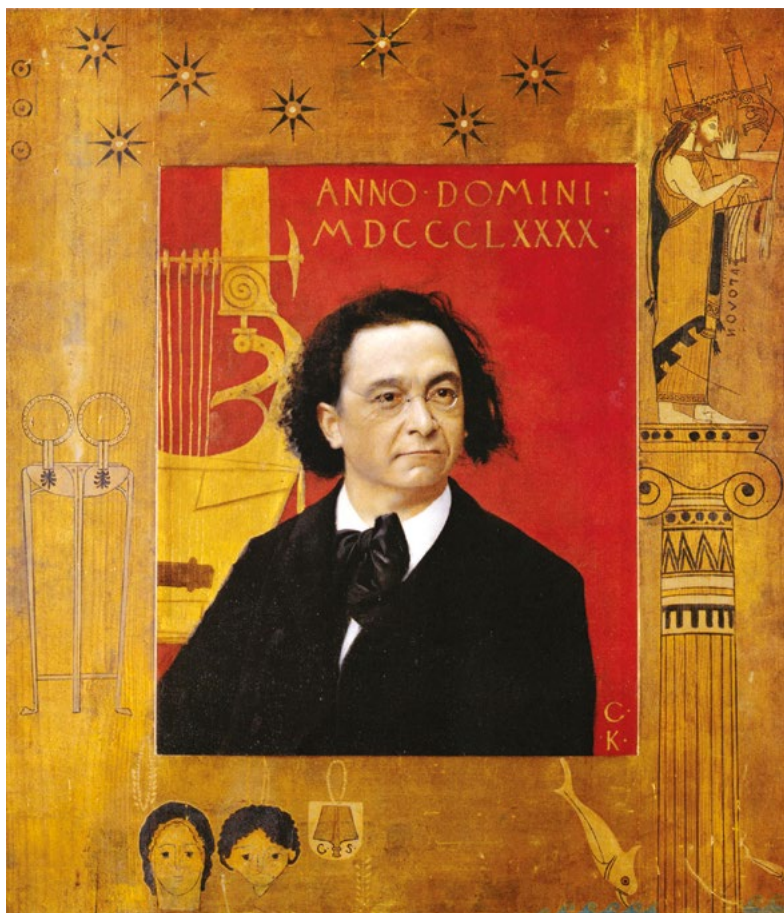


Fig. 38. Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of pianist Joseph Pembauer*, 1890. Wien Museum.

The high number of similarities in terms of artistic means, however, is surprising:

The subject in both cases is basically the piano, but it takes the form of Apollo and his lyre in both compositions.

1. Both compositions are a “picture in a picture”, a solution often applied by Klimt (e.g. *Idille, Liebe, Tragoedie*)
2. The portrait is considered a unique, exceptionally early portrait in Klimt’s „Goldene Periode”, which might now be complemented by the Ehrbar Relief. In both cases the composition seems three-dimensional and gilded all over their entire surface.
3. In both cases the letter G looks more like a C. Klimt uses this typography in these years only, and will abandon it in his later career. The portrait has two Gs, one in the image and the other in the archaic frame, but they are of the same structure as the one in the Relief.
4. In both pieces there are three dots each, in the text field. One is a division between two parts of the text, while the other two are periods at the end of a paragraph.
5. Both Apollos seem to be looking sideways and out of the composition, a novelty compared to Klimt’s earlier compositions.

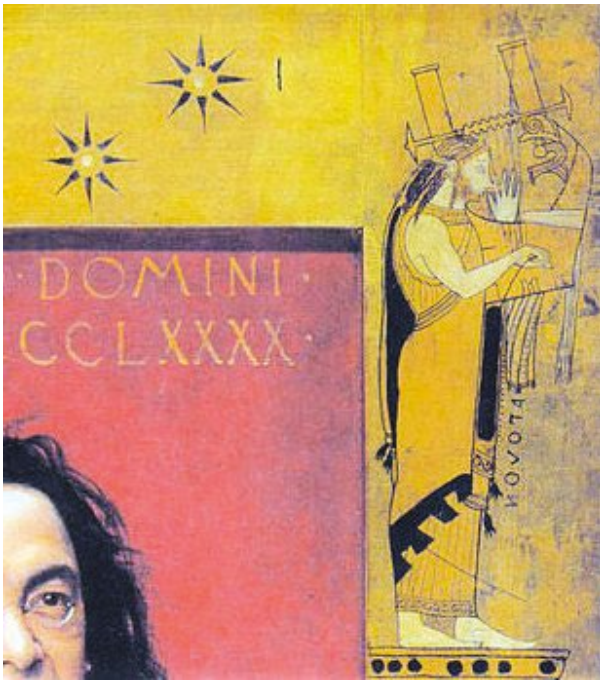


Fig. 39. Gustav Klimt, *Portrait of pianist Joseph Pembauer*. 1890. Frame detail with Apollo. Wien Museum¹⁰

¹⁰ http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Chronological_list_of_Gustav_Klimt%27s_main_paintings
1890. „A realistic portrait of pianist and piano teacher Joseph Pembauer. The face’s photographic realism generates a subtle tension with the symbolism of the stylised elements. In this period, the stylistic dilemma tormenting Klimt between historicism and symbolism, is here resolved by the mediation of archaic forms, which attribute to Music as identified by the instruments, an absolute and eternal value.[2][3]”

II.5 Two Klimt drawings, with subjects similar in structure

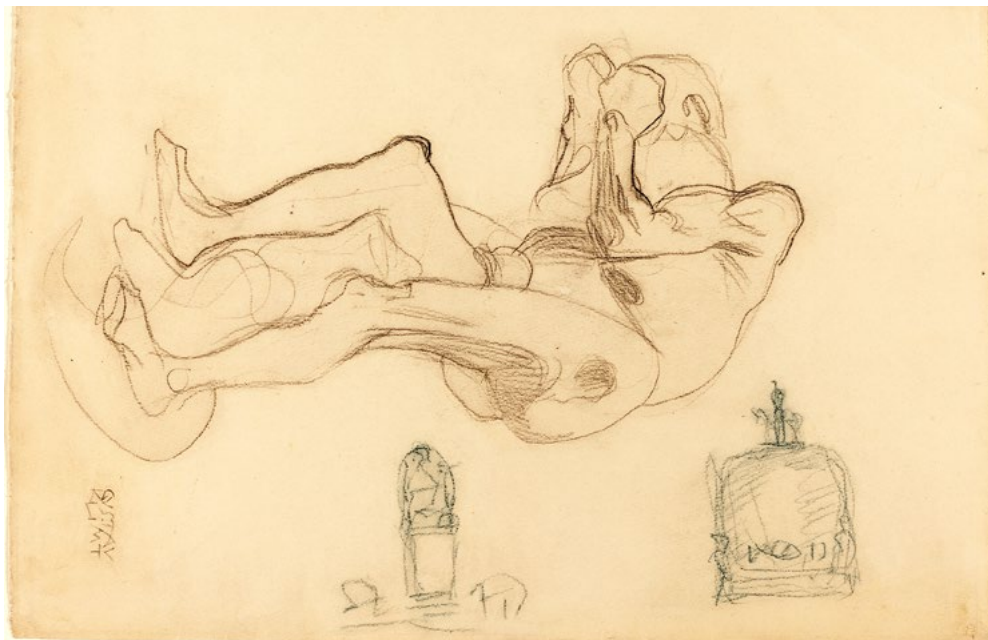


Fig. 40. Gustav Klimt, *Study of a Nude Old Woman Clenching Her Fists, and Two Decorative Objects*, c. 1901

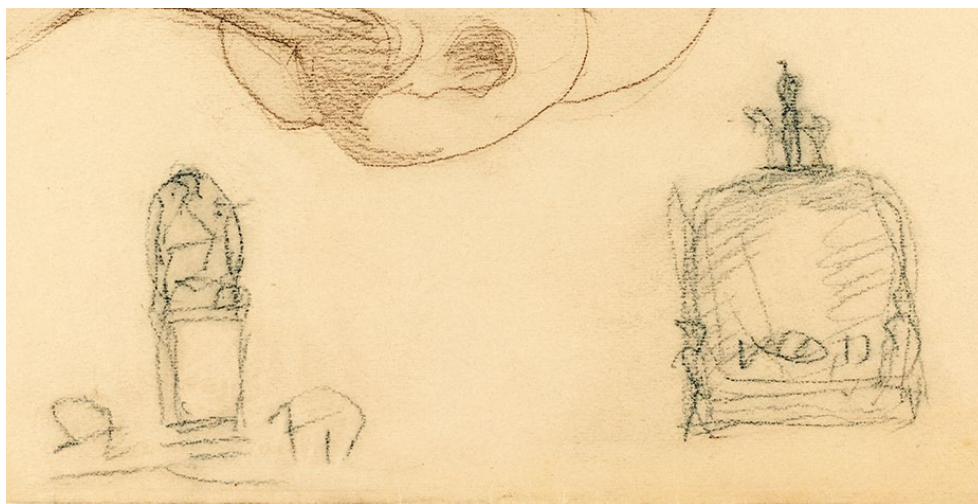


Fig. 41. Gustav Klimt's way of presenting objects

This sketch of Klimt's is rather like a memorial plaque, with a similar structure to that of the Ehrbar Relief. It has topping components, drapery on the sides and a text field at the bottom. It is an important document of his career as an applied artist, with this detail looking as if it were a sketch for the Relief.

II.6 Comparison of motives in the Ehrbar Relief with other Klimt works

A special framework not found anywhere else but in Klimt's Gulden design

It is remarkable, that the Gulden design was made at the same time as, supposedly, the Relief, in **1892**. Both belong to the applied art category, and both have the main figures standing on the bottom line of the composition, looking sideways out of the picture.



Fig. 42. Gustav Klimt, Design for the Gulden. 1892.

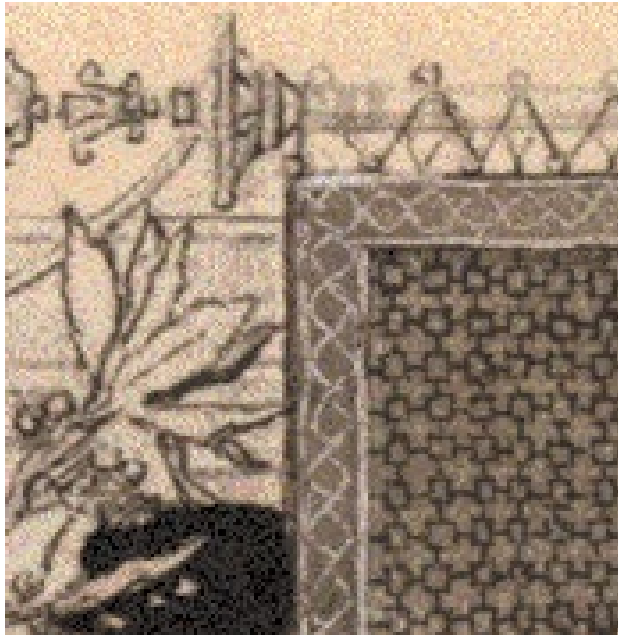


Fig. 43. Gustav Klimt, Detail of the *Gulden* design with intertwined snakes, here, also, used as an internal frame. 1892.

The exact same motive is found in the Ehrbar Relief, possibly made in the same year, 1892. Next to the snakes we have bay leaves with berries. It is remarkable that while the Relief is full of new typography, the *Gulden* design does not have any.



Fig. 44. The Ehrbar Relief's crossed wavelines as a frame with bay leaves and berries.

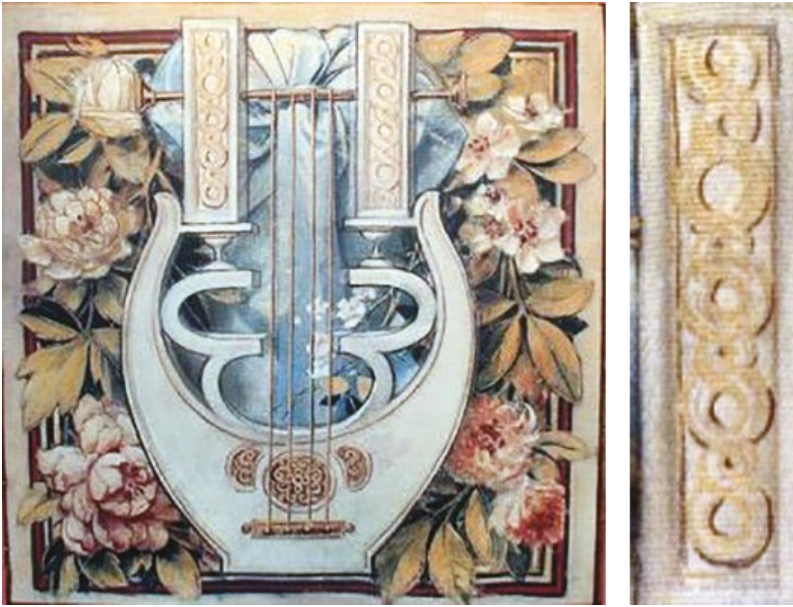


Fig. 45. Peles Lyre 1883–85. Crossing waves between parallel lines. Another appearance of the motive in Klimt’s early works, here also adorning the frequently applied lyre.

II.6.2 In Klimt’s works nothing appears by chance, and the Relief’s framing motive does not, either. The crossing waves are another attribute of the god Hermes, an adaptation of the semantic mark on his wand has a meaning and refers to commerce.

Apollo’s best friend Hermes, who was also the god of poetry, can be associated with the Relief through several (semantic) symbols:

- a, **Crossing wavelines.** On Hermes’s gold wand there are two snakes intertwined in the form of an 8, an ancient symbol of commerce. That is why the symbol was applied in the Gulden design, and also in the Ehrbar Relief, similarly associated with commerce.
- b, **Apollo’s lyre.** When “Hermes was playing his harp, Apollo was immediately captivated by the sweet sound of the instrument and his heart melted. He gave his whole herd to Hermes in exchange for the lyre, in addition, he gave away his gold wand, which had exceptional magic powers”.
- c, **Androgynous characteristics of the Relief’s Apollo.** “Out of the loves of Aphrodite and Hermes Hermaphroditus was born, who was later melted together with the nymph Salmakhis at her request by the Gods, and therefore he became man and woman at the same time. ”¹¹

¹¹ <https://www.wikiwand.com/hu/Herm%C3%A9sz>



Fig. 46. Waving internal border as also applied by Klimt in the Relief.

Another similar internal border cannot be found in the graphic arts of the entire 19th century. Fig. 46 has several symbols of the Relief: 1. The intertwined snakes; 2. Bay leaves with berries; 3. The composition of the wings and a small lion on the helmet; 4. The figures are already at the bottom of the composition; 5. They look sideways out of the picture; 6. Both compositions are works of applied arts.



Fig. 47. Intertwined snakes border symbolising commerce.



Fig. 48–49. The snakes also appear in Klimt's *January* (1901) and the *Beethoven Frieze* (1902).



Fig. 50. Gustav Klimt, *Musik II*. 1898

„*Musik II* by Gustav Klimt represents the music competition **between Pan and Apollo**.”¹²

According to the literature of art history, the women playing harps in Klimt's pictures are invariably depictions of Apollo.

„Feminising man, a distinct feature of Klimt's art suggests that an explanation should be found in the personality of the artist himself; (...). But we do not know Klimt's biography well enough to draw conclusions.”¹³

¹² <http://thomas-michel-contemporary-art.de/gustav-klimt-allegory-of-music/?lang=en>

¹³ Fliedl, Gottfried: Gustav Klimt, Köln, 2000. / 1989. p. 205.

II.7.1 Why did Klimt use an earlier composition for the Relief and make the latter a precise mirror image?



Fig. 51. Gustav Klimt: *Dionysos altar* in the Burgtheater. 1886 - 88



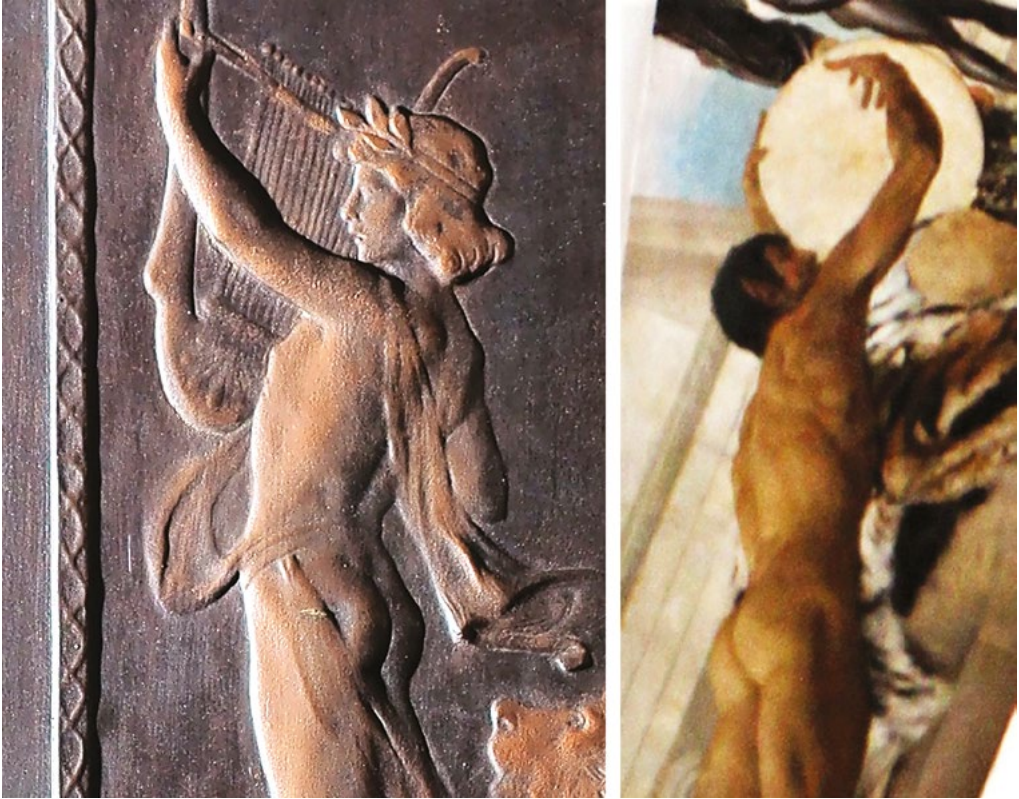
Fig. 52. Figure on the left of the *Dionysos altar* looking in the right direction.



Fig. 53. Rotated mirror image of the Relief figure for comparison.

The Relief's Apollo figure almost appears to be hovering above the earth, an effect the artist creates through drawing his model lying on his belly, rather than standing upright, thus creating the effect of floating feet.

Rotating the composition to an upright position, the figure will no longer be standing in a static position. The figure on the left in the Dionysos altar is looking in the right direction. This is the direction Klimt used in the earlier composition.



Figs. 54–55. Apollo with almost unnoticeably indicated feminine breasts, around 1892. Right: The Dionysos altar's male figure with a masculine chest.

References to Klimt often point to a conflict between Apollo's idealism with Dionysian passion, as a source of internal tension for Klimt's art.

This transformation makes his works lofty and ethereal, bringing them close to everyday man.

II.7.2 Technology and execution, painting of surfaces

The band for the border was raised from the soft clay surface and the wavy lines were drawn by hand. The hardly noticeable twitches and leaves were impressed, creating soft forms. The artist therefore was not working “in the positive”, adding material, but through impressing or scratching the material for the central composition. The lettering, however, may have been a “positive” process, and the mould for the final piece could have been made through casting material over that basis.

Painting:

The plaque was uniquely painted by hand. This is visible on the larger letters, where the streaks of the brush are clearly noticeable.

The surface of the central composition may have been the result of a complicated process of several layers of paint and rubbing some of the layers back.

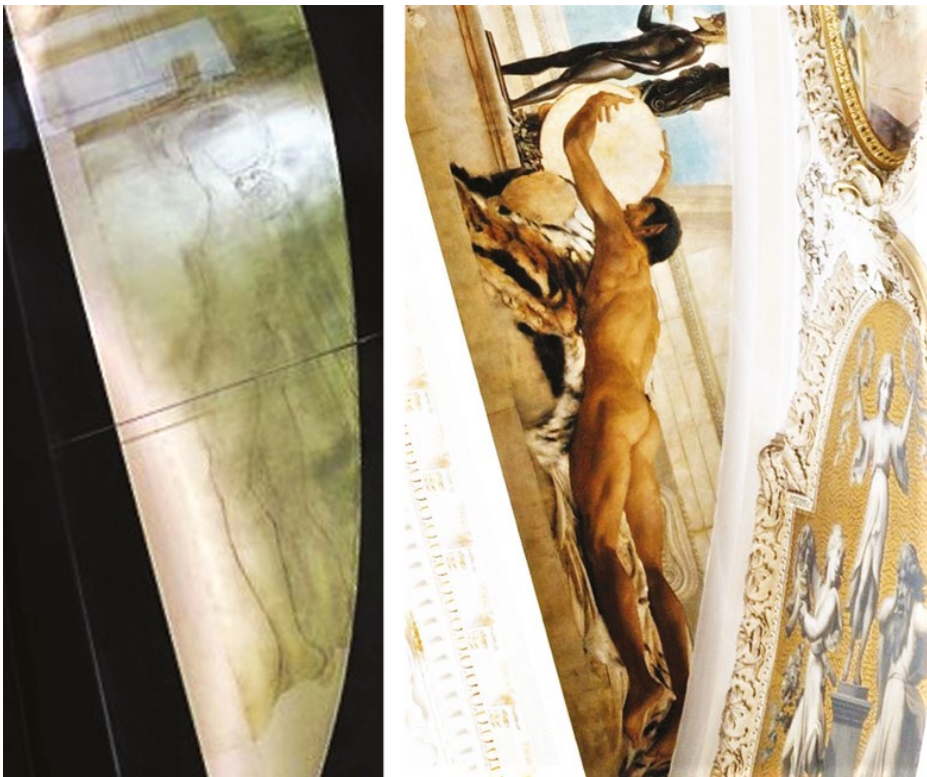


Fig. 56–57. Klimt, Burgtheater. 1886 (mirror image) A recently discovered design for the Burgtheater’s tympanum with a similar male figure with a veil. 1886 (mirror image)

The movement of the figure and the artist’s point of view are similar to those of the Relief.

II.7.3 Possible studies for the Ehrbar Relief

The **Ehrbar Relief** could not have been made on basis of a few rough sketches and it was certainly preceded by meticulous preparations and a series of studies.

The final studies on paper must have been the same size as the piece to be made, at least **89cm × 61cm**.

Such large cartons are not easy to store and, probably smeared with clay and plaster, they ended up in the waste baskets of the Atlier Künstlerbund. When Ehrbar Jr. abandoned the composition (after 1895), the disappointed artist could have destroyed the designs himself – this, however, is just an assumption.



Figs. 58–59. Apollo in the Ehrbar Relief. 189192 (93); Burgtheater, 1886. Mirror image of rotated detail.

II.7.4 Identical positive and negative forms



Figs. 60–61. Negative forms are applied consistently

The presentation of negative forms of thighs and buttocks, their lines and the artist's point of view all suggest the same hand. Indicating these negative forms are so important for the artist that he makes a distinct painter's gesture on the line of the veil in the Relief. The thigh joint is distinctly marked in each of his drawings, see the following examples.



Figs. 62–64. Clear indication of the thigh joints.

II.7.5 The figure seems to be hovering above ground.

The feet suggest a weightless floating, similarly to portrayals by Klimt in the same period.

It was Klimt's own invention to draw his models lying in a horizontal position, with no weight on the feet, then rotated the image by 90 degrees.

In a vertical position, therefore, the figure seems to be hovering above the ground.



Fig. 65. Ehrbar Relief



Fig. 66. *Thespiskarren, Greek Theatre; Burgtheater, 1888;*

Fig. 67. Gustav Klimt: *Taormina;*



Fig. 68. *Thespiskarren, 1886*

II.7.6 Bay leaf head band and similar profiles in later works



Figs. 69–70. Headband in the Relief, and *Design for the initial D*. 1898.

On both heads the bay leaves are placed in front, fixed on a broad ribbon. The profiles are Grecian, the lips are slightly parted, and both figures have ample hair.

The structure of the headband is similar in compositions made 3, 6 and 10 years later.

The special bay wreath – or, rather, headband with leaves – is a surprising evidence. It is a composition of the traditional wreath and headband, applied by Klimt in a unique way.

My research so far has not revealed any similar motive in the entire history of art. We may now be so accustomed to this special form of wreath that it appears conventional – it may, however, be another **Klimt invention**.

It appears on the Relief, for the first time ever, which adds to the Relief's significance.

A similar headpiece is found on Grecian urns, however, composed on boughs rather than bands.

Franz von Stuck applies a most similar design, however, his structure has the band in front and the leaves at the back.

Bay leaves on a headband, slightly parted lips. 1890–92. Not applied by other artists.
Gustav Klimt: 1895, 1898, 1898, 1902.

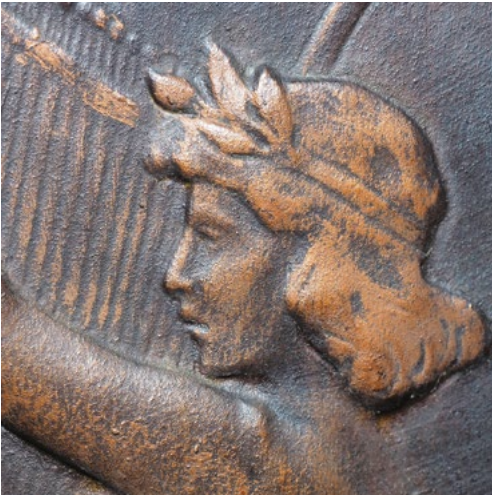


Fig. 71. The structure of the headband is similar to that in the Relief.



Fig. 72. Gustav Klimt: *Die Musik I*, 1895



Fig. 73. Gustav Klimt, *Profile of Girl's Head Facing Left*. 1898.



Fig. 74. Gustav Klimt, *Poetry, Apollo Beethoven Frieze*. 1902.

II.8.1. Possible traces of Georg Klimt's hand on the Relief

On this work, Georg Klimt worked independently, and thus signed it.



Fig. 75–76. Georg Klimts Flachrelief in der Lobby des Hotels Unter dem Adler in Bielsko-Biała, 1905¹⁴



Fig. 77. Ehrbar Relief, detail.

Composition of the bay wreath is the same as in Georg Klimt's work in Fig. 76.

¹⁴ https://www.wikiwand.com/de/Georg_Klimt

Traces of Georg Klimt's hand could be assumed judging from the rare motifs described above. If he had made it alone, he would have signed it; but there was a partner, who could not have been anyone else but Gustav. As it appears, there was a group in the early years called Atelier Künstlerbund, at Wien, Stubenring 18. As the Franz Joseph barracks was demolished in 1900, the Atelier could only stay at that address until the previous year, the latest.

The group had at least two members. Georg was one, and, as with other contracts, Gustav was the partner. Georg, the youngest of the Klimt brothers, was not part of the "Künstler-Compagnie" grouping between 1883-1892. That is why the Klimt brothers needed to form a new group. They were probably aiming to do commercial work and the group was not long-lived, probably because of Gustav's disappointment over Ehrbar's dropping the design.



Fig. 78. Detail in the upper right hand corner. Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien aus dem Jahr 1891. Gustav Klimt

Twining bay leaves with berries. The leaves are overlapping, with one berry at each junction. This rare motive was applied both for the Relief and the Kunsthistorisches Museum fresco.



Fig. 79. Ehrbar Relief, detail



Fig. 80. Detail, Georg Klimt's Flachrelief in der Lobby des Hotels Unter dem Adler in Bielsko-Biala, 1905.

„Georg Klimt wurde von seinem Bruder Gustav Klimt sehr gefördert. Gustav entwarf auch für ihn (etwa das Grabkreuz der Eltern; (...)) („Klimt Grab ~ Grave Design and execution Gustav Klimt and Georg Klimt“)

II.9.1. Detail of drapery is similar to the Relief in an early work



Fig. 81. Gustav Klimt, *Die Reiche der Natur*. 1882.



Fig. 82. Detail of veil in the Relief, suggesting Klimt's hand



Fig. 83. Detail from Klimt's drawing. 1882.

Similarities between these two tiny details could not be more indicative of the same hand. Isolating them from the larger composition, we will find the following:

1. The same theme and function: the corner of floating fabric.
2. The same geometrical lines.
3. The same arrangement of positive and negative forms.



Fig. 84. Gustav Klimt, *Gewand für die Lauterspielerin im Deckenwand, Karlsbad Stadttheater, (preliminary) 1885. Study for fabric, rotated detail.*



Fig. 85–87. Gustav Klimt, Franz Matsch, *Apollo's apotheosis*. 1883–1885. Study for a ceiling. Apollo, still with masculine features, is depicted in space.





Fig. 88–89. The fabric above the curved line shows the same delicate wrinkles in Klimt's sketch and the Relief. (Gustav Klimt: *Sitzende Frau nach links mit Kopftuch*.1888-89.)



Fig. 90. Gustav Klimt: *Sitzende Frau nach links mit Kopftuch*. 1888-89.

II.9.2. Branch of a tree hanging into the composition



Fig. 91–92. Branch of a tree hanging in from outside the picture. The main figure is clearly similar to that in Klimt's *Taormina* composition for the Burgtheater. 1886–88. The central figure, the Sun going down, and the tree trunk in line with the border all indicate the same hand.



Fig. 93–94. Similarity of details with a tree trunk tight on the composition's borderline.



Fig. 95–97. The portrait of Emilie Flöge was made in 1892 – the same time when the Relief may have been created.

This could explain the similarity in composition, with both pictures closed off with a tree with a similar structure of branches. In both cases the trunk is merged into the frame. The positive curve of the lower branch hangs into the picture, while the negative curve of the upper branch rounds off its corner.

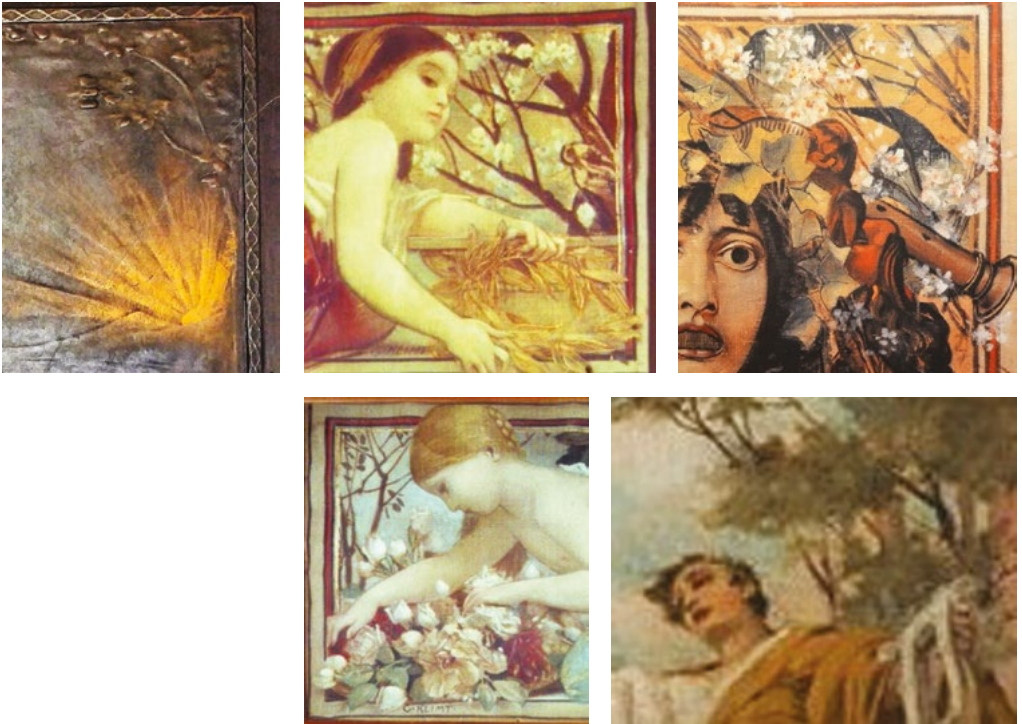


Fig. 98–102. Klimt likes closing off a composition by way of a tree branch close to the border. Relief at Peles Castle (1884), *Spring, Summer, Apollo* (1885).

II.9.3 Rays of the Sun in the Relief and in other Klimt works



Fig. 103. Rays of the Sun in the Relief appear in bunches.

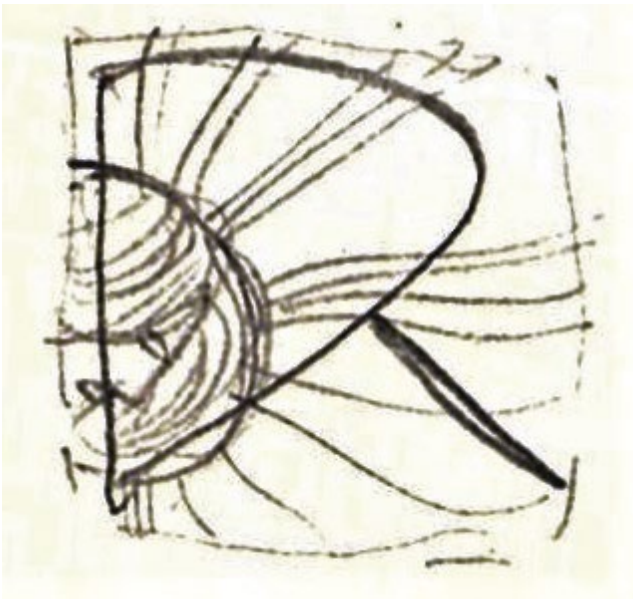


Fig. 104. Klimt's sketch in rays arranged in bunches, drawn in 1898, about six years later.

Rays of light and smoke of similar proportions can be found in the bottom right corner of Klimt's *Josef Lewinsky*, 1895.

This type of R appears several times in the Relief. This form will only be accepted later.

II.9.4. Unique presentation of birds' feet both in the Relief and Klimt compositions



Fig. 105–106. The Relief's eagle with strange feet and detail of Klimt, *Opera*, 1883, with similar feet

1. The massive appearance of the feet of the two birds (eagle and owl) is both similar and unusual (1.). The claws are missing in both cases or at least they are hidden from view. Eagles at this time were invariably presented with their claws, but they were omitted from both these compositions.

The structures of the wings are also similar. Both the eagle and the owl are covered with scale-like feathers.

2. The *Opera* design has above the bird the same bay wreath with berries as in the Relief under the wings (2.).

3. Klimt was experimenting with the letter G between 1883 and 1896. His Gs resemble mostly the letter C, but later it gets closer to the traditional form.



Fig. 107–108. 1. The same, strange “knees” in both compositions, as if the birds were in a sitting position. 2. same bay wreath with berries 3. Unique form of the letter G

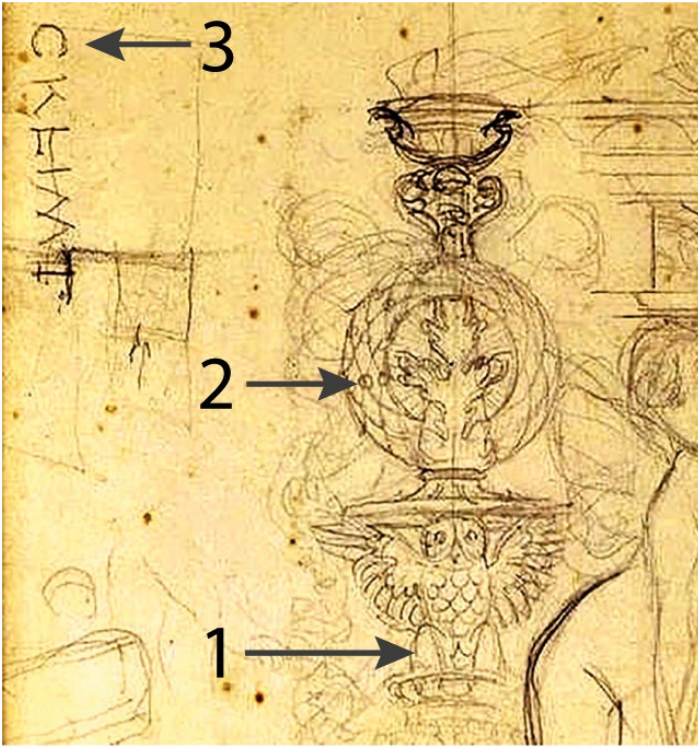


Fig. 109. Klimt, Opera, detail 1883.

The eagle in a later (1899) Ehrbar advertisement, by an unidentified artist, the claws reappear, as usually presented. The feet are no longer as monolithic as in the Relief and in the Klimt drawing.



Fig. 110. Unidentified artist, Ehrbar advertisement in 1899, with conventional feet.



Fig. 111. Klimt, Opera, detail 1883.

II.9.5. Klimt's depiction of lyres



Fig. 112. Gustav Klimt, Karlsbad, Lyre. 1885.

„Gustav Klimt Entwurf zum Vorhang des Stadttheaters Karlsbad, 1884/85 Design for the curtain of the Municipal Theater in Karlsbad (Karlovy Vary).



Fig. 113. Details of Klimt's *Apollo* sketch. 1885.



Fig. 114. Klimt, *Musik*. 1895.

II.9.6 The oldest form of lyre, made of horns



Fig. 115. The Ehrbar Relief – Apollo's first lyre made of a tortoise's shell and the horns of cattle

In the Relief Klimt refers to the actual situation through the form and composition of the lyre. Apollo, depicted in a natural environment, holds up his first lyre made of the shell of a tortoise and the horns of the stolen cattle. This is when Apollo recognises the beauty of music, and is given the first instrument in exchange for the animals. The Relief shows a clear structure which reflect the artist's familiarity with mythology.

„A classical lyre has a hollow body or sound-chest (also known as soundbox or resonator), which, in ancient Greek tradition, was made out of turtle shell. Extending from this sound-chest are two raised arms, which are sometimes hollow, and are curved both outward and forward.”



Figs. 116–117. Lyres in Klimt's drawing and in the Relief



Fig. 118. Gustav Klimt, *Die Allegorie der Skulptur*. 1889. Detail.

The lyre in this drawing of Klimt's is the most similar to the instrument depicted in the Relief. The harp made of cattle horns is the most important instrument in ancient drama. The horn closer to the musician is smaller, while the other one is longer; a basic rule for the harp is that strings of a lower tune are further away from the harpist.



Fig. 119. *Die Allegorie der Skulptur*, 1889.

II.9.7. Simplified lyres in a Klimt design and in the Relief



Fig. 120. Klimt, *Design 50 Krone*. 1900. Small, stylised lyres applied as a decoration.



Fig. 121. Klimt, *Ehrbar Relief*. A small lyre applied both as a symbol and a decoration.

III.1. Comparison between the addresses in the Relief with other references

Atelier Künstlerbund Wien I. Stubenring 18.

„In den 1880er Jahren bildete er mit seinem Bruder Ernst (Eintragung bei Lehmann: *Gebrüder Klimt*) und Franz Matsch eine als *Künstler-Compagnie* geführte Ateliergemeinschaft, die bei Lehmann (s. o.) erstmals 1888 an der Adresse 6., Sandwirtgasse 8, aufscheint und hier bis 1890 genannt wird; 1888 war der jüngste der drei, Georg, volljährig geworden. 1888/1889 unternahm Klimt Reisen nach Krakau, Triest, Venedig und München. Von 1891 an scheint als Atelieradresse der *Compagnie* 8., Josefstädter Straße 21, auf (man arbeitete im Gartenpavillon des Hauses gegenüber dem Theater in der Josefstadt).“¹⁵

The Lehmann Register in 1888 has a reference to *Gebrüder Klimt*, obviously meaning the Klimt brothers, also mentioning Franz Matsch, who would quit the group in 1892. It is logical to think that the group consisted of nobody else but the brothers Gustav, Ernst, and Georg. Ernst Klimt's death in 1892 is indicated in next year's edition of the Lehmann Register, but *Gebrüder Klimt* are indicated in 1895 and as late as 1897. Logically, *Gebrüder Klimt* was continued by the two surviving brothers after **Ernst's** death.

The Lehmann Register does not indicate a „Künstler-Compagnie“, which was the group's well-known name. It is likely that the editors only accepted actual names to be included in the Register. It would also explain why there is no reference to an „Atelier Künstlerbund“, either.



Fig. 122–124. „*Gebrüder Klimt*“: Gustav, Ernst, and Georg Klimt

„Die Wiener Frauenakademie, ursprünglich Kunstschule für Frauen und Mädchen genannt, war eine 1897 gegründete künstlerische Bildungseinrichtung für Frauen in Wien. (...) Die Vereinstateliers befanden sich zunächst in Wien I, Stubenring 12,

¹⁵ https://www.wikiwand.com/de/Gustav_Klimt

Bäckerstraße 1, Bibergasse 8 und Stubenring 16.”¹⁶ „Georg Klimt unterrichtet Metallarbeiten” „Er wurde Lehrer an der Kunstschule für Frauen und Mädchen. Schuf (teilweise nach Entwürfen seines Bruders Gustav, der ihm auch Aufträge vermittelte) dekorative Arbeiten, Treppengeländer und anderes, 1905 auch eine Silberkassette für Franz Joseph I.”¹⁷



Fig. 125. Stubenring 18.

The academy was founded in 1897, and if its activities were based on Georg’s existing studio of plaster and metalwork, we have found the missing link. On the other hand, at this early date Stubenring 16 is the address of the Franz Joseph barracks, only indicated in military registers, while Stubenring 18, the address for the Atelier Künstlerbund, could be another entrance to the same building. With a huge building like the barracks, the address and the studio are likely to be the same.

This argument, however, will only hold if Georg’s involvement with the **Kunstschule für Frauen** und Mädchen started long before 1902, when he is employed as a teacher. As we have seen, the change in the Ehrbar Saal’s address dates the Relief to the early 1890s.¹⁸

I assume that Georg’s work as a sculptor and metalsmith, involving noise and dust, cannot for the long run be done simultaneously with Gustav’s creative activity requiring quite and contemplation.

The new studio, therefore, could have been set up at Stubenring 18, where the noise disturbed nobody.

III.2 The idea of the Künstlerbund is associated with Gustav Klimt’s name, and the date of its foundation could be put earlier, if we assume that “Atelier Künstlerbund” is an early name for the same formation.

This assumption may contradict millions of books on the subject, but there is logic in it and it could pave the way for new research. Confirming or denying this theory may not be possible without original documents, such as surviving contracts in the Ehrbar heritage.

¹⁶ https://www.wikiwand.com/de/Wiener_Frauenakademie

¹⁷ https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Georg_Klimt

¹⁸ Further research into the addresses at different times would be required in view of **Georg Klimt’s** teaching metalworking at the **Kunstschule für Frauen und Mädchen** (Viennese Women’s Academy). The Vereinsatelier in the beginning was at Vienna 1, **Stubenring 12**, at Bäckerstraße 1, Bibergasse 8, and at **Stubenring 16**.

III.3.1 The Lehmann Register does not indicate Stubenring 18 in these early years, probably because it was intended for civilian use and the barracks at the site was a military facility. It requires further research and confirmation if the Franz Josef Kaserne, defunct around 1890-92, is identical with Stubenring 18.

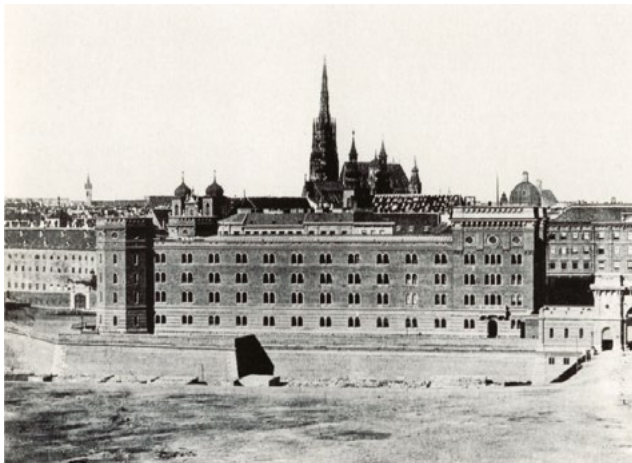
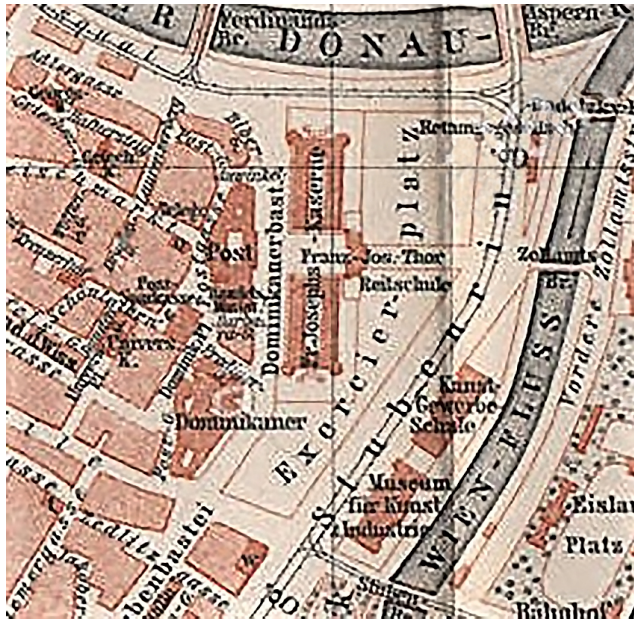


Fig. 126. Stubenring 1890, Franz-Joseph Kaserne und Reitschule. A building soon to be demolished in a huge park on the side of the Stubenring with even numbers.

The even numbers of Stubenring is a huge parkland in 1890, possible with garden pavilions. Either one of those or the no-longer used riding school (Reitschule) was the facility we are looking for – Stubenring 18.

III.3.2 Klimt's birthplace was demolished in 1966 and it nearly happened to his later studio, too. Some of his works went through hard times – the Beethoven Frieze, for example, was recovered, badly damaged, from the basement of a museum. No wonder, there is little or no information about the studio of his brothers or about their short-lived cooperation.

III.3.3 When in 2017, at the beginning of my research, I visited the Stubenring and looked for number 18, it was obvious that the building could not have housed a sculptor's studio. The elegant, turn of the century mansion's marble lobby or its structure were not evocative of the noise of a chisel or workmen carrying bags of plaster of Paris around.

III.3.4 That was when my investigation took a turn and I started concentrating on the 1890s, to lead me to what I had been looking for: the Franz Joseph barracks and riding school, defunct at the time and to be demolished in 1900, as indicated in an old military register.

„01-3-318-C

Stubenring 2–16, Dominikanerbastei 2–24, Dr.-Karl-Lueger-Platz, Franz-Josefs-Kai 1–9

1857–1900 Franz-Josephs-Kaserne mit Exerzierplätzen / Mon / 337¹⁹

III.4 Does the makers' mark on the Relief refer to Gebrüder Klimt?

The Lehmann Register's indicating Gebrüder Klimt in 1888 obviously refers to the Klimt brothers, Gustav, Ernst, and Georg, as an independent formation.

The register indicates their studio at “Wien 6., Sandwirtgasse 8 (in **Lehmans Wiener Adressbuch** schien sie hier 1888–1890 auf)”.

My findings suggest that this same group will refer to itself as „Atelier Künstlerbund Wien I. Stubenring 18.” The group, with this name and address, must have worked between 1890 and 1892.

This is supported by the fact that after Ernst's death in 1892 the Lehmann register indicates his name with a cross. **Gebrüder Klimt, however, continues to be indicated in 1895 and as late as 1897, five years after Ernst's death!** It suggests that Gebrüder Klimt was continued by Gustav and Georg.

III.4.1 Gustav Klimt visited Munich in 1889-90, where Art Nouveau was already in the air, bringing about the ideas of artistic cooperation – the Künstlerbund.

My assumption is that the Künstlerbund idea must have been born much earlier than art historians have so far believed.

¹⁹ http://militaergeschichte.at/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Verzeichnis_der_Objekte_Bd3.pdf

IV.1 The Relief could have been the first big typographic challenge in Klimt's career, which could account for a number of novel solutions.

Typographic analysis of the Relief

The Relief's distinct typographic markers and its unadorned fields suggest an early Art Nouveau piece. It is important to note that official publications around 1890 are all printed in Gothic, with Art Nouveau hardly appearing. Art Nouveau was not born in architecture but in applied arts, rooted in applied graphics.

The first Art Nouveau group was formed in 1892 under the name „Münchner Sezession“. Between 1892 and 1894 neither Franz von Stuck nor his fellow artists come up with any significant typographic inventions. The Ehrbar Relief, as proved, was made at this time, therefore its novel typography is **unique and the first of its kind worldwide**.

Franz von Stuck had a tangible influence on Klimt's work, and both artists contributed to the Wien Verlag's *Allegorien und Embleme* designs.

IV.1.2 Analysis of the Relief's typography has yielded surprising results

I found all the analogies in Klimt's **later** works, which means that what we see in the Relief is the first experiments. This is simply explained by the fact that earlier **he had not had the task of presenting so much text on a piece, having to meet at the same time requirements of the modern age**.

The artist had limited space to present a lot of information. He had to resort to using different letter sizes, as well as to reducing the connective word 'und' to just one letter. It could not have been a simple task to meet the magnate Ehrbar's requirements considering all aspects of function, aesthetics, modernity and grandiosity.

I assume that the Relief was the beginning of Klimt's experiments with typography.

As we have proved, the Relief was made between 1891–1892. One or two years difference in the dating does matter as novel solutions could quickly be adopted by other artists.

IV.2.1 I found no other piece at this time with the solution of integrating two letters, a unique way of adapting medieval ligatures to Art Nouveau. The letters L and Ü in FLÜGEL and L and I in ATELIER, melted into single characters in modern typography.

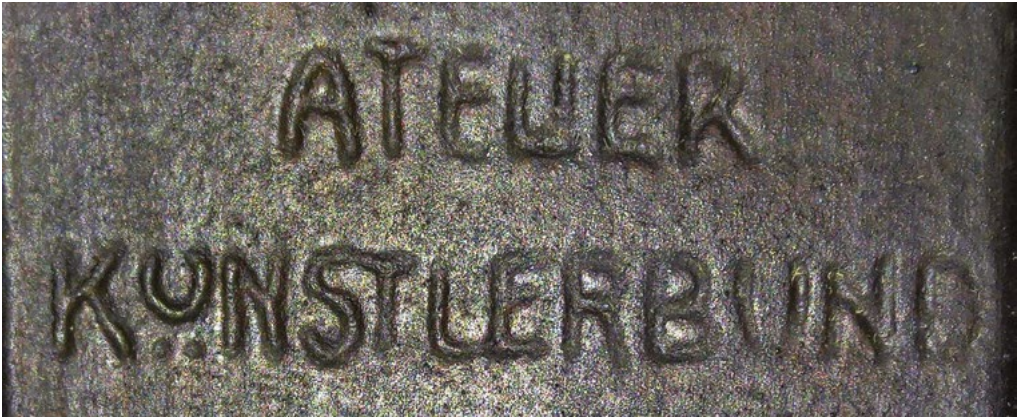
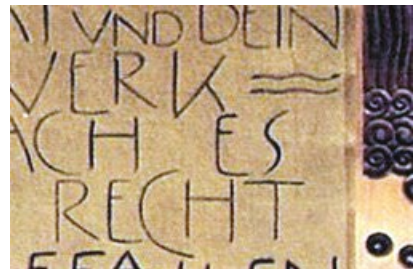


Fig. 127. Ligature in the Relief

IV.3.1 Using two, horizontal, parallel lines in the text, as an element to counterbalance the mass and ensure symmetry is a novel phenomenon. The same tool is used to separate words. Let us not forget that we are in 1890-93, and these tools **cannot be found in earlier pieces.**



Figs. 128–129. Detail of Nuda Veritas, 1899 and detail of the Relief



Fig. 130. Ligature in the Relief



Figs. 131–132. Details of the Relief and Klimt's Nuda Veritas.

IV.4 Klimt demonstrates his free, constructive mind when he inverts the Ü in ATELIER KÜNSTLERBUND by putting the umlaut at the bottom and placing the U on top of it. I found no other example of this witty idea by an experimenting and brave genius.



Fig. 133. Unique attempt at re-positioning the umlaut for the letter Ü.

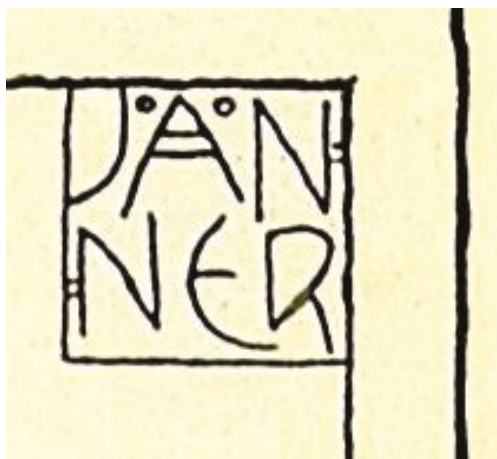


Fig. 134. Ver Sacrum, January. 1901. Detail

An umlaut removed from its usual position will later appear inside its letter or on the legs of the letter A.

The umlaut is removed from its usual position and placed inside the letter in the Saturnus design, published in *Ver Sacrum* in 1901, nearly ten years after the Relief, in which Klimt had resorted to the same tool. The two, horizontal, parallel lines applied in the Relief return.



Fig. 135. Gustav Klimt, *Ex libris der Vereinigung bildender Künstler Österreichs Secession*. 1899/1900.

Umlaut inside letter

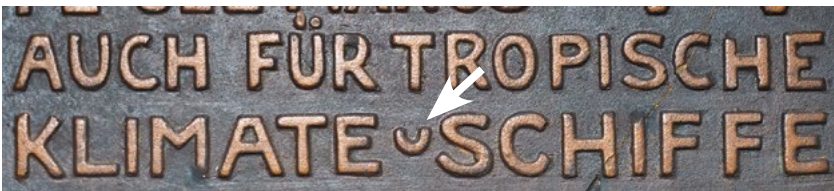
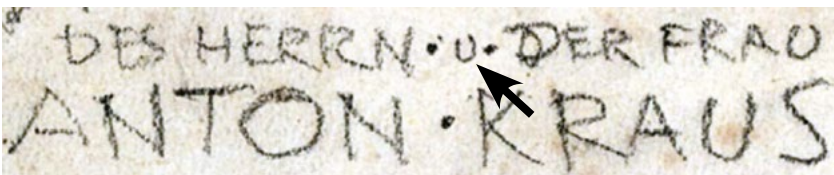


Fig. 136. Here we have a rarely used device, a smaller letter U as the abbreviation of 'und'.

This is applied on a design for Otto Kraus: Klimt. Die Sammlung des Wien Museums, (2012, S. 146, Abb. S. 146). Date: 1896–1898.²⁰ (Entwurf zu einem Erinnerungsblatt für eine Vermählungsfeier)

The size and shape of this unique letter is similar to the full stops after stressed words and is applied with them simultaneously. This appears on the Relief for the first time, while the above drawing was made at least six years later, between 1896–98. Other artists will adopt it even later.

²⁰ Bildmitte: ZUR FREUNDLICHEN / ERINNERUNG DER / 10 JÄHRIGEN / VERMÄHLUNGSFEIER / DES HERRN . U . DER FRAU / ANTON . KRAUS; im Bild re.: JUNGESELLE / ERMANNE DICH / UND / UND [durchgestrichen] BEWEIBE DICH

IV.5. The Relief's makers were required to display a surprisingly long text:

GEGRÜNDET = 1801
PIANOS
•EHRBAR•
FABRIK FÜR FLÜGELPIANOS WIEN IV/I MÜHL=
AUCH FÜR TROPISCHE EIGENER GASSE=18
KLIMATE ^U SCHIFFE • CONZERTSAAL 550

In addition, the makers were indicated:

Atelier Künstlerbund Wien I. Stubenring 18

Klimt's influence on typography and his revolutionary ligatures are well known. His subsequent influence is reflected in the Klimt Font, named after him. He was not only familiar with the rules of typography but made such rules himself, and knew well to what extent he can deviate from traditional ones.

Klimt's VER SACRUM magazine was founded about eight years after the Relief, in 1898, primarily to promote new ways in graphic arts.

IV.6. Unique form of the letter G

Klimt was experimenting with the letter G between 1883 and 1895. His Gs resemble mostly the letter C, but later it gets closer to the traditional form.



Figs. 137–138. Klimt's letter G is similar to that in the Relief (Portrait of Joseph Pembauer, 1890.)

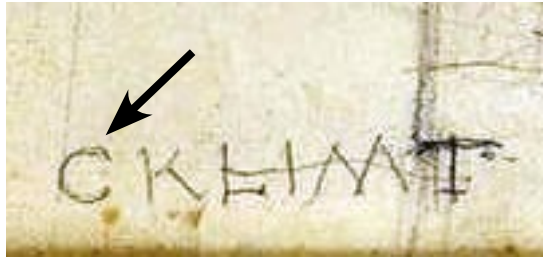
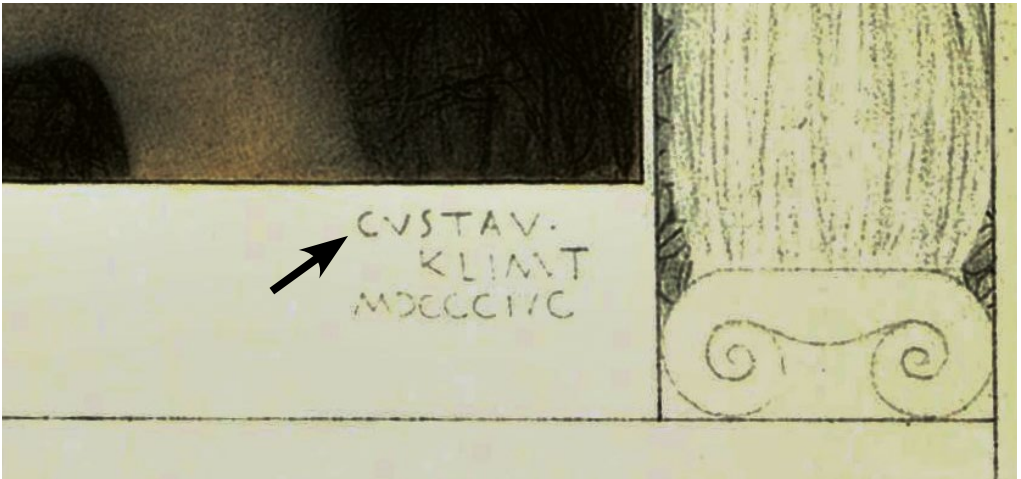


Fig. 139–140. Thespiskarren, 1886. G in the signature looks more like a C; Opera, 1883.



Fig. 141–142. Signature in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, with a C-like letter G.



Figs. 143. Signature in the *Junius* design. 1894.

The similarities listed so far cannot be coincidental.

IV.7 The Relief is Klimt's first quadrangular Art Nouveau composition

Franz von Stuck, founder of the Munich Sezession, made a quadrangular Pan composition in 1891. The quadrangle is one component of a three-part composition where the two, vertical fields on either side are empty – the same way as in the Relief. When visiting Munich, Klimt could have seen Stuck's piece in the making in 1890. This first appearance of quadrangular composition is the beginning of the Art Nouveau's cubic Würfelstil. This cubic composition rarely appears – as in the works of Hans Makart – outside the Vienna Sezession.

In chronological order, the next quadrangular composition is the Ehrbar Relief, probably the first such piece in Klimt's career. If we owe the popularity of the quadrangle in Art Nouveau, the Relief will be its pioneer, with subsequent pieces to further promote the trend. Could the magazine *Ver Sacrum* appear in a quadrangular format because of that very trend? Or Otto Eckmann's symbol for the weekly „7” in 1899? With the exception of von Stuck there are no other examples to be found for this quadrangular composition before the Relief, to be followed by innumerable pieces by many artists.

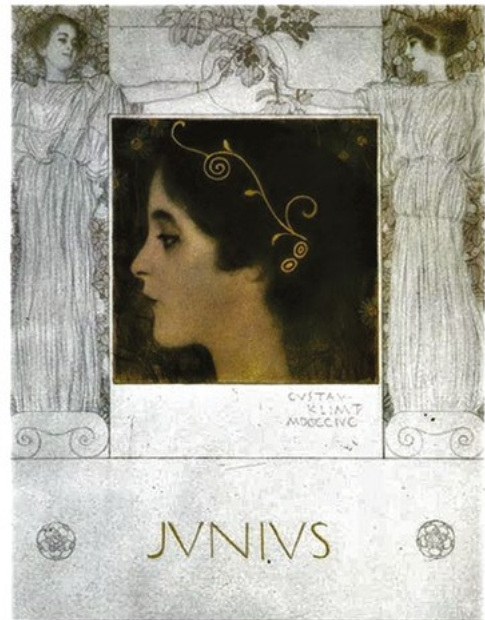
THESIS II

**Hidden structures
in Klimt's pictures**

V. Hidden structures in Klimt's pictures

The Relief as a predecessor to the *Junius* design

The structure of the design is the same of the Relief: composed of three parts, with the quadrangle in the centre with the profile and a nearly empty bottom field for the text. The text is limited right and left with a dot-like component, just like the one closing the word EHRBAR in the Relief. *Junius* was born at least four years later.



Figs. 144–145. The *Junius* design was made at least 3-4 years later for the Gerlach publications (Klimt, *Junius* 1896. Gerlach publications)

V.1. The Junius design was composed by way of silver section, just like the Relief

A similarity between the structure of the *Junius* design and the Relief is obvious.

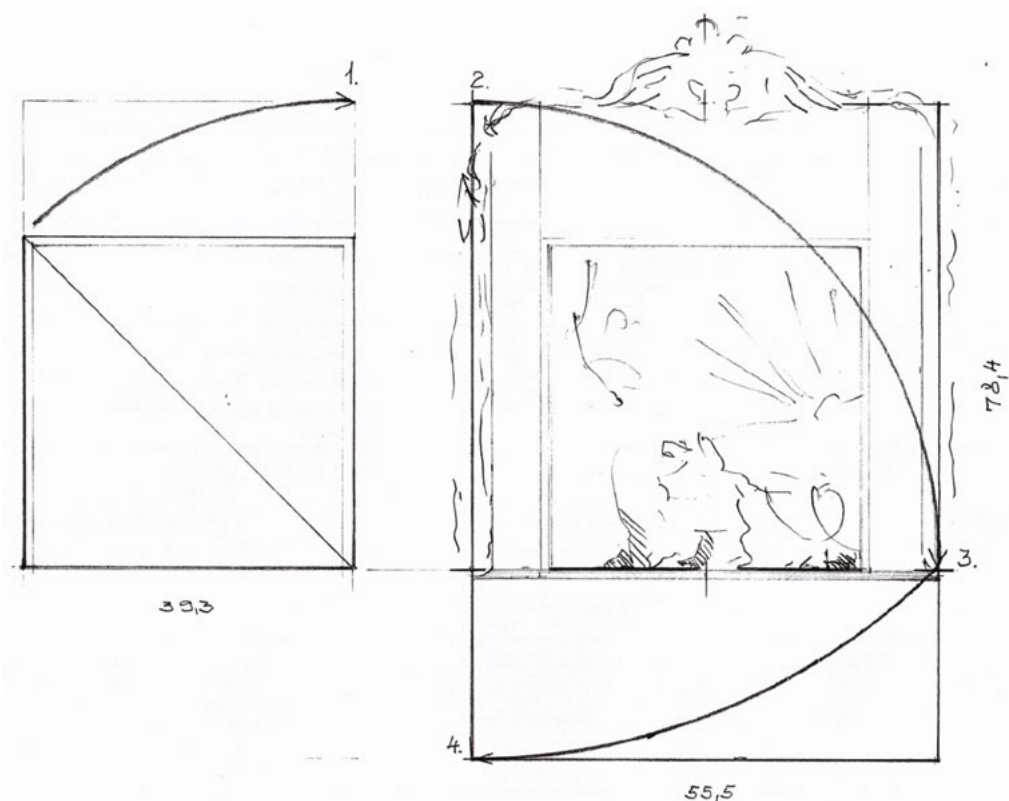


Fig. 146. The Relief's structure composed by way of silver section rules

There is a striking similarity between the structures of the design and the Relief, a way of composition that will not appear in works by contemporaries until somewhat later. Klimt applies the classical silver section, using the 1 : 1.414 ratio. If the side of the upper quadrangle is 1, its hypotenuse according to the Pythagorean theorem will be $\sqrt{2}$, which will determine the height of pages. Standard A, B, and C sheets have been made with those proportions since the 13th century.

The Relief's central quadrangle is the basic unit. Its dimension multiplied by $\sqrt{2}$ (1.414) determine the width of the plaque, and its height up to the coat of arms.

Apollo's field with the wavy borders is 39.3 × 39.3 cm; 39.3 × 1.414 = 55.5 cm, which gives the bottom width of the Relief. 55.5 × 1.414 = 78.4 cm, which gives the height of the plaque up to the bay leaves. It is interesting to note that Apollo's foot at the bottom marks a perfect quadrangle.

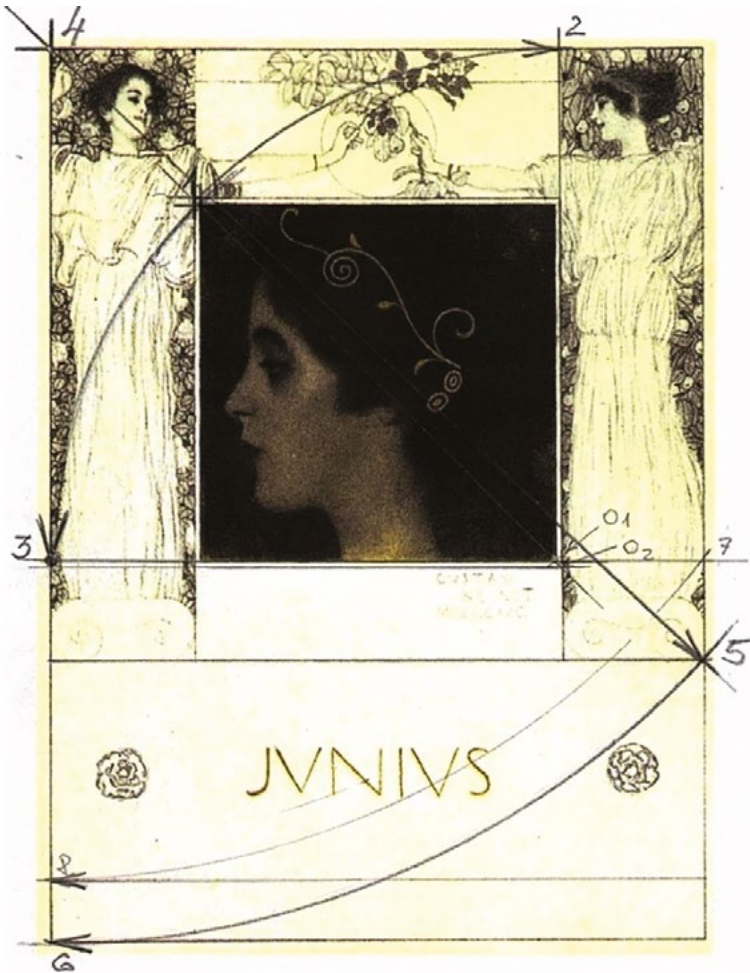


Fig. 147. Klimt, *Junius*. 1896.

The principles of construction are the same as those of the Relief.

The sides of the quadrangle surrounding the profile determines the width of the fields on top of it and on the sides, in line with the rules of silver section. In the final version – similarly to the Relief – the side fields taper towards the top and the hypotenuse of the upper quadrangle determines the composition's full height. This, so far unrecognised principle of composition was only applied by Klimt at the time. The slim structure of the side fields could be **considered as Klimt's unique signature**.

Klimt, in his earlier period of historic eclecticism had applied quadrangles such as in his murals for Peles Chateau, with several components which would reappear in the Relief. These works, however, were not created in the Vienna Sezession style.

Such components include the harp and intertwined snakes, depicted by way of silver section. In another canvas he painted the musician with parted lips and branches closing off the corner of the composition.

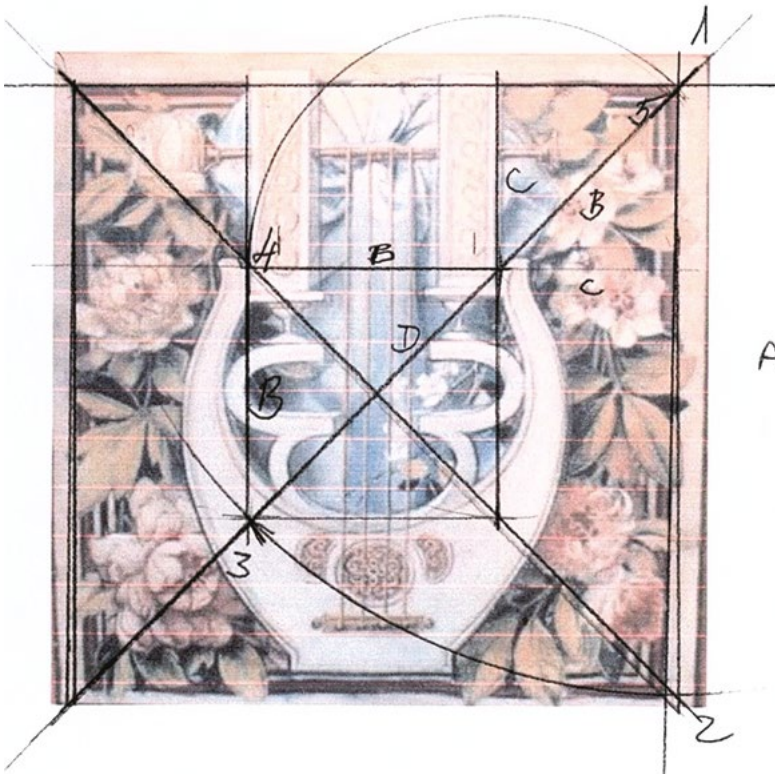


Fig. 148. Gustav Klimt, Decoration for Peles Castle 1884. Klimt already applies the quadrangle, and rules of silver section.

Looking for the origins of the trend, mockingly called Würfelstil at the time is crucial because the quadrangle will then become the most characteristic feature of the Wiener Werkstätte, founded by Klimt. This then led to modernism, to the culture of modern graphic arts, architecture, and design.

The appearance of the quadrangle was not a chance coincidence.

Klimt's classical education and familiarity with antiquity suggests that he was aware of the rules of golden and silver section both based on the square as a geometrical notion, and applied them.

V.2 The structure of some of Klimt's works

A study of the Relief has led me to the conclusion that some of Klimt's works incorporating geometric forms show proportions of silver section, which led to further assumptions:

1. Through his classical education and approach, Klimt may have made the public aware of the importance of the quadrangle itself and of the associated proportions.
2. Klimt was interested in the proportions of the human body and used them in his art.



Fig. 149. Gustav Klimt: *Liebe*. 1895.

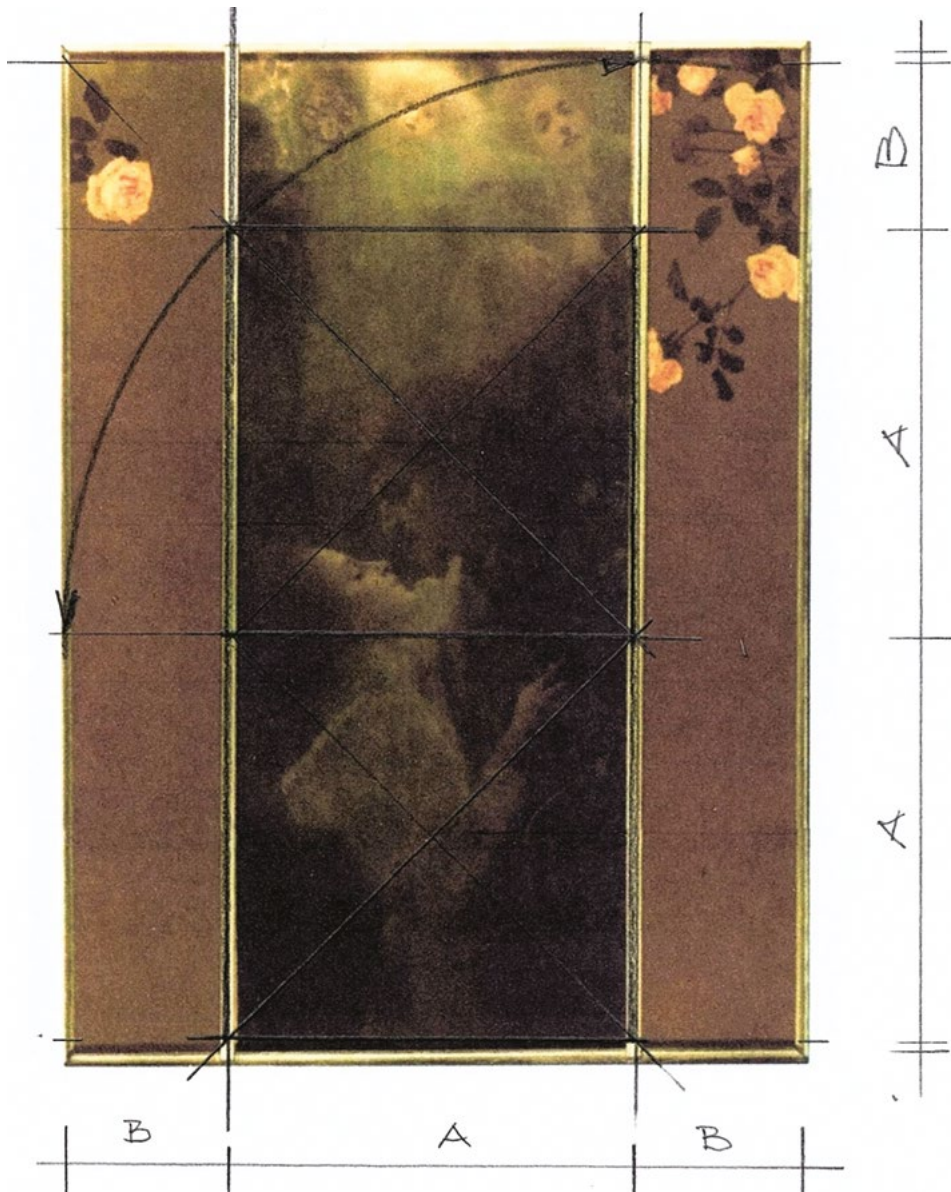


Fig. 150. The composition of *Liebe*, reflecting the principle of silver section

The composition is divided into three parts, with the two side fields that are nearly empty. The structure was designed in line with the rules of silver section. The dark brown strips at the top and at the bottom may have been dictated by accuracy. The basis, here again, is two quadrangles one on top of the other, all other dimensions are calculated by way of silver section.

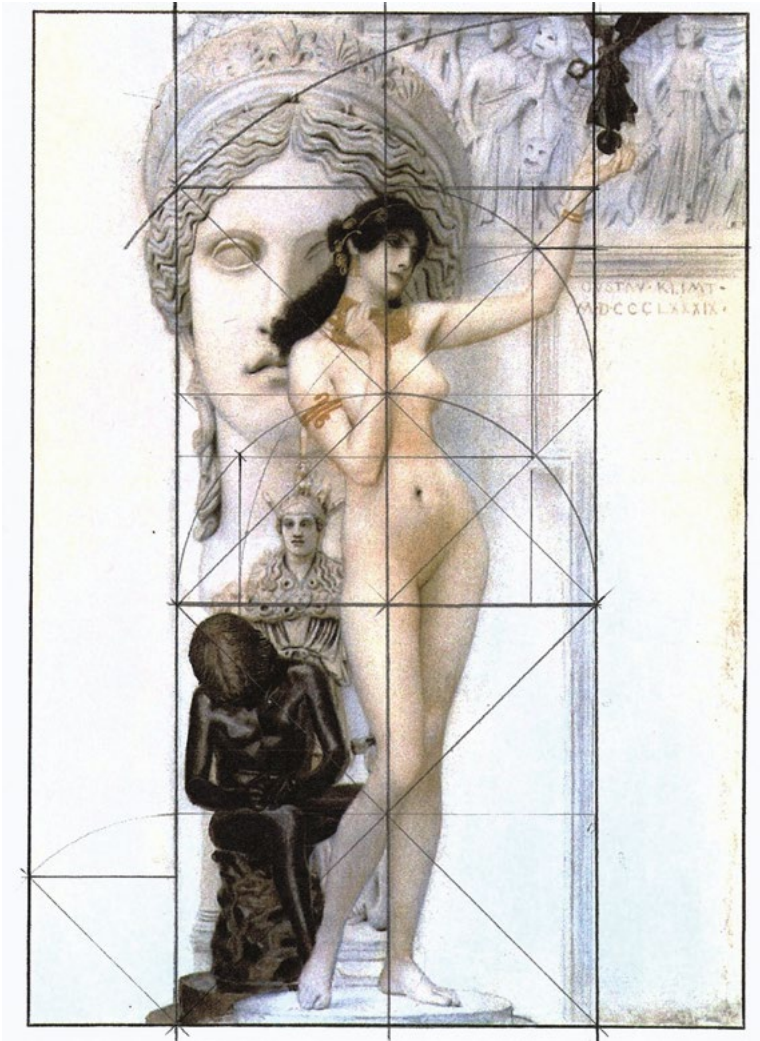


Fig. 151. *Die Allegorie der Skulptur*, 1889.

These examples demonstrate an overlap between art and science. They show the geometry of silver and golden section and the importance of those proportions which give a tangible support for the artist.

What I have discovered is that a number of Klimt's compositions are based on two quadrangles, one placed on the other, as well as their projections using the proportions of silver section. In fact, the structure of the Ehbar Relief can also be defined through that formula.

The *Allegorie der Skulptur* (1889) shows several proportions. The arch of the cornice and the unadorned fields are defined by finely arranged majors and minors. The contra post of the female figure coincides with the axis of the composition, which runs through the figures of the weighted ankle.



Fig. 152. Fair drawing for *Nuda Veritas*, 1898.



Fig. 153. Klimt:
Erste Kunstausstellung

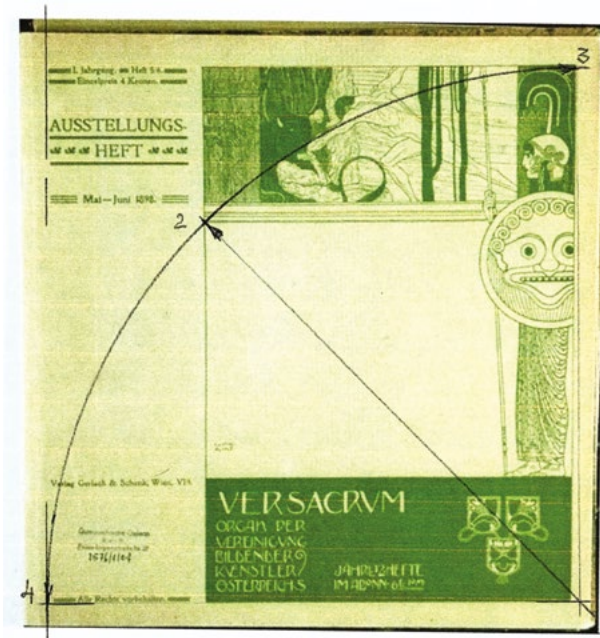


Fig. 154. Cover for *Ver Sacrum*,
1 st.year, 1898

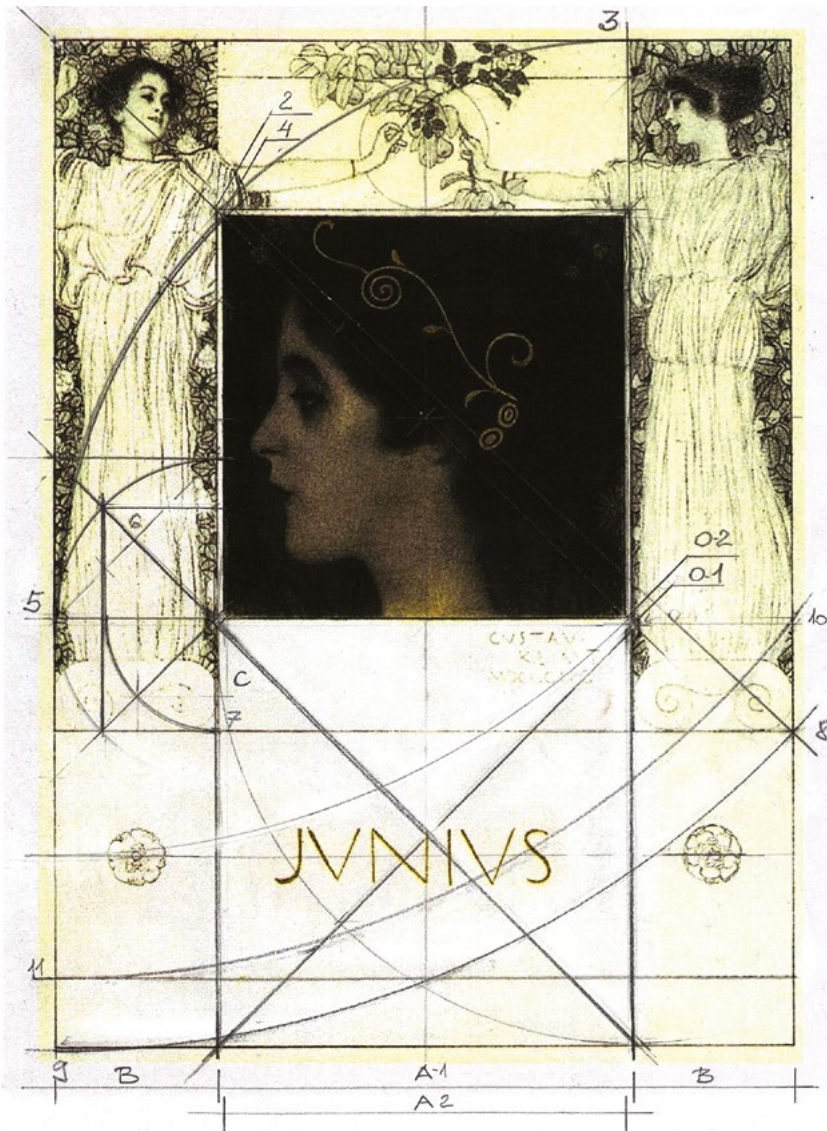


Fig. 155. The composition rests on two quadrangles one on top of the other

The Junius design shows a structure of minors and majors, the most surprising minor being the smallest, marked C, serving as a pedestals for the side figures. The Relief's Apollo, in fact, also stands on this dividing line. The central theme is framed in double lines, discontinued at the bottom in both cases. This internal frame is applied in the Gulden design, too – applied in the same manner on both sides and at the top but omitted at the bottom.



Fig. 156. The Ehrbar Relief

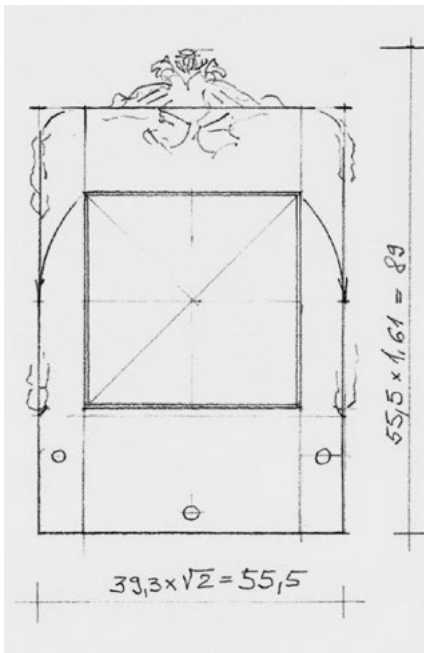
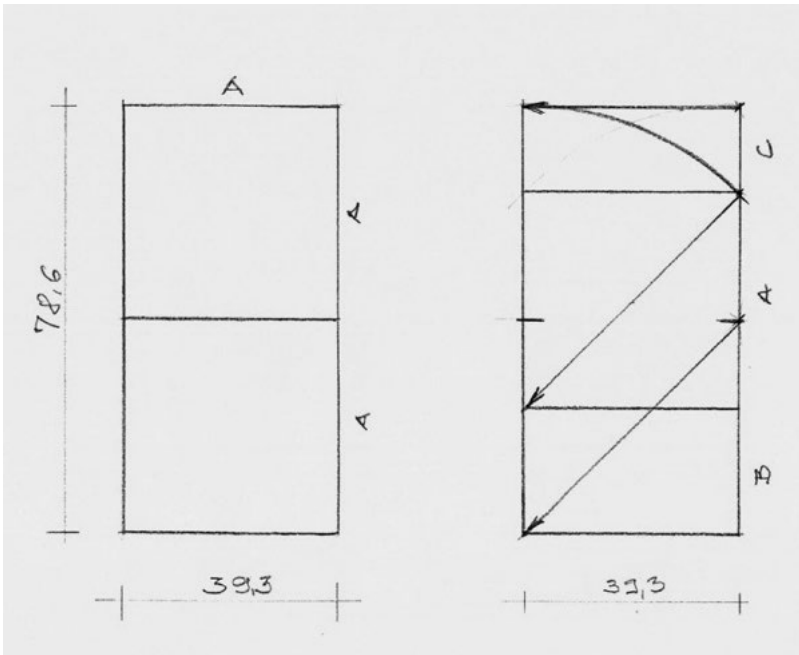


Fig. 157. The Relief was also constructed using two squares

The similarity between the structure of the two compositions is obvious at first sight. A careful analysis reveals details of this similarity, a method of construction based on two squares one on top of each the other, found with several other Klimt works.



Fig. 158. Klimt: *Erste Kunstausstellung*

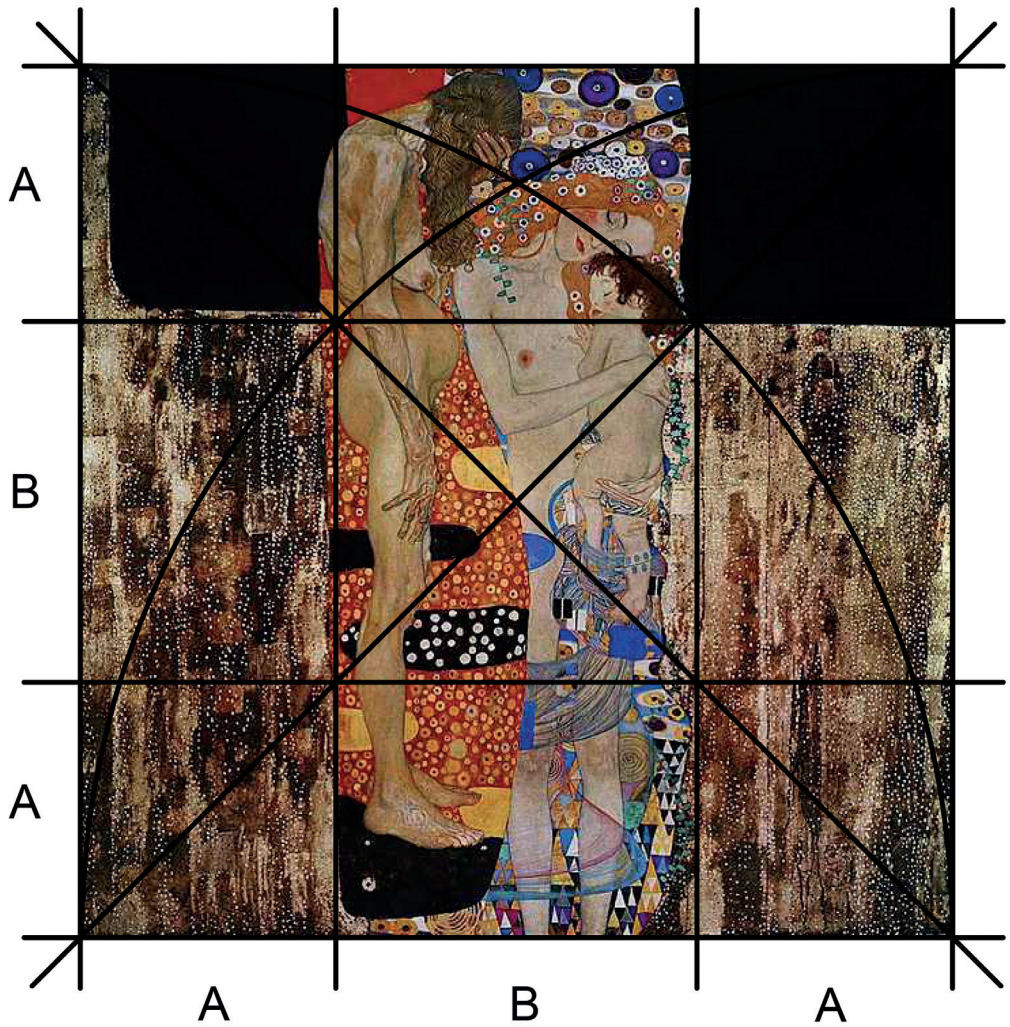


Fig. 159. Internal structure – *The Three Ages*, 1905.

The viewer has the feeling as if the large arc from the left upwards determined the posture and position of the figures.

$$A \times \sqrt{2} = B$$

$$(A + B) \times \sqrt{2} = B + 2A$$

$$\frac{A+B}{B} = \frac{B}{A} = 1.41$$

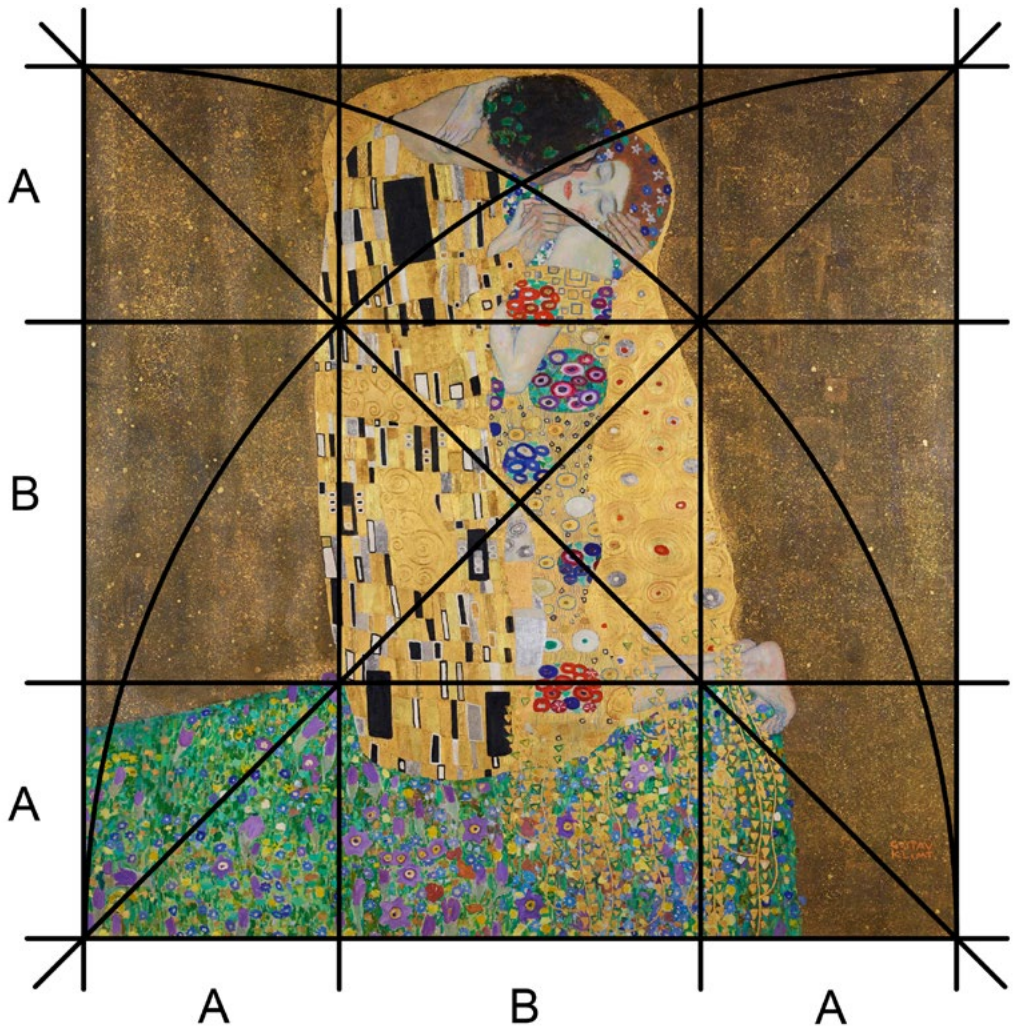


Fig. 160. *The Kiss*, 1907–8.

The traces of silver section are clear, even if not as accurate as with Klimt's geometric compositions.

The arch used in the composition divides the faces in both this picture and the Relief. The structure of massive components in the composition follow silver section rules.



Fig. 161–162. Formal consequences of the construction lines

Let us look at a detail of one of Klimt's most famous paintings to demonstrate the crucial role of construction lines. The crossing points of silver section arches define the composition in both cases. In one picture they define the position of the heads and shoulders, while in the Relief they set the outline of the wreath and the bottom of the scrolls supporting the two coats of arms. This structure, in both cases, is flanked by empty fields on either side.



Fig. 163. Klimt, *Salome*, 1908.

The composition is bordered by golden strips on both sides (just as in the Relief). The minor of the squares is the width of the strips. The vertical dimension is defined by the three squares and their minors.



**Fig. 164. Klimt, *Josef Lewinsky als Carlos*, 1895.
The fields on the sides relate to the main field in line with silver section rules.**

The width of the side field multiplied by $\sqrt{2}$ equals the width of the centre section, as indicated by the construction lines.

The rays of light from the tripod are arranged in distinct bunches similar to the rays of the sun in the Relief.

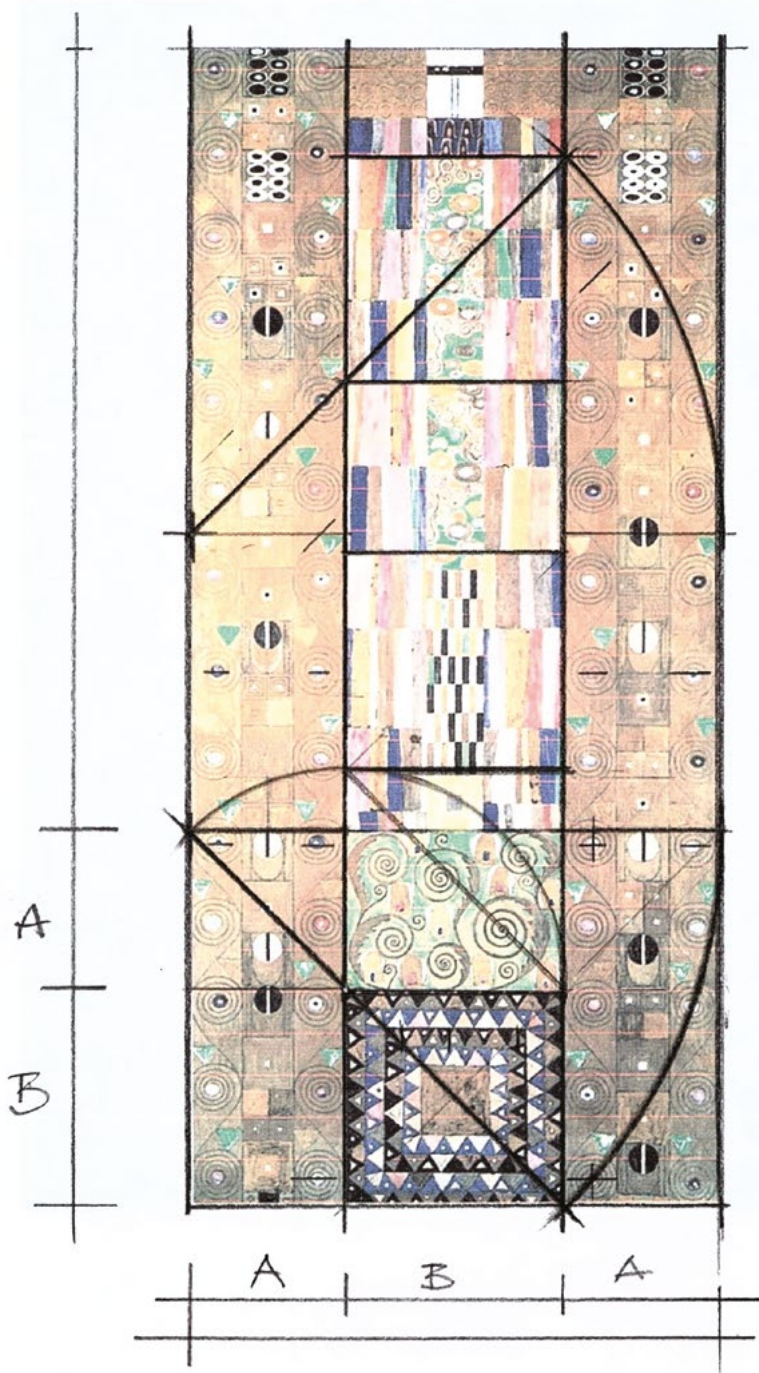


Fig. 165. *Stoclet Friese, Fulfilment, 1908-10.*

The formula demonstrated in the following systematically recurs in Klimt's art:

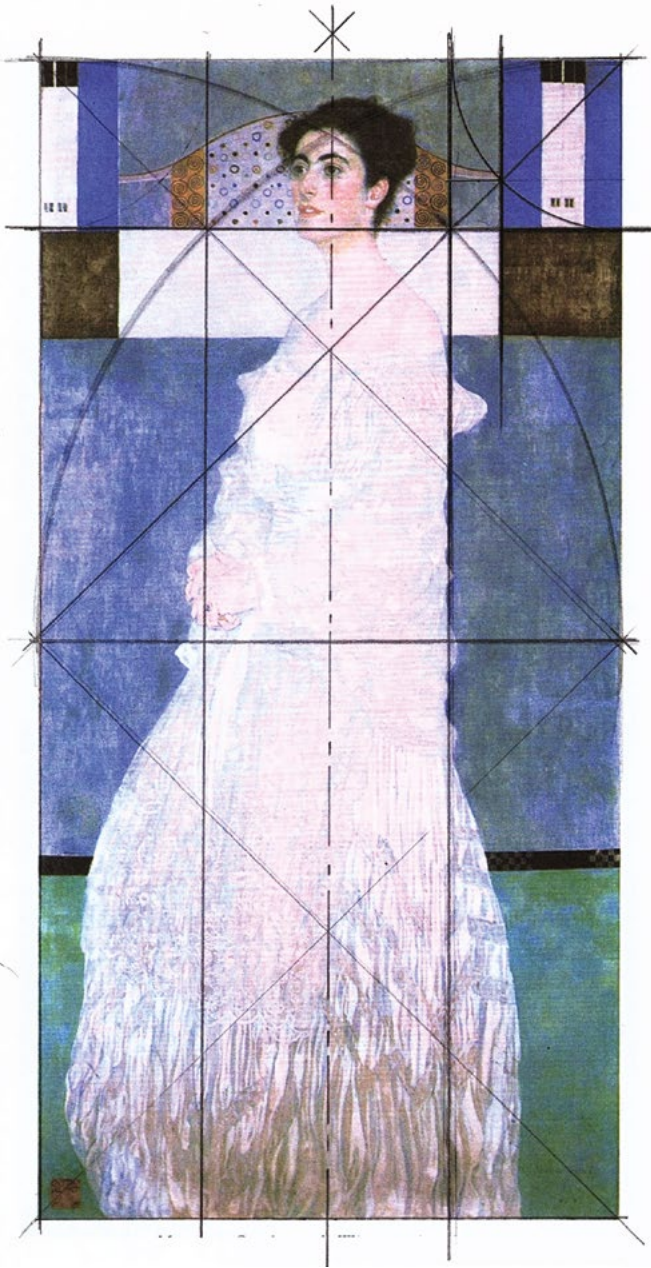


Fig.166. *Portrait of Margaret Stonborough-Wittgenstein*, 1905. (180 × 90,5 cm)

The structure is made up of two squares one on top of the other. In the upper one the components are arranged logically, and in line with silver section.

V.3 A few compositions using golden section

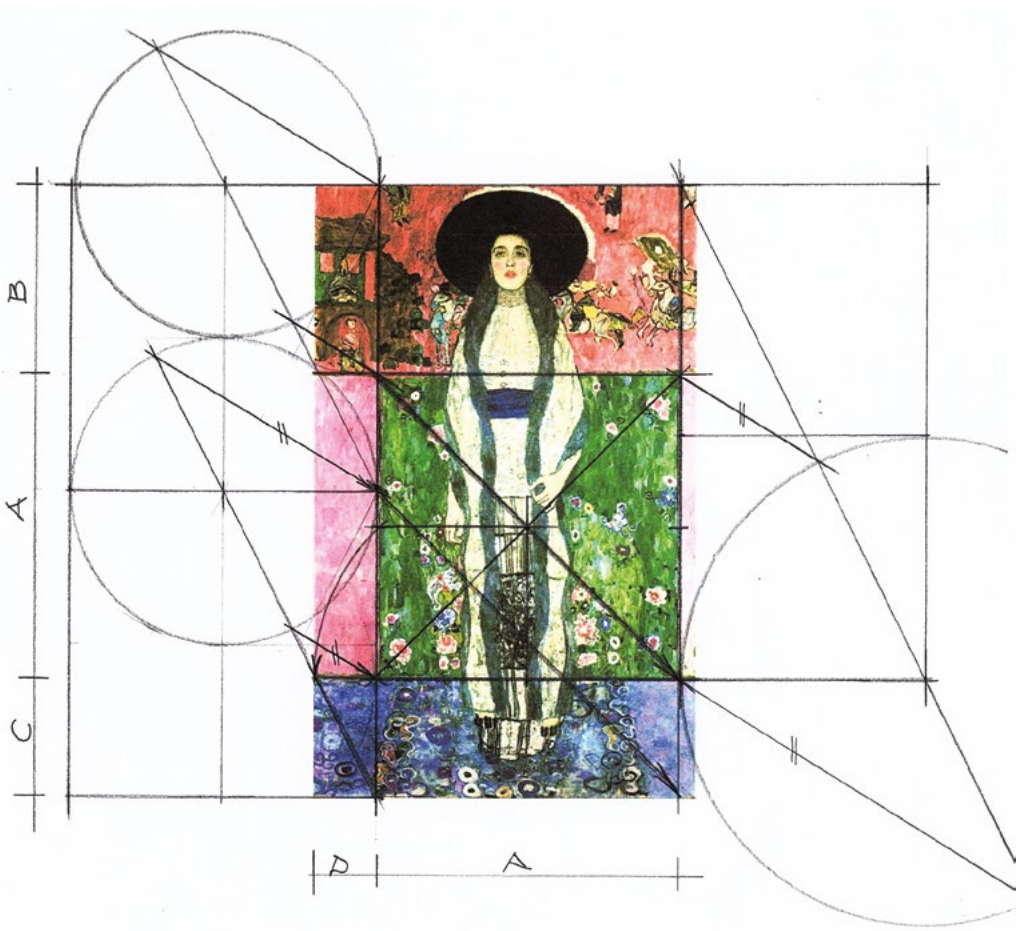


Fig.167. Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer, 1912.

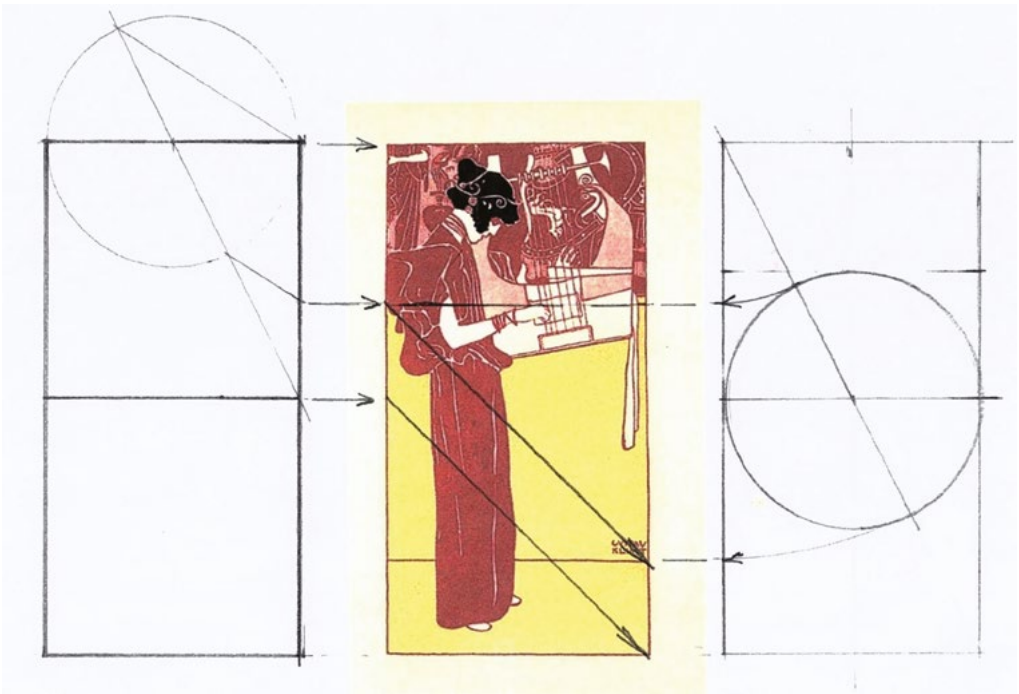


Fig. 168. Gustav Klimt: *Allegory of Music (Apollo) for Ver Sacrum*, 1901

**HOW TO
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CALIPERS**

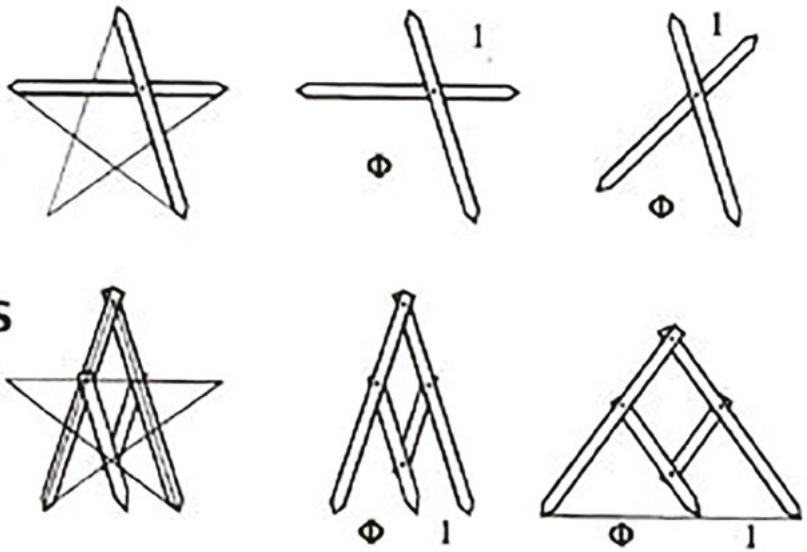


Fig. 169. Pantograph, a tool for golden section compositions

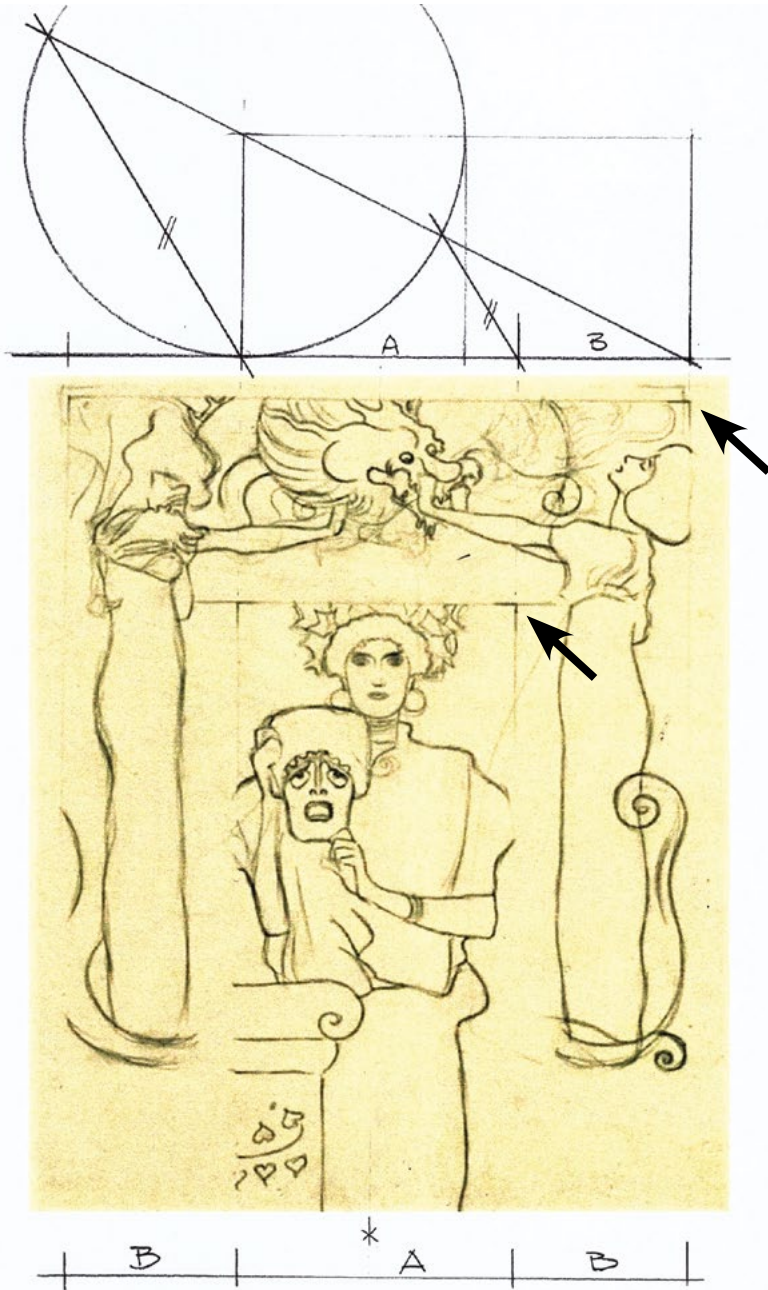


Fig. 170. A shining proof of pre-drawn proportions

Looking at *Tragedie* offers a some lessons. The bottom part of the drawing is obviously unfinished, but the crosses, marking the width of components, are in place. The width of fields A and B were defined by way of golden section. The artist could have used a pantograph created for the purpose. The vertical dimensions follow silver section.



Fig. 171. *Allegory of Tragedy*, 1897.

Klimt used different proportions in his compositions, sometimes even using both silver and golden section at the same time.

I have found three proportions in *Sculptur*, one seemingly constructed from another. The composition also contains a section of the **Fibonacci Spiral**, revealing Klimt's education and the coincidence of science and art.

$$\frac{A+B}{A} = \frac{A}{B} = \frac{B}{C} = 1.618 = \Phi$$

Outside the composition we have a construction by golden section, in which the basic unit is the square with sides A, and with minors B.

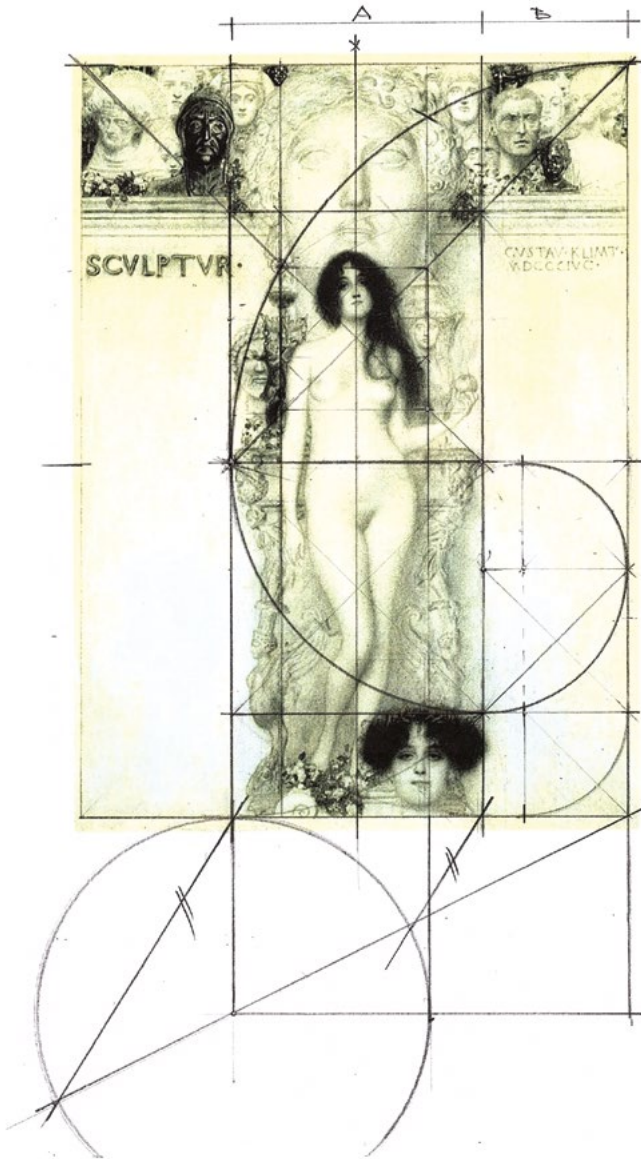


Fig. 172. *Allegory of Sculpture*, 1896.

The Fibonacci Spiral must have been the result of deliberate construction.

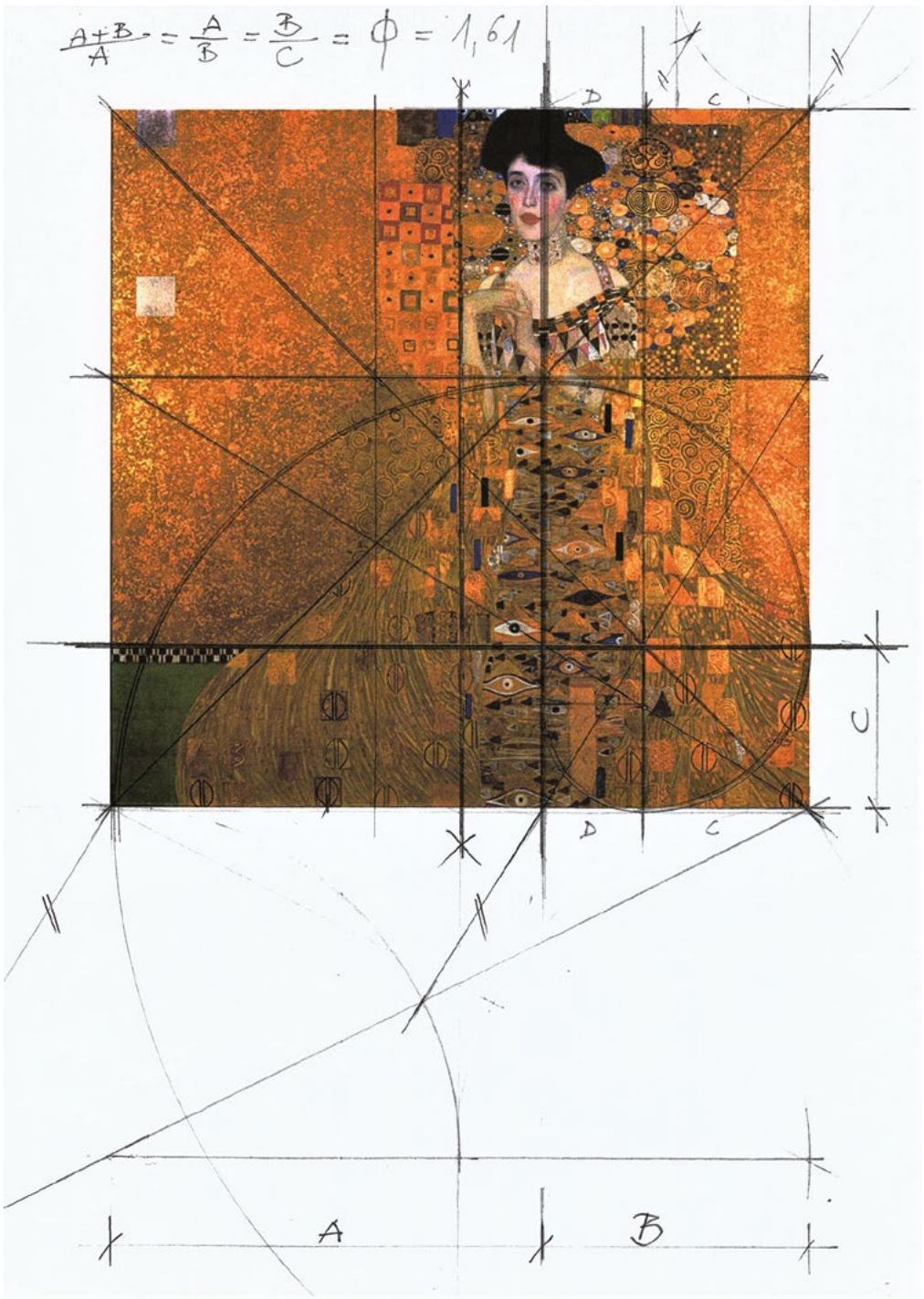


Fig. 173. A portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer

The sections A, B, C, D show golden section construction.

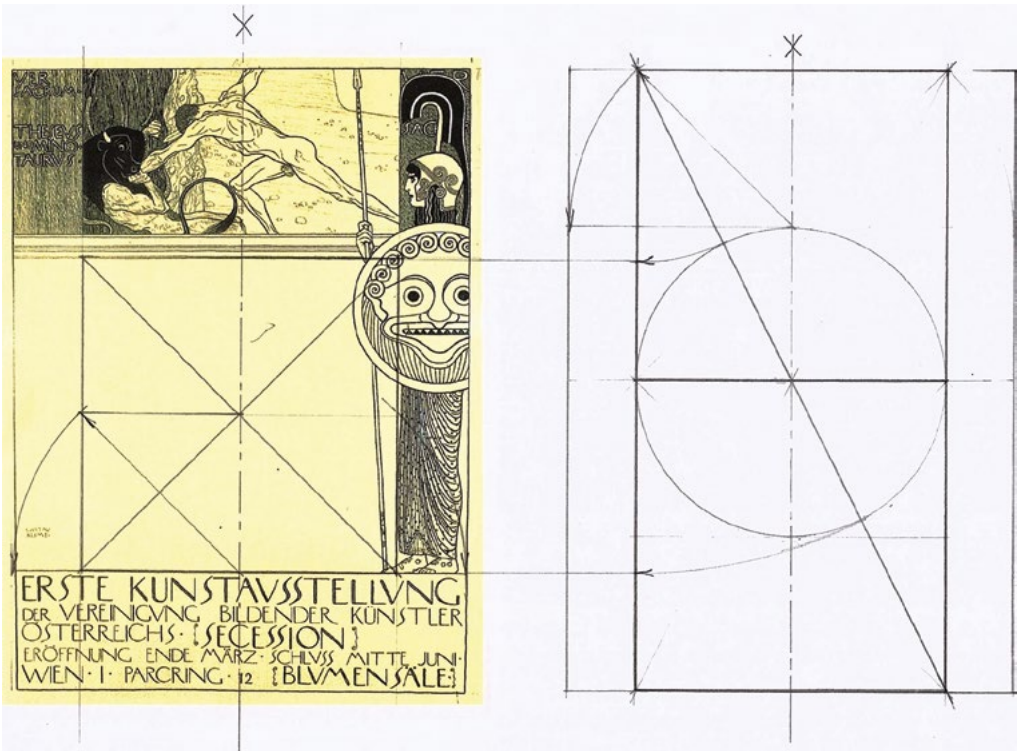


Fig. 174. Poster for the 1 st Secession Exhibition, 1898
Vertical dimensions are defined by golden section on the right, while silver section is applied for the horizontal dimensions on the left.

The two squares, as the basis for the composition, yield a complete series. One square is in a central position, while the other is cut in two parts by golden section. In this case the larger part, the major, is on top, while the smaller part, the minor, is at the bottom, for the text. The horizontal extension is constructed by silver section.

The construction of the two fields on either side is analogous with those in the Relief, using both golden and silver sections within the same composition.

VI. Nuda Veritas, Klimt's Vitruvian Man or Woman



Klimt used a square grid for many of his larger sketches. The grid is usually numbered from left to right and from bottom to top, 0, 1, 2, 3...



Fig. 175–176. The grid is used to calibrate the body only, rather than the whole composition.

The sketch for Nuda Veritas, however, shows a different, slightly different scale: the edge of the drawing, surprisingly, is an unmarked -0.5, then we have 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4, which marks a vertical axis. Then the numbering goes on until 8, and closes with an extra 0.5, to give a total nine units. The vertical scaling is even less visible: while Vitruvius divided his man into 30 units, Klimt used 28 for his female figure.

It appears as if Klimt had reconsidered Vitruvius' and da Vinci's studies. He places the squares on top of each other rather than forcing the spread-out composition into one. Similarly to both Vitruvius and da Vinci, the upper and lower fields contain text – probably a surprising gesture in his own age. The composition is aimed at demonstrating female beauty and the natural symmetries of the human body through a way of scientific simplification.

The composition, based on a vertical axis, is arranged in 8x28 units in rigorous order.

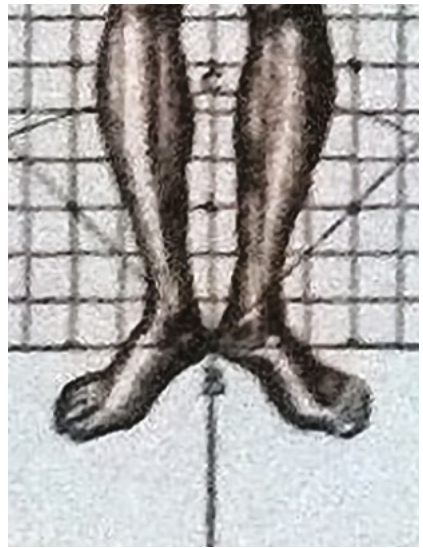


Fig. 177–178. The square grid for human proportions is there in both compositions.

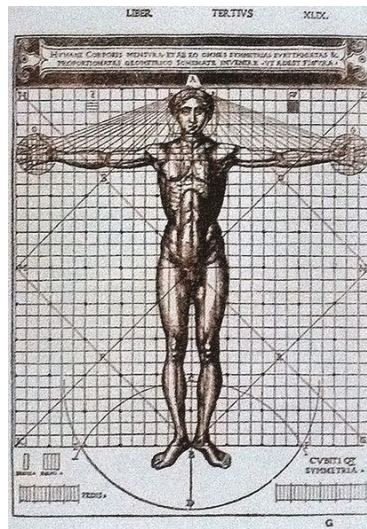
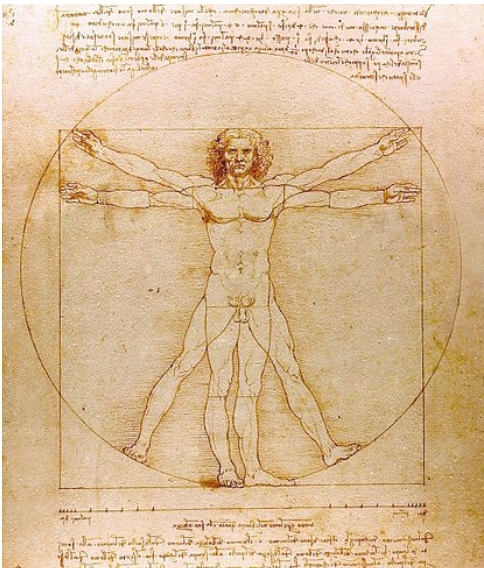


Fig. 179–181. *Vitruvian man*, Leonardo da Vinci, (c. 1485-1490), *Vitruvian man*, is based on the concepts of proportion developed by Vitruvius.²¹

²¹ https://www.wikiwand.com/en/De_architectura

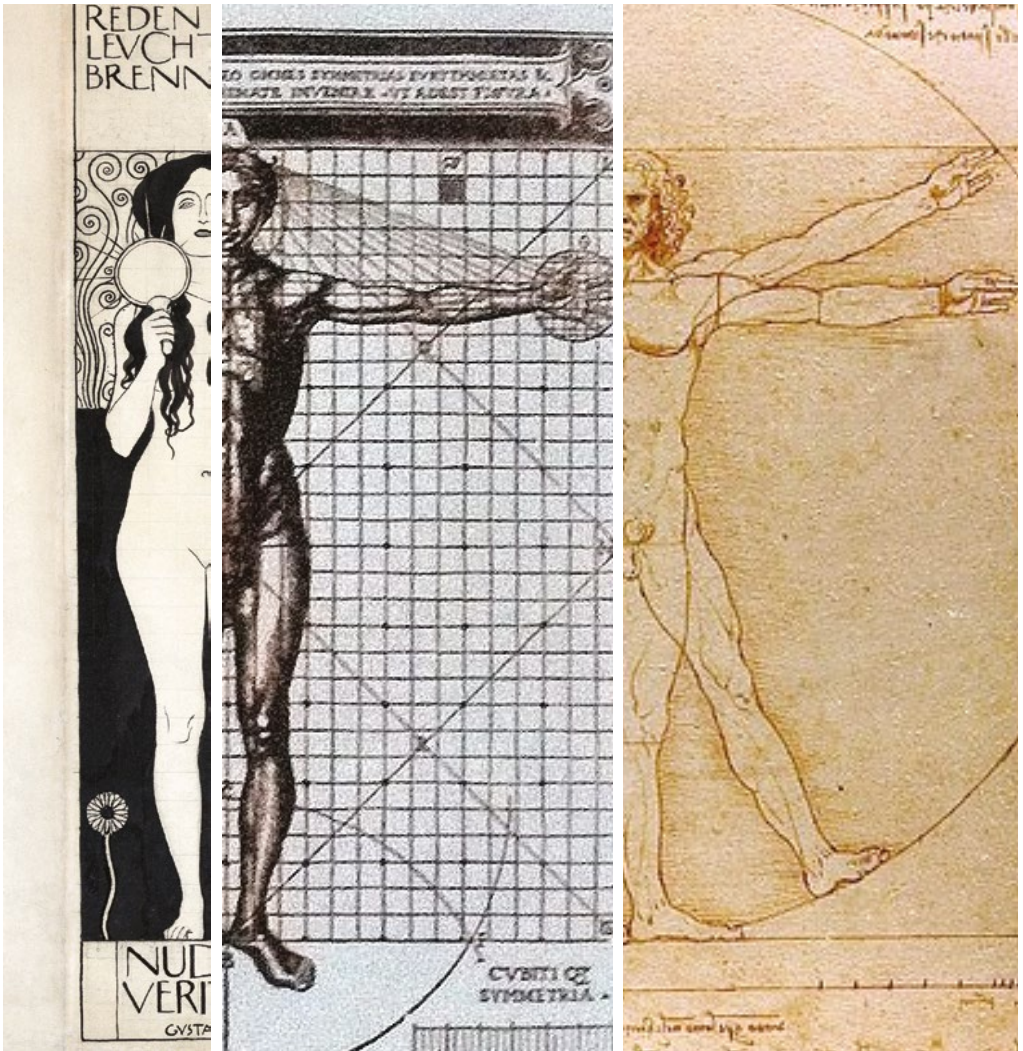


Fig. 182–184. Klimt focuses on female beauty and proportions, carrying forward and complementing the ideals of his predecessors.

Vitruvian Man, illustration in the edition of *De architectura* by Vitruvius; illustrated edition by Cesare Cesariano (1521). When Klimt made a study tour in Italy in 1888-89, he could have come across the Vitruvian studies.²²

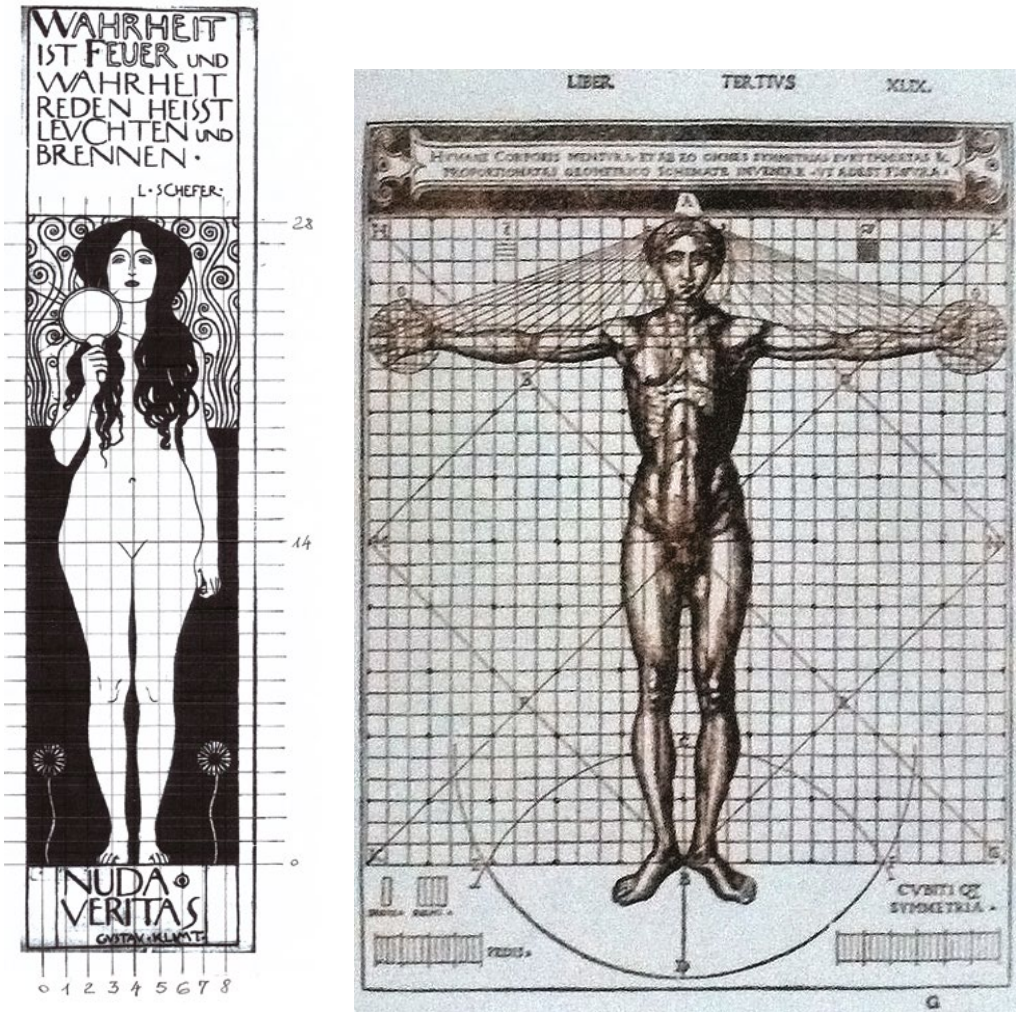


Fig. 185–186. A similar structure if we restore the erased grid.

²² Roman engineer and author Vitruvius (80-70BC – after 15AD) applied his conclusions concerning proportions to the human body, serving as a basis for Lenoardo’s Vitruvian study, with the famous drawing of a body included in quadrangles and circles. It consists basically in a geometric, rather than arithmetic, method to double a square, in which the diagonal of the original square is equal to the side of the resulting square. Vitruvius attributes the idea to Plato. A rectangle whose aspect ratio is the silver ratio ($1:\sqrt{2}$, approximately 1:1.4142135 decimal) is sometimes called a **silver rectangle** by analogy with golden rectangles.

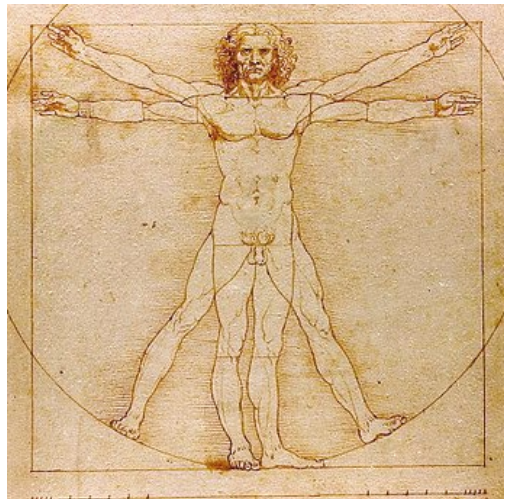
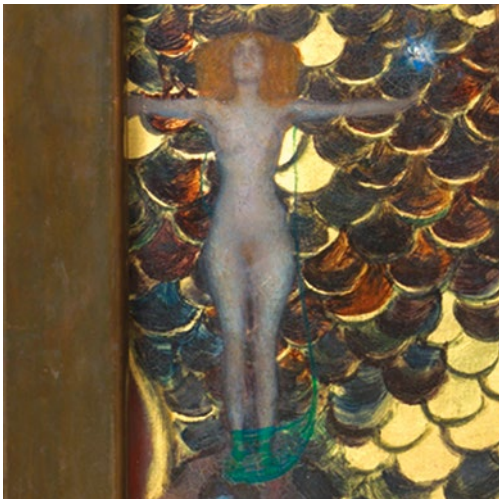


Fig. 187. Klimt, *Pallas Athene*, (1898) Wien Museum. *Vitruvian man*, Leonardo da Vinci, (c. 1485–1490)

The link between *Nuda Veritas* (1898) and compositions by Vitruvius and da Vinci is obvious: *Pallas Athene's* rigid figure and arms stretched apart, is the same as the *Vitruvian man* or woman without the grid and circles. This is one more idea to add to *Nuda Veritas*.

VII.1 The place of the Relief among Klimt's male figures

Trying to find antecedents of the Relief in Klimt's earlier works, I arranged his males in chronological order and came to the conclusion that the Relief's Apollo is both the end of an epoch and the beginning of the next one. While we found that the handling of space is different in the Relief from earlier compositions (such as *Fable*), the same shift or change appears in the depiction of his figures.

The Relief's Apollo appears to be the last one in a series of relaxed, happily radiant males, which already shows signs of the androgyneous character of later figures.

The Relief appears to be followed by some trauma, a period in which Klimt would present males turning away from the viewer, sometimes dead or obscured. The trend may have been inspired by Ernst's death or some sharp criticism the artist received at the time, but that subject is outside the scope of this study.

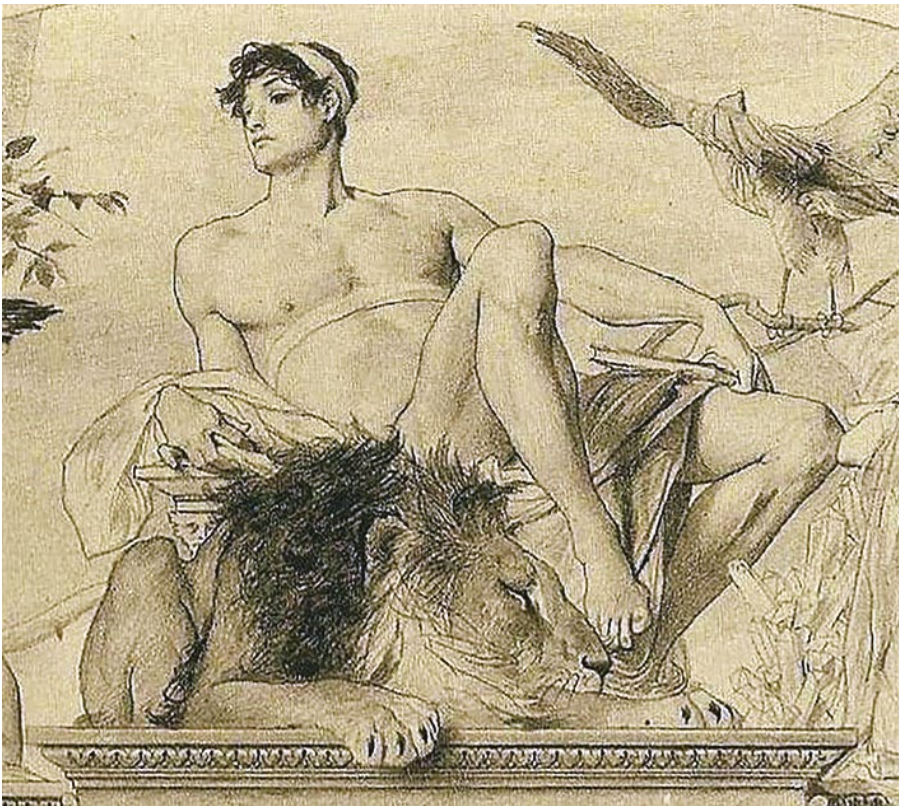


Fig. 188. Klimt: *Die reiche der Natur*, 1882.

A similar subject Klimt elaborated at age 20: a veiled male enjoying life, with a lion, surrounded by nature.

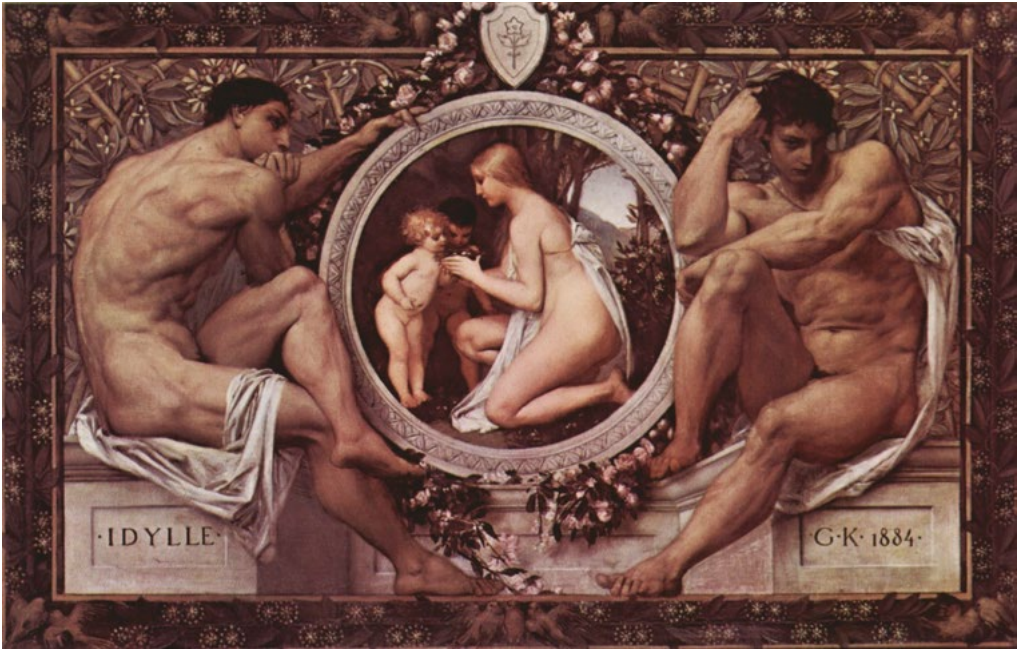


Fig. 189. Gustav Klimt, *Idylle*, 1884.



Fig. 190. *Taormina, Burgtheater*, 1886-88?



Fig. 191. Taormina, detail

Taormina, a ceiling fresco for the Burgtheater, made a few years after *Idylle*, depicts two males in an antique entertainment scene watching a dancer from their bed. A rich but resigned older man turns away from his young lover. A Dionysian figure in the background is holding up a goblet. Despite its inner tension, the scene is still a declaration of a joy of life. Young Klimt was sharply criticised for this composition.

VII.2 *Sappho*, 1890

The composition at this time is still three-dimensional.

Following this painting the *Relief* could be the first work in which the figures are placed on the bottom line, in a two-dimensional way.

The right heels of the figures are raised, the angle at which the viewer sees the child is similar, and both figures look out of the composition, to the left.

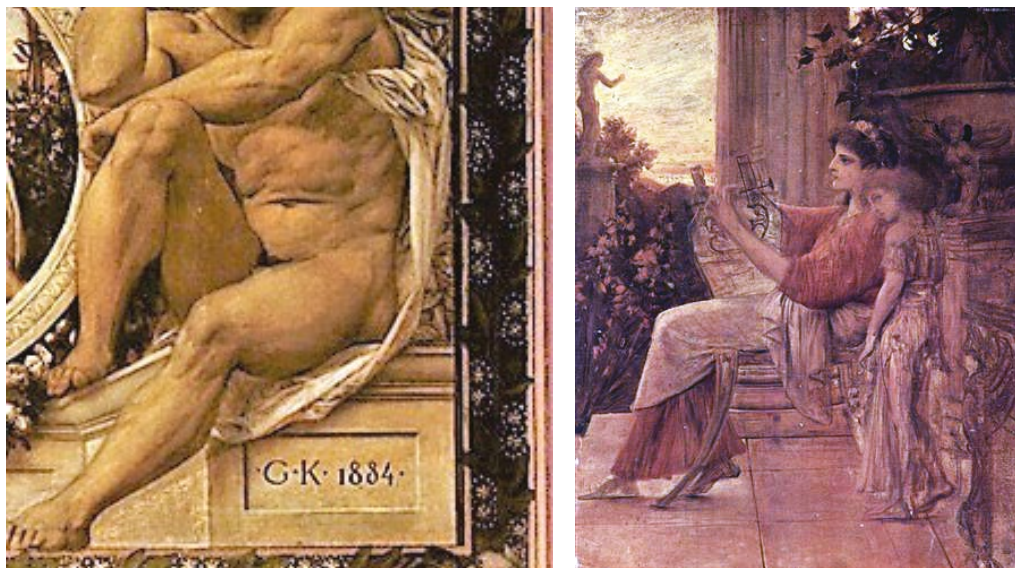


Fig. 192–193. *Idylle*, 1884 – *Sappho*, 1890

A comparison of the two pictures suggests a tension which could motivate the shift in Klimt's art.

Sappho, despite the weight and meaning of its theme, is a bit syrupy and could have been motivated by a desire to meet requirements of the time. The young artist may have been cowed by the criticism he suffered and tried to change directions.

In cooperation with his brothers the painter could have started experimenting with a new medium – all incentives are in place to set up a new venture: Atelier Künstlerbund. Ernst's premature death, however, could mean the end to the short-lived undertaking.

Gottfried Fliedl quoted Hans Tietze, who wrote in 1919: "Klimt's strength, it seems, was broken by conflicts. He, who had a fundamentally good character, was forced to live in solitude, face indifference and animosity, while it was love he needed more than anything. We are trying to understand those contradictions to get closer to

the core of his mysterious art; with a soft finger, we must even touch the deep secrets of a great artist whose works dedicate such a prominent place to the praise of the magic exerted by the female body. Klimt's robust figure had a huge impact on people, especially on women; (...)"²³

In the same study Fliedly adds "Tietze's somewhat tactfully covered hints hide more than what they say, but suggest that Klimt's personality could not have been so uni-dimensional as many would like to see him today, and it cannot be entirely matched with his work."²⁴



Fig. 194. Egon Schiele, *The Hermits* (Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt), 1912.

Young and unbridled Egon Schiele portrayed his friendship with his master, Gustav Klimt. All this is important to understand who the early and strong criticism impacted Klimt's portrayal of men. If we need to find the point after which he drops his interest in portraying men, Ernst's death is the most likely date.

²³ Hans Tietze: *Gustav Klimts Persönlichkeit*. p. 10. Kunstchronik, 1917-18. In. Fliedl, Gottfrid: *Gustav Klimt*, Köln, 2000. / 1989. p. 206.

²⁴ Fliedl, Gottfrid: *Gustav Klimt*, Köln, 2000. / 1989. p.206.

VIII. The Relief's later history

For the past century, the Relief has adorned the walls of the same building in Budapest. The premises housed the piano salon of “Balazs Hevesi’s successor”, an official supplier to public schools and winner of a gold medal at the Millennial Exhibition of 1896. The 8 rooms of the salon were divided into apartments in the housing shortage of the 1950s, one of them luckily preserving the Relief in its original place.

Chronological table of events

Ehrbar Relief	Gustav Klimt
	<p>1862 Born on 14 July 1862</p>
<p>1876 Friedrich Ehrbar (1827–1905), piano manufacturer and supplier to the emperor, has a concert hall of his own built.</p>	<p>1876–1878 Studies at the School of Applied Arts of the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (present-day University of Applied Arts Vienna) until 1883. Klimt’s brothers Ernst (1864–1892) and Georg (1867–1931) also study there shortly afterwards. Meets Franz Matsch (1861–1942).</p>
	<p>1883 before Klimt keeps a studio at the School of Applied Arts in Vienna’s 1st district, Stubenring 3.</p> <p>1883 Klimt brothers establish “Künstler-Compagnie” with Franz Matsch and work until 1892. The company then moves into a studio in Vienna’s 6th district, Sandwirthgasse 8.</p>
<p>1883–1886</p>	<p>1883–1886 Stubenring 3. MAK, where Georg Klimt graduates in 1887. He is ready to join his brothers’ firm. Many of their products are still known.</p>
<p>1888/1889</p>	<p>1888/1889 Lehmann: <i>Gebrüder Klimt,</i> 1888–1890. (III.4.) Klimt’s visit to Munich, where he may have met Franz von Stuck for the first time, as well as the ideals of the planned Münchner Sezession (1892) and the „Künstlerbund”. This may have led to the name Atelier Künstlerbund Wien – around 1890/92.</p>

<p>1890</p> <p>Ehrbar may place an order for an advertisement for his pianos and concert hall at this time.</p>	<p>1890</p> <p>Receives the Emperor's Prize for his work <i>Auditorium of the Old Burgtheater</i>. The Künstler-Compagnie moves into a studio in Vienna's 8th district, Josefstädter Straße 21.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Sappho</i> – the composition is still three-dimensional.</p>
<p>1891</p> <p>Though the <i>Ehrbar Saal's</i> address was <i>Mühlgasse 6</i>, they could have used <i>Mühlgasse 18</i>, in anticipation of the new address with a view to the streets' planned extension.</p> <hr/> <p>Stuck's <i>Pan</i> is composed of three parts, similarly to the Relief.</p>	<p>1891</p> <hr/> <p>„Münchner Sezession“:</p> <p>Franz von Stuck's first square composition (<i>Pan</i>), which Klimt could see during his Munich trip.</p>
<p>1892</p> <p>This year could be the last for the Ehrbar Saal to be found at the address Mühlgasse 18.</p> <hr/> <p>Franz von Stuck co-founds the <u>Munich Secession</u>,</p> <hr/> <p>Ernst Klimt dies and the „Atelier Künstlerbund at Wien I., Stubenring 18“ is probably disbanded.</p>	<p>1892</p> <p>The Künstlercompagnie is disbanded but Klimt keeps the studio at Josefstädter Straße 21.</p> <p>Klimt's „emasculated“ Apollo. <i>Kopf des Apollo</i> 1892.</p> <p>Gustav Klimt: detail of the <i>Gulden</i> design, 1892, with the crossing, wavy lines used as a frame.</p> <p>Klimt's father dies in July and his brother Ernst in December.</p>
<p>1893</p> <p>Ehrbar Saal: At this time it must have been obvious that, under the new plans, the address indicated on the Relief would be wrong, the new address to be Mühlgasse 28.</p> <p><u>The Relief, therefore, had been made earlier!</u></p>	<p>1893</p> <p>Silver medal at the exhibition of the Künstlerhaus for the painting <i>Auditorium</i> of the Theater of Esterházy Palace in Totis (Hungary).</p>

<p>1894 By this year Mühlgasse was integrated with Mühlbachgasse. The new address is Ehrbar Saal, Mühlgasse 28.</p>	<p>1894 Commission for the <i>Faculty Paintings</i> for the assembly hall of the University of Vienna. Klimt will only complete the paintings in 1907.</p>
<p>1898 Friedrich Ehrbar places advertisements in the Ver Sacrum, however, it is a new image probably better for marketing purposes. The new address of the Saal is Mühlgasse 28 – to stay until today.</p>	<p>1898 First exhibition at the (26th March to 15th June). First publication of the magazine Ver Sacrum. Klimt joins the Munich Secession as a member.</p>
<p>1899/1900 The Franz Joseph barracks are demolished at Wien I. Stubenring 2/16, 18, which could have housed (Klimt's) atelier. Künstlerbund Atelier</p>	
<p>1906 Arguably, the Künstlerbund idea must have been born much before 1906.</p>	<p>1906 Klimt is made president of the newly founded Association of Austrian Artists (Künstlerbund). Travels to Brussels, London, Germany and Italy.</p>
<p>1911 The <i>Prayner Konservatorium</i> takes over the Ehrbar Saal and buildings of the piano factory. The complex's address has been unchanged - Wien IV. Mühlgasse 28–30 – since 1894.</p>	<p>1911 Klimt completes the <i>mosaic frieze</i> for the Palais <i>Stoclet</i> in Brussels.</p>
<p>1912 The Relief is in Budapest, to stay in the same apartment for over another century.</p>	<p>1913 Klimt participates in exhibitions in Budapest, Munich and Mannheim.</p>
	<p>1918 Klimt dies on 6 February 1918, following a stroke.</p>

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Table of contents

Thesis I

The Ehrbar Relief: A work attributable to Klimt

I.1	Introduction.....	7
	Introduction. A comparative summary of facts and aspects.....	9
	Decorative Plaque for Ehrbar's representative shops	23
I.2	About the makers and dating the Ehrbar Relief.....	24
I.3	Dating the Ehrbar Relief.....	26
II.1	Description of the Ehrbar Relief, analogies.....	34
II.2	Analogies and comparison with other Klimt pieces.....	38
II.2.1	The Apollo theme is recurrent in Klimt's art, appearing in several of his works.....	39
II.3	The Relief could have been a forerunner to the <i>Junius</i> design	43
II.4	Whether pianists or pianos, Klimt will invariably paint Apollo with his lyre	46
II.5	Two Klimt drawings, with subjects similar in structure	48
II.6	Comparison of motives in the Ehrbar Relief with other Klimt works.....	49
	Special framework not found anywhere else but in Klimt's Gulden design.....	49
II.7.1	Why did Klimt use an earlier composition for the Relief and make the latter a precise mirror image?.....	54
II.7.2	Technology and execution, painting of surfaces	56
II.7.3	Possible studies for the Ehrbar Relief.....	57
II.7.4	Identical positive and negative forms	58
II.7.5	The figure seems to be hovering above ground.	59
II.7.6	Bay leaf head band and similar profiles in later works	60
II.8.1	Traces of Georg Klimt's hand on the Relief	62
II.9.1	Detail of drapery is similar to the Relief in an early work	64
II.9.2	Branch of a tree hanging into the composition	67
II.9.3	Rays of the Sun in the Relief and in other Klimt works	69
II.9.4	Unique presentation of birds' feet both in the Relief and Klimt compositions.....	70
II.9.5	Klimt's depiction of lyres.....	72
II.9.6	The oldest form of lyre, made of horns.....	73
II.9.7	Simplified lyres in a Klimt design and in the Relief	75
III.1–3	Comparison between the addresses in the Relief with other references.....	76
III.4	Does the makers' mark on the Relief refer to Gebruder Klimt?	79
IV.1	The Relief could have been the first big typographic challenge in Klimt's career, which could account for a number of novel solutions.....	80

IV.1.2	Analysis of the Relief's typography has yielded surprising results	80
IV.5	The Relief's makers were required to display a surprisingly long text.....	84
IV.6	Unique form of the letter G.....	84
IV.7	The Relief is Klimt's first quadrangular Art Nouveau composition.....	86

Thesis II

V.	Hidden structures in Klimt's pictures	89
	The Relief as a predecessor to the <i>Junius</i> design.....	89
V.1	The Junius design was composed by way of silver section, just like the Relief	90
V.2	The structure of some of Klimt's works.....	93
V.3	A few compositions using golden section	109
VI.	Nuda Veritas, Klimt's Vitruvian Man or Woman.....	116
VII.1	The place of the Relief among Klimt's male figures.....	121
VII.2	<i>Sappho</i> , 1890	124
VIII.	The Relief's later history	126
	Chronological table of events.....	127
	Bibliography	130
	Links.....	131
	Table of contents	132

PUBLISHED BY
ARTES KFT.
info@artes.hu

EDITOR
László RUSVAI

TRANSLATION
László RUSVAI

BOOK DESIGN
Gergely PATTANTYUS

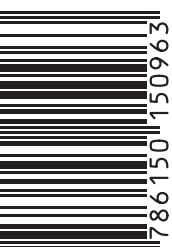
COVER DESIGN
Győző HERÉDI

PHOTOGRAPHY
Győző HERÉDI

PUBLISHER RESPONSIBLE
György SELMECZI
© Selmeczi 2018.

ISBN 978-615-01-5096-3

•• HIDDEN STRUCTURES IN KLIMT'S PICTURES ••



9 7861501150963

