

# Károly Kós in Istanbul

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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### ABSTRACT

Károly Kós, a pioneering master of 20th century Hungarian architecture, spent two years in Istanbul as a fellow of the newly established Hungarian Institute for Science in Constantinople between 1916 and 1917 to pursue research on the architecture of the Ottoman Empire. During this period, he created a whole series of drawings of numerous Byzantine and Ottoman historical buildings and street sections. A volume entitled *Istanbul - Urban History and Architecture* was published as a summary of his research. However, this historical event and the resulting publication have a far-reaching significance beyond themselves in many ways. Firstly, the aforementioned period was a significant turning point in Ottoman-Turkish architectural history. On the other hand, Kós's work is more than just an analysis of architectural and urban history.

This paper aims to provide an insight into the period and the turning point between the late Ottoman and the early Republican era of Turkey's history; the local context of Kós's activities in Istanbul and, at also to analyse the architectural-historical achievements of the Hungarian master's work in the location which he himself described as "The City".

### KEYWORDS

Károly Kós, Istanbul, urban history, architecture, Late Ottoman architecture

## INTRODUCTION – THE FRAMEWORK FOR HUNGARIAN-TURKISH ARCHITECTURAL RELATIONS IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

During the period preceding the arrival of Károly Kós in Istanbul (Gall, 2019; Pintér, 1994; Fodor et al., 2020), around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and in the first half of the

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20th century the people living in the Carpathian Basin, the inhabitants of the Balkan and Anatolian peninsulas likewise witnessed an enormous transformation in their lives and their living environment. The industrial revolution of the 18th century, technological progress, social modernisation, the explosion in human population and the intellectual drive of the search for renewal, the quest for the new, had led to a massive transformation in all aspects of life, affecting the composition of society, all segments of culture and the previously embedded socio-economical frames (Vámosy, 2002. 13–16).

The 19th century saw major infrastructural development across the vast territory of the Ottoman Empire - characterised by historicist architectural features and the emergence of Art Nouveau, which was practised throughout Europe. Although WWI had led to the disintegration of the empire, to economic hardship and a long war of reconquest, the period that followed the 1920s brought on a profoundly new and progressive trend in architectural style.

The main ambition of the Republic of Turkey, proclaimed in 1923, was to build a new country, not only in its constitution and ideology, but also in its physical structure – its infrastructure, urban development and buildings (Bozdoğan, 2002). The era is periodised by Turkish architectural historians in various ways, but is generally divided up according to the two major national architectural movements, reckoning, of course, with an inseparable continuity with the late Ottoman architecture that preceded it.

In addition to Turkish architects, many foreign masters were also involved in the process (Hasol, 2017; Aslanoglu, 2010; Holod et al., 2007). The antecedents of the First National Architectural Movement date back to the turn of the century, to late Ottoman times. Its greatest masters, such as Kemalettin and Vedat Tek, were active in the period before the proclamation of the Republic, but it did not emerge as a programmatic architectural principle until the Atatürk era, when it became a leading feature of the 1920s and 30s. Buildings of this era were characterised by a desire to articulate ‘Turkish’ architecture and the use of pre-Ottoman stylistic features. Subsequently, in the period immediately preceding WWII, an increasing number of engineers representing European modernist architecture and the Bauhaus school taught and worked in Turkey: the names of Bruno Taut, Ernst Egli, Hermann Jansen and Clemens Holzmeister deserve to be mentioned, who, while creating a series of iconic buildings, were also involved in the education of a new generation of architects (Demir, 2008. 292–292). These young engineers were the representatives – from the 1930s to the 1950s – of the Second National Architecture Movement. In the buildings designed by Seyfi Arkan or Sedat Hakkı Eldem, traditional Anatolian vernacular architectural features were combined with contemporary technologies and with reinforced concrete as a material; resulting in clear spatial structures and economical construction methods becoming elements of a rational architectural culture which remained faithful to Anatolian traditions.

In the Carpathian Basin, following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, dynamic economic development and socio-political changes led to a degree of infrastructural and urban development that still characterises the main cities today (Lovra, 2019). Within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the newly unified Budapest was one of the major centres of development: by the turn of the century, its urbanisation had reached Western European levels (Gerle, 1998. 249). The expansion of the social life of the urban bourgeoisie and the spread of modern amenities gave rise to many new functions; technological progress translated all of this into an increasingly free architectural form. The growth of civic consciousness was accompanied by an increasingly historicist view of architectural forms and the use of historic styles. Infrastructure development



gave way to an ever faster flow of information and knowledge transfer (Kalmár, 2001. 15). Thus, from the late 19th century onwards, architects in Hungary were mainly educated in German-speaking countries. This was the case not only at the end of the 19th century when the Historicist styles were being developed, but also at the turn of the century. Progressive, innovative intentions first appeared on the palette of the representatives of the Art Nouveau who sought a national style within that trend, such as Ödön Lechner and his followers, as well as in the works of the group known as the 'Fiatalok' (Youths) – Károly Kós and his Fellows – who worked in the context of the European Arts & Crafts movements, inspired by Hungarian folk architecture. In the first decades of the new century, Hungarians were also represented in the pioneering institutions of Modernism such as the Bauhaus in Weimar and the CIAM and CIRPAC associations that perpetuated its spirit. Clearly this was a time when Hungary's cities were an integral part of the European hub.

We may observe a number of intersections between these two parallel processes, both in their architectural aspects and in terms of the main actors who shaped the architectural environment of the two territories. The Ottoman Turks and Hungarians entered the first decades of the 20th century with a past of different interactions. The hostile relationship the two countries had in the 16th and 17th centuries was being steadily transformed by world political events into a rapprochement. By the time of WWI and the period that followed, this grew into an alliance of a magnitude that led to various forms of cooperation in many areas within their political and economic life and the field of scholarship. Architects from Hungary came to Turkey at all stages of the various architectural periods, and in parallel, several Turkish architects went and pursued their activities in Hungary. During the 19th century, Hungarian architects typically studied in Vienna, Berlin and Munich after completing their education at the Royal Joseph Polytechnicum, present-day Budapest University of Technology and Economics (Sisa, 1998). Thus, a transfer of knowledge between the German and the Hungarian areas may be observed during both the Historicist and the Modernist period. This is also true of republican Turkey, owing to a great many German and Austrian architects who practised, created and taught in the country (Akcan, 2012). It is, therefore, important to examine the subject in the context of the German-Turkish-Hungarian triangle of architectural relations in the era.

The presence, activity and influence of Hungarian architects in the late Ottoman Empire and early Republican Turkey can be traced in several areas, including the design of buildings in Ankara and Istanbul, conceptual proposals for urban architecture, landscape architecture projects, surveys of historic buildings and built heritage conservation projects, participation in international design competitions or on juries such competitions, as well as teaching (Kovács & Sağdıç, 2022). Although many projects planned by the Hungarian architects were never realised, their influence can still be felt in the architecture.

Károly Kós, born in Transylvania, was a graduate of what was then called the Royal Joseph Polytechnicum, together with his friends – young student architects who formed the group called Fiatalok (Youths – the members were: Károly Kós, Dezső Zrumecky, Béla Jánszky, Lajos Kozma, Lajos Tátrai, Dénes Györgyi, Lajos Mende). They were invested in the contemporary architectural style known as 'Arts and Crafts', that had started in Europe in the early years of the 20th century. These movements, originating in England based on the ideology of William Morris and John Ruskin, determined the work of architects such as C. R. Mackintosh or F. L. Wright; but Lindgren, Gesellius, and Saarinen also served as models for building on the traditional Hungarian legacy in developing their architectural science. With these ideas,



*Fiatalok* generated a unique corpus of their own. In parallel with his architectural activities, Kós, who was a researcher, writer, and editor of works primarily representing Transylvanian art, also managed to win a scholarship to Constantinople during WWI. This enabled him to open a window to the Middle East and offer a distinctive view which enriched not only him, but also the Hungary of that period and the following generations. The arrival of Károly Kós in Istanbul between 1916 and 1917 was around the initial phase of the period when the European Arts & Crafts movement influenced his architectural creativity, together with the phenomenon known as Turanism, one of the propulsive forces of intellectual relations between the two countries, which also affected Kós's approach.

## TURANISM AND ARCHITECTURE – IN SEARCH OF A NEW HUNGARIAN STYLE

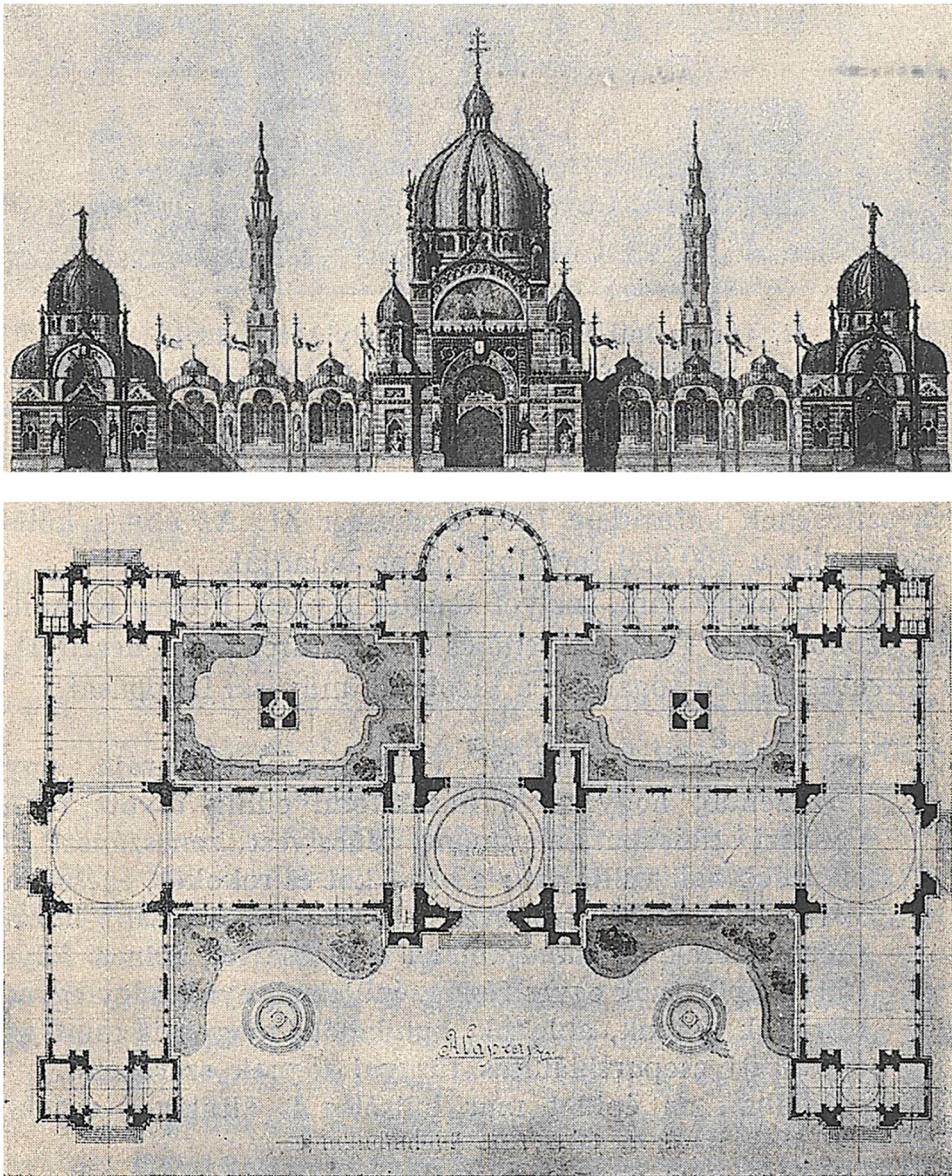
*"[...] We have to force our way forward to the East if we want to create a Hungarian style. I would feel I had fulfilled my duty if I could contribute to these efforts with my modest talent on the occasion of the celebrations."* (Bloch & Fridrich, 1932. 58)

This quotation is from a prominent architect, Ignác Alpár, in relation to his plan submitted in 1893 for a design contest organised for the complex of historical buildings to be designed and built for the Millennial Exhibition of Hungary in 1896, where the expectation was to represent the 'Hungarian character' (Magyar, 1933. 25). The building plan submitted by Alpár is like a Historicist palace in its design, its façade a flourish of oriental forms borrowed from a photograph entitled 'Tombs of the Mamluks in Cairo', where a 15th century Mamluk building, Emir Sawdun's mausoleum, was used in the design of the Historic Hall (Fig. 1). In the event, the jury did not support the plan, due to its extreme Oriental character. However, it is an important piece of evidence of the impact that Hungarian Historicist architecture had in searching for a national style. This, in turn, leads us to the summary of the Turanian idea which played an important role in the ideological background of Hungarian socio-political culture at the turn of the 19th–20th century. This concept affected the thinking of many scholars – and provided a unique Hungarian aspect to the increasing general interest that Europe showed in Oriental art (Kovács et al., 2015).

Interest in the research and use of Oriental architectural features in Hungary at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, during the period of Historicism, can be traced back to two ideas. Firstly, this was a time when Europeans in general were showing a heightened interest in the art forms of regions lying to the East of Europe, such as the Middle East, the Far East and the North African lands, including the Islamic heritage of the Iberian Peninsula. This found embodiment in the Orientalism that appeared in many artistic disciplines. In many cases, this may be paralleled with the use of certain high-quality hand-made and handcrafted artefacts emulating the Far or the Middle East in architecture. On the other hand, we may also note the marked presence in the period of a specifically Hungarian phenomenon, Turanism, which stemmed from a romantic claim to link country's current politics to its ancient origins and which led to the emergence of a movement which had its effect on the arts and architecture.

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, including Hungary, was not spared the overall 'Orientalist' fashion of Europe that emerged based on the art of the remote lands of the vast British





**Fig. 1.** Ignác Alpár: Façade and plan of the Historical Hall, 1893 (Bloch & Fridrich, 1932. 59.)

colonial empire. The increasing influence of the British, French and German military and trade links on the territories of the Ottoman Empire where they enjoyed predominance also led to a massive westward flow of industrial goods and architectural fragments (MacKenzie, 1995),



accompanied by expeditions organised by academic institutions. The increasingly systematic and positivist collection of objects from the East culminated in the creation of temporary world exhibitions with a variety of profiles, as well as in the emergence of private collections and thematic exhibitions in museums or specially designed thematic building complexes and streets (Kovács, 2022; Vernoit, 2000). Since almost all Hungarian architects who worked with Oriental motifs were influenced by their experiences at the world exhibitions, the influence of the styles and the quality of oriental craftsmanship that was promoted by colonisation and which they experienced at the world exhibitions can also be noted in the Hungarian architecture of the turn of the century. Unlike the Western European empires, which had gained influence in the East mainly through colonisation and great power politics, Hungarians used Eastern connections to emphasise their opposition to the Habsburgs. This way, the ideology of the Eastern origins of the Hungarians became part of their nation-building ideology in the second half of the 19th century. The concept of the so-called “cultural nation” saw the nation as a community based on shared ethnic origins and a common language, and was embodied in the intelligentsia’s search for and fascination with the country’s folk culture, including the ancient eastern traits that it displayed. This was accompanied by a growing sense of uniqueness in contrast to the so-called pan-European movements (pan-Germanic, pan-Slavic). Hungarians, in search of their origins, turned to the ‘East’, and this gave rise to the Turanian ideology. Turanian is a term used for the non-Semitic and non-Indo-European peoples of Inner Asia. Although scholars fairly quickly abandoned the term, it has survived as a kind of romantic kinship hypothesis linking the Hungarian nation to other peoples of Asian – mainly Turkish – origin. It was initially invented as an alternative to the concept of Aryanism and included, besides the Hungarians nationalities, the Finns, Estonians, Turks, Tatars and even the Japanese. It was thus a convenient tool for developing a kinship system of Hungarian identity in the face of the growing pan-movements (Oláh, 2012; Ablonczy, 2016). Alongside its academic dimension, including the Turkish-Ugric debate, Turanism was also a definite economic programme within the Hungarian policy of the period, entailing intentions to open up to the Balkans and the East and providing a kind of ideological basis for the establishment of international political and economic relations with the Balkans and Asia. The Hungarian Geographical Society, founded in 1872, sought to encourage the exploration of the farther reaches of Asia, and its founders included such eminent travellers, scientists and pioneers of Oriental studies as Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913) and János Xántus (1825–1894). The society aimed to provide publicity to the reports written by explorers from other nations and publish the accounts of Hungarian explorers such as Lajos Lóczy (1849–1920), Jenő Cholnoky (1870–1950) and Pál Teleki (1879–1941). Particularly significant among the travellers is the name of Aurél Stein whose research concerning the Silk Road is of particular importance. Photographs of Middle Eastern settlements and landscapes may also have been taken during diplomatic or military missions. One of the most outstanding of these photographs, taken in the Ottoman Empire and the Eastern Mediterranean between 1905 and 1906, was captured by Dezső Bozóky (1871–1957), a doctor from Oradea who served as a naval doctor in the Austro-Hungarian navy on the warship Taurus in Constantinople. His priceless photographs provide a unique record of Ottoman daily life before WWI (Fajcsák, 2019). It is important to note that the idea of Turanism was not only characteristic of the Hungarian intelligentsia: in the Ottoman Empire, ideas for possible reforms of the empire often included the strengthening of the ‘Turanian’ relations (Akyürek, 2009).



In 1910, the Hungarian Turanian Society was founded in Hungary. With the support of this Society, several Ottoman students could receive scholarships in Hungarian educational institutions, and a number of scholars were able to pursue their research projects. Semih Rüstem (1898–1946) was a Turkish architect of the Early Republican era who studied architecture at the Technical University of Budapest owing to a scholarship provided by the Turanian Society (Gümüş, 2015, 2022). His relationship with Hungarian Turanism and his architectural education in Hungary make him an exception among Turkish architects. During this period, the first comprehensive collection of Ottoman buildings known to exist in the country was compiled, including with survey drawings. Collecting work for the volume was carried out by Ernő Foerk with the help of students from the Royal Hungarian State School of Architecture in Budapest, and it included an introduction to the architectural history of the period and a typological classification of the buildings. The work also contained Ottoman language inscriptions on tombstones published by the Turkologist-philologist Ignác Kúnos (Foerk, 1918a). In addition to the survey programme, Foerk also took part in several study trips to the Balkans with delegates from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Pál Teleki, vice-president of the Hungarian Turanian Society, was the main organiser of the study trips. Members of the Society's art committee were József Huszka (Huszka, 1996), Róbert Kertész K. (Kertész, 1905, 1906a, 1906b), Ignác Alpár and Károly Kós. One of the trips, which started in September 1917, covered Albania and Serbia, followed by a trip from Belgrade to Uzice in 1918. A printed account of the trip was published under the title "Balkan Letters" (Foerk, 1918b).

In conclusion, Turanism in turn-of-the-century art stems from both a romantic need for a sense of origin and a pragmatic need for improving current political relations (Gerelyes, 2014). Although the ideas at the base of Turanism were highly problematic in their historical accuracy, they led to several useful outcomes in cultural diplomacy. The spread of the idea overlapped with the foundation of the first Hungarian cultural institute abroad, in Constantinople, intended to forge political capital through cultural diplomacy.

## KÓS IN ISTANBUL

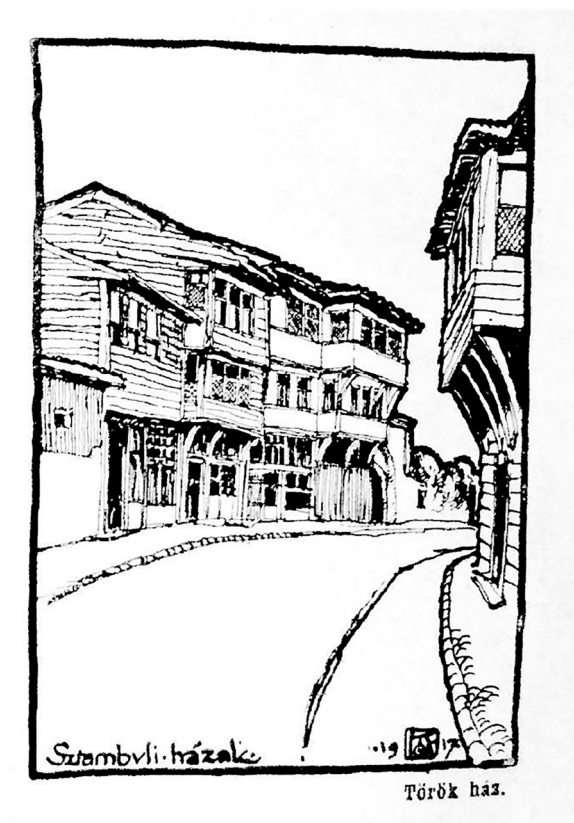
During the fraught era of WWI, one of the most outstanding results of positive cultural diplomacy was the opening of the Hungarian Institute for Scholarship in Constantinople. Therefore, this act can be evaluated in the context of common Hungarian – Ottoman-Turkish history; having been the first independent result of institutionalised Hungarian cultural diplomacy (Fodor, 2021).

The director of the institute was art historian - archaeologist Antal Hekler, and its researchers on scholarship included Byzantinologists Péter Ralbovsky and Géza Fehér, archaeologists Zoltán Oroszlán and Ferenc Luttor and librarian-historian Ferenc Zsinka. The institute, founded in the autumn of 1916, besides its registered purposes, primarily aimed to perform archaeological excavations in the Ottoman Empire (Fodor, 2020). Unfortunately, the original building of the Institute, at 23. Büyük Bayram Street in the Beyoğlu (Pera) district of Istanbul, is no longer accessible, since it closed its doors in 1918. However, after the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 it had its successors: an Institute of Hungarian Studies was opened in Ankara in the 1930s and, more recently, as of 2013, the Hungarian Cultural Center bearing the name of Ferenc Liszt, located in Istanbul, awaits those interested in Hungarian Culture in Turkey.



After the foundation of the Institute, young Károly Kós, now a 33-year-old architect, avoided involvement in WWI, accepted the scholarship and travelled to Istanbul. His main task was meant to be to participate in archaeological excavations and record the findings in survey drawings. However, since the surveys could not begin because of wartime difficulties, the Institute began to focus on the history and especially the topography of Constantinople. Consequently, Kós was commissioned to draw up a 1:5000 scale map of the historic peninsula of Istanbul before the Ottoman conquest, on which they could later record their observations, including the Byzantine buildings and ruins that were already known or were still being excavated (NN, 1917).

Besides urban research, Kós also prepared surveys on single buildings. There were also plans to begin the survey of Topkapı Palace, but this was never realised. However, he did some work in relation to the Pantokrator Monastery (Molla Zeyrek Mosque) jointly with Ferenc Luttor and made several illustrations for Luttor's book (Fig. 2). Unfortunately, the results of this survey were never published.



**Fig. 2.** Illustration by Károly Kós in 1917, featuring houses in Istanbul, created for a book by Ferenc Luttor (Luttor, 1918. 81.)



Besides examinations of the city and its history, Kós also gave lectures at the Institution, including one on the 27 March 1917, entitled ‘The Art of Islamic Nations’, based on his readings and local research experience. Over the next year, his interest turned from Byzantine architecture to the development of the urban history of Istanbul in the Ottoman period and the related contemporary processes and needs. Unfortunately, none of his known projects came to fruition in Istanbul; however, his studies on Byzantine architecture are reflected in a non-realised plans for an Orthodox Church prepared in Cluj Napoca (Kolozsvár - the plan is preserved at the Arhiva Arhiepiscopiei Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului).

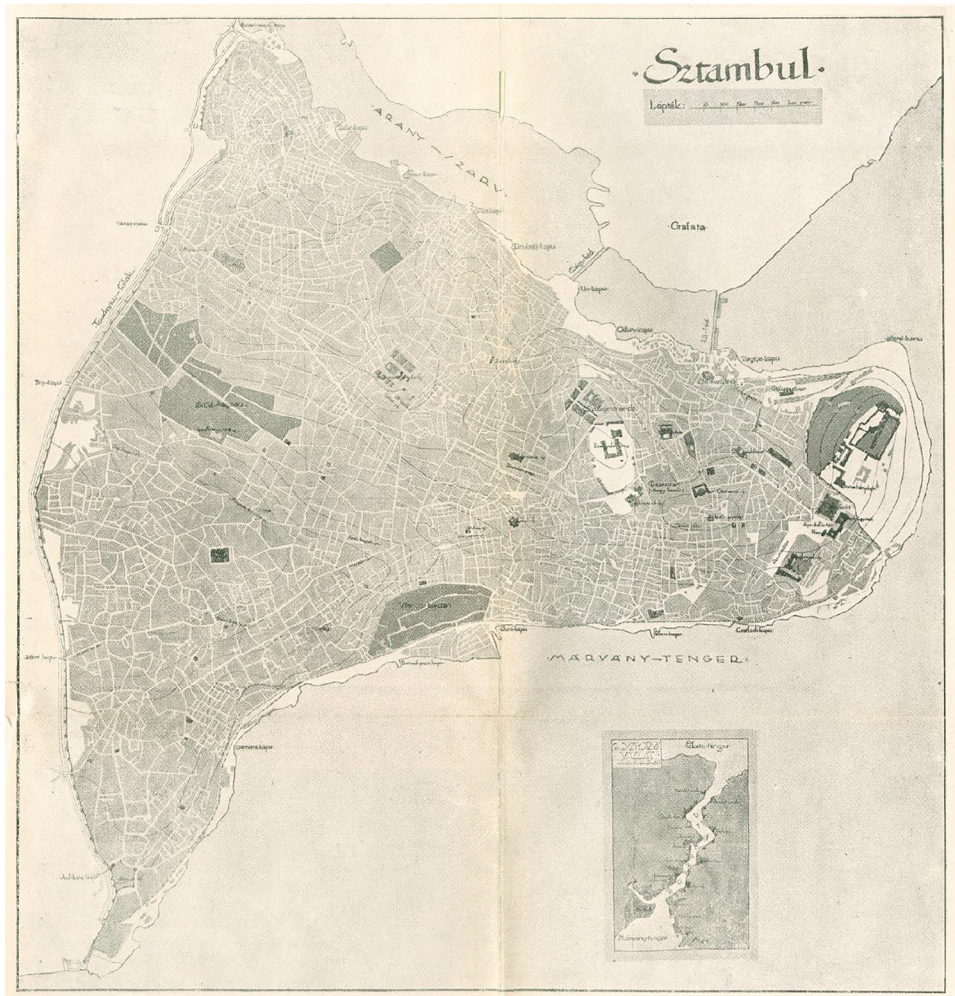
During his stay in Istanbul, his former lecturer, Géza Maróti, also visited the city. For the eminent architect, sculptor, painter and craftsman, Istanbul was an important starting point for his travels in the Middle East. During WWI, Maróti was sent by the Hungarian press headquarters to the Palestinian front to make drawings of the war (Maróti, 2002). During his stay in Istanbul, numerous photographs and pencil drawings of the city’s skyline, Byzantine monuments and cemeteries were created. According to Maróti’s description, he stayed in Istanbul with the permission of ‘Evkaf’ (the Institution of Historical Foundations), granted by a certain ‘K. Bey’, whom he described as having met earlier in Budapest (Archives of the Hungarian National Gallery, Cat. no: 491). Presumably, this person was identical with Kemallettin Bey, an important architect of the Early Republican period. Maróti summarised his eastern travels in his book ‘A single pillar of wisdom: fire in the Holy Land’. He spent more than a month in Istanbul and had the opportunity to participate in the lectures and trips organised by the Hungarian Institute for Scholarship in Constantinople in April and early May 1917. Additionally, Kós and Maróti often wandered in the city and explored its heritage together.

### The main outcome of Kós’s scholarship: ‘Istanbul: Urban History and Architecture’

On 8 December 1917, Károly Kós gave a lecture on his urban research entitled ‘Istanbul: a sketch of architectural history and urban architecture’, which formed the basis of his later book. However, Kós was slower than expected in completing the manuscript due to his design works, and returned to Hungary in March 1918. His book ‘Istanbul, Urban History and Architecture’ was finally published in December 1918. In fact, due to wartime circumstances, the work remained largely unpublished. The first complete Turkish edition of his book ‘Istanbul’ was finally published in 1995 (Kós, 1995), and a critical version with footnotes appeared in 2016 (Kós, 2015). Although the original plan was to publish the book in Turkish, German, and Hungarian, this did not happen until decades later. It has to be noted that the second chapter of the book, on Ottoman-Turkish mosques and the oeuvre of Mimar Sinan, was translated into Ottoman-Turkish by Semih Rüstem and published in the Turkish journal *Dergah* in 1921. Years later, Kós also published two articles on Turkish themes: one on Ibrahim Müteferrika (Kós, 1924) and one on the widely known architect Mimar Sinan (Kós, 1932).

The book consists of two parts. A 1:5000 scale map of the city, as well as a group of images with two articles were added to the sections titled Constantinople and Istanbul (Fig. 3). In the first part, the author explains that Istanbul is ‘the work of Ottoman Turkish culture that rose on the basis of Byzantium’. In his writings, he discusses the historical influences, the customs of city-oriented cultures, and the geographical location – for example, the city being almost surrounded by the sea, but utterly open to the sky. Built on Greco-Roman foundations and inspired by Byzantine philosophy, this city, which reached the highest levels of size and beauty during the





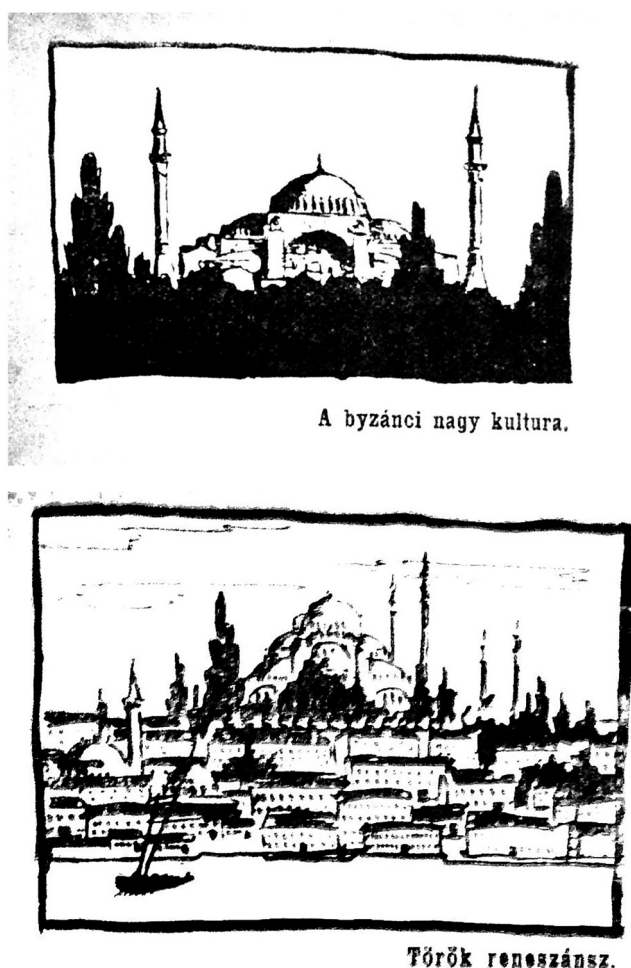
**Fig. 3.** Map of Istanbul drawn by Károly Kós. (Kós, 2015. Figure 56.)

reign of the Sultans, is seen as a sanctuary, a treasury of the interaction of peoples and cultures (Fig. 4). Kós's approach to history reflects the previously described Turanian philosophy.

In the second chapter, he presents a sensitive analysis of the city's endowments and his proposals for its development. This approach places Kós among the foreign architects –Antoine Bouvard, Henri Prost or Henri Gavand– who had provided urban development proposals for the city since the era of the late Ottoman Empire (Şahin, 2012; Bilsel & Pinon, 2010; Gavand, 2011).

The paragon of a modern city for Károly Kós was Paris whose historical centre was not destroyed. Concerned about the adverse effects of modernisation, Kós reviewed the reflections of this process in Istanbul.





**Fig. 4.** Drawings by Károly Kós: Hagia Sophia, bearing the title ‘Byzantine High Culture’ and Süleymaniye Mosque titled ‘Turkish Renaissance’ (Luttor, 1918. 15., 55.)

In the last part of the book, he provides proposals for the city’s future development. Kós typologically divides the historical city into four regions. His survey extends to works of art and engravings, social needs and engineering features, infrastructure and roads and ends with drawing conclusions. He also drew picturesque sketches where, besides the detailed recording of materials, structures and spatial organisation, the city’s silhouette is also emphasised.

*“In Istanbul, in front of the entrance to the museum, in the middle of the street, there is a sprawling, beautiful tree. The road is not too wide, and the tree stands in the way of traffic all the more because the road railway also runs along this street. In Berlin and Budapest, it would have been cut out a long time ago because it disturbs order and traffic; in Istanbul, it is bypassed without a word.”*

(Kós, 2015. 169)



This quotation provides an apt summary of Kós's thoughts related to Istanbul. According to him, the city's plans should be made following a harmonious assessment of artistic considerations and issues related to traffic and logistics, as well as a detailed study of the topographic structure. Local architects should prepare these works first in the field and then on the drawing table. In service of this, Kós emphasised the importance of improving architectural education and of basing design on on-site surveys. The ideas and considerations he offered in this were those of a pioneer of the later national architectural movements and of the kind of education that could support these. Kós also writes down some of his suggestions in the last part of his work "Istanbul". Thus, the Hungarian architect's work may be considered as one of the first urban planning proposals by a contemporary Western architect based on local conditions, following the 1911 field trip to Istanbul by Le Corbusier (Kortan, 2005), the master of modernist architecture.

Kós analyses in detail the architectural qualities and characters of each district, seeking to identify the various elements that need to be preserved and protected and the possibilities for development. In his analysis, he reviews the lessons that may be drawn from various historical representations and graphics, as well as the conditions he observed at the time. He explains that it is a complex case when it comes to regulating and developing historic 'cities of culture', using the cases of Paris, Vienna and Budapest, as well as London and New York as examples – providing analyses which may sometimes appear subjective (Kós, 2015. 164–165). It outlines three paths for development: firstly, a change that does not respect the old elements and meets primarily civilisational needs; secondly, a solution that concentrates on the protection of historic elements and new development is focussed in one place, namely the Galata area; and thirdly, an integrated developmental direction that harmoniously incorporates into the existing urban fabric the buildings that meet the needs of the new age. He himself considers this third option to be the most appropriate.

He stresses that the city's unity is provided by its multicoloured, patchwork-like sense of cohesiveness, and by the silhouette which holds it together and which must be preserved in the development process. In this regard, his opinion meets with Le Corbusier's similar insight (Kortan, 2005. 79). It is this aesthetic approach that guides the thinking behind his urban design proposals. He notes that Istanbul does not tolerate buildings that are too high or wide-spreading; in his opinion, 2–3 storey buildings are the most appropriate for the area.

He divides the city into four parts. Firstly, he describes the so-called central area (the historic Byzantine part), which he believes deserves the most attention. He proposes to move the large railway stations and customs houses and to solve the traffic congestion with a large port for the future. He proposes the demolition of several buildings that he considers inappropriate. He also proposes to bring certain areas closer together – such as the construction of a colonnade on the empty site next to Hagia Sophia, inspired by the Fisherman's Bastion in Budapest (Kós, 2015. 177). He also recommends closing Hippodrome Square with a building – for example, a new National Theatre or City Hall; and proposes redesigning streets, protecting historic buildings, and giving them a new contemporary function. The area outside of the Lycos, as he describes, meaning the territory outside of the city walls, does not necessarily need to be regulated in the direct future, since new urban areas will be developed there naturally. Cleaning the shores of Golden Horn Bay is also included in Kós's suggestions. The area around Yedikule, Yenikapı, where the new port would be located, is intended to function as an industrial environment. As an overall suggestion, he states that improvements should take into account topography,



transport and current needs, but with the involvement of a committee to review the changes from an artistic point of view.

Zoltán Oroszlán, the secretary of the Institute, wrote years later that if the plans for urban transformation, especially those for the Hippodrome Square, had been implemented, “Kós and Hungarian architecture would have gained great glory and our Institute a rare reputation.” For Kós, a city is a unit that creates its organic texture over time. He considers Istanbul a collective artistic work, a masterpiece of holistic art. As a result, he emphasises the need to develop the city’s philosophy and natural and social features, while preserving the *genius loci*. Károly Kós drew on the site’s historical and natural features, making proposals to preserve the city’s character which had evolved over thousands of years.

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