

The Institutionalisation of Art Education and Its Implications for the Conceptualisation of “Art” and the Artistic Profession in the Early Turkish Republic

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The transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the Republic of Turkey in 1923 brought with it a series of changes in the artistic field. The process of reforms of the new government greatly affected the training of artists and the conception of what had to be “Turkish national art”. In this respect, the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul played a central role, and became a higher education institute. The figures of Namik Ismail, Director of the Academy, and Ali Sami, painter and art critic, are essential to understanding the debate on the modernity established in the first half of the 20th century in Turkey. The examples of the schools of Paris and Vienna aggravated the disputes, as did the constant presence of foreign artists, who undoubtedly contributed decisively to the artistic evolution and pictorial training of Turkish artists.

With the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, a basic restructuring of the cultural system was set in motion. The realm of public institutions involved in the formation and development of cultural values was profoundly reshaped. Existing institutions were closed down or reformed, and new ones created. Many of the ideas at the base of these transformations had arisen during the late Ottoman Empire, and members of the late Ottoman elite were the decisive actors in these processes. Thus, the claim that there was an historical “break” between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic

will not be sustained by this paper. Nevertheless, the velocity and holistic dimension of the transformation, as well as the eagerness with which it was pursued and disseminated, justify the expectation that it will be found to mark a paradigm shift within the art field.

Up until now, scholars of art history have neglected these important aspects when addressing the early Republican era. Furthermore, art historical approaches to the art works of that period continue to operate within the paradigm of high art, which obstructs awareness of the potential diversity of concepts of art. In addition,

there is to be observed a continuous repetition of macro-caesuras such as, for instance, an assumption of the unidirectional political indoctrination of culture, while the dynamics that arise out of the artistic tasks and activities themselves are ignored. Finally, the terminology applied is characterised by a generic use of terms such as modern art, Westernisation, or national art, disregarding their specific connotations and the shifts they experienced.

It is obvious that the analysis of art education alone is not sufficient to grasp all the factors involved in processes of concept and theory formation

This paper aims to contribute to redressing these deficiencies by examining the conceptualisation of art and the artistic profession in the early Turkish Republic. To this end, the text analyses art education in the process of its institutionalisation between the years 1924 and 1932. It is obvious that the analysis of art education alone is not sufficient to grasp all the factors involved in processes of concept and theory formation. It can be argued, however, that in the case of the early Republican years a focus on artistic training might very well provide a significant contribution to our understanding of these processes, since a public discourse of art was only just beginning to emerge, and the professional field was not yet established. What is more, during the years under analysis, the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul was the sole public institution for the professional training of artists in Turkey, and became incorporated into the Republican reform processes. It constituted the backdrop for discussions on the understanding of art and its function for the young nation-state.

A prominent example of this discussion is the open correspondence between the director of the Academy, Namik Ismail [Yegenoglu] (1890-1935), and the painter and art critic Ali Sami [Boyar] (1880-1967), published by the Turkish daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* in late 1931 and early 1932.¹ Within two months, twenty lengthy statements of this heated debate had appeared, each filling half a page of a newspaper which, at the time, itself totalled only six to eight pages. This prominent placing indicates the importance of the disputed issues. This paper will take this controversy as an instancing frame to gain insight into the interdependence between the Academy's educational setting, its orientation of artistic curricula, the ideologies of art historiography, and cultural political expectancies. This will contribute to a comprehension of the formative role these factors played in the conceptualisation of art and the artistic profession.

Institutionalisation and Educational Setting

“It’s not modern, it’s classical.” With these words, Namik Ismail refers to the training at the Department of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts. He was reacting to provocation by Ali Sami. The art critic had labelled the painting practices at the Academy “modern”, and equated them with an art happening he said he had observed in Paris: an outrageous mob dipping the tail of a mule into a pot of paint, and pulling the animal with the paint dripping from its tail back and forth over the canvas on the ground.² This anecdote refers to an occurrence at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris in

1. Surnames are given in brackets as family names were only introduced in Turkey after 1934.

2. All quotes and references to the correspondence between Ali Sami and Namik Ismail are taken from the letters published by the Turkish daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* between November 1931 and February 1932. Regarding the anecdote itself, it is important to refer to Daniel Grojnowski's publication *Aux commencements du rire moderne. L'esprit fumiste* (Paris, José Corti, 1997), where he offers an interpretation of the event with the mule that indeed took place.

1910. The show included a fauvesque seascape entitled *Sunset on the Adriatic*; this was signed Joachim-Raphaël Boronali, presumed to be an Italian artist, and the alleged author of the previously published manifesto of a new art movement, Excessivism. After the exhibition opening and its coverage by the art critics in the daily press, a group of French classicist painters along with the writer Roland Dorgelès published documentation revealing that the painting, in fact, was executed by a mule, and the manifesto written by Dorgelès himself. Executed in the manner of the Futurists, the fraud was conceived of to ridicule modern art by exposing its similarity to a painting made by an animal. The event became famous and was often drawn upon in discussions about artistic tradition and the avant-garde. In his newspaper article, Ali Sami creatively developed this anecdote into an anarchic happening he claimed to have witnessed in person. In doing so, he not only conveyed that what he called modern art was lacking any rule and mastery: he also discredited the modern artist as an irresponsible individual. Namik Ismail did not want the Department of Painting to be seen as having any connection with such activities.

It was during his directorship that the bylaw governing the Academy was effectively implemented. The bylaw, drawn up in 1924, marked the Academy's upgrade to an institution of higher education. It was designed to raise the educational level, and was essentially concerned with the formalisation of its structure and programme. It was an integral part of the government programme of 1924 to strengthen, formalise, and unify the education system in order to create a united society that would strengthen the continuity of the

state.⁵ The three existing departments – of painting, sculpture, and architecture – were complemented by two new departments: the Department of Decorative Arts and the Department for Teacher Training.⁴ Although the Department of Decorative Arts had already been informally founded the year before, its official recognition and integration with the education system only came into force with the bylaw of 1924. The prolongation of the study period and requirements regarding entrance qualifications evidence the general objective of raising standards to a level comparable to higher education in the West.

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In the early years, however, the entrance qualification criteria were constantly lowered. For the years 1926 and 1927, academic status was suspended for all departments except architecture. The Academy was not receiving enough applications. The number of school children was already relatively low, and the devastating demographic and economic effects of ten years of almost continuous warfare, as well as large-scale migration and deportation, must be seen as the root cause of the low level of registration. Although there may be several other reasons also in play, this in any case shows that the upgrading of an institution for training in art to the level of an institution for higher education was the deliberate decision of the government and not the result of a general

3. N. Dagli and B. Aktürk, *Hükümetler ve Programları* [Governments and Programmes], Ankara, TBMM, 1988, p. 29.

4. M. Cezar, "Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi'nden 100. Yılda Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi'ne", in Muhtesem Giray (ed.), *Güzel sanatlar eğitiminde 100 yıl*, İstanbul, Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1983, pp. 5-84, 22. Other information on the institution's organisation is also taken from Cezar's article.

demand in society. What is more, in 1926, the Academy obtained the building of the former Parliament (Meclis-i Meb'ûsân) as its first permanent location for years, along with the necessary funds to adapt the building to its new purpose. This was a significant step, as the new building not only provided adequate space for training, but was also a substantial symbolic confirmation of the Academy's status within the education system.

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In the midst of this process, in 1927, Namik Ismail was appointed director of the Academy. By 1928 the adaptation of the building had been completed, and only then was the title of "Academy" officially adopted. Until 1927, every official document regarding the Academy carried its Ottoman name, referring to it as a school (Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Âlisi). In the following months, it is referred to as an academy through an Ottoman-Romanic hybrid (Sanayi-i Nefise Akademisi). With the Turkish language reform – which not only changed the alphabet from Arabic to Latin, but was also the beginning of the so-called purification of the Turkish language of its Arabic and Persian components – the Academy is renamed the Academy of Fine Arts (Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi) in modern Turkish.

Against all the difficulties of a precarious time, fine arts were established as an active component of the nation-building process. It is reasonable to assume that this entailed, in

return, increased expectations regarding the outcome of the Academy's activities. This, then, underscores the fact that the discussion between Namik Ismail and Ali Sami took place during a period of tightening of state control over education institutions and a general tendency to measure education standards by rational parameters. For instance, the Darülfünun, the future University of Istanbul, was subjected to scrutiny by the Swiss pedagogue Prof. Dr. Albert Malche under the commission of the Ministry of Education – at exactly the time when Namik Ismail and Ali Sami's discussion was ongoing.⁵ What is more, the Republican People's Party, Turkey's sole and governing party in the early Republican period, inscribed tighter state control over economic and social affairs in the party programme of 1931. This programme laid down the basic principles of Kemalism, among which statism figures prominently. In this light, a comparison – in public – with an anarchical mob and mule must have been unacceptable.

The Orientation of Artistic Curricula

So what did the training in painting at the Academy actually look like? What did Namik Ismail mean when he claimed it was classical? In 1924, training with a life model was introduced and, according to the 1934 examination regulations, the core requirement for the final examination was a full-length portrait in oil. What further adds to Namik Ismail's conception of its being classical is, as he points out in one of his letters to Ali Sami, that the drawing and painting of the nude was accompanied by the teaching of Greek mythology. This indicates an orientation in line with the precepts

5. W. Rüegg (ed.), *Universities in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1800-1945)*, Vol. 3, *A History of the University in Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 44.



Streets of Istanbul (IEMed Collection).

of academic painting, which had defined the painting classes in Istanbul ever since the foundation of the institution as the Imperial School of Fine Arts in 1883.

Although training in front of a nude model was not, in the Ottoman period, practised in Istanbul itself, selected students received a grant to address this aspect of their academic training at the Académie Julian in Paris.⁶ This was, for instance, the case for Ibrahim Feyhman [Duran] and Hikmet Onat. It is also true

that Nazmi Ziya Güran as well as Namik Ismail received some of their training at the Académie Julian. Alongside other Ottoman artists, they all spent a major part of the years between 1910 and 1914 in Paris, as did Ibrahim Çalli. All became professors of painting at the Imperial School of Fine Arts soon after they returned to Istanbul at the beginning of World War I, and all remained in their positions during the early Republican period with the exception of Namik Ismail. He had not been a member of staff at

6. D. Artun, *Paris'ten Modernlik Tercümeleeri. Académie Julian'da İmparatorluk ve Cumhuriyet Öğrencileri*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2007, p. 9. Further information in this article about the Ottoman and Turkish artists abroad is also owed to Artun's publication.

the Academy prior to taking up the office of director in 1927; most certainly, though, he had been involved in setting up its 1924 bylaw. By then he was General Inspector of Education, and a member of the committee tasked with setting up a programme for the modernisation of the Republic's education system.⁷

Is it possible that Namik Ismail was also using the term “classical” to counter the negative, chaotic, and unreasonable image that Ali Sami tried to attach to the Academy? Throughout the heated correspondence, the Parisian art institutions appear as the ultimate examples of the unquestionable ideal. This holds equally for Ali Sami: to an attempt by Namik Ismail to discredit him as an artist and thereby deflect his criticism, the art critic reacts with a long article about his merits as a painter sealed by his success on the French art market. For Namik Ismail, the reference to the Parisian model apparently constituted sufficient legitimation by itself. Thus, in one letter he writes: “The educational system at the Department of Painting of the Academy today is the same as the painting system of the French schools, which is, without doubt, the most progressive. And all [our] teachers were trained in France as well.”

Throughout the years of Namik Ismail's directorship, selected students continued to obtain public grants for a study visit to the Académie Julian. The training at this private school, though, was only in its formal structure comparable to the classical training at the École des Beaux-Arts. Students could paint and draw from a live model and ask for a weekly critique. In general, they could use the school's facilities and avail themselves of the nude models without being obliged to follow an artistic dogma.

The school became especially popular among women and foreign students as the École became practically inaccessible to them following its reform in 1863. Besides this, young French painters opted deliberately for this private school precisely because of their objection to the official school and its fixation with classicism. Among this group of students was Henri Matisse, who was one of Namik Ismail's idols. Ismail wrote: “It is our mission to train artists like Cézanne and Henri Matisse.” Therefore, he went on to explain, the training they offer at the Academy is classical in order to enable the youth to think for themselves. The essential was not whether a painting was in an old or new style but whether it was good art.

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Ali Sami, however, was simply denying that the training at the Academy was producing good artists. Their discussion on this matter – and, arising out of this problematic, their discussion of which criteria ultimately define a good artist – offers insight into the understandings of the artistic profession prominent at the time. While Namik Ismail's comments reveal a modern conception of the artist, Ali Sami's challenges, though anything but thoroughly elaborated, venture a distinct conception of authorship, which turned out to be more successful during the early Republic.

First, the director had to explain why instruction at the Academy in Istanbul was not provided in structured classes, as it was in other academic areas. Again with reference

7. N. Öndin, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi (1923-1950) Kültür Politikalarının Türk Resim Sanatı Üzerindeki Yansımaları*, doctoral thesis, Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Sanat Tarihi Anabilim Dalı, Batı Sanatı ve Çağdaş Sanat Programı, İstanbul, 2002, pp. 52-53.

to a famous model – in this case the Prix de Rome – he claims that quality was enhanced in the form of competitions held inside the five different studios of the Academy. This was intended to enable an individual approach to subject matters.

Second, he faced criticism regarding the low job expectations for the graduates. Ali Sami argued that the art market in Istanbul was dominated by foreign artists who, in addition, achieved higher prices for their works. The critic deemed what he saw as deficient preparation by the Academy responsible for that problem. Namik Ismail, though, disclaims responsibility. The Academy was not an institution for trade, he countered. Its task was to preserve and stimulate the national cultural life. He further argued that the best artist was not the one with the highest remuneration. After all, an institution such as the Academy could only provide the ground for the development of the born artist. Everything else depended on his/her vocation and talent. “For one Delacroix to come in one century, France had to train tens of thousands of students.”

Namik Ismail’s argumentation follows the precepts of the modern concept of authorship. This turns on the special status of the artist, which was developed at the European courts and became even more accentuated after the 18th century due to the increase in autonomy of artistic creation (although the extent to which there was an increase in autonomy is, I think, often overstated).⁸ This alleged autonomy supported the idea of the artist as the auctorial creator who, free of all rules and

functions, was bearing art out of his inner self, his thoughts and emotions. In this manner, the artist represented the prototypical subjectivity and the concept of the individual, and triggered the idea of the genius standing out from the masses.

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Consequently, Ali Sami is not completely mistaken when he defines the art practised at the Department of Painting as modern, even though for him this is simply equivalent to new. He expresses his opposition to this individualistic conception of artistic practice and profession, considering it damaging for “a nation, which is only in its beginnings,” and called for people to work together in order to overcome the challenges of nation-building. He dedicated a long letter to a detailed outline of the enormous means provided to the Academy that led, in his eyes, to no benefit for the nation. He calls for the nationalisation of art, and the creation of a Turkish school and a Turkish artist. Instead of Greek mythology, the students should study and represent the national history – “For the nation.” Namik Ismail consents in the sense that he sees art’s potential for social change but, to him, producing national artists was a mistake: “An art school that produces artists like industrial machines has never been seen by mankind.”

8. M. Warnke, *Hofkünstler* [The Court Artist], Cologne, DuMont, 1985, p. 12. For further considerations on authorship, which only could have been touched on here very briefly, see also M. Wetzel, “Autor/Künstler” [Author/Artist], in K. Barck et al. (eds.), *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe* [Aesthetic Concepts], Vol. 1, Stuttgart, J.B. Metzler, 2000-2005, p. 480. Regarding the relativity of this autonomy and the new constraints, dependencies, and functions, see O. Bätschmann, *Ausstellungskünstler. Kult und Karriere im modernen Kunstsystem* [The Artist in the Modern World: The Conflict between Market and Self-Expression], Cologne, DuMont, 1997, especially chapter II on the artists’ freedom and social functions, and S. Kampmann, *Künstler sein. Systemtheoretische Beobachtungen von Autorschaft* [Being an Artist: System-Theoretical Observations of Authorship], Munich, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2007.

With these words he rejected the demands for the Academy, as a producer of artists, to cater to the young nation-state and the formation of a modern society. At the same time, though, he was possibly addressing the revolutionary discourse of modernism, prominent among architects, writers, and painters at that time, with its references to technology, industry, and machine aesthetics. Members of the Association of Independent Painters and Sculptors, a group of young artists who had graduated from the Academy and also trained at the Académie Julian in Paris, were preparing to form the D Grubu (Group D) at precisely the time that the discussion between Namik Ismail and Ali Sami was ongoing. They sought a liberation of art from academic and classical traditions, and introduced technological themes and references to the machine age with a stylistic approach based on cubism and constructivism.

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Challenges of this kind to the Academy's artistic model did not themselves go uncontested. The painters of the Association of Independent Painters and Sculptors in particular received severe criticism for their European style. The most frequent complaint was that they were copying Western art. Even a friend of the group, Elif Naci, wrote in an article in the Turkish daily newspaper *Milliyet* (27th February 1931) as a comment on their art: "Com-

patriot, speak Turkish!" As the D Grubu, these artists were compelled to distance themselves from abstraction of the avant-garde and turn instead to the forms, motifs, and inspirations of Turkish folk culture.

The question of the national character of Turkish Art would become a central issue for the practising artists, and dominated the public discourse during the 1930s. The academic conceptualisation of national art in Turkey, however, had already been undertaken in the preceding decade, not least at the Academy in Istanbul, and certainly informed the intellectual background of the discourse.

Ideologies of Art Historiography

Three basic and interrelated theses characterise early Republican historiography of Turkish art and architecture. One argument caters to the desire to dissociate modern Turkey from oriental and Islamic artistic traditions, stressing the original and unique character of Turkish art and architecture, which had (it is claimed) remained unnoticed by European scholarship with its inherent Orientalist bias. The second is the secularisation of cultural historiography by the focus on non-religious material culture and buildings. The third stresses the rationality and evolving character of Turkish art and architecture, and hints at the proximity between Turkish and Western traditions. As Sibel Bozdoğan points out, these arguments constituted a challenge to the Orientalist and Eurocentric biases of Western art historiography, even if they also carried nationalistic and essentialist biases of their own.⁹ They sought an extension

9. S. Bozdoğan, "Reading Ottoman Architecture through Modernist Lenses: Nationalist Historiography and the 'New Architecture' in the Early Republic", *Muqarnas*, Vol. 24, 2007, pp. 199-221. The following accounts on art historiography consider further articles in the aforementioned issue of *Muqarnas*: O. Pancaroglu, "Formalism and the Academic Foundation of Turkish Art in the Early Twentieth Century", pp. 67-78; S. Redford, "'What Have You Done for Anatolia Today?': Islamic Archaeology in the Early Years of the Turkish Republic", pp. 243-252; G. Necipoglu, "Creation of a National Genius: Sinan and the Historiography of 'Classical' Ottoman Architecture", pp. 142-183.

of the documentation and knowledge on Turkish art and architecture that would counter the conception of non-Western traditions as incapable of historical evolution.

This scholarship and debate was shaped by Turkish and foreign art historians alike. The Austrian scholar Heinrich Glück (1889-1930) linked Seljuk and Ottoman art in Anatolia to Central Asian motifs and monuments. The French art historian Albert Gabriel (1883-1972) focused on the formal characteristics of the architecture on Turkish territory, and considered their rationality and purity as “unique among other Islamic traditions.” His writings about the functionality of the Ottoman-Turkish non-religious buildings nurtured the quest by Turkish architects to provide modern architecture in Turkey with national features. The major state-funded research projects by scholars like Celâl Esad [Arseven] (1875-1971), who taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul, and Gabriel, were dedicated to the documentation and mapping of the historic artefacts of Anatolia. The latter published his book *Monuments turcs d’Anatolie* [Turkish Monuments of Anatolia] in 1931 in order to accompany his course in archaeology at the Darülfünun in Istanbul. Celâl Esad held a professorship of art history at the Academy in Istanbul during the 1920s, and then again intermittently until the 1940s. He was trained as a painter, but after the foundation of the Republic he dedicated his professional life to art and architectural history. With his book *Türk San’ati* [Turkish Art], first published in 1928, he was the first Turkish scholar to situate Turkish art and architecture within the broader historical frame, and to stress their rational, formally pure, and evolutionary qualities. While other Republican historians turned a blind eye to Ottoman culture, Celâl Esad’s approach facilitated the integration of Ottoman art and architecture into the Turkish national narrative.

At the same time, Celâl Esad introduced European modernism to Turkish audiences. He translated Camillo Sitte’s (1843-1903) book on the principles of modern town planning into Turkish, and in 1931 he published *Yeni Mimarî* [New Architecture], which is based on a book from 1929 by the French modernist architect André Lurçat (1892-1970). *Yeni Mimarî* became a required text for architectural students at the Academy. It built a bridge from European modernism and its principles to the works under construction in Turkey’s new capital Ankara.

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The Viennese School of Art History was among the most influential in shaping the methodological and ideological principles of Turkish national art historiography, as Oya Pancaroglu has shown in her analysis of the academic conceptualisation of Turkish Art. Of importance in methodological terms was Alois Riegel’s detachment of form from its context. In addition, his dedication to the decorative arts contributed to the formation of the study of national or folk traditions. Josef Strzygowski (1862-1941) promoted the extension of the limited research field of the art historical discipline, and incorporated Turkish art as a sub-field in a universal art history. In 1917, he published *Altai-Iran und Völkerwanderung: Ziergeschichtliche Untersuchungen über den Eintritt der Wander- und Nordvölker in die Treibhäuser geistigen Lebens* [Altai-Iran and the Migration of Nations: Ornament-Historical Investigations on the Entrance of Migrating and Northern Nations into the Greenhouses of Spiritual Life]. Scott Redford hints at Strzygowski’s comparison between the pure forms

of Armenian, Iranian and Central Asian art, and an Aryan, Northern, Germanic culture, which is, according to Strzygowski, untainted by religion and Hellenism.

An essay called *Türkische Kunst* [Turkish Art], by Strzygowski's colleague and former student Heinrich Glück, was issued the same year, on the occasion of the opening of the Hungarian Institute in Istanbul. Glück was especially interested in cross-cultural artistic exchanges, and represents the Turkic people as the carrier of visual culture from Middle Asia to Anatolia, enabling the formation of Anatolian Seljuk and Ottoman art. Through their migration, the Turkic people weaved the multiple traditions they encountered on their way into expressions of their own national spirit, without losing its particularity. Glück argues that their art demonstrated originality in their syntheses emerging from this process that was often, as he claims, mistaken for imitation.

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Redford reasons that the arguments of the Austrian art historians “provided a model by which émigré German, Austrian, and European-trained Turkish scholars could look for a pure Turkishness beneath what they saw as the accretions of Ottoman Islam.” Around 1926, Fuat Köprülü, the founder and Director of the Turkology Institute at the Istanbul University, invited the two scholars to contribute on the subject of Turkish art to the journal of the Turkology Institute, *Türkiyat Mecmuası* [Journal of Turkology]. Gülru Necipoglu points out that it was also Köprülü who envisioned sending Turkish students to study with Strzygowski in Vienna, and invited Glück to teach at Istanbul University. Their articles in *Türkiyat Mecmuası* draw upon

their previous surveys, but, following Necipoglu, seemingly sharpened their nationalistic arguments adapting to their new audience.

In *Türk San'ati*, Celâl Esad refers to Strzygowski and Glück as examples for further research on the national, racial, and individual features of Turkish art. He includes a map that draws upon Strzygowski's and Glück's theories on the migrations that triggered the inter-cultural syntheses under the patronage of the Turkish dynasties. Esad's book guides the reader through thirteen centuries, covering various empires and geographical regions, in which Turkish art somehow never loses its Turkish essence. Necipoglu's analysis also shows, next to Celâl Esad's attachment to the Viennese scholars, his criticism of their focus on mosques, and his effort to broaden the scope towards the “multifunctional dependencies, which embody urban design principles, and to secular building types.” Furthermore, he did not agree with arguments regarding the Byzantine and Armenian influences on Seljuk art, and turned it down as an exaggeration by European scholars. He deems the dearth of research and documentation on Turkish art responsible for such – in his eyes – misinterpretations. In order to overcome these shortcomings, he endeavours to create an association for research and documentation on the topic. He considered it a national duty to rectify the lack of recognition of Turkish art. In 1951, the Turkish History Society was founded with the purpose of demonstrating “the service of the Turks to civilisation” by means of national historiography. Celâl Esad was a member of the scientific committee, and the subject of Turkish art moved to the centre of official attention.

Conclusion

The discontent with the Department of Painting at the Academy was widespread, and its

Parisian artistic model was rejected as alien and unsuitable for Turkey's present condition and requirements. This, then, provoked questions about what art in Turkey might consist of, and what institutions could represent, foster and develop it. The most consequential result of such reflections is surely to be seen in the opening of the new art education department at the Gazi Training Institute for secondary teachers in Ankara in 1932. It represented a momentous complement – and contrast – to the art education of the Academy in Istanbul, although (or precisely because) it was not meant to train artists but to create teachers of creative practices for public schools. The initiator and first director was the prolific educator and art critic Ismail Hakki [Baltacıoğlu].¹⁰ For Ismail Hakki, art had to respond to the necessities of its social context. He was promoting an art that would be more nationalised, popularised and vernacular. The particularities of Turkish folk art, he thought, should be studied and taught to adults and children alike. To this end, art courses were also included in the education programme of the People's Houses, and the Gazi Institute would eventually provide most of their teachers. The first of these community centres were also founded in 1932. On one of the pages of *Cumhuriyet*, where Namik Ismail and Ali Sami's discussion was published, one finds the publication of the first bylaws governing the People's Houses. Before the end of the 1930s, the number of these centres would rise to over two hundred. The People's Houses were commissioned by the

Republican People's Party, the ruling and sole existing party at that time. Their objective was to disseminate a national consciousness.

By the early 1930s, a dynamic discourse on art in Turkey had taken off. The concept of art was developing according to the particular circumstances, issues and necessities prevailing at that time in Turkey. It diverged rapidly and considerably from the model initially adopted at the Academy in Istanbul. New institutions were created that were no longer mere copies of former models, but new creations arising directly out of perceived necessities. Nevertheless, it seems obvious that such strong alignment by artists and institutions to a nationalist concept of art cannot be explained by observations concerning art or art theory alone, but requires a complementary analysis of the art market and cultural policies.

Even at the Academy in Istanbul an adjustment was soon to be observed. Several photographs of the Academy began to circulate soon after the *Cumhuriyet* correspondence. They show neatly dressed, exemplary students at work, who in no respect resemble the image of the chaotic, selfish artist, but seem to be rather diligent workers. Finally, in August 1933, Namik Ismail, backed by the staff of the Academy, supplied a report on the state of fine arts in Turkey to the Ministry of Education, which shows, in contrast to the tone of the newspaper correspondence, a radical change in ideas and an almost ostentatious use of language which appeals to the ideological furore of that time.

10. The information about the Gazi Institute and further developments in art education is owed to the following publications: H. Penkmezci, "Gazi Eğitim Enstitüsü Resim-İp Bölümü ve Bauhaus (Yeni İnsanın Tasarımı-Yeni Bir Toplumun Tasarımı)", in A. Artun and E. Alıçavusoglu (eds.), *Bauhaus: Modernleşmenin Tasarımı: Türkiye'de Mimarlık, Sanat, Tasarım Eğitimi ve Bauhaus*, Istanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2009, pp. 277-302; D. Köksal, "The Role of Culture and Art in Early Republican Modernization in Turkey", in Bernard Heyberger and Silvia Naef (eds.), *La multiplication des images en pays d'Islam : de l'estampe à la télévision (17e-21e siècle)*, Würzburg, Ergon, 2003, pp. 209-227; "Halkevleri: Talimatname basılarak tevzi edildi", *Cumhuriyet*, 11th January 1932, p. 3; M. Katoglu, "The Institutionalisation of High Art as a Public Service in the Republican Era", in S. Ada and A.H. Ince (eds.), *Introduction to Cultural Policy in Turkey*, Istanbul, Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2009, pp. 27-85, 43; A. Çeçen, *Atatürk'ün Kültür Kurumu: Halkevleri*, Ankara, Gündoğan Yayınları, 2000; S. Simsek, *Bir Ydeolojik Seferberlik Deneyimi, Halkevleri 1932-1951*, Istanbul, Bogaziçi Üniversitesi Yayinevi, 2002.