

Triumphal Arches (Tak) Architecture as a Temporary Architectural Device: A Study on Early Republican Period in Turkey Examples

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Abstract

This article examines triumphal arches (TAK) erected on urban squares and main axes during the early Republican period in Turkey as ephemeral architectural elements, positioned between monument, gateway and decorative portal typologies. The conceptual framework is structured around ephemerality, monumentality, collective memory and nation-building, and interpreting these reads arches as both spatial interfaces and ideological communication devices. Methodologically, the study combines a literature review, archival documents, photographs and plan analyses; ceremonial arches in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Zonguldak, Diyarbakir, Samsun and other cities are classified through a comparative analysis reading. Common formal features are evaluated under the headings of number of openings, vertical mass configuration, material and structure, colour and graphic language, and urban location. The findings indicate that Republican arches appropriate the archetypal scheme of ancient triumphal arches, yet translate discourses of modernization and national unity into space through the use of red-white colour codes, portraits of Atatürk, institutional emblems and numerical slogans. The article argues that these temporary yet highly representative installations should be documented and discussed as part of modern architectural heritage and reconsidered as an installation language that can inform contemporary urban design and commemorative practices.

Keywords: Collective Memory, Monumentality, Temporary Architecture, Triumphal Arch Architecture.

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THE CONCEPT OF THE TEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT IN ARCHITECTURE

Beyond creating mere reference or meeting points through every architectural intervention that is attached to it, the city also fully mobilizes its capacity to represent the architectonic expression specific to its time. Through the act of construction, both the content that is defined and the mode of its communication reflect the prevailing assumptions of the society's system of values (Kolbay & Bursa, 2022). In the configuration of public space, the representations of these elements directly influence collective memory. They rewrite existing codes or add new ones, thereby shaping collective memory, while at the same time communicating as instruments of representation. In this context, Kolbay and Bursa (2022) interpret the term architectonic expression, based on its usage in the literature, as a sign of constructing the whole by emphasizing all structural values in a constructive and structural sense.

The role of the image in transmitting "emotion" within the urban memory is highly significant. The meaning encoded in the city's memory by a given architectural element, object, symbolic structure or image is expanded rather than narrowed as it intersects with the individual stories of the city's inhabitants, continuing without undergoing a fragmented transformation. Its position in memory is reinforced, its foundations become more deeply rooted, and, like the widening of a circle, the semantic field it encompasses expands, rewriting the codes. This process of rewriting is not a replacement of the existing codes, but rather their re-inscription in a way that preserves what already exists while incorporating broader, additional layers of meaning.

This new form of representation, which is integrated into social memory and carries emotional transmission, may materialize as an inscription, a totem, an obelisk, or a building. In Turkish societies and in Anatolia, the tradition of monuments grounded in commemorative rituals dates back to the Göktürk period. The Göktürks, also reflecting Shamanism, conveyed traces of the history of the Turkish language and art, and symbolized specific events or significant figures through balbals bearing inscriptions. In the Uighur period, another Turkish state, under the influence of Buddhism and nourished by Indian, Chinese and Hellenistic art, a more realistic mode of pictorial and sculptural expression was achieved. Monuments were produced for various purposes, ranging from everyday themes to the representation of religious rituals (Kolbay & Bursa, 2022), (Sözen, 1973). In Antiquity, obelisks and columns functioned as frequently used imagistic instruments; in Seljuk and Ottoman architecture, the search for a new monumental language distant from figurative abstraction led to the emergence of fountains, ablution fountains, and public buildings constructed for revival purposes as integrative architectural elements of squares.

In spaces designed within temporary settlements, the concepts of maximum mobility, freedom and flexibility come to the fore (Chappel, 2004). These structures are generally characterized by ease of construction without requiring high craftsmanship, the use of light and easily formable materials, and rapidly assembled structural systems. In this respect, in the historical context, temporary structures are primarily buildings made of local materials, used for a short period and designed to respond to basic needs (Gök & Erman, 2021). Such structures have been erected not only to create space, but also for symbolic occasions. Built for events with strongly symbolic meanings—such as coronations, victories, births, or weddings—these structures were dismantled after the ceremony, to be reassembled again when needed. Emerging with their symbolic monumental value, triumphal arches (tak) architecture have continued to exist in its modern usage as a temporary architectural element.

Temporariness in architecture is not merely the opposite of permanence; it is a design strategy that relies on time-bounded assembly, reversibility, and event-based performativity. Scholarship on portable and temporary building emphasizes demountability, mobility, and the capacity of short-lived structures to generate long-lived social effects (Kronenburg, 2008). Within urban studies, 'temporary urbanism' is discussed as a fourth dimension that reconfigures land, space, and meaning through interim uses and staged interventions (Bishop & Williams, 2012). Taking these perspectives together, this article reads early Republican taks as temporary architectural devices that compress political representation, urban choreography, and collective memory into a short time span.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study approaches TAK architecture within the continuity of "passage/monument" that stretches from ancient triumphal arches to ceremonial arrangements of the early Republican period (1923–1938), and reads it through the tension between temporariness and monumentality. The elements attached to urban space are positioned not only as points of reference or landmarks, but also as imagistic interfaces that represent the architectonic expression and the value system of their time. While the notion of the temporary architectural element is commonly defined in the literature through mobility, flexibility, light structures and short-term use, this study considers taks not solely in relation to their physical lifespan, but in conjunction with their durability within collective memory. Built for rituals such as coronations, victories, births, marriages and national holidays, these structures continue to function in urban memory as instruments of emotional transmission and narrative production, even though they are dismantled once the ceremony is over.

The trajectory of the monumental tradition in Anatolia—from Göktürk balbals to Seljuk and Ottoman fountains and ablution fountains, and from there to the modern Republican taks—reveals a language whose form changes while its meaning remains continuous. The mode of representation established through obelisks and columns in Antiquity evolved into the idea of the arched monumental gate in Roman triumphal arches; in the Republican period, this archetype was translated into contemporary nation-state discourses through temporary taks.

In this context, TAK architecture both sustains the historical continuity of the "triumphal arch / monumental arch / ceremonial gateway" typology and, at the same time, becomes a performative stage device that makes visible the early Republic's ideals of modernization, nation-building and urban citizenship. Ceremonial TAKs erected in city squares, in front of train stations or along major boulevards can be read as temporary yet symbolically dense urban installations that stage, in public space, the fusion of state and people, the ideological framework of the new regime and a modern lifestyle through slogans, colours, symbols and lighting.

Internationally, the twentieth century produced a rich repertoire of temporary monumental gateways and festival architectures used to stage modernization narratives and mass publics. In Soviet Russia, revolutionary festivals and street decorations transformed central routes into scenographic corridors through ephemeral structures, banners, and gateways (von Geldern, 1993; Murray, 2018). The 1937 Paris International Exhibition combined permanent monuments with explicitly temporary pavilions, such as Le Corbusier's Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux, conceived for dismantling and potential reuse, demonstrating how

modernist design embraced planned ephemerality (BIE, 1937; Fondation Le Corbusier, 1937). Similarly, the 1939 New York World's Fair adopted monumental yet temporary icons—most notably the Trylon and Perisphere—built to symbolize the 'World of Tomorrow' and later dismantled (ArchDaily, 2016). Post-war Britain continued this lineage through the Festival of Britain (1951), which relied on distinctive temporary structures like the Dome of Discovery and the Skylon to project a future-oriented national image (V&A, 2024). These precedents help situate Republican taks within a broader twentieth-century culture of temporary monumental representation.

METHODOLOGY

The study is designed as a qualitative and descriptive study and adopts an interpretive approach that analyses TAK architecture through its historical, typological and spatial dimensions.

Literature review: A conceptual background was established through a review of national and international literature on temporary architecture, monuments and images, ancient Roman triumphal arches, Ottoman ceremonial architecture and early Republican celebrations. Recent scholarship published from 2020 onward reframes temporary urbanism and temporary structures as modes of producing publicness and governance through events and interim spatial practices (Bragaglia & Caruso, 2020; Krmpotić Romić & Bojanić Obad Šćitaroci, 2022; Skytt-Larsen et al., 2022; Turku et al., 2023; Behmanesh & Brown, 2025). Recent historiography on early Republican Turkey likewise emphasizes institutional and ideological production contexts beyond stylistic readings (Erol & Şenyurt, 2025).

Archival and visual data analysis: Newspaper reports from the period, municipal and provincial administration reports, official celebration programmes, photographic archives, postcards, journals (particularly visual material published in *Arkitekt*), as well as secondary sources on urban plans and square arrangements were examined. Through these materials, the historical context of taks, their ceremonial routes and their urban locations were reinterpreted.

Sample selection: The sample consists of taks used during Republic Day, Liberation Day and 23 April celebrations in cities such as İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Adana, Zonguldak, Diyarbakır, Samsun, Şirvan and Bolu, representing different geographical regions and political contexts. The selection criteria were defined as:

- density of documentation (photographs, written sources, plans),
- representation of different institutions and social actors (municipalities, state economic enterprises, professional associations, minority communities, etc.),
- formal diversity (number of openings, form, material).

Data reliability and limitations: Because many archival images are black-and-white and sometimes lack detailed captions, the study does not infer material, structure, or exact urban siting from a single photograph. Material/structural notes and locational information are reported only when supported by written sources (newspaper captions, official programmes, municipal reports, archival inventories). When such information is missing, the attribute is recorded as 'undocumented' in Table 1, and the example is used only for form/graphic analyses that can be robustly extracted from multiple sources. Examples that were visually accessible but lacked minimum metadata (year, location,

commissioning actor) were excluded and are noted as part of the study's limitations.

Typological and formal analysis: The selected examples were coded and analysed under the following headings:

- number of openings,
- mass and proportions,
- material and structure,
- decorative elements and graphic language,
- inscriptions and symbols carried on the structure,
- urban location and relation to the choreography of the ceremony.

On this basis, a comparative typology was constructed. This typology was then used to make visible the points of architectural and semantic continuity and rupture between the permanent triumphal arches of Antiquity and the temporary ceremonial taks of the Republican period.

Discussion and interpretation: In the final stage, the findings were analysed around the axes of modernization, nation-building, collective memory, and the performative use of public space. In this framework, the contribution of tak architecture to debates on modern architectural heritage and urban identity was critically evaluated.

DIVERSITY OF USES OF TAK ARCHITECTURE

As defined by Curl (1992), taks are arches whose designs foreground the permanence of Rome's victories; they are constructed to commemorate an event or a person—most often a military victory—and frequently carry a quadriga on top. Structurally, in their simplest sense, they may be described as arched structures supported by two four-cornered piers. Researchers, however, define them more comprehensively as arched structures that connect one or more piers, often crowned with a statue or a sculptural group, sometimes adorned with reliefs, typically built over one of the main roads of the city, allowing pedestrians and vehicles to pass underneath and bearing inscriptions that state the reason for their construction (İdil, 1989). In Roman cities, arches in Asia Minor can be examined under four types: single-bay, double-bay, triple-bay and tetrapyla.

Triumphal arches became emblematic structures during the Roman Empire. In these structures, which symbolize the ceremonial Roman procession, architectural ornament and sculpture come to the fore. The reliefs on the arches often depict events of the period, literary narratives of victories and scenes in which emperors are honored. Although triumphal arches are the first structures that come to mind when the term tak is mentioned, today the word also corresponds to temporary architectural elements built for different purposes. In this sense, it is possible to speak of three different fields of use for taks. In Turkish, all three are commonly referred to with the same term, tak. These three uses can be broadly summarized as:

- in the sense of a structural arch,
- in a broader monumental sense, and
- in the sense of a decorated façade entrance.

In this article, this broad historical lineage is not revisited in detail; instead, it is used as a conceptual scaffold to distinguish three registers of 'tak' as they appear in the literature and in practice: (1) the arch as a structural element, (2) the arch as a symbolic gateway with monument-like meaning, and (3) the arch as a decorated portal or façade entrance that functions as a scenographic interface in public ceremonies. This distinction allows early Republican taks to be analysed not as replicas of ancient monuments, but as temporary urban devices that mediate passage, representation, and spectacle in modern city space.

The use of tak architecture and its deployment in celebratory contexts continued frequently in the Republican period as a cultural practice inherited from the Ottoman era.

TAK ARCHITECTURE IN THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD (1923-...)

Within Turkish architectural and urban vocabulary, the term tak refers to an arched ceremonial gateway—often designed as a temporary, decorated portal erected for public rituals such as national days, liberation celebrations, inaugurations, and institutional displays. Unlike permanent monuments, taks operate through planned assembly and dismantling; they stage a short-lived but highly visible form of monumentalisation in public space. Recent scholarship since 2020 has expanded debates on temporariness toward governance, event-based public space production, and the politics of interim uses, showing how time-bounded spatial interventions can function as strategic urban devices (Bragaglia & Caruso, 2020; Skytt-Larsen et al., 2022; Turku et al., 2023; Behmanesh & Brown, 2025). Building on this perspective and on earlier work on portable architecture and the temporary city (Kronenburg, 2008; Bishop & Williams, 2012), this section frames early Republican taks as temporary monumental devices that mediate passage, spectacle, and ideological communication in the newly reconfigured squares and boulevards of early Republican Turkey (1923-1938).

In the cities built after the proclamation of the Republic, monuments became the most widespread architectural medium through which Turkey's transforming structure could be expressed. In this process, both permanent monuments erected in squares and temporary structures designed for holiday and celebration ceremonies emerged as spatial tools for nation-state construction. Foremost among these structures are the 'arches', which trace their origins to ancient triumphal arches but were reproduced with a modern narrative during the Republican era. The architecture of the 'arch,' often defined in the literature by its transience and symbolic intensity, served not only as decoration in the early Republican period but also as a 'spatial interface' that facilitated contact between the state and the people in the public sphere and conveyed ideological messages (through slogans, colours, and portraits) to the masses. Not only in Turkey but also in many other countries undergoing processes of change, transformation or distinct sociological developments, monuments have long been among the most preferred elements for representing and symbolising an idea. In general, these are permanent monuments. In this respect, elements that can be classified as taks differ from the first images that come to mind when one thinks of monuments today, as they possess a temporary monumental character.

The most striking components of Republican celebrations are the monumental-scale taks. These taks are modern instruments of representation that continue the functions of their archetypes, the ancient triumphal arches. Situated in locations such as main streets and squares—crowded urban spaces where

public events take place—these temporary structures communicate with their audiences through multiple channels (Tozoğlu, Kaymaz & Sezen, 2022). The slogans and national or political symbols displayed on them convey the official narrative. Especially in the Republican period, taks became one of the leading representational devices in ceremonies and celebrations for visualising the new system of government, the reforms and Kemalist ideas.

The literature indicates that taks were indispensable elements of celebrations held across the country on Republic Day and on local liberation days marking the recapture of cities. In particular, the taks designed for the Tenth Anniversary of the Republic rose in the cities as powerful symbolic markers. These taks were generally designed by architects. While the People's Party Column (Halk Fırkası Sütunu) designed by architect Seyfettin Nasih was erected in Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul, the State Railways Monument (Devlet Demir Yolları Anıtı) by architect Bedrettin Hamdi was built in Ankara for the Tenth Anniversary celebrations (Okumuş, 2021) (Figure 1a). Another emblematic Republican tak, commissioned by İş Bank, was designed by architect Nizamettin. One of the most important Republican-period taks—the project for the Karaköy Cumhuriyet Takı in Istanbul—was entrusted to foreign architects Margarete Schütte and Wilhelm Schütte (Karain, 1996) (Figure 1c).

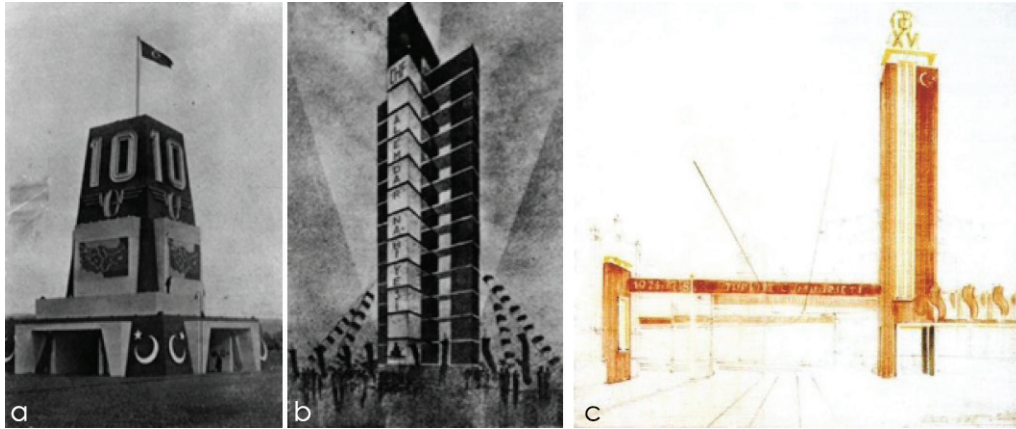


Figure 1. a) State Railways Monument designed by architect Bedrettin Hamdi for the Tenth Anniversary of the Republic (Okumuş, 2021). b) Ceremonial arch and light tower built for the Republican People's Party, designed by Seyfi Arkan in 1933 (Okumuş, 2021; Bozdoğan, 2002). c) Karaköy Republic Arch designed by Margarete Schütte and Wilhelm Schütte (Okumuş, 2021; Karain, 1996).

Designed in 1938 for the Republic Day celebrations and constructed as a temporary structure, this tak predominantly employed red and white colours. At the very top of the Karaköy Republic Arch, a section enlivened by illumination bears the Roman numeral XV (fifteen) together with the letters "T.C.". On the sides, the portrait of Atatürk and Turkish flags are placed, catching and reflecting daylight (Karain, 1996).

Preparations for the first liberation celebrations held in İzmir on 9 September 1923 began about a week in advance, and all shops, stores and houses in the bazaars and neighbourhoods were decorated with flags (Temizgüney, 2021). In addition to large numbers of people arriving from the surrounding districts, commanders who had played a significant role in the liberation were also invited to the festivities. Triumphal taks were erected along all the streets stretching from the Government House to Basmane and along the Kordon; depictions of Mustafa Kemal Pasha and other commanders were placed on the arches. In subsequent years, İzmir's liberation day continued to be celebrated with great splendour (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Republic Day celebrations in Tire, İzmir, 1933 (URL 2).

During the 1942 liberation celebrations in İzmir, the city was once again adorned with flags from end to end and triumphal arches were erected. After the Democrat Party came to power, in addition to Victory Day, signs referring to the Democrats' "Victory of 14 May" were incorporated into the visual language of the celebrations (Temizgüney, 2021). In the following years, the city was decorated with taks, flags and flowers for the festivities. The well-known İzmir institution Tariş, together with the Basmane and Alsancak railway directorates, commissioned triumphal arches and placed them at certain points in the city (Şavkılı & Kösele, 2023). Triumphal arches were also erected in front of the buildings of the Democrat Party and the Republican People's Party and decorated with flags.

6 October, the date marking Istanbul's liberation from enemy occupation, came to be referred to as "Liberation Day" (Kurtuluş Bayramı). In the press of the period, reports on the events related to this date likewise used the term "Liberation Day". The activities organised for the first anniversary of Istanbul's liberation (6 October 1924) continued in subsequent years (Kalemlı, 2018). Thus, the 1924 Liberation Day celebrations constitute the event in which the first triumphal tak of the Republican period was erected.

In preparation for 5 October, all of Kadıköy and Üsküdar were extensively decorated, and large triumphal arches were constructed along the routes where the army would pass through these districts. In Kadıköy, at Altıyol, Feneryolu, Göztepe Avenue and many other locations, triumphal arches carefully built for the occasion were adorned with red-and-white ribbons, laurel branches and flowers (Kalemlı, 2018). At the entrance of Göztepe Square, a triumphal arch was erected and decorated with a photograph of Gazi President Mustafa Kemal Pasha in his Commander-in-Chief uniform, taken shortly after the recapture of İzmir. On 6 October, for the ceremonies in Taksim, a large triumphal arch was built, and boards bearing the inscriptions "Long live the great army, long live the Republic of Turkey!" were hung beneath large portraits of the President. Next to the triumphal arch, a rest area was arranged. During the ceremonies, cinema and photographic cameras continuously recorded the procession (Kalemlı, 2018).

During the celebrations of the 12th anniversary of Republic Day in Bolu, it is reported that, in addition to various decorations, triumphal arches were erected in front of the 135th regiment (Altan, 2021). Altan (2021), also notes that during the 13th, 20th and 24th anniversary celebrations, triumphal arches were again set up in various parts of the city. Although he does not explicitly state that triumphal



Figure 3. Taks prepared for various celebrations in İstanbul (from left to right) Tenth Anniversary of the Republic celebrations (URL 3) Tenth Anniversary celebrations in Şehzadebaşı (URL 4) Tenth Anniversary celebrations in Beyoğlu (URL 5).

arches were erected in the intervening years, his emphasis on the organisation of celebrations similar to those of previous years suggests that such arches were likely constructed in those years as well (Figure 3).

In Şirvan, ceremonies were organised for Republic Day in 1941, 1942, 1944, 1946, 1948 and 1949, during which the municipality erected taks along the streets where the celebrations were most intensely held and commissioned decorations with flags, flowers and panels (Demir, 2015).

The use of triumphal arches in various events organised for Republic Day celebrations is also observed in Diyarbakır. In the 1940 celebrations, two triumphal arches were erected at two important points along the main street; these taks were decorated with flags, lanterns and branches, and additionally adorned with portraits of the "Eternal Chief" and the "National Chief" (Çoban, 2019). In the 1942 celebrations, the city was entirely adorned with national colours, arches and tree branches. In 1943, the celebration committee placed eight triumphal arches at different locations, and the number "20", marking the twentieth anniversary of the Republic, was written in large characters and hung at the top of these arches. In 1945, three selected locations in the city were equipped with triumphal arches, and in 1948, a triumphal arch was erected in front of the People's House (Halkevi). For the 1947 and 1949 celebrations, the researcher Çoban (2019) notes, without specifying an exact number, that triumphal arches were placed in various parts of the city (Figure 4).

During the Republic Day celebrations held in Zonguldak in 1928, 1929 and 1932, triumphal arches were erected in front of major buildings such as the Government House, the municipality building, the Turkish Aeronautical Association (Tayyare Cemiyeti), the fire brigade garage, as well as along the city's main streets; the city was adorned with laurel leaves.

In the Tenth Anniversary celebrations of the Republic in 1933, the festivities, initially planned to last three days, were carried out with great enthusiasm. While it was first envisaged that twelve or thirteen taks would be erected for the holiday, the actual number exceeded one hundred and fifty; houses were decorated with flags and laurel branches, and the streets were embellished with red-and-white colours and greenery (Namal & Toparlak, 2022).



Figure 4. A Tak decorated with tree branches, prepared for Republic Day celebrations in Diyarbakır (Çoban, 2019).



Figure 5. a) Tak of the Chamber of Physicians, b) Tak of Ziraat Bank, c) Tak of Salonika Bank, d) Tak of Ottoman Bank, e) Tak of İş Bank, f) Tak of S.R. Gileto Factory (Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)- Adana, 1933.

In 1936, triumphal arches were erected by the municipality, the Ereğli Company, Türk-İş, Kömür-İş, İş Bank and the State Railways. On these arches, the number thirteen—marking the thirteenth anniversary of the Republic—was written in large illuminated numerals, particularly on the taks placed in front of the party headquarters. In 1937 and 1938, as in previous years, all public offices, taks, the municipality building, the CHP building, the People's House, mining pits, stations, streets and squares, as well as land and sea vehicles, were decorated with flags. In Samsun, too, triumphal arches were erected along the streets for Republic Day celebrations. In his study, Haykır (2021), presents the celebration programmes between 1934 and 1950 and shares details of the planned festivities. These programmes state that the streets would be decorated with flags, pictures, panels, inscriptions and taks (Haykır, 2021).

As a region that experienced the National Struggle very directly, the city of Adana was among the places that prepared most intensively for these celebrations. The taks erected in the middle of the streets, in forms allowing both pedestrians and vehicles to pass underneath, became prominent symbols of the grand ceremony in Adana, which drew nearly 50,000 participants (Figure 5). In their article examining in detail the Tenth Anniversary celebrations of the Republic held in Adana, Oğuz Kalafat and Emine Kalafat (2022) place particular emphasis on tak architecture. The authors note that around forty taks were built and that their forms varied, including oval, square, rectangular and triangular shapes (Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022) (Figure 6).

As can be seen in Figure 7, the use of taks in the celebrations showcased the unity of the people of Adana, who belonged to different professions and faiths.

For the ceremonies held in Ankara, official documents of the period, together with newspaper articles, photographs and other visual depictions, provide a continuous narrative. Wooden tribunes were constructed and placed side by side in front of the Parliament building for the Republic Day celebrations. According to Tozoğlu and his colleagues (2022), in a city like Ankara, which at that time did not yet possess urban facilities such as a stadium or a hippodrome, such arrangements were undoubtedly both economical and highly practical. In addition to the official ceremonies defined by the Square and Station Street, daytime parades of students, scouts and soldiers, as well as torchlight processions



Figure 6. a) Tak of Millî Mensucat Factory, b) Tak of Şalih Factory, c) Tak of Çırçır Factory, d) Tak of the Chamber of Commerce and Grain Exchange, e) Tak of the Haberdashers' and Drapers' Association (Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022), Adana 1933.

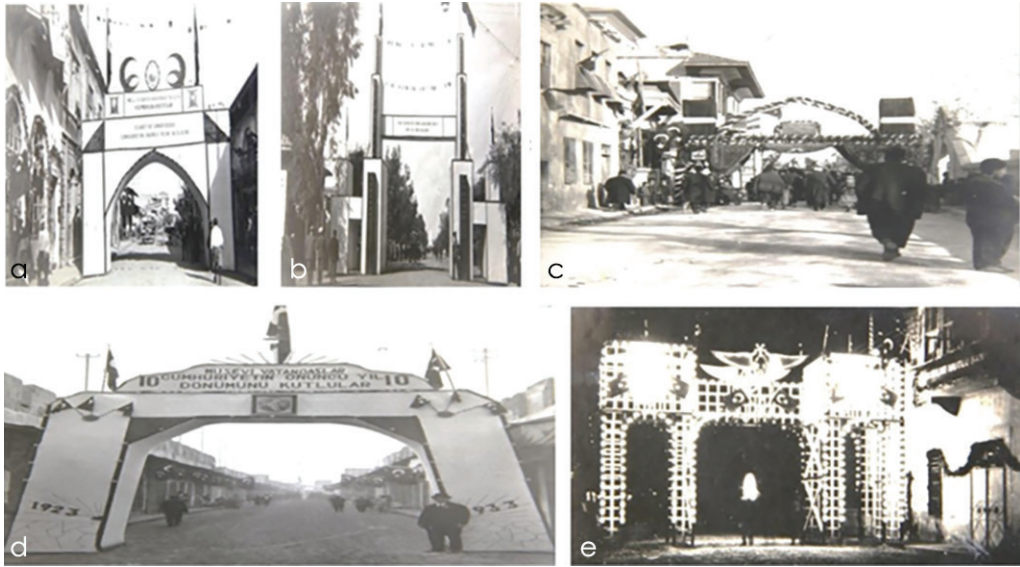


Figure 7. a) Tak of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, b) Tak of the Turkish Merchants' Group, c) Tak with Arabic script, 15d. Tak of Jewish Citizens, e) Tak of the athletes (Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022).



Figure 8. The crowd watching the passage of cyclists during the ceremony on Istasyon Street in Ankara and the arch erected in front of the first parliament building, 1928 (Tozoğlu, Kaymaz & Sezen, 2022, Koç University VEKAM Library and Archive, Inventory no. 2709).

in the evening, were organised along a route extending from Karaoğlan (Anafartalar) and Çocuk Sarayı streets through Samanpazarı and Fire Brigade Square to Bankalar Street, and ending at Hakimiyet-i Milliye Square (Tozoğlu, Kaymaz & Sezen, 2022). Taks are particularly striking in these ceremonies. In Ankara, uses that go far beyond traditional urban illumination practices can also be observed in the context of holiday celebrations. Illuminated panels in the squares and lighted taks along the streets serve as media through which slogans and messages are conveyed to the masses (Figure 8).

In the literature, information on tak architecture generally focuses on city liberation days and 29 October Republic Day celebrations; however, it is also noted that during the early Republican (1923-1938) period, taks were erected as part of the decorations in front of important streets and buildings for the 23 April Children's Day celebrations as well (Temizgüney, 2019). In a broader sense, celebrations held on national holidays also functioned as events in which exhibitions were organised to present to the public the material achievements of the Republic and the lifestyle transformations brought about by the reforms. In this respect, taks can be understood as a kind of urban installation (Figure 9). The architectural journal *Arkitekt* published photographs and short descriptions of the taks to be displayed in İstanbul and Ankara for the 10th and 11th anniversaries of the Republic (Tozoğlu, Kaymaz & Sezen, 2022). Some of these taks—used as small exhibition pavilions in which state economic enterprises such as the State Railways, İş Bank, Sümerbank and the Ministry of Water displayed their investments—were designed by prominent architects of the period. For instance, the Temporary Monument (Muvakkat Abide) of the State Railways in Ankara was designed by architect Bedrettin Hamdi; the Iron Column (Demir Sütun), exhibited on the Galata Bridge, was designed by architect Abidin; and the People's Party Column (Halk Fırkası Sütunu), displayed in Sultanahmet Square, was designed by architect Seyfettin Nashi.

FINDINGS: CLASSIFICATION OF COMMON FORMAL FEATURES

Tak architecture can be categorised under several headings based on the examples examined. The sample set and its documentation status are summarized in Table 1; the analytical typology of common formal features is synthesized in Table 2.

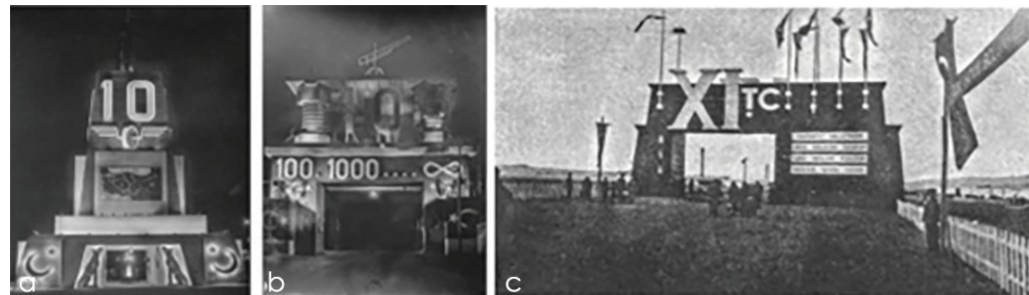
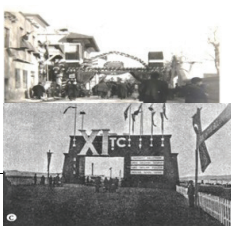
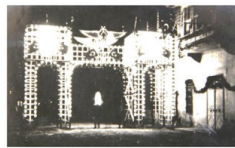
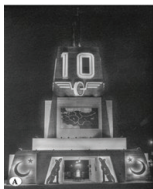


Figure 9. Some arches prepared for Republic Day celebrations (Tozoğlu, Kaymaz & Sezen, 2022).

Example/ Figure(s)	City	Year / Event	Urban location (as reported)	Commissioning actor	Main source(s)	Material/ structure data (source-based)
Fig. 1a	Ankara	1933 / 2nd Anniversary	Station axis / ceremonial route (literature- based)	State Railways	Okumuş, 2021	Undocumented in sources cited here
Fig. 1b	Ankara	1933 / 2nd Anniversary	Ceremonial route (literature- based)	Republican People's Party (CHP)	Okumuş, 2021; Bozdoğan, 2002	Undocumented in sources cited here
Fig. 1c	İstanbul (Karaköy)	1933 / 2nd Anniversary	Karaköy (district-scale urban node)	Municipal/ ceremonial organization (literature-based)	Okumuş, 2021; Karain, 1996	Undocumented in sources cited here
Fig. 2	Tire (İzmir)	1933 / Republic Day	Not specified in image caption; city- centre route	Local authorities / community (implied)	URL 2	Undocumented; image-based only
Fig. 3a–c	İstanbul (multiple districts)	1933 / 2nd Anniversary	Şehzadebaşı; Beyoğlu; other districts (as per image sources)	Municipal/ ceremonial organization (implied)	URL 3–5	Undocumented; image-based only
Fig. 4	Diyarbakır	1934–1949 / Republic Day (period)	Main celebration streets (Çoban, 2019)	Municipality / local administration	Çoban, 2019	Vegetation/ branches visible; structure undocumented
Fig. 5a–f	Adana	1933 / 2nd Anniversary	Main streets / public route (Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)	Banks, professional chambers, factory	Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022	Form documented; structure/ material largely undocumented
Fig. 6a–e	Adana	1933 / 2nd Anniversary	Main streets / public route (Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)	Factories, associations	Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022	Form documented; structure/ material largely undocumented
Fig. 7a–e	Adana	1933 / 2nd Anniversary	Main streets / public route (Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)	Chambers; merchants; citizens groups	Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022	Form documented; structure/ material largely undocumented
Textual case	Zonguldak	1925–1938 / Republic Day	Government House, municipality, CHP/People's House, station, main streets	Municipality; public institutions; enterprises	Namal & Toparlak Şahin, 2022	Material/structure undocumented in reviewed sources
Textual case	Samsun	1934–1950 / Republic Day	Streets along the ceremonial route (program- based)	Municipality / local administration	Haykır, 2021	Material/structure not specified in programmes
Textual case	Bolu	1933–1948 / Republic Day	In front of the 135th regiment; various urban points	Local administration / military context	Altan, 2021	Material/structure undocumented
Textual case	Şirvan (Siirt)	1941–1949 / Republic Day	Streets where ceremonies were most intense	Municipality	Demir, 2015	Material/structure undocumented

Table 1. Dataset and
documentation matrix.

Table 2. Common Formal Features.

NUMBER OF OPENINGS AND PASSAGE TYPE	Single-bay arches Taks (figure: Side, Turkey, Mansel, 1958).		MATERIAL AND STRUCTURE	Timber frame and skeletal Taks (figure:Tak of the Chamber of Commerce and Grain Exchange, Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)	
	Multi-bay arches (two- or three-bay) Taks (figure: Side, Turkey, Mansel, 1958).			Taks defined by greenery and vegetation (figure: Republic Day cel.,Diyarbakır Çoban, 2019)	
	Corridor-effect and serial Taks (figure: Bâb-ı Hümayun- URL1)			Hybrid systems (figure: Tak with Arabic script, Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)	
VERTICAL MASSING AND SILHOUETTE COMPOSITION	Gate-type portal Taks (figure: Tak of İsbank, Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)		COLOUR, GRAPHIC LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLIC MEANING	Taks dominated by national colours and symbols (figure: Republic Day cel. Tozoğlu, Kaymaz & Sezen, 2022)	
	Tower-integrated a Taks (with columns/light towers) (figure: Tak of the athletes Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)			Portrait- and figure-focused Taks (figure : Republic Day cel., Beyoğlu, URL-5)	
	Pavilion-like Taks (figure: republic day cel., Tozoğlu, Kaymaz & Sezen, 2022)			Taks with a strong emphasis on corporate logos and text (figure: Tak of S.R. Giledo Fac., Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)	
URBAN POSITIONING AND CEREMONIAL CHOREOGRAPHY					
Square–boulevard junction Taks (figure: Tak of Salonika Bank, Kalafat & Kalafat, 2022)		Taks in front of station public buildings (figure: republic day cel., Tozoğlu, Kaymaz & Sezen, 2022)		Neighbourhood-scale Taks (Figure: İstanbul, URL-5)	
					

a. According to Number of Openings and Passage Type:

Single-bay arches Taks: Examples with a strong axial emphasis and a single passage opening that follow the classical triumphal arch typology. Some of the taks erected for the Tenth Anniversary celebrations in İstanbul and Ankara, as well as those built in front of railway stations, fall into this category.

Multi-bay arches Taks (two- or three-bay): Republican-period taks placed on main boulevards, whose side openings provide dynamism and allow large ceremonial processions to pass through, parallel to the ancient examples of Patara, Hadrian's Arch and Orange.

Corridor-effect and serial arches Taks: In Adana, certain taks, the Bâb-ı Hümâyün Gate, and numerous smaller-scale arches aligned in sequence along a main urban axis create a "continuous passage" effect, turning the ceremonial route into a kind of stage tunnel.

b. According to Vertical Massing and Silhouette Composition:

Gate-type portal Taks: A type defined by two supports and an upper beam/arch that connects them, producing a clear and legible entrance image.

Tower-integrated Taks (with columns/light towers): As seen in examples such as the CHP light tower or the State Railways Temporary Monument, tall tower or column elements integrated into the arch composition reinforce both nighttime illumination and monumental emphasis.

Pavilion-like Taks: In the taks commissioned by institutions such as İş Bank, Sümerbank or Tarih, exhibition panels, niches, display surfaces and, at times, the formation of a small interior volume transform the tak into a kind of micro exhibition pavilion / corporate showcase.

c. According to Material and Structure:

Timber frame and skeletal Taks: Frequently observed in Ankara and provincial towns, these are taks that can be rapidly assembled and dismantled, consisting of a timber skeleton completed with fabric, stucco (or cardboard), boards and lighting.

Taks defined by greenery and vegetation: As in the examples from Zonguldak, Diyarbakır and Kadıköy–Göztepe, these types are adorned with laurel branches, flowers and tree branches, turning landscape elements directly into structural and decorative components.

Hybrid systems: Compositions in which temporary tak components are added onto a pre-existing street or square structure, thereby transforming the urban infrastructure into an instrument of staging (for instance, the Iron Column placed on the Galata Bridge and similar examples).

d. Colour, Graphic Language and Symbolic Meaning:

Taks dominated by national colours and symbols: Examples that directly visualise the Republican narrative through the use of a red-white colour palette, Turkish flags, crescent-and-star motifs, and numerical compositions highlighting years such as "10", "13" or "20". The inscription "XV" and the letters "T.C." on the Karaköy Republic Arch are early and striking instances of this visual language.

Portrait- and figure-focused Taks: Taks that become stages making social plurality visible through Atatürk portraits, military figures, depictions of commanders, and, in some cities, figurative panels representing Jewish citizens, athletes or various professional groups.

Taks with a strong emphasis on corporate logos and text: Taks commissioned by actors such as banks, factories, chambers of commerce and industry display their logos, production themes and slogans, forming a “corporate monument” type that incorporates economic development and modern production relations into the broader narrative of the Republic.

e. Urban Positioning and Ceremonial Choreography:

Square–boulevard junction Taks: Taks positioned at nodal points where squares connect to main axes, designed as thresholds marking the entry and exit points of ceremonial processions (e.g., İstanbul Taksim, Ankara Station Street).

Taks in front of stations and public buildings: Taks erected in front of railway stations, government houses, municipal buildings, People’s Houses and party headquarters, placing centres of transport and administration at the heart of the festive choreography.

Neighbourhood-scale Taks: In smaller settlements such as Tire, Şirvan or Bolu, taks erected at the scale of the bazaar or neighbourhood reveal the ways in which Republican ideology permeated local and everyday urban life.

CONCLUSION

This article set out to examine triumphal arches (taks) built in city squares and along main ceremonial axes during the early Republican period in Turkey as temporary architectural elements positioned between the typologies of monuments, gateways, and decorative portals.

Tak architecture has served as a significant architectural image since antiquity. To the codes it has historically carried—such as propaganda, communication of information, commemoration, honouring, ownership and belonging—the Republican period added new layers associated with modernization, particularly the emphasis on contemporaneity and the aspiration to create a modern city. This process also fostered collaboration between disciplines such as architecture, urban planning and sculpture in the production of urban spaces.

Considering this spatial practice within the scope of modern architectural heritage and ensuring its preservation and transmission to future generations in Turkey’s urban centres and squares plays a crucial role in sustaining social memory. These structures, which employ the innovative design approaches and construction technologies of their time, stand as representatives of the design ethos of their period. Although most of them were temporary, their conservation value, historical significance, aesthetic and artistic qualities, as well as their functional and symbolic meanings, should continue to be highlighted through exhibitions and commemorative events so that they may retain a place in collective memory. The role of tak architecture in shaping urban identity makes it essential to safeguard its position within urban memory.

Despite not being permanent buildings, Republican-period taks emerge as highly charged nodal points in the modernisation narratives of cities. These temporary structures, which inherit the spatial logic of ancient triumphal arches, generate temporary axes, stages and frames that effectively “rewrite” the city on ceremonial days. For this reason, tak architecture should be approached not only as a medium of political and ideological representation but also as an interdisciplinary design laboratory at the intersection of urban design, lighting, graphic design and exhibition practices. Taking early Republican taks as a reference for contemporary temporary installations, festival structures and

thematic gateways in public spaces today would both render this heritage more visible and help establish a line of local continuity within contemporary design culture.

A key limitation is the unevenness of archival metadata: many images are monochrome and lack explicit information on material, structural system, or exact urban coordinates. For this reason, attributes are recorded as 'undocumented' where written evidence is unavailable (Table 1), and the analysis privileges elements that can be supported by multi-source triangulation. Developing the corpus through additional primary archival records (municipal archives, project drawings, and construction records) would enable future research to deepen the material and structural reading of these temporary devices.

Based on the comparative reading of the documented sample (Table 1) and the typological synthesis (Table 2), the study indicates that Republican taks repeatedly mobilize a limited set of formal and graphic devices: single- or multi-bay passage frames, gate-like silhouettes, and strong red-white chromatic and emblematic codes (Atatürk portraits, institutional emblems, numerical slogans). Rather than claiming technical details from photographs alone, the paper treats these devices as a temporary but legible communication infrastructure that rewrites urban space during national ceremonies.

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