

Adrienn Papp

# THE TURKISH BATHS OF HUNGARY: ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF THE OTTOMAN ERA



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Cover photo:

The Ottoman era hot room of the Rudas Baths in Buda today

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Volume editor: Gyöngyi Kovács

English translation: Michael James Webb

Copy editor: Zsuzsanna Renner

Editorial assistant: Ágnes Drosztmér

Desktop editing and layout: Zsuzsanna Kiss

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# EDITORS' FOREWORD

The Turkish baths in Hungary occupy a special place in Hungary's archaeological heritage. These are buildings that we are still using for the function they were originally designed, and—especially in today's Budapest—they are viewed as part of modern bathing culture. At the same time, these buildings are not mere venues for physical rest and recreation, they are historical documents of an era, relics of the period and its culture. The Ottoman occupation in Hungary was in many respects a sad and destructive period in Hungarian history. However, there are a number of phenomena, even in modern everyday life, that can be traced back to external influences on our Hungarian homeland. One need only think of bathing or coffee.

The medieval Hungarian thermal water baths were replaced by a great many more Turkish baths during the Occupation era, and where there were no hot water springs the bath-houses were equipped with heating. We are able to envisage these from the preserved remains of our built heritage. In many cases, archaeology has exposed these relics or has demonstrated that within modern structures parts of Ottoman buildings lay hidden. The results of Hungarian heritage conservation and archaeological research are also important in the international context, many remains have been preserved, excavated or at least documented. One particularly important advance has been the archaeological research and analysis into monuments linked to written sources. Of course, this applies not only to baths but also to other typical buildings of the period under review, including mosques, minarets and mausoleums.

The surge of archaeological investigations into Ottoman buildings that took place in Hungary several decades ago gave fresh momentum to the archaeological excavations carried out during renovations on several important bath buildings over the past decade. This has also provided an opportunity to summarize the knowledge that has been accumulating since the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: data from the first surveys of buildings, from architects and researchers in the field of conservation and survey of monuments, and the generations of historians struggling with the not insignificant difficulties of written sources and archaeological excavation specialists. Consequently, it was this topic we chose when designing the second volume of the Hungarian archaeological heritage series. These monuments show superbly how a building can be both a part of architectural heritage and of modern everyday life. The presentation of the baths, however, is not just a description of the main historical data, architectural features and phenomena discovered during the excavations, but also points to the connections and contexts that illustrate many characteristic features of this historical period.

*Elek Benkő, Erzsébet Jerem, Gyöngyi Kovács, József Laszlovszky*