YILLIK

Annual of Istanbul Studies

2022

4

İSTANBUL
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies
4 (2022)

YILLIK is a peer-reviewed annual journal, published simultaneously in print and online (via Dergipark).

Title history
2012–2018 | İstanbul Araştırmaları Yıllığı / Annual of Istanbul Studies, 1–7
2019– | YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies

Mode of publication: Worldwide periodical, published annually every December
Note to contributors: *YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies* accepts submissions in English and Turkish. Articles should conform to the usage of The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), 17th edition, and to the style guides published on the journal's website. Articles in Turkish conform to a customized CMOS style available at the website. Research articles are subject to review by two anonymous reviewers and the editorial board. All other submissions are reviewed by the editorial board.

Istanbul Research Institute Publications 49
Periodicals 11
Istanbul, December 2022
ISSN: 2687-5012
Publisher: On behalf of the Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation, Necmettin Tosun
Graphic Design: Volkan Şenozan
Typesetting: Elif Rifat Türkay
Copyediting: Emily Arauz, Miray Eroğlu
Assistants: Ahmet Can Karapınar, Elizabeth Concepcion
Contact: istanbulstudies@iae.org.tr
Color Separation and Print: A4 Ofset Matbaacılık San. ve Tic. A.Ş. (Certificate no: 44739)
Yeşilce Mahallesi, Donanma Sokak. No:16 D:1-2 Seyrantepe 34418 Kağıthane/Istanbul

Meşrutiyet Caddesi no. 47, 34430, Tepebaşı - Beyoğlu/Istanbul
www.iae.org.tr
Certificate no: 12482

spectacle of projected order in those of the former, who framed rebellions as "attacks on religion itself" (p. 234).

Astutely bringing together a wide range of resources, Wishnitzer utilizes his findings with the adroitness of a storyteller and the criticism demanded by the thorny interpretation of primary sources and in the articulation of secondary sources. A rigorous exploration of the social Ottoman night, this study is a one-of-a-kind reading. It constitutes a timely parallel of readings of the European night before and after the Enlightenment[2] and offers a much needed and informed image of nights at the imperial capital.

In method as in scope, this book outlines an impressive array of discussions and a comprehensive consideration of imperial and non-imperial actors from various ideological camps. To this brilliant portrait that Wishnitzer makes of Istanbul first and Jerusalem second, inclusion of court records from Galata or Kumkapı and a deeper engagement with and elaboration on the visual material could have contributed to contextualizing the image with regard to gender issues, the spatial and urban dimension of the night, as well as further elucidation of what constituted an infringement of regulations (during, for instance, the month of Ramadan). This study insightfully succeeds in bracketing the discussion into the broader scholarship on darkness and sleep as "historically specific and socially constructed" (p. 4) by implementing the geographic (and consequently ecological) dimension, fundamental to challenging existing and forthcoming Eurocentric or state-centric readings of the early modern night. The book rigorously bridges topics central to its narrative and questions to which primary sources did not permit conclusive answers. Joining a growing scholarship on illumination in the Ottoman empire, Wishnitzer's contribution, addressing nightlife before the installation of street lighting, seems to be the first to focus on the eighteenth century.[3] *As Night Falls: Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Cities after Dark* deserves to be a must-read for researchers of light, illumination, the Enlightenment, and of the long eighteenth century in general and of the late Ottoman Empire in particular.

Oumaïma Jaïdane
Middle East Technical University
oumaima.jaidane.y@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-8367-964X

https://doi.org/10.53979/yillik.2022.15

I would like to thank Gizem Tongo for her encouraging comments on an early version of this review.

1 Cemal Kafadar, "How Dark Is the History of the Night, How Black the Story of Coffee, How Bitter the Tale of Love: The Changing Measure of Leisure and Pleasure in Early Modern Istanbul," in *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean,* ed. Arzu Oztürkmen and Evelyn Birge Vitz (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2014), 243–269.

2 E.g., Avner Wishnitzer, *Reading Clocks, Alla Turca: Time and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Wishnitzer, "Modern Turkey, Real Time and Other Functional Fabrications in Tanpınar's The Time Regulation Institute," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 2, no. 2 (November 2015), 379–400; and Wishnitzer, "Eyes in the Dark: Nightlife and Visual Regimes in late Ottoman Istanbul," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 37, no. 2 (2017): 245–261.

3 E.g., A. Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past* (New York: Norton, 2005); Alain Cabantous, *Histoire de la Nuit: XVIIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2009), and Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

4 See for example Nurçin İleri, "Geç Dönem Osmanlı İstanbul'unda Kent ve Sokak Işıkları," *Toplumsal Tarih*, 254 (February 2015): 30–37; İleri, "Nightlife and Temporal Order in fin de siècle Istanbul," in special issue "Inquiring Temporal Otherness: Timekeeping and Attitudes towards Time in the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire," *Etudes balkaniques* 2 (2017): 295–325; and Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal, "Intoxication and Imperialism: Nightlife in Occupied Istanbul, 1918–1923," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 37, no. 2 (2017): 299–313.

Enno Maessen, *Representing Modern Istanbul: Urban History and International Institutions in Twentieth Century Beyoğlu*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2022. 208 pages, 4 figures and 1 table. ISBN: 9780755637461

Enno Maessen's recent book, published by I.B. Tauris in 2022, is a welcome contribution to the fields of urban history and Istanbul studies. The book is the fruit of nearly decade-long research that the author conducted in Turkey as well as in the Netherlands, Germany, and the United Kingdom, unveiling new material from hitherto unpublished sources and archives. While the title, *Representing Modern Istanbul*, indicates a larger theme than the actual scope of the book, the subtitle makes it clear that this research focuses on the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul. It sheds light on the recent history of the city through the lens of Beyoğlu and certain institutions that have prevailed in the district since the nineteenth century.

Skillfully zooming in and out of this research area, Maessen succeeds in portraying the urban, cultural, political, and social transformations of Istanbul, while focusing on Beyoğlu and particularly on the five institutions he selected as case studies: Teutonia, Cercle d'Orient, Galatasaray High School, the German High School, and the English High School for Girls. These international institutions, all located on and around the main artery of the district—İstiklal Street—are selected as symptomatic cases portraying the continuities and ruptures in the recent history of the city as well as the district. The role of these institutions in identity formation and place-making is a constant theme throughout the book. It demonstrates "the intricate relationship between Beyoglu's physical environment and its communities" and "[investigates] the development, continuities and discontinuities, of representations on the district" from the nineteenth century and to the 1980s (p. 4–5). It discusses Beyoğlu's

role broadly as "a unique place in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey" and as "a microcosm, mirroring social, political and economic processes that occurred on a citywide, national and international scale" (p. 5).

Focusing on the understudied period of 1950 to 1990, Maessen brings a new perspective to Istanbul's urban history by incorporating micro histories of the institutions alongside a macro analysis of the district. While offering a holistic look at the turbulent political and social history of the region, the book takes a close hand look at the developments, continuities and discontinuities that took place in the second half of the twentieth century. Building on a comprehensive discussion of the late nineteenth century, Maessen brings the major breaking points of the twentieth century, such as the rise of the Young Turks to power, World War I and its aftermath, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the foundation of the Republic of Turkey to the table. In this context, the rise of nationalist ideologies, burgeoning xenophobia towards non-Muslims, and changing demographics of the region are meticulously portrayed. Drawing upon the social and political transformations of the era, the author unwraps the period post-1940, scrutinizing the outcomes of notorious incidents such as the Wealth Tax of 1944, pogroms against non-Muslims in 1955, and the expulsion of Rums in Turkey to Greece in 1964. According to Maessen, drastic changes in the urban culture and social fabric of post-1950 Beyoğlu introduced cultural and spatial ruptures that created new and different types of demographics and cultural formations. These sociocultural ruptures caused a sort of nostalgia towards the lost cosmopolitanism of the past decades. This longing for an imagined past of Pera, which has been idealized as a place of cultural diversity, refined luxury, and elegant entertainment, is also questioned throughout the book.

This "convenient cosmopolitanism," as coined by Maessen, was reimagined, mystified, and became an urban topos representing the diversity of *belle époque* Beyoğlu. Building on existing scholarship and new empirical material, the author skillfully unpacks this nostalgia for the "lost" multiculturalism of the region, while portraying various levels of xenophobia escalating against non-Muslim and non-Turkish entities during the early republican period. On the other hand, the book also challenges the hackneyed claims that Beyoğlu lost its charm and cultural significance and became a center of debauchery, corruption, and cheap entertainment during the 1970s and the 1980s. Maessen is critical of the instrumentalization of Beyoğlu's past and underlines that the "1980s brought an industry of cosmopolitan nostalgia in popular literature, city and tourism branding, which revolved around the claim to multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism" (p. 35). Scrutinizing discourses of "decline and decay" and stereotypes of urban nostalgia and underlining severe ruptures and transformations that the area faced during the twentieth century, Maessen suggests that Beyoğlu continued to be a significant cultural center and sustained its role as an urban hub of Istanbul, taking part in the formation of a dynamic new cultural production. In this respect, international institutions, with their cultural and educational capabilities, played significant roles in socioculturral continuities, identity formation, and place-making. They are treated as micro cases reflecting broader political, cultural, and social developments of the region.

The first international institution discussed in the book is the German club Teutonia. Located on the extension of İstiklal Street in Galata, Teutonia was established as a social center for Istanbul's German speaking population in 1847 and played a significant role in their social life until the 1970s. Maessen's research in the club's archives, discussed in chapter 2, reveals the severe transformations the club went through, particularly during the post-Ottoman era. Club Teutonia reflects the international political fluctuations of the region, especially due to World War I and II. The Ottoman-German alliance during the Great War and its aftermath resonated with in the club's rise and fall. After being shut down by the Allied forces during the occupation of Istanbul (1918–1923), the club was reopened in its original building in 1923 and registered with the Turkish authorities after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Yet, Teutonia lost blood again due to its affiliation with the Nazi regime after 1933, as it housed the activities of the *Hitlerjugend.* Istanbul during this period housed many German intellectuals and refugees fleeing from the Nazi regime. Therefore, the club's bond with the German-speaking residents of Istanbul diminished and finally it was shut down after the defeat of Germany. Rejecting its organic links with the Nazis, Teutonia was reestablished in 1954 and positioned as a protector of the assets of the institution, especially of the historic club building. The building still exists today in Galata, and it will be housing Orient-Institut Istanbul, an academic research institute funded by the Max Weber Foundation, by the end of 2022. In fact, the building is a living memorial of the transformations and continuities of the international community of Istanbul, especially that of German speaking ones.

Chapter 3 brings the reader to a more recent history of the region and opens the discussion of cultural heritage and architectural preservation. Focusing on a monumental building that was built on İstiklal Street, the chapter discusses the history and afterlife of the Cercle d'Orient. Built for the Ottoman-Armenian bureaucrat and businessman Abraham Eremyan Pasha by the famous Levantine architect Alexandre Vallaury in 1883, the grand building with a façade of 45 meters, was rented by the elite gentlemen's club and named after it. Parallel to the transformations that took place in the sociopolitical scene of Istanbul and due to the rise of "*arabesk* culture," the club gradually moved away from Pera and reestablished itself at its summer residence on the Asian side of Istanbul in 1971. Maessen shows that as the club, which initially had a strongly pronounced international character, became more Turkified, its sociospatial links with "cosmopolitan" Beyoğlu also diminished. Parallel to the so-called deterioration of the region, the Cercle d'Orient building changed hands numerous times. Simultane-

ously, the close vicinity of the building to the entertainment industries in Beyoğlu introduced new meanings and roles, especially after the 1950s, as its surroundings became the central node for a newly flourishing cultural enterprise. The adjoining street, Yeşilçam Alley, became a locus for the growing local cinema industry. As the name Yeşilcam became a synonym for Turkish Hollywood, the street developed as the hub and locomotive of the sector and housed numerous movie theaters, such as Rüya, İpek, Sümer, and Melek (later, and more famously, Emek).

From the mid-1970s onwards, with the drastic urban transformation of the region and due to the controversies regarding property ownership, these cinema halls changed hands, some started showing adult movies and others shut down their doors. Yet, one of the oldest and most remarkable movie theaters, the Emek Cinema, remained open and became a significant cultural landmark for cinephile Istanbulites, a fine reminder of the heydays of the Turkish cinema industry. The decision to demolish Emek, in line with a project involving the restoration of the Cercle d'Orient building and the construction of a shopping mall at the parcel of the historic cinema, caused unrest and ignited many public protests in 2013. Maessen, in this chapter, elaborates on the role of Yeşilçam and Emek in public memory and critically discusses the privatization of heritage and profit-oriented urban transformations.

The chapter on Galatasaray High School, a francophone school with roots dating back to the Ottoman era, examines the connection of the school and its alumni with Beyoğlu. Feeling proud of the location and history of their school, many Galatasaray graduates identify themselves with Beyoğlu, establishing strong ties and participating in the processes of place-making. However, raised with secularist and nationalist sentiments, particularly the older generations of Galatasaray alumni turned a blind eye to the tragic demographic transformations of the region. According to Maessen, while producing a deep nostalgia for the *belle époque* Beyoğlu and its cosmopolitan past, various Galatasaray graduates also participate in the fabrication of discriminative discourses.

Unlike those of Galatasaray, the alumni of the English High School for Girls and the German High School, as discussed in chapters 5 and 6 respectively, may not have established such close bonds with the district. Both institutions were founded by the initiatives of the British and German governments during the nineteenth century and were products of their political and economic alliances with the Ottoman Empire. In response to the increasing European populations in Istanbul, Great Britain initiated the foundation of educational facilities for girls and boys. The English High School for Girls (EHSG) was established in its current building on a plot that was granted by Abdülmecid to the wife of the British ambassador, Lady Stratford de Redcliffe. Located on İstiklal Street, the legal status of EHSG was transformed numerous times, reflecting Anglo-Ottoman political relations. While the activities of the school were suspended during World War I, it was reopened during the Allied occupation of Istanbul. The high school remained active as a British institution until 1979 and continued to be popular among Turkish families. When the Thatcher government decided to close all foreign schools, the EHSG was nationalized, and reopened as an *Anadolu Lisesi* (Anatolian High School) and continued its life as a national educational institution with an English curriculum. On the contrary, the German High School, located in the vicinity of Tünel, retained its connection to the German state until today. Yet, both institutions departed from their foundational purpose to educate children of German and English-speaking communities in Istanbul, as the number of Europeans living in Istanbul dropped drastically in the twentieth century. Local students would fill their places in the second half of the twentieth century. These institutions were thus positioned as diplomatic tools reinforcing the relations between the new Turkish Republic and Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as disseminating their respective national cultures.

To conclude, Maessen's book provides an original and fresh look at the urban history of Istanbul and particularly of Beyoğlu. While some sections detailing the internal mechanisms of the selected institutions and their relationships with Turkish and European governments may not be of particular interest to non-specialists, the book's focus on the postwar period fills an important gap in the literature. The institutions scrutinized in the book are far from being representative of the whole region, let alone the city, yet Maessen manages to skillfully position them within a wider historical context, bringing a larger sociocultural and political perspective to Beyoğlu's recent history.[1] The local, international, and transnational actors and institutions are interconnectedly entertained in the book, a feature borrowed from the dynamism of Beyoğlu itself. The book, with its refined and straightforward language, competently weaves together archival research, urban theory, and historical data and is a great read both for experts and non-experts interested in the recent history of Istanbul.

Nilay Özlü
İstanbul Bilgi University
nilay.ozlu@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-1366-5103

https://doi.org/10.53979/yillik.2022.16

1 For previous studies on the district Maessen engages with, see Sibel Bozdoğan and Esra Akcan, *Turkey: Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012); Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Edhem Eldem, "Galata-Pera between Myth and Reality," in *From 'mileu de memoire' to 'lieu de memoire': The Cultural Memory of Istanbul in the 20th Century*, ed. Ulrike Tischler (Munich: Peter Lang, 2006), 18–36; Paolo Girardelli, "Architecture, Identity and Liminality: On the use and meaning of Catholic spaces in late Ottoman Istanbul," *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World, XXII* (2005): 233–264; Girardelli, "Sheltering Diversity: Levantine Architecture in Late Ottoman Istanbul," in *Multicultural Urban Fabric and Types in the South Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Maurice Cerasi et al. (Istanbul: Orient Institut, 2008), 113–140; K. Mehmet Kentel, "Assembling 'Cosmopolitan' Pera: An Infrastructural History of Late Ottoman Istanbul" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2018).