

Büyükcinal, Feriha. *Bir Zaman Tüneli, Beyoğlu*. İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2006, 214pp.

ABSTRACT

A Journey in Time: Beyoğlu

Bir Zaman Tüneli, Beyoğlu

This is a work of popular history by an author who is not a professional historian but a native of Istanbul, who aims to shed light on the social and cultural history of Beyoğlu by utilising memoirs and secondary sources. It is a compilation of the author's essays previously published in the journal *Sanat Çevresi*. She emphasises the cosmopolitan nature of Beyoğlu in her narrative and investigates under separate headings the various communities, such as the Armenians, Jews and White Russians, who arrived in Istanbul in the 1900s. The book demonstrates that by accumulating wealth in economic terms and developing educational systems and printing press facilities, the Armenians, Greeks, Jews and other Levantines became Beyoğlu's first bourgeoisie and acted as the focal point of its social and cultural life.

The author provides information on the traditions and customs of each community and mentions their harmonious relationships with the Turks. While she does not explore the Greeks, who were one of Beyoğlu's main communities, under a separate heading, she provides detailed information on their customs and lives, and talks about their good relationships and integrated lives with the Turks.

At times, the author refers to her own memories. She mentions Beyoğlu's religious spaces, outstanding buildings, arcades, shops, hotels, cafes, patisseries and taverns, giving

information on those that are still functioning – such as Rejans, Abdullah Efendi Restaurant, Markiz and Lebon, Nüsüaz and Petrogard. She also talks about famous artists and intellectuals – such as Said Naum Duhani, Cahide Sonku, Cahit Burak and Vitali Hakko – mentioning their relations with the quarter and giving information on their lives. She describes the unsightly urban sprawl that Istanbul has been experiencing since the 1950s and emphasises the role the ‘Society for Saving Beyoğlu’ plays in protecting old Beyoğlu buildings and stopping uncontrolled urban expansion. The book utilises reliable secondary sources and as a work of popular history on Beyoğlu, it has its merits.

Feryal Tansuğ

Translated by Aysu Dincer