

Rıza, Ali (et al.). *Eski Zamanlarda İstanbul Hayatı*. İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2001, 2nd ed., 474pp.

ABSTRACT

Life in Istanbul of Yore

Eski Zamanlarda İstanbul Hayatı

The book has been prepared for publication by Ali Şükrü Çoruk in the Latin alphabet, as the original articles were written before 1929, when the Arabic script was still in use for writing Turkish. It also, includes articles by Ali Birinci, formerly published in *İstanbul Araştırmaları* (Vol. 1, Spring 1997, pp.87-94) and *Tarihin Gölgesinde* (2001, pp.101-108), which are gathered in a section entitled “Correspondent of Istanbul, Ali Rıza Bey the Minister of Fisheries”.

After having worked in various government posts, Ali Rıza Bey (1842-1928) was assigned as the Imperial Minister of Fisheries in October 1883, Minister of Salt Works and Fisheries in 1884, and Imperial Minister of Public Debts in March 1907. After the proclamation of the Second Constitution, he was suspended in 1909 and retired in January 1910.

The book is a compilation of articles published by Ali Rıza Bey between 1919-1925 in various newspapers and journals of the time. Çoruk sums up his purpose in writing the articles as “a wish to inform the new generation about customs and traditions which have been forgotten with the passage of time; ways of life in palaces and mansions, love affairs of famous people, hashish addicts, beggars, firemen, ways of entertainment, in short, all that

relates to old Istanbul". Written in a flowing and colourful language, this compilation constitutes one of the most comprehensive and important studies of the author, as it includes invaluable observations, anecdotes and analyses on all aspects of old Istanbul's social and daily life. The author has made an effort to present his memories and observations in detail and they are well-supported by other sources. However, there are significant overlaps and repetitions in the book, since the individual articles were published separately on various occasions.

The book fills a gap and serves as an important primary source, as well as presenting an interesting attitude towards historical writing. However, it does have certain shortcomings: the original articles in Ottoman script have not been published, which is a significant problem, as it is not possible to check the accuracy of the transcription. Additionally, the introduction does not reveal the identity of the person who undertook the transcription, or the methods that were followed. Also, orthographical rules have not been used consistently throughout the book.

Samet Bağcı

Translated by Aysu Dinçer