

Cezar, Mustafa. *XIX. Yüzyıl Beyoğlusı*. Istanbul: Akbank, 1991, 476pp.

ABSTRACT

Beyoğlu in the Nineteenth Century

XIX. Yüzyıl Beyoğlusı

Focused mainly on the nineteenth century, this book provides detailed information on the history of Beyoğlu, a district formerly known as Pera. Printed on paper of excellent quality, it holds rich visual material, including numerous maps, plans and photographs. Each of the twelve chapters ends with a notes section, and the work concludes with a six-page summary in English.

The author expresses his disappointment over the decline of Beyoğlu's cosmopolitan nature, criticising the political developments that caused its non-Muslim population to dwindle. The book begins with an etymological investigation into place- names, i.e. 'Beyoğlu' and 'Pera'. The author then goes on to describe the changes in the physical boundaries of the neighbourhood through the centuries. He mentions the vital role played by the provision of water in the formation of the neighbourhood and emphasises the fact that Beyoğlu developed significantly during the time of the Ottoman reforms, namely the closing decades of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century. He refers to Ottoman reforms again when he depicts the barracks and military schools built in the neighbourhood.

Cezar describes not only Beyoğlu but also its surrounding neighbourhoods, and provides information on issues such as the general development of the population along with the social and cultural life of these places. In addition, the book looks at changes in the demography of the area, while highlighting factors that have made an impact on the social life of Beyoğlu such as: foreign schools, transport (trams were in frequent use during the nineteenth century), recreational spaces, shopping centres, arcades, theatres and cinemas. Cezar presents detailed information on the history of various mosques, churches and synagogues in the area. This is followed by a detailed explanation of the architectural attributes (elements) of the neighbourhood, also featuring examples of buildings that were damaged or destroyed, which are supplemented with photographs. Ottoman palaces are also examined in detail, especially when the author discusses the impact that the transfer of the Ottoman court from Topkapı to Dolmabahçe palace had on the neighbourhood.

Finally, the author describes political events that Beyoğlu has witnessed: the military reforms, the Tanzimat reforms which influenced the administrative, social and economic structures, the first Ottoman parliament, the first constitutional monarchy and the transition into a republic.

Drawing on academic works in Turkish, French and English, and supplemented by vibrant visual material, *XIX. Yüzyıl Beyoğlusu* is a rich account of Beyoğlu's history and a pleasurable read to those interested in Istanbul. Given its wide ranging perspective, the book is also a valuable contribution to existing research and studies on Istanbul.

Feryal Tansuğ

Translated by Aysu Dincer