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152 Avner Wishnitzer, *As Night Falls: Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Cities after Dark*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021. xiii + 376 pages, 8 figures. ISBN: 978110883214

"How Dark is the History of the Night?," Cemal Kafadar asked in his 2014 article where he determined an examinatory framework for sixteenth-century Istanbul after dark, identifying coffee as the primary fuel and coffeehouses as the main stages for social and cultural activities pouring into the night.[1] Building upon this framework, Avner Wishnitzer, in his *As Night Falls: Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Cities after Dark,* takes the discussion to the eighteenth century—a century metaphorically and literally associated with light in the European context—and asks: How dark is the history of the night in late Ottoman Istanbul and Jerusalem?

In line with his previous publications on the cultural, industrial, and social history of clocks, temporality, and illumination in late Ottoman Istanbul, Avner Wishnitzer, professor in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History at the University of Tel Aviv, directs his focus to nighttime in this study. With light (or the absence thereof) as the spearhead of "visual regimes," the author convincingly argues that the "relative ineffectiveness [of utilizing light to perpetuate daytime state authority into the night] was a mixed blessing" to both the rulers and their subjects (p. 242). This ineffectiveness rendered light concretely and metaphorically a vector of nocturnal realities and dark politics. Whereas its absence was an exacerbation of precarity, oppression and social inequities to some, it was equally an ideal setting for rituals or for revolutionary, nefarious, and criminal activities to others. Likewise, the presence of light was not only a physical commodity and an instrument of uncloaking mischief otherwise willingly plunged into the dark. It was also instrumentalized through "festivities, in truly carnivalesque, Bakhtinian terms" to resonate with imperial authority by endowing it with a divinity essential to its legitimization (p. 191).

In hatching this captivating and comprehensive portrait of the imperial capital and peripheral Jerusalem by night during the long eighteenth-century, the author relies on a myriad of sources, including Üsküdar/Istanbul and Jerusalem court records, chronicles, travel accounts, poetry collections, and palace-produced surnames (imperial festival books), as well as anecdotes, popular jokes, prophetic traditions, and even idioms in Arabic and modern and Ottoman Turkish.

In line with his premises, Wishnitzer structures a thematic reading of the sources along two primary axes (overlapping with the two parts of the book) with regard to the perspectives of the ruled and the rulers, respectively. In the first part, "Nocturnal Realities" (chapters 1 to 5), the norms of the night experience are examined from a sociological standpoint. According to long eighteenth-century norms, economic, ecological, and technological aspects of lighting were not direct agents of change. Wishnitzer demonstrates that "the night did not emancipate people from the social hierarchies and material conditions of their days," but rather was the screen against which diurnal order and disorder alike were projected and magnified (p. 10). As night fell, the setting was one in which darkness deprived the authorities of their control and the most vulnerable of their security. This impairment of vision gave way to discourses and regulations imposing visibility and authorities taking punitive measures against those lurking in the dark. Nevertheless, this did not preclude that the night also served the interests of the same order seeking to limit it, nor did it deter the economically underprivileged and socially marginalized from perpetuating their activities. In fact, nocturnal settings were favored by those in search of solitude or gatherings of those in search of unorthodox leisure, intimate connections, or spiritual elitism. Beyond the mere spiritual elitism the presence of light afforded, lighting was first and foremost a basic physical commodity at the end of an industrial economic production system and—much like in modern terms—was impacted by geographic location, quality standards, supply, demand, and inescapably regulated market and black-market dynamics.

Conversely, the second part, "Dark Politics" (chapters 6 and 7), offers an account where real and metaphoric light were agents of political propaganda and insurrection. In fact, with the constraints of its exchange value outside the court dismissed, for the rulers, light predominantly had a utilitarian value and a symbolic value. Unbound by its prices and production details, sovereigns "did not suffer the inconvenience of darkness" (p. 178). Unlike their subjects, whose access to lighting products and nocturnal leisure resonated with wealth and elitism, sultans partook in these night activities as a social and political obligation. Nocturnal court parties, extravagant use of light in imperial infrastructures and during religious or regal festivities were a conduit of directly ensuring legitimacy among the political elite and indirectly among the subjects. Often echoing their European counterparts, eighteenth-century sultans subscribed to the association of light with the divine. Conspicuously employing it as a demonstration of ability to turn night into day, Ottoman rulers confirmed that "light was to some extent a universal political language [that] also had very local dialects" (p. 175). These were dialects through which Istanbul sovereigns formulated a rhetoric whereby light was associated with absolute Sunni Muslim sultanic authority, and whereby mischievous janissaries, the religiously antinomian, and the urban underclass were stigmatized into "heretic forces of darkness and chaos" (p. 13). To exemplify this formulated rhetoric, Wishnitzer traces the night battles between the janissaries and Ahmed III (r. 1703–1730) and describes how darkness constituted a backdrop against which janissaries exercised de facto domination over the night and briefly succeeded in devising a plan to overthrow the sultan. Revisiting later janissary rebellions, the writer makes the case that fire also aligned with the day and night dichotomy opposing the rulers of the day to "the unofficial rulers of the night" (p. 210). It was chaotic arson in the hands of the latter and the

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.

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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