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Shirine Hamadeh and Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, eds., *A Companion to Early Modern Istanbul*. Leiden: Brill, 2022. xxx + 757 pages, 57 figures, 6 tables. ISBN: 9789004468566

This wide-ranging collection of essays offers a very different vision of Ottoman Istanbul from what historians used to favor. In the words of Christoph Neumann that open his contribution to the volume, “For a long time, scholars have written the history of the Ottoman Empire as that of the elites” (p. 114). This top-heavy history was doubly true for Istanbul, where the palace cast a long shadow and was assumed to dominate urban life. Most of the authors here have, if not exactly inverted this older history, chosen to broaden their view and take the whole of Istanbul, both people and cityscape, as their sprawling and many-sided subject. They tempt readers down into the streets. They take them across the city, beyond the palace and imperial monuments, and lead them through the markets and out to the surrounding gardens and cemeteries. The survey passes through neighborhood streets and holds up tidbits of daily life: how people lived in their neighborhoods, built, and furnished their houses, managed practical affairs like security

and sanitation, and experienced the sights and sounds of the city around them. The bustle of the capital comes alive. This is a tour meant to engage all of the senses, and to push readers into mental cityscapes, exploring the values, beliefs, and anxieties of the population.

For a collection of twenty-six essays that cover different facets of Istanbul's early modern history, roughly from the Ottoman conquest (1453) to the end of the eighteenth century, this review will not be able to discuss each and every chapter separately. It will instead strive to draw out their “collective” arguments and tendencies. Two questions will occupy most of our attention: debates about Istanbul's “early modernity” and the distinctive features of Istanbul as an imperial capital.

The concept of “early modernity” is central to the *Companion*, which represents more than the summation of new research carried out over the last two decades or so. Unlike previous histories of Istanbul, which selected a particular period (like Robert Mantran's classic study on the late seventeenth century) or which aimed at comprehensive coverage (like the lively, colorful social history co-authored by Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, who surveyed the entire Ottoman period), these essays place Istanbul within early modern history and work out exactly what this periodization means.<sup>1</sup> Their answers tend to emphasize a story of continuing growth and development, very unlike the old Ottomanist narrative of sixteenth-century glory that sputtered into long-term decay. The authors further invite us to reconsider Istanbul as an early modern capital. Receiving the greatest scrutiny are Ottoman myths of power. Instead of subjects squirming in the grip of absolutism, we see far more complicated terms of interaction between state and society where the state had to accept very real constraints on its authority and proceed with wariness and caution towards the very population that lived most fully within its grasp.

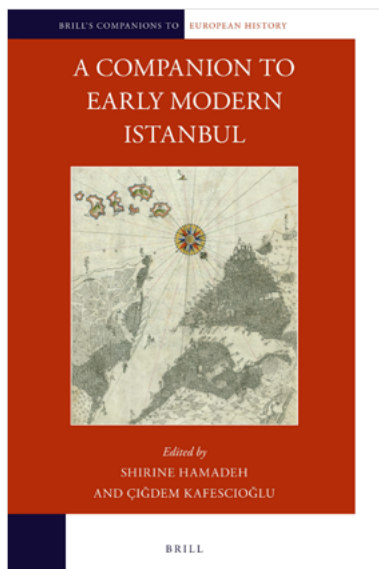
### Istanbul and Early Modernity

One basic yet essential observation that we can make about Istanbul dur-

ing the early modern centuries is that it grew dramatically after 1453. It burst the confines of the old medieval walls, climbed northward across Galata, and expanded its footprint on both shores of the Bosphorus. The population boomed. By the early sixteenth century, it had more than doubled to about 100,000; and by the eighteenth century, it had further swelled to some 400,000, easily making it one of the five largest cities in the world.

All of this growth had consequences far beyond the sheer number of inhabitants or the profusion of neighborhoods, markets, gardens, and other spatial landmarks. It reverberated within Ottoman culture. Cemal Kafadar pursues this theme most directly and sets the conceptual groundwork for many of the chapters in the collection. He dwells on “the unavoidable sense that in the long sixteenth century, something happens to Istanbul, if not cities and to urban life in general, that we need to reckon with” (p. 29). In the case of Istanbul, the general expansion of the economy and population—not to mention the empire itself—gave birth to a more complex society which began to hail itself as the pinnacle of urbanity. It was during the sixteenth century that the city “acquired the aura of being larger than any other place” (p. 30). Reveling in its size and magnificence, it self-consciously offered an alluring cityscape full of sights and experiences that one could not hope to have elsewhere. As a spectacle, Istanbul was incomparable.

Authors repeatedly stress the symbolic potency of Istanbul. The capital acted as a vast stage with its numerous imperial mosques, sprawling markets, monumental fountains, gardens for excursions and promenades, and of course the ceremonial focal point of Topkapı Palace. The state regularly asserted its presence against this backdrop. On the accession of a new sultan, the birth of a prince or princess, the circumcision of young princes, or some military victory, the palace would deck out the capital in festive lights. Officials, soldiers, and palace retainers would conduct parades, banquets, celebrations. Zeynep Yelçe shows how these ceremonies became



146 Ottoman. Continuing the Byzantine custom, the Ottomans originally used the Hippodrome (At Meydanı) as the main venue for celebrations of state and dynasty. By the eighteenth century, we learn, an interesting shift had occurred. The palace now preferred to hold its entertainments and fireworks by the shores of the Golden Horn. This ceremonial migration, as Yelçe sees it, represents an effort to turn the entire city into the setting for imperial spectacles once confined to the environs of the palace.

Beyond these grand celebrations of state was the possibility for a new kind of stage. In the main thoroughfares and commercial districts, the art of “people watching” began to take shape. The young and fashionable acquired the habit of gathering together, both to watch and be seen. Selim S. Kuru and Lucienne Thys-Şenocak note how the major thoroughfares became places where these connoisseurs and aesthetes might cast their appreciative gaze on passersby, female and male, and memorialize them in verse. So central did the capital and its sights become to Rumi poetry, Oscar Aguirre-Mandujano and the late Walter Andrews tell us, that all scenes were assumed to take place in Istanbul unless the author specifically named another location. Not exclusively a sensual pursuit, the city-as-stage lent itself equally to religious interpretations. Asli Niyazioğlu explains how Sufis set up spiritual tours amid the religious monuments and saints’ tombs. Casting their eyes upon much of the same ground as poets, they did not fail to notice the innumerable worldly temptations on the streets of the capital and held them up as a moral warning to acolytes. For those who were looking for such temptations, Istanbul did not disappoint. In his essay on sociability, an under-researched topic in Ottoman studies, Marinos Sariyannis shows how the capital was unmatched in the number and variety of outlets for social life, which was quickening during the early modern centuries. The city harbored a burgeoning leisure culture, which, as he rightly argues, was one of the hallmarks of “early modernity.” The first coffeehouses, perhaps the greatest social innovation of the early

modern period, had appeared in the mid-sixteenth century. Patrons came for more than coffee. They sought out company and conversation, to be shared in a new public space which positively encouraged social gathering and the circulation of gossip and information. Others were lured by entertainments such as storytelling, shadow puppet theater, and musical performances. Operating at the margins of social respectability were numerous taverns, where alcohol was served to a multi-confessional clientele. Tobacco arrived at the beginning of the seventeenth century, achieved instant popularity, and quickly wafted into all corners of social life. By the eighteenth century, Sariyannis argues, a more expansive sociability had taken hold. One of its most provocative consequences was the growing visibility of women in public spaces, which the authorities judged intolerable and tried, with little effect, to suppress with several bursts of decrees. Sariyannis attributes this official clamor to “increased state supervision of modes of sociability” (p. 492) touched off by a more active leisure culture that the state was helpless to police.

All of this social activity helped to produce distinctly Ottoman forms of cultural expression. Cem Behar illustrates this development by giving a tour of Ottoman music—which he insists on calling “Ottoman/Turkish” even though much of it was made by non-Muslims or those who sang in languages other than Turkish. His central point is that, by the seventeenth century, this music had already arisen in the vibrant social milieu of the capital and required no official or court patronage. Baghdadi musicians brought to the capital in 1534 easily inserted themselves into the local music scene. A little over a century later, after Murad IV reconquered Baghdad (1638), the Iraqi musicians who followed him back discovered that their music had become associated with the “Persian” style, quite distinct from that of the court and the streets of the capital. In the interim, local musicians and audiences had fashioned new musical tastes for themselves. Excluding the small ensembles—perhaps five or six musicians at most—who consti-

tuted the “classical” tradition of Ottoman music, this performance was overwhelmingly popular, not professional, and happily gave the audience what it wanted to hear, not what formal musical canons might demand. This thriving music culture was one measure of the deep creativity of an active “street culture.” Utterly independent of patronage from the court or officialdom, it owed no particular loyalty to religious values or political factions. It possessed an earthy mentality, very much rooted in the material concerns of urban life. Its “archive” is the folklore of the city, to which Gülru Necipoğlu draws our attention. Grappling with the setbacks meted out by natural and man-made disasters—plagues, earthquakes, fires—the urban population placed its trust in talismanic buildings and objects, many of them dating to the Byzantine period, which were held to exercise a kind of magical guardianship. These legends acknowledged a much older history of Istanbul (also addressed by Cemal Kafadar), stretching back far beyond the Islamic era, and told of earlier iterations of the city whose remnants, people believed, still lurked in the urban landscape along with various spirits and spells. This awareness of a deep past reinforced apocalyptic predictions which continually circulated and renewed their credibility with every misfortune that the capital suffered.

One of the mysteries in Ottoman studies has to do with the relative neglect of the vast trove of folkloric materials available to researchers. Difficult to interpret and to date with any accuracy, these fragments of an older oral culture constitute one of the biggest opportunities that historians have yet to grasp. For precisely this reason, one of the most exciting contributions is the essay on Istanbul folklore by Zeynep Altok, who takes us away from tired clichés about “Islamic culture” and shows us a different side of the city that too many historians still fail to acknowledge. The chapter explores new genres of prose tales that came into being in early modern Istanbul. The main plotlines of these stories, she tells us, often consisted of urban adventures set in the contemporary city itself, not in

some far-off time and land. The tales spoke with a “materialistic worldview” and unfolded without a “moralizing message” (p. 585). The culmination of this new oral literature, worldly and irreverent, was the birth of *meddah* performances sometime around the beginning of the eighteenth century. Altok takes the advent of this genre, which featured a cast of recognizable and realistic social types, as an unmistakable step towards an early modern sensibility. The stories possessed an “unabashed fictionality” she argues (p. 598), which self-consciously used Istanbul as their stage, returning us to our earlier theme of the capital as an enormous spectacle. More provocatively, Altok regards the *meddah* as a precursor to modern mass culture. It nourished a love of “novelty,” she insists, which set it apart from the established folk genres of storytelling.

The rise and maturation of new forms of urban art and entertainment during the seventeenth and early eighteenth century must certainly rank among the critical turning points in Istanbul’s cultural history. How can we fit these innovations within an “early modern” periodization? The answer, this volume indirectly suggests, requires us to think of two general phases. After an initial period of sixteenth-century growth, as emphasized by Cemal Kafadar, Istanbul’s culture experienced a kind of delayed response. As the capital became bigger and richer, it could sustain a more sophisticated leisure culture. In other words, the contributors have collectively supported a new narrative for early modern Istanbul, which places the accent on long-term growth and dynamism. This narrative stands in marked contrast to the older account of this period, which cast the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in particular, as little more than a time of stagnation and decline.

This “decline paradigm” first came under attack in the 1980s. It has long lost its purchase, and the *Companion* both confirms its demise and the points the way towards a newer and fuller framework to replace it. Only one contribution hearkens back to the old model. In his overview of Ottoman science, Harun Küçük argues that the scientific

culture of the capital foundered amid the “economic collapse of education” (p. 612) in the seventeenth century. Deprived of earlier channels of financial support, Ottoman science languished, or rather became “little science,” increasingly “pragmatic” and oriented to the market for patronage. The idealization of the sixteenth century, so pronounced in the older scholarship, gets a second wind in this chapter, alone among the other contributions. Drawing on the past generation of scholarship, Linda Darling reminds us how the idolization of the sixteenth century as a “golden age” stemmed in large part from political rivalries inside the Ottoman state. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, downwardly mobile factions were already wielding nostalgia for a bygone order as a veiled form of political dissent and criticism. By the seventeenth century, a larger elite was consolidating its power, increasingly from beyond the walls of the palace. Christoph Neumann highlights a long-term tendency towards “aristocratization” as high positions in the bureaucracy and religious establishment came to be dominated, if not entirely monopolized, by a relatively closed club of families who successfully passed their social privileges and connections from one generation to the next. John Curry provides a case study of this stratification within the Sufi leadership, which came to pass through a few eminent lineages. This profile of an entrenched elite closely resembles, as Neumann argues, the aristocratic cliques dominating the large states of early modern Europe. European diplomats and visitors, he says, had little trouble understanding the workings of the Ottoman elite precisely because the terms of rank and deference were so much like the rules and sensibilities that prevailed in their own societies. Looking across Eurasia, one might say that this enhanced sense of hierarchy and protocol was very much part of early modern urban society.

### **What Did It Mean to Be an Imperial Capital?**

As the seat of the Ottoman government, early modern Istanbul was inextricably bound to the workings of the Ottoman state. It held the pal-

ace, most of the sultan’s officials, and by far the largest part of the Ottoman military. And as we saw earlier, it acted as an enormous ideological platform, dotted with imperial monuments that broadcast the glory and legitimacy of the dynasty. No place more fully projected the Ottoman order than Istanbul.

To an earlier generation of historical writing, the weight of the early modern state was immense. It was a vast absolutist regime which pervaded, dominated, and endlessly surveilled its society. Echoes of this older historiographical view occasionally surface in the volume. Most forthright is Zeynep Yürekli, who in her overview of Istanbul’s imperial monuments, casually refers to them as “vestiges of a highly centralized bureaucratic machine” (p. 518). Such a mighty state would surely have its own way in its capital. But was the relationship between state and capital as straightforward as this older view supposes?

Let us take the policing of urban space as one basic measure of state power. In the two chapters dealing with responses to natural disasters, for instance, we do not find identical assessments. In her study of death in Istanbul, Nükhet Varlık examines plagues, earthquakes, fires, and other mass fatalities. Impressed by official efforts to cope with these misfortunes, she cites regulations for burials, garbage collection, and fire-fighting. Seventeenth-century laws forbidding construction in timber encourage her to speak of something resembling “urban planning.” All these initiatives, she maintains, amounted to an “early modern Ottoman public health and disaster-relief system” (p. 434). But would everyone agree? After the Great Fire of 1660, one of the very worst of the early modern period, the state did indeed order homes to be rebuilt with masonry. Gülru Necipoğlu judges the measure a failure that left no imprint on the urban fabric. She attributes it to the “limited efficacy of the Ottoman administration in implementing” (p. 226) such regulations. The main obstacle was the loyalty of the capital’s population to inherited styles and tastes in architecture. Timber homes were lighter and more

148 comfortable. The state could not simply make people switch by issuing a few pronouncements.

Two other contributors treat the capabilities of the state with the same skepticism. Discussing neighborhood and family in Istanbul, Leyla Kayhan Elbirlik finds that the state had no effective means of tracking Istanbul's population. Official efforts to promote marriage registrations went nowhere and would not, in fact, make much progress before the late nineteenth century. Betül Başaran widens this criticism. Her study of crime and policing shows how official anxieties about rural migration crested during the eighteenth century as population growth accelerated. The state responded with a series of initiatives. It tried to step up patrols of the streets and inspections of markets. It imposed new regulations on migrants, set up checkpoints outside the city, and required proof of established residence through a system of guarantees, which had to be confirmed by residents of the neighborhood where individuals claimed to live. And yet what is most remarkable about all these ambitions is how quickly they faded. The state was unable to create anything approaching mass surveillance and mobilization. Başaran's analysis, in particular, represents a sobering correction to so much of the older tradition of writing about the Ottoman state as a well-oiled machine. Instead of this idealized vision of Ottoman statecraft, we get snapshots of an early modern state which, like its Eurasian peers, struggled to convert decrees and plans into practical results.

No imperial administration could act exactly as it pleased in its own capital or pretend that its decrees would instantly translate into action. The political and logistical frustrations which circumscribed early modern administration in the provinces imposed many of the same barriers within sight of the palace walls. Experience would teach officials that they should not take public order for granted. Gülay Yılmaz sketches a city where popular discontent could suddenly and unpredictably boil over. She helpfully places Istanbul in a broader and

early modern context, links the Ottoman capital to a global "age of protest" spanning the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The city strained under its own growth. From the deposition of Osman II (1622) to the Patrona Halil Revolt (1730), she counts nine major upheavals in which demonstrators, sometimes joined by soldiers, clamored against an array of unjust policies such as new taxes and fees or debasement of the currency. Read in a less flattering way to official authority, her account reveals the state as anxious and uneasy in its very backyard. As Zeynep Yürekli argues, even the dynasty's grand imperial monuments built to magnify its grandeur, could set off grumbling and resentment.

Instead of imagining the early modern state as exercising its own independent will against society, we should recognize how it was always more effective when it knew its limits and aligned its policies with local needs and interests. In a fascinating study of the legal and technological workings of the capital's water supply, Deniz Karakaş lays out an intricate system of customs and rights, entirely dependent on private investment and ownership. Istanbul's growth eventually overburdened the network of canals and pipes from which it drew sustenance. Having previously confined itself to supervision through the courts, the state for the first time stepped in directly in 1722 with the construction of the Great Dam in the Belgrade Forest. In this case, intervention was welcomed and proved effective because the inadequacy of the old arrangements was obvious and only the state could mobilize the requisite resources for the project. The same deft restraint is visible in the capital's numerous gardens and orchards, examined in great detail by Aleksandar Shopov, who is right to complain that historians have not paid enough attention to the agricultural side of the urban economy. Indispensable to both local markets and diets, the belt of greenery around the city supplied residents with vegetables, fruit, and wine. Nothing could get in the way of this urban agriculture, not even Islamic law. Courts proved willing, he explains, to carve out special exemp-

tions which allowed religious foundations to be re-endowed and leased out on generous, long-term contracts. Ottoman judges thereby encouraged cultivators to make improvements on the land and sustain the vital flow of produce to local kitchens. This part of his argument joins other recent scholarship in demonstrating how the Ottoman legal establishment, contrary to older assumptions, was quite adept at molding and tweaking Islamic law as social and economic conditions required. Such sensitivities were not a luxury of statecraft; the entire Ottoman political order understood that it had to take extra care with its capital, which posed unique challenges.

In short, Istanbul was not like other cities. The difference was not merely a matter of size or the threat of insecurity. It had to do equally with the concentration of state resources and personnel. The resulting distortions put Istanbul, as well as other imperial capitals, in a class of their own. Writing about the extensive political networks of the capital, Christoph Neumann tracks their footprints in the marketplace and concludes, "the imperial order rather than market forces dominated [Istanbul's] economy" (p. 130). Suraiya Faroqhi studies the guilds and explains how artisans had always recognized this political logic. Unlike their counterparts in other Ottoman towns, production served the local market alone, whose immense demand spared them from having to think about regional commercial links or exports. And since the political establishment had such an outsized presence, the capital's markets were closely watched and regulated. Prizing political stability, the state kept a nervous eye on local prices, and more frequently and precisely than in other Ottoman towns, it drew up price registers (*narh*), meant above all to ensure supplies to the state and basic commodities to local households. Faroqhi explicitly cautions against generalizing about Ottoman industry from the practices of the capital.

As we discover from other chapters, this warning is no less relevant to finance, trade, and patterns of consumption. Istanbul was its own world of expanded possibilities that no other

place in the empire could match. It was the nexus of revenue flows, stipends, and assorted payments and levies. As a result, it had incomparable purchasing power. This constant infusion of wealth ensured that Istanbul could draw to itself the fruits of the Ottoman economy and long-distance trade. Maurits van den Boogert recounts how the capital fed itself from several large commercial streams that it commanded with its wealth and financial prowess. Amanda Phillips leaves no doubt about its domination of the market for luxury goods such as Indian textiles. And the elite of the capital had truly rarified tastes. In her chapter on Ottoman painting, Emine Fetvacı retraces the migration of artistic patronage beyond the walls of the palace, once the “primary locus of creative power and prestige” (p. 168). By the end of the sixteenth century, courtiers and affluent members of the urban elite hired artisans to produce their own picture albums and illustrated manuscripts. Where else but the capital could such a market be found?

This volume thus helps us to see Istanbul as contemporaries did: as an urban colossus of extraordinary proportions. Its gigantic appetites and resources had no parallel in the Ottoman domains. This difference in scale really matters because, as we now better appreciate, the early modern period witnessed the expansion of Ottoman towns nearly everywhere. Istanbul still took its place in a separate league. Only broader comparisons reveal how it really ought to be classed with the other great imperial capitals of the early modern age, which similarly accumulated vast wealth, generated gargantuan levels of demand, and fostered new forms of cultural expression.<sup>2</sup> This recognition has consequences for the debate about “early modernity” that the collection wants to address. For if Istanbul was not exactly a representative city, then it cannot really serve as a readily transportable template that we might automatically apply to the rest of Ottoman society. We cannot assume that the key features of early modernity, however we might define them, appeared in other parts of the empire at the same time or proceeded at the same pace or with the same intensity as in the capital. The singularity of Istanbul is

especially worth considering in a field like Ottoman studies, which too easily leaps from the capital to the empire.

### Old Habits and New Perspectives

The contest between old and new continues in the *Companion’s* handling of religion. Ottoman studies is fond of invoking the model of an Islamic (or “Islamicate”) society on which religion firmly left its imprint. Might the collection hint—sometimes against its own instincts—at other possibilities? Take its treatment of Christians and Jews, who together made up nearly half the population of the capital. The older historiography is unabashedly sectarian. Resting on a straightforward reading of legal and administrative documents, it dwells on the symbolic forms of discrimination prescribed by Islamic law, the extra tax (*cizye*) imposed on them, and the administrative structures assigned to each non-Muslim “community.” It presents non-Muslims as distinct, “protected,” and yet fundamentally vulnerable. At first repeating this older judgment, Karen Leal sighs that the lot of Christians and Jews was, quoting Braude and Lewis, “tolerable but insecure.” Most curious is the subsequent tenor of her essay, which acknowledges a far more complicated set of relations marked by social familiarity and frequent contact. Toleration, she concludes, proceeded both from necessity and disposition. It was never forced, reluctant, or distant.

The rest of the volume seems to agree. Other contributors have quite naturally folded Christians and Jews into the social, economic, and cultural life of the capital. Aleksandar Shopov has discovered that many of the laborers in the gardens of Istanbul were Christian migrants from the Balkans. Few of them would have stood out, particularly if they had stayed long in the city. In tracking patterns of consumption, which might in theory have made them more conspicuous, Amanda Phillips deflates any assumptions about different religious groups having distinct material cultures. The division of Istanbul into neat enclaves, finds Leyla Kayhan Elbirlik, was entirely “imagined,” mainly by

Ottoman administrators. In fact, few neighborhoods attained anything like ethnic, religious, or even class uniformity; at most, one can only speak of a tendency towards concentration in some areas. Inside the many quarters with mixed populations, there was no evidence of long-term religious or ethnic tension. The main fault line, as Betül Başaran sees it, ran between residents and “outsiders.” To the former, religious and ethnic identity made little difference. Why, then, have Ottomanists been so willing to overlook this shared street culture? No doubt the field has too faithfully mimicked Ottoman administrative and legal sources, with their hierarchical language and theological contempt for “infidels.” More social and economic history is precisely the antidote for these top-down ideological distortions. The point is not to “romanticize” relations between religious groups; it is to explain moments of tension or persecution—like the expulsion of Jews from the neighborhood around Yeni Camii in 1660—as the conjuncture of specific political forces, not as the emanation of fixed social structures or cultural attitudes.

As the editors are somewhat self-consciously aware, the volume has no chapter dealing specifically with the Muslim religious establishment or religious and legal thought. Nor does it contain more than passing references to the Kadızadeli movement, which surged during the middle decades of the seventeenth century, gained power as a faction at the palace, and worked at imposing its own puritanical agenda in closing the coffeehouses and taverns, outlawing public smoking, and harassing those who fell afoul of their stringent religious views. At first glance, this decision looks like an odd oversight. But readers who are craving fresher views on Istanbul’s society and culture will not mind. So much of the older history rests on an obsession with religion, law, and ideology, which were the preserve of small cadres of literate specialists. To its credit, the *Companion* prioritizes the living culture of the city, which was overwhelmingly oral and unlettered and did not necessarily bow down to religion and authority. By the eighteenth century, the Kadızadeli were hardly more

150 than a memory, whereas Istanbul's leisure culture was hitting its stride and gaining strength. In playing up such themes, the collection helps to strike a new balance, which is long overdue in Ottoman studies.

*A Companion to Early Modern Istanbul* is the culmination of a generation of new research. Each of the chapters will serve as a valuable overview of topics ranging across many different subfields of history. Readers will not only find the latest historiographical debates, but a trove of information about primary documents and essential studies from the historical literature. The collection will stand as a landmark in Istanbul studies for its breadth of research and willingness to re-examine received ideas. Students

Nathanael Aschenbrenner and Jake Ransohoff, eds., *The Invention of Byzantium in Early Modern Europe*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2021. xviii + 457 pages. ISBN: 9780884024842

One wonders why this compelling volume is not entitled more simply *The Inventions of Byzantium*, since in their excellent conclusion the editors demonstrate precisely that there was no single invention of Byzantium. Certainly, it was not invented by Hieronymus Wolf in 1562. As Anthony Kaldellis shows clearly in his characteristically pellucid chapter, Laonikos Chalkokondyles used Byzantium as a synonym for the Eastern Roman Empire a century before Wolf. More than that, even the use of *historiae byzantinae*, attributed to Wolf by many (including this reviewer), should instead be attributed to his publisher, when Wolf's translations of Zonaras and Choniates were joined with a Latin translation of Laonikos by Conrad Clauser. Still more than that, in

who are looking for new ideas and questions about the history of Istanbul would do well to start here.

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1 See respectively Robert Mantran, *Istanbul dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle: essai d'histoire institutionnelle, économique et sociale* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1962); Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Kaldellis' view, it made no difference at the time to the way in which the eastern empire was viewed. Kaldellis traces the invention of Byzantium, as a new designation for the Eastern Roman Empire, through discussions of "the Eastern Question" and the Crimean War to the creation of the discipline, *Byzantinistik*, by Krumbacher. What more is there to say? A good deal more, according to the editors and other contributors. Most contributors, although not all, focus on early modern thinkers and their engagement with Byzantium. However, just as clearly, together they refute the notion that we should search for a single inventor of Byzantium in that period or later.

Fabio Pagani offers a foundation to the volume by establishing the importance of Gemistos Pletho and his student Bessarion. These are familiar names whose articulation of the decline and fall of, as they saw it, a Greek world, are situated in richly textured political and ideological contexts. Anthony Grafton introduces the Western humanists who encountered Greek texts, tracing in necessary detail the prehistory of what he identifies as the year (1691), when "Byzantine studies and clas-

2 For a sampling of this literature, see for example Kathryn Babayan, *The City as Anthology: Eroticism and Urbanity in Early Modern Isfahan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021); Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad: the Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639–1739* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Peter Clark and Bernard Lepetit, eds., *Capital Cities and Their Hinterlands in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996); Gerald Groemer, *Portraits of Edo and Early Modern Japan: the Shogun's Capital in Zuihitsu Writings, 1657–1855* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Abhishek Kaiker, *The King and the People: Sovereignty and Popular Politics in Mughal Delhi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020); Paul Keenan, *St. Petersburg and the Russian Court, 1703–1761* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); James McClain et al, ed., *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Matsunosuke Nishiyama, *Edo Culture: Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600–1868* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997); David Ringrose, *Madrid and the Spanish Economy, 1560–1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Anthony Wrigley, "A Simple Model of London's Importance, 1650–1750," *Past and Present* 37 (1967): 44–70.

sical scholarship celebrated their divorce" (p. 72). Thereafter, classical scholars would look to medieval Greek only for what it preserved of antiquity, excising and collating quotations. Before 1691, however, Latin scholars had been more generous. If some, like Wolf, came to their subject reluctantly ("he treated Choniates' prose as affected and hyperbolic" [p. 89]), others like Clauser embraced it. So did Martin Crusius, a Tübingen professor, who saw Byzantine authors like Eustathios, author of detailed commentaries on Homer as well as his own works, as both communicators of ancient knowledge and learned commentators on them. Richard Calis explores Crusius' career and the "full richness of his engagement with Byzantine materials" (p. 106) in a detailed chapter, beautifully illustrated with images of Crusius' own textual and visual glosses in his own books, now in the Tübingen University Library. Teresa Shawcross turns our attention to a rather better known author, Charles du Cange, addressing in turn *La byzantine du Louvre* (Paris Corpus), inspired in part by a French concern for the Ottomans, and Du Cange's reinvention in the eighteenth century as a French national historian, following the