

Title of MA: TRANSFORMATION OF PERA INTO THE CULTURAL DISTRICT OF ISTANBUL IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

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The new version of the MA is more convincing in demonstrating that Pera has functioned as a cultural district in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It provides more material and draws on more secondary sources.

The introduction has not changed a lot, this chapter has a “story telling” character. It is not possible to uncover the author’s point of view. In this part he still did not establish his corpus and did not characterize the sources he had used.

However, in the second chapter “The birth of Cultural District” there is an attempt to refer to the scientific literature in a more coherent way and there are efforts for employing a more argumentative style. At the same time, the assumptions he proposes are not always persuasive. For example, the references to “multicultural theatre” and “gentrification” seem ahistorical in case of Pera. Nevertheless, we can find more coherent information on the consequences of foreign economic presence in Pera. Although not explicitly, but the author also points at some interest conflicts between the Muslim and non Muslim population. In this part of the MA M. Sami Bayram interpreted those elements of the urban structure (department stores, coffee shops, photography houses, etc.) in a more ordered and detailed way that made Pera a modern district. It is encouraging that he also made suggestions regarding the usages of these meeting places by the population. More compelling was his argumentation on the consequences of the new lighting techniques, new roads and the institutions of city management for the modernization. These urban development trends in case of Pera showed real parallels with European cities.

The next chapters related to the architecture (Modern arcades of Pera) and to the buildings and activities of theatres (Western type theatres of Pera) are more detailed and better founded than they were in the previous version. What is still missing it is the author’s own research based on primary sources.

The Conclusion which is related to the notion of cultural district is less subjective, more realistic than it was in the previous version.

It is also encouraging that there is information given in the text on the photos and the author often interprets them in connection with his reasoning. Unfortunately, the maps were inserted into the text without suitable interpretation.

Unfortunately, in the new version there are more grammar and spelling mistakes, unclear sentences than they were in the previous version.

Proposed mark for the MA: 3 - C

My questions for M. Sami Bayram remain the same because I have not got answer for them even from the second version:

What were the most serious ethnic, religious conflicts in Pera during your research period? In which archives are the primary sources related to the topic examined in your MA?

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