

FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA  
UNIVERZITY KARLOVY  
V PRAZE



Ústav světových dějin

## Master's Thesis Review

Student's name and surname: Muhammet Sami Bayram

Title of the thesis:

Transformation of Pera into the Cultural District of Istanbul in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

Reviewer's name and surname:

**1. Heuristic** (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

1.1 Evaluation of the selection of literature and sources	2
1.2 Complexity of used sources from the perspective of the state of the art	3

Short evaluation:

The author manages a variety of secondary sources, and supports his narrative via selected primary sources, some of them visual ones. Still, he leaves out some of the important bibliography on the subject and his bibliography regarding the broader framework of the changes taking place in the 18th- and 19th-century Ottoman Empire is rather haphazard.

**2. Research problem and its solution** (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

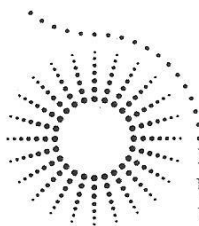
2.1 Choice of the formulation of the research issue respects the task given to the student	1
2.2 The relevance of the goal from the perspective of research area methodology	1

Short evaluation:

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### 3. Thesis' structure evaluation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

3.1 Is the structure of the thesis logical?	2
3.2 Does the thesis' structure work along the methodology and methods declared in the introduction	2

#### Short evaluation:

The structure of the work is logical, but due to the hypothesis of the whole work – that of Pera as a creative city due to its intercultural nature –, it should have included much heavier socio-cultural analysis, either interwoven into the one dealing with architectural and institutional aspects aspects of Pera's transformations, or carried out in separate sections. The author has not done much to prove his hypothesis beyond describing different spaces of intercultural interaction. While he does satisfactorily deal with administrative changes that contributed to and were shaped by the emergence of Pera as a unique cultural space in the 19th century Constantinople, he hardly explores human interaction itself, in spite of existing primary and secondary sources. He did not explore tensions and power relationships in these spaces.

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### 4. Quality of analysis and interpretation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

4.1 Analysis of sources and literature	2
4.2 Interpretation of sources and literature in their interaction	3



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Short evaluation: The author provides a thorough, competent description of new-style spaces of sociability in the nineteenth-century Pera. Nonetheless, the following step towards interpreting Pera as a creative city thanks to the interaction of peoples of different ethno-religious adscirptions mostly relies on the wishful thinking of the author and of some of the interviewees and authors of online secondary sources he has used. While I consider Bayram's hypothesis a strong one, I would argue that it should have been tested using easily available primary and secondary sources focusing on the interaction of people in these spaces. He should have also acknowledged existing tensions, conflicts and hierarchies that characterised the interactions of people of different origins, sexes and allegiances in Pera.

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**5. Quality of the text** (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

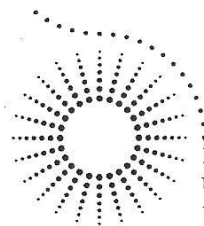
5.1 Style and grammar	2
5.2 Use of terminology	2

Short evaluation:

While the author's English is not always correct, he is mostly capable of making himself understood.

### 6. Synthetic evaluation ( 500 signs):

Sami Bayram successfully outlines what made Pera special in the context of both 19th-century Europe and the Ottoman Empire. He focuses mainly on the new spaces of interaction (theatres, passages, cafés, shops), examining their purpose, use and architectural characteristics. He does so in a competent way, without forgetting the administrative and demographic elements that contributed to shape theses spaces. What is missing is the analysis of actual social interaction in these spaces, that could have been included via existing secondary sources. While the theoretical framework of the analysis is highly innovative and persuasive, the overall framing of the analysis in the Ottoman history is slightly simplistic and shows a very limited use of existing historiography on the 18th- and 19th- century transformations of the Empire.



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**7. Questions and comments which should the candidate answer and discuss during the defense:**

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**Suggested grade:** 2

**Date:** 1st of September 2016

**Signature:**