

PREFACE

The book you have started reading will talk a lot about the Ottoman history, local topography, major monuments, museums, and mosques but also about many other things; the protestant missionary activity, coups d'état, the Crimean War, Russia, oil trade, Napoleon, Egypt, Shakespeare's Globe Theater, Venetians, Persians, local culture, contemporary architecture, even Johann Strauss, movies, a Ford factory far from home, Ancient Greek and Roman authors, just to mention a few.

While it does not try to be an all-inclusive text about the Bosphorus, it reaches to give a comprehensive view of the Bosphorus as a whole, and, at the same time, tends to surprise even the most ambitious reader with several unpublished and unexpected archival documents and photos.

This book is not a lament; its aim is not to mourn over values "gone forever". It's true that many things went wrong, many historic homes were damaged by oil tankers, many monumental buildings were lost, but the Bosphorus is still beautiful without a match and unique.

This is not one of those books which exposes all the details and monuments of a neighborhood. There are works which do this very well already, and undoubtedly, there will be many detailed publications. It would not be wrong to say, though,

that we made mention of some remarkable examples when they sprang to mind.

This book could also not be defined as a book which attempts to describe all the details of some major monuments. Outstanding monographs about many monuments have already been written. However, if we identified details which are not mentioned even in these monographs, we have presented them here.

Is this an academic book? Yes, it is; but it tries to avoid being one of the most boring examples of this genre. It doesn't consider a saturnine style as a prerequisite for being academic in nature.

We could perhaps define it as a book which brings to mind a little bit more of what we think about the Bosphorus when we think of it casually. Another possible definition would make it the exposition of a few details about the places we visit along the Bosphorus to go out to eat, have some fresh air, enjoy ourselves, and, sometimes, attend an event.

It is most probably not a book which reveals a lot of unknown facts about the Bosphorus, but we can say that these pages repeat and sometimes offer a different perspective on many things which are worth remembering.

Besides all these, we can also say that many historical documents, some of which have not been published elsewhere and unearthed in archives, both in Turkish State Archives and in private collections, are being published on these pages. We hope that this will be of some additional value for those who like to remember the good old days.

A preface cannot go without acknowledgments, but the number people to thank is just too many, which would increase the book's volume significantly. Therefore, I would like to

content myself only with thanking all those at Timaş Publishing who have contributed to the making of this book at every stage; if Samet Altıntaş had not come up with such a suggestion unexpectedly, this book would not have existed in any case. If Neval Akbıyık and Zeynep Berktaş had not embraced this work, we would not be able to finalize it. If Hüseyin Özkan had not touched every inch of the book, it would not have been this pleasant to hold it in our hands.

Numerous people and institutions have contributed to saving the book from mediocrity a little bit by providing information and materials. Among all those, I am thankful to Saffet Emre Tonguç, Gökçen Ezber, PhD, Erhan Ermiş, PhD, for their friendly support and owe particular gratitude to Mr. Erol Makzume and Architect Mr. Sinan Genim, PhD, for generously sharing their own living spaces, collections and even information and documents that they could not yet publish themselves.

I will be more than happy if the end result could loosely resemble what they expected.

Sedat Bornovalı
May 2019, İstanbul

PAR M^r TAILBOUT. Consul

WHAT IS THE BOSPHORUS AND WHERE IS IT?



While locals tend to associate the Bosphorus with songs, poems, paintings and scenes from films, along with their own nostalgic memories, the main determining factor behind its entire cultural heritage is the region's physical geography. Accordingly, it is crucial, at the risk of boring the reader, to define and clarify its borders at the outset. The Bosphorus, as the famous Straits of Istanbul are known internationally, is the name of the waterway between the Çatalca and Kocaeli peninsulas, part of the ancient Thracia and Bithynia, where they are the closest to one another. The name Bosphorus is used as a general designation of the open and settled spaces on both shores of this waterway. Both peninsulas are peneplains, vast plains with a slightly uneven surface close to sea level. The surrounding hilly areas (made, for example, of quartzite) are more resistant to erosion. Such elevations (inselbergs or monadnocks, as they are technically called) are known as "witness hills" in Turkish. Taksim (110m), Çamlıca (262m), Kayışdağı (438m), Alemdağ (442m), Aydos (537m) and Altunizade (110m) on the eastern and western banks of the Bosphorus are some notable examples. The nearby Princes' Islands have the same characteristics, as can be seen, for



A map of the Bosphorus, (1715)



instance, with the Aya Yorgi Hill (202m) on Büyükada.

Situated further to the south of the Çatalca peninsula is Istanbul's historic center and the Golden Horn (known as "Haliç" which means "gulf" in Arabic and "Estuary" in Turkish) just north to it. All these areas are, geographically speaking, part of the Bosphorus. Even though the locals visiting along the Golden Horn do not usually call it the Bosphorus; neighborhoods along the Golden Horn are, strictly speaking, part of the geography of the Bosphorus.

The boundaries of the Bosphorus have not always been drawn in the same way, as different definitions limited or extended what is meant by the Bosphorus. There is, nonetheless, an area which most have agreed upon: the Strait of Istanbul (as the locals call) will continue to exist as long as Kocaeli peninsula on the Asian continent in the east and Çatalca peninsula on the European continent are located in proximity to

one another; and once they move away from one another for good, it will cease to exist. The Anadolu and Rumeli lighthouses in the north are generally accepted as the northern boundaries of the Bosphorus, while it is commonly held that the line between Seraglio Point (Sarayburnu) and Salacak, near the Maiden's Tower, form its southern border.

The length of the Bosphorus, between the northern and southern ends, is about 30 km (around 17 mi.). Its eastern shoreline, on its Asian side, is about 35 km long, while its western shore on its European side nearly 55 km. The reason for the significant difference between the lengths of the two shores is that the Anatolian shoreline is relatively straight in comparison to the European side, which has the Golden Horn (which, as stated above, is officially part of the Bosphorus) along with a large number of coves.

As a side note, the terms “north” and “south” will be used through this book, even though the Bosphorus has a slight northeastern and southwestern axis. Furthermore, it does not run in a straight line, but rather winds between the Black Sea and Marmara. As a matter of fact, except when one is near to the Black Sea and Marmara, it can feel like you are passing from one lake to another.

While most of the references around the Bosphorus (including the ones in this book) are about the monuments on the shores of the Bosphorus, it is important to bear in mind that it is essentially a waterway. It is for this reason that the waters of the Bosphorus deserve to be mentioned first and foremost; it is where the waters of the Black Sea meet the rest of the world.

There are several well-known, large rivers flowing into the Black Sea. These include the Kuban, Dnieper, Don and the Danube outside Turkey and the Kızılırmak (Halys), Yeşilirmak (Iris), Sakarya (Sangarios) and Çoruh (Akampsis) rivers in Turkey. The amount of the freshwater carried by all these

WHAT IS THE BOSPHORUS AND WHERE IS IT?

TAVOLA DELLE OSSERVAZIONI FATTE NEL CANALE DI CONSTANTINOPOLI DALLA PARTE DI GALATA, IN FACCIA alla punta del Seraglio, per conoscere il Flusso e Reflusso che nel detto canale si fa, e per maggior chiarezza di ciò in fine di ogni mese. Il Livello dell'acqua l'ho stabilito d'once 24. e di lì più, e di lì meno, farà la differenza d'oscillazione. Pag. 41.

Giorno.	Levar del Sole.	Mezzogiorno.	Tramontar del Sole.	Notte.	Vento.
Febraio.	onc. 0	0	0	0	0
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4	onc. 16	0	0	0	0
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31	onc. 16	0	0	0	0
Aprile.	onc. 0	0	0	0	0
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Le figure osservazioni sono le più esatte per conoscere il punto del vino dell'acqua.

Sciocco-Bonaccia.
Bonaccia.
Sciocco.
Sciocco leggiero.
Bonaccia.
Tram. gagliarda.
Tram.
Tram. gagliarda.

The first oceanographic measurements in history, by Luigi Ferdinando Marsili (Bosphorus, 1681)

ivers and the limited evaporation due to low average temperature, unsurprisingly, result in the low salinity of the Black Sea.

As mentioned, the waters of the Black Sea “encounter” the rest of the world – meaning that there is a current flowing from the Black Sea through the Bosphorus. While there is a current on the surface of the waters of the Bosphorus that visibly and continuously flows to the Sea of Marmara in the south, at the same time there is actually an undercurrent – invisible to the common observer – flowing in the reverse direction towards the Black Sea. The amount of water flowing in the undercurrent is more limited. Although it is not easy to observe these currents, they were the subject of scholarly interest even centuries ago. In the 17th Century, the Italian Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsili demonstrated for the first time that the currents of the sea could be measured scientifically, and he thus had the honor of initiating the science of oceanography in the very waters of the Bosphorus.

These currents, however, do not flow smoothly like a river: sometimes the southwestern wind is so strong that the surface water cannot flow southward and instead flows north. This

phenomenon has a specific name: the Orkoz current. Additionally, the surface current sometimes turns towards the north when it hits the capes so one may observe two surface currents in opposite directions.



Those Who Have Come and Gone

With its natural beauty and strategic location, the Bosphorus has never had the problem of being uninhabited. It has long been desired as it has been the site of wealth, both in terms of commercial interest, and also for its strategic position, both in its own right and for the city of Istanbul to the south, one of the most important cities of human history; at other times, as a dream location for habitation or as a place desired for its natural beauty.

Until very recently, when talking about the history of the Bosphorus, we used to only be able to rely on historical sources which went back to antiquity. Since 2017, however, our knowledge of the area changed significantly: during the subway constructions in Beşiktaş, thanks to the salvage excavations carried out by Istanbul Archaeological Museums, the existence of at least one settlement on the shores of the Bosphorus, belonging to a much earlier period in history, was ascertained. The layers of a necropolis, proven to belong to the Iron Age and most probably even to the Chalcolithic period, were unearthed at the site.

During the Antiquity, when the Greeks and Romans dominated the region, there were many mythological and historical references to the Bosphorus. Almost none of the monuments belonging to this period have survived to this day even in ruins.

What is most important, though, is that two colonies of Megara were founded on the southern entrance of the Bosphorus in the 7th century BC. Their names are very familiar: Byzantium (now Fatih, the historical peninsula of Istanbul) and Chalcedon (modern Kadıköy). Generally speaking, most of the monuments from the Antiquity, whose ruins are not visible today and mainly consisted of sacred areas, would have belonged to these two settlements.

Due to the central trade ports on the shores of the Black Sea, those who left major cities to the south founded colonies here during antiquity. The most ambitious and active of these were the Milesians. Among the new colonies of Miletus beyond the Bosphorus, a city of philosophers south to the Meander River, İnebolu (Ionopolis), Ordu (Cotyora), Giresun (Cerasus), Sinop and Trabzon were founded along the Black Sea coast.

Because there were numerous colonies along the Black Sea in antiquity and the Bosphorus was the only means of access to these colonies, we can state with high confidence that it must have been as much busier hub than records show.

Not far from here is another strait - the Dardanelles, which is also along the route from the Black Sea down to the Mediterranean. We do not have mythological references to Istanbul which could be compared with the story of Troy, but even Troy itself, located near the Dardanelles clearly testifies to the significance of these waterways as early as the 13th century and even before. Most probably, in antiquity the landscape of the Bosphorus was not determined by its monuments but mainly by nature. If there were particularly monumental buildings, no tangible proofs of them have in any case survived.

The concept of crossing the Bosphorus, however, should not only be viewed as passing through the waterway. As a matter of fact, the etymology of the Bosphorus means 'cattle-passage' or "ox-ford". A mythological narrative attached to the Bosphorus refers to the passage of a bull, which swam across the waterway, passing from Europe to Asia.

Beyond myth, the Bosphorus is an important passageway not only for the bull in the myth or for humans in recorded history, but also for birds as one of the most important and dense migration routes. The migration of storks is just one of the most impressive events of the region that also hosts hundreds of thousands of water birds, predatory and singing birds during periods of migration.



The Persians Built the First Bridge Across the Bosphorus

In an account by the historian Herodotus we are told that 2500 years ago the Persian Emperor Darius built a pontoon bridge across the Bosphorus by tying boats together and they used this bridge, their historic landmark, to cross between two continents. We even know the architect of this temporary bridge: Mandrocles of Samos. With what was left from the substantial sum of money paid to him, the architect commissioned a painting that would celebrate his work. He donated this painting to the Temple of Hera on the island of Samos (just across Kuşadası in Western Turkey), and he thus was able to immortalize his own name as well.

Speaking of temples, the shores of the Bosphorus were not densely settled in antiquity. Monuments that marked the view were most probably temples appealing to passers-by. We know about numerous locations related to such monuments thanks to the writers of the period including a temple which Jason and the Argonauts supposedly built around İstinye.

The prominent points of the Bosphorus geography, starting from the present Sarayburnu, which was Byzantium's acropolis,

and to the Pillar of Pompey (which built on the Clashing Rocks mentioned in the myth of Jason and the Argonauts) in Rumeli Kavağı, were likely adorned with monumental structures honoring gods of the period. To visualize the Bosphorus during that age, we could perhaps imagine that monuments like the Çanak-kale Martyrs' Memorial, the *Abide*, on the Dardanelles were scattered along the shores of the Bosphorus.

It is clear that the region during the Byzantine period, even if not as much as the present day, was somehow populated. Fishing and agriculture activities that fed a great capital along with numerous monasteries built in beautiful rural areas would have left their mark on the Bosphorus. However, there were still not many reasons to think that the Bosphorus was something more than scattered villages that were largely distinct from the capital Constantinople. We can imagine a series of shore villages and some monasteries on the hills with minimal connections to the City. Villagers would travel the capital only to sell their goods in the markets.

Another noteworthy moment from earlier periods of Byzantium is when Emperor Heraclius crossed a pontoon bridge built with boats tied together while he was marching for the Persian Campaign. The building of this bridge is a striking incident, because the design was aimed at lessening Heraclius' fear of water.

It is also recounted that the Pechenegs, during one of their raids against the Turks in 1048, crossed to the Anatolian side across a bridge built with boats. It must have been another unforgettable moment when they decided not to continue this journey and swam back across the waters of the Bosphorus with their reserve horses.

Another noteworthy crossing of the Bosphorus belongs to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa following an agreement with the Byzantine Emperor during the Third Crusade.

Since the emperor lost his life near Seleucia (now Silifke), drowning in the river Calycadnus three months after his landing on the Anatolian shores in the March of 1190, he was unable to make it back to the Bosphorus.

In the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, which resulted in the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, the dominance of the Bosphorus was passed on to the Latin powers. Even after the reconquest of Constantinople by the Palaiologos dynasty, the Venetian and Genoese maritime powers continued to dominate the area.

Genoese trade was focused on the Black Sea during the Byzantine period resulting in efforts to control the Bosphorus. The monumental Yoros Castle situated on the northernmost point of the Bosphorus on the Anatolian side is living witness to this period.

It was precisely during this period when the Turkish presence in the Bosphorus started to be felt. The entire Anatolian side of the Bosphorus, including the Yoros Castle, came under Ottoman control during the reign of Orhan Gazi, the empire's second sovereign in the first half of the 1300s, when the Ottoman state, which was merely one of many Turkish principalities of Anatolia, was just founded. The Ottomans were virtually invincible in and around the Bosphorus, and they were the ones who would determine the rulers of the surrounding geography. Thus, one of the battles of the Second Venetian-Genoese War was held on 13 February 1352 in the Bosphorus, and it was only through an alliance with the Ottomans that Genoa won the war against Venice in the Naval Battle of the Bosphorus between the two Italian states.

Afterwards, just as the colonies of Miletus earlier, the Genoese colonies, allies of the Ottomans dominated the Bosphorus, but not much longer because the only ruler of the Bosphorus passage would be Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror and he would turn the Black Sea into an Ottoman lake. Following this, the Genoese colonies fell to the Ottomans one by one: Amasra in 1459, Sinop and Trabzon in 1461, Caffa, the largest of the Black Sea colonies, in 1475 and Kopa and Anapa, other ports on the shores of Crimea in 1479. Around the same time the Genoese brought the plague to Europe from Crimea through the Bosphorus.

The Long History of Crossing and Passing Through the Bosphorus

While history is full of interesting stories of crossing the Bosphorus, it has in fact not always been that easy to cross. During Byzantine rule, the crossing of this waterway was possible by the permission of the emperor in Constantinople. The 12th century historian Niketas Choniates even mentions another chain (in addition to the one at the mouth of the Golden Horn) between Seraglio Point (Sarayburnu) and the Maiden's Tower to control ships passing through the Bosphorus.

The most glorious and most famous of the buildings that represent the end of the Byzantine era is again along the Bosphorus. Built a year before the fall of Constantinople, the fortress known as Rumelihisari represents the final stages of the conquest of the Bosphorus both literally and symbolically. In

Istanbul and a part of the
Bosphorus, engraving from
Hartmann Schedel's *Liber
Chronicarum* (1493)



addition to considering who could pass through the Bosphorus, it is also important to bear in mind those who were not allowed to pass. Those who did not heed the rules of passage established by the Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror after the construction of the Rumeli Castle were not allowed to pass.

On November 26th in 1452, for example, “The first cannonball shot from the castle sank Antonio Rizzo’s ship, because the ship, bringing barley to help Constantinople, refused to lower sails.”

Following the Conquest, the Bosphorus for nearly two hundred years continued to be a series of rural settlements close to the capital. Surely, by then, the Ottomans, who ruled almost all the Black Sea as well, had no particular concern for defending the Bosphorus. Hence, there was no reason for dense settlement to emerge along here, and the pre-existing ones were developed as centers for agricultural production. Populations from the coastal towns of the Black Sea, especially from its eastern provinces like Rize and Trabzon, were settled in the villages of the Bosphorus. Since less populated areas were more in danger of pillage, villages were established, and new populations were brought in so as not to leave them uncontrolled.

Furthermore, the coastal areas, especially the southern parts close to Istanbul, were allocated to high state officials and elites. The mouths of streams and surrounding areas were preserved as agricultural lands and rural settlements sprang up around them.

The historian Naima narrates one of the most traumatic moments in Ottoman history: on July 20th in 1624 the northern parts of the Bosphorus down to Yeniköy were raided by the Cossacks, (yes, like those mentioned Sholokhov’s “And Quiet Flows the Don” and Gogol’s “Taras Bulba”). They raided with boats known as “*chaikas*” that each had 50 rowers. Large fleets were not able to move fast when there was no wind, whereas these boats could maneuver very well and could harm an opponent. Naima’s History mentions that the Cossacks arrived

with 150 *chaikas*. These Cossacks went ashore in Tarabya and Yeniköy and pillaged the land. They escaped by sea and disappeared when the soldiers arrived.

Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi (1611-1682) refers to the incident as well: "They have come from the Black Sea Straits (Kerch Strait) with 300 *chaikas* and captured one thousand men as slaves and stole five Egyptian treasures and the same amount of valuable goods. They soon easily left for their hellish homeland fearlessly and recklessly." Interestingly, it mirrors a similar incident, centuries earlier when the Rus, Vikings from what is now Ukraine and Russia, suddenly attacked the Bosphorus in 860.

Undoubtedly, such an unexpected attack on the Bosphorus, an indispensable part of Istanbul, triggered an inexpressible terror in the city. Hence, a new defense perspective was adopted for the Bosphorus in the aftermath of this attack. Just after the raid of 1624, firstly the villages of Anadolu and Rumeli fener, and then Garipçe and Kilyos were turned into settlement areas. It was thus possible to see possible raids beforehand and prepare an initial defense against them.

New defense components were added after this date, and there was a transition from mostly medieval structures to the defensive principles of the Modern Era. During the reign of Mustafa III, the French Hungarian architect Baron de Tott built the Garipçe and Poyrazköy castles in line with the principles of modernity.

The ongoing struggle for dominance over the Bosphorus then was felt in other areas as well. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca signed with Russia in 1774 granted Russian traders the right to pass through the Bosphorus, which was a significant blow to Ottoman prestige and interests. Fortunately, at the time Russia's internal problems increased and its diplomatic leverage was weakened. The Russian insistence on granting the right of free pass to warships as well could not be sustained. The

relations between the Russian and Ottoman empires were not unidimensional, but rather also involved all of the Great Powers of the time. Although war was never-ending, wheat began to be imported from Russia for the first time at the end of the 19th century during the reign of Abdülhamit I to answer Istanbul's increased need for bread.

Since Napoleon referenced the strategic significance of the Bosphorus in sustaining global balance against Russia, it has often been claimed that he was the source of the quotation "If the world were only one country, Istanbul would be its capital". As a matter of fact, it is reported that a vast crowd applauded the Russian fleet passing through the Bosphorus in September 1798 to cooperate with the Ottomans in the Mediterranean against France who occupied Egypt.

As Ottoman industrial initiatives were being implemented during these years, the Bosphorus emerged again as a focal point. The area around Beykoz, in particular, emerged as one of the major production centers for goods like paper, leather, and glass. Some key elements for sustainable industry are actually the more important natural beauties (e.g., river sources and ports) that need protecting. Therefore, the choice of Beykoz for the first industrial initiatives of this early period should come as no surprise. Fortunately, we have started feeling sorry for the risk of losing even these relatively recent but beautiful buildings by considering them as a sort of industrial archeology.

When the army at the command of Muhammad Ali of Egypt's son Ibrahim Pasha left Egypt, a source of dispute with Napoleon, and reached around Kütahya, many people inside and outside the Ottoman Empire began worrying about a possible occupation of Istanbul. When the Russians came for help from the north as a solution, the Bosphorus once more played a central role in history.

The landing of Russian soldiers so close to the capital, in the area where the current Beykoz Shoe Factory (not in use

anymore) is located, and their staying there until the Ibrahim Pasha's troops retreating behind the Taurus Mountains, should have certainly raised concern for Istanbul's security, even when the Russians were deemed as saviors at the time. Russians should have reacted in a friendly way, not because of their fondness for Sultan Mahmud II, but because they preferred that the weak Ottomans remained in power rather than a strong enemy like Muhammad Ali. Furthermore, a long stay on the Bosphorus was a great opportunity to learn and document the zone in detail. After all, with the signing of the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi in 1833, the Russians gained a great advantage in Bosphorus, and the Ottoman State had to enter an agreement that allowed the Russians use the Bosphorus.

Britain, of course, was in no position to celebrate in this state of affairs. Hence, worked hard on a different front and only five years later, having increased their pressure within the Ottoman state, the British also signed the Baltalimanı Trade Agreement in the Bosphorus (at the waterfront mansion of Reşid Pasha) in 1838. The British have thus gained significant privileges, and this paved the way for granting new rights to other European states as well. The Ottoman State lost its monopoly in foreign trade and the extraordinary power of taxes and limitations, including the customs duties.

During the last year of Abdülmecit's reign in 1861, other series of trade agreements were signed with Western states on the shores of the Bosphorus (again at the Keçecizade Fuat Pasha's waterfront mansion that no longer exists). These are known as the Kanlıca Trade Agreements. Even the fact that the agreements then signed with the Great Powers at were named after the neighborhoods of the Bosphorus indicates how it became a focal point once more.

In the meantime, the establishment of *Şirket-i Hayriye* ferry company and the first regular ferry lines on the Bosphorus made this waterway as virtually a central part of the city. It should also

be noted that since Beşiktaş was the center of court life starting with Mahmut II in the same era, the Bosphorus became even more central to the political and social life of the city.

The Crimean War (1853-56), which had decisive outcomes for the Ottoman State, and left a lasting mark: the British, French and Italians, this time, passed through the Bosphorus together against the common enemy of the time, the Russian Empire. This is how Cevdet Pasha describes what happened in his own words: “They got used to the pleasant way of living and attempted renting waterfront mansions in the Bosphorus. No corner has been left empty; finding a four-room house in Büyükdere was equal to a victory one could very rarely obtain”.



The Dawn of a New Era

Many European states during these years strengthened their positions with the ambassadorial summer houses built along the northern Bosphorus. The US first appeared on this waterway, which had already been a significant point for Russia around the same period. The development of a country's influence through educational institutions was also general practice at the time.

A Protestant-based American religious institution was already teaching a small number of students in Bebek since 1840; later it began to look for a new plot of land in Kuruçeşme. After this search, the school, with the name Robert College, acquired Ahmet Vefik Efendi's land in Rumelihisarı in 1863 and leading to the establishment of what is known today as *Boğaziçi* (Bosphorus) University.

As revealed above, the Bosphorus was a miniature of the empire, especially during the last years of the Ottoman state. It offered many beauties to enjoy, yet also grappled with many troubles.

The German Goeben and Breslau (renamed Yavuz and Midilli) warships, which are among one of the most important examples of ships passing through the Bosphorus, should certainly not go without mention. These two ships passed through the straits of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus and attacked the Russian cities Odessa and Novorossiysk, leading to the Ottoman entrance into World War I. After staying moored in İstinye for a short period of time, the two ships started off for the Black Sea leading to an irreversible course of events.

After the World War I, during the occupation of Istanbul, with the British fleet anchored just in front of Dolmabahçe Palace, the Bosphorus has once again revealed that it had symbolical meaning as well as posing an actual threat.

The far-reaching reforms of the Republican era were reflected on the shores of Bosphorus as well. During the early years of the Republic, there was a significant transfer of property ownership. The deported members of the Ottoman Dynasty sold their personal properties on the shores of the Bosphorus in the very short time given to them. Many of the waterfront mansions were declared to be public property and were given new functions by the state.

Magnificent waterfront mansions during these years were mostly allocated to educational institutions, though some of them were used as warehouses. Since the educational function is less harmful to the buildings, many of the mansions assigned to schools could survive to this day after generations of graduates, whereas the ones used for industrial purposes gradually fell into ruin. Even the most splendid ones of their kind, such as Nazime Sultan and Hüseyin Avni Pasha mansions, were not saved from falling into ruins; they totally collapsed or burned.

Fire was a constant tragedy that affected waterfront mansions used as residences during both the Ottoman and Republican eras.

Furthermore, it was even argued that those who were no longer interested in their timber mansions chose to destroy them by setting them on fire, only to later erect concrete apartment buildings in their plot. However, perhaps it is wiser not to prematurely accuse anyone with such a crime, as the nature of timber building material is prone to being engulfed with fire with the slightest spark, destining them to be ultimately replaced by concrete buildings..

The year 1973, by the way, was the year during which the most prominent man-made structure added to the Bosphorus was constructed. The two continents were connected with a bridge and the ease of transportation that the bridge provided, also resulted in an uncontrolled building activity on the Asian side. The relatively greener part of this city also fell prey to an ever-increasing density of concrete.

The uncontrolled construction period lasted up to 1983. With the Bosphorus Law enacted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in November, it was decreed that the period brand new constructions in the Bosphorus basically had come to an end. The parliamentary system in the country was just being rebuilt at the time, and a parliament's ability to enact such a decisive law with such strong will and with the necessary instruments only a very short while after a military coup (12th September 1980) is an indication of how effectively the institutions were running. Thus, the Bosphorus we have inherited today is the Bosphorus given to us during that period.



Passing through the Bosphorus

All those who want to sail to and from the Black Sea have to pass through the Bosphorus; it is the only seaway that connects the Black Sea and its surroundings to the entire world. This makes it a route of high-volume trade. Oil is its most important trade good, partly due to Russia, which is a major oil exporter, relying on this route. While there are other oil routes, they are somehow problematic for Russia, which for instance, exports 3 million tons of oil from the Port of Murmansk, but the port can only be reached via the Barents Sea north of Norway. The Barents Sea, as expected, is a cold sea and the ice acts as an obstacle for traffic for most part of the year.

Russia can also export its oil through the Baltic Sea. However, the narrow entrance of the sea is rather shallow, making it difficult for large vessels to use this route. Reaching high volumes requires an extraordinarily high number of small tankers to pass here, which is not a desired setup. Since there is no freedom of passage through the Danish straits, as there is in the Turkish straits, the Bosphorus emerges as the only practical water way, the right of passage being guaranteed by international agreements. Therefore, huge tankers loaded with oil frequently pass through the Bosphorus. Not only oil but also imports of the Black Sea countries are brought by huge container carriers through the Bosphorus as well and each type of vessel is subject to different rules of passage. Sometimes military ships, and even submarines, pass through the Bosphorus; and although their numbers have decreased recently, a significant number of cruise ships, too use the straits.

The “rules” referenced above are a form of legal *acquis* that has emerged over the course of the centuries. The rules took their most recent shape in the Montreux Convention in 1936. The rules, described in broad strokes in the convention (and not so easy to follow in practice), have been made applicable through

regulations. If the range of vision drops below 1 mile, for example, traffic becomes unidirectional. If the range of vision is below 0.5 miles, the Bosphorus is closed to traffic. Military ships can pass without paying any fees and do not need to be escorted by maritime pilots. Aircraft carriers are not allowed to pass. Submarines can pass from the surface and only during the daytime. However, ships not belonging to the Black Sea countries need to weigh less than 45 thousand tons, and they should give notice 21 days beforehand to benefit from exemptions.

Passage for merchant ships is for free in theory, but they have to pay health and lighthouse duties. If they don't stop between the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea, they are not obliged to use a pilot. However, even if they will stop at only one place in Marmara, their exemption is lifted. Almost 60% of the ships do not stop between the Aegean and the Black Sea, thus they often do benefit from the exemption. Tugboats are also decisive for traffic security in the Bosphorus: they are not obligatory under normal conditions, except for tankers measuring more than 250 meters long. As a matter of fact, these extraordinarily large vessels are subject to some special technical constraints, such as passing in company of even 2-5 tugs. Recently a pilot went to the port of departure of a particularly large vessel and spent several weeks aboard it for training and it was only after this that the ship was permitted to pass through the Bosphorus, under the guidance of the same captain.

These large tankers not only transport oil; they are often loaded with water so as not to lose balance. It is through this "ballast" water that some foreign fauna from distant geographies is brought to the Bosphorus. These sea creatures cause much greater harm than what one might expect, as they are invasive species that can damage the environment and harm local species in these waters. The amount of these ballast waters is quite substantial. It is calculated that billion tons of water travel from distant seas in this way every year. The International Maritime Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations, fortunately, decided to

implement regulations on ballast waters before the impacts become more severe. An international convention was recently put into force. Accordingly, the problem will be solved by 2024, however, the cost of these new regulations for the ship owners will be billions of dollars.

The waters of the Bosphorus, with its narrow passages, sharp turns and many challenging currents, have been the site of occasional accidents. Some of these incidents were near misses, whereas some others caused disasters. In 1979, the 300-meter Romanian crude oil carrier *Independenta* on her way from Libya to Romania exploded when she was waiting for a pilot to lead her during the passage through the Bosphorus. The ship was on fire for weeks causing the death of tens of people on its board; it was one of the most tragic accidents that occurred on these waters.

In 2009, a ship hit and demolished half of the Yeniköy Şehzade Burhaneddin Efendi waterfront mansion. After the accident, the media focused more on the fact that the tenant of the mansion at the time was an actress and the tabloid press published many pieces about the accident (discussing mainly about the choice of a luxury mansion of a left-wing artist).

Only a few days before this book was written, another ship was involved in an accident, hitting the Hekimbaşı waterfront mansion and caused considerable damage. The owners used to rent the property for social events like weddings and other ceremonies, and they were also trying to host activities like classical music concerts. The antique pieces and documents owned by the family were also preserved and exhibited in the waterfront mansion. Since the accident occurred on a day when there was no event, there was no loss of life, but the unprotected pieces of art were surely heavily damaged. Fortunately, these timber mansions can easily be rebuilt as needed. Although the accident caused severe damage, a great part of the building can still be saved if the intervention is not too late.

An even more unusual crash was between a Lebanese and a Philippine ship that caused the death of more than 21 thousand sheep. Several of them floated on the Bosphorus waters for a long time.



BEGINNING THE TOUR



So now it is time for us to embark on our virtual tour of the Bosphorus. This book, which is based on the itinerary of the actual tours given, will proceed as if you just joined a tour, which sets off from the Yemiş Pier in Eminönü. This is a appropriate place to begin, as everything started here for the famous Ottoman traveler and travel writer, Evliya Çelebi as well. The small mosque (Ahi Çelebi Mosque) is the very place where *Seyahatname*, a huge travelogue, was first inspired by a dream. This will be the best spot to start our journey along the Bosphorus, described as a “miniature of the empire.” The pier is located on the Ragıp Gümüşpala Street’s shore, a name that will appear again on the Bosphorus.

We set off from the Ahi Çelebi Mosque. The first building nearby is ITO (Istanbul Chamber of Commerce) University. The project that was chosen with a contest in 1963 belongs to the Architect Orhan Şahinler.

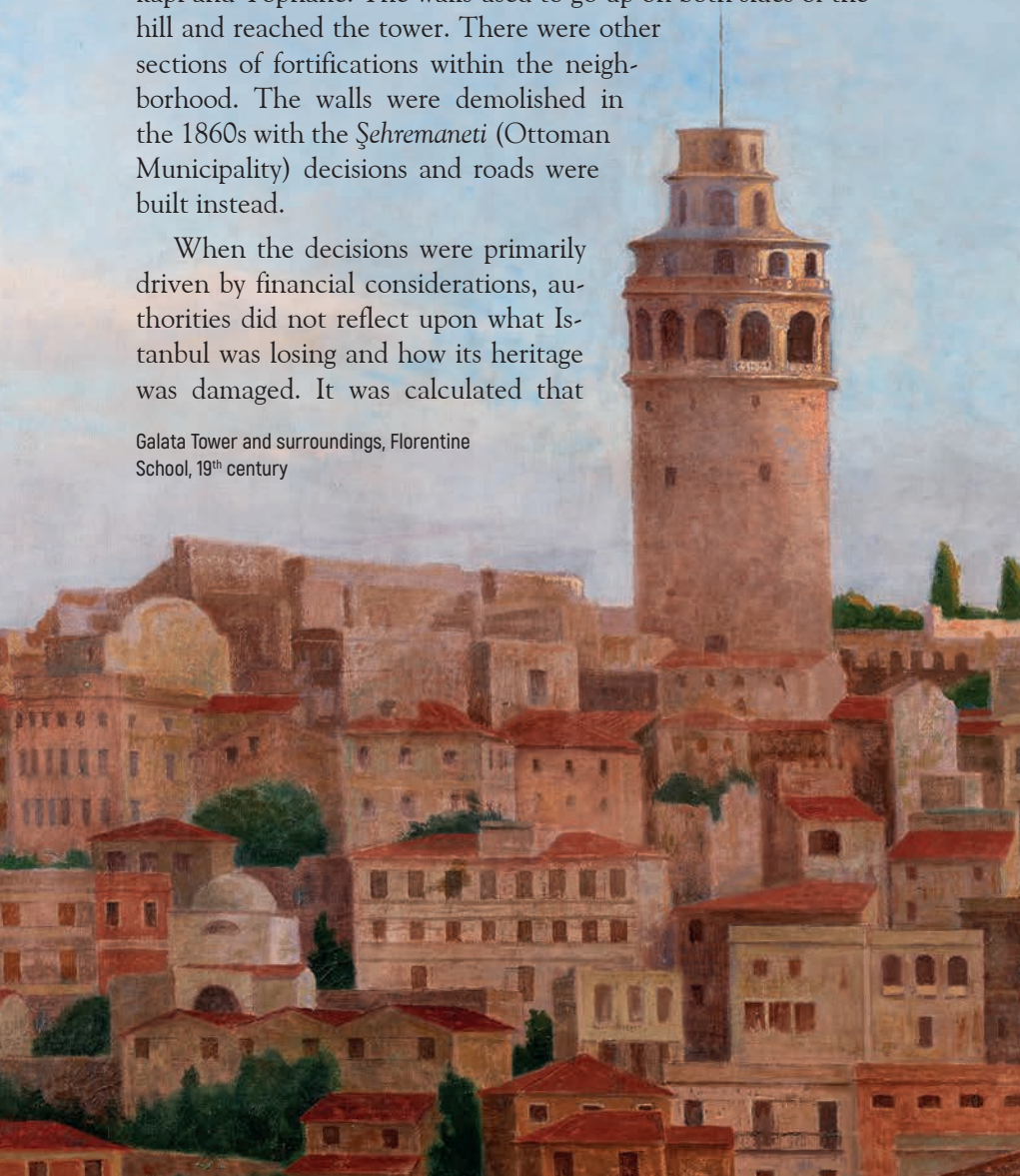
We will pass under the Galata Bridge and take our exit from the Golden Horn (known in Turkish as Haliç or the “Estuary”), an important port for the Romans and Ottomans alike. We will

thus start our journey along the Bosphorus. At this moment we can see the Galata Tower, that dominates the landscape to our left.

We know that previously the Galata Tower was not alone, but rather was accompanied by the Genoese walls of Galata where it rose up as the most magnificent of their towers. There used to be a line of fortifications close to the sea between Azapkapı and Tophane. The walls used to go up on both sides of the hill and reached the tower. There were other sections of fortifications within the neighborhood. The walls were demolished in the 1860s with the *Şehremaneti* (Ottoman Municipality) decisions and roads were built instead.

When the decisions were primarily driven by financial considerations, authorities did not reflect upon what Istanbul was losing and how its heritage was damaged. It was calculated that

Galata Tower and surroundings, Florentine School, 19th century



with the demolition of 3500-meter long walls and the 30 towers, 2,5 acres of land would be gained. This new patch of land would ease the traffic, and also dead ends would no longer pose a problem during fires. The moats in front of the walls were filled, and more land was obtained (evidence of all these live on in the names of *Büyük* and *Küçük Hendek* streets, literally meaning the “Big” and “Small Moat”). Generating revenue selling these new parcels of land was the main motivating factor at the time.

The walls had surely lost their function and were in a derelict condition in those days. They also posed a threat to the residents due to damages by earthquakes and fires. Perhaps there was no financial source at the time to restore these walls or the way of thinking at the time could not justify preservation. However, it would have certainly been an astounding experience observing the walls of Galata now, passing by a boat.

Below, parallel to the shore, there is the *Bankalar* (banks) Street with a series of neoclassical buildings. Its official name is still *Voyvoda* Street, though this name is not used by many people. Galata was home to numerous banks such as the Ottoman Bank particularly during the last periods of the empire. This tradition is still very much alive. The building of the Ottoman Bank, designed by the Italian architect Alessandro Vallauri, is presently shared and used by the Central Bank and Salt Galata, a noteworthy cultural center.





If you look closely towards the shore as soon as we leave the bridge behind, you will see the building of Ziraat Bank, once the Austrian Bank that stands out with statues on both corners of its terrace.

Favorably located in the center of Karaköy, the historical port of Galata (the northern shore of the Golden Horn) and a financial and business center, the building is an epitome of prestige bearing the last vestiges of its era. The lower part of the building is reminiscent of palace architecture, whereas the relatively animated upper part adds a Viennese ambiance to the Bosphorus shore. The building could be defined as one of the most important examples of the “Secession” modernism that flourished in Istanbul at the beginning of the 20th century. It was later extended in the northern direction. We learn from its architects Muhteşem Giray and Nezih Eldem that piles were driven as deep as 37 meters for

Ziraat Bank's main door by Sculptor
Şadi Çalık

this northern wing to be built on a land fill. Pile-driving on the shoreline to reclaim land was a noisy, costly affair.

There are only a few buildings with a sculptural program in the city and the Austrian Bank building is particularly important in that sense. We do not know whether out of respect or mere coincidence, the gate of the building that was built at a later point in time is a real artistic piece of sculpture by Şadi Çalık. The artist is mainly known for his 1973 sculpture of “50. Yıl Heykeli” (“Statue of the 50th Anniversary”) is located at Galatasaray Square in Istanbul.

Just behind there is the other bank building in the square, Yapı Kredi/Halkbank. The visual effect of the building is stunning with its yellowish masonry reflecting the setting sun during the evening hours. The Italian architect Giulio Mongeri (d. 1953) was inspired by the architectural details of Hagia Sophia which were used in the façade of a modern building. Terms like “Neo-Byzantine” have been coined for such buildings. Across the bank in the square, there is an insurance building with its unique pairs of arched windows on each of its two levels. The ground floor of this building was for many years the location of the Baylan Patisserie, which now survives on the Asian neighborhood of Kadıköy.



Ziraat Bank and the Karaköy Mosque before its demolition (1958)

What Karaköy Lost

When we look through old photographs of the square, we immediately notice a significant absence: the Karaköy Mosque (Masjid of Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha), once adjacent to the Ziraat Bank building, is no longer there. This elegant building by the Italian Architect Raimondo d'Aronco (1857–1932) was dismantled and moved from the square. The plan was to rebuild it in another place, but such a thing did not happen. The idea of rebuilding it is often suggested nowadays, which is certainly possible as it is very well documented and known in minute detail.

It should be noted that we will come across the works of d'Aronco several times during our tour along the Bosphorus. Sometimes his works will not be visible, as they are hidden behind a building or a hill, but still it is important to note that the works of this important architect are there.

We follow the shoreline towards the north as we observe some buildings that are part of the harbor facilities and mostly date back to the Republican era. The Ömer Abed Han, work of the Italian Architect Alessandro Vallauri, stands, unfortunately,



The former Karaköy Pier

behind some less sophisticated buildings on the shoreline and it can only be discerned by looking from particular angles. Its perpendicular roof, which is not in harmony with the local architecture, can also be recognized. In the foreground is the barge of the Karaköy pier for the city's ferries. The constantly relocated barge deserves the adjective "portable". The much larger Karaköy pier sank overnight and the smaller barges that were tied to the shore have been offering the same function for many years, which implies such a larger one was actually not needed. Still, a colossal pier has recently been put into use again.

The following building named as the Quarantine Administration and the *Karantina* Street just behind it remind us that such open waterways and port were once constantly exposed to infectious diseases. We know that some other locations in the Bosphorus, like Anadolu Kavağı, Beykoz, and Kuleli, were also used as quarantine centers.

Next, we can see two office buildings built for the operations of the Maritime Lines. There is a passenger hall between these two buildings. The first one is recognizable with its mainly blue colored tiles and deeper curves on the façade, while the other is called *Çinili* (Tiled) *Deniz Han*. The façade linings of the second are predominantly yellow. While the last floor looks like it has been added later, it does not really offend the eye since its yellow hue matches the rest of the building.

The passenger hall located between the two tiled buildings was in the process of being demolished as these lines were being written. Currently, only a vertical section can be seen. The building was designed by the Architect Rebiî Gorbon, who won an international design competition in the 1930s. It was like a living museum. Since even the furniture of the building was designed by the same single designer, we should hope that it can be restored with the very same high quality details. For many locals, the building is only be remembered as the Port Restaurant ("*Liman Lokantası*"). The number of people who came to this restaurant is definitely higher than the number of people

who used the passenger hall during for seafaring. The warehouse with its hard-edged porch was designed by Bedri Uçar during the same years (1939) and the building in this area was aligned with Galata Port Post Office (*Paket Postanesi*).

This port post office, which was once handled large packages and also acted as a sort of customs, was formerly yellow, but was later better known for its pink color. With its monumental dome reminiscent of Sirkeci Railway Station and long façade facing the sea, the building was reminiscent of the coastal representative of the “Main Post Office”, “*Büyük Postane*”) behind the station across the Golden Horn in the historical peninsula. While the Sirkeci Post Office was the symbol of the 19th century globalization as it was connected to the railway, this post office in Galata was almost like a nautical version connecting the city to the world trade.

The building is currently almost nonexistent, save for its façade along with some ruins of its original structure, which appears like a phantom vaguely outlining its original splendor.

Once you find a space among the Galata Port Post Office and the attached buildings behind, you can quickly glance inland to discern the mosque complex commissioned to Sinan by the famous Ottoman admiral Kılıç Ali Pasha (d. 1587), a.k.a. *Occhi-ali*, who was originally born as an Italian from Calabria, named Giovanni Dionigi Galeni. This area is a good example of how the geography of the Bosphorus was radically altered, as even these 16th century buildings were erected on a land fill that was once a cove.

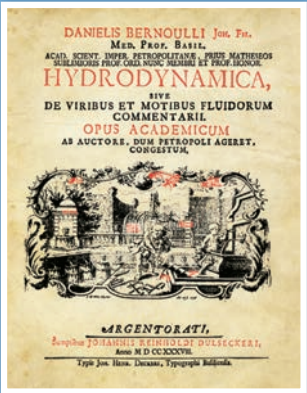
The burial area of Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque makes the building even more remarkable. First of all, it hosts tombs of many sailors, which is a kind of homage to its patron. These tombs, with their references on their headstones, are in harmony with the identities of their owners. The burial area is also rich in terms of headstones without tombs. For example, it is also home for the headstones brought from the Ebulfazl Mosque as it was demolished. The mosque used to be located on the Italian Slope

(İtalyan yokuşu), named after the Italian hospital behind the buildings of the Imperial Cannon Foundry, *Tophane-i Amire* (just across the street and easily visible, being on the very slope). The mosque was restored recently, but it might not have been an easy task to match the tombs with their original headstones.



Istanbul Modern Formula as an Answer to Istanbul’s Need for Art

The port facilities continue with warehouses built on land reclaimed from the sea. The buildings of the maritime lines, with massive and hard-edged designs, were here for a long period of time. The facilities initially functioned as an entrepôt, but after their cranes were dismantled the buildings were used for passenger liners only. The Warehouse (*Antrepo*) no: 4 was used as Istanbul Museum of



Bernoulli's Hydrondynamica (1758)

Bernoulli's formula on Istanbul Modern's façade

