This book describes the atmosphere of Galata and Pera, cosmopolitan areas of Istanbul, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and covers their buildings and social environment along with their urban and structural characteristics. The study is the first to examine the area by drawing on newspaper accounts. Three French daily papers, *Journal de Constantinople*, *La Turquie*, and *Le Moniteur Oriental*, published in Istanbul from 1848 to 1900, are reviewed as first-hand communications. According to the author, the information found in these newspapers recounts the *belle-époque* of the districts. The research based on these sources aims to reconstruct their vanished exquisite lifestyle.

The author suggests that the information obtained will help to preserve the historic environment of the areas under discussion, as they have to date survived with very few changes as compared to other districts of the city. The author refers to the cosmopolitan nature of the city which influenced the process of Westernisation in the nineteenth century. He explains the concept of Westernisation and the role of non-Muslims in transmitting it to the rest of the empire. Population, history and several urban characteristics are reviewed in subsequent chapters.
through the examination of primary buildings such as religious, commercial, educational, cultural, residential, entertainment and recreational spaces.

The work demonstrates that during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the area of Galata and Pera was the “West in the East”; i.e. it was in close contact with Europe, and all manner of goods and services were available almost simultaneously in both places. The style of living was similar to that in cities such as Paris and Vienna; the area boasted a varied urban culture that was not commonly observed in other parts of the Eastern world.

However, the research, primarily drawn from memoirs, travel books and visual material, does not take account of newspapers in Ottoman and other languages and describes the area mainly through the perspective of French daily newspapers. The use of valuable visual material could also be improved through better print quality. Nonetheless, this work is a reflection on the built and social environment of Galata and Pera, the most Europeanised districts of Istanbul, during the extensive Westernisation of the Ottoman Empire.

Sezim Sezer