



THE DRINK TANK



~Editors~

Alissa McKersie, Chuck Surface, Chris Garcia, Doug Berry

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1 View for the Top

Istanbul: A Personal Journey by Douglas Berry

Lygos, Byzantion, Byzantium . . .

In 2015, my wife Kirsten and I came to a decision. Our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary was approaching, and we wanted to do something special for it. After much discussion, we agreed to try to make a trip to Istanbul happen. With an amazing outpouring of support from friends and family, we were able to raise enough money for a week in the Queen of Cities. I was about to fulfill a life-long ambition.

I had first learned about this amazing place as a teenage gamer. Wanting more options for my AD&D campaigns, I became a voracious consumer of history. Learning about Rome led me to Constantine I, and his decision in 330CE to move his capital to this sleepy trading town on the Bosphorus. I quickly fell in love with the story of the city, from its founding in 657 BCE to the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1923.

Following the threads of the city's history is intoxicating. The sheer number of great people who lived there, the weight of history, all of that fed my desire to learn more and more. I read about Leo III and iconoclasm, or how Beyezid II brought the Jews expelled from Spain to the Ottoman Empire, saying, "He who has impoverished his own country and enriched mine!"

Reading book after book, studying maps, and staring at pictures of this, the greatest of cities, only fueled my desire to someday see it for myself. To walk in the footsteps of autokrátōres and sultāns.



2. Douglas Sultan

Augusta Antonina, Alma Roma, Roma Constantinopolitana . . .

Our arrival at the now-closed Atatürk International Airport after the eleven-hour flight was much like any other. Airports are generally utilitarian. The flags and language were different, but the dull routine of passport control and getting our bags was something we had done before. Even the ride to our hotel was old hat for two former airport shuttle drivers.

But then we passed through the still formidable Theodosian Walls and entered a place that seems to exist in several different eras at once. We had entered Istanbul's Old City, the heart of two great empires and a crossroads for traders for millennia. Our hotel was on Ordu Caddesi. Looking down on it, watching the trams and taksis battle porters hauling overloaded carts through the narrow side streets, I realized that this was the final stretch of the Roman Via Egnatia. I could picture the Roman triumphal marches going toward the Great Palace, or the Janissaries, led by their legendary bands, marching to Topkapi to salute the Sultan. Or revolt against him. It could go either way.

This feeling of timelessness was persistent. On our first day, we walked down to Sultanahmet Square to pick up a bus tour. Along the way, we passed a sixteenth-century graveyard, some remains of the Forum of Theodosius . . . and then I nearly walked into the Column of Constantine. I could feel myself slipping in time. The shops ringing what was once the Forum of Constantine were the direct descendants of the merchants who bought and sold on market days.



3. The Blue Mosque

Constantinopolis, Kōnstantinoúpolis, Kōstantīniye . . .

The Old City is filled with wonders. The Byzantine Great Palace is long gone, but some of its amazing mosaics survive. In one short walk through the Hippodrome, you can go from the Obelisk of Thutmose III, which dates to around 1490 BCE, to the German Fountain, presented to Abdul Hamid



4. The Süleymaniye Mosque

II in 1900. You run into this jarring clash of centuries everywhere. A centuries-old mosque sitting within sight of a McDonalds, or a modern funicular rising above an ancient cemetery

.But that's the joy of the Old City. That it is still, a living, breathing metropolis, with thousands living inside the walls. Life and commerce thrive here creating a link to those days gone by where the residents lived in much the same way. Names change, but the city lives!

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Kapalıçarşı, the Grand Bazaar. Begun in 1455 to stimulate prosperity, and only reaching its final shape in the eighteenth century, the Grand Bazaar is perhaps the world's oldest mall. Today, bright neon and LED lights catch your eye as you wander those labyrinthine corridors, but the din of haggling merchants and shoppers, the eager entreaties of store runners, and the ever-present warnings about pickpockets could come from the reign of Suleiman the Law Giver.

While bargaining over a set of chessmen depicting Byzantines on one side and Ottomans on the other, I had to wonder how many of these tiny stores had been held by the same families for generations. The spice merchants, the men selling cloth and rugs and lamps, all accompanied by tea and the ever-present arguing over the best deal. It was an uninterrupted cacophony lasting centuries, with no sign of stopping anytime soon, despite modern supermarkets and malls in the New City.

Miklagarðr, Basileos Polis, Rūmiyyat Al-Kubra . . .

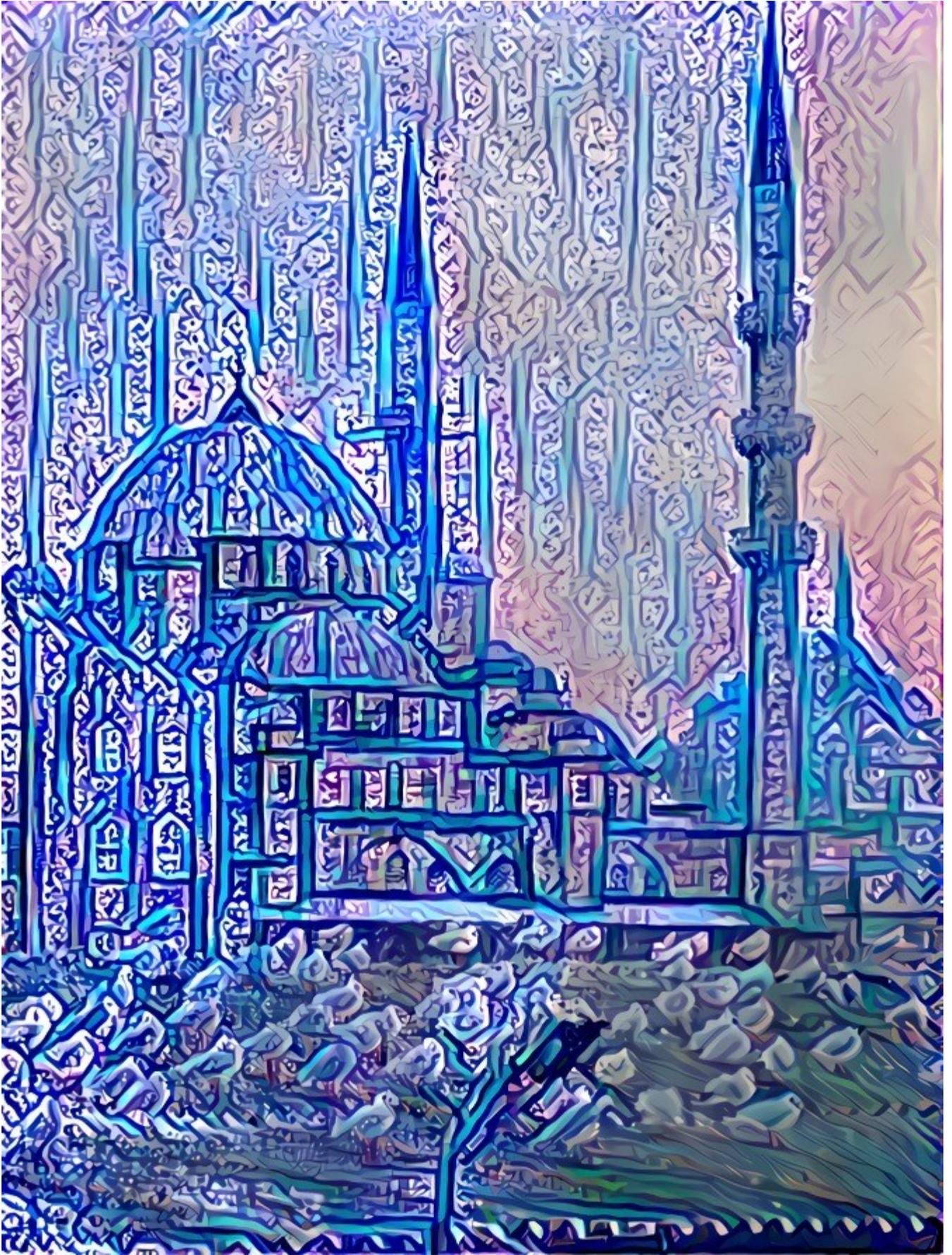
Istanbul is really a global crossroads. In the Hagia Sophia, a bored Viking carved his name in runic symbols in a marble balustrade. Stores advertise in numerous languages, and visitors flock from around the world to see the marvels left by now-dead emperors. The city really reflects all its influences. Part European, part Roman, Part Turk, but undeniably all Istanbul. For our trip, we struggle to learn a few useful phrases in Turkish, but we soon learned that learning “*Tuvalet nerede?*” was pointless as there were numerous signs for the nearest WC.

But if I had to sum up what I learned in Istanbul -- what I learned that you can't learn in a book, or on a guided tour, or in a college lecture -- it came in something that happened early in our trip. We were getting onto the funicular that goes to the top of Pierre Lotte Hill, one of the best views of the city and the Golden Horn. Kirsten and I boarded, along with three women in full chador and a cat. The cat immediately jumped into my lap and demanded love. As I complied, we shared smiles with these three women, who were probably from someplace the US was at odds with. We had no common language, but for the minute or so of the ride, we connected as people over this cat.

And that's Istanbul. The crossroads between East and West for centuries and run by cats.

Der-i Sa'ādet, Islambol, İstanbul . . .







Travel Man in Istanbul

A Review by Alissa McKersie

My husband and I accidentally stumbled upon a televisual gem called *Travel Man* last weekend, and we can't stop watching it! Maybe it's because we long to travel, or maybe it's because it's just a great show . . . whatever it is, we highly recommend it!

I first saw Richard Ayoade as Maurice Moss on the IT Crowd several years ago. He is the host of *Travel Man*. He's tall, bespectacled, nerdy, and socially awkward; the kind of guy I could go for a pint with. On this show, he invites a comedian/actor/friend to go with him on a mini-break somewhere. The episode I'm writing about is from the second episode from the first season. Richard invites comedian Adam Hills to Istanbul for two days.

Day One

Apparently, Istanbul can be reached via the famous Orient Express, from horseback from Greece, but both Richard and Adam fly from Britain, which isn't a very long flight. When Adam asked Richard why Istanbul, Richard gave several bullet points:

- Eighth most popular tourist destination in the world
- Only city in the world spread across two continents (Europe and Asia)
- Been the capital of three empires: Roman, Latin, and Ottoman
- Famous for having 1400 public toilets
- Been the filming location of choice for three James Bond films
- Ten million tourists visit per year

Richard and Adam decided to stay in the “hip and arty” or “trendy” as he called it district of Karaköy. The hotel they chose has an up-cycled decor and is called SuB Karaköy. Once they dropped off their suitcases, they headed out to enjoy the night life. Richard told Adam it was time to try the national fire water called raki or “lion’s milk”. This drink turns cloudy when mixed with water. Adam enjoyed it, but they had to hurry on to their next culinary destination. Richard and Adam had the opportunity to try tripe soup, which is described here as sheep stomach boiled in milky water, flavored with garlic, chili, vinegar, black pepper, salt, and a mixture of other spices. After a spoonful of this, both of them made faces, and Adam declared it “too Turkish,” and they had quite the laugh. It seems they had a very fun evening of trying new things.



Day Two

Realizing that there is a LOT to take in and with only one more day to do it in, the duo decides that the best way to take in the most scenery in the shortest amount of time is from the Bosphorus Strait. Adam decided it was best to do this in style and hired a yacht! Richard had another show called *Gadget Man*, so he will pop up with gadgets throughout the show, and on the yacht is one of the first ones: a pair of binoculars that snaps photos and records! Once their yachting tour is done, they come back on the other side of the Bosphorus on the ferry, and Richard has more handy information and gadgetry, because he’s just that cool (or geeky, depending on your perspective).

Apparently, Turkish barbers are famous. People pay a lot of money for a Turkish shave in London, so Richard and Adam head to Anand’s Barbershop. Adam gets a haircut and Richard gets a

shave. This is their first experience with a barber burning hair instead of cutting, due to belief that hair is a living thing. Richard uses a translation app to communicate with Anand.

When they leave Anand's Barber Shop, they head for some world-famous Turkish coffee. Turkish coffee is made by boiling beans unfiltered, and in some places, one can have their fortune told afterwards from the dregs. Richard and Adam have their fortunes told, and Richard asks the fortune teller to compare the fortunes.

When going to Istanbul, one really should go to the Grand Bazaar. Richard and Adam are amused by the fact signs adorning the ceilings. Usually, Richard has all the facts ready, but at this point, there is no need. Adam has permission to buy a rug, and haggling is the sport. He is so excited to get the rug he wants for 50% off the originally asked price. They then go to the tea emporium, and Richard gets tea for 10% off. He realizes that he's not great with haggling.

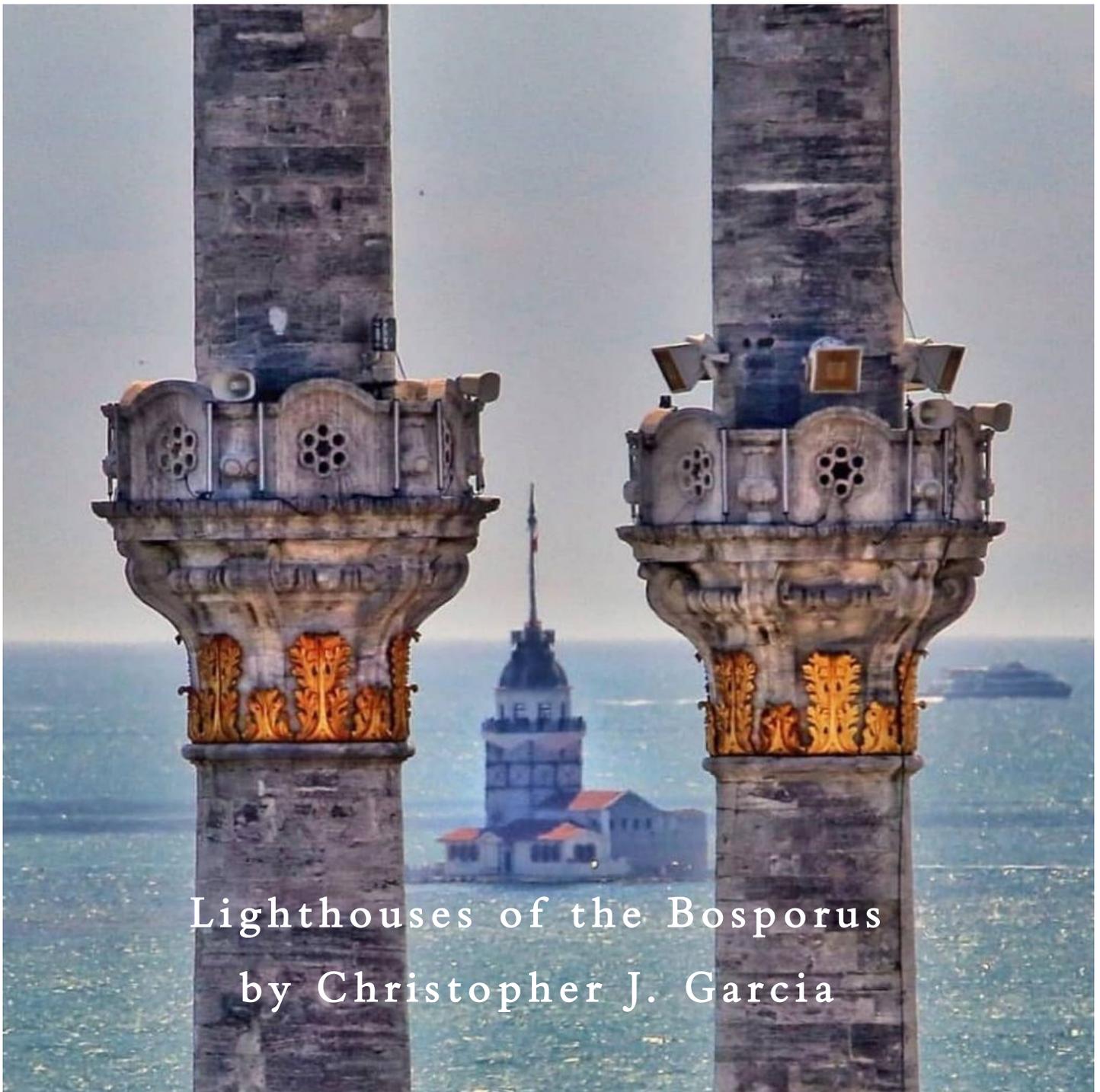
After the Grand Bazaar, they head to Hagia Sophia, Greek for "Holy Wisdom." The Hagia Sophia receives ten thousand visitors a day. Richard and Adam arrive near to closing time to avoid too many people, and they use one of Richard's handy gadgets to get around quickly and efficiently. They really take a moment to reflect, though.

Finally, they end up at Ağa Hamami, a coed public bath, where they reflect on their time in Istanbul. They enthusiastically give it two thumbs up.

We have enjoyed *Travel Man*, and we would recommend it to anyone. It's a quick watch on Amazon Prime, and it's fun.







Lighthouses of the Bosphorus by Christopher J. Garcia

I have written often about architecture and my silly love of it. I have not, to my knowledge, written about lighthouses.

When I was a kid, we would go to Point Reyes, where they had a lovely little lighthouse. Alcatraz, Pelican Bay, Umpqua River, they're all faves. I love a good lighthouse, not only for the connection to the sea and commerce, but for the architecture. We all have an image of what a lighthouse is supposed to look like, but the reality is there are just about as many different kinds of lighthouses as there are kinds of ships that kept from running aground via the light of a lighthouse.

Or so it would seem.

I've never been to Istanbul, but as I dug into the city, I was immediately drawn to the architecture. There are so many different forms present – Greek, Byzantine, Genoese, Ottoman, and, of course, more contemporary architectural forms. It's a fascinating form of organic growth, at times a study in contrasts. A single shot from any part of the city might have an Ottoman palace in the foreground, a Byzantine ruin off to one side, and the not-so-distant-future skyline of the Queen of Cities. Istanbul also sits right on the Bosphorus, the division between Asia and Europe, and thus one of the most important shipping lanes in the world. It would follow that this would require lighthouses, and as I have written it, so it has been!

There have been lighthouses in and around Istanbul for centuries. It's likely that there were fires kept burning to signal ships to shore all the way through antiquity. In 1562, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent issued a decree, in which he ordered the establishment of a light on the rocks at Kalamış. This decree led to a lighthouse being built, which would eventually become the Fenerbahçe Feneri, built in 1826. There was a great increase in the building of lighthouses in the nineteenth century as the number of ships passing through increased, as well as the speeds they could attain with new steam engines and other advances. The Fenerbahçe Feneri lighthouse today is about 65 feet tall and is still illuminating the same area as Suleiman the Magnificent had declared centuries ago. It's a neat little lighthouse, reminds me very much of many of the Gulf Coast lighthouses built just about the same time.

Then we have the more or less twinned lighthouses of Anadolu Feneri and Rumeli Feneri. They sit on either side of the straight and are still in use. The Anadolu Feneri was originally built in the 1820s, but the current version dates from 1856. It's a pretty typical looking lighthouse. On the other side, it's higher, on a bluff roughly 200 feet above sea level, and important it's ninety feet tall. That makes it the tallest of the lighthouses on the Bosphorus. On the other hand, it's kinda boring to look at.

But that is not the case for the Ahırkapi Feneri. It's still pretty lighthouse-y, but it's a powerful lighthouse. It has the tapered look you expect, with that railed balcony sort of topper. It's a powerful lighthouse, and it marks the southern-most segment of the Port of Istanbul. The original was built after a ship ran aground. Osman III rushed it into production, and it used an olive-oil fueled burner. The current version was designed and built by the French and is currently the brightest of Istanbul's lighthouses.

It is, though, not my favorite.

That honor goes to a building I didn't know I knew until I started digging into this issue. The Maiden's Tower is one of those buildings that instantly strikes you. It is low, I mean ridiculously low. Galveston Island low. It's as if it is skimming the water, a tower of Ottoman design, almost quaint.

It's history is long.

There was a rock, and after the Battle of Cyzicus, the rock was turned into a ship's rest point. In 1110, Alexius Comnenus had a wooden tower built. It was on the Asiatic side, and a chain was strung from the tower to the European side of the strait. The tower was called Leander's Tower, and it was destroyed in the earthquake of 1509. There are still some points of that chain system, a defensive system, that can still be seen underwater today. The tower that replaced the 1110 tower burned in 1721. In 1725, the current tower was built.

Well, kinda.

The walls had been replaced, and then it was significantly restored several times, so it's hard to say exactly how much is original or not. The last time it was restored was for the movie that I had first seen it in *The World is Not Enough*. Yep, another thing I am only aware of because of James Bond.

The Maiden's Tower has been a lighthouse almost its entire time, though now it is more widely known for the café and restaurant that inhabits the lower floors. It's a tourist site, and a picturesque one. It's even on the back of the ten lira note!

The name, by the way, seems to come from a story of an emperor who made the mistake of visiting an oracle. Of course, it told him that his daughter would die of a snakebite on her eighteenth birthday. He decided he wasn't going to have any of that, so he built a tower out on the water, made sure there were no snakes, and put her in it. He decides to bring her some exotic fruit, and of course, there was an asp among the fruit that no one noticed. She dies in her father's arm. Sad, right? Not a real story, but the popularity of the story seems to be where the name came from, is a classic, much like similar stories like "Rappaccini's Daughter."

The lighthouse is not nearly as important these days. Nearly all ships have GPS systems and computerized charts. Many have automatic depth-finders and scan systems that allow them to automatically avoid, or at least notice, shallows. And there are cars. Trucks. Airplanes. The lighthouse is not nearly useless; it's merely changed in importance. Yes, they are still used to mark where land is found, but they also represent the significance of shipping, about how important it was to the world. Just to keep boats from running aground they had to build towers and provide powerful lights. They are tourist attractions, and in many places that are landmarks, marker of land spaces for the people of the land. A nearly completely opposing use for them.



Holy Wisdom by Douglas Berry



It has been the seat of the Orthodox Patriarch, a Catholic cathedral, a mosque, and a museum. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site, and for many centuries it was the largest building in the world. It is the Hagia Sophia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom. Now, 1,483 years after its completion, Justinian's Great Church is again in the news due to controversial actions by the Turkish government.

Sitting at the southern tip of the Old City, the Hagia Sophia is the third known church built on the site by Roman emperors. The first, the Magna Ecclesia of Constans II, was consecrated in 360 CE. A point of contention among historians is whether this church was built from the ground up, an expansion of an older church, or built on the foundations of a pagan temple. Whatever the true story, the reality is that the church was largely burned down in 404 CE during a period of rioting.

The second church, also known as the Magna Ecclesia, was built during the reign of Theodosius II, opening in 415 CE. This church was in a far more classical Roman style, with elaborate carvings on the exterior walls showing not just Biblical scenes, but triumphs of the empire. Once again, the Great Church fell victim to fire and riot, burning on the night of 13–14 January 532 during the infamous Nike riots.

Once the rubble was cleared, the Emperor Justinian I, who was the last Roman emperor to speak Latin as his first language, ordered that a new church be built, this time a church to withstand the worst the Constantinople mob could bring. He brought in architects and materials from across the known world, and in what seemed a miraculously short time, the new Hagia Sophia was consecrated on December 27, 537 CE. Justinian, on walking into his new church for the first time, was breathless before saying *Σολομώντα, σε ξεπέρασα* (Solomon, I have surpassed thee.)

The numbers, though impressive, do not do the building justice. From the outside, the Hagia Sophia appears squat and almost muscular. So unlike the graceful Blue Mosque across the square. But enter through the 23-foot tall Imperial Door and you are suddenly in a huge space. Walk further in, and you find yourself under the 182-foot tall dome. Everywhere there are mosaics. Walking through, you feel the presence of the thousands who prayed here, took refuge here, and in some cases, died here. Legend says that the wall behind the altar hides the spirits of the priests who walked into the wall when Ottoman troops burst in.



Everywhere you look, there's a different facet of history. Here, a Sultan's old library, there, the cenotaph of Doge Enrico Dandolo, who led the Venetian assault in 1204. Over here, the spot where Roman Emperors were crowned. So much to take in! I will relate one personal story. One of the most well-known mosaics is the "Donation Panel." It shows Constantine I and Justinian I presenting models of the city and the church to a seated Mary and Christ child.

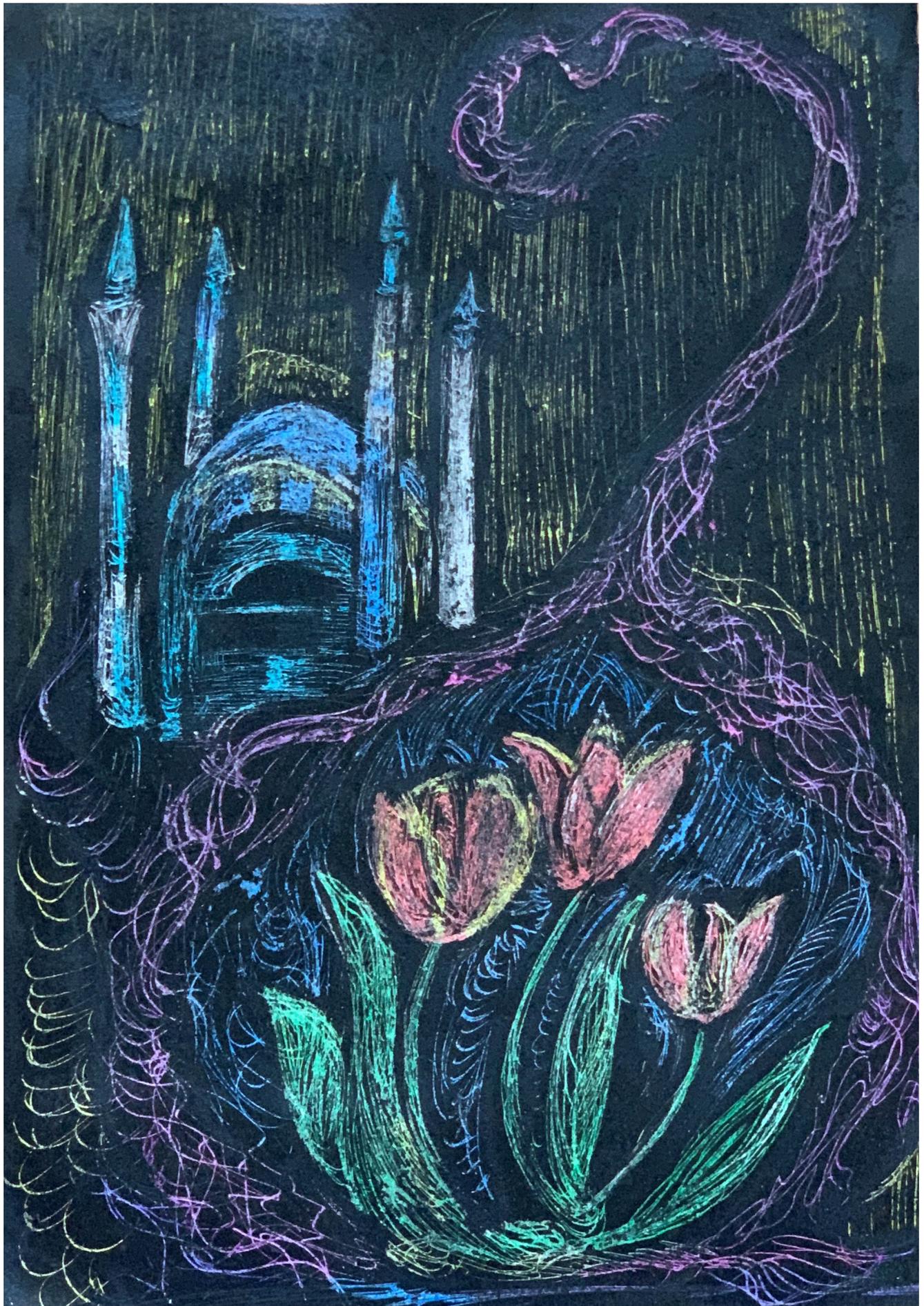
It really was the one detail I wanted to find. We had been in the building for about an hour and decided to check out a passage that led outside. Kirsten commented "Oh, that's cool, there's a mirror to show you what's on the arch behind you. I looked up, stopped, spun around, and began jumping up and down in glee. I was three years out from a stroke and still using a cane. It was the Donation Panel. I flew over 10,000 miles to see that.

It was worth the trip.



But now, sadly, the controversy. As part of his great reforms, Atatürk, the father of the Turkish Republic, enforced a more secular government. In Istanbul, never the most religiously observant city to begin with, the decision was made to turn the Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya in Turkish) into a museum. This allowed admission to be charged which funded restoration and preservation efforts. However, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has been playing to his conservative religious base, took steps to revoke the status of the Hagia Sophia as a museum and returned to being a mosque.

This set off a storm of international condemnations from Orthodox Christians (who still see the church as theirs, historians and preservationists, and world leaders. Erdoğan has converted four museums that date from the Byzantine era into mosques. It seems the 15-century long saga of Justinian's Great Church still has a few more chapters to be written.





Ottoman Interfaces by Chris Duval

I invite you to turn borders upside down! Instead of thinking of them as bounds to a container that keep things in or out, envision them as interfaces, where things pass through for some purpose on the other side of the interface. Take the Ottoman Empire as an example.

If you look at maps—in Wikipedia or any historical atlas that covers Europe—you'll see the growth and decline of the empire through changing borders. The Turkish state is shown first absorbing other nations or bits of them; then those places reemerge (or newly emerge); the maps show changing sets of what peoples are contained by the borders. That's the traditional look. There's nothing wrong with it; but you can also enjoy thinking differently.

Take the eastern edge in Asia. From the early sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century Mesopotamia was in the Empire and bordered Iran. Going both ways across that border—that interface—came Shi'a people, traveling to and from Najaf and Karbala. Young religious students came to study with the masters there; some stayed, and some returned to Iran to teach or model behavior. Pilgrims came to hear and reverence the masters; then returned.

Or take a seacoast. We're used to thinking of them, or at least their ports, as entrepôts. But it isn't just willing and unwilling people, trade goods and bounty that pass from sea to land. Winds do too. Moist winds come off the Mediterranean, channel through passes in the Lebanon mountains and drop rain beyond on farms in northwestern Mesopotamia.

Sometimes you can speculate that there must be an interface, but you don't know where. A Basque ship spotted an Ottoman fishing ship in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence/ Saint-Laurent (true according to Champlain). So where did that cod end up? If not sold through a Christian intermediary, it must have gone back through the Mediterranean to the empire. An Ottoman coast had to have an interface for cod going in and fishers going in and out.

You can even reimagine traditional maps. The war maps that show red or blue or gray curvy arrows crossing borders: interfaces. So are all rivers that flow into the empire like the Danube, the Nile, or the Dnieper.

I had fun with this. I hope you will too.





Art Nouveau in Istanbul
by Christopher J. Garcia

The few of you who follow the entirety of my writings will know that I am an architecture nerd. I love it, and I especially love the styles of the twentieth century . . . so long as you stretch that to include the very end of the nineteenth century. While Brutalism is my complete jam, and I can go on about Bauhaus and Gehry and even Mid-Century Modern, it's two movements that have truly captured 3/16 of my heart.

Art Nouveau.

Art Deco.

When we started thinking about this issue, lo so many moons ago, I knew I would be writing about architecture, but when I went looking for the styles I love, I didn't find much.

Until I actually dug a bit deeper.

There are a few excellent examples of both styles, and while Istanbul is not a city I would associate as great exemplars of Deco other than the lovely Süreyya Opera House and Ankara Railway Station, there are two amazing things in the Nouveau milieu.

The first is a hotel.

Much of the influence for the sweeping style of Art Nouveau comes from the interaction of European designs with that of the Eastern traditions. While Orientalism, that troublesome adoption of Far and Middle Eastern aesthetics by any number of artists of the nineteenth and twentieth century, had a significant impact on the artists and architects of the Art Nouveau movement, Turkey's examples of the style were either smaller and less ostentatious, or had been plowed under in the modernization of the city. Either way, the examples are pretty spectacular of the ones that still remain. The best surviving example of Art Nouveau has to be the Pera Palace Hotel.

First off, looking at a photo of it, I thought it was the set from *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. It has that same sort of distant time stylistic whimsy about it that only legitimate Art Nouveau architecture manages. The exterior is fairly simple, though not without the embellishments that make Art Nouveau so recognizable. The fact that it was built as the Istanbul housing for the passengers of the Orient Express probably helps give it an aura.

Now, I've never been to Istanbul, or 99% of the places I write about, so I am bound to the internet, to photos, and especially to Wikipedia lists. When I looked up "List of Art Nouveau Buildings in Istanbul" and I was wondering why this was listed. Then I saw interior photos and I knew why. The lobby and sitting rooms have the scalloping and draping that is so very much a marker of the style, but more importantly the elevator grating. To me, there is no other single object that displays exactly what Art Nouveau should look like in a public space than the legendary Metropolitan signs in Paris, but looking at the metalwork here, it gives those a run for their money. Truly magnificent craftwork.

As I dug about, I found a reference to a set of outdoor stairs. "That's odd," thought I as I stared at my Internet machine, "outdoor stairs aren't usually of a particular movement other than up."

I was, of course, wrong.

In the Karaköy neighborhood, one of the oldest in the city and home to most of the high-finance institutions of the Ottoman period. Thus, it was the obvious place where an outdoor access device would be given a highly-decorative design. The Camondo family were a major banking family, and they were one of the most important families in the area. Apparently, they had a raft of children, and to get to school, they'd have to walk down about thirty-five feet from their home to get to school. To drop that height, they'd have to walk down a long stretch of street, then turn back and go up another street to arrive about fifteen feet away from where they had started, only thirty-five feet lower. Like all banking families, they figured the best way to solve the problem was a big old public work!

In this case, the Camondo Stairs.

At first, I thought they looked like a double helix, two waves that touch at two points, though they begin and end as two separate streams of stairs. In the gaps between the touches are planters, and over the years, they have been over-grown, and at times bare. It absolutely speaks of the themes of Art Nouveau – the interaction between the natural and the urbane, the great sweep, the scallop, the wave. It's an amazing public piece, but more importantly, for these days, it is another piece of a past that is no longer real interacting with the world as it exists today. The neighborhood has changed, and it's still got so many of its former glories replaced, and at times echoed back at itself. These stairs are a lovely example of what public interaction with Art Nouveau could be. It's pragmatic, you've got to get down to a lower street level and these lovely steps serve that purpose, but even just the way you have to sway, almost sashay, down the steps that make you realize the interaction is guided with an ideal, an idea that dispatches with linearity and embraces that which curves, churns. Even in the late nineteenth century, you probably didn't consider that much, but today, it is far from the norm, and thus there is impact.

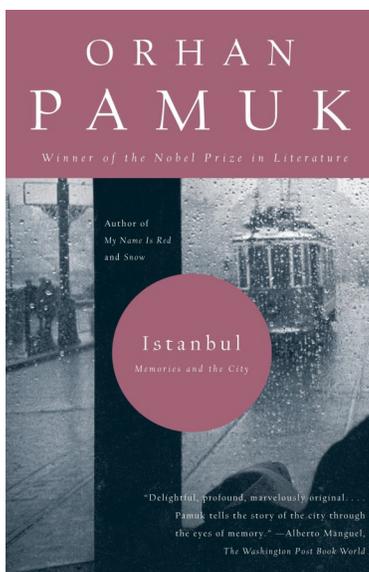
If I go to Istanbul, first it would be on the current form of the Orient Express and a stay at the Pera, but I would find my way to the Camondo Stairs, start at the bottom, and climb my way up towards Galata Tower.





My process for virtually exploring new cities begins subjectively. Literature, memoirs, poetry, and popular histories help me to understand a locale emotionally, enhancing my chances for bonding with any given place. For example, James Joyce brought me to Dublin while Victor Hugo introduced me to Paris, albeit to specific periods within each city. I need multiple authors from different eras, possessing various viewpoints for discovering the possibilities of any given location. This is how it happens for me. I am more intuition and feelings than logic and reason. Then if suitably engaged, I'll progress to objective, academic sources.

When Chris Garcia and Doug Berry said, "Let's do an issue about Istanbul," I realized that I knew next to nothing about the Queen of Cities and needed a point of entry to help me develop empathetic ties. The two volumes I've chosen to review for this special issue did so quite remarkably -- one a memoir from a Turkish Nobel Laureate and native Istanbulu, and the other a popular history of Istanbul between World Wars I and II from a respected American scholar. Thanks to these, I'm ready to learn more and one day walk among the majesty of Istanbul myself.



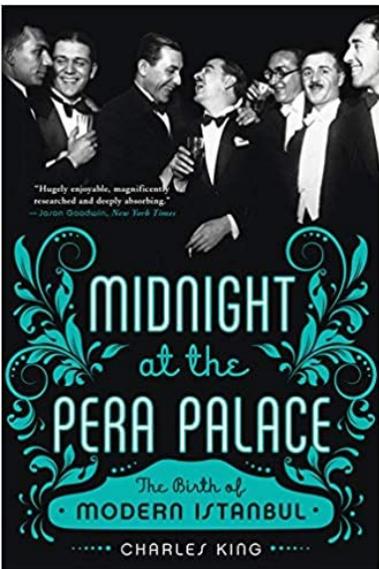
***Istanbul: Memories and the City* by Orhan Pamuk (Translated by Maureen Freely)**

Already a renowned writer, in 2005 Orhan Pamuk gained notoriety with the following statement: "Thirty thousand Kurds have been killed here, and a million Armenians. And almost nobody dares to mention that. So I do." The quote appeared in *Das Magazin*, a Swiss publication for which Pamuk was doing an interview. A hate campaign ensued, his books were burned, and Pamuk fled Turkey until returning, yes, to face criminal charges, since such talk was punishable under Turkish law. But this didn't stop him from doubling down when he told the BBC News, "What happened to the Ottoman Armenians in 1915 was a major thing that was hidden from the Turkish nation; it was a taboo. But we have to be able to talk about the past." And then during a award ceremony in Germany: "I re-

peat, I said loud and clear that one million Armenians and 30,000 Kurds were killed in Turkey." Eventually, the court dropped all charges, and Pamuk moved on to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. The author felt that Turkey could not grow without truth, without freedom of speech, and he'd damn well let you know that.

With *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2004), Pamuk applies this truthful practice to his hometown. Born in 1952, his Istanbul was a city defined by *hüzün*, literally meaning "melancholy," but Pamuk distills this general concept into a melancholy specific to Istanbul, one related to a city that had become, "poorer, shabbier, and more isolated than it had been before in its two-thousand-year history." *Hüzün*, in short, is "an end-of-empire melancholy." Here we see an Istanbul plunging uncertainly toward westernization, where black-and-white chiaroscuro abounds across the landscape and within each inhabitant's soul. Pamuk will not spare us from this truth, however, because he loves his city and his people. No propagandist is he. He'd prove that a few years later as I discussed in my first paragraph.

Famous authors and painters make cameos: Flaubert, Hemingway, and Melling, for example. Pamuk also devotes much time to influential Istanbulis, such as the poet Yahya Kemal, the historian and journalist Reşat Ekrem Koçu, the novelist Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, and the memoirist Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar. Like me, Pamuk draws inspiration from the artistic and subjective. This in no way, however, detracts from the memoir's worth to those seeking historical knowledge of the city. Readers experience the streets and districts of the Queen of Cities quite vividly. This is neither pure autobiography nor common travelogue. Instead, Pamuk blends the two, devising a template for understanding how individuals both are influenced and influence their cities. Pamuk would have you see Istanbul not just for its historic beauty, but for its truth, warts and all, for its uncertainties and for its anxieties, for its past glories and for its mistakes from which no Turk should hide but must confront. I find that refreshing, and it compels me to learn more.



Midnight at the Pera Palace: The Birth of Modern Istanbul

We move now from memoir (of a sort) to popular history. A Professor of International Affairs and Government at Georgetown University, Charles King concerns himself with the history of Istanbul between the two World Wars, providing a view into the people and events that led to the Istanbul of Pamuk's generation. During this period, Istanbul shifted from decaying empire, to an occupied territory, to the republic established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Such turmoil, and, like Pamuk, King spends many pages illustrating the rigors of national transformation and its effects on the citizenry. Although never discussed deeply, the Pera Palace mentioned in the title becomes a loose metonymy reflecting the movements and progressions of this period.

The Wagon-Lits Company first opened the Pera Palace Hotel in 1892, aiming toward several deluxe accommodations along its Orient Express. European tastes and fashions were enticing Ottomans at that juncture, and the hotel reflected that aspect of the zeitgeist. Later in 1919, the flamboyant Prodromus Bodosakis-Athanasiadis, an Istanbul Greek, purchased the establishment, an evolution reflecting the blend of occupation forces, exiled White Russians, and Armenians populating Istanbul. Then in 1927, the hotel came into the hands of Misbah Muhayyeş, a Muslim from Beirut, very much on par with the nationalist tendencies arising after the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) that facilitated the expulsion of foreigners from the budding republic. Currently, Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts, an Emirati concern, owns the property. Beyond this metaphorical framing, however, King doesn't dawdle with the Pera, instead presenting a history that transforms readers into participants of culture and events.

That nationalism though . . . ough. Several times, I thought to myself, “Ah, that’s what Pamuk means.” Pamuk rises barely above allusion while King delivers the nitty-gritty. King explains the root of Pamuk’s hüzn, although of course this isn’t his main intention. After the empire’s demise, changes arrived rapidly, and the republic’s birth rose hand-in-hand with aggression toward foreigners. So adept is King at making us a part of the action I often felt my neck twist back and forth from the quick turns and jerks he describes, as if on the roller coaster of the Joker’s dreams. How could ordinary Turks have endured that day after day? They did, which speaks highly of their collective character.

And, yes, King never forgets ordinary Turks. Shopkeepers, former imperial eunuchs attempting assimilation into the republic, and musicians enter the story alongside George Milne, Charles Harington, Mehmed VI, and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Any successful history book, whether popular or academic, narrates with little data-dumping. King succeeds magnificently in this regard. Thanks to him and Pamuk, I’ll happily expand my journey through Istanbul, most assuredly by reading, and, if luck goes my way, physically as well.



Enditorial

~or~

Some notes on the Art

For this issue, knowing that Istanbul was one of the most visually stunning cities on Earth, I went deep into my bag of tricks with DeepDream. The ornate architect of the city lends itself well to capture, but perhaps not so much for digital manipulations. The 5 pieces I include here, on pages 2, 9, 14, 23, 28, and 30, are out of a total of about 300 I created over the course of the last year as we had this issue on various of our personal project burners.

The pieces on page 20 and 23 are by the amazing Kathryn Duval. Her work here, with the chalk, actually reminds me of many of the DeepDream works, and when I tried to plug it in to the program, it came out very nicely, but also kinda floofy. Someday, computers will understand.

Doug Berry, who chose this issue as his return to editing with us at The Drink Tank, is a wonderful human being. He also provided the images that came with his articles. That story of the Donation mosaic is my fave.

I loved laying this issue out, largely because I just love Istanbul. I may never make it there, but I can not say it is not one of my favorite cities to stare at, to dream of.

Chris

