



As Night Falls

In a world that is constantly awake, illuminated and exposed, there is much to gain from looking into the darkness of times past. This fascinating and vivid picture of nocturnal life in Middle Eastern cities shows that the night in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire created unique conditions for economic, criminal, political, devotional and leisurely pursuits that were hardly possible during the day. Offering the possibility of livelihood and brotherhood, pleasure and refuge; the darkness allowed confiding, hiding and conspiring – activities which had far-reaching consequences on Ottoman state and society in the Early Modern period. Instead of dismissing the night as merely a dark corridor between days, *As Night Falls* demonstrates how fundamental these nocturnal hours have been in shaping the major social, cultural and political processes in the Early Modern Middle East.

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As Night Falls

Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Cities
after Dark

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In memory of Walter G. Andrews (1939–2020)

“For in the dark of that night she saw that Alexander clearly”
Latifi (d. 1582)

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Acknowledgments

This project took off following a somewhat unexpected meeting during my postdoc at the University of Washington, a little over a decade ago. Soon after I arrived in Seattle, people told me I should meet Walter Andrews, whom at the time, I only knew by name. I was completely ignorant of the world of Ottoman poetry, nor was I particularly interested in learning about it. When we finally met, Walter listened carefully as I shared with him some raw ideas I had about Ottoman nights, and then gently suggested that Ottoman poets probably would not have agreed with many of my observations. I have to admit it had never occurred to me to ask Ottoman poets what they thought. But something about the way Walter spoke about poetry lured me in and, before I knew it, I was participating in his poetry-reading group. It was as if Walter showed us a secret pathway into the collective mind of a bygone society and guided us along its long and winding corridors. With his immense knowledge he initiated us into a world of nuance and ambivalence and patiently corrected our often-embarrassing mis-translations. An almost incidental encounter turned into a fascinating intellectual journey.

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Note on Terms, Names, and Transliteration

Ottoman Turkish words have been transliterated according to modern Turkish standards. In cases where the Ottoman words are no longer used in modern Turkish, they were transliterated according to the *Redhouse Turkish/Ottoman-English Dictionary* (1968). Arabic and Hebrew words were transliterated based on the style adopted by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Arabic and Turkish terms usually appear in the singular form and are italicized and explained on the first appearance. Whenever the plural form of such terms is required, a romanized “s” is added to them. Extracts from poetry and chronicles that had been transliterated by other scholars and incorporated into the current study follow the original transliteration. All translations are mine, if not otherwise indicated. Names of places commonly known to readers of English have been written in their usual forms (therefore, Istanbul, not İstanbul; Jerusalem, not Yerūshalayim or al-Quds). For names of authors who wrote in Ottoman-Turkish, Turkish transliteration was applied (hence Hasan Hamid and not Ḥasan Ḥamīd). In cases where there are several common transliterations in modern Turkish, I chose the one closest to the Ottoman source (hence Ahmed Midhat and not Ahmet Mithat). However, in titles of Ottoman publications that have been reprinted in modern Turkish, the names of authors appear as transliterated by the publisher. Inconsistency between text and references in some places is therefore unavoidable. Names of authors who wrote in Arabic or Hebrew were transliterated following IJMES conventions.

Abbreviations

BOA –	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi
EI –	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i>
IJMES –	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
JS –	Jerusalem Sicili
TDVİA –	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi</i>
ÜS –	Üsküdar Sicili