

Note from the Guest Editors:

At the Margins of Consumption: Reframing Ottoman Historiography¹

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Ottoman historiography has paid comparatively little attention to consumption through conceptual frameworks such as consumer behaviour, the consumer revolution, or consumerism. Instead, existing literature tends to centre on two dominant themes: the process of modernisation and the lifestyles of the elite. However, the potential scope of consumption studies extends well beyond these areas. Consumption constitutes a pertinent analytical lens that can inform nearly every stage of historical inquiry. Therefore, one of the central aims of this special issue is to explore how various fields of study intersect with the theme of consumption and to consider the broader historiographical implications of these intersections.

Consumption is no longer viewed solely as an economic phenomenon. While it remains deeply intertwined with economic structures, there is a growing recognition that social, cultural, and political contexts must also be considered when analysing consumption patterns. This broader perspective enables a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the subject. In order to enrich our understanding of Ottoman consumption, contributions that engage with micro-level conceptual debates are particularly valuable. Such approaches enable a more micro analysis of consumption practices within the Ottoman context. There remains a clear need for studies that address all segments of Ottoman society, engage in global debates without being confined by them, and foreground the subjectivities and internal dynamics of Ottoman social life. As this body of scholarship expands, we will be better equipped to understand how consumption took shape in the Ottoman world and how it evolved over time.

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In other words, consumption can be examined as a field of study that provides insights into broader, long-term social transformations, rather than serving solely as a reflection of the material culture of prominent individuals. Domains such as food, clothing, household goods, medicine, and leisure—areas where patterns of continuity and change are particularly evident—should be analysed across both elite and non-elite segments of society. On this basis, this special issue seeks to demonstrate that scholars across varied research agendas can meaningfully engage with consumption without departing from their core disciplinary or thematic commitments. Accordingly, we invited contributors to work within their established research frameworks and to reflect on how their inquiries intersect with consumption, including the kinds of primary sources that support such connections. This approach has revealed that consumption is a versatile and productive lens—one that can be articulated across a wide array of historical and social questions.

The conceptual foundation of *Keshif* lies in the close reading of micro texts, including individual documents, contextualised through short, but concise essays. These brief pieces provide insights into broader themes that can be explored in greater depth and highlight a wide array of sources that scholars can draw upon for future research. This special issue features contributions covering the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Two articles—by Fikret Yılmaz and Tunahan Durmaz—focus specifically on the seventeenth century. Yılmaz demonstrates that among the revenue sources of the Ahmed I foundation were taxes collected from the production and sale of alcoholic beverages such as raki and wine. The involvement of alcohol producers in financing a major imperial foundation invites further inquiry into patterns of alcohol consumption in the Ottoman Empire and may encourage more focused studies on this topic. Also centred on the seventeenth century, Durmaz’s article highlights the close relationship between medicine and consumption. By examining medical texts his work offers a valuable introduction to the intersections between food, medicine, and consumption.

Contributions from Yaron Ben-Naeh, Sümeyye Hoşgör Büke, and Eyüp Ensar Dal represent the eighteenth century. Drawing on Hebrew sources, Ben-Naeh presents the

shopping list of a Jewish family in Edirne, offering a rare glimpse into the everyday dietary needs and household provisions of the period. In contrast, Hoşgör Büke examines the concept of food hierarchy through an analysis of provisioning lists allocated to Darendeli Sarı Abdurrahman Pasha (d. 1766) following his retreat after a failed rebellion in the late eighteenth century. Also situated in the eighteenth century, Eyüp Ensar Dal's study investigates the clothing of primary school students, providing a dual perspective on consumption. His study not only documents what children wore to school but also, through detailed price data, offers insight into the broader market economy. Notably, Dal's research uncovers early evidence for the use of the fez in Ottoman society, predating its official adoption in the nineteenth century.

The nineteenth century is addressed through four valuable contributions by Yavuz Köse, Hatice Gökçen Özkaya and Derya Düzgün Top, Deniz Özeren, and Özgür Gündiken. These studies illuminate shifting consumption patterns and evolving social dynamics in the late Ottoman Empire. Köse's analysis of Nestlé's operations and its recognition for wartime provisioning demonstrates how a multinational company strategically navigated local markets and aligned itself with state priorities, revealing the entanglement of commerce and politics in a volatile period. Özkaya and Düzgün Top examine an expense record related to the furnishing of a newly constructed salon at Yıldız Palace, showing how modernisation influenced elite consumer preferences through the adoption of Western aesthetics. Özeren analyses a fruit purchase record for the Yalova mountain bathhouses, offering insights into the pricing and distribution of perishable goods and highlighting the integration of food consumption into everyday social practices. Finally, Gündiken explores an invoice documenting luxury purchases by the first secretary of the imperial chamber under Abdülhamid II. His analysis demonstrates how material culture served not only as an expression of personal taste but also as a medium for articulating political allegiance. Collectively, these articles illustrate how consumption functioned as a key site for modernisation, social distinction, and the negotiation of identity in the late Ottoman period.

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and textual analyses of the contributions. We also wish to express our heartfelt thanks to *Keshif*'s Chief Editors—Gisela Procházka-Eisl, Ercan Akyol, and Aysu Akcan—for their unwavering support from the inception of this special issue. It is largely due to their commitment that this issue has come to fruition.

Ultimately, if this special issue prompts readers to reflect more critically on the role of consumption within their own research and within broader historiographical trajectories, then we believe it will have achieved its intended purpose.