“A dream to dream again” – accounts of travels to Constantinople in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

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On September 25th 1882, at noon, a certain Per Emmanuel Bergstrand arrived at Constantinople, on board a steam-ship coming from the Black Sea. His description of beholding the city for the first time conveys the impression of a profoundly spiritual experience. “Suddenly”, Bergstrand writes, “Constantinople appears as by magic, so deafening that one believes one has lost all senses and to have moved to another world, a dreamworld beyond reality. Everything one has seen before”, he writes, “disappears to nothing, nothing else leaves such a lasting impression or can be compared to this.”

The feelings Bergstrand describes resembles descriptions of the “first view” of Constantinople in a number of other accounts of the city from the same age. There is no reason to doubt Bergstrand’s honesty or to suspect that he exaggerates. However, this raises the question about the relation between traveller’s experiences and the narratives of for instance guidebooks, and whether Bergstrand’s journey was a typical one. In this paper, I will discuss the relations between guidebooks and traveller’s experiences, drawing on the example of 19th-century and early 20th-century Constantinople. Further, I will also explore how the accounts presented by the guidebooks relate to other types of writings, in this case encyclopaediae.

In the 19th century tourism to Constantinople and the Near East was booming, fuelled by two trends: one the one hand, the wide-spread interest in Orientalism in western Europe, which embraced art and architecture, racial theories, religious programmes, commercial and political enterprises. On the other hand, the Ottoman empire was undertaking large-scale administrative reforms to modernize the country, which also made it more attractive for travellers. The first steamer reached Istanbul in 1840 and shipping companies started regular lines carrying not only diplomats, businessmen and politicians, but also an increasing number of tourists. In the early 20th century travelling to Constantinople had become a mass phenomenon, as the city received between 40 000 and 65 000 visitors each year and the tourist industry becoming an increasingly

1. Bergstrand 1883, 56: “…ända till dess sjelfva slutpunkten, Konstantinopel, står fram som ett trollslag, så dofvande att man, ehuru förberedd på öfverraskningen, tror sig ha förlorat sina sinnens fulla bruk och vara förflyttad till en annan verld, till en drömverld uppböver verkligheten. Allt hvad man förut sett, försvinner till ett intet, och ingenting annat efterlämnar heller ett så djupt intrryck eller är dermed jemförligt.” It should be pointed out that the translations of quotes from Swedish have been done by the author.
important part of the city’s economy.2 Bergstrand’s account presents an example of the experiences awaiting these travellers.

Per Emanuel Bergstrand was by profession a land surveyor and cartographer but also active as a journalist and writer. He became most well-known for the texts he wrote under the pseudonyme of Captain Gulliver – “small vignettes of this and that, flavoured by humorous whims and puns” according to a later biographer.3 Among “Gulliver’s” writings were a number of accounts of travels. One of these, published in 1883, relates a journey to Constantinople in the year before. Bergstrand’s journey begins 10 days before his arrival to Constantinople, when he leaves Stockholm on a steam-ship bound for Libau (present-day Liepāja in Lithuania) and from there Bergstrand travels through the Baltic countries, Poland and Central Europe to Constantia by the Black Sea in south-east Rumania. From Constantia, Bergstrand travels the last stage of his journey by boat, as all travellers would have done, through the Bosphorus. During his journey, Bergstrand relates many acute observations and experiences of life and culture in Eastern and Central Europe. A recurring topic is the tensions between cultures and faiths in the contemporary world, an issue which will be very much on Bergstrand’s mind in Constantinople as well.

Bergstrand’s first impression of “the second city of the world” (Bergstrand hastens to mention that he regards Rome as the first one) only lasts until he comes ashore and actually goes out to take a look at the city. This proves to be an intense experience, full of unfamiliar and dramatic contrasts: wooden houses in all colours, noisy harbour quarters, the elegant houses of Pera; cafés, trams, cabs, the crowded streets with their horses and dogs (above all these dogs!). And, like many other visitors, Bergstrand is now struck by the contrast between the beauty of the settings and the ill-kept appearance of the city; he notes that while the landscape of Constantinople is famous as the most beautiful city in the world, it is also perhaps the dirtiest city of the world. There is also a contrast between Europe and the Orient here, as Bergstrand notes that the best part of the city is the district of Pera, the European part of the city and “the only part of the city where even the most modest European could live.”

After this apparently somewhat exhausting first encounter with the city, Bergstrand takes a trip to the suburbs of Pankaldi and Feriköi to recuperate. Leaving the metropolis behind, these suburbs seem pastoral and idyllic. Bergstrand visits peaceful cemeteries and picturesque cafés and

3. Jacobson 1922, 707: ”små, av skämtsamma infall och anspelningar krydda ögonblicksskildringar från än det ena, än det andra området.”
4. Bergstrand 1883, 60: ”Som vi veta, är Pera den bästa stadsdelen, der Europas diplomater måst ursprungligen bygga åt sig själve, och den enda stadsdel i vilken även den mest anspråkslöse europé kan bo.” It should be pointed out that the place-names mentioned in this paper are the late 19th and early 20th century names and name-forms used in the sources quoted, i.e. Pera = present-day Beyoğlu; Skutari = Üskudar.
notes Turkish customs with interest. However, he also muses that the lavish Ottoman palaces he passes are too many, too costly and of too little use. Finally, Bergstrand crosses the straits to the village of Skutari on the Asian side, but this visit does not last for long, as Bergstrand considers it more dirty there than in Europe.⁵

After having spent his time in Skutari admiring the views towards Europe, Bergstrand once more crosses the straits to the European side to visit the Dolmabahce-palace, the lavish palace built in the mid-19th century by the Ottoman sultans as a modern replacement for the mediaeval Topkapi-palace. Here, he finds another ready opportunity to contemplate the irresponsible spendings of the sultans. Instead, he finds his way to Stambul, the oldest part of the city,⁶ and visits Hagia Sophia. This proves to be another profound experience; Bergstrand writes that he can barely endure the sight of the church's grand beauty and divine majesty.⁷

During the following days, Bergstrand makes a number of excursions, with a steamboat up the Golden horn, among narrow and winding lanes in Stambul, and up the Bosphorus to the village of Buyukdere by the Black Sea. He meets people everywhere: Turks, Greeks, Armenians, others Northerners and Western Europeans. He tells of steam-boat piers, coffee-houses, clock-makers and fez-dealers. Finally, on Friday the 29th of September Bergstrand leaves Constantinople – incredibly, he has spent only five days in the city.⁸ However, his visit seems to have given enough impressions to last a lifetime.

Bergstrand is ambivalent towards the Orient, Turkey and Constantinople. His great admiration for the beauty of the place is a recurring topic. He also expresses a genuine curiosity about Turkish and Oriental culture – there is so much, Bergstrand feels, that Europeans do not understand and underestimate out of their own pride and self-centeredness.⁹ At the same time, Bergstrand repeatedly voices his scepticism towards the Ottoman Empire, the rule of its sultans and their role in contemporary European politics. If the Turks want to defend their place in Europe, he maintains, “they should try to hold a more even pace with us in our progress and not be content with buying Krupp guns, battleships and German officers.”¹⁰ For Turkey has a mission, Bergstrand argues, to be the transmitter between Europe and Asia; and, “there is a lot to hope for in one of the most excellent peoples of world history.”¹¹

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6. Stambul (or Stamboul) was the name used for the old part of Constantinople, south of the Golden Horn, where the ancient city was located. The name, like the present-day name Istanbul, is usually assumed to come from the Greek expression εἰσ τὴν πόλιν, “to the city”. See Room 2006, 177–178.
7. Bergstrand 1883, 84.
10. Bergstrand 1883, 94: “Men vilja turkarne häfda sitt ärofulla namn och sin eröfrade plats i Europa, så måste de hålla jemmesteg med oss i vårt framåtgående och ej inskränka sig till att köpa kruppskanoner och pansarfartyg och tyska officerare.”
Bergstrand’s style can be both poetic, wistful and drastic, often switching in an instant from one mood to another. Then there are his “humorous whims”: for instance during a trip along the Bosporus, Bergstrand gets the idea into his head that he would like to take a swim and buys what he thinks is a ticket to a public bathing-house. He changes his clothing there, which leads to much commotion – “vous avez fait scandal, monsieur?” – and Bergstrand gets the explanation that he has actually bought a ticket to the steam-ship to Constantinople, and tried to change his clothes on the pier.\textsuperscript{12}

“Captain Gulliver” is, on the whole, a very entertaining cicerone to Constantinople of the 1880s, mixing such hilarious anecdotes and surprisingly acute observations of the contradictions of the modern world. Bergstrand is surprisingly open-hearted about his uncertainties and confesses that he has even started to doubt Western civilisation: “it is also in the Orient that I, for my part, more than before have started to doubt the infallibility of western culture […] some merciful barbarians”, he muses gloomily, “will come and kill us with our own Krupp-guns, our own armoured ships.”\textsuperscript{13} Bergstrand would prove to be hauntingly prophetic, as the First World War broke out some 30 years later, and his account remains a fascinating account of the world in the decades before the war.

“Captain Gulliver” does not mention any guidebook, but his account as indicated above relates closely to them. The first guidebook to Constantinople was the Guide du voyageur à Constantinople et dans ses environs, published in 1839; similar editions were published in German by Karl Baedeker of Leipzig in 1852 and in English by John Murray of London in 1854.\textsuperscript{14} The journey to Constantinople was still a stressful and adventurous one in the mid-19th century, something which is also reflected in the guidebooks; the introduction to Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Turkey in Asia including Constantinople The Bosphorus, Dardanelles, Brousa and plain of Troy from 1873 gives detailed instruction concerning what a traveller to the Near East should bring for an adventurous journey, encompassing just about anything from tents to horses and weapons.\textsuperscript{15} However, the route rapidly became safer, as railways started connecting Western Europe with the Balkans and Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{16} These new means of communication lead to a rapid rise in tourism to Constantinople; this change is clearly visible in an edition of Baedeker’s Konstantinopel und das westliche Kleinasien from 1905. The presentation of the city in the introduction sounds familiar

\textsuperscript{12} Bergstrand 1883, 99.
\textsuperscript{13} Bergstrand 1883, 72–73: “Men just i orienten har jag för min del börjat mer än förr tvivla på ofelbarheten af vesterlandets kultur. […] När vi ligga med förstörda magar som boa constrictorn, så komma väl några barnhåriga barbarer och slå ihjäl oss med våra egna kruppskanoner, våra egna pansarfregatter.”
\textsuperscript{14} Hastaoglou-Martindis 2004, 40–41; for a recent introduction to the guidebooks of Karl Baedeker and John Murray, see Goodwin & Johnston 2013.
\textsuperscript{15} Murray’s 1873, 11–18.
\textsuperscript{16} Hastaoglou-Martindis 2004, 41.
even some 110 years later: “Constantinople, situated on the threshold to the Orient and connected directly and conveniently with the west through the railroad, offers next to completely European parts also the foreign impression of an Oriental capital, in addition to one of the most picturesque sceneries on the world”.17

When the traveller arrives at Constantinople, the task of the guidebook was to prepare the eye of the tourist for the unfamiliar landscape of the oriental city and to provoke emotional responses on how to feel and react. This introduction would be combined with practical instructions, concerning necessary preparations, an overall presentation of districts, sites and monuments, and information on population and history.18 One central trait of guidebooks to Constantinople was the presentation of striking contrasts between on the one hand the venerable capital and on the other the expanding metropolis; the Oriental and European faces of the city and between disorder and civilisation.19 As we have already seen, this contrast recurs through Bergstrand’s experiences; as we also shall see, it is very much at the front in other writings, and even today.

Travellers would reach the city by sea and land at the Galata shore, as Bergstrand does (Fig.1); the travel guides prepares the gaze of the traveller for the sight of the place, emphasising its

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beauty. Both Murray’s and Baedeker linger on this view. “To be seen to perfection”, Murray’s claims, “the traveller should first behold it on his arrival by the Sea of Marmora on an early summer morning, when the sun, rising from behind the range of the Bithynian Olympus, first throws its rays upon the magnificent domes and towering minarets”. The Baedeker is no less picturesque. The traveller is assumed to land in Galata and is then introduced to the various means of communication. The traveller should then head for Pera, where the guidebooks expect a European visitor to stay.

When the visitor has arrived and found lodgings it is time to start sightseeing. The guidebooks present a symbolic geography through drawing up the contrasts between Stambul, “European” Pera and “Asian” Skutari. A traveller to Constantinople should make excursions to all of these parts of the city. Tours are drawn up on the basis of the spatial proximity of the monuments, for the convenience of the travellers. Murray’s from 1873 and the Baedeker from 1905 present the city in rather different styles, partly, again reflecting the rapid development of the city during these years. In a long introducing essay, Murray’s paints the contradictions between the setting of the city and the intense city life in vivid colours: “The barbarous extremes of magnificence and wretchedness, the majesty of nature ... in contrast with the atrocious effects of unrestrained sensuality, fill up the varied picture.” The guidebook then provides a short introduction on hotels, restaurants and cafés (“there are a number of Greek restaurants, which cannot in any way be recommended”), communication and ciceroni (“no professed cicerone should be allowed to make bargains at the bazaars or anywhere else”). After this, Murray’s suggests a “general examination” of six days; this begins with visiting some important sights around Hagia Sophia and the Topkapi palace on day one, and continuing to various places of interest around the hippodrome on day two. For day three and four, excursions further west in central Stambul are suggested, and for day five and six longer trips to the areas around the Byzantine Land walls in the far west of the city.

The city and its monuments are also ordered in a hierarchy of sights. Murray’s first presents the various neighbourhoods of the city, beginning with Galata and Pera, a number of suburbs and

21. Murray’s 1873, 63–64.
25. Murray’s 1873, 64.
26. Murray’s 1873, 68.
27. Murray’s 1873, 69.
only then moving on to Stambul. Murray’s points out that “Europeans never go into Stambul at night. Dogs swarm and would worry a stranger in the dark.”

Later, the warning is repeated that “The population are not friendly, and the dogs at that time would tear a stranger to pieces.” Then a number of monuments are presented: walls and gates, the Topkapi palace, Imperial mosques and türbes (Ottoman imperial tombs), ancient buildings and cisterns, Greek churches, fountains, harems, khans (open ware-houses), the slave market, baths, cemeteries, and finally a number of other buildings that may be of use to know such as hospitals. All suggested tours begin in Pera; as the traveller is assumed to stay there, the travel guides describe the city looking out from this vantage point on the northern side of the Golden horn. This directs the movements of the travellers, as they are instructed to cross the bridge spanning the Golden horn and going to the old town in Stambul. This experience is relevant even today; present-day tourists divide their time between the must-see sights of the old town, especially the part of the city today known as Sultanahmet, and the busy night-life and shopping areas in Beyoglu (as Pera is called today).

The Baedeker, instead of dividing the sights in categories, presents all monuments and sights in the course of its suggested walking tours. After a compact section on practicalities, a number of short tours that can be accomplished in 4 days are suggested to the traveller who is in a hurry. The first day, after having arrived, the traveller is suggested to take the tram from Pera to Galata, from there to cross the bridge over to Stambul and for instance take a look at Hagia Sophia, before climbing the Galata tower and admiring the view before sunset (see Fig. 2). The second day should be spent visiting the Archaeological museum and the eastern parts of central Stambul; the third day with seeing the Great Bazaar, certain sights around the Land walls and the Eyup (a western suburb famous for its mosque, the most important muslim sanctuary in Constantinople); the fourth should be spent with a tour on the Bosphorus and to Skutari on the Asian side.

The more thorough tours also begin with Pera and Galata (tour a). Once again a visit to the Galata-tower is mentioned as the best preparation for a tour of Constantinople. Tour b takes the traveller from Galata over the Golden horn to Stambul and the area around Hagia Sophia, while tour c and d leads to areas further west, rather like the tours of day 3 and 4 suggested by Murray’s. Tour e is a detailed account of the exhibitions of the Archaeological museum; while tour f

29. Murray’s 1873, 64.
30. Murray’s 1873, 81.
31. Hastaoglou-Martindis 2004, 50; Murray’s 1873, 82–118.
33. Baedeker 1905, 82–83. Murray’s Handbook, too, assures the reader that “No finer view can be obtained than from the summit of the tower of Galata” (Murray’s 1873, 77).
34. Baedeker 1905, 86–104.
35. Baedeker 1905, 104–118.
explores the areas of the ancient Roman walls to the west and the district of Eyup. Tour g takes the traveller on a boat-trip on the Golden horn, and finally tour h takes the traveller to Skutari which is claimed to have preserved its Oriental character far better than Stambul. On the whole the Baedeker keeps the reader/traveller on a tighter lead than Murray’s; while the reader of the latter is expected to do some exploring themselves, the Baedeker seems to be written for a visitor who has less time to spare, quite like a modern stressed-out “extended weekend”-traveller. One could say that Murray’s is written with the perhaps somewhat old-fashioned connoisseur in mind, while the Baedeker is intended for a modern consumer.

38. This seems to have been a common opinion in the last decades of the 19th century as well, and a reason why Murray’s Handbooks-series was sold in 1901 after having been unprofitable for some time; see Goodwin
Bergstrand never mentions whether he carries any guidebook with him. He proves to be an independent (and even eccentric) traveller, strolling around as he pleases. Still, his visit to Constantinople follows the pattern of the visit envisioned by the guidebooks in several respects. Bergstrand is first struck by the beauty of the place and then by the intensity of the city streets. He is aware of the general geography of the city and the characteristics of the areas on the three sides of the straits; the mixed blessings of modernity as described in the guidebooks are not lost on him, nor are certain details such as the dogs. Thus, Bergstrand’s accounts echo a number of the experiences prepared for and expected from the traveller to Constantinople.

These close links between guidebooks and travel accounts are perhaps not so unexpected. But the guidebook narrative, interestingly, recurs in other kinds of texts as well. In this case, there is a number of links between guidebooks and some of the most important contemporary encyclopaedias. Sometimes there are direct links between the two types of texts; one example is the article on Constantinople from the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannia* (EB) which was published in 1910 and was written by Alexander van Millingen, professor of history at Oxford University, who also contributed descriptions of Byzantine antiquities for the Murray guides.39 In the same year, 1910, a similar article on Constantinople was published in the second edition of *Nordisk Familjebok* (literally translated as “Nordic Family Book”). The first edition of this encyclopaedia (hence: NF) was published in the last decades of the nineteenth century in twenty volumes; the second which was published between 1904 and 1926, was much expanded and comprised of no less than 38 volumes. This second edition remains the most comprehensive encyclopaedia ever produced in Sweden.40 The article on Constantinople from the fourteenth volume, printed in 1910, was written by Johan Fredrik Nyström, school lecturer in Stockholm, Carl David Ludvig Wilhelm W:son Munthe, major-general and commander of the Swedish fortification, and Julius Ebbe Centerwall, a former school headmaster from the provincial city of Söderhamn and co-editor of the NF.

The introduction to the entry on Constantinople in NF reminds of the structure of the guidebooks, although of course in a much abbreviated form. After briefly considering the names of the city and their epistemologies and locating Constantinople geographically, the article turns to the by now familiar appreciation of the location, which has a picturesque feel reminding of both

& Johnston 2013, 43.
39. van Millingen 1910, 3–9; see Hastaoglou-Martindis 2004, 43.
Murray’s and the Baedeker: “regarding beautiful settings only a few cities in the world would be able to compete with Constantinople. Especially from the Bosphorus, the view is delightful due to the amphitheatrical slopes of the brinks, the multitudes of domes and minarets, and the busy harbour, where the flags of all nations fly.”41 Then the reader is confronted with the streets: “The inner of the city gives a quite different impression. The streets, with the exception of a few newer parts, are narrow and winding, poorly lit and lack stone paving; houses are low and insignificant, and generally constructed out of wood, which means that fires cause great destruction. At least up to now, there has been the greatest disregard for cleanliness and sanitation. Despite its fresh location, because of the drastic changes in climate, Constantinople is not a healthy city.”42

After considering climate and general topography, some of the most important locations are briefly described: the ancient city walls and its principal gates are mentioned, as are the Ottoman palaces. The article then turns to a compilation of the most important sights, beginning with churches, mosques, türbes (Ottoman monumental tombs) and cemeteries, finishing with bazaars and caravan-serais. After this, the reader is presented with some of the ancient monuments. The NF states that Mohammedan rule has been an age of decline and neglect, and that there are only few traces of the city’s Roman and Byzantine past.43 The NF then briefly describes the other parts of the city: Galata, the NF states, is the seat of international trade, and closely resembles an Italian port (a phrase which seems to be copied from the Baedeker44). In this part of the city, the streets are busy, and filled with the clamour of merchants, soldiers, carriers and animals. From Galata, a street rising through steep terraces, and since 1875 a heavily-used railway tunnel lead the reader up to Pera; like the guidebooks, the NF notes that this district more resembles a European than an Eastern city. Here, one can find European-style hotels, theatres, post offices, shops and cafés; and “the streets are better lit, although despicably paved.”45 Tophane, below Pera, on the other hand is

44. Baedeker 1905, 82: "Von den türkischen Eroberern verschont, ist Galata nach wie vor der Sitz des internationalen Handels geblieben und gleich ... in seiner Bauart ungefähr einer italienischen Hafenstadt.”
45. Nyström et al. 1910, 841: “en ytterst starkt trafikerad järnvägstunnel leda upp till Pera, frankerna och de främmande diplomaternas kvarter, som mera påminner om en europeisk än en österländsk stad. Hotell, teatrar, posthus, butiker och kaféer är inrättade på europeiskt sätt; gatorna är bättre upplysta, ehuru jämmerligt stensatta.”
a wholly Turkish area. S. Dimitri, north of Pera, is inhabited mainly by Greeks and is ill reputed, the NF claims, mainly because of its numerous places of ill-repute; the nearby Jewish quarters of Hasköi are argued to be even worse, because of its stench and dirt.\textsuperscript{46}

After this overview of the city with its almost startling contrasts, the NF turns to its population numbers and points out the main residential areas and professions of the Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Jewish and European communities. The article then gives a brief overview of various civic structures such as schools, newspapers, and the organization of firefighting – after a number of devastating fires, fires were an urgent topic in the guidebooks as well.\textsuperscript{47} The NF then turns to industries, trade and banks, none of which should not be measured according to European standards.\textsuperscript{48} The NF then comments on the social life of the constantinopolitans: life in Constantinople, the NF considers, “is very monotonous and, except in Pera and Galata, lacks all the amusements one is used to find in a European capital. The Turks have not been able to develop a social life in its conventional form.”\textsuperscript{49} Their most beloved places of gathering are coffee-houses and baths, while promenades, however, are not in the taste of the Ottomans and places for this purpose for this reason are scarce. Boat trips, on the other hand, are much enjoyed. The lively Ramadan- and Beiram-festivities present a change from the usual calm routine.\textsuperscript{50}

In a final section, the article turns to the history of Constantinople. By far the largest part of this section is devoted to the development of the city in the Roman and Byzantine ages. Here, the NF gives much credit to the Byzantine empire and its greatness, but also takes the opportunity to criticise its pre-occupation with internal intrigues. Events in the Ottoman age, by contrast, are presented very summarically; as a Turkish capital, the NF concludes, Constantinople has been comparatively peaceful and one can assume that current reforms in the Ottoman empire will put their mark on Constantinople as well.\textsuperscript{51}

The article on Constantinople from the NF is similar to the texts of the guidebooks in several ways. Initially, the reader is presented with the by now familiar first impression of Constantinople, and then with an overview over the location and the various parts of the city. A hierarchy of important sights are presented, as are the various nationalities of the city. Some differences can also be noted: the guidebooks assume the reader will be starting out from Pera and thus describe the city from this starting-point. The NF, on the other hand, initially provides a birds-eye perspective

\textsuperscript{46} Nyström \textit{et al.} 1910, 840–841.
\textsuperscript{47} See for instance Murray’s 1873, 63–64.
\textsuperscript{48} Nyström \textit{et al.} 1910, 841–43.
\textsuperscript{49} Nyström \textit{et al.} 1910, 843: “Lifvet i K. är mycket enformigt och saknar, utom i Pera och Galata, alla de förstörelser man är van att hitta i en europeisk huvudstad. Ett sällskapslif i vanlig mening ha turkarna icke kunnat utbilda.”
\textsuperscript{50} Nyström \textit{et al.} 1910, 843.
\textsuperscript{51} Nyström \textit{et al.} 1910, 844.
describing various monuments all around the city. Then the reader is “dropped” in the middle of Stambul, and from there taken to Galata, Pera and to the other parts of the city.

Further, certain contrasts seem to be drawn sharper in the NF than in the guidebooks, for instance that between a lost golden age in antiquity and a modern age of decay. There is also a sharper contrast between the European “civilized” Pera and the “Oriental” parts of the city. The reasons for this are not immediately clear and could be manifold. For one thing, by comparison with the guidebook, the encyclopaedia-article is a heavily condensed text, and is only natural that contrasts will be exaggerated. Further, such contrasts could have been introduced to render the city understandable for the reader watching the city from his birds-eye perspective. Finally, and perhaps most likely to be the simplest explanation, these contrasts may be due to the preferences of the authors. Possibly, their attitudes towards their topic differ from those expected from the travellers actually planning to visit the city. Nevertheless, the encyclopaedia and the guidebook seem to be following the same agenda: to make the cityscape understandable and enable the reader to envision it.

For our final example, let us turn to a visitor in the wake of the First World War. In the early 1920s, Constantinople was visited by Fredrik Böök, an author and critic of literature at Svenska Dagbladet, one of Sweden’s leading conservative newspapers. Böök traveled to Constantinople through Central Europe and published an account of his travels in several articles in Svenska Dagbladet and certain other newspapers; these were then collected in one volume in 1922. Böök travels to Constantinople through Denmark, Germany, Austria, Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria. His journey takes the shape of a meditation on the ruins of Europe after the first world war. An outspoken Germanophile (the conventional position among well-educated conservatives in Sweden at the time), Böök repeatedly comments on the continued injustices even after the peace of Versailles, suffered especially by German minorities in Eastern Europe, and the abuse of power and corruption in the new states following the peace.

Like Bergstrand, Böök travels the final distance to Constantinople by boat through the Bosporus. He vividly describes the seaside with its greek villages on the European side, its blackened Turkish houses on the Asian side, old castles, palaces and modern hotels, cemeteries. When Böök finally beholds Constantinople, however, the world war is everywhere evident. In the harbours, there are British, French, Italian and Greek warships everywhere lying anchored, constantly reminding of the fact that Constantinople is an occupied city.52

Constantinople is almost a mythical place, a city Böök has never seen, yet always known from tales. The Orient, in his experience is not a country of fast development.53 Accordingly, “Constantinople is not a role model when it comes to order or hygiene, but as a replacement, it is one of the

52. Böök 1922, 270–271.
most picturesque, most comprehensible, most charming and exciting cities. The Northerner walks among its streets ... with approximately the feelings he had when he leafed through Thousand and One night as a child ... truly, Constantinople has not become less complicated through the World War. All its intense city life, the hilarious mixture of the West and the Orient is still there.”

Böök does not describe his walking tours in Constantinople in any detail, the city rather serves as a backdrop for his meditations on the great powers of the world. He notes that there are Russians everywhere and that the educated among them mainly seem to be cooking food; Russian restaurants are without competition and by far seem to be most popular, not least among Americans – for this democratic people, Böök cynically notes, obviously cannot resist the temptation of being served by old aristocrats. Another new feature in the cityscape of Constantinople are the occupation troops that are of course everywhere, not least on the Galata bridge, where the whole world convenes: French, Italian, British, Indian, even Scottish highlanders led by pipers. Who actually has the political power in Constantinople? Böök finds this question extremely difficult to answer.

This is not least as the most resolute power in Turkey, that of Kemal Atatürk, can not be seen, but still felt; the shadow of Mustafa Kemal, the liberator of the Turkish people, falls from Angora over the whole of Constantinople. And finally, Böök arrives at the Galata bridge again, contemplating his sights: nowhere in all of Europe, is the divide between England and France so wide and deep as in Constantinople. Constantinople, Böök recognises, is the key to the politics of the European powers, and will always remain a centre of the world, where the peoples of the West and the East meet. And while standing on the Galata bridge, one gets the feeling of “standing between two continents, on the very bridge between Europe and Asia, and one is quite right in thinking so.”

Böök arrives in Constantinople during ramadan, and walks through Stambul in the evening, after a cannon shot has signalled that the day’s fast over. He wanders by the hippodrome, contemplating the kingdoms, dynasties and cultures that have ruled the place, and what little they have left behind. It is as if rulers, gods, laws and faiths have all went by without traces, and only a few stones testify to what has been.” But even here, the World War is present. To one side, Böök sees

54. Böök 1922, 272: “Konstantinopel är följaktligen icke precis något mönster i ordning och hygien, men till ersättning är det en av världens mest pittoreska, mest innehållsrika, mest tjusande och spännande städer. Nordbon vandrar kring på dess gator ... med ungerfür [sic] de känslor han hade, när han som barn bläddrade i Tusen och en natt ... Sonnerligen, Konstantinopel har icke blivit mindre komplicerat genom världskriget. Allt det forna myllret, den hejdlösa blandningen av västerland och orient finses kvar.”
57. Böök 1922, 278: “man tycker sig stå mitt emellan tvenne världsdelar, man har illusionen att detta är bron mellan Europa och Asien, och i grund och botten har man rätt.”
the remains of the famous serpent column, erected by the ancient Greeks after the victory over the Persians at Plataea in 479 BC; now, instead, the Greeks lurk aboard their battleships out on the Bosphorus, bitterly grieving the fact that the Turks have been able to keep their bridgehead in Europe.58

Böök also finds opportunity to study Muslim culture, as he visits a “Swedish effendi” living in Stambul, a place he views with much more appreciation than the guidebooks. For Böök, Stambul is calm and soothing; in contrast to the noisy and seedy Galata district across the bridges.59 Böök then moves on to visit several sights, such as Hagia Sophia, but does not seem to pay any particular interest to the ancient architecture. And anyhow, he finds the mosque of Eyup to be more atmospheric.60 For Böök, the world here presents a stronger sense of “realness” than Western civilisation: “the modern development obviously for each day dissolves this classical world of shapes, but still the outlines can be discerned, still the colours have not faded, still Stambul is a piece of the Orient and of the past.”61

Böök then makes the mandatory trip to Skutari, but unlike Bergstrand he finds it even more genuine than Stambul. He admires the view from Camlica hill and then tries the genuine Turkish cuisine together with the “Swedish effendi”.62 Finally, after a last visit to the bazaars, Böök leaves Constantinople on the Orient Express and heads for Prague.63 Apparently, his visit strengthens his view that the world war has not produced any moral winners, except possibly Turkey.

The accounts of Böök provide interesting similarities with earlier accounts, but also differences. As noted, Böök’s account is very much shaped by the present political situation. Böök is also consistently more interested in Turkish culture, which becomes a refuge from war-torn Europe. Thus, for Böök too, the landscape of Constantinople and its location at the straits between Europe and Asia takes on profound symbolical meanings; and his journey to the place assumes a spiritual dimension.

In all the accounts described above, the landscape and the setting of Constantinople is constantly evoked as a symbol of the differences between Europe and “the East” and between order and disorder. Secondly, for the travellers, the journey to this place, with its symbolical dimensions, becomes a spiritual one. One can, thirdly, also note that the travellers move in more or less the

59. Böök 1922, 286.
60. Böök 1922, 294.
61. Böök 1922, 300: “Den moderna utvecklingen upplöser naturligtvis för varje dag denna klassiska formvärld, men ännu skönjas linjerna, ännu ha färgerna icke helt bleknat, ännu är Stambul ett stycke av Orienten och av det förflytta.”
63. Böök 1922, 324.
same patterns and react in roughly the same way: they are dazzled by the first sight of the cityscape and are then confronted with the bustling city streets of Galata. They they walk over the Galata bridge to meet the “Old East” in Stambul, Hagia Sophia and the other remains of the Byzantine age. In the cases we have seen, the experiences of travellers closely match those prepared by the guidebooks, thus reinforcing how the city is viewed. The fact that a narrative similar to that of the guidebook finds its way to a different type of text, the encyclopedia, further reinforces an image of Constantinople, giving it a life of its own.

The observation that similar narratives find their way into quite different kinds of text lead to a third aspect of the matter, namely the authors. Several of them were not among the most famous authors or scholars of their time. On the other hand, they were very active in other fields. Returning to Bergstrand, he was a writer and a journalist, but also also a minor celebrity, thanks to a curious collection of arts. He was also active in political debates, albeit apparently not very successfully as he was as eccentric in politics as in his social life. Johan Fredrik Nyström was a journalist, a historian and a geographer, but he too was a productive author, writing several works on history, geography, political science and economics. Julius Ebbe Centerwall was mainly working in primary education, as the headmaster of a primary school in Söderhamn, but also as an author of several noted accounts of travels to the Mediterranean, and highly appreciated as a lecturer. Both Nyström and Centerwall were also active in politics (the former for the Conservative party, the latter for the Liberal party), apparently with mixed success. Fredrik Böök, finally, is a different character; at the time of his travels to Constantinople, he was professor of the history of literature at Lund University in southern Sweden. Böök was not directly involved in politics; however, he too was a journalist and a prolific writer. More importantly, the same year as the accounts of his travels to Constantinople were published, he was elected a member of the Swedish Academy. This made Böök one of the most influential members of the Swedish cultural elite.

It is apparent, then, that these authors were versatile personalities, moving freely between science and teaching, popular culture and politics. They acted as intermediaries, very much involved in transmitting academic arts and humanities to wider audiences. Such versatile actors seem to have been highly active in Swedish academia and culture around the turn of the twentieth century. A suggestion for further study on guidebooks and their cultural impact would be the relations firstly between guidebooks, encyclopaediae and travel accounts, and secondly between the intermediaries producing such texts.

The symbolical landscape of Constantinople is very much present in contemporary Istanbul. In the early 2000s, Newsweek described Istanbul as “Europe’s coolest city”: “Remember the sounds

of Istanbul’s streets—European and Turkish and Balkan and Middle Eastern, all coming together in a strange but beautiful harmony.”

This trope have been repeated in so many presentations of Istanbul up to the point of it becoming a tired cliché. Since then, the situation has changed again. The Syrian refugee crisis, a number of terror strikes and Turkey’s slide towards a totalitarian state cast long shadows over Istanbul’s modern melting pot. In 2013, the massive demonstrations in the Gezi park, located in the Taksim area to the north of the Beyoğlu district, became a symbol of resistance towards the present regime; the attempted military coup d’etat in the summer of 2016 has also put its mark on the cityscape, as one of the Bosphorus bridges has been renamed the “15 July Martyrs Bridge” in honour of those resisting the military at the bridge and those killed during the the attempted coup.

Thus, Istanbul constantly presents a new symbolical landscape to the traveller. It is a landscape filled with emotions, as it was for “Captain Gulliver” as he took farewell of Constantinople: “now the Seraglio point and its gardens, domes, walls, spires and minarets disappear from view and the spire. The dome of Saint Sophia and the point of the small Leander tower sinks into the Bosphorus, and Constantinople is now only a memory, a dream, a memory that one will want to awake again, a dream to dream again ... there is no place on earth that I would want to see again so dearly.”

68. Bergstrand 1883, 111: “Nu försvinner Seraljudden med sina trädgårdar, domer, murar, tinnar och minareter ur synkretsen. Sofiakyrkans dôme och det lilla Leandertornets spets dyka ned i Bosforen, och Konstantinopel är nu blott ett minne, en dröm, ett minne, som man vill väcka upp igen, en dröm, som man vill drömma om ... det finns intet ställe på jorden, som jag så gerna skulle vilja återse.”
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