

The ‘Dutch’ beer brewer of Beyoğlu

Marloes Cornelissen Aydemir

Over a century and a half before the foundation of the beer brewery and factory of the Swiss Bomonti brothers by the end of the 19th century, a ‘Dutch’ beer brewer set up his beer brewery in Beyoğlu. Although not a common beverage in the Ottoman capital at the time, master brewer Gilles Fourneau (d. Istanbul, 29 January 1730), had an established clientele mainly among foreign representatives and their communities. Before coming to Istanbul, Liège-born Fourneau was employed at beer brewery “Het Luykse Wapen” in Delft until 1711, where he brewed so-called Liege beer. After a (disputed) breach of contract in Delft, Fourneau moved to the northern Frisian city of Harlingen before his journey to Istanbul with his two sons.

Fourneau’s beer appears to have been sold in the tavern of François Barchon (d. Istanbul, 8 August 1731), who also served as the butler of the Dutch Ambassador to Istanbul. Upon their founders’ demise, the inventories of the beer brewery and the tavern were registered in the Dutch Chancery’s records in 1730 and 1731, respectively. This paper aims to discuss and contextualize the inventory records of the two establishments and the registries of the related costs and debts, which provide an invaluable insight into a unique consumption culture. It also focuses on the running and clientele of these establishments, at a time when beer was not commonly produced or consumed in Istanbul.