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# The Borderland City of Turkey: Izmir from Past to the Present

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**Abstract.** *Izmir is a large metropolis in Turkey at the side of a gulf on the Aegean Sea in the westernmost part of Anatolian Peninsula. As the third most populous city of the country after Istanbul and Ankara, Izmir has a population over 4 million on an area of 12,012 km<sup>2</sup> extending along the Gulf of Izmir to the inland across Gediz River's delta in the north, alongside a plain in the east and a somewhat craggy area in the south. It is the second leading port after Istanbul with its large and sheltered harbour. The ancient city which was known and also mentioned in English as Smyrna has officially taken the name of Izmir in 1930. Being described as "princess" by the 19th century French poet Victor Hugo, the city have witnessed 8,500 years of human history including 3,500 years of urban history as one of the oldest port cities of the Mediterranean. Izmir had long served as a point of interaction between the East and West and constituted a borderland between civilisations, between ethnicities, and between religions in its process of evolution from Smyrna to Izmir. The current urban identity of Izmir and its population has been deeply influenced by its historical heritage and multicultural past. Although the city has experienced vital changes in the course of time it still bears the borderland city flavour as a contribution of this heritage.*

**Keywords:** *Izmir, Smyrna, Turkey, borderland city, international port, historical and cultural heritage*

## ***Introduction***

Izmir which is the third largest city of Turkey has witnessed a long and rich history of 8,500 years as one of the oldest port cities of the Mediterranean. As the door of Asia Minor opening to Mediterranean through the Aegean Sea, the city which is said to be founded by the legendary female warrior Amazons has been one of the significant centres of its region since the ancient time. Besides the advantages emanating from its location and Aegean style Mediterranean climate, the city's wide hinterland serving as a point of intersection between diverse cultures, languages and religions also contributed to its economic, social and cultural development. Many cultures and civilisations flourished over the centuries within a colourful social mosaic in this deep-rooted city. The city was ruled or influenced by various civilisations such as Hittites, Ionians, the ancient Greeks, the Lydians, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, and the Seljuk Turcomans until it became part of the Ottoman Empire in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. During the Ottoman era, it became a place of interaction between the Muslim, Christian European and Jewish cultures strengthening its multi-religious and multi-cultural fabric.

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Hence, this harbour city long constituted a “borderland between ethnicities, between civilisations and between periods” in its process of evolution from Smyrna to Izmir.<sup>3</sup>

Although Izmir was ruled by various civilisations throughout the history, its importance increased particularly during the Ottoman rule between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Whereas the economy of the city was dominantly based upon agriculture until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it turned into a fundamental market and a trade centre by the second half of the century. Hence, the city became a vital harbour city along with the alterations in the Mediterranean trade system between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The changes in the economic system in this period contributed to the formation of a cosmopolitan society composed of the Muslim Turks, Jews, Armenians, Greeks and Levantines. The city became a major external trade port in the Ottoman Empire in 19th century owing to its social, economic and urban development. Besides its enhancing economy and commerce, the cultural richness stemming from the historic and natural environment as well as the ethnic and religious diversity played role in the flourishing of Izmir during the Ottoman era. The city has become part of the Republic of Turkey since 1923. Despite the vital changes experienced in the city following the establishment of the Republic, the imprints of heritage of the past can be traced in the present identity and culture of Izmir which still has a special borderland flavour. In addition to the impact of historical legacy and multicultural past, also the position of Izmir as an international port city continues to be an important aspect of the city’s identity. Within this context, this study aims to elaborate on the historical and cultural past of Izmir as well as its evolution as an international port city which are indispensable aspects of its persisting identity as a borderland city.

### ***Location and the roots of the name of Izmir***

With its 8,500 years of history, Izmir has an international as well as a territorial and regional importance. Located at the intersecting point of civilisations, Izmir contributed to the development of several civilisations in the world. As the door of Asia Minor opening to Mediterranean through the Aegean Sea, the city hosts Temple of Artemis which is one of the Seven Wonders of the World as well as Ephesus and Pergamum which were the metropolitan areas of the ancient era. While Pergamum was the capital of the Kingdom of Pergamon during the Hellenistic era, the Ephesus constituted one of the major cities of Asia Minor among the twelve cities of Ionian League during the Classical Greek period. Contributing vastly to the development of the ideational legacy of the ancient era, Izmir is the area where the parchment paper was first produced and the Ephesus Celsus Library which was one of the biggest libraries of the era was established. It is said to be the birthplace of Homer who is the writer of Iliad and Odessa, the two most important epics of the ancient era, as well as of Heraclitus who is accepted as the founder of the dialectical philosophy. Izmir is home to the three of the seven churches (Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos) mentioned in the Bible (seven Churches of Revelation) as well as the Church of the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, Izmir had been a crucial city-playing role in the spread of Islam to Europe through Aegean and Balkans and also one of the major areas where the Jews migrating from Europe to Anatolia were inhabited in the Middle Ages. Besides, it served as an important centre in the modernisation process from the Ottoman era to the establishment of modern Turkey.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Edhem Eldem et al., *The Ottoman City Between East and West Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14.

<sup>4</sup> Izmir Development Agency, *Izmir Current Situation Analysis* (İzmir: Arkadaş Matbaası, 2009), 4, accessed June 25, 2015, [http://www.izka.org.tr/files/Mevcut\\_Durum\\_Analizi.pdf](http://www.izka.org.tr/files/Mevcut_Durum_Analizi.pdf).

The currently used city name Izmir is transformed from the ancient name of Smyrna. It is claimed that Smira, Lesmira, Zmirra, Ismira, Samorna or Smurna were also used as the earlier versions of the name. The choice of the word Smyrna is assumed to be related to the existence of a sacred place near the settlement area. In the ancient ages the widespread belief in supernatural powers inclined people to establish their city near places representing such powers. In this manner, it is argued that the sacred place in the case of Smyrna was Halkapinar Spring (Circular Spring) and the lagoon formed by that spring. The European travellers visiting Izmir in the 19<sup>th</sup> century often called this spring as Diana Baths. Thus, the word of Smyrna which most probably has a Hittite origin is asserted to be connoting to the Mother Goddess Spring / Lagoon or at least related to the meaning of Mother Goddess / Holy Goddess. The word was written as Smurne in the ancient Ionian dialect and as Smyrna in the Attic Greek.<sup>5</sup> The name of Smyrna was retained for long years in the history until it started to be pronounced as Izmir following the conquest of the city by the Turks. Initially it was pronounced as “Ismir” and eventually turned into “Izmir”. In this sense, while the name of Smyrna embraces the marks of the history of the city, the transformation of the name of the city into Izmir symbolizes the transition from one cultural structure to another one.<sup>6</sup>

One can encounter different stories about the initial foundation of the ancient city of Smyrna based upon the fables of ancient writers. Whereas Smyrna which is one of the oldest settlements of the Mediterranean basin is argued to be established by Tantalos, the mythic king of Phrygia according to one story, it was described as an area where initially Lelegians, an aboriginal Aegean-Anatolian tribe, were settled down. According to a more common argument, the city’s name was originated from an Amazon women warrior during the Hittite rule of Anatolia. Another speculation about the meaning of Smyrna relates the word to the place name Ti-smurna as referred to in the Kultepe inscriptions. As a different pronunciation, the name of the city was written as Zmyrna on monuments and coins of the Hellenistic and Roman eras.<sup>7</sup>

The city of Izmir was founded at the end point of a self-titled Gulf. Throughout its evolution process from the ancient ages to the current era, it has become the most important settlement of the Aegean Region. The city was initially located along with a small and sheltered harbour in the eastern margin of the Gulf of Izmir but it was later abandoned due to overpopulation, thereafter it expanded to an alluvial plain located between Halkapinar Spring and Meles stream at Pagos Hill (Kadifekale) foot. The population of the new city area increased rapidly due to the existence of abundant spring water and fertile agricultural fields. The construction of a castle on the Pagos Hill during the time of Alexander the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC facilitated the defence of the city while the inner harbour gained significance in parallel to the development of commercial life. Hence, a new residence area emerged near the Pagos Hill. This residence area has maintained its importance for ages. Thus, although many settlement areas around Izmir such as (Erytraï, Kolophon, Ephesos, Priene, Miletos) were abandoned over time, Izmir

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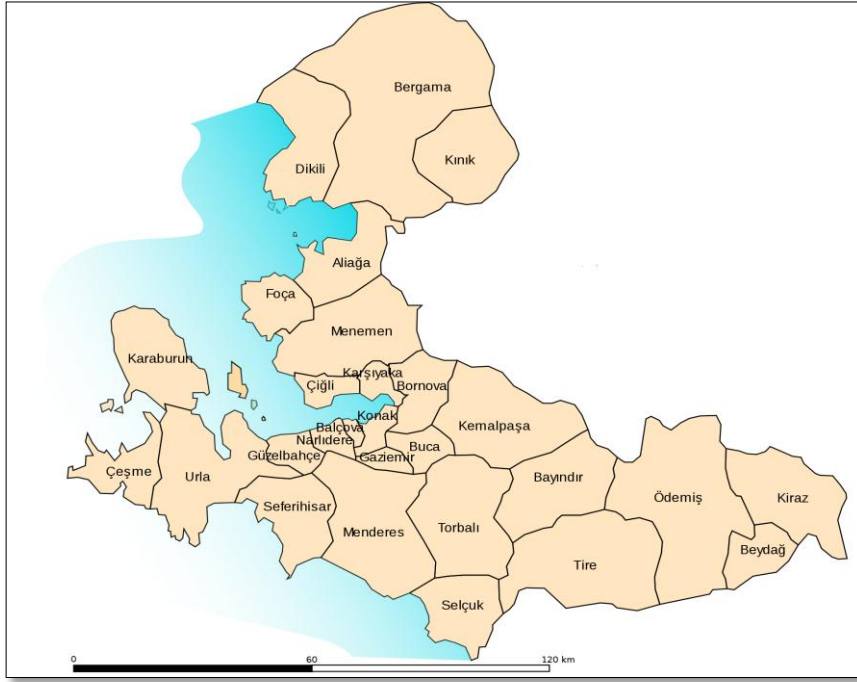
<sup>5</sup> Attic Greek is the main Greek dialect spoken in the ancient Attica.

<sup>6</sup> T.C. İzmir Valiliği Resmi Kent Rehberi [Izmir Governorship Official City Guide], “Smyrna/İzmir İsminin Anlamı” [History/ Izmir/ Smyrna/ Meaning of the name of Izmir], accessed July 11, 2015, [http://izmirfx.mekan360.com/iys\\_tarihce,sehirID=35,icerik=135,sayfa=1-tarihce-smyrna-izmir-isminin-anlami.html?#detay](http://izmirfx.mekan360.com/iys_tarihce,sehirID=35,icerik=135,sayfa=1-tarihce-smyrna-izmir-isminin-anlami.html?#detay).

<sup>7</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, “Smyrna in Ancient Times,” accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN,34491/smyrna-in-ancient-times.html>.

has retained its vitality and dynamism in different periods.<sup>8</sup> Izmir currently consists of 30 districts under the authority of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality. The districts, namely Balcova, Bayrakli, Bornova, Buca, Cigli, Gaziemir, Guzelbahce, Karabaglar, Karsiyaka, Konak and Narlidere are located in the centre of Izmir.

**Illustration 1:** *Provincial Borders of Current Izmir.*



**Source:** “Izmir Kent Rehberi” [Izmir City Guide], accessed August 15, 2015, [http://www.izmirde.biz/FileUpload/ds31586/File/izmir\\_haritasi\\_5.png](http://www.izmirde.biz/FileUpload/ds31586/File/izmir_haritasi_5.png).

### ***Ancient Age and old Smyrna***

Despite the uncertainty about the exact date of the establishment of the city, the excavations shed light on the long history of the city. The findings of the excavations carried out from 1948 to 1951 had indicated initially that Smyrna was originally established as an Aeolian city on a hill called Tepekule located behind the modern suburb of Bayrakli by 3000 BC in time of the first city of Troy.<sup>9</sup> Besides the finding at this level, it was illustrated that the other two levels belonged to the Hittite and Troy VI age (2000-1200 BC) and to the Greek era (X-IV century BC).<sup>10</sup> However, whereas these previous excavations pointed out a history of 5000 years, the discovery of Yesilova Mound located in the plain of Bornova in 2003 revealed that the settlements in the city dated back to more than 8,500 years. The excavations performed in the Mound by a team of archaeologists from Izmir's Ege University in collaboration with Izmir Archaeological Museum between

<sup>8</sup> Ahmet Necdet Sözer, “İzmir: Ege'nin Metropolü” [Izmir: The metropolis of Aegean], *Ege Üniversitesi Coğrafya Dergisi* [Aegean Geographical Journal] (1988): 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Trudy Ring, Robert M. Salkin, and Sharon La, *International Dictionary of Historic Places*, Volume 3, *Southern Europe* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1996), 348.

<sup>10</sup> Sözer, 5.

2005 and 2008 found out three levels, the two of which were prehistoric. Whereas the first level concerns the late Roman-early Byzantine era, the second level refers to the Chalcolithic period and the second level to the Neolithic period.<sup>11</sup> Hence, it is estimated that the indigenous people settled in the area approximately from 7th millennium BC to 4th millennium BC. The discovery of various graves from 3000 BC in the site illustrates that the place was started to be used as a cemetery after a while as the shoreline retreated.<sup>12</sup> Thus, after 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, Smyrna obtained an identity of city-state.

As a location in charge of the whole Gulf of Izmir, the settlement which later became the core of “Old Smyrna” (the current quarter of Bayrakli) was founded around 3000 BC on a hill (Tepekule) on the slopes of the Mountain of Yamanlar and flourished over time. Located between Aeolis and Ionia, it was colonised by the ancient Greeks in the middle of tenth century BC. The city turned into one of the most developed cultures in early Anatolian history comparable with Troy. Whereas around 1,000 people lived within the city-walls, the rest were inhabited in close villages where fields, olive trees and vineyards were situated. The main means of living were agriculture and fishing. It came under the influence of the Central Anatolian Hittite Empire by 1500 BC.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, it remained as an Aeolian city till the conquest of the Ionians. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the city was seized by the refugees from Kolophon which was one of the twelve Ionian states (Miletos, Myous, Priene, Ephesos, Kolophon, Lebedos, Teos, Erythrai, Klazomenai, Phokaia, Samos and Khios) around 700 BC.<sup>14</sup> The Ionian states formed a powerful commercial network via their overseas colonies within their established federation. Thus, they presumably wanted to take advantage of Smyrna’s favourable location in their trading activities spreading these activities to the Gulf of Izmir. In fact, the invasion of the city by the Ionians resulted in a rapid transformation in the history of the city as it prospered and developed in a short period of time. It became one of the leading cultural and commercial urban centres in the Mediterranean by the 650–545 BC. The Temple of Athena which was the most crucial sanctuary of Old Smyrna dates back to this era (640–580 BC).<sup>15</sup>

### ***Izmir under Lydian and Persian Rules***

As Smyrna prospered in the seventh century BC, it had to face the attacks of the Lydians who aimed to control the Western Anatolian trade and harbours. The Lydians became much more interested in this port city near their capital. They ultimately conquered and destroyed parts of the city around 610-600 BC coercing the citizens to leave Smyrna. During this era, the citizens had to move to villages.<sup>16</sup> Due to the transformation into a village system and the decline in its power, the importance of

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<sup>11</sup> Zafer Derin, “Yeşilova Höyüğü Kazıları ve İzmir’in Tarih Öncesi Dönemi” [Yeşilova mound excavations and the prehistoric period of Izmir], in *Körfez’de Zaman İzmir Araştırmaları Kongresi Bildiriler* [Proceedings of the Congress of Izmir Researches], ed. Eren Çiçek, Mustafa Mutluer and Cüneyt Kanat (Bornova: Bormat Matbaacılık, 2010), 11, accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.yesilova.ege.edu.tr/arsiv/korfez.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> World eBook Library, “Izmir,” accessed July 11, 2015, <http://www.worldbooklibrary.org/article/WHEBN0000580279/%C4%B0zmir>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ring, Salkin and La, 348.

<sup>15</sup> World eBook Library, “İzmir.”

<sup>16</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, “Smyrna in Ancient Times.”

Smyrna as a city-state abolished for the next 300 years. The Lydian rule over Smyrna continued until the Lydians were defeated by the Persians in 546 BC.<sup>17</sup>

The Persian conquest gave end to the history of Old Smyrna. Following the invasion of the capital of Lydia by the Persian Emperor Cyrus, the coastal cities of the Aegean were also attacked leading to the destruction of Old Smyrna in 545 BC. As it was not possible to restore the urban settlement around Bayrakli, the settlements could only continue within an unorganised village system. Hence, the first phase in the evolution process of Izmir came to an end. In the following phase, the city would move to the slopes of Pagos as a developed and larger city. Nevertheless, one of the most important heritages of the city from the ancient time is the Old Smyrna. The excavations have still continued to uncover the marks of history in this old city which was later discovered to have grid-planned organisation of streets cutting each other vertically.<sup>18</sup>

### *Alexander the Great and the re-establishment of Izmir*

The city was re-established in Pagos Hill (Kadifekale) at a new location beyond Meles River with the order of the Macedonian Alexander the Great around 340 BC. After defeating the Persians in 333 BC, Alexander the Great advanced towards the Ephesus. According to the legend, when Alexander the Great went to hunting at the woods of Pagos Hill, he fell asleep and was required sacredly in his dream to establish a new city in Pagos and to bring the citizens of Old Smyrna to this place. In fact, the new location of the city was very suitable for military and commercial reasons.<sup>19</sup> Being situated 186 meters above sea level, the Pagos castle was constructed on a very advantageous location in terms of defence. This castle was later used in the periods of Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Beyliks and the Ottoman Empire. The fate of the city which was founded from the Pagos Hill down towards the sea and harbour was again closely related to dynamism of the harbour and maritime trade.<sup>20</sup> Whereas old Smyrna could accommodate only a few thousand people as a small hill, much more people could be settled down in Pagos causing an increase in the city's population.<sup>21</sup>

Following the conquest of the Alexander the Great, Smyrna benefited more favourable conditions to achieve peace and prosperity. After the death of the Alexander the Great, the establishment of the city was finalised Lysimakhos. That was why the city was named after Lysimakhos' daughter "Eurydikeia" for a while. Yet, this name was discarded in a short period of time. Regarding Alexander the Great as the founder of the city, his image started to be used on the coins. The newly founded city which joined the Ionian Confederation as the 13<sup>th</sup> member on the basis of the recommendation of Ephesus obtained the recognition of Hellenistic Monarchs and the other sovereign city-states. It succeeded in maintaining its status of "independent city-state" by this way. Being aware that they needed the support of powerful states for ensuring their survival, the Smyrnians

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<sup>17</sup> Sabri Yetkin and Fikret Yılmaz, "İzmir'in Tarihi" [The history of Izmir], accessed June 28, 2015, <https://www.izmir.bel.tr/Izmir%E2%80%99inTarihi/225/196/tr>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Izmir Development Agency, "Izmir The Frontier City of Turkey," 10, accessed June 25, 2015, [http://izka.org.tr/files/oncubrosuruler/Eng\\_web.pdf](http://izka.org.tr/files/oncubrosuruler/Eng_web.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> T.C. İzmir Valiliği Resmi Kent Rehberi [Izmir Governorship Official City Guide], "Tarihçe/İzmir/İzmir'in Yeniden Kurulması" [History/ Izmir/ Reconstruction of Izmir], accessed July 11, 2015, [http://izmirfx.mekan360.com/iys\\_tarihce,sehirID=35,icerik=138,sayfa=1-tarihce-izmir-in-yeniden-kurulmasi.html?#detay](http://izmirfx.mekan360.com/iys_tarihce,sehirID=35,icerik=138,sayfa=1-tarihce-izmir-in-yeniden-kurulmasi.html?#detay).

<sup>21</sup> World eBook Library, "İzmir."

established cooperation with the Syrians. Later on, the city fell under the rule of Pergamons which strengthened its power in Western Anatolia. In this era, although the city's relations with other cities were subject to Pergamon's approval, it retained its authorities regarding the formation of an army and printing money.<sup>22</sup> Upon the demise of the Pergamon king Attalus III, the city had become part of the Roman Empire together with other Ionian city-states in 133 BC. While the importance of Izmir ascended, the city solidified its position as a commercial centre under the rule of Roman Empire.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Izmir under the Roman and Byzantine Rules***

The Romans already started to expand their influence on Western Anatolia through their strengthening cooperation with the Pergamon Empire by the 3rd century B.C. In 195 BC the Smyrnians constructed a temple dedicated to the Rome in order to reveal their friendship to the Romans. They supported the Romans together with Pergamon Kingdom in the Magnesian War between the Romans and Syrians in 190 BC.<sup>24</sup> The city became part of the Roman Empire when the Pergamon king Attalus III willed his kingdom to the Romans before dying heirless in 133 BC. As a civil diocese and a Roman province of Asia of 100,000 people, the city enhanced its position in this new era of prosperity. Many outstanding structures were constructed by the Romans in the city which became known for its beauty, library, rhetorical tradition and school of medicine where Galen of Pergamon, one of the most important surgeons in the Roman Empire, studied. Smyrna competed with Ephesus and Pergamon to become "the first city of Asia". Alongside the weakening of Ephesus, Smyrna which hosted one of the Seven Churches built in the evolution process of Christianity in Anatolia and referred to in the biblical Book of Revelation by St. John the Apostle, became the place of a significant bishopric. Yet, as the Christians resisted the imperial rule of the Roman Empire, the churches were persecuted by the Romans.<sup>25</sup>

The city was destroyed overwhelmingly by the catastrophic earthquake in 178 AD. The city could only be rebuilt by the support of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius of the Roman Empire. The state Agora which was presumably built in the era of Alexander and stands as one of the few surviving pre-Ottoman monuments was restored after the earthquake. Indeed, plenty of architectural works were constructed in this pre-Turkish era but unfortunately few of them could reach to date.<sup>26</sup> The vital works of the era that could not survive so far includes the theatre, stadium, and the commercial agora whereas the state Agora, Kadifekale castle and aqueducts were retained.<sup>27</sup>

Following the split of the Roman Empire into two entities in 395 AD, Anatolia and thus Izmir became the territory of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. The collapse of Western Roman Empire in 476 AD contributed to the reinforcement of the Byzantine rule in the region. Izmir continued to be one of the crucial ports of the Empire until the upsurge of Istanbul (Constantinople). Once Istanbul turned into a political and economic centre as the capital city of the Empire, the trade between Anatolia and the West reduced and thus vitality of Izmir weakened leading to a decline in its size during the Late

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<sup>22</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "Smyrna in Ancient Times."

<sup>23</sup> Republic of Turkey Izmir Governorship, "History of Izmir," accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.izmir.gov.tr/tarih-e>.

<sup>24</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "Smyrna in Ancient Times."

<sup>25</sup> Ring, Salkin, and La, 350.

<sup>26</sup> World eBook Library, "İzmir."

<sup>27</sup> T.C. İzmir Valiliği Resmi Kent Rehberi, "İzmir'in Yeniden Kurulması."



Antiquity and Early Middle Age. Thus, the city could not reach again the levels of prosperity that it once achieved during the Roman era. Nevertheless, the declaration of the city as a metropolitan and the appointment of an archbishop at the Council of Chalcedon (current Kadikoy) in 451 AD confirmed Izmir's religious importance. But still, it would be fair to state that the traces left by the Byzantines on Izmir were not comparable to the ones left on Istanbul.<sup>28</sup> The areas and temples used in the Roman and pre-Roman periods were destroyed as they were seen contrary to the Christian faith of the Byzantines. Furthermore, the external attacks had an adverse impact on the development of the city from the beginning of 7th century. The attacks of Sassanids in 608 were followed by the continual attacks of Arabs after 637. In 665 Izmir was seized for a while by Arabs as a result of the Emevi attack on the Byzantine Empire. Izmir started to revive as a city from the 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In this period Izmir started to be used as a base of Byzantine navy, hence promoting the construction of navy yard and vessels. This development which was accompanied by a commercial revival contributed to the military significance of the city. Yet the earthquake in 1025 caused destruction in Izmir. Izmir entered a new phase of transformation in its evolution process as the Byzantine rule became questionable due to the hand-over of the city between the Empire and Turks for a few times.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Byzantine Rule and the beginning of Turkish era in Izmir***

The victory of the Seljuk Turks against the Byzantine Empire in 1071 was a turning point in the Anatolian history. Izmir was first captured by the Seljuks in 1076. The Turkish commander Caka Bey (Chaqa-known as Tzachas among the Byzantines) located himself in Izmir by 1081 giving end to the presence of Byzantines and used Izmir as a base for its assaults against the Aegean islands.<sup>30</sup> Contributing to the establishment of the navy, Caka Bey developed a sort of naval state by seizing the neighbouring villages including Clazomenae (Urla) and Phocaea (Foca). Yet, following his death in 1098 the city returned to the Byzantine rule until 1317.<sup>31</sup> The interim Nicaea (current Iznik) Empire (1204-1261) was founded by the Byzantines following the invasion of Istanbul by the Latin Crusaders in the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The Iznik Empire could restore its authority in Izmir and its citadel in a short while notwithstanding the enormous concessions given to the Genoese regarding the use of the prosperous port.

The city regained its importance during the era of Nicaea Empire. After the transferral of administrative headquarter of the Empire to Izmir in the period of Byzantine Emperor John III. Ducas Vatatzes (1222-1254), the city had again become the naval base of Byzantines through which they could intervene in the developments in Europe. The restoration of the Pagos castle (Kadifekale) and construction of a new castle by the side of the port<sup>32</sup> led to the separation of the city into two parts. In this period a Genoese neighbourhood was formed in the city in line with their rising commercial activities. The return of Istanbul from the Latins to the Byzantines and its restoration as the capital city in

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<sup>28</sup> Onur İnal, "Levantine Heritage in Izmir" (MA thesis, Koç University, 2006), 9-10.

<sup>29</sup> T.C. İzmir Valiliği Resmi Kent Rehberi, "İzmir'in Yeniden Kurulması."

<sup>30</sup> C. Edmund Bosworth, *Historic Cities of Islamic World* (Leiden: IDC Publishers, 2007), 218.

<sup>31</sup> İnal, 11; Bosworth, 218. According to some other sources the return of Izmir to Byzantines took place in 1096.

<sup>32</sup> The lower port castle of Neon Kastron was called St. Peter by the Genoese and "Ok Kalesi" by the Turks.

1261 resulted in a decreasing interest in Anatolia and Izmir causing the collapse of the border defence and thus paving the way for the raids of the Turcoman tribes.<sup>33</sup>

After almost two centuries, Izmir was recaptured by the Turks as the city was conquered by the chief (Bey) and founder of the Turcoman principality of Aydin (beylic of Aydinoghulları), Mehmed Bey, in 1317. Umur Bey, the son of Mehmed Bey, had become the governor of Aydin principality of Izmir and used the city as a naval base building a shipyard. Although the lower port castle was invaded in 1344 by the Latin crusaders who passed it to the Knights of Rhodes, the principality of Aydin could be able to keep the upper castle called Kadifekale. Thus, the city was split into two parts as “Turkish Izmir” and “Christian Izmir” for almost sixty years. Conquering Izmir in 1402 the Mongol Khan Timur (Tamerlane) expelled the Knights from the city destroying the lower castle. Consequently, Izmir was taken over again by the principality of Aydin up to 1415 when it was captured by the Ottoman Empire during the period of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed I Celebi.<sup>34</sup>

### ***From the Ottoman Rule to the Izmir of Turkish Republic***

The Western Anatolia and Izmir had become under the certain control of the Ottoman Empire which terminated the principality of Aydin in 1426 culminating the administrative uncertainty of Izmir. Thereafter, the Ottoman Empire had continuously ruled the city for almost five centuries. The Ottomans created the conditions under which stability and prosperity could be achieved in the city whose harbour and hinterland was terribly destroyed back then. Yet they initially needed to strengthen their dominance over the Aegean Sea as they confronted with the commercial and military rivalry and repeated attacks of the Venetians to capture Izmir. The Venetian attack in 1472 led to the reconstruction of the formerly destroyed lower port castle and thus returned the city to its previous facade. The city became integrated again between the upper Pagos castle and the lower port castle. The settlements intensified around the Pagos Hill whereas the commercial site was situated around the harbour at that time.<sup>35</sup>

In the course of the sixteenth century the increase in the population of the city forced the Turks to expand their residential area from the hill to the harbour and thus to form a continuous suburban area between the upper castle and the lower castle.<sup>36</sup> In fact, besides the natural increase, the rising population was also caused by the newcomers including the Turkish Muslims from other parts of western Asia Minor, Armenians from Bursa, Aleppo, and even Safavid Isfahan; Greeks from the Aegean islands and Morea; Jews from Spain, Portugal, Italy and some other Ottoman towns; and European merchants coming from Holland, England, France and Venice. The European merchants generally employed Ottoman Armenian, Greek, Jewish brokers who could speak western languages and Turkish whereas the role of the Turks was much more limited in the international trade. The Western merchants' preference for Izmir as a transit harbour in their commercial activities resulted in the establishment of several consulates in the city. While Izmir was a settlement of 2,000 people by the end of the sixteenth century, it turned out to be one of the most important port cities in the Eastern Mediterranean and a vital

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<sup>33</sup> Yusuf Ayönü, “İzmir’de Türk Hâkimiyetinin Başlaması” [The beginning of Turkish domination in Izmir], *Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi* [Journal of Turkish World Studies] 9, 1 (2009): 5.

<sup>34</sup> Bosworth, 218.

<sup>35</sup> Yetkin and Yılmaz.

<sup>36</sup> T.C. İzmir Valiliği [Izmir Governorship], “İlimizin Tarihi” [History of our city], accessed June 28, 2015, <http://www.izmir.gov.tr/tarih-e>.

commercial centre of approximately 35,000-40,000 residents by 1640. In this period, the city was the supplier of products such as food, wool, leather and silk not just for Istanbul but also for the European merchants.<sup>37</sup> Thus along with the growing population, the economic composition of the city was also changing. The city was being alienated from its rural and agricultural structure and transformed into a market as the newcomers were engaged in trade rather than agricultural activities.

Despite being already the biggest city of the region in the seventeenth century, Izmir remained as the subdivision of Aydin province<sup>38</sup> until the permanent movement of the capital of province from Aydin to Izmir in 1850.<sup>39</sup> The city was noticeably devastated by the earthquakes in 1688 and 1778. 10,000 to 15,000 inhabitants died in the 1688 earthquake and the accompanying fire. The city could be reconstructed within two years by the Ottoman Empire which was also supported by the foreign merchants, the Ottoman middlemen and Muslim notables in the region. The enhancement of Izmir continued notwithstanding the military and economic problems experienced by the Ottoman Empire from the late seventeenth century to the nineteenth century. Izmir had become a location where the Ottoman Empire was penetrated into the world economy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Ottoman Armenians, Greeks and Jews played a critical role in this penetration by taking the place of the local notables. The British prevalence in the Ottoman Mediterranean as well as the reforms carried out by the declining Ottoman Empire for the modernisation of the military, economy, government as well as other fields of state and society contributed to the urban growth of Izmir and generated an even more cosmopolitan city. Besides the mounting European trade, the Ottoman reforms benefited particularly the non-Muslim population by enlarging their rights in the Empire.<sup>40</sup> Izmir became one of the cities profiting most from the growing commercial relations driven by the Industrial Revolution throughout the nineteenth century. Attraction of the capital owners to the city was not only leading to the formation of new business areas but also to an increase in the population.<sup>41</sup> The estimated population of the city by the end of the seventeenth century was approximately 90,000 which included around 60,000 Turks, 15,000 Greeks, 8,000 Armenians and 6,000 to 7,000 Jews in addition to the substantial amount of European, essentially the French, the British, the Dutch and Italian, merchants.<sup>42</sup> The city's population increased to 200,000 by the 1890s and to 300,000 after the World War I.<sup>43</sup>

The non-Muslim Ottomans and the foreigners in the city played a dual role by enabling the trading of the local products and also marketing the European products in Western Anatolia. Therefore, in the course of this century which is called by a famous

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<sup>37</sup> Gabor Agoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Facts On File Infobase Publishing, 2009), 291-292.

<sup>38</sup> The province of Aydin was an administrative unit including the current cities of Izmir, Manisa, Mugla, Denizli, Aydin in Turkey.

<sup>39</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "İzmir Merkezde Görülmesi Gereken Yerler-Hükümet Konağı" [The places to be seen at the centre of Izmir - Government Office], accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.kultur.gov.tr/TR,72639/hukümet-konagi.html>. Izmir became the capital of the province of Aydin for the first time in 1841-42 albeit temporarily.

<sup>40</sup> Agoston and Masters, *Ottoman Empire*, 292.

<sup>41</sup> H. Taner Kerimoğlu, "19. Yüzyılda Reformlar ve İzmir" [Reforms and Izmir in the 19th century], in *İzmir Kent Ansiklopedisi, Tarih Cildi, I. Cilt* [Izmir city encyclopaedia history, Volume I], ed. Kemal Arı and Fevzi Cakmak (İzmir: İmaj Basım, 2013), 82.

<sup>42</sup> World eBook Library, "İzmir."

<sup>43</sup> Agoston and Masters, 292.

Turkish historian as “the longest century of the (Ottoman) Empire”,<sup>44</sup> Izmir experienced a significant transformation as a result of the increasing population, developing economy and social life and gained a facade of a modern Western city. It was also like a display window for the Western powers in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities. The expansion of the population and thus residential areas also required the improvement of the urban services. Hence, the initial formation of the municipal organisation in 1867 to deal with the problems of the city was followed by the establishment of Izmir Municipality in 1868.<sup>45</sup>

Izmir once more experienced instability, destruction and then rebirth due to the World War I and developments in the successive years. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a result of the World War I was followed by the Greek occupation of Izmir and the Aegean region with the support of the British, French and Italian troops on May 15, 1919. The city was recaptured by the Turkish forces led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, on September 9, 1922. Unfortunately, important amount of the city was destroyed by the fire which started on September 13, 1922 while the Greek forces were retreating. The fire which could only be extinguished on 18 September burnt 20-25 thousand buildings and destroyed a residential area of 2 million 6 hundred square metres. Almost two thirds of the city excluding the Turkish quarter was burnt in this fire.<sup>46</sup>

The Treaty of Lausanne which was concluded on July 24, 1923 established the borders of modern Turkey where Izmir was located as the third largest city. This Treaty also involved a stipulation that was crucial for the fate of the city: the substantial population exchange between Turkey and Greece. This required the exchange of the huge Greek population of the city with the ethnic Turks who had long been inhabited in Greece and Greek islands in a way strengthening the current Turkish character of the city. The commencement of a new era for Anatolia as well as Izmir was confirmed by the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923. Meanwhile, revealing the significance attached to the resolution of the economic problems of the country and the establishment of a national economy, the first Economic Congress was convened in Izmir in February 1923 with the participation of 1100 delegates of farmers, traders, workers and industrialists. The Congress provided a platform for the discussion of the future economic policies of the new country. Despite the call for the protection of local industry, foreign investment was not opposed on the condition that preferential treatment was not provided to foreigners.<sup>47</sup>

Izmir was influenced by the western planning approaches in the new Turkish Republic. The modern city was planned by French planner Henri Prost and Rene and Raymond Danger in 1925. The plan which was endorsed by the Izmir Municipality in the same year was modified in 1933.<sup>48</sup> In order to revive trade, the goal of attracting foreign investment to the city came to the forefront. The first effort to introduce and market the local products was the fair opened during the Izmir Economic Congress. Izmir Fair which is one of the oldest and most extensive trade organisations in Turkey was formally started in 1927. This fair which has been associated with the city in the course of time has officially taken the name of “Izmir International Fair” in 1937. Since those days, the city

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<sup>44</sup> İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* [The longest century of the Empire] (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2014).

<sup>45</sup> Kerimoğlu, 83-84.

<sup>46</sup> Yetkin and Yılmaz.

<sup>47</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (New York: Tauris & Co Ltd, Revised Edition, 2004), 195.

<sup>48</sup> Isin Can, “Urban Design and the Planning System in Izmir,” *Journal of Landscape Studies* 3 (2010): 183.

has grown rapidly. As the city was oriented towards industrialisation after the 1950s it started to attract massive domestic migration, particularly rural-urban one. This development has essentially affected the demographic structure as well as the urban settlement in the city.

**Illustration 2:** *Historic Clock Tower at Konak Square in the City Centre of Izmir.*<sup>49</sup>



**Source:** “Photos of Izmir,” Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Website, accessed July 11, 2015, <https://www.izmir.bel.tr/IzmirFotograflari/303/tr>.

### *Izmir as an International Port City*

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Izmir carried on its commercial relations particularly within near abroad as a small city positioned at the western end of the caravan trade. For most of the sixteenth century, the overwhelmingly agrarian internal trade of the city was focused on the steady transfer of local products to the capital city Istanbul. The lack of international trade was a crucial factor preventing the economic development of the city.<sup>50</sup> At this point understanding how Izmir was developed into a trade centre and which actors were influential in this accelerated development process are crucial in order to comprehend the historical identity of Izmir as a borderland city. Several factors played role in the modification of the commercial relations of Izmir as the Ottoman Empire had gained a leadership position in the Aegean and Mediterranean maritime trade. The Ottomans obtained the status of a “sea power” against the Venetians in the Mediterranean following the naval Battle of Preveza in 1538.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the seizure of locations such as Egypt, Syria, Rhodes, Cyprus, and Chios by the Ottomans were critical in securing the sea routes in the sixteenth century. The initial rivalry of Izmir with the

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<sup>49</sup> The historic clock tower was designed by by the Levantine French architect Raymond Charles Père, and built in 1901 to commemorate the twenty fifth anniversary of Abdülhamid II's accession to the throne.

<sup>50</sup> Agoston and Masters, 291.

<sup>51</sup> Halil İnalçık, “Osmanlı Deniz Egemenliği” [Ottoman sea domination], in *Türk Denizcilik Tarihi* [Turkish maritime history], ed. Bülent Arı (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Denizcilik Müsteşarlığı, 2002 ), 59.

other Eastern Mediterranean coastal cities was followed by the upsurge of the city after the decline of the other trade centres. The seizure of Chios by the Ottomans caused the shift of the trade of precious goods from Chios to Izmir. Furthermore, the movement of Armenian silk merchants to the city was ensured by the decline of Aleppo owing to the insecurity of this route because of the Ottoman-Safavid confrontation.<sup>52</sup>

The notable rise of Izmir started at the end of the sixteenth century. Cotton and other goods which were grown in Western Anatolia rendered Izmir attractive for French, English, Dutch and Venetian traders. The commercial privileges (capitulations) granted by the Ottoman Empire to the several European states in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries increased the attractiveness of Izmir like the other Ottoman port cities for the European merchants. In this period the Empire approached to the issue of capitulations pragmatically as a way of developing commercial relations as well as alliances with the European powers against its rivals such as the Tsardom of Russia and Habsburg Empire.<sup>53</sup> Yet, in the following century the capitulations converted into a serious stumbling block for the Ottoman Empire and played an important role in its decline.

The global transformations such as the geographical discoveries which led the European states to extend their commercial activities worldwide also had an impact on the development of Izmir. The British efforts to spread their influence into the Near East while competing with the French and Venetians for predominance in Eastern Mediterranean trade also played a vital role in the rise of Izmir as a commercial centre. Following the British and French merchants, the Dutch also came to the city by the early seventeenth century and they all began to reshape the Western Anatolian trade contributing to the significance of Izmir as one of the most important cities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Hence, foreign consulates started to move from Chios to Izmir providing commercial services to their nationals. Each consulate had its own quay where the ships of their country could anchor. Besides, the long period of campaign for the Cretan conquest (1648-1669) influenced the situation of Izmir significantly in the Empire. In this process Izmir functioned as a shipping port which was used to supply troops for the conquest.<sup>54</sup>

In the early seventeenth century the Jewish community in Izmir was playing a vital role in international trade as the most considerable Ottoman rival to the foreigners. However, though not absolutely withdrawing from the commercial sector, the dominance of the Jews over trade started to shrink in the coming years as Greeks, Armenians, and even Venetians began to serve as factors, brokers, even consuls for the French, English, and Dutch. These groups eventually took the place of the Jews as middlemen between the foreigners and producers in Western Anatolia. Thus, the structure of the Western Anatolian commercial networks altered towards the end of the seventeenth century. Up to the 1670s several groups and individuals as well as the foreigners spread out randomly across the Western Anatolia to conduct commercial activities. In this regard, the Dutch, Venetian and English merchants had to use the letters patent issued by Istanbul to move around the region. Yet from the late seventeenth century onwards, the foreigners started to

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<sup>52</sup> İnal, 21.

<sup>53</sup> Halil İnalçık, "Osmanlı'nın Avrupa ile Barışıklığı: Kapitülasyonlar ve Ticaret" [Reconciliation of Ottoman with Europe: capitulations and trade], *Doğu Batı Dergisi* [Journal of East West] 24 (August-September-October 2003): 61.

<sup>54</sup> World eBook Library, "İzmir.": Daniel Goffman, *İzmir ve Levanten Dünya 1550-1650* [Izmir and the Levantine world, 1550-1650] (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları 21, 2000), 60-63.

focus ever more on their commercial activities in Izmir and employ Armenian, Jewish, and Muslim agents for their activities in the provinces.<sup>55</sup>

The disturbing earthquake in July 1688 led to a rapid decrease in trade of Izmir for a while. Nevertheless, the proposal of some European traders to constitute an alternative trade centre on the Aegean was not accepted by the Ottoman government. Despite the destruction created by the earthquake, Izmir was still seen by the majority of European merchants as the most secure hub in their commercial network. In the following years, the French had gained dominance in the commerce of Izmir comprising the biggest European trade community in Izmir by the eighteenth century. In this era when the port of Izmir was used as a transport centre for the French goods to and from the Near East, the economic and cultural life of the city was influenced deeply by the French. After experiencing a period of stagnation during the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) and the Greek War of Independence (1821-28), Izmir revived again as a trade port in the 1830s.<sup>56</sup> The port of Izmir was the transition point for 24 percent of all imports to the Ottoman Empire from the West and 57 percent of all exports in the 1840s while the same trade figures appeared as 19 percent and 55 percent respectively in 1900.<sup>57</sup>

The city passed through a crucial transformation process in the nineteenth century as the demanded products and the means of trade altered. Due to the increasing demand of the European cities for the agricultural products in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, the trade of these products, especially pulses and cereals, substituted the trade of precious goods. This shift in the trade structure also affected the infrastructure of the city reshaping the capital resources and the network of entrepreneurs and intermediaries. Within this period the Armenians and the Greeks became the primary actors as intermediaries in trade and started to play a key role between the European merchants and the Muslim producers.<sup>58</sup> These local Ottoman intermediaries did not only connect the inner production places with the port but also mediated the transfer of credit from the coast into Anatolia.<sup>59</sup> In the nineteenth century the major export products included raisins, cotton, dried fruit, figs, madder, opium, cereals, sponges, olive oil, tobacco while the imports from the West were mainly comprised of manufactured and textile products.<sup>60</sup>

By the first half of the nineteenth century as the impact of the British expansionary policies on the Ottoman Empire prevailed, the British merchants started to dominate in the Western Anatolian trade. This dominance was achieved particularly following the 1838 Balta Limani Treaty which is often evaluated as a significant breaking point for the foreign trade and foreign relations of the Ottoman Empire. Differently from the previous unilateral concessions given by the Empire to the foreigners in terms of rights to trade and reside within the Empire, this Treaty was designed as a bilateral agreement which increased the privileges of the foreigners to a crucial extent. In fact the Treaty was concluded in a difficult period of time for the Empire when it was striving to contain the revolt by the governor of Egypt. Ensuring protection for the activities of British merchants, this British-Ottoman commercial treaty decreased the authority of the Ottoman government to enforce unilateral trade tariffs and laid down the abolition of monopolies of

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<sup>55</sup> Devrim Dumludağ and Bülent Durgun, "An Economy in Transition: İzmir (1918-1938)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 47, 6 (2011): 924.

<sup>56</sup> İnal, 23.

<sup>57</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "The Making of an Ottoman Port the Quay of Izmir in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of Transport History* 22, 1 (2001): 24.

<sup>58</sup> İnal, 23.

<sup>59</sup> Dumludağ and Durgun, 925.

<sup>60</sup> Frangakis-Syrett, 24.

any nature and other methods of control that could restrain the trade.<sup>61</sup> Consequently the number and influence of the British merchants increased in Izmir. Thus, the Commercial Bank of Izmir which was the first bank in the Ottoman Empire was established by the British merchants in 1843 and the British Chamber of Commerce was set up in 1888.<sup>62</sup>

**Illustration 3: Izmir Port in the Nineteenth Century.**



**Source:** “Photos of Old Izmir,” Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Website, accessed July 11, 2015, <https://www.izmir.bel.tr/IzmirFotograflari/303/tr>.

Izmir developed into a larger city and one of the most well-known and famous cultural and trade centres in the world through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The nineteenth century was also important for Izmir as an experience of physical change. This change could be achieved through the financing of particularly foreign investors who enjoyed the concessions of railroad, streetcar, natural gas, tobacco, and other monopolies given by the Ottoman Empire to the American, British, French, and German companies. Besides, Izmir turned into a publication midpoint whereby books, magazines, and newspapers were published.<sup>63</sup> In this context the first newspaper (*La Spectateur Oriental*) of Izmir published in 1821 by the Levantine groups. Afterwards the Greek newspaper, *O Filos ton Neon*, was published in 1831, the Armenian newspaper, *Archalouys Araradian* (*Dawn of the Ararat*), was published in 1840, the Jewish newspaper, *La Bueno Esperansa* (*Good Hope*) was published in 1842, and the Bulgarian newspaper, *Ljubosleviye* (*Love for the World*), was brought out in 1842. On the other hand the Turkish newspaper, *Aydin*, was published comparatively late in 1869.<sup>64</sup>

The development of transportation facilities also played a key role in Izmir’s evolution process, particularly for its increasing and expanding trade. This enabled not

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<sup>61</sup> Resat Kasaba, “Treaties and Friendships: British Imperialism, the Ottoman Empire, and China in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of World History* 4, 2 (1993): 216-218.

<sup>62</sup> İnal, 24.

<sup>63</sup> Dumludağ and Durgun, 924.

<sup>64</sup> İnal, 26.



only the access of products and merchants to the seaport of Izmir, but also the connection of the commercial foundations in Western Anatolia to their partners in Europe. Therefore the first railway line in Anatolia was constructed from Izmir to Aydin within a period of ten years between 1856 and 1866. Construction of the railway did not only change the economy and society in Izmir and its hinterland but also provided the city a precursor role in the construction of other railways in the Ottoman Empire. The other important development regarding transportation was the construction of the quay. The quay played a key role in the economic, cultural and also social life of Izmir and it became an esplanade. Cafes, theatres, cinemas, clubs, hotels, and consular bureaus were established throughout the coast in an area called Kordon which became a haunt especially for the Levantines. Apart from the progress in transportation facilities the reorganisation of the rights of foreigners to attain properties in 1869 also attracted the Levantines to the city and increased their settlement in the city in the nineteenth century.<sup>65</sup> Such developments crucially influenced the demographic structure, culture and the Ottoman character of the city. Thus, Izmir eventually became the centre of the Aydin province which constituted an administrative area embracing a huge fraction of the current Aegean region in 1867.<sup>66</sup>

Beyond their interaction with their home city and the economy of the region, the ports also play a crucial role in shaping the social, cultural and spatial features of city.<sup>67</sup> In this regard, Izmir (Alsancak) port has continued to constitute a vital aspect of the city's historical identity as a borderland city enabling the connection between the west and the east. The identity of Izmir as an international port city persists in modern Turkey as well. Although the development process of Izmir port was interrupted from 1920s up to the 1960s due to the initial focus of the new Republican regime on the establishment of official institutions, its interaction with the city has continued to influence the general characteristics of Izmir. The port has taken its current location with the establishment of the Alsancak quay in 1954. The port was transferred to the Turkish State Railways in 1957 and started to operate in 1959. Hereafter, along with the revival of the port which has a serious contribution to the national economy, Izmir has retaken its place in international trade.<sup>68</sup> When it is evaluated in combination with its highway and railway connections, the hinterland of Izmir port which predominantly provides service to tramp vessels and cruises involved the southern part of the Marmara Region, the entire Aegean Region, the western part of Inner Anatolia, and western and north-western parts of the Mediterranean. According to 2012 external trade data, 34 percent of the imports and 40 percent of exports of the city and the Aegean region were conducted via Izmir port.<sup>69</sup>

When the place of Izmir in the regional and national economy is assessed in general, it can be stated that Izmir is the pivotal city of the Aegean region creating 48% of

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 25-27.

<sup>66</sup> World eBook Library, "İzmir."

<sup>67</sup> Hitay Baran and Çınar Atay, "İzmir Alsancak Limanı'nın Etki Alanı ve İzmir Kentinin Ekonomik Yapısı ile Bağı" [The influence area of Izmir Alsancak port and its connection with the economic structure of Izmir city], *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Denizcilik Fakültesi Dergisi* [Dokuz Eylül University Journal of Maritime Faculty] 2, 2 (2010): 67.

<sup>68</sup> Ümit Çiçek, "İzmir Limanı'nın Tarihsel Gelişimi" [Historical development of the port of Izmir], *İzmir Ticaret Odası Ar & Ge Bülteni* [Bulletin of Izmir Chamber of Commerce], (2006), accessed June 28, 2015, [http://www.izto.org.tr/portals/0/iztogenel/dokumanlar/izmir\\_limaninin\\_tarihsel\\_gelisimi\\_u\\_cicek\\_26.04.2012%2022-21-21.pdf](http://www.izto.org.tr/portals/0/iztogenel/dokumanlar/izmir_limaninin_tarihsel_gelisimi_u_cicek_26.04.2012%2022-21-21.pdf).

<sup>69</sup> Turan Yalçın, "İzmir Limanı" [The port of Izmir], T.C. Devlet Demiryolu İşletmesi Genel Müdürlüğü" [General Directorate of Turkish State Railways], accessed June 28, 2015, [http://www.deu.edu.tr/UploadedFiles/Birimler/21148/TCDD\\_Turan%20YAL%C3%87IN.pdf](http://www.deu.edu.tr/UploadedFiles/Birimler/21148/TCDD_Turan%20YAL%C3%87IN.pdf).

the region's gross domestic product. Izmir's economy is dominantly based upon industrial, commercial, transportation, communication and agricultural activities. It is also a prominent foreign trade city of Turkey with its 2 free zones, 13 industrial zones, and 4 technology development zones. Maritime transportation opportunities have a significant share in the country's international trade.<sup>70</sup> It ranks as the 5th city in total imports, and 4th in the exports. In 2013 the imports of Izmir amounted to 10 653 188 dollars while its exports was of 9 311 212 dollars comprising almost half of the exports of the Aegean region. Food products, construction products, textile products, wood products and furniture, chemical products and agricultural products have a vital place in Izmir's trade. Izmir has a developed capital market via its national and international banking network and stock market. Thanks to its strategic location, logistics infrastructure, qualified human resources, multi-sectorial economic structure and investment zones with special incentives Izmir is a city attractive for foreign investments. Cumulative amount of foreign direct investments (FDI) rose to 1,944 in 2013 from 534 in 2004. German companies take the first rank in terms of foreign investments accounting for 25% of the foreign firms and are followed by companies of Netherlands (8%), Iran (7%), Italy (7%), United Kingdom (6%), France (6%), United States (5%), Greece (3%), Russia (2%), Switzerland (2%), Austria (2%), Azerbaijan (2%), Belgium (2%) and Israel (2%).<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, owing to its historical, cultural and natural assets as well as Aegean type Mediterranean climate, Izmir is one of the vital tourism centres in Turkey. The city's special borderland flavour combining its western culture and outward-oriented structure with the Anatolian culture contributes to its touristic attraction. Besides thermal tourism, eco-tourism, sun tourism and convention and fair tourism, culture tourism and faith tourism also form a significant aspect of touristic activities in this sense. Of the 1 943 253 tourist arrivals in the city in 2013, 1 407 240 were foreign tourists. Tourism income was over 1, 5 million dollars in the same year.<sup>72</sup>

### ***Izmir's multicultural past and its impact on the present structure of Izmir***

Eighteenth century was a period of time when Izmir passed through a noticeable transformation process. The different social groups and communities who came to Izmir in order to participate in the commercial activities had been effective in this process contributing particularly to the remodelling of social and economic life. Thus, Izmir gained a multicultural and cosmopolitan structure with the participation of different ethnic and religious groups in the urban life. These groups were separated from each other in their residential areas as they were located in different regions of the city. For instance, while Turkish population was inhabited on the foothills of Kadifekale, the Jews settled in Karatas, the Franks in Alsancak, British in Karantina and Goztepe districts. In this sense, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are perceived as a period of transition for Izmir in terms of the structural configuration and settlement of the population based on ethnic and religious identity.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Izmir Development Agency, "Why Izmir: Economy?," accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.investinizmir.com/en/html/1089/Economy>.

<sup>71</sup> Izmir Development Agency, "Foreign Direct Investments," accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.investinizmir.com/en/html/1129/FDI+in+Izmir>.

<sup>72</sup> Izmir Development Agency, "Economic Facts and Figures-Izmir," 2014, accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.investinizmir.com/upload/Sayfa/1128/files/facts.pdf>.

<sup>73</sup> Ercan Tatlıdil, "Kent ve Kentli Kimliği; İzmir Örneği" [Identity of cities and citizens; the case of Izmir], *Ege Akademik Bakış* [Ege Academic Review] 9 1 (2009): 330-331.

During the eighteenth and particularly nineteenth centuries the ethnic and religious composition of Izmir was especially remarkable due to the diversity of settled Ottoman communities as well as Levantines. In this period Izmir, as the second biggest city of the Ottoman Empire, had mainly two settled communities; one of them was Muslims (Turks) and the other one was non-Muslim, including the Orthodox, and Catholic Greeks, Gregorian and Catholic Armenians, as well as a few thousand Jews. The large non-Muslim population in Izmir during this era influenced the perspectives of Muslims and the Ottoman authorities on Izmir leading to the labelling of the city as “Infidel Izmir”.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, there were also Levantines, namely captains, merchants, seasonal travellers, and artisans from Europe who decided to settle in the city following their visits. The Levantines were mostly from the European countries such as Britain, Holland, France, Italy, and Greece.

**Illustration 4:** *Famous Esplanade (Kordon) of Izmir in the Nineteenth Century*



**Source:** “Photos of Old Izmir,” Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Website, accessed July 11, 2015, <https://www.izmir.bel.tr/IzmirFotograflari/303/tr>.

Although one can come across different data in diverse sources regarding the distribution of population between different religious and ethnic groups in Izmir in those times, it is a fact that the total population of the non-Muslims and foreigners in the city composed more than half of the total population up to the First World War. As well as Muslims, the Rums<sup>75</sup> (the local Greeks of Izmir and Anatolia), Armenians, Jews and Levantines maintained their presence in the city until the era of Turkish Republic.<sup>76</sup> The Ottoman General Census of 1881/82-1893 in which the women as well as men were counted for the first time illustrated a total population of 496,6 thousand for the Izmir Sandjak as an administrative unit. This figure included 279, 6 thousand Muslims, 133, 8

<sup>74</sup> Ring, Salkin and La, 350; İnal, 26.

<sup>75</sup> This is a phrase meaning the people on the Roman lands and used to differentiate the local Greeks of Izmir and Anatolia from the citizens of Greece.

<sup>76</sup> Kerimoğlu, 81-82.

thousand Greeks, 17, 2 thousand Jews, 9, 2 thousand Armenians, 54, 6 thousand Jews and 54, 6 thousand foreign citizens.<sup>77</sup>

Basically, Izmir was composed of five neighbourhoods: Turkish, Jewish, Armenian, Greek and Frank neighbourhoods. The Turkish community established itself in the higher part of Kadifekale. Another community of Izmir, the Rums were settled in the area behind the Frank Quarter. The Armenians as the smallest community of the city were settled in the Basmane area located between the Turkish, Greek, and Jewish districts. The other community of Izmir, Jews were established in Karatas region.<sup>78</sup> Probably due to the fact that the French were the first community to get into contact with the Ottoman Empire with regard to political and commercial issues, all European foreigners were called as Franks in the Empire. Frank neighbourhood was located in the Frank quarter by the seaside. The Westerns built the most comfortable and beautiful houses of the city in the Frank Street. Frank merchants generally dwelled upstairs of their warehouses which were aligned near the quayside.<sup>79</sup> The Frank neighbourhood was in the centre of economic and social life with the consulates, the European market, elegant houses, best-paved streets, art galleries, luxurious restaurants, theatres, clubs, coffeehouses, patisseries and pubs. Greek and Armenian neighbourhoods located at the rear of the Frank neighbourhood were characterised by Southern European style of houses. The social and cultural lives of the Greeks were particularly affected by the Franks. On the other hand, the Turkish and Jewish neighbourhoods which were less organised compared to the other neighbourhoods were identified with their narrow streets, red roof tiles and gardens.<sup>80</sup>

Notwithstanding the multicultural structure of Izmir, each ethnic and religious community preferred to live in its own quarter and formed its own neighbourhood in the city. Nevertheless, these different communities were not separated from each other by strict borders. The neighbourhoods which were characterised by mosques, churches or synagogues in consistence with the given community were close to each other. Hence, the enlargement of the quarters over time resulted in the formation of overlapping neighbourhoods. Thus, in spite of the differences between the communities they could still share the social, cultural, and economic life, and succeed to live together.<sup>81</sup>

Being attracted by the city's commercial growth, geographical location as well as ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, many travellers including Turkish and foreign ones particularly from England, France and Germany visited Izmir between the seventeenth and twentieth century. The writings of these travellers on their experiences and observations of Izmir clearly reflected the multicultural structure of the city.<sup>82</sup> A well-known Ottoman-Turkish traveller Evliya Celebi visited Izmir between the years of 1657 and 1658 and he included his observations and comments on the city in his famous Travel Book, called "Seyahatname". In addition to a thorough description of the historical, geographical, architectural and social elements of the city, Evliya Celebi also informed about the local people's lifestyles, beliefs, and their customs. According to his book, there were then ten

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<sup>77</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914 Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 122-123.

<sup>78</sup> İnal, 28-29.

<sup>79</sup> Evelyn Lyle Kalças, *Gateways to the Past Houses and Gardens of Old Bornova* (İzmir: Bilgehan Matbaası, 1978), 4, accessed July 11, 2015, <http://levantineheritage.com/pdf/Gateways-to-the-past-Houses-and-gardens-of-old-Bornova-Evelyn-Lyle-Kalças.pdf>.

<sup>80</sup> Burcu Taşçı et al., "Rediscovering the 19th Century of a Port Town in Levant: Smyrna/İzmir," *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* (January 2015): 66-70.

<sup>81</sup> İnal, 32-33.

<sup>82</sup> Taşçı et al., 62.

Muslim, ten European and Jewish, two Armenian and one Gypsy neighbourhoods in Izmir. The population dwelled in 10,300 houses spreading from the foothills of Kadifekale to the plain up to the sea. Within this scope, different ethnic and religious communities who were dealing with their specialised economic activities co-existed peacefully. Evliya Celebi also mentioned about twelve mosques and forty churches and synagogues in the city.<sup>83</sup>

The views of the travellers on Izmir frequently diversified. Whereas some portrayed the city as “an Eastern town” and “the capital of Levant”, some others viewed it as a Western city comparable to Marseille, Naples and Trieste. These differentiated views were mainly stemming from the dual structure of the city and the different life styles of the settled communities. The Turks, Jews and Armenians settled on the outskirts of the castle while the Greeks and the Westerns were located closer to the seaside. The Turkish and Jewish neighbourhoods shaped the Eastern style of the city while the Levantines, Greeks and the Armenians formed the Western style of the city with their social and cultural lives. Thus, the travellers who visited Western style parts described Izmir as a Western city, whereas the travellers who visited the other districts figured it as an Eastern city. The dual structure which was shaped by this multicultural society consisting of different communities was clearly reflected not only by the diversity in the urban and architectural styles but also by the differences in social and cultural activities. Therefore, the cultural activities also varied in the city. The Muslims often preferred to socialize by visits to their neighbours, gatherings in the front of or at the courtyards of their houses, and picnics. On the other hand, there were different socialisation tools for non-Muslims such as theatres, clubs, coffeehouses, patisseries and pubs which were mostly located on the coastal line.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, Izmir established itself as one of the largest multicultural and cosmopolitan cities of the Ottoman Empire. In 1988 there were 236,547 foreign citizens in the Ottoman state and 55,805 of this figure were settled in the Aydin province chiefly thanks to Izmir.<sup>85</sup> Izmir experienced a crucial progress essentially caused by the industrialisation in its urbanisation process from the second half of the nineteenth century. Izmir’s trade city identity improved owing to the advancement of the harbour and consequently urban population engaged in commercial activities progressively increased as a result of significant amount of immigration to the city. Hence, Izmir had gained a distinctive urban identity compared to the other Anatolian cities particularly due to the impact of the Levantines. As Izmir became an international harbour city in a multicultural environment the number of the cultural activity centres such as cinemas, theatres, dancing halls also increased. The new structuring and cultural diversity influenced the quality of life in the city.<sup>86</sup>

However, the rise of nationalism during the late Ottoman era had an undermining impact on multiculturalism in the Empire in general and in Izmir in particular. In this regard the multicultural structure of the city incrementally weakened in the twentieth century. Following the triumph of the Turkish forces in Izmir in 1922, a significant amount of the Greek population migrated to Greece. Furthermore, the huge population exchange between Turkey and Greece in 1923 was a very important development changing the ethnic diversity of the city. In addition to the flee of large amounts of Greeks, Armenians and other groups from the city, the arrival of Turkish Muslim population from Greece and islands considerably altered the population structure.

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<sup>83</sup> Tatlđdil, 330.

<sup>84</sup> Taşçı et al., 64-65, 74-76.

<sup>85</sup> Karpat, 161.

<sup>86</sup> Tatlđdil, 331.

Moreover, from 1950s onwards Izmir started to take interior migration as the third largest city of Turkey. The inadequacies in the master plans in terms of the settlement of the newcomers led to the formation of slum areas in the city which has faced difficulties to protect its historical heritage.<sup>87</sup>

Urban identity covers a large scope of issues related to cultural and social norms as well as natural and geographic factors. Although cities constitute many common features, they also have distinctive characteristics due to their natural, economic and social circumstances as well as historical evolution process. To say differently besides universal values, the cities may embody distinguishing values and characteristics at the same time.<sup>88</sup> In this respect, it is a fact that the current urban identity of Izmir has been deeply influenced by its historical heritage and multicultural past. Although the city has experienced vital changes in the course of time it still bears the borderland city flavour as a contribution of this heritage.

There is a widespread consensus both among the inhabitants of Izmir and people living in other parts of Turkey on the distinctiveness of this city. This distinctiveness which has both objective and constructed aspects can be associated with three main factors. Firstly, its physical features and location by the sea and Gulf and also the existence of harbour are crucial factors shaping the urban identity of Izmir which is often characterised as the “Pearl of the Aegean” and “Beautiful Izmir” in Turkey. The encirclement of the urban settlement by Izmir Gulf enhances the coherence of the city with the sea. Thus, the sea and the coast are always a vital part of the lives of people in Izmir. The second important factor regarding its urban identity is related to the perceptions of the inhabitants on Izmir as the actors of the city. The inhabitants of Izmir frequently view themselves “different” from the inhabitants of other parts of Turkey. They are generally pleased to be from Izmir and think that this is a privilege for them.<sup>89</sup> The issue of life style should be also mentioned as another crucial factor shaping the distinctiveness of Izmir as an input of urban culture and identity. The inhabitants’ social life is not limited to in-house activities, but rather the people often prefer to socialize outside spending time at coffeehouses, restaurants, and usually by the sea. The often mentioned tendency to free and modern life style in the city is also seen as an important aspect of the urban identity of Izmir. This tendency which can be associated with its multicultural heritage directly influences the perceptions on Izmir and its inhabitants. For instance, although the population of Izmir has lost its heterogeneous structure to a great extent due to the outflow of the majority of its non-Muslim population in the era of Turkish Republic, the pre-Republic description of the city as “Infidel Izmir” persisted in several circles in the other parts of the country.<sup>90</sup>

According to a study aimed at revealing the perceptions on Izmir and people from Izmir, the inhabitants of Izmir are pre-emptively identified as modern, relaxed, innovative, beautiful, democrat, extrovert, patriotic, good, sympathetic and friendly, entertaining,

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Olca Sürgevil and Sabri Sürgevil, “Farklı Nesiller ve İzmirli Algısı” [Different generations and perception of being from Izmir], in *İzmirli Olmak Sempozyum Bildirileri 22-24 Ekim 2009* [Proceedings of Symposium on Being from Izmir 22-24 October 2009] (Ankara: BMS Matbaacılık, 2010), 182-183.

<sup>89</sup> İlhan Tekeli, “İzmir’in Farklılığı Üzerine Düşünmenin Değişik Yolları” [Different ways of thinking about the distinctiveness of Izmir], in *İzmirli Olmak Sempozyum Bildirileri 22-24 Ekim 2009* [Proceedings of Symposium on Being from Izmir 22-24 October 2009] (Ankara: BMS Matbaacılık, 2010), 29-33.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 33.

hybrid, intellectual, knowledgeable and healthy.<sup>91</sup> One can easily track the traces of Izmir's multicultural past in most of these characterisations. The results of another study are also striking in this regard. The mentioned study aimed at searching the opinions of people on Izmir who have positive or negative ideas and memories on the city regardless of their place of settlement or birth. In this study Izmir was portrayed by the participants as a place worth living, the most beautiful city of Turkey owing to its natural and historical beauties, and the modern and enlightened facade of Turkey. The main characterisations pointed out by the participants for Izmir include coastal, harbour, commercial, Western (European), cosmopolitan, most modern, secular, and tolerant city as well as respectful for freedoms and differences. On the other hand negative assessments regarding Izmir were mainly related to the physical aspects of living conditions such as transportation problems, insufficiencies of municipality services, and intensive immigration.<sup>92</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Although cities constitute many common features, they also have distinctive characteristics due to their natural, economic and social circumstances as well as historical evolution process. In this regard, the current urban identity of Izmir has been deeply influenced by its historical heritage and multicultural past. As the door of Asia Minor opening to Mediterranean through the Aegean Sea, Izmir had long served as a point of interaction between the East and West and constituted a borderland between civilisations, between ethnicities, and between religions in its process of evolution from Smyrna to Izmir. The city was ruled or influenced by various civilisations in its history of 8,500 years. Thanks particularly to the worldwide economic developments and the increasing importance of its harbour in international trade, the city developed into an important and famous trade centre under the Ottoman rule particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this era, the multicultural fabric of the city was shaped by the formation of a cosmopolitan society composed of diverse communities such as the Muslim Turks, Jews, Armenians, Greeks and Levantines. Hence, the usually accepted distinctiveness of the city is substantially related to its historical and cultural heritage. This heritage has an impact not only on the everyday life and culture of the city but also on the perceptions of Izmir in general.

Undoubtedly, the standing of Izmir as an international port city plays a crucial role in shaping the social, cultural and spatial features of the city. Hence, the port has long been a vital aspect of the city's historical identity as a borderland city enabling the connection between the West and the East. As it was both a trade centre and living space with its climate, geographical location and natural beauty for the merchants in the Ottoman era, the foreign traders preferred to settle in Izmir. Although each ethnic and religious community established its own settlement and shaped its own neighbourhood in the city, there weren't strict borders between the neighbourhoods and they could live together. Especially in the last periods of the Ottoman Empire, the dual character of the city originating mainly from the multi-cultural nature of society dominated the economic, social and cultural life of the city. Principally by the influence of Levantines, Izmir gained

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<sup>91</sup> Nuri Bilgin and Pınar Uğurlar, "İzmir ve İzmirli'lere İlişkin Algı ve Temsiller" [Perceptions and representations of Izmir and people from Izmir], in *İzmirli Olmak Sempozyum Bildirileri 22-24 Ekim 2009* [Proceedings of Symposium on Being from Izmir 22-24 October 2009] (Ankara: BMS Matbaacılık, 2010), 168.

<sup>92</sup> Sürgevil and Sürgevil, 183-199.

a distinct identity from the other Anatolian cities and developed social and cultural connotations. In this regard, the numbers of the cinemas, theatres, night clubs and cafes in the city increased and these places became popular for the Levantines. The population structure of the city changed with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and particularly with population exchange, and thus the multicultural nature of the city was partially lost. Nevertheless, both international port and the previous multicultural composition continue to affect social and cultural structure of the city. So, Izmir which had a different identity from the other Anatolian cities in its Ottoman past preserves the same feature today. In this sense, Izmir is considered to be different from the other parts of Turkey by both the ones who live in Izmir and who live in other provinces. In fact, this difference has a total content of both the city identity and town-dweller identity.

Today Izmir which is often characterised as the “Pearl of the Aegean” and “Beautiful Izmir” in Turkey is the third largest city and the second leading port of the country. The characteristic of Izmir as an international port city persists and the harbour gives vitality to the city economically and commercially. Besides, the active life of the city as a cultural and social inheritance from the past is still in progress. With rich social and cultural facilities, Izmir offers various cultural opportunities to the people of different social status. Until the 1950s, Izmir was spread to a limited area but has begun to grow rapidly after that date, and has expanded over the years in terms of both surface area and population. Migration from other provinces has had a significant impact on this expansion. The city’s uncontrolled growth in some places has brought significant challenges in the field of urbanisation and housing and infrastructure needs. Founded as a local government unit in 1984, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality has been working to solve these problems and from 2012 also offers services in both rural and urban areas. Despite the criticisms regarding Izmir’s insufficient performance to achieve its potential as well as to solve urban problems, Izmir continues to be a centre of attraction in economic, social and cultural terms. Izmir currently consists of 30 districts. The districts, namely Balçova, Bayraklı, Bornova, Buca, Çiğli, Gaziemir, Güzelbahçe, Karabağlar, Karsiyaka, Konak and Narlıdere are located in the centre of Izmir. On the other hand the other districts such as Çeşme, Foca and Dikili stand out with their natural beauties and tourism potential whereas Selçuk, Bergama and Odemis come to the forefront with their historical and cultural heritage.

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