

European Views of Early 19th Century Izmir
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I

When European travellers arrived in Izmir during the first half of the 19th century, they did not, on the whole, feel like strangers in a strange place. Merchant companies had established a European, and later Frankish, nucleus of trading houses, factories, and consulates long ago - the English Levant Company had done so as early as 1610-1620 - and to visitors these establishments and the Levantine society clustering around them seemed to be home from home. Familiarity loosened the tongues of travellers: Frankish society, though a minority in the city, is given much more space in their accounts than Turkish society, understandably so: Frankish Izmir was where travellers had to turn to in search of lodging and nourishment; the Franks were akin in manners to the visitors; communication was easy in a variety of languages; the hosts were hospitable as well as voluble.

Turkish Izmir, on the other hand, was almost silent. Very few travellers spoke Turkish, their scanty contacts with Turks had to be established with the help of Levantine interpreters. If the Europeans were kept from a dialogue by the language barrier, it was assumed that the Turks did not want to enter into it because of their aloofness and their habitual mistrust of foreigners. Moreover, the relatively meagre comments on Turkish society derive from the fact that the Turkish mode of existence was almost inaccessible to European travellers. Turkish social life - defined as family life and not as male outdoors entertainment - took place behind impregnable walls. The female members of the household were inaccessible in any case; travellers had to rely on hearsay, and they were told that among Turkish families social intercourse in the shape of parties, meals, feasts played a minor role only.¹

We find therefore a structural bi-partition in the accounts of early 19th century Izmir. From an interior perspective they speak about what went on in the homes of European and Christian minorities; from an exterior perspective they speak about Turkish life which remained, to a large part, identical with what went on in the streets and the public places in and around the city.

My analysis follows this structure; it deals first with Frankish Izmir and then with Turkish Izmir. Finally, I shall discuss Izmir and its landscape as aesthetic objects, i.e. the mode of their pictorial representation.

II

In 1813, John Cam Hobhouse, Lord Byron's friend and companion on their eastern tour, writes: "the Frank quarter at Smyrna deserved and was flattered by the name of Petit Paris."² Hobhouse recognized that Izmir's claim to be called Paris was valid only for the Frankish community. The ordinary Turkish citizen had neither the wish nor the means to live as a kind of "Parisian of the Levant." Later European travellers were not so circumspect: their view was that Izmir as a whole existed in, but did not belong to, that complex of cultural otherness which the Orient was traditionally held to form. Alphonse de Lamartine describes the city as a Marseille on the coast of Asia Minor where consuls and European merchants live the life of Paris and London.³ In 1828 Charles MacFarlane takes up once again the prevailing equation of Izmir and Paris:

Smyrna boasts the title of "Le Petit Paris du Levant;" and when compared with any other city of the grand signior's dominions, she certainly may merit it.⁴

The Muslims themselves regarded the whole city as dominated by European rather than Islamic traits - no virtue in their eyes, and consequently, as Adolphus Slade and others report, they were wont to name the city "Infidel Smyrna", or "Ghlaour Ismir".⁵

What made contemporary visitors repeat the comparison to Paris? Obviously, it was an idle boast. No traveller can have overlooked the deficiencies of the Ottoman city. Paris was the capital of 19th century modernity; Izmir a backwater spot. Paris had royal and civic architecture, a historical centre as well as a modern street system; Izmir had none of these. Paris had a glittering cultural and intellectual life, operas, concerts, museums, painters and poets. The cultural aspirations of Izmir culminated in the Casino which, true, boasted regular balls, itinerant singers, billiard rooms, and a few newspapers of which the Observateur Ottoman was published locally. For a time there also existed an Italian theatre and a Dutch hospital. High culture, therefore, cannot have been the basis of comparison. The, to contemporaries, Parisian quality of Izmir must be sought elsewhere, in the opportunities the city offered for satisfying solidly upper middle class tastes, for the bulk of Franks are to be subsumed under this category: well-to-do merchants, their dependents, diplomats and officers of middling rank. What they all wanted, and what, according to the testimony of travellers, Izmir offered was "the good life". "The good life", while of dim intellectual lustre, was founded on lively social intercourse and material comforts. Social life meant regular rounds of balls,

card-games, gossiping and picnics. Sometimes social events gained additional glamour when officers and naval bands from visiting European ships took part. Material comforts consisted of spacious town and country houses, an excellent local cuisine, and of "the comforts and luxuries" of London and Paris which were to be had in abundance, as Arundell reports in 1834.⁶ Such imported luxuries were undoubtedly cherished beyond their intrinsic value because the very fact that they were available gave the Franks a psychological link with Europe. The same subjective need seems to have been at work when Levantines so tenaciously upheld the claim of "Le Petit Paris". By pretending to live metropolitan and "Parisian" lives they were fortifying, as it were, a civilized island in a hetero-cultural sea. Some visitors, too, felt assured by the veneer of European civilisation that Asia was no overwhelming presence; some of them were even blinkered enough to deny the Oriental quality of Izmir altogether.⁷ A traveller's perspicuity may well be gauged by his capacity of recognizing the ambivalence of the city, not quite Oriental and not properly European either. In 1836 Anton Prokesch von Osten propounds this dual view:

Sie scheint mir ganz geeignet, dem europäischen Reisenden den Unterschied seiner Welt von derjenigen, die er zu betreten kommt, recht deutlich vor Augen zu stellen, wie sie, in Europa und Asien getheilt, beide hart an einander stellt (...) Vom Pariser Frack bis zum persischen Überwurf - vom europäischen Staubhut bis zum stolzen Turban des Emirs (...) - welch' ein Übergang!⁸

In the individual travel account the perspective of its writer largely determines the image of a city; this is, in the 19th century, an almost inescapable consequence of foregrounded auctorial subjectivity. What a traveller wished to see and what he avoided, how he felt about his experience, such factors determine the quality of an account more often than its analytical strength. In short, most travellers may be categorized as tourists rather than the "philosophical travellers" of the 18th century. Consequently tourists, with time on their hands, were drawn to the amenities of the "Paris of the Levant", and saw Izmir quintessentially as a city of leisure - incidentally analogous to contemporary views of Istanbul which were sometimes utterly blind to its economic life. Alternately, travellers like John Galt, a self-professed "economic traveller", kept their eyes on exports to, and imports from the countries of Europe and therefore viewed Izmir as, above all, a great commercial centre.⁹ When travellers contented themselves with observing the busy scenes in the streets and bazaars, their accounts are likely to be impressionist, with only an occasional attempt at economic analysis. Their layman's understanding was gained firsthand but also at first glance.

Alfred Wood has described the quality and scope of the trade with England in A History of the Levant Company.¹⁰ What other European nations wanted to import into Turkey, and what the hinterland of Asia Minor offered to European markets through the port of Izmir makes a list of goods that fluctuated in the course of the 19th century. In 1830 John Fuller gives one of the most detailed accounts:

From England it imports cotton goods in large quantities, cotton twist for the home manufactures, lead, iron, tin, and colonial produce of all kinds. Woollen cloths it receives chiefly from France and Germany, those of English manufacture being too expensive for the Turkish market; and glass-ware, coarse cutlery and paper, come from Trieste and the Italian ports.

The staple articles of export are dried fruits, of which from twenty to thirty cargoes annually are shipped to London and other British ports, and several to Trieste. The figs come from Nazli and Eidin-Guzel-hissar, on the Meander. They are brought to market in a green state. <...>

The raisins come chiefly from Vourlá and Carabournoú in the gulf of Smyrna. Considerable quantities of wool and cotton are also exported; the latter chiefly to France, as the English spinners prefer that of American growth. The raw silk of Brusa, the Turkey carpets (which are made at a place in the interior called Ushák), and the mohair yarn of Angora, all find their way to Smyrna. Opium is brought from Afium Kara-hissar, about five days journey to the eastward; and the Americans take great quantities of it to China.¹¹

Although the major European trading nations, the French, Italians, and the Dutch had factories and consuls at Smyrna, the English Levant Company was apparently the chief mercantile establishment there. This company had imported English woollen cloth into Turkey during the 19th century; but around 1800 English, and French, cloth was ousted by cheap cloth from Germany, and the English were forced to offer new kinds of import goods. In 1812 Galt lists: "refined sugar, shalloons <already languishing, R.S.>, coffee, indigo, lead-shot, tin and tinplates, with dying woods."¹² English cotton goods, eventually, developed into the most important commodity. Galt estimates that their value, from the sales in Izmir alone, amounted to around 180,000 £ sterling in 1809;¹³ whereas official sources show the enormous increase of these goods by 1830 when their export value to Turkey rose to £ 871-965.¹⁴ The bulk came in through the port of Izmir. "For every ship which went to Constantinople ten went to Smyrna," states Wood¹⁵ and also remarks on a concomitant increase in the personnel of the English factory at Izmir. The establishment comprised at least 25 merchants by 1821, and not only a consul but an additional vice-consul, a chaplain and a medical doctor.

Izmir, in fact, was closely linked to the growing wealth of 19th century England because its cotton market was one of the main outlets for the rapidly developing English cotton industry, particularly that of Lancashire which was to flood the world markets with cheap and bright cotton goods. The link is reflected in the very bazaar of the city. In 1835 William Hamilton visits the bazaar and finds that "one gallery, called the English bazaar, is occupied by cotton goods, and printed calicoes chiefly from Manchester."¹⁶

The prosperity of Izmir also showed in the growth of its population. Robert Semple estimates the population at 150,000 in 1807;¹⁷ Hobhouse at the same figure in 1813;¹⁸ and Henry Christmas at 180,000 in 1851.¹⁹ The increase, despite occasional setbacks by earthquakes and plagues, was considered to be due to trade, and the singlemindedness with which the city - Lamartine's "vaste et élégant comptoir" - pursued trade; travellers are silent about causes for the growth of the Turkish population which must have been considerable. In any case, the soul and mind of Frankish Izmir was mercantile, and Richard Madden makes fun of the fact:

all the faculties of their souls are bound up in the contemplation of figs and raisins <...> You ask about the gardens of Bournabut, and you hear that figs abound there; you inquire about the curiosities of the place; and they lead you to the fig mart; you solicit information on politics, and you are told that figs are low <...> go where you will, the eternal topic is figs, figs, figs!²⁰

The ubiquitous fig is indeed risible, but it indicates a more serious state of Frankish society, too. The Frankish community had to channel its energies into trade because politics were no outlet. By their uncertain political status the Franks were excluded from government and even town offices; in dangerous times they were thrown on the mercy of the Ottoman administration. Charles Fellows recognizes this state quite clearly:

The Frankish people here, having no interest in the country they inhabit, and no voice even in the local government of the town, devote their thoughts wholly to business; their goods are all the stake they have, and even this interest is limited by the climate and government.²¹

True, in times of war with one or the other European nation, and especially during the Greek War of Independence, Frankish Izmir was often in mortal danger. Travellers like John Carne and Arundell offer eye-witness accounts of random killings, robberies and the plundering of property.²² Here we must distinguish between the violent actions of the Izmir mob and, on the other hand, Ottoman

government policy and the administrative measures taken as regards infidels. Hassan Pasha, the governor of Izmir (MacFarlane praises him as "moderate, tolerant, just and adverse to bloodshed"²³), remained friendly and protective towards Greeks and Franks in the fury of the Greek Revolution. He even went so far as to call out his troops to defend them against enraged crowds.²⁴ Prokesch von Osten commends the protective care of the Pasha of Smyrna after the battle of Navarino in 1827.²⁵ After the Greek Revolution things grew peaceful again very quickly. Trade does not flourish in strife; and it was in the best interest of both Turkish government and Frankish community that commerce should continue without disruption.

A survey of the 19th century as a whole shows that the existence of foreigners and rayahs in Izmir was remarkably calm, and the good life no unattainable dream. Naturally, the good life begins and ends with being safe, with safety of foreign individuals and resident ethnic minorities. There are sufficient testimonies to that state. In 1830 Fuller asserts:

that no community in the world enjoys a greater degree of freedom than that of the Franks residing at Smyrna, - no individual being ever molested except he be guilty of some violent outrage against the habits or feelings of the Turks.²⁶

Slade notices in 1837 that in the century-old centre of commerce Christians are more respected than elsewhere, and that the Greek merchant community has peacefully settled down again to acquiring wealth.²⁷ Two years later, in 1839, Fellows remarks that the Turks themselves no longer shun Christian society as they did before, and that daily trading helps to bring about a new, familiar intercourse between the two societies.²⁸

The individual European traveller also had less and less to fear as the century progressed. In 1715 Richard Chandler, no hero himself, warns that "Caution is required in going out to the Frank quarter, and it is proper to be proceeded by a janizary as a safeguard";²⁹ and in 1807, Semple was warned of the danger of a visit to the Acropolis,³⁰ whereas in 1822 Arundell found it "unsafe even to walk in the streets".³⁰ But Fellows in 1839 took his "daily walk" to "the Castle Hill" without molestation;³² and earlier, Semple had admitted that Izmir was a cosmopolitan place where familiarity with the exotic - in this case the strangely-clad European - bred a kind of indifference in the Turkish population so that "a man in the European dress is scarcely stared at in any quarter of the town."³³ Several travellers combine in their praise of Izmir as a city virtually without crime,³⁴ a situation which makes Hamilton exclaim in 1842:

with the change which of late has taken place in the Turkish character, a residence in Smyrna or its neighbourhood would be as free from alarms as any part of Italy or Spain: indeed, I might say, much more so.³⁵

Thus the foundations of the good life existed; we should look at its fabric more closely.

One advantage was that the Franks occupied the commercially most convenient and the most pleasantly situated part of the town. Mercantile travellers remark, naturally, on the advantageous combination of warehouses and lodgings in the Frankish quarter which stretched along the harbour front and whose main thoroughfare was the Via del Franci (or as English travellers call it, "Frank Street"), whereas romantic travellers are more concerned with the amenity and beauty of the spot. Hobhouse represents the practically-minded observer:

The houses of the Consuls and the principal merchants are built altogether in a very commodious fashion, enclosing on three sides a court or small garden, but are only one story in height, and composed of unburnt brick in frames of plastered laths. The warehouses, stables, and offices, are below, the family apartments above.³⁶

Slade, on the other hand, takes a picturesque view of the marina:

gay is yon row of houses, inhabited by Franks, stretching along the beach to the northwards, sparkling with their bright casements, and grotesque with the crown-capped ensign staves, denoting the abodes of consuls.³⁷

The quarter afforded seclusion where during their evening promenades the Franks were "permitted to breathe with ease and security"³⁸ and where the smart shops were concentrated. In times of the plague the seclusion of these widely-spaced establishments also provided a kind of protection, although the majority of consuls and merchants took to their country villas when danger arose. During the summer months the Franks sojourned to their villas, some of which are still elegantly extant in Bornova.

The various European nations had various favourites among the villages in the vicinity of Izmir. The French preferred Bournabat, the English Bujár, and the Dutch Sedi-köy.³⁹ Their villas there were not only places of refuge from the plague but also of recreation which often took the form of hunting wild animals. Of these there must have been still a good supply at the beginning of the century, if Thomas Macgill speaks truthfully in 1808:

Sediqui is another charming village, about an hour and a half's ride from town, and is by far the most rural of the whole. It is situated south from Smyrna, on the east side of a high mountain, covered with lofty trees; the walks about this mountain are beautiful and romantic, and justly entitle the village to the name it bears, which in the Turkish language, signifies the "Village of Love". The Dutch consul and many of his countrymen have houses here. The lion and the tiger are sometimes found on the neighbouring mountains which abound with game, indeed this is the case with all the mountains around the gulph of Smyrna. The hyena, bear, and wild boar, are very common.⁴⁰

Such game must have given the young men of the merchant houses a healthy outdoor outlet for their energies; the elderly and the ladies also lived at ease because, as Fuller says:

Many of these villas are well provided with European comforts, and have gardens and pleasure-grounds laid out in the style of the different nations to which their proprietors belong.⁴¹

The Casino, however, formed the centre of Frankish society; travellers flocked there; Hobhouse and Fellows have the most entertaining accounts. On it rested the claim to "Parisian" life; and it was, indeed quite remarkable. The merchant of society of Izmir, which, all in all, amounted to 300 to 400 persons, ran the club by subscription, 5 guineas annually. Naval visits were welcome excuses for a ball: the officers brought with them the military bands of their ships; the Frank ladies would adopt French fashions,⁴² whereas the Levantine ladies appeared in their native dresses. Fellows remembers:

The Casino Ball was extremely gay: many of the women, and particularly the middle-aged and old, wore the Greek costume, which is very elegant <...> The band from the Sapphire frigate, and the officers in their uniform, added to the gaiety of the room. I came away at about one, but find that most of my friends remained until five, and some until seven o'clock.⁴³

He omits to mention what earlier travellers have to tell namely that the gentlemen filled the late and early hours with heavy drinking.⁴⁴ Hobhouse mentions the more sober pleasures of the Casino:

Here there is a reading-room furnished with all the papers and gazettes of Europe, except the English, and there are two other apartments with billiard tables: refreshments of every kind can be procured in the house,

for those who choose to form parties for supper. - The rooms open at eight o'clock every evening; and during the Carnival, the subscribers give a ball once a week, to which all the respectable Greeks and the ladies of their families are invited.⁴⁵

If the Casino recalled European culture to the Europeans, it gave the Levantine communities a sense of partaking in what seemed the latest fashion. As mentioned before, the vast majority of Turkish citizens were, of necessity, immune to these "Parisian" charms, but the highest Turkish officials were not. Fellows describes the visit of the governor of Izmir to the English consul and his request "to be allowed to go to the ball." The governor was dressed in the European style, obligatory after Mahmud II's reforms, i.e. "blue cloth clothes and red cap," and the Chief Judge was in his attendance.⁴⁶ MacFarlane was told of another governor, "the famous Katib-Oglu," that he, at the Casino, played cards, drank wine, attended all the balls and was a "passionate admirer of the ladies," with, it was whispered, some success; in short: "his manners were unexceptionable, and <...> gentlemanly."⁴⁷

The Greeks and Armenians did not move in separate circles from those of the Europeans proper. There existed a free and easy interchange between ethnic groups, and over the years the ties with English, French, Dutch, German and Italian families were strengthened by the marriage of the daughters of rich Levantine merchant families to the sons of European merchant houses.⁴⁸ The process of acculturation worked both ways: the Levantine strove to acquire European manners and tastes; the Europeans abandoned stiffness and etiquette and unbent towards an Orientalized indolence. To the English churchman MacFarlane this seemed a lapse from grace; grace, he thought, were the stern virtues of his nation.⁴⁹

Travellers felt the opposition of strict European manners and a superficially Europeanized but fundamentally Oriental way of life most acutely when they observed the ladies of Frankish Izmir.

Charles MacFarlane, one-time chaplain of the English embassy at Istanbul, had a critical eye. Levantine ladies, he thought, lacked the social accomplishments obligatory to a genteel Englishwoman: they could not play the piano, nor even sing; if they could read novels - the opportunity was offered by a lending library - they neglected to do so. In what I hope is an unerotic sense, he puts them down as "really too unintellectual and uninformed to be anything but the pretty playthings of an hour."⁵⁰ Yet for all these shortcomings, as Madden observed, they made excellent wives and "proved that a woman may be a virtuous wife, and an agreeable companion, without being able to read novels."⁵¹ Another, to travellers, disagreeable



*Charles Gleyre:
Angelica 1834*



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Angelica 1834

difference from English etiquette were the generally very free manners of Levantine women; young ladies even took part in male society but, as one traveller grudgingly acknowledges: "no general immoral effects result from the indulgence."⁵² What constitutes immorality is, to a large extent, the result of social conditioning, and it is, therefore, curious to see that one of the charges of indecency levelled at the women was based on the way they usually sat. In 1834 Charles Gleyre painted a Smyrniote beauty, "Angelica,"⁵³ and his picture literally illustrates the point MacFarlane tries to make, without sharing his moral abhorrence:

The "received position", even in company, is to sit with one leg on the sofa bent under them, and the other hanging over the edge <...> You will see in this strange, pernicious (not to say indecent) attitude, half a dozen ladies, sitting side by side, on a long sofa.⁵⁴

If Gleyre's beautiful "Angelica" is a representative female, then the praise of the beauty of Smyrniote ladies, which travellers sing, is not extravagant. European travellers employ two different strategies of description to Levantine beauty. The first is a comparison to the aesthetic ideal of Ancient Greece; the second is a levelling of ethnic differences in favour of a more uniform Oriental ideal. Chandler remarks of the ladies of Izmir that "their apparel and carriage are alike antique" and finds "their trowsers are mentioned in a fragment of Sappho."⁵⁵ Many years later MacFarlane detects in their turbans "a fac-simile in style to that found on ancient statues - the works of <...> the elegant Ionians."⁵⁶ The classical reference, as elsewhere in the description of Orientals, serves to bring out the unchanging, and, indeed, almost timeless quality of Oriental life; as such it is a two-sided compliment because it denies the possibility of Oriental progress while, at the same time, the approximation to the beaux idéal of the Greeks is meant highly laudatory.

The ideal of female Oriental beauty struck travellers as essentially picturesque, even in the narrow sense of the term which William Gilpin, one of the early theorists of the Picturesque, adduces, "that kind of beauty which would look well in a picture."⁵⁷ Smyrniote ladies meet the demands of a living painting. Their beauty is to be observed when they sit at open windows, windows, as Kinglake remarks, "decidedly appropriated to the gentle sex."⁵⁸ MacFarlane carries the aesthetic postulate of a pictorial frame into the Izmir scene where ladies "are seen to the greatest advantage in their 'frames' - the windows."⁵⁹ He also agrees with a further postulate of aesthetic theory which is that picturesque beauty should be observed from a distance. He keeps polite distance and adds, not very gallantly, that if these beauties were inspected at close range, their enchantment would vanish because defects would

no longer be concealed. Art would then be seen as helping nature; art, in this case, being the cosmetic arts of trimming and dyeing the eyebrows, and of creating "the lilies and roses" of the complexion by powder and paint. In short, "like pictures <...> they should never descend from their frames."⁶⁰ Napier adds the observation that the ladies of Izmir cling more to "Oriental customs and costume" than those of the rapidly progressing capital. He finds in Smyrna the Ideal of languishing Oriental beauty which Lord Byron embodied in the "Dudu" of his Don Juan, and Napier, too, puts his females in a picturesque frame:

Towards evening, the portly beauties of Armenia may be seen at the windows, and are easily discernible by their "Dudu" forms, sleepy dark eyes, and fine complexions; the voluptuous languor of their general appearance offering a marked contrast to the lively glances and sparkling black eyes of the Greek damsels.⁶¹

The Greek ladies, because of their gaudy and ill-assorted dress are, so he thinks, "a much less modest appearance than their veiled and nun-like Osmanli sisters." By necessity, European travellers were not capable of describing Turkish women in great detail; the "feridjee" and "yashmac" completely shrouded them, and, as Napier regretfully concludes, left "nothing for the most lively imagination to move upon."

My account of Turkish Izmir is, with equal regret, sparse about Turkish women for want of source material.

III

Turkish social life, to repeat a distinction made before, was on view to European travellers not in the homes, not even at the windows, but in the streets, khans, bazaars, cemeteries and picnic grounds of the city.

Until well into the second half of the 19th century observers of Turkish street life favour a typifying description. They speak of "the grave Turk" or "the stately Persian" rather than of, say, "three Turkish merchants." In doing so they adhere to a mode of ordering knowledge which the 18th century had chiefly employed, namely the classification and tabulation of materials. When the material consists of the picturesque and colourful crowd in Izmir, the classification proceeds according to distinctive social and ethnic markings, in our case, according to the variety of costumes, their prescribed colours, and the various physiognomies of Izmir's rich ethnic population. Moreover, the observers characteristically do not embed their

description into their own spatial experience of the city, in other words: there is no sequential ordering of what they describe, as one would find in a narrative of the type: "and then we went to X, and from there to Y." Instead the description mirrors the subjective view; the observer chooses a perspective at once intimate and distanced. The technique may be compared to the "view from a window" perspective increasingly popular in 19th century urban painting. Travel accounts favour perspective for urban scenes; for rural scenes they more often employ the tableau. Fellows surveys "the East" from his hotel window,⁶² and Hamilton chooses the bazaar as such a vantage point:

the most striking object there is the great variety of curious and gay costumes, various even among the different classes of Turks; but still more so from the heterogenous nations that swarm and congregate in this busy quarter. The grave and stately Turkish merchant and shopkeeper, in his ample robes, and squatting on his shop-board, contrasts with the strong, active, and almost gigantic hamal or porter, bending beneath a burthen which it seems scarcely possible for the human back to sustain <...> Their dress is as simple as that of the other is ostentatious, with bare legs and white drawers, and a wisp of cotton-cloth rolled round their dirty fez or red skull-cap. Again, the Xebeque from the mountains, and the banks of the Maeander, white bare legs and white drawers fitting tight to his thighs, but made preposterously loose behind, with his high and gaudy turban bedecked with tassels and fringes, is a very different being from the Euruque or Turcoman, clad in sombre brown, tramping along in heavy-shod iron boots, and driving on his camels and asses laden with charcoal for sale <...> we see <...> the proud chavasse with his splendid arms, his dagger, pistols, and silvermounted yataghan, and the bandy-legged, half-starved tactico (regular infantry soldier), with his ugly, useless fez and blue tassel, looking half angry and half ashamed of his ill-made and unmahometan dress! Hard by is a long train of Turkish women, silently shuffling along in their yellow slippers.⁶³

Napier reports strolling through the streets, but he also selects the bazaar as the one point from which best to survey the diverse nationalities.⁶⁴ His account fastens on a contrast which strikes almost every observer between the lively and gesticulating Levantines, and the dignified and tranquil Turks. MacFarlane watches Turkish male recreation at the coffeehouses, where the men are seen "smoking their long pipes on platforms outside of the coffeehouses <...> (principally on spots overlooking the sea) sitting in mute and almost motionless groups for hours at a time."⁶⁵ His italics reveal the strangeness of such behaviour to the restless European; the polarisation of activity v. inertness is, in fact, for him, as for most travellers, indicative of the of the fundamental opposition of the European and the Oriental character.

Next to the bazaars, the "Caravan Bridge" was "a spot of general attraction." Arundell remarks on "the number of persons seated on chairs, and taking refreshments under the shade of the cafinèt-trees."⁶⁶ Apparently the inhabitants of Izmir were fond of strolling there in the evening; Caravan Bridge was but a short walk north to the city. "The scenery of this Smyranean paradise" was made up of a small stream - anciently the river Meles - coffee-gardens, picnic-grounds, a cemetery with tall cypresses, "and an old bridge of a single arch," so runs Semple's description in 1808.⁶⁷ Partaking of coffee and tobacco was one amusement, story-tellers were another. Semple chooses Caravan Bridge as the proper observation point from which to watch the tableau of Turkish social life. He himself employs a related metaphor to describe the scene: "Caravan Bridge is the theatre of Smyrna;" it has an Aristotelian unity of scene; its "stage is founded on principles and feelings common to all nations."⁶⁸ Very obviously, in Semple the Enlightenment Impetus is still alive which aims at describing the totality of a scene and at uncovering the general humanity below the exotic varieties of nations; here Turks and Europeans are palpably sharing a basic character. Later travellers, tourists rather than "philosophical" travellers, are no longer concerned with the analytical discussion of a picturesque scene. To them, the picnics at Caravan Bridge afford a visual stimulus and no more; Mrs. Baillie, in 1873, may be cited as a good specimen of a tourist looking at the outside of things: "most picturesque are the oriental groups to be found at this spot," is all she has to say.⁶⁹

In Izmir itself the Turkish cemetery at the top of a hill became interesting to travellers for a double reason. First, Turkish burial grounds, with their forests of funereal cypresses and marble-turbaned tombs, belong to the favourite spots for Europeans anywhere in Turkey. They never failed to visit the great cemeteries of Istanbul and to thrill at these icons of Oriental solitude; solitude being a commodity much sought after by the "sentimental" traveller. Emerson follows this tradition in Izmir: "It is in these spots that one feels truly in the East, where all around reigns the stillness of death."⁷⁰ The melancholy groups of mourners afforded, secondly, proof that family sentiment and sorrow for the dead were the common traits of Turks and Europeans alike, and that in both the women distinguished themselves by "the superior gentleness of heart and fervent affection."⁷¹ The walking shrouds in the streets of Izmir hid, after all, loving and caring human beings. The humanity of Turkish family life, finally, enters into the accounts of slavery in Izmir. The Slave Market ought to have been a repulsive sight to an Englishman who, if of liberal mind, was likely to denounce the slave-trade as a mark of barbarism. The expected revulsion did not, however, come to Napier praising:

the mild treatment of the Osmanli towards the poor creatures whom - on becoming possessed of - he considers more as his own children, and parts of his family, than as purchased slaves.⁷²

It seems that European travellers experienced Izmir as a complex of houses and streets in a rather idiosyncratic manner: my account of their accounts followed them to picnic-grounds, bazaars, khans and markets, but not, as yet, into the streets themselves. One reason for this is that Izmir, as Oriental city, did not represent the sum of its streets to them. They understood the Oriental street system only dimly and, for the most part, disliked it intensely because they could, literally, not see their way through the streets. Not being able to "read" the city, they pronounced it to be "unreadable"; their favourite image for Izmir's street system was that of a labyrinth. Burgess complains:

The interior of Smyrna is a labyrinth of narrow ill-built streets, with a muddy channel as the only embellishment of each, and a Babel of confusion of tongues assails the ear on every side.⁷³

Hobhouse finds the streets almost impassable for a European:

The narrow streets <...> are on some days so crowded as to be almost impassable, and the press is increased by the camels, which, in strings of two or three hundred, preceded by an ass, pace slowly along.⁷⁴

The negative image of the streets of Izmir stems from the actual discomfiture of travellers. If they were middle-class gentlemen, they were likely to hate crowds in cities anywhere, whether in London, Istanbul or Smyrna. The oppressive presence of city crowds is a topos running through 19th century fiction as well as factual literature. Being in an Oriental city like Izmir made matters worse, because it appeared to be so utterly foreign and exotic. For one thing, travellers searched in vain for architectural landmarks, such as the cathedrals, squares and bridges of European cities afforded; the mosques of Izmir, apparently, did not operate for them as signs of orientation, as the great mosques of Istanbul did for visitors to that city.

Then, the streets had no names, and the houses no numbers; moreover, without an interpreter a traveller was quickly lost in the "Babel of confusion". The accumulative effect of these auditory and visual distractions created a psychological condition in which 19th century Europeans felt claustrophobic, hemmed in, soiled by contact with the crowds, incapable of communication, and wishing only to escape into an open space. Burgess is relieved to have escaped from the labyrinth to the marina, "where,

alone, it is permitted to breathe in ease and security;"⁷⁵ and Mrs. Baillie was so troubled by "porters, donkeys, mules & c., continually coming up against you" that she was "glad when we emerged again into the open space."⁷⁶ Mrs. Baillie reveals a characteristically Victorian bourgeois striving for keeping oneself to oneself, for a psychological space of privacy and separateness that was being constantly thwarted by the Oriental crowds. Turkish Izmir had no open spaces, at least not when compared with European cities. Istanbul, to be sure, possessed the At Meydanı, the ancient Hippodrome, where foreign visitors could stroll; but Izmir was sadly lacking in squares and boulevards, in parks and entertainment gardens. It had no pleasure gardens such as Vauxhall and Ranelagh in London, where Englishmen of all classes flocked for their evening entertainment; no Piazza Navona like Rome, where the coaches of aristocratic families would parade in ostentatious self-representation; no boulevards, like Paris, where bourgeois strollers would enjoy the latest fashions of a modern metropolis. Instead, Turkish Izmir presented itself more modestly; its places of entertainment, like the picnic-grounds near the Caravan Bridge, offered the image of a picturesque Turkish society whose material constitution and class division remained obscure to the eye of a European traveller. Yet Caravan Bridge served the same social functions as its famous counterparts; a fact which Arundell recognizes when he designates the spot as an Oriental substitute for a Parisian boulevard:

Caravan Bridge <...> may be called the Boulevards Italiens of Smyrna <...> and if the refreshments are not Parisian, and if there be but little of female society, yet the scene is a showy one.⁷⁷

The urban pleasures of Turkish Izmir, were, to Europeans paradoxically, to be found not inside the city but outside of it; consequently travellers devote their descriptive energies not so much to the interior as to the exterior of Smyrna; which is to say that descriptions of the town's natural surroundings occupy a large space in their accounts. My account may, therefore, claim a certain argumentative logic when it ends on a topic which in the natural experience of travellers came first: the outside perspective, the first view of Izmir and its landscape.

One text, above all other accounts, embodies the romantic view of Izmir prevalent with travellers of the early 19th century.⁷⁸ It is Arundell's description of his first view in 1822 when Smyrna, approached from the sea, presented to him "a picture of indescribable beauty:"

The acclivities of Mount Pagus and the plain beneath, covered with innumerable houses, the tiled roofs and painted balconies, the domes and minarets of mosques glowing and glittering with the setting sun; the dark



Smyrna



Smyrna

walls of the old fortress crowning the top of the mountain, and the still darker cypress-groves below, shipping of every form and country covering the bay beneath; flags of every nation waving on the ships of war, and over the consulate houses; picturesque sacolevas, and innumerable caïcks skimming along the surface of the waves; mountains on both sides of stupendous height and extraordinary outline, the effect of volcanoes or earthquakes, tinted with so strong a purple, that neither these nor the golden streaks on the water could safely be attempted to be represented even by a Claude: at the margin of the water on the right, meadows of the richest pasture, the velvet turf contrasted with the silvery olive, and covered with cattle and tents without number.⁷⁹

This textual representation is matched to a high degree by a visual representation which Thomas Allom provides in an engraving;⁸⁰ the affinity of both images derives from common principles of romantic landscape apprehension.

Both representations do not wish to be topographical and subordinate correctness of detail to the overall impression. Both present the city at a distance, or to put it differently: they present the city embedded in a wide landscape. Landscape and city enter into an organic relationship; the city forms the natural centre, the landscape provides a space of mood and atmosphere for the city.

Allom's engraving belongs to a type of visual urban representation that prevails until well into the middle of the 19th century. It is a type essentially coordinating a romantic inventory; that is: natural and man-made elements are linked in such a manner that they create an over-all and unified mood. Allom's veduta of Izmir establishes a theatrical tableau; he dramatizes chiefly by heightening the natural props and lessening the urban ones. In detail: on the left side, the city stretches from the foreground into the background, and, although the domes of some mosques contrast with the small roofs of innumerable houses, the picture gives a relatively small space to the city, and even less prominence to the gulf and the boats on it. The backdrop is formed by the mighty silhouette of the castle matching the outlines of the mountains across the bay. The centre of the picture, particularly its right side, is curtailed off from the background by groups of tall, dark, funereal cypresses; in fact, the foreground is filled with emblems of melancholy and mourning: the trees, the turbaned gravestone, the ghostlike train of Turkish mourners carrying a coffin. A group of picnicking Turks on the right invites the beholder to share their observations of a sad scene.

Allom's choice of representing Izmir, a bustling city, by a cemetery is to be linked to Emerson's appreciation of the sentimental value of Turkish burial grounds: "It is in

these spots that one feels truly in the East."⁸¹ Allom's burial scene serves as a painterly strategy for the Orientalization of his veduta of Izmir. "Desolation", "solitude", "the stillness of death" recur regularly in European accounts of the Turkish country-side; in turn, the textual or pictorial presence of vehicles carrying such sentiments almost automatically warrants the Eastern, or Oriental, quality of a landscape.

In contrast to Allom, Arundell describes Izmir in anything but melancholy tones, rather he evokes a mood of wealth, splendour and exhilaration. He too creates his effect by a painterly mode of description. The eye of the observer sweeps from the mountains in the background to the city in the plain below, then up to the castle and the cypresses beneath, next to the bay covered with boats of every nation, up to the mighty mountains on both sides which frame the city and finally down to a foreground covered with grazing cattle and Turkoman tents. His description of Izmir firmly follows the picturesque formulas so overwhelmingly popular in his day. Richard Payne Knight defines visual beauty, and in particular the picturesque in nature, in his Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste (1805) as consisting:

in harmonious, but yet brilliant and contrasted combinations of light, shade, and colour; blended, but not confused; and broken <...> into masses: <...> such as display to the eye intricacy of parts and variety of tint and surface.

Arundell indeed introduces varieties of tint and surface into his text: the purple mountain sides, the "golden streaks on the water," "the velvet turf contrasted with the silvery olive." His description also combines massy shapes - the "mountains <...> of stupendous height" - with intricate detail - "the tiled roofs and painted balconies." His Izmir is alive and bustling as the boats skimming over the water show. He runs, however, the risk of exaggerating the painterly qualities of his veduta because he mixes the picturesque mode with the tradition of the heroic landscape which, to his contemporaries, was soonest evoked by a reference to Claude Lorrain's paintings of a harmonious nature enveloping an idealized humanity and its works; all bathed in a golden light. Arundell demonstrably thinks of a Claudian landscape; he not only invokes his name; he also selects for his description Izmir's glow and glitter in "the setting sun" and the gold and silver hues of bay and olive groves. Arundell's view of Izmir embedded in its landscape, is, as I have said, characteristic for the manner in which European travellers of the 19th century saw that Turkish city. At a distance, from an exterior perspective, they were glad to admire its aesthetic qualities, the picturesque silhouettes, the sublime natural forms of bay and mountains, and the Oriental beauty of it all.

NOTES

My paper is a revised version of two lectures given at Ege Üniversitesi, Izmir, in October 1986.

N.B. Primary Sources are given by short titles only; these refer to the bibliography below.

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- ² Hobhouse, J.C., Journey Albania Constantinople, II, 618.
- ³ Lamartine, A., Voyage Orient, VII, 329.
- ⁴ MacFarlane, Ch., Constantinople 1828, I, 80.
- ⁵ Slade, A., Turkey Greece, II, 84. Cp. Warburton, B., Crescent & Cross, II, 385; Kinglake, A., Eothen, 46.
- ⁶ Arundell, F., Discoveries Asia Minor, II, 418.
- ⁷ Schweitzer, G., Urlaub Orient, 70: "in der ganzen europäischen langweiligen Frankenstadt <...> ist von der Farbenpracht des Orients nichts wahrzunehmen."
- ⁸ Prokesch v. Osten, A., Denkwürdigkeiten Orient, I, 101.
- ⁹ Galt, J., Voyages 1809 Turkey. Cp. Hobhouse, J.C., Journey Albania Constantinople, II, 616; Fuller, J., Tour Turkish Empire, 42-44; Slade, A., Turkey Greece, II, 84.
- ¹⁰ Wood, A., A History of the Levant Company, London, 1964.
- ¹¹ Fuller, J., Tour Turkish Empire, 43.
- ¹² Galt, J., Voyages 1809 Turkey, 372.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 374.
- ¹⁴ Wood, A., Levant Company, 194.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 195.
- ¹⁶ Hamilton, W., Researches Asia Minor, I, 57.
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- ¹⁸ Hobhouse, J.C., Journey Albania Constantinople, II, 616.
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- ²⁰ Madden, R., Travels Turkey 1824, I, 146-7.
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- ²² Carne, J., Letters East, I, 68-9; Arundell, F., Discoveries Asia Minor, II, 416-7.

- ²³ MacFarlane, Ch., Constantinople 1828, I, 28.
- ²⁴ Fuller, J., Tour Turkish Empire, 46.
- ²⁵ Prokesch v. Osten, A., Denkwürdigkeiten Orient, III, 546-7; 553.
- ²⁶ Fuller, J., Tour Turkish Empire, 46.
- ²⁷ Slade, A., Turkey Greece, II, 84-5.
- ²⁸ Fellows, Ch., Journal Asia Minor, 8.
- ²⁹ Chandler, R., Travels Asia Minor, 67.
- ³⁰ Semple, R., Observations Spain Constantinople, II, 199. Cp. *ibid.*, II, 209-10 on the danger of being shot at accidentally by a Turk.
- ³¹ Arundell, F., Discoveries Asia Minor, II, 416; Cp. Carne, J., Letters East, I, 68-9.
- ³² Fellows, Ch., Journal Asia Minor, 5.
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- ³⁴ Christmas, H., Shores Mediterranean, III, 97; MacFarlane, Ch., Constantinople 1828, I, 90-1.
- ³⁵ Hamilton, W., Researches Asia Minor, I, 59.
- ³⁶ Hobhouse, J.C., Journal Albania Constantinople, II, 618. Cp. Fuller, J., Tour Turkish Empire, 42.
- ³⁷ Slade, A., Turkey Greece, II, 83.
- ³⁸ Burgess, R., Greece Levant, II, 75.
- ³⁹ Fuller, J., Tour Turkish Empire, 49. Cp. Carne, J., Letters East, I, 67.
- ⁴⁰ Macgill, Th., Travels Turkey, I, 82.
- ⁴¹ Fuller, J., Tour Turkish Empire, 49.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 48.
- ⁴³ Fellows, Ch., Journal Asia Minor, 5.
- ⁴⁴ Wood, A., Levant Company, 241.
- ⁴⁵ Hobhouse, J.C., Journal Albania Constantinople, II, 619.
- ⁴⁶ Fellows, Journal Asia Minor, 6.
- ⁴⁷ MacFarlane, Ch., Constantinople 1828, I, 93.
- ⁴⁸ Chandler, R., Travels Asia Minor, 66; Hobhouse, J.C., Journal Albania Constantinople, II, 618; Madden, R., Travels Turkey, I, 147; Wood, A., Levant Company, 225.

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- 50 *Ibid.*, I, 82-3.
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- 52 MacFarlane, Ch., Constantinople 1828, I, 83.
- 53 Charles Gleyre, "Turkish Woman ('Angelica'), Smyrna," (Oct., 1834). Lausanne. Reproduced in: Mary Anne Stevens, The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse. Royal Academy of Arts: London, 1984, p. 153, ill. 49.
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- 69 Baillie, E., Sail to Smyrna, 214.
- 70 Emerson, J., Letters Aegean, I, 80.
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- 73 Burgess, R., Greece Levant, II, 75.
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- 78 Slade, A., Turkey Greece, II, 83; Fellows, Ch., Journal Asia Minor, 1.
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