

**“BROUGHT UNDER THE LAW OF THE LAND”**

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# **“BROUGHT UNDER THE LAW OF THE LAND”**

The History, Demography and Geography of Crossculturalism  
in Early Modern Izmir, and the Köprülü Project of 1678

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**Merlijn Olon**

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To Claudia,  
in loving gratitude



## Table of Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Lists of Illustrations and Documents.....                        | 9   |
| Maps .....   | 9   |
| Tables .....   | 9   |
| Figures.....   | 10  |
| Plates .....   | 10  |
| Documents .....  | 10  |
| Acknowledgements.....  | 11  |
| Introduction .....   | 15  |
| The Ottoman City.....  | 19  |
| History.....   | 19  |
| Greek and Roman Izmir .....                                      | 20  |
| Byzantine and Seljukid Izmir.....                                | 21  |
| Latin and Aydınoğlu Izmir.....                                   | 22  |
| Aydınoğlu and Early Ottoman Izmir .....                          | 23  |
| The City as a Frontier.....                                      | 24  |
| Izmir as an Ottoman Port.....                                    | 34  |
| Demography.....  | 38  |
| The Status of the Non-Muslim Communities .....                   | 38  |
| Family Multipliers.....  | 47  |
| Size and Composition of the Taxpaying Population in 1657/58..... | 54  |
| Size and Composition of the Taxpaying Population in 1678.....    | 63  |
| Jewish Protection and Lump Sum Taxation.....                     | 67  |
| Demographic Trends from 1657/58 to 1678.....                     | 76  |
| The Tax-Exempt: From Elite to Underclass .....                   | 78  |
| Geography.....   | 82  |
| Towards a Plan of the 17 <sup>th</sup> -Century City.....        | 83  |
| The City and its Quarters According to the Survey of 1528.....   | 89  |
| The City and its Quarters According to the Survey of 1575.....   | 95  |
| The City and its Quarters According to Evliya and Galland .....  | 103 |
| The City and its Quarters According to the 1678-Deed.....        | 110 |
| Pluralism within and among 1678-Izmir's Quarters.....            | 121 |
| Crosscultural Traffic in 1678-Izmir.....                         | 122 |
| The Köprülüs, Their Endowment and Its Impact.....                | 126 |
| The European City.....   | 141 |
| History.....   | 141 |
| From “the Community of Non-Muslims” to “Frank Street” .....      | 142 |
| The Changing Character of the Frontier.....                      | 145 |
| The Capitulations .....  | 168 |
| Demography.....  | 179 |
| Measures of Liberty .....  | 183 |



|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Kara Mustafa Paşa and the Reassertion of Ottoman Control .....    | 187 |
| The Explanatory Value of the World-systems Approach.....          | 222 |
| Developments in the Status of an Alien Quarter.....               | 229 |
| Size and Composition of the non-Ottoman Communities .....         | 248 |
| Organization and Taxation .....                                   | 259 |
| Geography.....  | 281 |
| A Topography of Frank Street.....                                 | 282 |
| Distribution .....  | 284 |
| Boundaries.....   | 288 |
| Conclusion.....   | 291 |
| Appendix 1: Plates.....   | 301 |
| Appendix 2: The Crosscultural Mess, from the Dutch Archives ..... | 311 |
| Appendix 3: The Dutch Nation Divided (1668-1677) .....            | 339 |
| Bibliography .....  | 341 |
| Archival sources .....  | 341 |
| Printed works .....   | 343 |
| Websites .....  | 356 |
| Summary in Dutch .....  | 358 |
| Curriculum Vitae .....  | 359 |

## Lists of Illustrations and Documents

### **Maps**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Map 1: General Topography of Izmir and Environs, Pre-16th Century .....   | 31  |
| Map 2: Triangular Outline of Izmir in 1678 .....                          | 66  |
| Map 3: Northward Shift of Izmir's Economic Center from 1570s to 1670s     | 84  |
| Map 4: Plan of Izmir in 1844.....   | 86  |
| Map 5: Impression of Izmir's Situation in 1678; Enhanced Graves' Map..... | 87  |
| Map 6: Tourist Map (c. 1990) Projected onto Our Enhanced Map (1844) ...   | 91  |
| Map 7: Tourist Map (1992) Projected onto Our Enhanced Map (1844) .....    | 91  |
| Map 8: Quarters of Izmir Proper in 1528 .....                             | 93  |
| Map 9: Ethnic Distribution of Izmir's Population in 1905 .....            | 98  |
| Map 10: Quarters of Izmir in 1575.....                                    | 102 |
| Map 11: Quarters of Izmir in 1678, as Listed in the Endowment Deed.....   | 117 |
| Map 12: Ethno-Religious Distribution of Habitation in 1678-Izmir.....     | 122 |
| Map 13: Systemic Traffic Between the Quarters of 1678-Izmir.....          | 123 |
| Map 14: Panorama with Clarified Landmarks (De Bruyn, 1678) .....          | 282 |
| Map 15: Map of Structures and Locations Identified by De Bruyn (1678) ..  | 283 |

### **Tables**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Table 1: Travelers' Estimates of Izmir's Population (1631-1739) .....          | 54  |
| Table 2: Average Number of Households per Avarız-Hane (1640-1700) .....        | 61  |
| Table 3: Composition of the Taxpaying Population of Izmir (1657/58).....       | 63  |
| Table 4: Composition of the Taxpaying Population of Izmir (1678) .....         | 67  |
| Table 5: Idem, Adjusted for <i>Maktu'</i> (1678).....                          | 76  |
| Table 6: Development of the Taxpaying Population of Izmir (1657-1678) ..       | 77  |
| Table 7: Distribution of the Population of Izmir Proper (1528).....            | 90  |
| Table 8: Distribution of the Population of Izmir Proper (1575).....            | 96  |
| Table 9: Population of Upper, Middle and Lower Izmir (1528-1575) .....         | 102 |
| Table 10: Avg. Number of Taxpaying Families per Quarter (1528-1678) ...        | 105 |
| Table 11: Density of the Taxpaying Population (1528-1678) .....                | 106 |
| Table 12: Real Estate Endowed in Izmir's Kasap Hazır-Quarter (1678).....       | 114 |
| Table 13: Fountains Endowed in Izmir (1678) .....                              | 115 |
| Table 14: Harem rule from 1617 to 1648.....                                    | 128 |
| Table 15: The Köprülü Hold on Customs and Poll-Tax Collection (1668) ..        | 237 |
| Table 16: Estimated European Population of Izmir (Galland, 1678).....          | 254 |
| Table 17: Idem (Chardin, 1672; De Hochepped, 1678) .....                       | 254 |
| Table 18: Official Incomes of Izmir's Principal Officials (Evliya, 1671) ..... | 258 |
| Table 19: Dutch <i>raggions</i> (trading houses) in Izmir, 1668.....           | 339 |
| Table 20: The Rift in the Dutch Nation of Izmir (1671).....                    | 339 |
| Table 21: The Rift in the Dutch Nation of Izmir (1675).....                    | 339 |
| Table 22: The Rift in the Dutch Nation of Izmir (1677 and Onwards).....        | 340 |

## Figures

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Figure 1: Venetian Consular Organization (17 <sup>th</sup> Century)..... | 266 |
| Figure 2: French Consular Organization (17 <sup>th</sup> Century) .....  | 267 |
| Figure 3: English Consular Organization (17 <sup>th</sup> Century) ..... | 271 |
| Figure 4: Dutch Consular Organization (17 <sup>th</sup> Century) .....   | 279 |

## Plates

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Plate 1: Smyrna (Cornelis de Bruyn, 1678).....                      | 301 |
| Plate 2: Smyrne (Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, 1700) .....           | 302 |
| Plate 3: City of Ismir (Thomas Graves, Before 1844) .....           | 303 |
| Plate 4: Smyrna Harbour (Richard Copeland, 1834) .....              | 304 |
| Plate 5: Golfo di Smirli (Antonio Borg, 1760s).....                 | 305 |
| Plate 6: Izmir (RV Verlag, c1990).....                              | 306 |
| Plate 7: Izmir City Plan (TR Ministry of Tourism, 1992) .....       | 307 |
| Plate 8: Smyrne (Karl Baedeker, 1914) .....                         | 308 |
| Plate 9: Köprülü Endowment Deed (8 April 1678).....                 | 309 |
| Plate 10: Summary Poll-Tax Register of Izmir (15 January 1688)..... | 310 |

## Documents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Document 1: Van Goor's misconduct in the <i>kadı</i> 's court.....           | 311 |
| Document 2: Privileges obtained from Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa.....       | 311 |
| Document 3: Christoffel Capoen taken hostage by fellow nationals.....        | 313 |
| Document 4: Nicolas Legouche accuses his consul of theft.....                | 314 |
| Document 5: An English dragoman discovers French coiner.....                 | 315 |
| Document 6: Pieter Smout accounts a Dutch protégé's debt.....                | 316 |
| Document 7: Jacob van Dam's memorandum on (his) life in Izmir .....          | 316 |
| Document 8: The Dutch nation's Jewish creditors demand payment .....         | 321 |
| Document 9: Jacob van Dam's defense against his Jewish creditors.....        | 322 |
| Document 10: Duties and expenses from the De Ruyter-convoy of 1675 .....     | 326 |
| Document 11: Disputed 'general' expenses by Jacob van Dam.....               | 330 |
| Document 12: Justinus Colyer on the execution of the <i>haraç</i> order..... | 331 |
| Document 13: Inventory of Jan van Breen's house and furnishings.....         | 332 |
| Document 14: List of orders regarding the Dutch nation, 1690-1709.....       | 336 |

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*As I have already suggested, everything we say in these subjects is challengeable, not just in the sense in which knowledge in the sciences is challengeable by bringing in new information or revealing flaws in the logic of the original reasoning, but challengeable by bringing to bear another idiom, another context, another emphasis, another perspective, another sensibility. And these are always matters of judgement, albeit of disciplined and experienced judgement rather than merely subjective or arbitrary judgement. The greater persuasiveness of the new account cannot be demonstrated conclusively: it can only attempt to plug itself into our understanding at a greater number of points, to build more plausibility and more illumination into a rearrangement of what is already in some sense partly known.*

Stefan Collini (2012)\*

*And some people, passing among the scattered pieces of that great overturned jigsaw puzzle, start to pick up a piece here, a piece there, with a vague yet irresistible notion that perhaps something might be done about putting the thing back together again. ... Two difficulties with this latter scheme at once present themselves. First of all, we have only ever glimpsed, as if through half-closed lids, the picture on the lid of the jigsaw puzzle box. Second, no matter how diligent we have been about picking up pieces along the way, we will never have anywhere near enough of them to finish the job. The most we can hope to accomplish with our handful of salvaged bits—the bittersweet harvest of observation and experience—is to build a little world of our own. A scale model of that mysterious original, unbroken, half—remembered. Of course the worlds we build out of our store of fragments can be only approximations, partial and inaccurate. As representations of the vanished whole that haunts us, they must be accounted failures. And yet in that very failure, in their gaps and inaccuracies, they may yet be faithful maps, accurate scale models, of this beautiful and broken world. ... That is the paradoxical power of the scale model; a child holding a globe has a more direct, more intuitive grasp of the earth's scope and variety, of its local vastness and its cosmic tininess, than a man who spends a year in circumnavigation.*

Michael Chabon (2013)†

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\* “The Character of the Humanities”, *What are Universities for?* (London & New York: Penguin, 2012), 79.

† “The Film Worlds of Wes Anderson”, *The New York Review of Books* 60/4 (2013): 23.

To constitute a full urban community a settlement must display a relative predominance of trade-commercial relations with the settlement as a whole displaying the following features: 1. a fortification; 2. a market; 3. a court of its own and at least partially autonomous law; 4. a related form of association; and 5. at least partial autonomy and autocephaly, thus also an administration by authorities in the election of whom the burghers participated.

Max Weber (1921)<sup>1</sup>

The absence of the government house from the list of the indispensable characteristics of a town would suggest at first blush that the Muslim town is perhaps not to be understood as a body politic at all. In any event, it is not (what the polis was) an autonomous association of citizens. A given town may at a given moment enjoy independence or self-government, in the sense that it is not subjected to an outside power of whose territory it forms but one part. Sovereignty and freedom may fall to it accidentally, as it were; self-government with executive officials designated by the full citizens there never could be, for the city constituted not a closed corporation, a share in which defines the citizen, but merely a functionally unified, administrative entity with a more or less stable complement of settlers or inhabitants. To such cities Plato's characterization of certain states as 'merely aggregations of men dwelling in cities who are the subjects and servants of a part of their own state' could fittingly be applied. There were no qualifications to be met to obtain admission to citizenship in the Muslim town for the simple reason that there was no body of town dwellers in whom political or civic authority was seen to reside.

Gustave Edmund von Grunebaum (1955)<sup>2</sup>

As to [the pre-eminence of the 'central' area over the periphery], concentrated in the city's 'central' area (often coterminous with the physical center, but not necessarily so) are the most prominent governmental and religious edifices and usually the main market. The chief public buildings either crowd around an open square, or plaza, onto which converge a number of streets ... or stand along, or at the end of, a broad, straight thoroughfare ... The plazas or main streets serve as meeting places and ceremonial sites for the populace ... Subdivisions along ethnic and/or occupational lines are manifested in the preindustrial city in the numerous wards or quarters, well-defined neighborhoods with relatively homogeneous populations that develop special forms of social organization.

Gideon Sjöberg (1960)<sup>3</sup>

Seventeenth-century Izmir strikingly resembles Braudel's vision of the early-modern European city. He writes of "autonomous worlds" of "unparalleled freedom" that had "outwitted the territorial state" and pursued "an economic policy of their own." He proclaims that they ruled "their fields autocratically, regarding them as positive colonial worlds before there were such things," and asserts that they were "capable of breaking down obstacles and creating or recreating protective privileges." The new city of Izmir conformed to this path first trodden by the European city; other nonwestern ports were to follow.

Daniel Goffman (1990)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Max Weber, *The City* (New York: Free Press, 1966), 80-81.

<sup>2</sup> G. E. von Grunebaum, "The Structure of the Muslim Town", in *id.*, *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1961), 141-42.

<sup>3</sup> Gideon Sjöberg, *The Preindustrial City: Past and Present* (New York: Free Press, 1960), 96, 100.