



Lutz C. Kleveman
Smyrna in Flames
How a Fire Changed Europe
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The fall of the Ottoman Metropolis in 1922 and its consequences for Europe

100 years ago, Smyrna, the ‘Pearl of the Aegean’, went up in flames. Thousands upon thousands of refugees waited in vain for rescue in the port of what is today Izmir. The devastating fire was followed by a population exchange that served as a blueprint for the ethnic cleansing of the 20th century: almost two million Greeks and Turks were forced to leave their homeland. Today, refugees fear for their lives in the region once again, languishing in camps such as Moria.

Lutz Kleveman travels to Izmir, to the offshore islands of Chios and Lesbos – and through time. During his research, he uncovers the secret of the harmony that once ruled between Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Jews and Levantines in Smyrna. He resurrects the cosmopolitan metropolis in order to depict the events that led to the disaster of 1922 even more clearly. A disaster that would change Europe forever.

Lutz Kleveman, born in 1974, studied history at the London School of Economics (LSE) and has written for Die Zeit, Spiegel Online and the Daily Telegraph. His publications include *Wanderjahre. A reporter’s journey in a mad world* (London 2012) and *Lemberg. The forgotten middle of Europe* (2017).

“In a lively and very personal style, Lutz C. Kleveman explores the history of this fascinating city. An immense joy to read!”

Philipp Blom



THE FLAMES OF SMYRNA

How a Fire Changed Europe

Sample translation by Ayça Türkoğlu

Chapter II

I dashed to the harbour early that morning, so as to have enough time for customs and passport control. The ferry set sail at nine o'clock on the dot.

The passage from Chios to Çeşme along the Turkish coast took barely an hour, despite some astonishingly large waves. Most of the passengers were Greeks, probably day-trippers looking forward to a day's shopping in Izmir. They obtained a special day visa at the port in Çeşme, while I was granted three months' stay. Shared taxis linked the ferry terminal to the coach station, and through the window of the car I saw a pretty harbour town with a castle and several mosques. Turkish and foreign tourists strolled along the quay, where a number of expensive yachts were moored. Minarets fitted with creaking loudspeakers broadcast the morning call to prayer, but this seemed of little interest to passers-by.

An express bus took us inland, along the motorway past hills dotted with pine trees and brand-new holiday complexes. The bus was air-conditioned, the conductor handed out drinks and words of friendly welcome rang out over the tannoy in Turkish and English: "Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, welcome, dear children!" It moved me that children were granted a special welcome – I had never heard that anywhere else in the world. I was curious about everything that awaited me. Within half an hour, the bay of Izmir lay before us; we would make the rest of the journey along the water's edge. The opposite end of the shoreline gradually drew closer to ours; together they formed a semicircle surrounded by mountains, like an enormous amphitheatre. Visible even from a distance, at the eastern end of the bay, lay its great stage: Izmir, old Smyrna.

Two hours later, I had a box seat view from the balcony of my room at the Hotel Izmir Palas, looking out with fascination at the bay which extended as far as the western horizon. Its shoreline was perfectly round, like the crescent moon on the Turkish flag. The city's location was unique. Mountains towered on all sides, so unshakeably majestic that they made the vast container ships anchored in the bay look like little faltboats. It must have been one of the most magnificent views in the Aegean – no wonder the Turks had chosen to adopt the Greek

word *panorama*. The water lay flat and deep blue, sparkling in the midday sun. Only a few ferries ran routes connecting the northern and southern districts of the city of Izmir. The city's central ferry terminal, known as Pasaport, lay to the left of the hotel.

The Izmir Palas was located right on Kordon, the great seaside promenade formerly known as the quai or corniche. Built in 1927 in the modernist style, with seven glass-fronted stories, the hotel was long considered the most stylish in the city. Some of the international hotels have given it a run for its money since then. The Izmir Palas was indisputably a little outdated, but it had retained an easy elegance which very much suited me. This included hotel letter-writing paper, a bathtub, a minibar reliant upon the guest's honesty, and a balcony with a sea view. It was a worthy counterpart to Theodore's Hotel Kyma on Chios. It was also affordable, due to the economic crisis and inflation, which saw the Turkish lira plunging ever lower.

After a quick shower, I left the hotel to find some lunch and get an overview of the city. I walked along Kordon, a large pedestrianised area, which stretched for more than a kilometre from the Pasaport ferry terminal to the Punto in the north, where the commercial container port began. Fish restaurants and cafes lined the quay side, which was now closed to traffic. The buildings on Kordon were almost all the same height, five or six storeys, large glass façades permitting the best view of the bay. Fishermen stood on the jetty and behind them cyclists and loved-up couples made their way along the promenade, arm in arm or holding hands, something I'd seen only rarely on Chios. Some of the women wore headscarves, others wore baseball caps. Young couples stopped for a moment to share tender kisses, but none of the passers-by seemed to bat an eyelid.

I bought myself a glass of ayran at a kiosk and exchanged a few words with the seller. He was a young Iranian who had migrated to Turkey a couple of years before. He had abandoned his studies in Tehran, he said; as an atheist, he could no longer tolerate the mullah regime. He'd received a Turkish work permit, it had been no trouble at all, he said, and now he was earning enough to get by. There were thousands of Iranians like him just in Izmir alone, he said. Did he want to travel on to Europe? I asked, expecting him to say yes. "No, why would I?" he replied, visibly surprised. "I like it here; I like the freedoms I have in Turkey, particularly in Izmir."

Political freedom was relative; it depended on your background. How curious, I thought, that the first person I met in Izmir had migrated here. I walked along Kordon to Republic Square,

right on the waterfront, where a statue stood of Atatürk on horseback. He was the founder of modern Turkey, and, so the inscription said, liberator of the city of Izmir. Dressed in military uniform and his officer's cap, his right arm extends as he tells his troops what's what. Atatürk seemed to be everywhere; since I arrived I had already seen countless portraits of him, in the hotel lobby, on street corners, in every bar along the promenade. The steel-blue eyes of the nation's founder even stared out at me from the kiosk belonging to the friendly Iranian man.

The Pasaport ferry terminal was situated at Republic Square and was seething with people. I hadn't seen so many young people and children on the streets of Europe for some time. That was my first impression of Izmir: how populous the city was, and how young its population. Nor was there any hint of the bustle of the oriental bazaar, at least not here in the modern commercial centre, but the streets were full, and lively too. At the same time, the Turks seemed to be more reserved than the Greeks, even teenagers spoke more quietly, their laughter more measured. I stood out less here than in Greece, where most of the people were short with dark hair. In Izmir, there were all sorts of people, including tall blonds like myself, people of every skin colour, even red hair. It gave me an inkling of the many distant regions of the former Ottoman Empire in which the people who now lived in Turkey had their roots.

Be it Hungary or Yemen, Algeria or the Caucuses, what the forefathers of today's Turks contributed more than anything else was their cooking. On the menus at the quayside restaurants, I rediscovered this cosmopolitan cuisine: Cretan-style prawns, Albanian liver, Circassian chicken, Bosnian stuffed vine leaves, Middle Eastern bulgur parcels stuffed with mince, Central Asian pilaf and, for dessert, Bulgarian dough balls with yoghurt. Just reading it made my mouth water. I picked a restaurant and ordered plates of meze, a little köfte and a portion of mantı, Turkish dumplings. I didn't eat badly on Chios, but the Greek cuisine I found outside of Athens, and Thessaloniki in particular, was often a little monotonous. One menu was the same as the next. Gyros and souvlaki are all well and good, but people need variety, and the Greeks were even more bland in their seasoning than the Germans. But the Turks knew how to use hot peppers – my lunch was a veritable festival of flavour.

As I was enjoying my lunch at a table outside, I witnessed a strange scene. An old man approached the entrance to the restaurant. He was dressed in rags and seemed drunk, swaying and slurring a little as he spoke to the waiter. The restaurant was a quality establishment, in business since the 1950s; the waiters in their uniforms were well-educated and somewhat snooty. At first, they observed the old man with suspicion. I was expecting them to throw him

out like a tramp – but then one of the waiters poured a glass of water and handed it to him. Now it became clear that the man wasn't drunk, just exhausted. Once he'd drunk the water and handed the glass back gratefully, something even more astounding occurred: the young waiter knelt down and tied the man's laces, which had come loose. The tenderness of the gesture moved me.

The woman at the next table and I smiled at each other; she'd been observing the scene too. She could tell I was a foreigner and explained what had happened. Rich or poor, she said, the waiter knew to treat older people, even strangers, with respect. "But you don't see this sort of thing in Turkey much anymore," she added. The young woman introduced herself as Sesil. Her accent seemed familiar to me. It emerged that she was a German Turk, from Bavaria, so we switched to German. In the purest Frankish dialect, with gently rolling Rs, Sesil told me her story. She'd been born and grown up in Nuremberg. Naturally, she considered herself a fully integrated German and had never even applied for a Turkish passport. Nevertheless, after finishing school she had moved to her parents' home country; they had moved to Germany from Izmir in the 1980s.

Sesil didn't much like most other German Turks. Even the younger ones, she said, who had grown up in Germany, still bore signs of the Anatolian villages their families had come from. "All this bloody ruffraff," she complained, "the men with their long beards and the women with all their jewellery – they want to live in Germany, but then they vote for Erdoğan in Turkey." Many of the former guest workers and even their grandchildren were stuck in the past, Sesil said; most Turks in Izmir, and other cities, were much more progressive.

Sesil had found a job in Izmir easily, working at a call centre for a big German mail-order company, making €600 a month. She got by on this very well in Izmir, as both rent and food were much more affordable than in Germany. However, on no account was she allowed to reveal to customers that she was calling from Turkey – it would be grounds for dismissal. She had to be constantly up-to-date on the weather in Germany, so as to be able to discuss it with clients.

Her employer had even required that she use a German name. During the day she was obliged to introduce herself into her microphone in honeyed tones with the words, "Hello, you're speaking to Annette Forst, how can I help?" This was fairly dishonest, Sesil felt, but she shook her head, more amused than indignant. It allowed her to live in a wonderful city like Izmir and once she'd clocked off for the day, she didn't have to deal with any more Frankish

racists. What she liked most about Izmir, she said, was the respect and tolerance its inhabitants had for one another, regardless of whether they were Muslim or atheist. “Life’s just more relaxed in Izmir than it was back home. It’s a free city.”

After lunch, I walked on to Konak Square, where the modern city hall stood. Two huge portraits hung from its façade, one of Atatürk, one of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. It was the first image of the president I had seen in Izmir. He did not seem to be particularly popular here. In the square stood a few palms, a small 18th century mosque, and a bright clocktower, the city’s touristic landmark. Exactly 25 metres tall, the tower was built in 1901 for the 25th anniversary of the coronation of Sultan Abdülhamid II. His ally, Kaiser Wilhelm II, who had visited Smyrna three years before, donated the clock – a little gift to ensure the ruler’s friendship. Countless white doves perched along the edge of the foundation surrounding the tower, until children ran by and scared them away.

From Konak, I climbed up to Pagos, the mountain close to the city. The journey took me through noticeably poorer parts of the city. The higher I climbed, the simpler the dwellings were, the more cramped the spaces in which people were living. There were lots of little mosques and simple shops selling groceries, where women in headscarves were doing their shopping, while men sat at the entrances to their homes and smoked. Instead of the universal *Merhaba*, which I had heard in the modern centre, people here mostly greeted one another with *Selamün aleyküm*. A few of the houses seemed to be inhabited by Arabs, probably refugees; the walls were daubed with graffiti. A refuse collector came up to me, wearing yellow wellington boots and a black hat, pulling his cart behind him. The steeper the slope, the more precarious people’s living conditions became. In one district, there was an abandoned building, clearly ready for demolition. Next to it lay piles of stones, where the digger had already been. A chimney jutted out, a staircase that led to nowhere. Children were playing in the rubble and ran away when they saw me looking.

Passing the ruins of an ancient theatre built into the slope, I finally reached the tip of Pagos. There stood the medieval walls of *Kadifekale*, the ‘purple castle’ and former acropolis of Hellenic Smyrna. I went through a gate into the castle complex, an enormous Turkish flag waving overhead, visible across the city. Behind the entrance, there were a few souvenir shops, but there was little else to see within the castle courtyard except for old walls. A sign indicated the Roman cisterns, but they were guarded by a pack of wild dogs, barking furiously, who sent me fleeing in the other direction. There was no doubt about it: the castle

was not particularly suited to being a site of touristic interest. But the Izmir of today, its three million inhabitants making it the third biggest city in Turkey, was not known for being a holiday destination. There was supposed to be a pretty bazaar district, but tourists didn't tend to dawdle in the city on their way from the airport to the Aegean islands, or the ancient city of Ephesus, and knew little of its history.

I'd read up a little on the city beforehand. According to legend, the old city of Smyrna had been founded by Amazons, or so the Roman historian Pliny claimed, but Smyrna actually emerged as an Ionian society in the 10th century BC. The Ionians were one of the four tribes of ancient Greece and created the first Hellenic civilisation in Asia Minor, which bore such prominent figures as Hippocrates, Heraclitus, and Homer, who is reputed to have grown up in Smyrna, though Chios and a number of other places are known to have claimed him too. Following its destruction by the Persians, Smyrna was rebuilt on Pagos around the year 340 BC by none other than Alexander the Great.

The city had to hold its ground against powerful neighbouring rivals, especially the island of Chios. A Chiotic battle fleet sailed to the bay of Smyrna in the year 244 BC, on the same day that the Smyrniotes were merrily celebrating a panegyris at the Dionysian temple outside the city. On spotting the enemy ships, the men interrupted their Dionysian feast and hastened back to the city, successfully defending themselves against the Chiotes. In their ecstasy, the Smyrniotes even captured a few Chiotic warships and, when the battle was over, carried one of them back as an offering to the wine god's temple, where the festivities continued with greater gaiety. For centuries, the city's inhabitants continued this important pagan ritual, along with the carrying of the ship to the temple, even once Smyrna had long since become a Christian city.

For the Romans, in possession of Smyrna for almost five centuries, Smyrna was little more than a trinket in Asia Minor. With a population on around 100,000, Smyrna became the successor to Ephesus, the latter's harbour having silted up entirely. The Roman geographer Strabon called Smyrna 'the most beautiful city in the world' and praised its imposing buildings and clean paved streets. Even at the end of the second century AD, the Roman orator Aelius Aristides was still describing the city as 'the joy of Asia and the jewel of our empire' in a report to Marcus Aurelius. He praised the great, sunlit boulevards and the well attached to every home. Smyrna was 'the most beautiful city to behold on this earth', serving as 'a model of beauty itself'. Similarly, it was in Smyrna that one of the seven early Christian

churches emerged, founded by the Apostle Paul on his travels through Asia Minor in 53-56 AD, and mentioned in the Gospel of John.

Smyrna declined in importance in the late Roman/Byzantine medieval period, and, like the island of Chios, was relinquished to Genoa by the emperor in Constantinople. Various conquerors followed the Genoese, including the knights of the Order of St John. The Mongolian commander Timur destroyed the city in 1403, ordering that any survivors be massacred and their skulls displayed in a pyramid. And so, Smyrna was a city of few inhabitants when the Ottomans came to conquer it a few years later. Smyrna would not begin to blossom again until the 17th century, when it gave Chios a run for its money as the most important trading port in the region. Chios had the trade in mastic to thank for its riches, while Smyrna's wealth came from cotton and figs, and later tobacco, opium and raisins, the famous sultanas. Ottoman trading privileges drew foreign businessmen to the city, first the Genoese and Venetians, then the Dutch, French and English. Some of them liked life in the Pearl of the Aegean so much that they settled there permanently.

The city's open, tolerant culture was a draw for many people. Smyrna was one of the eastern Mediterranean metropolises – like Constantinople, Alexandria and Salonica - modern-day Thessaloniki – in which Christians, Muslims and Jews lived together. They formed a 'Levantine synthesis', a coexistence of different cultures and religions as seen in medieval Andalusia. From the late 15th century, following the expulsion of the Jews and Marranos from Spain and Portugal, Smyrna also became the centre of the Sephardic Jewish community. There was an atmosphere of religious tolerance, a hybrid spirit, the city's skyline as shaped by the spires of Byzantine churches as by minarets and the roofs of magnificent synagogues.

From the middle of the 18th century, Smyrna was the second largest city and the largest port in the Ottoman Empire. Several different ethnic groups – Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Jews, Europeans and settled Westerners, so-called Levantines – lived here together and created one of the world's unique urban cultures. In the streets, a range of languages could be heard, primarily Greek, Turkish, Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), Armenian, English, Dutch, Italian, French and Provençal. The English archaeologist Richard Chandler, whose Aegean travelogues I encountered in the library on Chios, travelled on from the island to Smyrna in 1764, writing that,

“Smyrna continues [sic] a large and flourishing city. The bay, besides numerous small-craft, is daily frequented by ships of burden from the chief ports in Europe; and

the factors, who are a respectable body, at once live in affluence and acquire fortunes. (...) The conflux at Smyrna of people of various nations, differing in dress, in manners, in language, and in religion, is very considerable. The Turks occupy by far the greater part of the town. The other tribes live in separate quarters.”

Located at the interface between Occident and Orient, Smyrna was also a window onto the West, like St Petersburg and Odessa in the Russian Empire. Smyrna was thought of less as an oriental city than a westernised one, impressing visitors with modern technology and a rich cultural and intellectual life. On his travels in 1806, the French writer François-René de Chateaubriand praised the city as ‘a second Paris’ and ‘an oasis of civilisation’. Thirty years later, his countryman, the writer M. L. Aimé-Martin was similarly struck:

“Smyrna is queen among the cities of Anatolia (...) Destroyed ten times, it has risen ten times more, and its position amidst an endless number of trading ports brings heavy traffic from traders and travellers. Its population comprises almost 150,000 souls, which the plague decimates each year. The city is split in two: the upper city populated by Muslims, the lower city by Europeans. (...) The lower city is a kind of federal republic; its leaders are various consuls. All the languages of Europe are spoken there, but French is dominant.”¹

During Europe’s *Belle Époque* in the late 19th century, Smyrna was a rich, modern, enlightened metropolis, full of joie de vivre, acting almost as an autonomous city state under the rule of the distant sultan. At the outbreak of the First World War, the city had 250,000 inhabitants, making it far more significant than the comparatively provincial city of Athens. A great port city, Smyrna was connected by water to the most important ports in Europe; passenger ships from London, Marseilles, Genoa and Trieste docked at its port. A string of pearls ran along its famous promenade, buildings built of white marble: trading houses, shipping companies, banks, hotels, theatres and cafes.

With its unique mix of different cultures, Smyrna was one of the first global cities, like Dubai or Singapore today. There were good schools, publishing houses and hospitals. Dynamic Smyrna was the first city in the Ottoman Empire with a newspaper (1828), a car (1905), and a cinema (1909). In 1914, Smyrna had one of the first golf courses in the Middle East, as well as 17 cinemas and 465 coffee houses, where you could read newspapers imported from Europe. There were also numerous local papers on offer, eleven in Greek, seven in Turkish, five in Armenian, four in French, and five in Hebrew.

The residents of Smyrna made their city a free town, where matters of morality were not always paid much heed. Lucrative trading and wine – and a certain degree of sexual freedom – were often more important to Smyrniotes than religion. This was also the case for Turkish men and women, who allowed themselves to disregard Islamic codes of dress in the city. Even then, Turkish women could be found strolling along Kordon without headscarves and in tight coats, and, unlike in Constantinople, women and men did not sit separately on the tram. Its looser morals earned Smyrna calls of *giaur* from stricter Muslims, the city of unbelievers, but much of the population did not care. They knew how to enjoy life.

But were they dancing on a volcano? The good times in Smyrna ended in the early 20th century with the outbreak of the great wars – first the Balkan wars of 1912-13, then the First World War, followed by the Greco-Turkish war. At first, the city was hardly touched by any immediate fighting, but nationalistic conflicts between its inhabitants began to tear the cosmopolitan metropolis apart from the inside. Its eventual downfall came when Mustafa Kemal's troops took the city back from Greek invaders in September 1922 and set the Christian quarter alight. The fire was the Turkish army's beacon of victory. It spread quickly across a large portion of the city, down to the harbour. Only the Turkish and Jewish quarters, and the European Punto quarters, were spared. The rest of Smyrna fell in blood and flame.

“Great, opulent Smyrna, cosmopolitan Smyrna” wrote the French writer Claude Farrère after the great catastrophe of flames swept the city he had often visited and loved. “The city of all countries, all religions, all languages; the city that the Turks most scornfully named ‘Infidel’, because it was ultimately and rightly unfaithful to all gods. Yet how pleasant life there was, how smiling and soft!”ⁱⁱ

What is left of old Smyrna today? I climbed up the walls of the castle, which offered a broad view of the whole city. It sprawled in all directions like a grey-woven carpet, along the shores of the bay, inland into a river valley and even up into the surrounding mountains. What were still green expanses in historic photos of Smyrna had now been completely built on and concreted. Buildings stood everywhere: pale tower blocks, modern high rises and glass office towers. A motorway and countless roads connected and divided the different districts. Izmir was an enormous, modern major city, where millions of people now lived and worked. What had once been old Smyrna still remained in the centre, but it was just a small portion of modern-day Izmir.

Even the old heart of the city was unrecognisable, if you only knew it from images from the early 20th century. Yes, the general topography remained - the city's position on the water and the gentle slopes of Mount Pagos, so too the waterside promenade and the harbour in the north. But had the old harbour not once extended around where Pasaport ferry terminal is today? Old photos show large steamers and sailing ships moored there. I squinted and could just about make out the remains of the quay walls in the water, which had once ringed the harbour basin. The old terminal building was still standing too, now painted bright yellow. But only passenger ferries docked here these days.

Yet the most noticeable difference was a green hole, a huge park right in the centre, so unlike its built-up surroundings that it seemed impossible it had emerged from the city. City planners had created these kinds of large parks in the 20th century, in the suburbs too. But this park had not been planned, that much was clear. This was an enormous wound in the fabric of the city, the kind you would expect after a meteor strike. You learn not to trust green spaces in places that have seen war. In German cities, these often indicate bombsites, covering the overgrown foundations of bombed-out buildings. It was similar in Izmir, but it wasn't bombs that had raged here, but fire, the great fire of 1922. The park was a hole burnt into the city.

The hole, as big as it was, clearly only represented the catastrophic fire's ground zero. I couldn't make out any old buildings in the residential areas surrounding the park either, only modern city planning: the districts were positioned at right angles, the streets poker-straight, the multistorey apartment blocks bore witness to the love affair with concrete that the Greeks and Turks have enjoyed since the 1950s. As elsewhere, the old buildings were recognisable by their tiled roofs. Looking out from Pagos, I could only see them in two parts of the city: in Alsancak, the one-time European-Levantine quarter in the north, and in the bazaar district in the south, where the Turks and the Jews once lived. It was a seam of the old city. The entire area in between, once populated primarily with Greeks and Armenians, had been razed to the ground and later rebuilt. The city which had once sat at the foot of Mount Pagos was gone entirely, without a trace.

I swallowed; I hadn't expected this. I knew, of course, that the old Smyrna didn't exist anymore. In biographies of cities, there is no rupture more powerful than a fiery blaze. But I hadn't reckoned on there being no trace left of the old city. There was no obvious continuity

between Smyrna and Izmir, at least at first glance. In few places in the world was the break with the past so blatant.

For years, I had delved into the stories of once cosmopolitan multi-ethnic cities, like Trieste, Lviv, Odessa, Salonica or Alexandria, which still belonged to supranational empires in the early 20th century – the Habsburg Empire, the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire – and which were then consolidated under national identities by war and displacement. I was interested in how these cities, now segregated and often stripped of their souls, had lost their multi-layered urban consciousness, even if they still looked exactly as they had before. In the once Habsburgian and now Ukrainian city of Lviv, into whose story I delved most recently, the old city survived two world wars, outwardly completely unscathed. I had to scratch away at length at the deceptive façade in order to discover long-hidden layers of the past, yet the historical testaments to this were still there.

Izmir, too, had once been a significant cosmopolitan metropolis – yet, from up here at least, almost nothing of it remained. The past seemed gone completely, disappeared without a trace. Old Smyrna had fallen, destroyed forever; even the ancient ruins of Ephesus were probably more present than the old city.

Was it just the physical erasure of Smyrna that led to this once significant city being almost completely forgotten today? Or did people prefer not to speak of the events of September 1922 for as long as they could, until the wounds had healed and literal grass had grown over the sites of the fire, as I saw in the park? The problem with this tactic of suppression was always that not processing such crimes led to diffuse feelings of guilt, and historical myths. As could be expected, Turkish and Greek schools have taught two fundamentally different versions of the events of 1922. To this day, Greeks and Turks blame each other for setting the fire that destroyed the city.

What really happened? How did this catastrophe come about and what were its consequences? I wanted to research this, because the fire at Smyrna was not an isolated event; it had ramifications across Europe. Shortly afterwards, several million Greeks and Turks were forcibly driven from the countries they called home and forced to settle elsewhere. I also wanted to investigate the state-organised population exchange, not least because it would later serve as a blueprint for the deportations and ethnic cleansing witnessed in Europe and Asia in the rest of the 20th century. In this way, the consequences of the tragedy of Smyrna are felt to this very day, including in the current refugee crisis.

A few hours later, I was back on my balcony at the Izmir Palas Hotel, writing up my first impressions, the city ferries sailed across the bay as Kordon shimmered with people before me. Cyclists, joggers and roller-skaters pressed along the tartan track. In the restaurants, families were meeting for an evening drink or already ordering dinner. Unlike in Greece, there is no siesta in Turkey so, much to my relief, people sit down to eat much earlier than they do in Chios. Roasted peanuts and sunflower seeds were being sold to keep hunger at bay. Dogs were being taken out for walks, smoking street musicians played the songs of Bob Marley. It was an image of unexpected joie de vivre, a little reminiscent of the beachside promenades in California. That West Coast feeling was much suited to the strong, warm light of the evening sun which sank gradually over the bay.

In Chios, there were sunrises, while here I had a glimpse of the orange evening sky over the sea and the mountains. Of course, the terms Orient and Levant, which stem from the Latin for ‘to rise’, are completely Eurocentric. Ultimately, it was all a question of your geographical standpoint, of what view it offered of sun and space. The word Anatolia, too, etymologically speaking, stems from the ancient Greek words ‘ano’ and ‘helios’, and means little more than ‘the place where the sun rises’. The Turks retained the Greek name, since, by coincidence, the word ‘Anadolu’ in Turkish means ‘full of mothers’, which also seemed somehow fitting.

I shut my notebook. Experience came before writing; I had to go back down into the city. I threw on a jacket and left the hotel. This time, I walked along Kordon in the other direction, heading north, the location of the modern-day harbour, and of Alsancak, the former district of the Europeans and Levantines of Smyrna. It was one of the two quarters which survived the fire of 1922.

ⁱ M. L. Aimé-Martin, *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses concernant l'Asie, l'Afrique et l'Amérique*, Paris 1838, p. 33,

ⁱⁱ Claude Farrère, *Méditerranée*, Paris 1926, p. 87

English sample from chapter 14

Translated by Lutz C. Kleveman

The waiter, a retired seaman, sat down with us.

His name was Dimitris and he was 92 years old. The tavern belonged to his daughter-in-law, and he helped her out sometimes. Next to Dimitris sat 80-year-old Yannis, his best friend and a retired captain himself. He just came over from his garden where he had looked after the olive trees and fed his rabbits. The two friends' nicknames were John and Jimmy, that's how they had been called in foreign ports.

We came to talk about the current refugee crisis on Chios. At its climax in 2015, many Chiot seamen and fishermen had taken their boats out to sea, in an effort to bring the refugees safely to shore. "There was great solidarity: we gave them clothes and food", remembered Yannis whose family had been living in the Kardamyla village for generations. During the Chios Massacre of 1822, his ancestors had hidden from the Turks in caves, he told me, before they escaped to the neighbouring island of Psara on a boat. After the Smyrna Fire in 1922 many refugees from Minor Asia arrived in Chios and settled in Kardamyla.

During the German occupation in World War II, many Chiots in turn fled to the Turkish side, trying to reach free Cyprus. His parents were among them, carrying little Yannis in their arms. "I was too young to remember but Jimmy can tell you more about this."

Dimitris nodded. His family, too, had escaped from the Germans in 1941. The 92-year-old took a sip from his beer bottle and began to tell the story.

"The German soldiers on Chios were no monsters but there was simply nothing to eat. We were starving. So my father got himself a rowing boat, hiding it on the beach. One night, we took off – my parents, my three siblings and myself. I was 13 years old then, only my little brother was younger. My sisters were crying when we left the house. The first night, we made it to Inousses, the small island between Chios and the Turkish coast. The second night, we were hoping to reach Turkey, so we set off at dusk.

But in the Chios strait, the weather is unpredictable. Suddenly, a storm came up, the waves turned higher and higher, and it was pouring with rain. Soon my father was totally exhausted from the rowing, suffering from cramps in his arms. Now my mother started crying and my sister clung on to me in fear. We were all very much afraid.

We thought we would drown.

Then, out of nowhere, a Turkish fishing boat appeared. They took us on board and brought us to safety. One of the fishermen had his son with him, a boy my age, and when he saw me, all freezing in my wet clothes, he took off his dry shirt and gave it to me. Then the boy also gave me his shoes and socks. Although the Turks were poor themselves, he told me to keep them. That I have never forgotten. I was still wearing them when we returned home after the war.“

At this point, Dimitris' eyes filled with tears, and his voice faltered. Yannis put a hand on his shoulder, and the other captains were all quiet.

“The fishermen brought us to Çeşme, where we stayed for six months, until we found a ship to Cyprus. During that time, I played a lot with Turkish boys at the port and made several friends. I never saw them again but I always wondered what had become of them and how they fared in life.

Five years ago, I finally took the ferry to Çeşme. I just had to go back there, and my wife came with me. I still remembered my playmates' names and asked for them. As it turned out, two of them were still living in Çeşme, and we were taken to their houses. We had become old men by now but we recognised each other immediately and fell into each other's arms. We were still friends.

I have had a good life, you see. I have a family, a good wife and two healthy sons. I am a happy man.

But what bothers me is all that terrible stuff the politicians are telling us about the Turks! The truth is that, as people, they are exactly like us. I love the Turks the way I love my neighbours. I have nothing against the refugees, either, who are coming to us on boats.

They are escaping from war and suffering. They are going through the same experience we went through back then, only the other way around. We have to help them with humanity, like we were being helped then.

We must not wage wars anymore and let our sons be killed. This has to end, finally. As humans, we must talk to each other and find solutions for everything. We must treat each other with love, only love.“

Book Proposal and Chapter Outline

by Lutz C. Kleveman

SMYRNA

The Great Fire of 1922 that changed Europe

This is to offer foreign language rights for Lutz C. Kleveman's upcoming book SMYRNA, a literary travelogue to be published by Aufbau Verlag in Germany in the spring of 2022. The manuscript will need to be translated from German.

Synopsis

The 100th anniversary of a seminal event in world history is coming up: the Great Fire of Smyrna in September 1922.

The wilful destruction of this legendary cosmopolitan metropolis, killing tens of thousands of its inhabitants, was one of the worst humanitarian tragedies of the 20th century. Its consequences were far-reaching, in space and time, and can still be felt today.

The Smyrna story needs to be retold. The name alone sounds mysterious, almost mythical like the vanished Atlantis. And in many ways it is, a fabled place from another realm and era.

Part of the Ottoman Empire and situated between Orient and Occident, Smyrna was once built on a wide Aegean bay, ringed by mountains, on the western coast of Anatolia. There it stood until September 1922, when it was burned down and eviscerated, to be replaced by the modern Turkish city of Izmir, and sunk into oblivion.

Smyrna was a prosperous trade centre, connected with all important European ports from Marseille to London. Known as the "Pearl of the Aegean", the city was home to various ethnic groups of different cultures. In an atmosphere of religious tolerance, Christians, Muslims, and Sephardic Jews coexisted together. Byzantine church towers, minarets, and the roofs of splendid synagogues marked the city's skyline.

Vibrant communities of Greeks, Turks, Europeans, Americans, Armenians, Jews, and Levantines lived together and created a unique mixed urban culture that made Smyrna the first truly global city in the modern sense. The Levantines, a community of orientalisied Europeans, were the world's first multiple-culture and mixed-identity urbanites. In many ways, they turned Smyrna into the prototype for today's diverse global cities such as New York and Singapore.

Following Smyrna's example were other Mediterranean port cities – Salonica, Trieste, Beirut, Alexandria – all of them beacons of seaborne trade and cosmopolitanism. So were Odessa on the Black Sea and St. Petersburg on the Baltic Sea. But like Smyrna, these multicultural cities and many others in Europe such as Vilna and Lvov were to be destroyed by nationalist, religious, and socialist forces in the course of the 20th century. Their demise was foreshadowed in 1922 by the flames that devoured Smyrna.

The destruction of Smyrna began at the end of the First World War, when the defeated Ottoman Empire was falling apart and the Greek army invaded Anatolia in 1919 in an ill-fated attempt to safeguard and annex Greek-populated areas. After three years of war, the attackers were repulsed by Turkish forces, who set Smyrna on fire and massacred its Greek and Armenian civilian population. The atrocities were allowed to happen despite the presence of some twenty Western war ships anchoring in Smyrna bay, whose commanders – American, English, French, and Italian – had orders from their governments not to intervene. For political reasons and to their lasting disgrace, they only rescued refugees of their own nationality.

As the Smyrna fire raged for more than a week, almost all its European and American inhabitants fled the city in horror, and never returned. The same was true for Armenian survivors and Minor Asia's entire Greek population which was driven out by force, ending its centuries-old presence there. Many Levantines also moved their businesses and families to other countries. Only the Turks and some Jews stayed behind but the Smyrna they knew was dead and would never rise to its former glory again.

How could this happen, and what led to the city's sudden demise?

In their conflict, both Greeks and Turks were driven by nationalist ideology which had spread from Europe to the Balkans in the 19th century. First introduced by the Philhellenes, nationalism inspired Greek fighters during the Greek war of independence from 1821-32, which started the Ottoman Empire's territorial dissolution. One of that war's seminal events was the Massacre of Chios, an island situated just off Smyrna bay, where Ottoman troops in 1822 killed and enslaved up to 100.000 people. As it emerged during the research for this book, Chios actually lies at the heart of the Smyrna story. From the 14th century onwards, this unique island was the East Mediterranean's most important trade hub, an early Levantine centre and the forerunner for the 19th century cosmopolitan cities of Smyrna, Salonica, and Alexandria.

The First World War led to the downfall of Europe's multi-national empires – Russia, Austria-Hungary, and finally the Ottoman Empire – and their disintegration into various small nation-states. This trend continued, accompanied by widespread ethnic violence, until after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Caught in the crossfire of nationalism and religious sectarianism were multi-ethnic cities, which saw their minority communities being chased through the gates, or killed.

The burning of Smyrna and widespread interethnic violence led to a massive refugee crisis across the Aegean region. In response, the League of Nations brokered an agreement between Turkey and Greece for a gigantic population exchange. Millions of Ottoman Muslims and Christians were forcibly expelled from their ancestral homes and re-settled in Turkish and Greek lands.

The population exchange of 1923-24, the first state-organised ethnic cleansing in world history, resulted in a humanitarian disaster and much individual suffering. Still, it was widely seen as successful realpolitik and would serve as a blueprint for the expulsions and deportations of millions of people in the following decades, during and after the Second World War, in the Indian Partition, in the Israel-Palestine conflicts, and during the Yugoslav wars.

Today, the Mediterranean and particularly the Aegean are experiencing another massive refugee crisis. Despite a deal between Turkey and the EU to stem the flow of migrants, an increasing number of boats keep arriving on Greek islands. Thousands of people from the Asia and Africa are currently stranded in overcrowded Greek camps, waiting for transport to Europe.

As many political developments these days seem like a re-run of the 1920s, the story of Smyrna, the first global city, is more relevant than ever.

Narrative Style

Like Kleveman's previous works, this manuscript is not a dry history book but a literary travelogue offering a lively mixture of narrative history and first-person reportage, laced with essayist observations.

In twelve chapters, the narrative moves between the Turkish city of Izmir and the nearby Greek island of Chios, which in many ways presents a mirror image to what happened in Smyrna.

Two narrative threads, one historical and one contemporary, are closely woven together. The narrative is not strictly chronological but alternates between the past and the present, while preserving intellectual coherence.

This style reflects the non-linear perception of time in the East Mediterranean, which connects events in more fluid simultaneous ways than in America or Europe. Rather than becoming distant history, the past still continues to resonate strongly. It often dominates the stories locals tell about their daily lives, creating the impression of an odd simultaneity with the present.

Combining journalism with academic research, the book is based on extensive on-the-ground research, interviews with fascinating figures, and thorough study of literature in various languages, including memoirs, travel reports, diplomatic despatches, and academic works (see bibliography).

Material

Corresponding to the narrative structure, the book will contain both historical and contemporary material, closely woven together. See the chapter outline below for more specific content description.

Chios, a medieval Levantine centre

The Smyrna story actually begins on Chios, a large island just off the Turkish coast, which was in many ways Smyrna's predecessor as a Levantine cosmopolitan trade centre. (The antique ancestor was of course Ephesus.) As early as the Middle Ages, when the Genoese took the island from the Byzantines, Chios was famous for its main export product, the resin of the mastic tree. It was used throughout the Mediterranean as medicine and later as the

world's first chewing gum, which was very popular among the Ottoman high society, especially in the sultan's harem where mastic was reputed to be a potent aphrodisiac.

Strategically located on the sea route between the Black Sea, Constantinople and the Levant, Chios town soon became the East Mediterranean's most important port and trade hub, long before Smyrna took over that position.

From the 16th century onwards, now under Ottoman rule, Chiots enjoyed great wealth and tax exemptions, and more civic liberties than any other Greeks in the Ottoman Empire. Traders and travellers, whose reports Kleveman discovered at Chios library, described the island as a cosmopolitan Garden Eden where the local women flaunted their beauty and freely conversed with foreigners.

It all came to a terrible end in 1822 – exactly one hundred years before the Smyrna fire – when Greek independence fighters conquered the island and the Ottoman military retaliated by massacring or enslaving most of its 100.000 inhabitants. The Chios massacre, denounced by foreign consuls and merchants, shocked Europe and inspired Eugène Delacroix's famous painting as well as poems by Lord Byron and Victor Hugo.

The wealthy Chiot merchant families – such as the Benakis and the Choremis – managed to escape abroad and founded the first Greek diaspora communities in London, Marseille, and other European port cities.

One family that returned to Chios were the Argentis, a wealthy Genoese clan that ruled the island before and after the Ottoman takeover in the 16th century. One contemporary character in the book is Signor Lorenzo Argenti, the clan's 76-year-old last heir, who opened his family archives for research and provided many valuable contacts in Chios and Izmir.

While their native island never really recovered from the 1822 catastrophe, many Chiots also settled in Smyrna whose ascent as a cosmopolitan metropolis now began in earnest.

Smyrna, a cosmopolitan metropolis

Myrovolos Smyrni, the sweet-smelling Smyrna, is what Greek Smyrniots lovingly called their city.

Praised as the Pearl of the Orient, the city was where Asia and Europe met. Founded by Alexander the Great, as legend has it, Smyrna rose to prominence in the Roman Empire. According to the New Testament's Book of Revelation, Saint Paul established one of the seven original Christian churches here. In the Byzantine Empire, the city declined in importance, only to flourish again in the Ottoman Empire. On a trip in 1806, Chateaubriand praised Smyrna as a "second Paris" and an "oasis of civilisation".

In the belle époque of European culture, Smyrna was a wealthy, modern, enlightened, and free-wheeling metropolis. Under the rule of the far-away sultans, it acted as a quasi-autonomous city-state that generated a major share of the Empire's gross domestic product. At the outbreak of the First World War, Smyrna had 250.000 inhabitants, including more Greeks than in Athens.

Attracted by good business opportunities and a tolerant cosmopolitan culture, countless Europeans and Americans settled in the city. Some stayed and assimilated into the local culture, becoming Levantines. Many different languages were spoken in its streets: Greek, Turkish, Judeo-Spanish (Ladino), Armenian, English, French, Dutch and Italian. Its inhabitants turned Smyrna into a free and at times frivolous city, where deals were put before ideals.

Along the famous Corniche stood splendid buildings of white marble: trade houses, shipping companies, international banks, hotels, theatres as well as grand cafés like the Café de Paris and the Sporting Club. The port was serviced by passenger ships from London, Marseille, Genoa, and Trieste.

It was not all glamour of course. Smyrna was a workhorse city with hard-and-fast mercantile rules and great social inequality. Thanks to the so-called Capitulations, wide-ranging concessions the Ottoman Empire had granted to Christian countries, Europeans in Smyrna enjoyed exceptional rights and privileges. Protected by their powerful consulates, they were exempted from prosecution and local taxation.

The city had good schools, publishing houses, and hospitals. At the Grand Hotel Kraemer Palace, according to the Baedeker travel guide, they served sauerbraten with cold Paulaner beer from Munich. As the first city in the Ottoman Empire, the dynamic Smyrna had a newspaper (1828), electricity (1888), a car (1905), a cinema (1909), and the first golf club in the Middle East opened here in 1914. That same year, there were 17 cinemas and 465 coffeehouses, in which one could read newspapers imported from all over Europe. Various local papers were also on offer, eleven in Greek language, seven in Turkish, five in Armenian, four in French and five in Hebrew. Shop signs were written in French, Greek, and Turkish, to attract as many different customers as possible.

In Smyrna reigned a hybrid spirit, a Levantine synthesis, born of the co-existence of different religions and cultures. At the same time, trade and wine – as well as a certain sexual liberty – were more important to most Smyrniots than religion. This was even true for some Turkish men and women, who could afford to ignore the Islamic dress code. At the Corniche promenade, female Turks strolled along in tight-fitting coats and with uncovered hair. Unlike in Constantinople, men and women were not seated separately on trams. This liberal spirit and a taste for loose morals has been preserved by Izmir's inhabitants till today, which has earned the city – then as now – the reputation of *gavur*, the city of infidels.

The Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire already existed for more than 700 years but had been in decline for a long time. It reached its climax after the takeover of the Byzantine Empire and the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Since their defeat near Vienna in 1683, the Ottomans were on a constant military-political withdrawal. By the 19th century, the sultan was seen as the “sick man of the Bosphorus”. Stubbornly medieval and incapable of domestic reform, his empire increasingly came under the influence of the European Great Powers.

The ideological base for the sultans' rule was still the Muslim religion but the Ottomans followed the Sunnis' Hanafi school, a moderate Central Asian form of Islam. Though Christians and Jews were treated as second-class citizens, they were tolerated and protected. Many sultans even had Christian wives and mothers from Serbia and Greece. Unlike in Europe of Inquisition-style Christianity, the Ottoman state remained tolerant and even indifferent vis-à-vis personal faith and public worship in churches and synagogues.

In the so-called *millet* system, the non-Muslim communities were considered as *dhimmis* (people to be protected). They administered themselves, with their community leaders being in charge of collecting taxes for the state. This system favoured wealthy Greeks and the Orthodox Church whose patriarch continued to reside in Constantinople, cooperating closely with the Ottoman rulers.

In the late 19th century, Enlightenment ideas began to enter the Ottoman Empire. They led to religions becoming gradually less important, and to societal groups being distinguished along class lines instead. In 1908, the Young Turk revolution broke out whose leaders demanded an Ottoman constitution to curtail the sultan's powers and to make all citizens equal, irrespective of their religion and ethnic origin. The revolution was enthusiastically supported by the Christian communities, but it also awakened their nationalist aspirations. As a reaction, Turkish nationalists soon came to dominate the Young Turk movement, too.

When the First World War broke out, the Ottoman society was still stratified along faiths and classes, but mainly along ethnic groups. (However, the Western concept of separating religion and nationality, i.e. the idea of one national group having more than one faith, did not exist in the Ottoman Empire. National and religious affiliation were seen as identical.)

Ethnic communities in Smyrna

The exact size of the various communities in Smyrna is still being disputed, because the Ottoman authorities never collected reliable and ethnically differentiated census data. Of roughly 250.000 inhabitants in 1914, the majority were Greeks, followed by Turks, Armenians, Jews, Levantines, Europeans, and Americans. Each large group had its own quarter, the Turks on the slopes of Mount Pagos, the Greeks in the centre, and the Levantines near the port, with the Armenians and Jews living between those groups.

As in most Ottoman cities, the Turks controlled the military and administration, while the Greeks (such as the Onassis family) dominated trade and banking. Some Greeks were descendants of ancient Greek communities in Minor Asia, which dated back nearly 3.000 years, much longer than any Turkish settlements. However, most Greeks had come more recently from the impoverished Kingdom of Greece. The Armenians were Eastern migrants who often worked as artisans and small traders.

A small but powerful community were the Levantines, who were Europeans living permanently in the Orient – not as colonialists or expats but as polyglot cosmopolitans who fused European and Eastern cultures. In so doing, they were the predecessors of today's mixed-identity digital nomads, making Smyrna the first truly global city.

Many Levantines were entrepreneurs who conducted most of Smyrna's international business. The oldest families had arrived from Venice and Genoa in the 16-17th century, later

to be followed by the French, Dutch, and English. They bore illustrious names such as Aliotti, d'Andria, Baltazzi, Marcopoli, Giraud, Guys, Pagy, Keun, Wood, Paterson, Forbes and Whittal. Benefiting from special trade privileges, they exported figs, olives, cotton, tobacco, wine, opium, and apricots. Today, some Levantines still live in their old villas in Bornova, a leafy suburb of Izmir.

An equally polyglot Smyrniot community were the Sephardic Jews whose Iberian ancestors had fled to the tolerant Ottoman Empire in the early 16th century. The sultans appreciated their business acumen, which led them to found many prosperous communities in the Balkans and in Minor Asia. Most Jewish families reached Smyrna via Constantinople and Salonica. Four centuries later, some modern Jews sent their children to French schools but most Sephardim in the city were still deeply rooted in Spanish culture, speaking the old Ladino dialect among themselves, as well as various local idioms with other Smyrniots. They had a wide range of professions, from being port hands to big traders.

Traditionally, the Jews remained aloof from the competing nationalisms in the city, although they tended to favour the Turks over the Greeks who had numerous anti-Semites in their ranks. While many Jews emigrated after the Fall of Smyrna, there still exists a small Sephardic community of about 1.000 members who look after the city's old synagogues.

The First World War and Greek invasion of 1919

In the First World War, the Ottoman Empire sided with the Central Powers. The Young Turk leader Enver Pasha strengthened the alliance with Germany, which provided military training and material. The Prussian general Liman von Sanders was dispatched to the Ottoman armed forces to act as their inspector general. For Smyrna this meant that the powerful French and British consuls were expelled, while the Levantines in general were henceforth considered as potential enemies of the state.

Apart from the Turks and the Jews who tended to support the Central Powers, the majority of the city's inhabitants sympathised with the western Allies. Faced with an internal Greek dispute between the pro-German King Constantine and the pro-English Prime Minister Venizelos over entering the war, which Greece finally did in July 1917, most Greek Smyrniots were on Venizelos' side.

Unlike the Dardanelles, Smyrna did not experience any fighting, apart from a limited bombing of the city by the British Royal Air Force in 1916. The city also provided sanctuary for Armenian refugees from East Anatolia who escaped the 1915 genocide, and for Greek refugees who fled their towns in Minor Asia after being attacked by Turks.

In the midst of war, cultural life in Smyrna continued unabated. At the opera house, Verdi's *Rigoletto* premiered in 1917, with the audience attending in tuxedos and fancy dresses. However, it was one of the last glamorous social events of old Smyrna. When the Western Powers won the war and occupied Constantinople, Greek forces landed in Smyrna in May 1919 and invaded deep into Anatolia.

With this military campaign, Venizelos was trying to turn the so-called *megali idea* (engl. great idea) into reality, an ideological project to annex the Greek-populated parts of Minor Asia. It was an attempt to reclaim Byzantium's historical expanse for Greece. Since the

Balkan Wars, which led to Salonica and major Aegean islands becoming Greek, the *megali idea* was very popular in Greece. The American President Wilson and the British Prime Minister Lloyd George also supported Venizelos' irredentist campaign, for the sake of Christian solidarity and national self-determination. The invasion was even justified as being a civilising mission vis-à-vis so-called Turkish barbarians. In so doing, Wilson and Lloyd George blithely ignored that it was the imperial Ottoman system that made Smyrna's civilizational blossoming possible in the first place.

Upon their arrival in Smyrna, Greek troops perpetrated several massacres against Turks. In the city's hinterland, Turkish villages were burned down and hundreds of civilians killed. The atrocities provoked a nationalist outcry across Turkey, and Mustafa Kemal began to re-group Turkish forces to resist the invaders. In the summer of 1921, Smyrna was visited by King Constantine, the first Christian king to set foot in Anatolia since the Crusades.

Most Smyrniots were sceptical about the Greek administration but many also participated in suppressing the city's Turks. This poisoned the existing multi-cultural harmony and made it impossible for the future.

The Greek war of independence 1821-32 and the Chios massacre 1822

As with many catastrophes, the Fire of Smyrna was the ultimate result of a longer historical process. It began exactly a hundred years earlier, with the outbreak of the Greek liberation struggle in 1821. Enjoying the support of the European Great Powers, who sought to weaken the Ottoman Empire, some parts of the Greek population rose up against the sultan's rule.

In the Peloponnese and other regions, the insurgents were successful in expelling the Ottoman administrators and, using much violence, the Muslim population. In the city of Tripoli, the rebels in September 1821 perpetrated a massacre of Muslims (and Jews) which cost nearly 10.000 lives. Behind the Ottoman society's multicultural façade, there had always been some tensions and violence, but for the first time the victims were Muslim civilians en masse.

In retaliation, the sultan ordered his troops to commit massacres against Greeks, most infamously on Chios. In two waves of widespread atrocities over several months of 1822, some 20.000-50.000 civilians were murdered and another 50.000 deported into slavery. Only about 2.000 survivors remained on the island, while others managed to escape across the Aegean Sea. The Chios massacre was the first destruction of a Levantine centre. Thus the un-mixing of peoples in the region began, which reached its final act in the Smyrna burning.

After the decisive naval battle of Navarino in 1827 and the founding of the Christian Kingdom of Greece, the Muslims on its territory were either killed, deported, or forcibly converted. While remaining a poor and small country, Greece was nonetheless a spike in the Ottoman Empire whose Greek subjects were henceforth torn in their loyalty. Especially the Greek consulates in Smyrna and Salonica, and the hellenisation projects they organised at Ottoman schools, were a constant irritant for the High Porte.

During the Greek independence war, the European philhellenes planted the seeds of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire. As in the Habsburg realms, this new ideology would in the following decades corrode the Empire from inside. The Anatolian campaign showed how,

in less than a century, the Greek nationalism had developed from a liberation movement into an aggressively expansionist project.

The Turkish liberation war and the burning of Smyrna 1922

Following initial successes, the Greek military advance into the Anatolian hinterland came to a halt, without a decisive victory being won. In August 1922, the Turkish forces launched a counter-attack, driving their enemies back to the Aegean coast within a few days. On September 9th, they took Smyrna without a fight. At that point, some 500.000 people were crowding the city, including many refugees from the interior. Although the Greek army had committed many atrocities during their retreat, the situation in Smyrna at first remained calm. But after a few days violence broke out: Turkish soldiers and civilians lynched the Greek Orthodox metropolitan Chrysostomos and started looting shops, raping and killing civilians.

On September 12th, Turkish troops carried petrol drums into the Armenian quarter and set houses on fire. Fanned by the wind, the flames soon spread across a large part of the city and reached the port. Most of the Christian and Levantine quarters burned down, only the Turkish and Jewish homes were spared. Fleeing the flames and marauding troops, who were now randomly massacring civilians in a blood frenzy, tens of thousands of people rushed down to the Corniche waterfront. Here they were stuck between the sea and a two-kilometre long wall of fire of 30-metre high flames. From the sides, troops were firing their guns into the crowd. In fear of the bullets and the unbearable heat, many people jumped or were pushed into the water and drowned.

The Smyrna apocalypse lasted several days and nights. It was allowed to happen although some twenty Allied warships were anchoring in the Bay of Smyrna. Their English, French, Italian, and American commanders undertook almost nothing to rescue the civilians, but instead pulled their ships further out into the sea, only taking victims of their own nationality on board. On some ships, the naval bands were ordered to play loud music to drown out the anguished cries from the shore. Seamen took photos of the skyline in the fiery glow, which gave Smyrna University's motto, *ex Oriente Lux*, a terrible new meaning. Some officers protested against the inaction but the orders remained unchanged. The Great Powers were more interested in good relations (and oil deals) with the new Turkish government than in saving lives.

“Let it burn, let it crash down – we can replace everything”, therefore commented a relaxed Kemal while observing the tragedy from his safe quarter on the hills. When after ten days the fire finally died down, an estimated 50.000 - 100.000 people had been killed.

In a heroic private rescue mission, an American YMCA employee named Asa Jennings single-handedly managed to charter several Greek ships and evacuate tens of thousands of refugees to safety. Contrasted with the inaction of the Western navy commanders, Jennings' personal humanitarian initiative was all the more astonishing. Its story deserves to be re-told, as it is an inspiration for the many non-governmental organisations active in the Mediterranean today, organising private rescue missions of boat refugees.

The Smyrna refugees were mainly women and children, because most male survivors, up to 100.000 Greeks and Armenians, were deported by the Turkish army into the country's

interior, where the majority would starve or die of disease. When the news of the catastrophe reached Western capitals, the New York Times front page reported: “Smyrna Wiped Out”.

The population exchange of 1923/24

The destruction of Smyrna and other multi-ethnic towns in Minor Asia resulted in a massive wave of refugees. Hundreds of thousands of Greeks as well as the Smyrniot Armenians, Levantines, Europeans and Americans attempted to get across the Aegean Sea to Greece. In turn, Muslim inhabitants moved in the opposite direction towards Anatolia, fleeing revenge violence. In this chaotic humanitarian crisis, the political leaders in Athens and Ankara, Eleftherios Venizelos und Mustafa Kemal, only saw one practicable solution: an exchange of the Christian and Muslim populations of both countries.

The Great Powers shared this assessment and commissioned the League of Nations to lead negotiations between the two countries in Switzerland. On 30 January 1923, the delegations signed the Treaty of Lausanne which stipulated the exact borders between Greek and Turkish territories as well as a nearly complete population exchange. Instead of a continued co-existence, Athens and Ankara favoured a geographical and cultural separation. Only the Greeks of Istanbul and the Muslims of western Thrace were exempted. After nearly 500 years of co-existence, the signatories agreed on a radical divorce settlement.

Its consequence was a gigantic ethnic cleansing, organized by two national governments, not on a voluntary basis but through state coercion. Nearly two million people, over a million Christians and 500.000 Muslims, had to abandon their homes. The entire Aegean region was experiencing a migration on a biblical scale, hitherto unheard of in human history.

“Exhausted, staggering men, women and children, blankets over their heads, walking blindly along in the rain”, eye-witness Ernest Hemingway described the refugee treks through Thrace.

The Lausanne Treaty constituted a novelty in international law and world history: for the first time people were turned into “exchangeables”. The criterion was not their ethnic belonging or their language, but solely their religion. Therefore, even Muslims from Crete had to move, although they only spoke Greek and felt close to Greek culture. In turn, Christians from Cappadocia, who had long assimilated into Turkish culture and forgotten the Greek language, suddenly found themselves in Greece, an alien country.

The exchange was logical and deeply unnatural at the same time. Given the widespread inter-communal violence, the deportation was a life-saving emergency measure for some people. For many others, the expulsion from their ancient homes came as a terrible shock. Their individual suffering counted less than the official realpolitik of forcible nation-making. From the ruins of the diverse Ottoman Empire, homogenous nation-states were to be created in which Christians would be turned into Greeks and Muslims into Turks. The multicultural cities of Smyrna and Salonica became the Turkish Izmir and the Greek Thessaloniki.

The ideal of national self-determination prevailed over a heterogeneous societal structure. Western politicians equally believed that good fences would make good neighbours. “Un-mixing the populations of the Near East... secures the pacification of the Near East”, wrote

Fridtjof Nansen, who led the Lausanne negotiations and received the Nobel Peace for his role.

The consequences for Turkey, Greece, and Europe

From the ashes of Smyrna rose the modern Turkish republic, whose founder Kemal Atatürk drove the Allied occupiers and the last sultan out of Istanbul. Unlike the Ottoman Empire, the new state focussed not on religion but on nationality as a source of identity and loyalty. In radical Turkification policies, which sought to assimilate all ethnic minorities, the Kemalist regime turned monarchist Muslims, as the sultan's subjects had defined themselves, into republican and secular Turks.

Economically, however, the young country fared badly in the first few years because the expulsion of the Greek and Armenian populations caused great damage in their former areas of settlement. Almost overnight, Turkey had lost most of its entrepreneurs, traders, and artisans. Most of the displaced Levantines, Europeans and Americans never returned either, moving their companies and capital abroad instead.

Greece also struggled with the consequences of the “Minor Asia catastrophe”, as the Greeks still call the events of 1922-24. The costs for the housing and provision of the countless refugees, who eked out an existence in the refugee camps and slums of Athens and Thessaloniki, were astronomical. The Greek state then faced the problem of how to culturally integrate the refugees into Greek society, which viewed them with great hostility.

Many refugees on both sides of the Aegean longed for their old homes and old neighbours (who in turn often missed them, too). However, with their fluid identities and cultural otherness, the refugees enriched their new home countries in terms of food, music, and vocabulary. In Thessaloniki one can sample the same delicious baklava as in Izmir where, in turn, many cafés still play Greek music today.

Thus, the un-mixing of peoples has paradoxically contributed to yet more cultural mixing, so that both countries have actually become more alike. Greeks and Turks often describe how similar people on both sides are, only divided by clerics and politicians. They often feel a deep longing for re-connection, as expressed in countless songs, novels, and films.

At the same time, the official relationship between Turkey and Greece remains largely antagonistic. The Erdogan regime demands re-negotiations over certain borders and islands, which Greece indignantly rejects. Hostile partners in NATO, both countries' military spending remains huge. Almost on a weekly basis, their navies and air forces perform threatening manoeuvres.

For Europe, too, the Lausanne Treaty has had profound consequences. It showed that it was practically and morally possible to undertake a massive ethnic engineering and call it a success. Its signatories believed to have solved the problem of minorities. Little did they know that the population exchange of 1923-24 would be turned into a blueprint for subsequent violent mass deportations in the 20th century.

In 1945, the Allies led by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill took the re-settlement of the Turks and Greeks as a successful model for the expulsion of millions of Germans and Poles from

their ancestral homes in Central Europe. The population exchange of Indians and Pakistanis in 1947 as well as the forced displacement of Palestinians in 1949 also followed the Greek-Turkish example.

The Lausanne Treaty continued to be felt during the Bosnian war of the 1990s, when Western politicians suggested a population exchange as a solution to the conflict. Given the ethnic inseparability of Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians, religion was to serve as the criterion for national affiliation. Most recently, Serbia and Kosovo have discussed swapping territories and people. Even today, Europeans are, as the British author Bruce Clark put it, the “children of Lausanne”.

Izmir and Chios today

The citadel on Mount Pagos, the site of ancient Smyrna where today a giant Turkish flag flaps in the wind, offers a fine view over modern Izmir.

While its location on the glittering bay, surrounded by mountains, is as beautiful as ever, the sprawling and congested city of four million inhabitants is not exactly a holiday destination. On the way from the airport to the Aegean sea resorts or the ancient Ephesus ruins, most tourists linger only to visit Izmir’s picturesque bazaar district. It is one of the few parts of the city’s old centre that survived the 1922 fire intact.

Only if one explores the city street-by-street, say in the former European district near the port, one will discover 19th century houses with Ottoman-style balconies. The book will describe a quasi-archaeological search for historical sites such as the old European consulates, the Sephardic synagogues, and the Levantine villas.

If they escaped the flames, many remnants of the past were obliterated in the building boom of the 1960s and 1970s. Modern high-rise office buildings and mosques now dominate the cityscape. While on the Corniche the old houses used to have only two floors, their successors now have at least six or seven.

The Greek Nobel poet George Seferis, who was born and raised in Smyrna, once wrote in the 1960s that Smyrna “had lost its shadow” (i.e. its soul) and that it now had more in common with ancient Ephesus than with modern Izmir.

Seferis had a case. How the legacy of old Smyrna is being remembered or forgotten, is evident in the way old buildings are being treated. High walls and barbed wire surround Levantine and Armenian churches, and houses once inhabited by Greeks are often abandoned and left to decay. It seems that the city’s multicultural past, the sheer fact that Turks once lived together with Greeks and Armenians, is still being ignored.

On the Greek side, too, public memory is quite patchy. In Chios, as in many Greek towns once partly inhabited by Turks, they are not being remembered as one-time neighbours but solely as occupiers and oppressors. Unlike Byzantine churches and classical ruins, which are nicely preserved for tourists, most Ottoman-era buildings and mosques are being left to rot.

Today, many such unmixed and soul-depleted places exist in the Turkish and Greek lands. The ongoing antagonism between both countries, with its concomitant foe image production,

still prevents an honest appraisal and remembrance of the tragic events between 1919 and 1924. Rather, they are being manipulated and misrepresented to serve political purposes.

However, personal attitudes don't always conform to official politics, and continuities do exist. In Izmir, older Turks fondly recall growing up in the city's mixed districts and sometimes recite Greek phrases they learned from their childhood playmates. On the Corniche, some restaurants offer Greek dishes and cafés once again play Greek music. More often than not, their owners are descendants of Muslim families who lived in Thessaloniki or Crete before the population exchange.

Especially the young and educated people, who belong to the "Gezi Park generation", are aware of their city's cosmopolitan past and regard their Western liberal lifestyles as being in that tradition. In the ongoing political power struggle and *kulturkampf* in Turkey between Islamists and Kemalists, these young Turks focus on defending their individual liberties.

The burning of Smyrna was not only a revenge of the Turks against the Greeks but also of the poor classes against the rich, of the hinterland against the city, the religious against the secular. Before 1922, Smyrna was known as *gavur*, "the city of infidels". Today, this same sobriquet is again being used by pious Muslims to describe Izmir, partly because it is the only big Turkish city never to have been controlled by President Erdoğan's increasingly authoritarian Islamist AK Party. Instead, Izmir is still being run by the secular Kemalist CHP opposition. Many of its inhabitants perceive Izmir as the country's last free city, oriented towards Europe but besieged by conservative forces, with the Erdoğan regime controlling the local police force to crack down on political dissent.

The ongoing antagonism between liberal Izmir and conservative Anatolia, which harks back to similar conflicts in Smyrna a century ago, resembles the situation in other countries today. With the current rise in Europe of neo-nationalists and populists, who oppose the supra-national European Union and who despise urban elites in general, today's cosmopolitan cities are again coming under pressure. Like Izmir, metropolises like New York and London are being besieged by rural forces, including Trump supporters and Brexiteers. Britain's exit from the EU has already changed the social fabric of London, as many Europeans are leaving. The conflict lines run between, as the English author David Goodhart put it, "people from anywhere and people from somewhere". The very term cosmopolitanism has acquired a negative association with neo-liberal globalisation, which is seen as the preserve of an educated global elite.

The Smyrna fire of 1922 caused a massive refugee crisis and, ultimately, the population exchange affecting millions of people. Today, there are striking parallels with the current refugee crisis in the Mediterranean. The causes are comparable, with people fleeing armed conflicts and political oppression. The individual refugee experiences then and now are very similar. One connection also lies in the special solidarity, which many Greek and Turkish citizens have shown towards today's refugees. It plays a role that many people's ancestors once suffered the same fate.

In a central chapter, the book provides a reportage-style description of the current refugee camps on Chios, Lesbos and Samos, based on personal visits and interviews with NGO workers, refugees, and state officials. Chios in particular offers interesting insights, as the island is one of the wealthiest parts of Greece today. The Chiot ship-owners, who control

most of the country's commercial shipping fleet, strongly influence local politics and the community's response to the refugee crisis.

Identity is a core issue of the book. In Smyrna's cultural diversity, people changed their identities as easily as they switched languages. Especially the Levantines, who fluctuated between worlds and sometimes had grandparents of four different countries, were the prototype for the globalised 21st century's mixed-identity generations. For many city-dwellers today, their ethnic and national origins matter less than the place which defines their present existence. The world over, they create cities and city identities as alternatives to states and national identities. More than ever, cities are laboratories for new concepts of ethno-cultural coexistence, which allow for small-group identities and individualist lifestyles. In cities, they can thrive to such a degree that national identities become existentially obsolete.

In Smyrna, people already experimented with all this a long time ago, until the forces of hatred prevailed.

Chapter Outline

Prologue and Epilogue

The narrative frame is set in the Cava d'Oro hotel in Piraeus in the spring of 2020, at the outbreak of the Covid pandemic, with the narrator telling his lockdown company the Smyrna story at the hotel bar.

Chapter I

The book starts with the author's ferry ride from Athens to Chios island, en route to Izmir. Scenic Aegean seascape texture and a personal narrative tone lead to an introduction into the main story, the burning of Smyrna and the author's ambition to rediscover the legendary city. Before heading there, however, he decides to linger on Chios to explore the island for a few days.

- Arrival at Chios port, description of the town
- History of Chios as Smyrna's medieval predecessor, with enormous wealth through trade and mastic gum
- Visit to Chios library, discovery of reports by 16-18th century travellers who described the island as the Mediterranean's Garden Eden
- Exploration of the island, visit to Homer's Stone
- Character Theodore Spordilis, the owner of the town's oldest hotel, who complains about how the refugee crisis keeps tourists away
- Character Lorenzo Argenti, the last heir of a Genoese clan that once ruled over Chios, who talks about his family history

Chapter II

- Onward ferry journey via Çeşme to Izmir, first impressions of the city and street encounters

with people

- Overview of Izmir from Mount Pagos, with a brief summary of the city's history from antiquity until the early 20th century
- Visual description of the extent to which the 1922 fire destroyed the city
- Brief account of the tragedy and its significance, loss of a great metropolis
- City walk to the Corniche and the Alsancak district, the former European and Levantine quarter of Smyrna
- Character Tanju Tartar, a student, who talks about today's Izmir

Chapter III

- Introduction of Otto Stahl, a German Protestant pastor in Smyrna before WWI, through his memoirs
- Library research at the Institut Francais: the Ottoman Empire and its minorities in the late 19th century
- Search for two of Izmir's Christian churches: the Catholic Cathedral and the small Greek-Orthodox chapel with its old cemetery
- Tolerance and multiculturalism: Smyrna's ethnic and religious communities: Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Jews, Europeans, and Levantines
- Character Mesut Domenico, a Catholic vicar, who talks about the situation of Christians in Turkey today
- Character Suphi Varim, a Turkish crime author, whose books are set in old Smyrna and who talks about the city's underworld

Chapter IV

- Walk through the *Kemeralti*, the historical bazaar district, with its old mosques and synagogues
- Story of Shabbatai Zvi, the Smyrna-born 17th century renegade rabbi, who converted to Islam
- Smyrna and Izmir as a multicultural melting-pot for Muslim refugees who came from all Ottoman provinces
- Description of Smyrna as a hedonistic metropolis, conflicts in Muslim and Jewish communities between modernists and traditionalists
- Author's personal memories of his student years at the cosmopolitan and neo-liberal London School of Economics (LSE) in the 1990s
- Character Rodney Simes, a descendant of a wealthy Levantine family in Izmir, who talks about cosmopolitanism and hybrid identities

Chapter V

- Young Turks' Revolution of 1908 and the rise of nationalism
- Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and their effect on inter-ethnic relations in Smyrna
- Story of the multinational *Oriental Carpet Manufacturers* (OCM)
- Ottoman-German alliance in the First World War and the Armenian genocide of 1915, Pastor Otto Stahl's war memoirs from Smyrna

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- Armistice 1918 and Allied occupation, bloody invasion of Smyrna by Greek army in 1919 and Anatolian campaign
 - Hellenism and the expansionist *Great Idea* of incorporating former Byzantine territory into a larger Greece
 - Character Mehmet Özbilgin, an ethnologist at Izmir University, who collects Balkan folk costumes and talks about pan-Aegean identity and music

Chapter VI

- Return to Chios and its library
- Backstory to the Smyrna catastrophe: Greek nationalism and the war of independence from 1821-32
- Traveller reports on early 19th century Greek-Turkish harmony on Chios
- Chios massacre of 1822: Greek insurrection on Chios and the Ottoman suppression of it, entire population killed or enslaved
- Diplomatic despatches by European consuls on Chios and other eye-witness accounts of the tragic events
- Character Lorenzo Argenti who shows me his family's art collection, including paintings of his ancestors who were killed in 1822

Interludial Chapter

- The *Meltem* and other Aegean winds
- Visits to refugee camps on Chios, Lesbos, and Samos
- Memories of the 2015 refugee crisis and the author's visit to the Idomeni camp on the northern Greek border
- The EU-Turkey refugee agreement of 2016 and its implementation
- Encounters with refugees, NGO workers, EU officials, and coast guards
- Author's arrest by Greek police during a visit to the Chios camp
- Characters Elisabeth and Isabel, two young EU officials and their Arab translators, who talk about the asylum hearings with migrants and refugees
- Character Duncan, a Congolese migrant on his way to London, who talks about life in the camps
- Character Panos, a Greek Frontex coast guard, who talks about his experiences in dealing with refugee boats
- Characters Carin, Chloé, and Amy, Western NGO volunteers, who talk about their work in the camps

Chapter VII

- Visit to the Nea Moni monastery on Chios, known for its legendary Byzantine mosaics and its ossuary of the 1822 victims
- Reaction to the Chios massacre in Europe, in the press and the arts: Victor Huges and Eugène Delacroix
- Political philhellenism and its influence on the 19th century nationalist movements in Europe

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- Great Power support for an independent Greek kingdom, with the Bavarian prince Otto as the first king in 1831
 - Visit to the eerie 14th century Chios leper colony and the Kambos villas, which were ransacked during the Chios massacre
 - Character Anna, a long-time guide at Nea Moni, who talks about how the 1822 massacre is being remembered today
 - Character Jo Cohen, a Turkish-French-Israeli chef, who runs a bistro in Chios port and talks about Greek-Turkish relations today

Chapter VIII

- Return to Izmir
- Liberation Day festivities and military parade
- Turkish re-conquest and “liberation” of Smyrna on 9 September 1922, followed by massacres of Armenian and Greek civilians
- Mustafa Kemal’s entry into the city amid atrocities
- Troops set Smyrna on fire, with flames soon engulfing the city and its inhabitants fleeing to the Corniche
- Eyewitness account by George Horton, the US consul in Smyrna, who organised the evacuation of the American community
- Eyewitness account by Garabed Hatcherian, an Armenian doctor, who tried to save his family
- Eyewitness account by John Clayton, a *Chicago Tribune* journalist, who despatched the first report of the Smyrna fire to the US
- Passive non-interference by twenty Allied warships anchored in Smyrna bay, whose commanders only saved citizens of their own countries
- Budding romance between Mustafa Kemal and Latife Hanim during the Smyrna burning

Chapter IX

- Walk along today’s Corniche, the site of the 1922 massacre, which today is a green park full of families and students
- Visit to the Atatürk museum and reflections on the (non-)remembrance of the Smyrna Fire and other war crimes
- Situation after the fire: 200.000 refugees huddled at the Corniche and waiting to be rescued amid Allied inaction
- Eyewitness account by Garabed Hatcherian, the Armenian doctor, of his ordeal after he got arrested by Turkish forces
- Story of Asa Jennings, a handicapped American YMCA employee in Smyrna, who single-handedly set up safe houses for refugees and organised a massive rescue operation
- Story of Halsey Powell, a US naval captain, who ignored his orders to stay neutral and assisted Jennings in his efforts to evacuate the refugees on Greek merchant ships
- Story of Esther Lovejoy, an American volunteer doctor, who arrived in Smyrna to give medical treatment to refugees

Chapter X

- Walk to Izmir port from where the refugees were evacuated in 1922, parallels with today's NGO rescue operations in the Mediterranean
- Visit to the suburb of Bornova, where the wealthy Levantines built sumptuous villas, still living in some of them
- The Lausanne Treaty and population exchange of 1923/24; the consequences for Turkey, Greece, and Europe until today
- Lausanne as a blueprint for 20th century ethnic cleansings
- Literature by poets George Seferis und Necati Cumalı on losing their childhood homes in Smyrna and Norther Greece in the exchange
- Character Valerie Sagel, a Levantine of the Whittal clan, whose grandmother hosted Mustafa Kemal in her Bornova villa in 1922

Chapter XI

- Day of the Republic festivities in Kemalist Izmir
- Kemal's creation of the Turkish nation-state as a secular republic, with ethnic minorities being assimilated into a new Turkish identity
- Visit of the Beth Israel synagoge: the remaining Jews of Izmir
- Black pious Turks versus White secular Turks: the political career of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Islamist AKP and neo-Ottomanism
- Reflections on societal pluralism, cosmopolitanism and identity politics today
- Character Bora Alevok, scion of an old Turkish family in Izmir, whose grandfather was one of Turkey's richest arms dealers and who talks about Kemalist secularism being under pressure
- Characters Sara Pardo and Erol Yafe, Sephardic Jews in Izmir, who talk about Turkish anti-Semitism and their community's situation
- Characters Meltem and Tan, liberal university professors, who talk about the difficulties they face

Chapter XII

- Return to Chios
- Walk through the Kastro, once the Muslim district, searching for its now-empty mosques and houses
- Encounters with Turks living on Chios today
- Valedictory visit to Kardamyla, a seaman's village on the island's northern shore, and return to Athens
- Characters Güher Spordilis and Gamze Konstantina, mixed-identity Turks living on Chios, who talk about their cross-cultural experiences
- Character Vasiliki Christopoulou, a Chiot singer, who studied music in Izmir and who talks about the pan-Aegean appeal of *rebetiko* songs
- Characters Yannis and Dimitris, Chiot seamen in Kardamyla, who talk about their family's refugee experience in 1822 and again in 1942

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Ian Kershaw, Sheffield University

“Extremely rewarding reading“

Alexander Kluy, Buchkultur Magazine, April 2017

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Philipp Blom, The Vertigo Years: Europe 1900-1914

"A melancholic homage to a great European city”

German Press Agency (dpa), 13 June 2017

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Stephan Stach, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 07 July 2017

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Ute Büsing, Radio Berlin, 09 April 2017

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Florian Oegerli, NZZ Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 26 March 2017

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Sabine Adler, German National Radio, 24 July 2017

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“His exciting city portrait is, at the same time, a mirror of European history.”
Nürnberger Nachrichten, 08 May 2017

"With his book Kleveman has pulled away the 'cloak of silence' which covers the city to this day. For this he deserves the utmost respect."
Bettina Schulte, Badische Zeitung, 29 March 2017

“A sensationally good and important book”
Jüdische Allgemeine Zeitung, March 2017

”Through the biographies of the people he meets in Lviv Kleveman approaches the city’s chequered history... as with a burning glass.“
Hannes Schwenger, Berlin Tagesspiegel, 20 April 2017

"A very nuanced historical depiction of a city that was home both to victims and perpetrators”
Gerrit ter Horst, Zeilensprünge literature blog, 6 May 2017

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