

Izmir and Salonica from the Late Ottoman urban scene to the nationalistic reconstructions.

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During the Late Ottoman period, Izmir and Salonica were subject to several and similar events in terms of urban and architectural changes. With the economical and political reforms of the Ottoman Empire after Tanzimat period, some districts, like waterfronts and Frank quarters became testing grounds where Western urban concepts (e.g. regular street patterns) and architectural types (e.g. collective housing) were realized by a multicultural social environment. At the end of the 19th century maritime districts became the modern and cosmopolitan façades of Izmir and Salonica: master builders, architects and members of the local elites from different religious-national groups realized private and public buildings which defined a plural, complex and comprehensive idea of modernity. After the Balkans Wars, the end of the Ottoman Empire, and the exchange of populations following the Greek-Turkish conflict, the urban societies of both Aegean cities started to become culturally homogeneous. Moreover, two big fires destroyed most of the Late Ottoman districts of Salonica and Izmir in 1917 and 1922, respectively. These catastrophic events gave the opportunity to the administrators to rethink urban identities according to the new dominant nationalist paradigm. European urban planners imposed different urban layouts and symbols in order to *de-Ottomanize* the cityscape. Despite this effort in the first decades of the reconstruction process, some of the buildings built proposed architectural techniques directly connected to the Late Ottoman period. This sort of cultural resistance well expresses how cities are basically collective facts; in my paper I will suggest this interpretation to understand how the social-cultural change following the Lausanne Treaty affected the urbanism and architecture of Salonica and Izmir.