

Preliminary information

Anatolia, as is well known, is like a union of cultures formed through the intermingling of countless civilizations over thousands of years. At certain times, this cultural fusion reached such a point that it even frightened central authorities, driving them to attempt to destroy people of their own religion and their own nation. The civilizations that lived on these lands left behind works reflecting their cultures. However, over time these works were ruthlessly destroyed, leaving no trace at all.

The purpose of our work is precisely this matter. I know many people who, with the precision of a surgeon, strive to gather the remaining fragments of a destroyed history in order to reveal it. Among those I know, I have never encountered anyone who pursues this with pure love without any material expectation. Sometimes they chase after the calligrapher whose signature lies beneath a line, sometimes after the symbol engraved on a gravestone. I salute them all with respect.

I am certain that this will serve as a resource for esteemed researchers, who will, with their studies, carry this knowledge much further.

Respectfully,

Mustafa Üzel

Abstract: In this study, we endeavored to uncover certain information by following the traces of a demolished fortress. We examined the structure of the İzmir Port Fortress and, although I had already written about the lost inscription I identified in 2016 in my 2017 work, I rewrote it here for the sake of coherence. At the same time, we mapped out where the fortress would have been located on present-day plans. We also made an effort to reveal the unknown secrets of an inn in İzmir whose origin or founder remains unidentified.

Saint Pierre, St. Pietro, St. Peter, Le Château, Liman, Ok, Lower Fortress

In the İzmir Bay, which has the natural characteristics of a harbor and has therefore been used as a port since antiquity, there once stood a fortress in the İzmir cove — the same one whose present location on city maps we will describe in detail in later sections.



John III Doukas Vatatzes, Emperor of Nicaea (1222–1254 CE)¹

In 1231, Emperor (of Nicaea) John III Doukas Vatatzes (1222-1254) built a fortress dominating this inner gulf, which they named Neon Kastron². This fortress was later referred to by many names: Genoese Castle, Castrum Smyrnarum, Hafen Kastell, Saint Pierre, St. Pietro, St. Peter, Le Château, Liman, Ok, Lower Fortress (Aşağı Kale), Kal'ai Bahr, Kal'ai İzmir Cedid, and Kadirga. Since there was a church built inside the fortress in honor of Saint Peter, the fortress has generally been known as the Fortress of Saint

¹ 15th century CE manuscript, History of John Zonaras, Mutinensis gr.122, f.294r, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena.

² John III Doukas Vatatzes also had the fortress on Mount Pagos in İzmir — today called Kadifekale, though its correct name was Kaydefa Kale — strengthened.

Pierre. It is possible that this church was later converted into a mosque, as in the Ottoman period (as we will explain later) there was indeed a mosque inside the fortress.



Drawing of the sarcophagus lid

In some sources, the drawing above is presented as belonging to the sarcophagus of John III Doukas Vatatzes, but the likelihood of this being correct is extremely low. The single-line inscription on the lid of the sarcophagus contains no information whatsoever about John III Doukas Vatatzes. The translation of this text is as follows:

“Now you are dressed in a beautiful adornment, in a great and divine garment; and so now go to God with the crown on the head.”

I had applied to the Izmir Archaeological Museum to research this sarcophagus lid, but the next day I discovered that research on this subject had already been conducted. The sarcophagus lid is in a broken condition, and its photographs are shown below. The researchers who carried out this study also share the same opinion as mine; in fact, they believe that this sarcophagus lid does not belong to John III Doukas Vatatzes but rather to Theodore II Laskaris³.



³ Ergün Lafli- Maurizio Buora, THE SARCOFAGUS OF A NICAEAN EMPEROR IN IZMIR, Вестник ВолГУ. Серия 4, История. Регионоведение. Международные отношения. 2021. Т. 26. № 6, р.131-133



The photographs of the sarcophagus lid were taken by E. Laflı in 2021 and are taken from the aforementioned studies.

The French historian René-Aubert Vertot, while narrating in great detail Timur’s arrival in İzmir and his siege and capture of the harbor fortress, also provides some descriptions of its structure. For this reason, I believe the most beneficial method is to present his account exactly as it stands. Vertot describes the siege as follows:

“Timur, knowing that Smyrna was better defended by the number and bravery of its defenders than by the height and strength of its walls, demanded nothing more than what his honor required in order to avoid a long and bloody siege. As a matter of form, he merely requested that the commander of the fortress allow his banner to be raised upon its towers. But the governor angrily rejected this proposal, and thus nothing remained but for the city’s fate to be decided by the outcome of battle.

Enraged by this refusal, Timur ordered the fortress to be besieged. His soldiers filled the ditches with earth, fascines, and bundles, while archers showered the defenders on the walls with arrows. The knights sallied out often to disrupt the works, and every day skirmishes broke out. These warriors, known as ‘the soldiers of Christ,’ seemed to compete with one another to prove their valor against the infidels.

Chalcocondylas, in recounting this siege, states that Timur placed two hundred men in each tower. Inside them were stairways and sloping passages giving access to different levels. The lowest story was generally occupied by laborers directing the machines or soldiers working to undermine the walls. The middle level was built on a line with the battlements and contained a drawbridge, which, when lowered, allowed the assailants to enter the city. The uppermost platform was filled with archers, who from their elevated position discharged a hail of arrows to drive the defenders from the ramparts.

Şerefeddin Ali of Yazd, a contemporary author whose work was later translated from Persian into French by the late M. Petit de la Croix (the younger), also left us an account of the siege of Smyrna. Although this writer does not explicitly mention the Knights of Rhodes, from his description of the defenders one can easily recognize them. It will perhaps be welcome to the reader if I cite this passage from his history. This Persian historian, who died in 1456, expresses himself in these or similar terms:

“Timur was informed of a very strong place by the sea, built of cut stone, surrounded on three sides by water, and on the landward side defended by a deep ditch faced with lime and thoroughly fortified. Within were many Franks. This place was called Izmir, or Smyrna. The Greeks regarded it as holy ground; from distant lands pilgrims came with devotion to offer their vows and alms. Nearby, at the distance of a horse’s gallop, on the side of a mountain, stood another fortress also called Izmir, but that one was in the hands of the Muslims. Because of their difference of religion, the inhabitants of one were in constant war with those of the other. The Christians of Smyrna, being open on three sides to the sea, received continual succor from Europe by ships bringing them provisions, clothing, weapons, and everything they needed. And because this stronghold lay on the furthest frontier of Asia within Muslim territory, the Greeks waged relentless war from it, defending it as their most important post. No Muslim ruler had ever subdued it or forced it to pay tribute. Murad I, father of Yıldırım Bayezid, had often marched against it at the head of powerful armies but failed; Bayezid himself had besieged it for a long time, but in vain. This place caused Muslims great distress: massacres were frequent, and streams of blood ran into the sea

When Timur learned of the situation in Smyrna, he convinced himself that, for the sake of religion, he must completely destroy his enemies in order to save the Muslims from this calamity. Accordingly, he sent Mirza Pir Mehmed, Emir Sheikh Nureddin, and others to the site. He first commanded them, through a messenger, to invite the people to accept Islam (for this is the command of Muhammad); if they attained the felicity of accepting it, they would be treated well, and this decision would be reported to him so that he could reward them with his benevolence. If their stubbornness softened and, while remaining Christian, they agreed to pay the tax, the amount would be determined with them and

collected. But if, unfortunately, they refused even this and dared to resist in defense, they would be all put to the sword.

The Mirzas and emirs immediately obeyed, and on arriving before Smyrna sent an envoy to invite the people to Islam, mingling promises with threats. But since they were destined for destruction, both were in vain. The governor Mahmony had already appealed for aid to the princes of Europe; and in consequence a great number of the bravest Christian commanders, even bands of reckless fanatics, had come there, establishing magazines of provisions and munitions.

Our commanders reported this situation to the palace, and as soon as Timur received the news, he decided to go there personally. He left his heavy baggage at the foothills of Mount Tire; despite it being winter and the weather extremely rainy, he insisted on riding his horse so that the reward of this holy war would be credited to him, and thus he set out in that direction. At the head of his army, on Saturday, the 6th of Jumada al-Awwal in the year 805 of the Hijri calendar / December 2, 1402 of the Gregorian calendar, he arrived there and ordered Mirza Mehmed Sultan, whose winter quarters were in Manisa, to advance and come before Smyrna. The same orders were also sent to Merasmiren Chuh and Bonleen, as well as to Emir Cihan-shah and others.

At Timur's approach, all the drums and kettledrums resounded, and the army raised a great shout. The city was attacked immediately on the land side. Each commander began his entrenchments opposite his own position, preparing catapults and battering-rams for the assault. Arrows were discharged against the fortress; vessels filled with burning oil and incendiary matter were hurled against its gates. Emir Chamelec also constructed large scaffolds upon three piles driven into the water, placing upon them huge timbers, and built a strong, level causeway from the shore up to the walls of the fortress, so that the soldiers could advance upon it boldly as if fighting upon solid ground.

Meanwhile, the Mirzas, Sultan Mehmed, and Miranshah arrived, having left their baggage at Manisa under the care of Emir Shamseddin Abbas. This reinforcement greatly advanced the siege, for Timur gave orders for a general assault. The Emir of Loumans and the colonels of thousands advanced with their troops each upon his side. The assault lasted from morning till evening, and from evening till morning; the brave men on both sides performed deeds of extraordinary valor. The attack was as obstinate as the defense; no one had a moment's rest. The engines and battering-rams beat down the walls and towers, while the besieged, undaunted, hurled without intermission pots of naphtha, wildfire, stones, and arrows from engines and bows alike.

Few of those who attempted to escape by leaping into the sea and swimming to their ships survived; most were drowned. After putting the inhabitants

of Smyrna to the sword, they demolished both the town and the fortress, casting the bricks, weapons, and goods into the sea⁴.

At this time, large ships from certain parts of Europe, called carracks, arrived. Each carried at least two masts, and they were loaded with soldiers and arms to bring aid to Smyrna. But when, on approaching the harbor, they saw no sign of the city or fortress, they stopped in astonishment. Timur commanded that the heads of some Christians be flung into these vessels. The fire-throwers executed the order, and several heads were hurled into the very midst of the ships. The sailors, recognizing the heads of their companions, were struck with horror, turned back, and fled in despair, their hopes entirely frustrated⁵.”



Miniatures depicting Timur's siege of Izmir ⁶

When we examine in detail the drawings in the first of these miniatures found in the Zafarnama, it is possible to see some of the details described by René-Aubert Vertot. In the lower left of the miniature, we can see the bridge built over the sea (the harbor) with wooden planks, and in the upper right, the towers where the soldiers are stationed. In this context, we cannot say that the miniature was drawn in an exaggerated manner. The Zafarnama generally deals with the life of the Mongol conqueror Timur. It is a eulogy

⁴ Some sources state that the siege lasted three weeks.

⁵ René-Aubert Vertot, The history of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, styled afterwards, the Knights of Rhodes and at present, the Knights of Malta, Dublin, J. Christie, volume 3, s.26-30

⁶ Zafarnama, Kamāl ud-Dīn Behzād (c. 1450-c.1535), John Work Garrett Library. Johns Hopkins Üni.

written about twenty years after his death. Commissioned by Timur's grandson, Ibrahim Sultan, between 1424 and 1428, it is among the primary sources on Timur's life.

Piri Reis describes this inner harbor, which the castle protected, as follows:

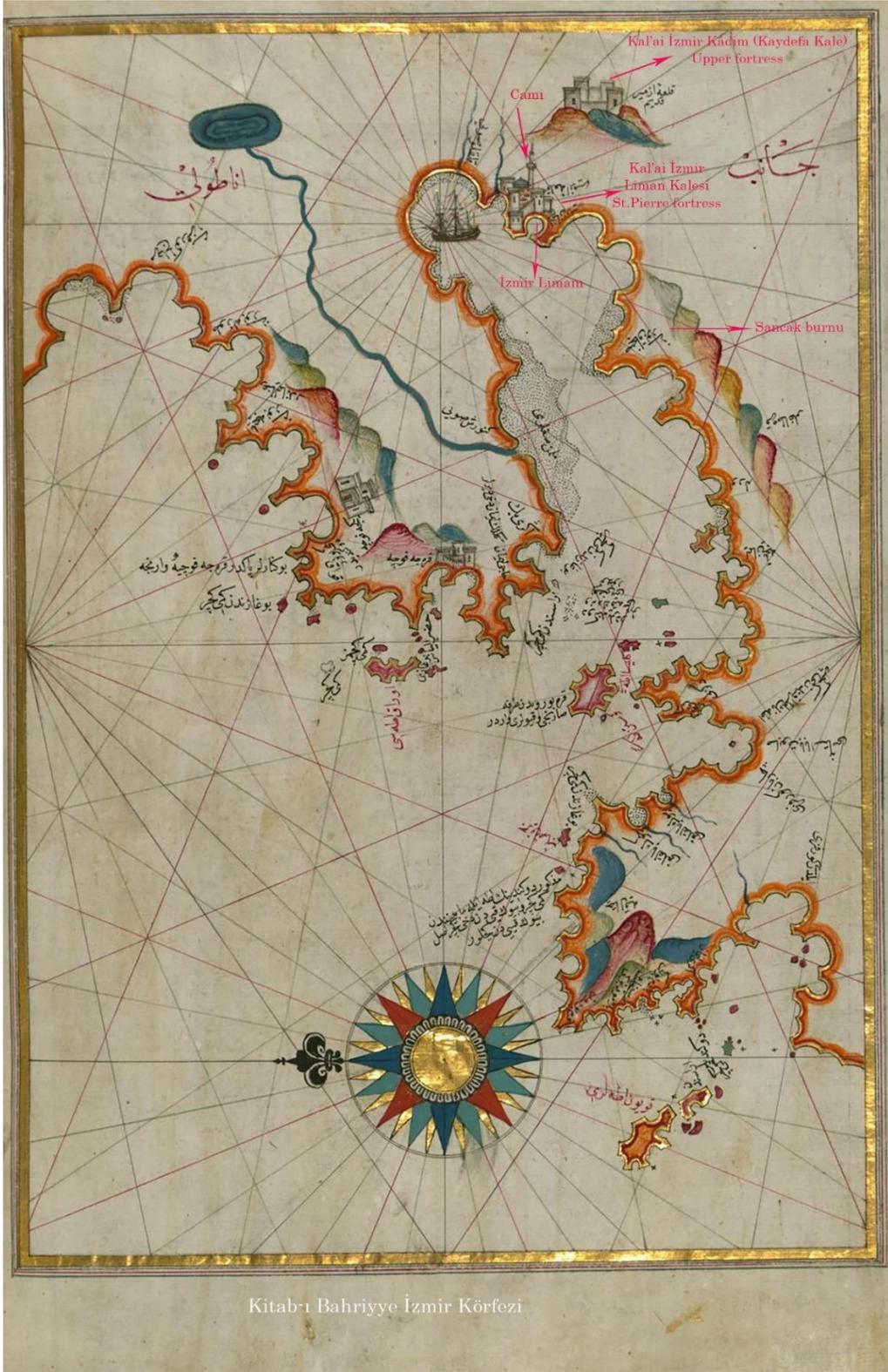
“Ships going to İzmir sail close to Kızıl Mountain on the qibla side. After reaching Sancak Cape, they head towards the middle. There are shallows at Sancak Cape as well. The Menemen coast is very shallow. After passing Sancak Cape towards İzmir, there are no shallows up to the front of İzmir Castle. Large ships can approach and anchor right in front of İzmir Castle. In front of this castle, there are stones piled up like ballast stones. Ships tie their mooring ropes around all of these stones and anchor facing the west. Inside, there is the INNER HARBOR. The harbor has a circumference of one mile. We entered with large ships and heavy barças, but when we returned later, it had silted up. Only small ships could enter. Its mouth is narrow. The hulls of large, heavy barças touch the ground on both sides, so they cannot enter. If they do not go in front of İzmir Castle but enter the SAND SHALLOWS instead, they are guided in with a sounding line and anchor there, because it is shallow. On the northwest side of the cape, there is a rocky place called NAL DÖKEN. Some heavy barças anchor there and load grapes⁷.”

In the Kitab-ı Bahriyye, rather than the structure of the castle itself, information is provided about the harbor due to the subject matter, and a map showing the location of both the harbor and the castle is also included. However, it is possible to catch some clues. Piri Reis included two maps of this location in his book. In one of these maps, a mosque can be seen inside the castle, and this mosque is also mentioned by Evliya Çelebi. Since we know that the first compilation of the Kitab-ı Bahriyye was in 1521, but the construction date of the Hisar Mosque is about seventy years later, it is not possible that the mosque shown by Piri Reis inside the castle is the Hisar Mosque. Moreover, the Hisar Mosque is outside the castle and was built on the filled-in harbor, while the mosque on Piri Reis' map is shown as being inside the castle. Unfortunately, this mosque has not survived to the present day.

As a Turkish-Islamic tradition, it is well known that a mosque was built in every conquered place; therefore, we must view the mosque that once stood inside the castle but did not survive in this context. Although the mosque inside the upper castle of İzmir, or Kadife (Kaydefa) Castle, is also interpreted in this context, it is clear that there is a confusing mix of uncertain information. Evliya Çelebi writes that the construction date of the mosque in Kadife Castle is 1308. However, in 1308 İzmir had not yet been conquered by the Aydınoğulları, and in fact, the Aydınoğulları principality was only just being established that year. It is possible that the mosque in Kadife Castle was built after 1317, and it is highly likely that it was constructed by Cüneyd Bey of İzmiröğlü.

⁷ Piri Reis, KİTAB'I BAHİRİYYE, Türk Tarihi Araştırma Kurumu Yayınlarından, no: 2, Devlet Basımevi, İstanbul 1935, s.156-159

The Kadife Castle mosque awaits researchers as a separate subject of study.



Piri Reis Kitab-ı Bahriye page.159

Evliya Çelebi also provides details about both this mosque and the fortress, as we present below:

“It is a castle built of cut stones on a flat ground by the seaside. It was commissioned by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. Its circumference is approximately twelve hundred paces. On the land side, it is surrounded by a deep and wide moat, three paces across. The other sides are bordered by the sea. It has excellent cannons to protect the harbor. On the qibla side, it has large gates with iron wings on two levels. Inside the castle, there is a small mosque and buildings for twenty people. There are no other buildings. On the inner side of the castle gate, there is a well with very cold and excellent water. We were surprised that a castle by the sea has such good drinking water inside. The castle has a commander and eighty soldiers. Its ammunition is quite sufficient. On the castle gate, there is an inscription on white marble. It reads as follows:

Elhamdü lillâhi Rabbi'l-âlemin, ve's-salâtü ve's-selâmü alâ Muhammedini'l-ma'sûmi'T kevineyn, emmâ mü'ebbede's-sultan-ı zaman, Fâtihu es Sultan nâm Mehmed bin Murâd Hân min nesli âli Osman, Li-sene ihda ve semane-mie

It is a very secure and solid fortress. It was built personally by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. It does not belong to foreigners⁸.”

The Arabic inscription on the tablet briefly states: “This fortress was built by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror in the year 801 of the Hijri calendar.”

We will also examine in more detail some of the information Evliya Çelebi provides about the fortress, but regarding the inscription of the castle, the details he gives are inconsistent. I first identified the repair and construction inscription of the fortress in 2016 on a fountain located at the İzmir Hamidiye Mosque, and I published it in 2017. Unfortunately, both the content and the date of the original inscription are entirely different from the information given by Evliya Çelebi.

The most important issue is the Arabic phrase that Evliya Çelebi records for the date of the inscription: “*Li-sene ihda ve semane-mie*”—which corresponds to the year 801 in the Hijri calendar, or 1399 in the Gregorian calendar. At that time, the patron mentioned in the text, Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, had not yet been born, nor had his father, Sultan Murad II. Moreover, the content of the inscription we identified does not match the wording provided by Çelebi.

There is also no possibility of a second inscription, because the date given refers to a much earlier period. Nor can this be dismissed as a translation error, since even if the date had been mistranslated, the text itself would still not match.

The content of the inscription, which I identified in 2016 and which is still kept at the İzmir Archaeological Museum, is as follows:

⁸ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, ANADOLU, SURİYE, HİCAZ (1671-1672), İstanbul Devlet Matbaası, 1935, c.9, s.88

“Elhamdülillahi veliyyülinayeti velavn vessalatü ala seyyidina muhammed il-maksudi minelkevni Emma bad fehezihil kalatil islamiyyetil beyzai büniyet biavni haliki-larzi vessemai biemri sultan Muhammed ibni murat han min ali Osman eyyedehulla-hülmülküddeyyan ve temmet biinayetillahilmennani fi şehrişaban seneti hamse ve se-manin ve semani mieti hezihi Husni necati lilmüminin üdhuluhe bisururin veselaminve ammerehe Elfakir ile Essamedilganiyyi Muhammed bin Muhammed el haseni”

The inscription is not written in Ottoman Turkish. It is written in Arabic, and in summary it states:

“This fortress was built in the month of Sha‘bān in the year 885 of the Hijri calendar, by the order of Sultan Mehmed, son of Murad.”

When converted to the calendar we use today, we understand that the fortress was completed around October–November of the year 1480. The date on this inscription corresponds with the dates mentioned in the chronicles and with the reign of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. This information proves that the details given by Evliya Çelebi are incorrect.



The construction inscription of the fortress that I discovered in 2016.

Evliya Çelebi’s account stating, “It was personally built by Sultan Mehmed, not by foreigners,” does not correspond with the historical information and documents. However, when Timur retreated, he gave this place to İzmirlioğlu Cüneyd Bey. İzmirlioğlu Cüneyd Bey was in constant conflict with the Ottomans. As a result of Sultan Mehmed I, the grandfather of Fatih Sultan Mehmed, fighting against Cüneyd Bey, we know that this fortress was seized from Cüneyd Bey and demolished down to its foundations⁹. Therefore, it is possible that Çelebi, evaluating the matter from this perspective, wrote that the founder was Sultan Mehmed II.

If we examine the information provided from the beginning together, we can say that until the 1600s, the majority of St. Pierre Castle was surrounded by the sea, and after this period, due to the silting of the harbor, the southern boundaries were formed by the

⁹ Mustafa Üzel, İzmirlioğlu Cüneyd Bey, Şeyh Bedreddin, Börklüce Mustafa ve Torlak Kemal, Papirüs Yayınları, İzmir 2022, s.173

Hisar Mosque and the Kızlarağası Han, while the northern boundaries were finalized by incorporating the structure now known as Mirkelâm Han.

During our field studies using current maps and by overlaying the 1856 and 1876 plans with modern maps, we determined that the Basmane-side boundary of the castle corresponds to Mirkelâm Han. In the 1856 plan, we see that there were settlements within the castle, but the street layouts do not match the present-day plan. However, when examining the 1876 plan, all streets within the castle align exactly with the current layout. Investigating how such changes could have occurred within the twenty-year period between the two plans, we found the reason: prior to 1876, no structure named Mirkelâm Han existed in this area, but in the 1905 Goad maps, we see Mirkelâm Han under the name Mir-i Kelâm. Therefore, we can say that the building acquired the name Mirkelâm Han after 1876. In the 1876 plan, this building is marked as a government/public building.

In fact, when evaluating both the original status of this building and the factors determining the importance of the castle, the question of who owned the building after 1876 is not significant. Additionally, Evliya Çelebi lists İzmir's inns as Malkoçzâde, Kurşunlu, Çavuşzâde, Altıparmak, Tercüman, Beyler, Mehmed Efendi, Mısır Veziri Ebu'l-Hayr Kethüda İbrahim Paşa, Muhtesib, İmamzâde, Bölükbaşı, Tavşanlı, Çukur, Hacı Hüseyin, Hacı Ömer, Fazlullah Ağa, Sulu, and Bostancı¹⁰, but he does not mention any inn called Mirkelâm (Mir-i Kelâm). If such a large inn had existed, Evliya Çelebi would certainly have mentioned it.

In conclusion, before 1876, no such inn appears in either the plans or the chronicles.

When we evaluate the information Evliya Çelebi provides between the lines, we see that it contains some details. Çelebi mentions a small mosque located within the castle, which is referred to in one source as the "Selvili Mescid." Unfortunately, this mosque has not survived to the present day. However, the possibility that the St. Pierre Church, established for the castle after it was taken from the Latins, was later converted into a mosque will always remain. There are numerous similar examples in Turkish-Islamic history. We will explain in later sections why this mosque and the castle did not survive to the present day.

Another detail provided by Çelebi is the well located within the castle, which he refers to as "âb-ı hayat" (water of life). Until recently, there was a well in the courtyard at the entrance of the structure now known as Mirkelâm, from which locals drew water using a pump. Unfortunately, when the courtyard was covered with concrete, the well was destroyed and is no longer visible today. However, its traces can still be followed.

At the right corner of the courtyard, there is a fountain that has survived to the present day. When I examined this fountain in 2016, I observed an elegantly carved anchor figure on its pediment. To the left of the anchor was the Ottoman numeral 3 (۳), to the right the Ottoman numeral 1 (۱), and beneath the anchor was the Ottoman letter "kef."

¹⁰ Evliya Çelebi, p 196

In the Janissary corps, the letter “kef” denotes a “bölük” (company), within a corps consisting of 61 bölüks, 101 cemâ’ats, and 34 sekbans. The anchor is the emblem of the 31st Bölük and the 88th Cemâ’at of the Janissary corps, i.e., its symbol. Since the number 31 appears on both sides of the anchor figure, we can definitively say that this emblem belongs to the 31st Bölük of the Janissaries.

As a result, we can confirm that this fountain belonged to the 31st Bölük. It is known that, especially from the 18th century onward in Istanbul, Janissaries engraved their emblems on some fountains and sold their water for a fee. The Janissary emblems on the Horhor Fountain in Istanbul are another example. Additionally, we know that a considerable number of fountains were constructed by Janissary aghas¹¹.



The Janissary emblem of the 31st Bölük on the fountain located inside Mir Kalam İnn

Çelebi mentions the Janissaries in İzmir, stating, “According to the information we received, all the tradesmen in İzmir paid tribute to the Janissaries once a week. ¹²” He also notes that this fortress had a commander and 80 soldiers, meaning there was a military unit inside the castle. As we have indicated above and will continue to discuss in the following sections, we have sufficient evidence to assert that these were indeed Janissaries.

The presence of the 31st Janissary Company in İzmir is documented in historical sources. Their name appears during the İzmir incidents of March 1797. Perhaps the most notable of the events during the tenure of Janissary Agha Mustafa was the incident in

¹¹ Mustafa Üzel, *Agayan-ı Yeniçeriyân Dergâh-ı Âli-Yeniçeri Ağaları*, KKY yayınevi 2025,c1,s.456

¹² Evliya Çelebi,page.96

İzmir in March 1797 involving the Janissaries and Venetians, Cephalonians, and Slovenians.

In Ramadan 1211 / February–March 1797, a troupe of performers, under the protection of the Austrian consulate and including four or five women, came to İzmir to put on shows in Ottoman cities. They began performing in a garden near the Güller Bridge, outside the Frank Quarter. Admission to this troupe was charged, and a guard from the Venetian consulate was stationed at the gate.

However, some Sloven, Venetian, and Croatian sailors attempted to force entry without paying. Janissary Bilâl, assigned to guard the gate, refused them. The group returned with about fifteen armed men. During the confrontation, one Venetian sailor shot Bilâl with a pistol or carbine, wounding several others. The audience panicked and dispersed.

Bilâl's comrades from the 31st Company and other Janissaries reported to the authorities that their colleague had been killed and demanded the perpetrator. Although the authorities notified the Venetian consul, the consulate staff delayed by saying "we will find him today or tomorrow," and eventually reported they could not locate him. Frustrated by these delays, the Janissaries armed themselves to handle the matter personally.

The incident escalated, extending as far as Punta, with Venetian ships firing cannons at the advancing Janissaries¹³.

As stated in the sources, the 31st Company of the Janissary Corps was present in İzmir, and as a rule, each company or *cemâ't* had its own quarters. Furthermore, the emblem on the fountain is evidence that the 31st Company was located here. By virtue of their duties, most of them were stationed inside fortresses. Therefore, it is possible to say that the building named *Mir-i Kelâm* after 1876 was used by the 31st Company. After examining the city plans, we will clarify this further. Their purpose for being here will also become much clearer once we study the plans.

An important point we must emphasize is that the Janissary Corps was abolished in 1826. Sultan Mahmud II eliminated the Janissary Corps, which had begun to deteriorate at the end of the 16th century and by the 18th and 19th centuries had completely lost its discipline and order. In fact, this was an extension of the modernization movement that began during the reign of Sultan Selim III. For a long time, the Janissary organization was deliberately weakened, and even men loyal to the Sultan were placed within it in order to undermine it from the inside.

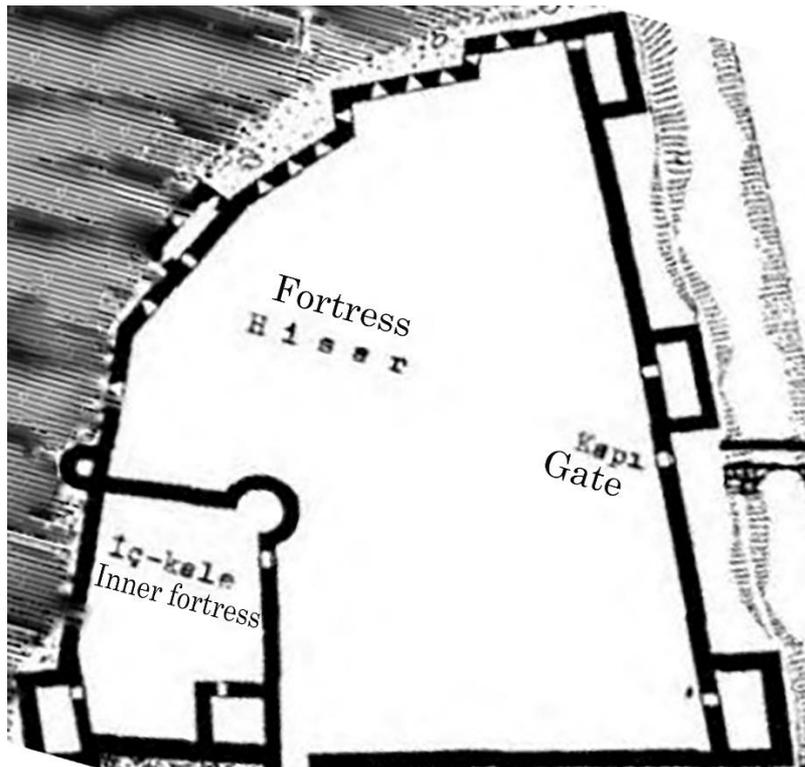
In 1826, with the support of Hüseyin Ağa/Pasha—who had previously served as Janissary Agha but was reassigned as Commander of the Bosphorus to protect him from

¹³ Mustafa Üzel, a.g.e.s. 457-8; Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, VI, 2. tab, İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1309 s. 235, 387

Janissary wrath—the Sultan eliminated what had for centuries been the most important element in the rise of the Ottoman Empire. In its place, he established a new organization called *Asâkir-i Mansûre-i Muhammediyye* (The Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad), named in reference to the Prophet. Ottoman historians refer to the abolition of the Janissaries as the *Vak‘a-i Hayriyye* (“The Auspicious Incident”).

From this information, we know that after this date neither the 31st Company nor any other Janissary companies or *cemâ’ats* were present in İzmir. Therefore, the spaces that once belonged to the Janissaries were, after this time, taken over either by the *Asâkir-i Mansûre-i Muhammediyye* or by other units assigned to them¹⁴.

When we evaluate what has been written about the structure of the castle and consider the general needs of such architectural constructions, we can say with certainty that the castle must have had a gate on the seaside. Likewise, there must also have been a gate on the landward side. In fact, Mr. Baykara, in the drawing below, suggested that there should have been a gate on the northern side of the castle, that is, toward Basmane. We also know that Timur’s armies approached from the landward side. From a logistical perspective as well, the presence of a gate on the landward side appears to have been an inevitable necessity.



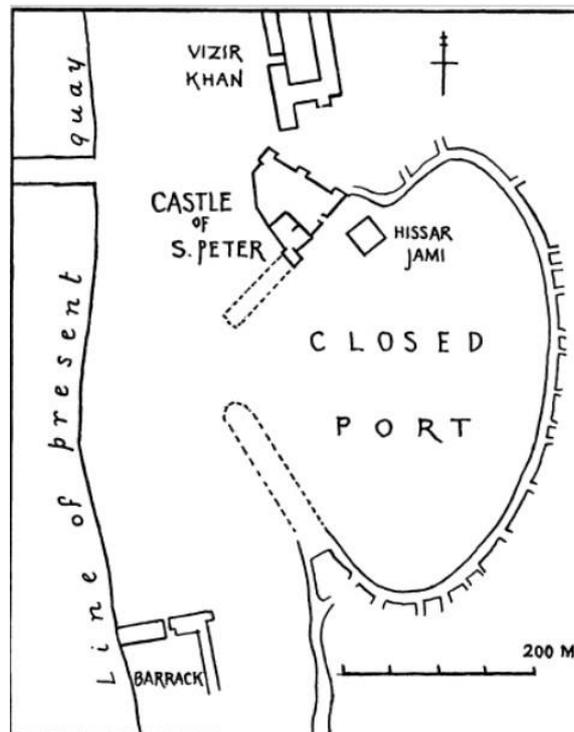
The plan of the harbor castle drawn by Tuncer Baykara¹⁵

¹⁴ Mustafa Üzel, page 795

¹⁵ Tuncer Baykara, *Aydinoğlu Gazi Umur Bey (1309-1348) Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları 1232, Türk Büyükleri Dizisi 131, Ankara 1990, s.45.*

Evliya Çelebi, while mentioning a gate on the qibla side, does not specify its exact location, so it is not possible to determine the gate's position solely from this information. If by "qibla side" he means from within the castle, then the gate would have to be on the side of the Hisar Mosque. However, from a strategic and logistical perspective, having a gate there does not seem reasonable. Therefore, it is highly probable that he was referring to the land side. If this possibility is correct, when looking from the Basmane side, the qibla direction would point toward the Mir-i Kelâm Inn. As we mentioned earlier, this building lies on the northern boundary of the castle and within its walls.

When Evliya Çelebi visited İzmir, the İzmir harbor had already silted up with alluvium brought by streams, and the Hisar Mosque had been built on top of it. However, at the time when the castle was built, the İzmir harbor was located where the Hisar Mosque and the Kızlarağası Inn stand today. A gate constructed there could not have provided the same strategic and logistical advantages as the gate that should have been on the land side. The fact that the harbor silted up and closed, and that the Hisar Mosque was built on the filled-in area, can be seen in Hasluck's plan below.



Hasluck plan¹⁶

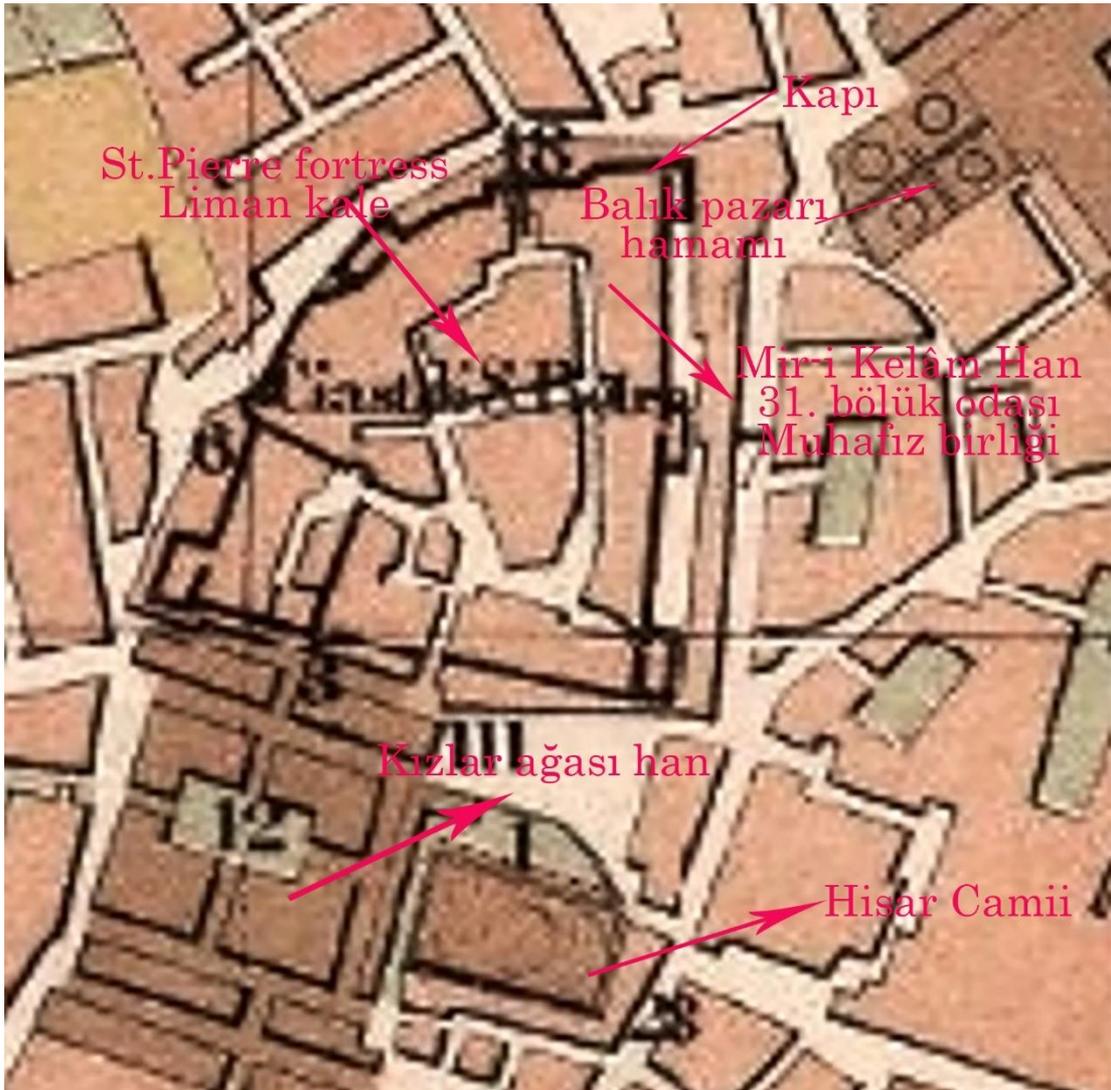
If we examine the 1856 plan, certain details become clearer. In the city plan prepared in 1856 by the engineer Luigi Storari—who was born in 1821 in Ferrara, Italy, and migrated to İzmir in 1849—and presented to Sultan Abdülmecid, both the location of the castle and the fact that settlements had formed inside the castle can be seen. Evliya Çelebi

¹⁶ F. W. Hasluck, *Heraldry of the Rhodian Knights, Formerly in Smyrna Castle*, *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, Vol. 17, 1910/1911, Fig.1

mentions that there were several structures inside the castle. It appears that, especially after the construction of the Sancakburnu Castle, St. Pierre, that is, the harbor castle, had largely lost its function, and civilian settlements began inside it.

When Storari prepared his plan, he recorded the harbor castle with the note Castello di St. Pietro and also indicated that within the plan there was a garrison of 40 guards inside the castle. Although the word “Karakol” (guard post) was written in Turkish at this point, in his parenthetical note he did not use the Italian equivalent of “karakol” (Stazione di polizia), but instead wrote “Corpi di guardia”, meaning “guard corps.” For the area shown inside the castle, he also gave the note “di 40 uomini”, meaning “of 40 men.” In other words, it is certain that there was a garrison of forty men inside the castle.

Furthermore, in the 1876 Lamec Saad plan, at the site of the Mir-i Kelâm Inn remaining within the castle, a pair of crossed swords was drawn to indicate a military post, and the area was shown as a public space under state control.



Luigi Storari planı 1856¹⁷

¹⁷ Luigi Storari, Pianta Della Citta di Smirne, Rileveta, Dall Ingegnere Luigi Storari 1856

In the 1876 Lamec Saad plan, we see that the interior of the castle does not show the irregular construction that appeared in Storari's plan. However, it is clear that there were settlements inside due to the castle having lost its function.

When i investigated the changes in the castle between 1856 and 1876, and the reasons for its transformation into its present state, it was not difficult to find the cause. The process began with a letter from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Works, dated 17 Muharram 1287 in the Hijri calendar / 19 April 1870 in the Gregorian calendar. The content of this letter is as follows:

“The petition reported from the province of Aydın regarding the demolition of the old harbor castle in Izmir states that, after deducting the expenses, the remaining proceeds from the sale of its stones and land should be given to the Reform School (Islahhâne). In connection with this, the Ministry of Finance requests that, following the demolition of the aforementioned castle and the purchase of the houses within it, a plan be drawn up for the construction of a marketplace extending from the castle to the Hisar Mosque and Halim Ağa Bazaar (down to the shoreline). We kindly ask that the values at which the mentioned houses are to be purchased be written down in a register and reported by foundation officials and city administrators who are knowledgeable about these matters. Hijri calendar: 17 Muharram 1287¹⁸.”

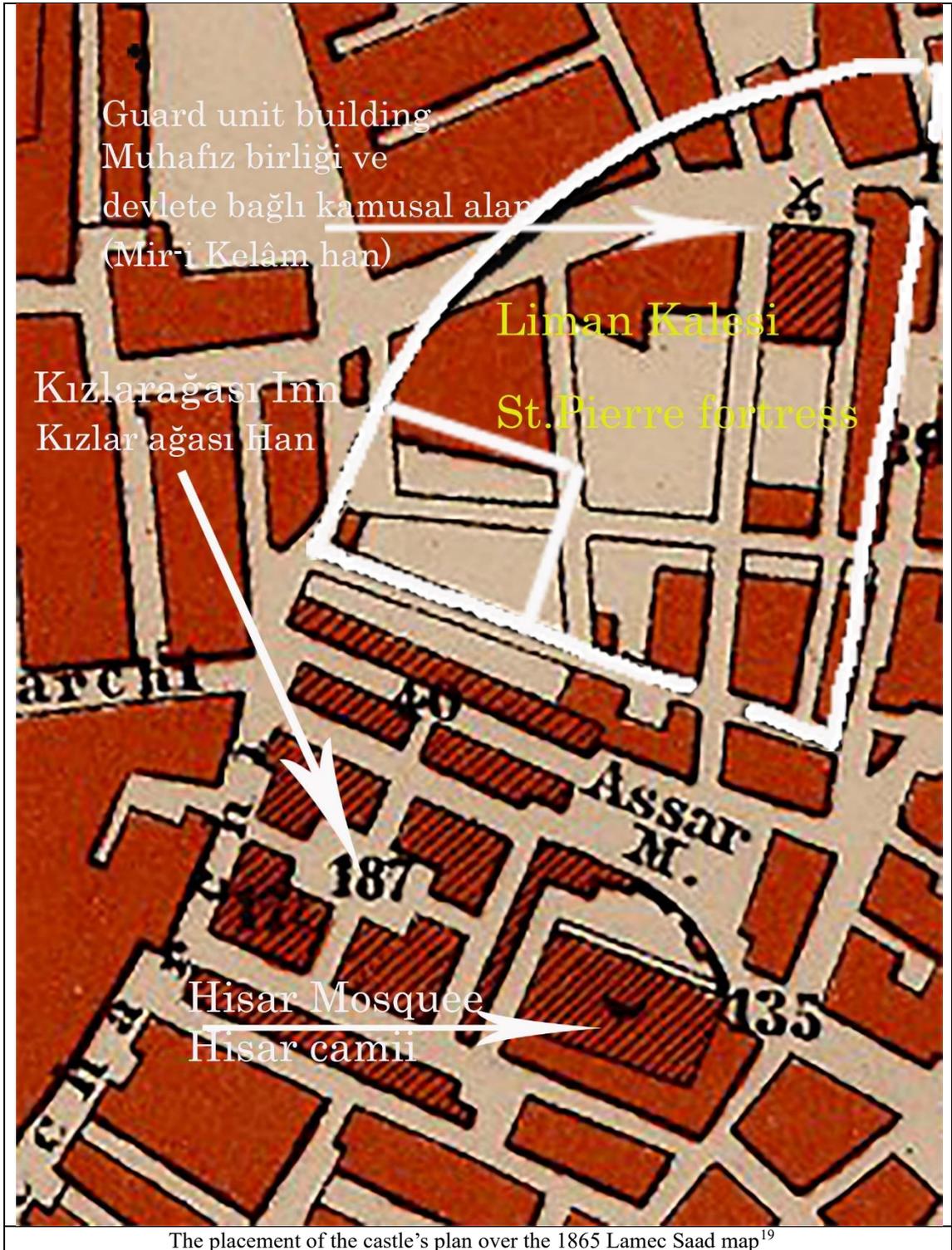
As a result of these correspondences, an agreement was reached with the municipality, and the castle was demolished, its stones sold, and after making arrangements with the owners of the houses located on the castle grounds, the buildings were removed and demolished. A bazaar and shops were then constructed on the site. I believe that the guard unit's quarters, later known as the Mir-i Kelâm Inn, also changed hands during this period, as in the subsequent 1905 plan it is listed under this name. Thus, the transformation of the haphazard settlement inside the castle in 1854 began in this way. The sale of these plots and buildings, and the construction of the bazaar, continued until 1876, resulting in the state seen in the Lamec Saad plan—essentially the same layout that still exists today.

When we placed the harbor castle plan onto the 1876 Lamec Saad plan, we obtained the result shown below. After doing this overlay, we sought to clarify some striking results through fieldwork. First, at the spot where we estimated the land gate of the castle to have been—on the Fevzi Pasha Boulevard side of the Mir-i Kelâm Inn—we found that the remains of the gate's arch still survive. At this point, it became evident that after the castle was demolished and replaced with a bazaar, another inn was built there, but this structure was constructed using the castle's original walls.

Today, Fevzi Pasha Boulevard passes directly through the site of the castle's land gate. For centuries, a path had already formed here through the continual passage of people entering and exiting the castle. After the castle was demolished, this route continued to be used and was eventually developed into a road that connected Basmane Station to the customs house. Initially known as the “Company Road,” this route later became

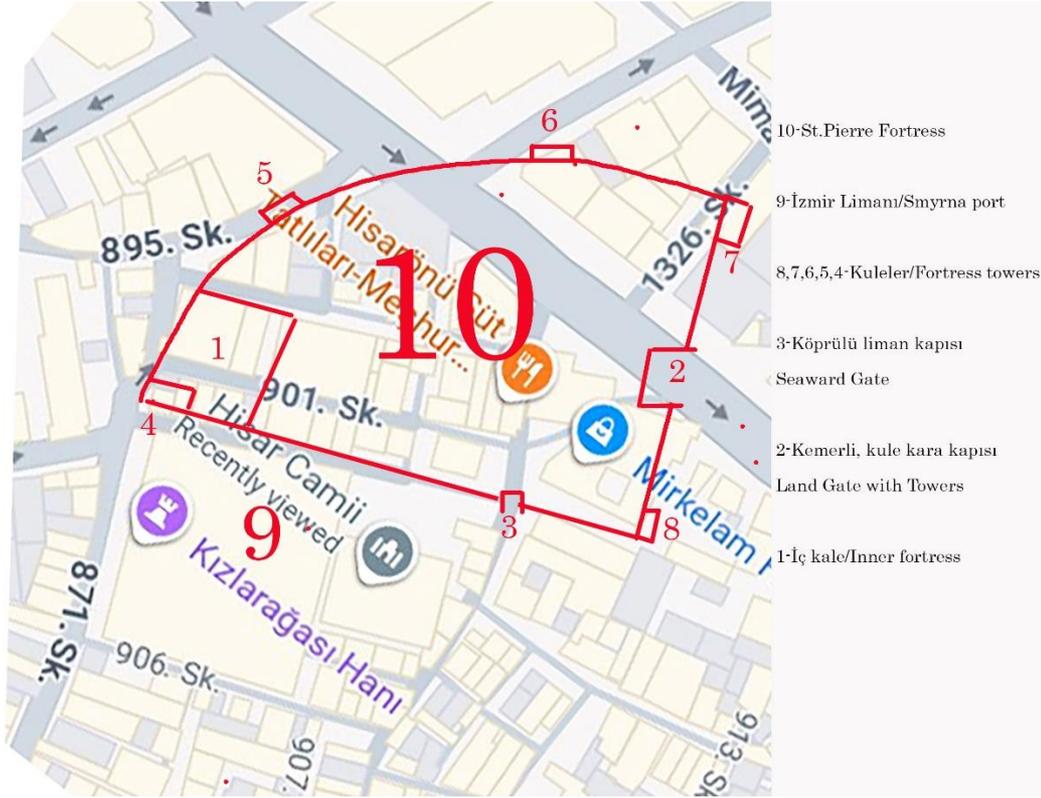
¹⁸ State Archives No: İ.Ş.d. 27770, date: h17 Muharrem 1287/m19 Nisan 1870

today's Fevzi Pasha Boulevard. Thus, thanks to the road that had already taken shape through centuries of use, the cost of expropriation was minimized.



¹⁹ Lamec Saad, Plan de Smyrne Leve et dresse par Lamec Saad 1876

In the final stage of our study, using all the information we have compiled so far, we created a plan of the İzmir Harbor Fortress, or Saint Pierre Fortress as it was originally called, and overlaid it onto the modern city map to determine the exact area it once covered. Accordingly, if the fortress had not been demolished, it would stand today in the location shown below, and we are confident it would be celebrated as an iconic landmark of İzmir.



The castle, built in 1231, served for nearly six centuries before being demolished and replaced by a market. I am certain that if it had not been destroyed, it would have become an iconic castle of İzmir. After the castle's demolition, the building that had served as the guard unit and the janissaries' quarters continued its life under new ownership as Mirkelâm Han. However, having witnessed the Byzantines, the Aydınogulları, İzmirli Cüneyd Bey, Yıldırım Bayezid, the martyrdom of Umur Bey, Timur, the Crusades, Süleyman Çelebi, Sultan I. Mehmed, Sheikh Bedreddin, Börklüce Mustafa, Sultan II. Murad, his son Fatih Sultan Mehmed, and many others, I cannot imagine that a building of such historical importance would have a long life unless it is properly preserved and restored, unlike the castle.

It is incomprehensible that while enormous sums are being spent to uncover countless historical artifacts in our country, at the same time, efforts are made to destroy them. Of course, roads should be built, and markets should be constructed, but in doing so, we must not destroy significant historical works. I know valuable people who spend years trying to find the calligrapher of an inscription hidden under a single stone. Understanding the logic of demolishing a six-hundred-year-old work in just six years to build a market is impossible for someone like me.



The current state of Mir-i Kelâm (Mir Kelâm) Han

Conclusion: Various studies have been carried out to date on the İzmir Port Fortress, also known as the Saint Pierre Fortress; however, as far as we know, no research has been encountered regarding its location on modern city plans. In this study, not only was its placement on today's city plans identified, but also the location of the land gate of the fortress was determined, along with the building inside the fortress that housed the Janisaries serving as its guards. Without doubt, the results of this study will contribute to the exploration of the fortress's role in İzmir's history, as well as its phases during the Byzantine and Ottoman periods.

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Respectfully

Mustafa Üzel, August 2025, Izmir

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