



İzmit

Turkey

Turkey






Iznik

with her ancient heritage,
unique ceramics,
stunning lake and
unspoiled natural
beauty...

Identified with Turkish ceramics, this small, attractive region has managed to survive since the 4th century BC. Its location which is very close to the road linking Istanbul to Anatolia, is an important source of its vitality.

Iznik is the city of Dionysus, God of Wine... According to myth, Nicaea, who was the daughter of the River God Sangarios (Sakarya River) and the Goddess Cybele, took an oath that she would never marry. She lived in a forest and liked hunting. One day, she met a shepherd called Hymnus who, when he saw Nicaea, fell in love with her. Nicaea, however, shot him with an arrow. Eros, the God of Love, was angered by her behaviour and turned to the God of Wine, Dionysus, asking for his help to take vengeance upon her. But Dionysus also fell in love with Nicaea when he caught sight of her bathing in the river. He feared that she would shoot him too, and added wine to the river from which Nicaea drank water. When she was drunk, he seduced her. As soon as Nicaea realised that she was pregnant, she tried to kill herself, but obeyed Dionysus and gave birth to his child. Dionysus, after his return from India, founded this city and named it 'Nicaea', after his beloved.





Iznik Museum (Garden)



Iznik Museum (Sarcophagus)



History

Rich in legend, İznik has been known as Nicaea since ancient times. It appears that the region owes its present name to the pronunciation of the words 'Eis' and 'Nik' part of the phrase, 'Eis Ten Nikaieon' meaning 'to Nicaea' in Greek.

Archaeological findings in the mounds of Karadin, Çiçekli, Yüğücek and Çakırca reveal that the history of İznik dates back to the prehistoric period, around 2500 B.C.

Before the immigration of Thracian tribes in the 7th century BC, the settlement in the area of today's İznik was known as Helikare. In the 4th century, this settlement became known as Antigoneia following its renovation by the Phrygian Governor of the Macedonian Kingdom. After the death of Alexander the Great, Antigoneia was captured by Lysimachus, the ex-governor of Thrace, and its name was changed to Nicaea, which was ascribed to Lysimachus' wife Nike. Later in 293 BC, it was annexed to the Bithynian Kingdom. In this period it was decorated with significant architectural structures. Golden coins were also minted in the city, which led to it being known thereafter as the 'Golden City'. The Romans battled with the Bithynian Kingdom for many years and eventually captured the capital Nicaea, and reconstructed it, repairing the damage caused by the earthquake in 123 AD. Again in this period, the city was surrounded by 4970 kilometre city walls including 4 main and 12 subordinate gates.

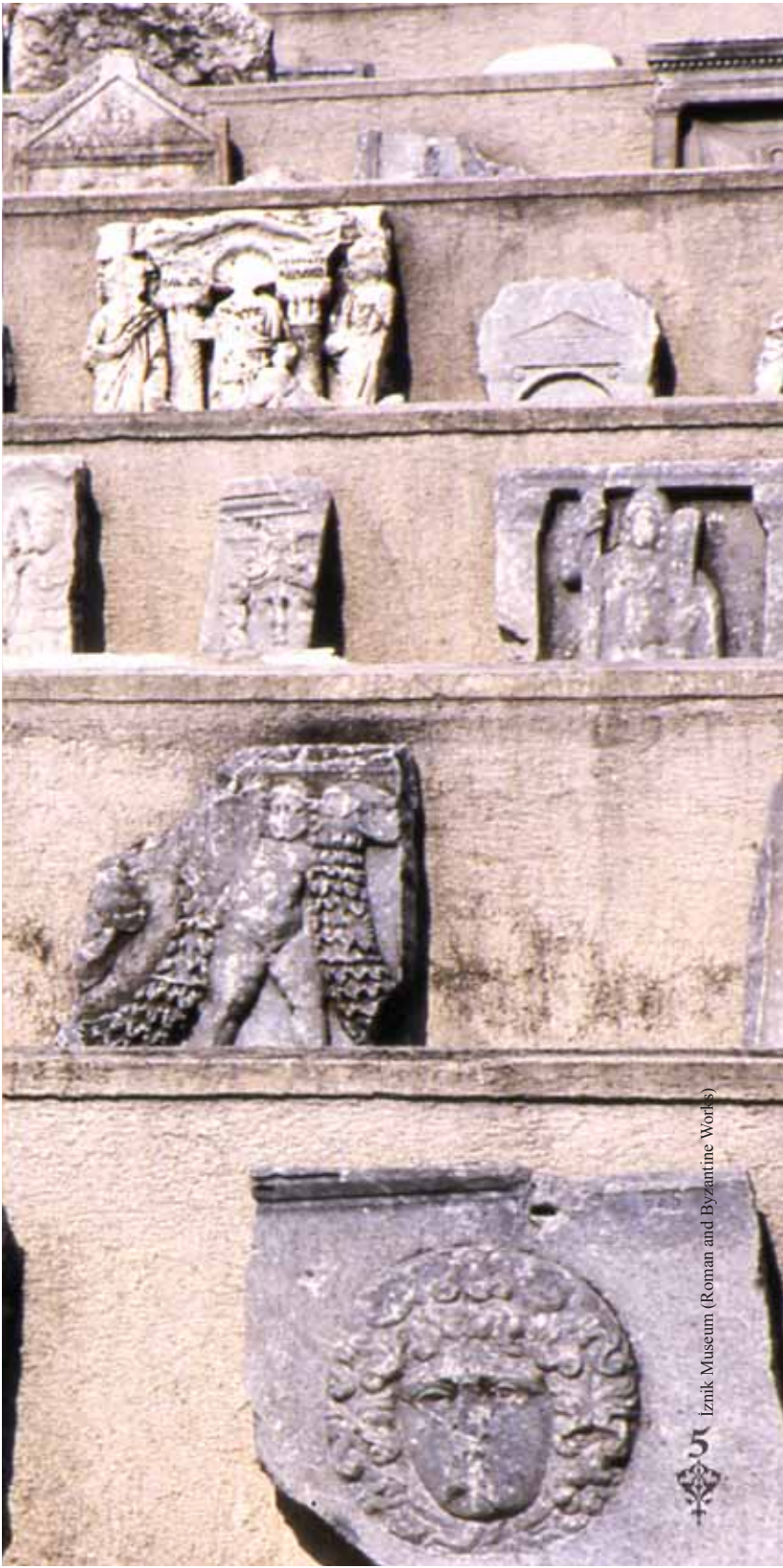
A very important centre for Christianity, İznik was introduced to Christianity through the efforts of the Apostle, St. Peter. All the prohibitions relating to Christianity were abolished during the reign of the Emperor Constantine I. In the beginning of the

summer of 325, Nicaea had witnessed a very important event for Christianity: the 1st Ecumenical Council, which gathered here in İznik in the palace in the presence of the Emperor Constantine. One of the subjects discussed in the council was the disagreement in the church of Alexandria over the nature of Christ. According to the thesis of an Alexandrian priest, Arius, Jesus Christ was not eternal, and was subordinate to God the Father. This thesis had found many followers in a short time; however, it had been opposed by the bishops. After long debate in the Council, the thesis 'Jesus Christ to be of one substance with the God the Father' found acceptance, as it is still accepted today. The Council formulated the Nicene Creed and 20 canons as well, as agreed on the date of Easter. İznik also bore witness to the 7th Ecumenical Council in the Ayasofya Church in 787. During the same period the prohibitions on paintings and statues were removed thanks to the efforts of the Empress Irene.

İznik served as the capital of both the Seljuks and Byzantines. In 1331 it was captured by the Ottomans commanded by Orhan Gazi, and in this period it became a centre of art, trade and culture. Some of the famous Sufis like Davud-u Kayseri, Ebul Fadıl Musa and Eşrefoğlu Abdullah Rumi lived in this lovely district and left many literary works behind them. The first mosque, madrasa and soup kitchen belonging to the Ottoman Period were all constructed in İznik. In the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, İznik became an important art centre and the world famous İznik tiles and ceramics were produced here.

The historic architectural texture of the district is still alive with its grid settlement plan which has remained since the Hellenistic Period and monumental structures from the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman periods.





Iznik Museum (Roman and Byzantine Works)





Lefke Gate



Historic and Cultural Assets

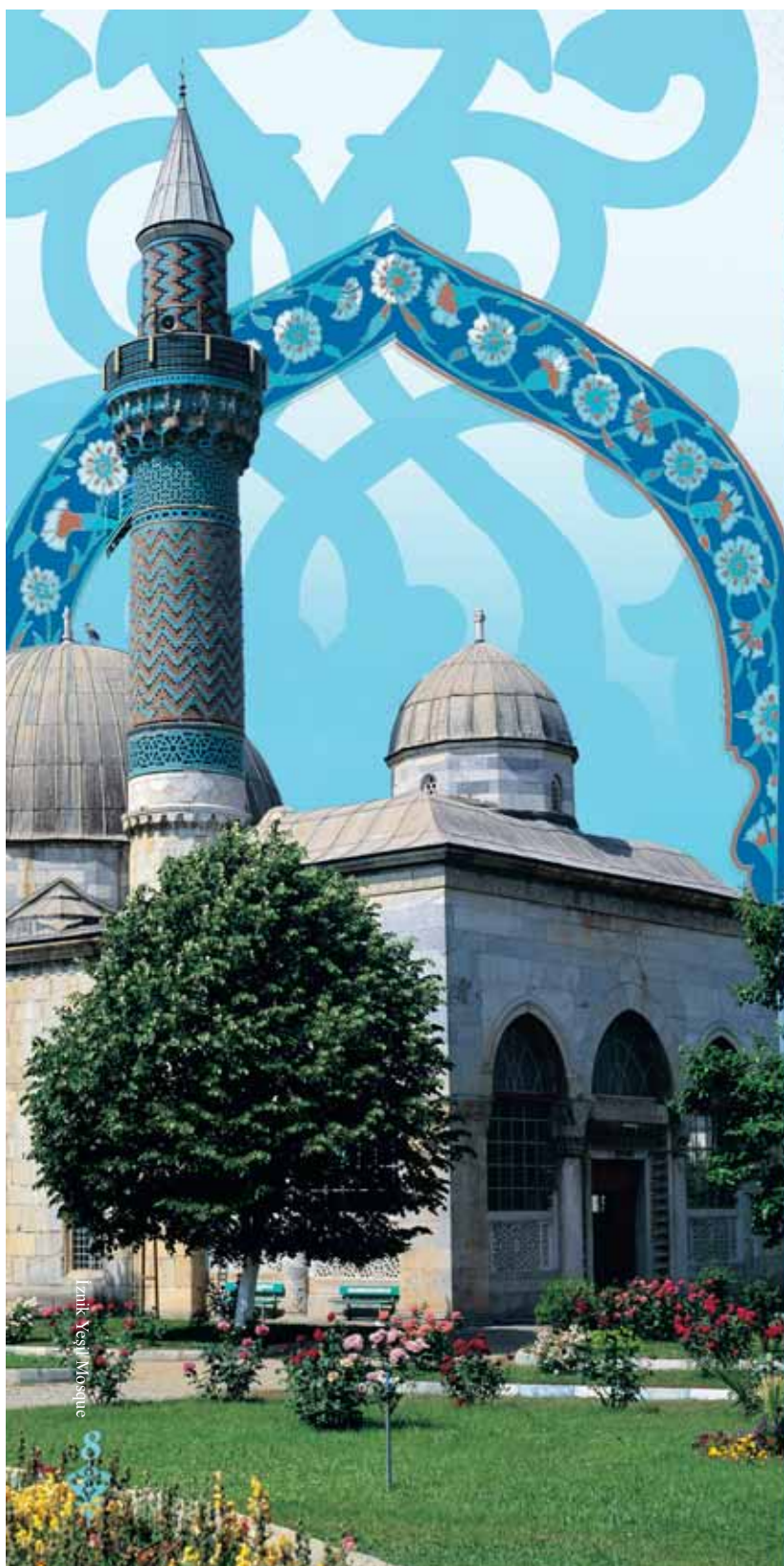
İZNIK MUSEUM (NİLÜFER HATUN SOUP KITCHEN)

This important edifice, which today is a museum, was constructed by Sultan Murat I in memory of his mother, Nilüfer Hatun in 1388. Known as the first soup kitchen built with a reverse T-shaped plan, it is a fine example of Ottoman architecture. Its brick and stone work is rich and colourful, designed with three rows of brick and a row of stone. The building served as a soup kitchen until the end of the 19th century; but it was largely destroyed during the Greek occupation in the Independence War. After having been restored in 1960, the Nilüfer Hatun Soup Kitchen was opened to visitors as a museum.

The Museum collection includes archaeological finds unearthed at the excavations of Ilıpınar, the theatre and İznik kilns together with other items found in İznik and the surrounding area.

Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman works including column capitals, sarcophagi, reliefs, ambroses, steles, inscriptions, gargoyles, column tambours, baptismal fonts, baked clay sheets and Islamic grave stones are exhibited in the garden of the museum. In the main hall are prehistoric ceramics, Greek, Roman and Byzantine age ceramics, stone works, glass wares, coins, jewellery, kerosene lamps, and metal works. Byzantine and Ottoman ceramics, kiln equipment, manuscripts, tobacco, money, watches, bowls, guns and rifles, ornaments, utensils, ethnographic artefacts, and Islamic coins are on display in the room leading to the main hall.





Iznik Kestî Mosque





AYASOFYA MUSEUM

This museum was once the church which witnessed the 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 BC, a very important event for Christianity. It is located at the point where the roads leading to the 4 main gates in the district centre meet. The church was constructed by the Emperor Justinian over the ruins of the former church dating back to the 4th century. However, it was demolished after an earthquake in the 11th century and rebuilt in the shape of a basilica with three naves. Its colourful marble floor mosaics with geometric designs and frescoes depicting saints and apostles are all charming.

Following the conquest of İznik by Orhan Gazi in 1331, this basilica shaped church was turned into a mosque. In the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, it was expanded with a minaret on the front and its walls were decorated by the famous architect Sinan.

YEŞİL MOSQUE (GREEN MOSQUE)

Recognised as the symbol of İznik, the Yeşil Mosque takes its name from the turquoise coloured İznik tiles and bricks of its minaret which are a fine reflection of Seljuk minaret style in Ottoman art. Built by the architect Hacı Musa between 1378 and 1392 upon the request of Halil Hayrettin Pasha, this mosque is undoubtedly the most magnificent of the single domed mosques of the Ottoman Period. Its unique minaret is on the right corner of the mosque. While its niche displays rich stone work, its body is covered with blue and green coloured tiles in zigzag mosaic style.

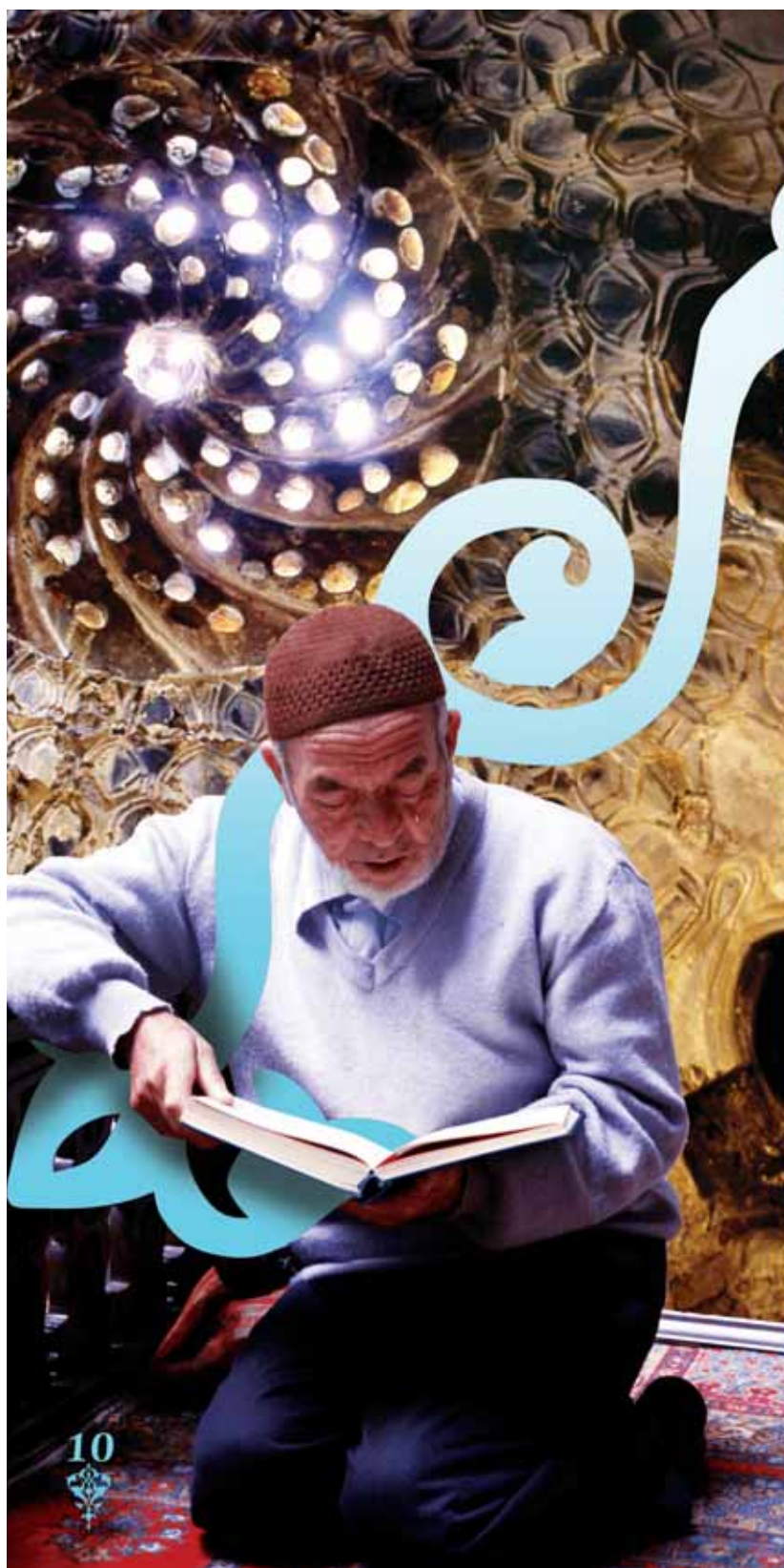
HACI ÖZBEK MOSQUE (ÇARŞI MASJID)

Hacı Özbek Mosque is the oldest Ottoman mosque in İznik, dating back to 1333. Built of hewn stone and brick, this square planned mosque has no minaret. Its dome has a diameter of 8 metres and is covered with roof tiles.

MAHMUT ÇELEBİ MOSQUE

Mahmut Çelebi, one of the grandsons of Hayrettin Pasha had this mosque built in 1442. Located in the district centre, the single domed mosque has a minaret with brick bond work. It also includes an inscription over the entry gate.







ŞEYH KUDBETTİN MOSQUE AND TOMB

Close to the Nilüfer Hatun Soup Kitchen, the Şeyh Kudbettin Mosque and the adjacent tomb for Sheik Kudbettin were constructed upon the request of İbrahim Pasha, one of the viziers of Sultan Bayezid the 2nd. This 15th century-mosque was restored to its original architectural form in 2007.

YAKUP ÇELEBİ DERVİSH LODGE AND TOMB

The dervish lodge was built in the 14th century by Yakup Çelebi who was the younger brother of Yıldırım Bayezid. There is a single domed tomb in the garden.

Contrary to common belief, the grave of Yakup Çelebi is not in this tomb but in the tomb of Murad the 1st in Bursa.

Other tombs in İznik also include: Eşref-i Rumî Mosque and Tomb, Kırgızlar Tomb, Sarı Saltuk Tomb, Çandarlı Hayrettin Paşa Tomb, Çandarlı İbrahim Paşa Tomb, Çandarlı Halil Paşa Tomb, Huysuzlar Tomb, Ahiveyn Sultan Tomb and Abdülvahap Sancaktarı Tomb.

SÜLEYMAN PAŞA MADRASA

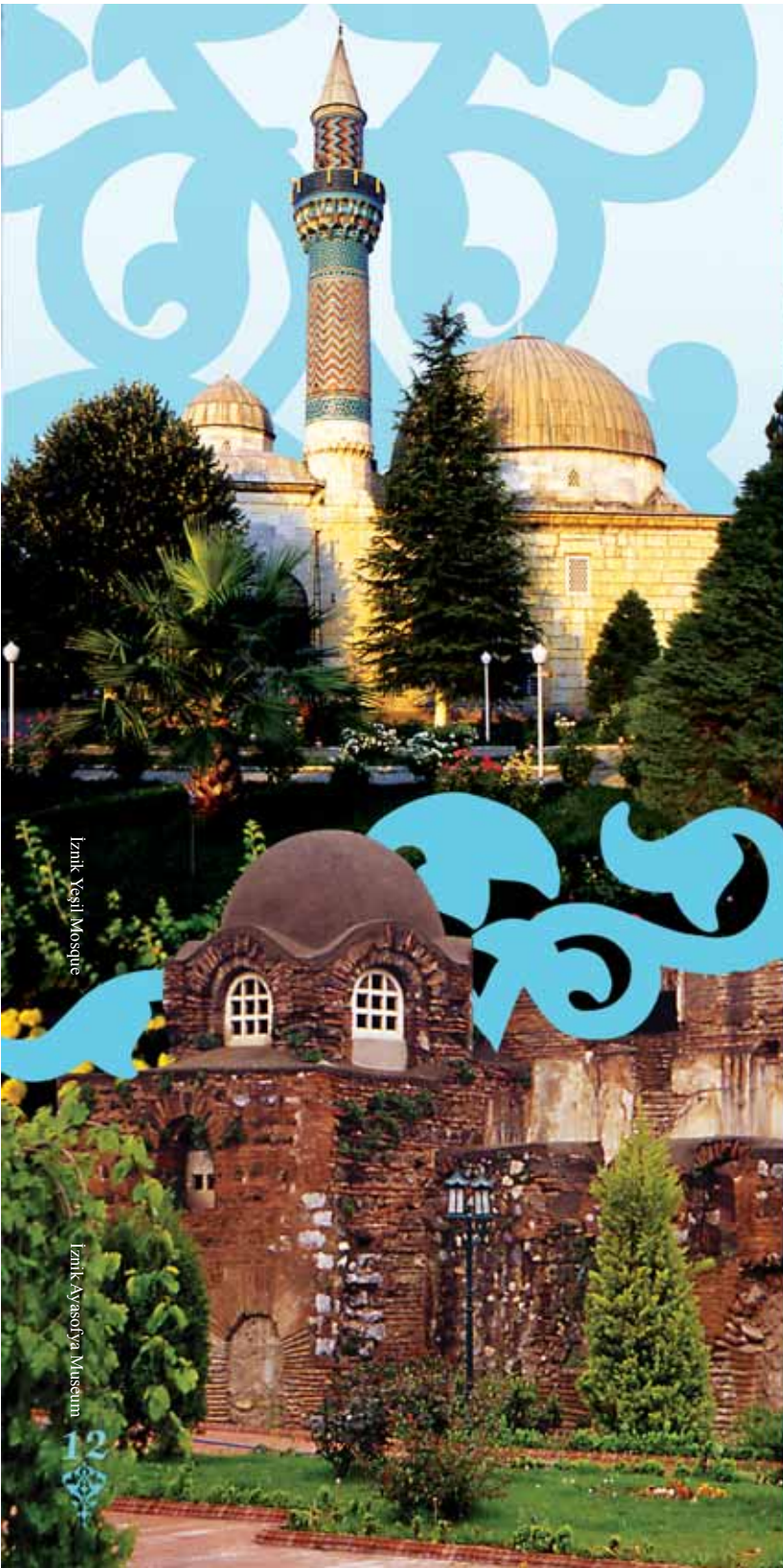
Süleyman Paşa Madrasa is the oldest in İznik which has survived to the present day. Orhan Gazi's son Süleyman Şah had it built in 1332. Included in the category of U-shaped Ottoman madrasas, it has 11 rooms and a classroom. Its walls date back to the first half of the 14th century whereas its dome dates from the second half of the 15th century.

HAGIOS TRYPHONOS CHURCH

With four columns, the Hagios Tryphonos Church has a cross-shaped plan. Its wall technique and plan reveal that this church was a Byzantine work built in the 11th century.

AYATRIFON CHURCH

Located on the road leading to the İstanbul Gate, this cruciform planned church dates back to the 10th and 12th centuries. The ruins show that the structure was once topped with a large dome and its floor was covered with very elaborate mosaics.



Iznik Yesil Mosque

Iznik Ayasofya Museum



KOIMESIS CHURCH

Bishop Hyakinthos had this church built in the 8th century. Supposed to have been a part of the Hyakinthos Monastery, the church was destroyed in the 1065 earthquake, but later it was repaired and enlarged. Only its flooring mosaics and foundation have survived to the present.

BÖCEK AYAZMASI (BAPTISTERY) (HOLY SPRING OF ORTHODOX GREEKS)

Located near the Koimesis Church, this baptistery is a round structure with a water spring at the centre of a quadrangular fountain. It is covered by a dome. Supposed to have been a part of the Hyakinthos Monastery, the baptistery is under the ground floor and reached by a staircase.

UNDERGROUND GRAVE (HYPOGEUM)

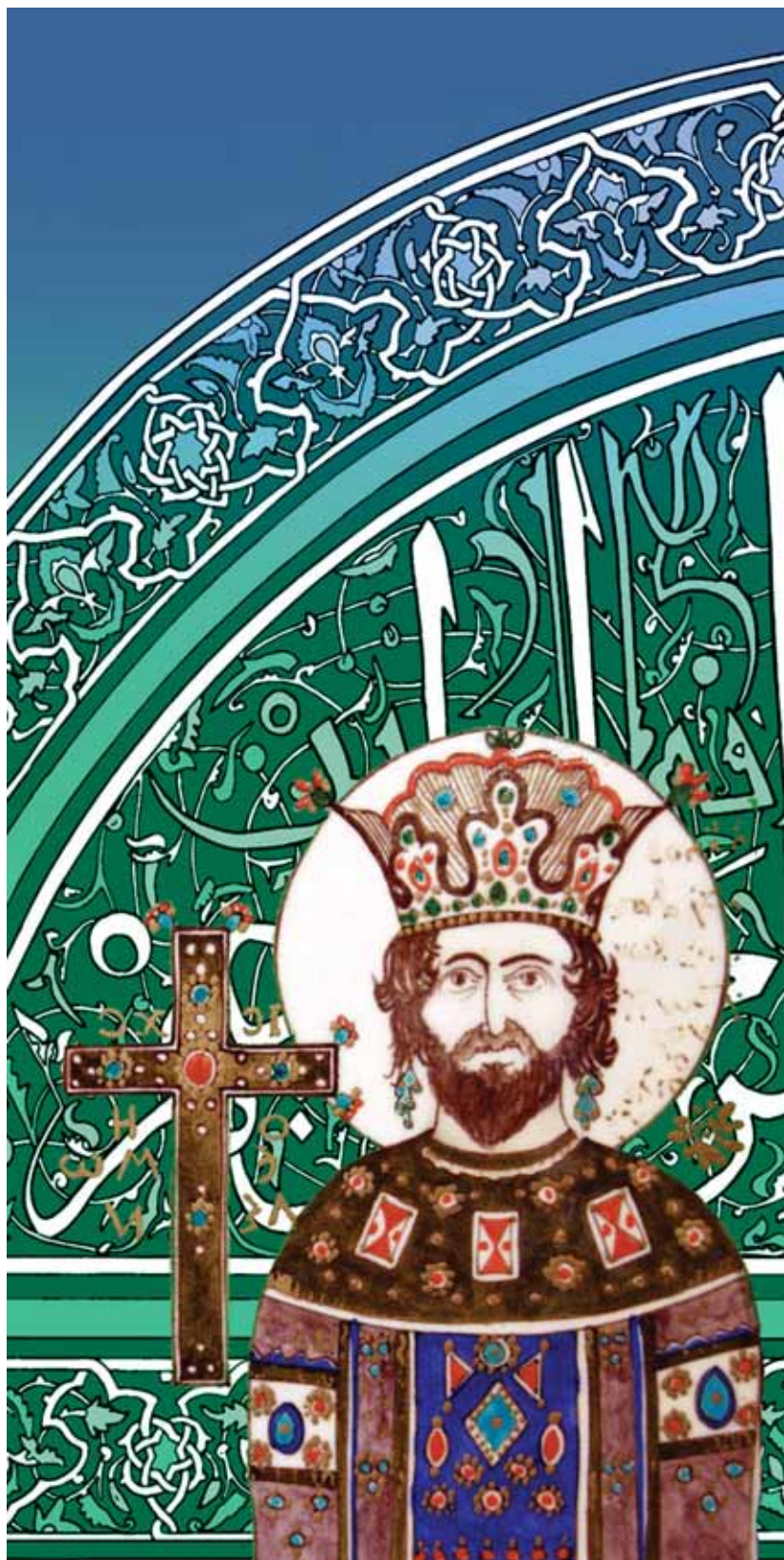
This underground grave, found in the Hesbekli location of Elbeyli Village, is thought to have been built in the 4th or 5th centuries AD. It is covered by a vault and its ceiling and walls are decorated with typical colourful frescoes of the early period of Christianity.

BERBER ROCK MONUMENTAL TOMB

Erected in the memory of the King Prusias the 2nd of Bythnia, this monumental tomb dates back to the 2nd century BC, and is a significant example of Hellenistic art in İznik. Carved on a large rock piece in the foothills, the tomb with a triangular fronton is in the form of a sarcophagus.

DÖRT TEPELER TUMULUS

The tumulus is located within the graveyard of Elbeyli Municipality. There are two monumental tombs in it. The first one is near the road and has a rectangular grave room with a dromos (narrow passageway). On both sides of this room are two stone seats. Built of white marble, the grave room in the other tomb has also a dromos covered by rough stones and trees.







Iznik Museum (Garden)



BEŞTAŞ (OBELISK)

Also known as Nişantaşı and Dikilitaş, this grave monument is on the ancient Roman road. Its inscription in Greek reveals that the obelisk was built by C. Cassius Philiscus in the 1st century. It rises over a rectangular prismatic pedestal, and includes five triangular prismatic stones one over the other.

CITY WALLS

The pentagon shaped city walls that surround İznik are 4970 metres in length. Although these city walls were constructed in the Hellenistic era, they have lost all the characteristics peculiar to this era. Only the wall parts constructed in the Roman and Byzantine periods have survived to the present. In the 8th century, the city walls were made higher and the bastions were built by using the construction materials brought from the theatre.

HISTORIC GATES

The historic gates in İznik were actually constructed as triumphal arches in the reigns of the Emperor Vespasianus (69–79) and Emperor Titus (79–81), and were restored to a large scale in the time of Emperor Hadrian. The city walls were built by connecting these arches to each other. Reflecting the architectural technique and style of the Roman Period, the İstanbul, Lefke and Yenişehir gates still stand splendid today, although the remaining gate, the Göl Gate is in ruins.

THEATRE

The ancient theatre spreading over a large area amid the shores of the lake and the Yenişehir Gate was constructed between 111 and 112 during the reign of the Emperor Trajan. It was converted into a mass graveyard in the 13th century. The graveyard was later replaced by the ceramic kilns. Only some part of the cavea (audience section) of the ancient theatre have survived to the present day. It appears that its stones were used as construction materials especially in the restoration of the city walls.





RÜSTEM PAŞA INN

This 16th century inn is thought to have been constructed by the great architect Sinan in the name of Rüstem Pasha, who was the grand vizier of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. Today, it is unfortunately in ruins amidst the apartments with only a part of its north and western walls still standing.

İSMAİL BEY HAMAM

(BATHHOUSE)

İsmail Bey Hamam is located on the road leading to the İstanbul Gate. With its interior design from the 14th and 17th centuries, it is an elegant structure. Covered with a dome, it has a square plan including 4 square spaces decorated with stucco work. It is also called as Selçuk Hamam, Mescit Hamam and Beyler Hamam.

HACI HAMZA HAMAM

(BATHHOUSE)

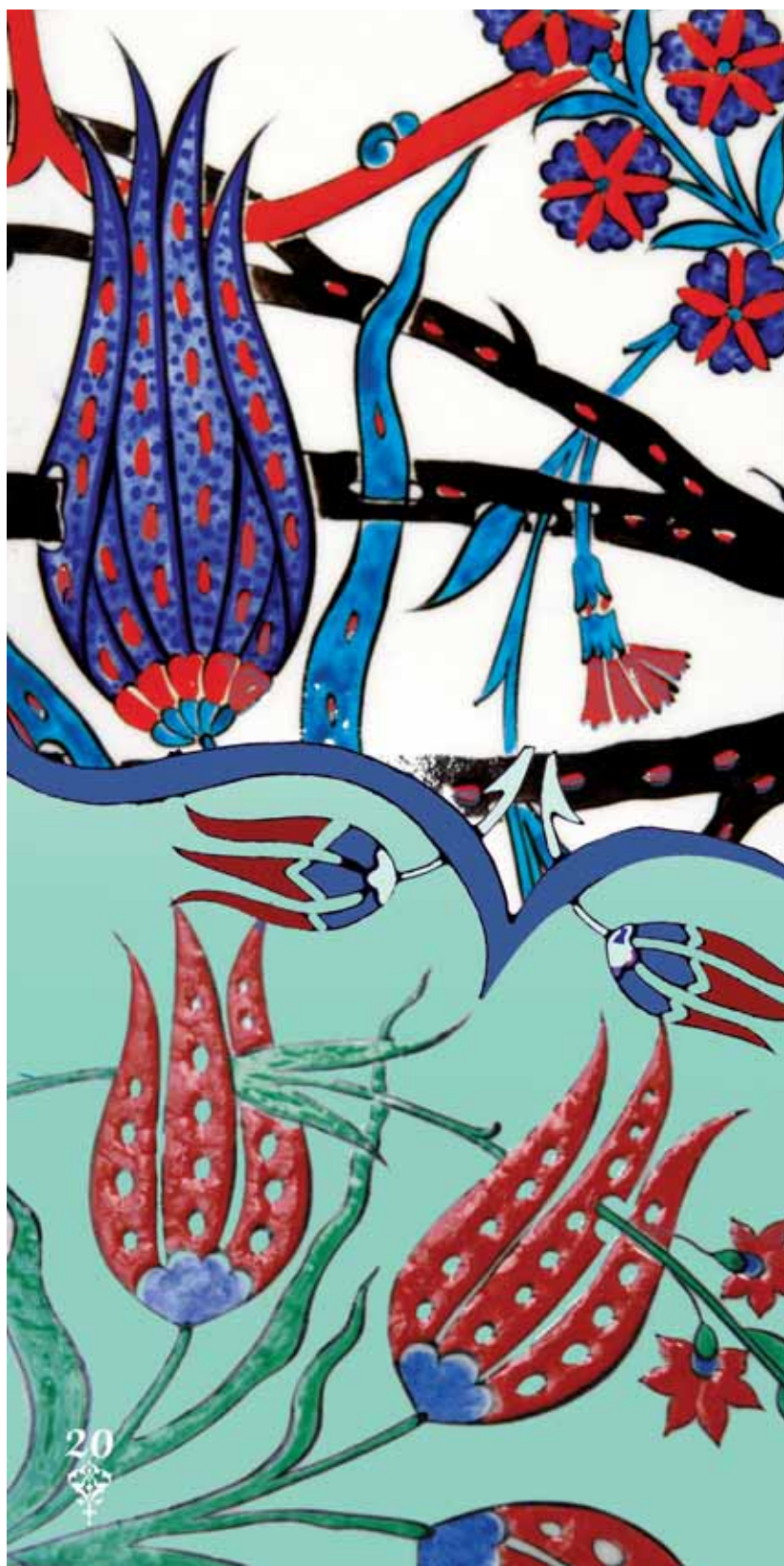
Also known as the Murat II Hamam, this bathhouse was constructed in the 15th century. It includes separate sections for women and men. The section for men is still in use today.

MEYDAN HAMAM

(BATHHOUSE)

Meydan Hamam, one of the three historically significant bathhouses in İznik, is also known as Büyük Hamam. Located on Atatürk Street, this bathhouse dates back to the end of the 14th century and the first half of the 16th century.

The stone wall technique used in the construction includes a brick bond course. The caldarium (hot room) that is built of stucco work is attractive.





Ceramic Art

Involved in architecture during the first half of 3000 BC, ceramics began to be used in Islamic architecture in the 9th century.

The ceramic art of İznik flourished in the 13th century when Seljuk architecture was at its peak. In that period, the walls of many mosques, madrasas, tombs and palaces were decorated with elegant ceramics. Together with the Ottomans, ceramic art gained a new perspective in the 14th century. The Ottoman ceramics continued the Seljuk tradition in technique and style but they are richer than the Seljuk ceramics in terms of their colours and hues. The turquoise and green ceramics decorating the minaret of the İznik Yeşil Mosque are an enchanting examples of Ottoman ceramic art.

Between the 15th and 17th centuries İznik became an important centre for ceramic production. Historic sources confirm that ceramics on the walls of the palaces and other historic buildings in İstanbul were produced here in İznik.

İznik is also the centre of the ceramic works which are known as Milet, Damascus and Rhodes. Floral motifs such as tulip, hyacinth, pomegranate and carnation are associated with the İznik ceramics which also depict human and animal figures and ships. Their colours are mostly blue, turquoise, green and red.







Olives

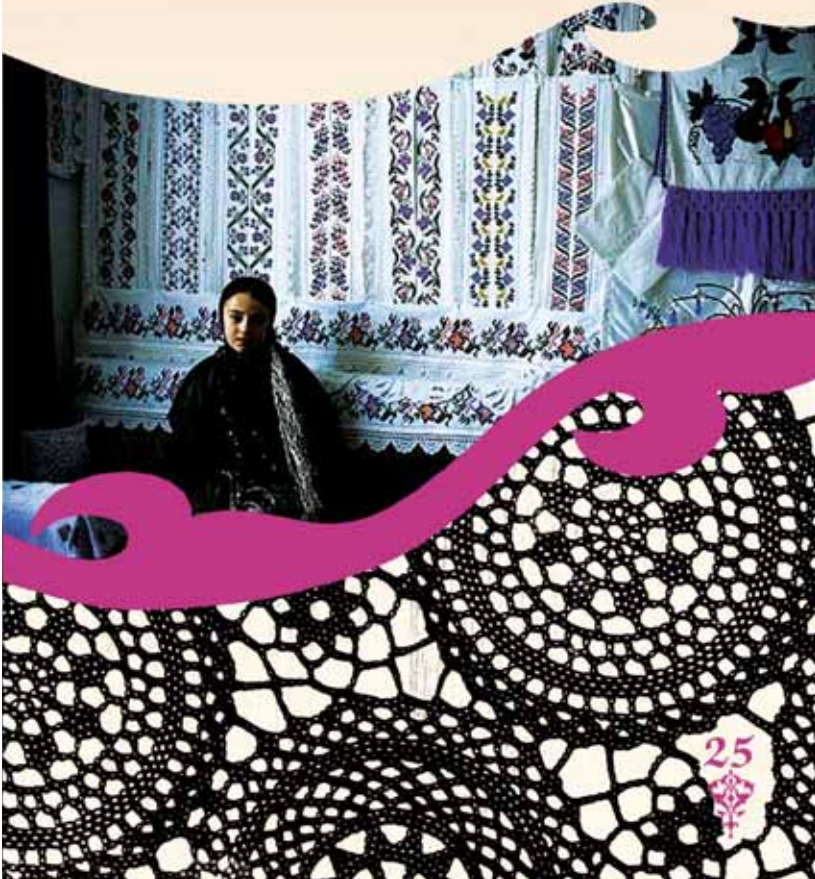
An indispensable part of the almost 8000 year old cuisine culture of humankind, olives are grown abundantly in our country. Covering the 10 % of the world olive production, Turkey ranks the 1st in the production of black olives, the 2nd in the production of table olive and the 4th in the production of olive oil. İznik's contribution to these rates is undoubtedly very important since it is one of the largest olive production centres in Turkey.



Handicrafts and Shopping

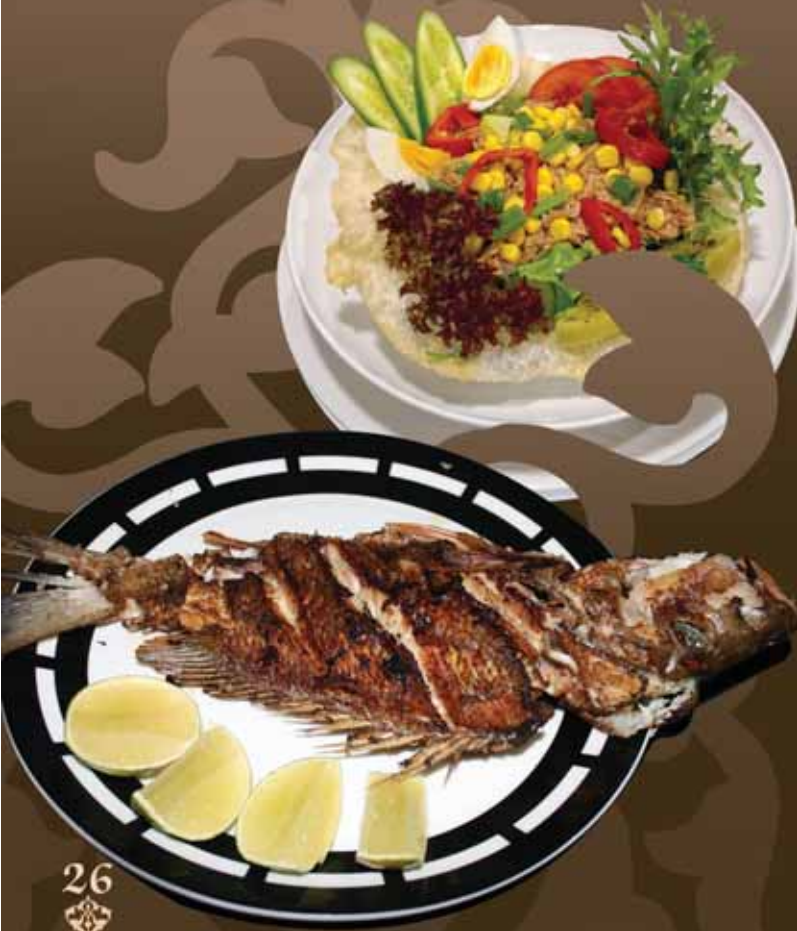
Besides its world famous ceramics, İznik also proves its worth with traditional handicrafts. Silk carpets of the Sansarak Village, rugs of the Derbent Village and embroideries of the Müşküle Village are all hand made and quite attractive for visitors.

Konak and Köylü bazaars set up on Wednesdays are ideal shopping areas in İznik.



Regional Cuisine

The district has a rich regional cuisine. Almost all dishes, cooked from vegetable and meat in Turkey, can also be tasted in the district. On the Lake side, delicious fish dishes such as soups and grills made from carp, sheath fish cooked on a skewer and sheath fish stew are all worth trying.



Alternative Tourism

Located on a fertile plain on the eastern shores of Lake İznik, İznik offers irresistible spots for nature lovers with its fresh air and verdant environment. The Köristan, Avdan and Müşküle Plateaux in Katırlı Mountains and Hacı Osman Plateau in Samanlı Mountains are popular for camping whereas the Sansarak Canyon with its 8 km long trail near the Sansarak Village is excellent for nature walking. Among activities to enjoy the region are also grass skiing and photo safari tours which offer the beauty of a verdant landscape.

Being the 5th biggest natural lake in Turkey, Lake İznik with its crystal clear waters offers the opportunity to experience the excitement of water sports such as sailing, surfing, canoeing, rowing, jet skiing, water skiing as well as fishing and swimming throughout the year. On the other side, its southern shores are perfect for camping in a tranquil atmosphere.



Local Activities in İznik

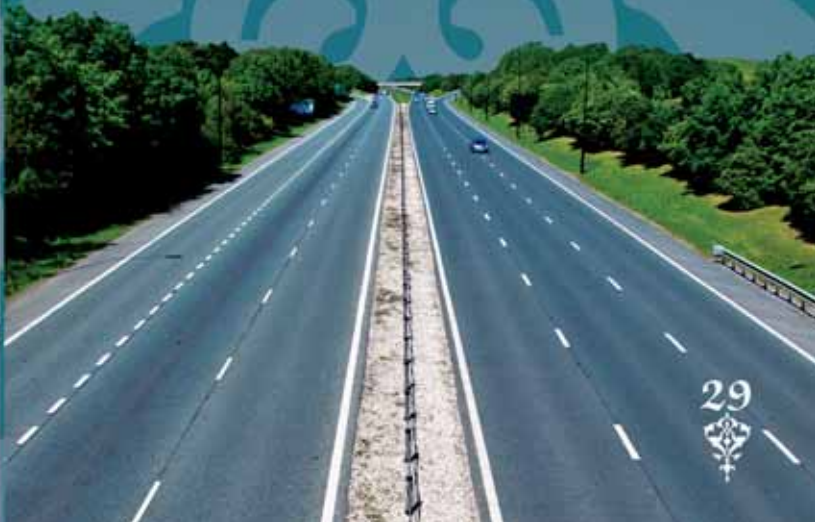
The Liberation of İznik	November 28
Hidrellez Celebrations (Beginning of Summer)	The first week of May
Lyrical Festival in the Lake Area	The first week of June
Public Training Festivities	The first week of June
Elbeyli Municipality Spring Festivities	The first or second week of May
İznik Fair	October 5-10





Transportation

There are regular bus services to İznik from all over the country while the nearest airport is in Bursa.



Climate

Mild climatic conditions are dominant in the district with rainy winters and hot summers which are also rainy enough to prevent drought.





Average Temperatures and Humidity Rates in İznik

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
Temperature	4.7	5.3	8.3	11.4	14.1	19.6
Relative Humidity	67.4	67.9	67.9	67.9	69.3	73.6

	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Temperature	22.1	21.4	18.4	17.4	9.9	10.6
Relative Humidity	72.2	73.3	74.5	74.7	68.8	68.5



Important Addresses and Telephone Numbers



Bursa City Directorate of Culture and Tourism
Sarı Köşk Osmangazi Cad. No:6 Tophane
Tel: + 90 (224) 220 99 26 - 220 70 19
Fax: + 90 (224) 220 42 51

İzmit Tourist Information Office
Kılıçarslan Cad. Belediye Hizmet Binası
Tel: + 90 (224) 757 19 33 - 757 14 54
Fax: + 90 (224) 757 19 33

İzmit Museum (Nilüfer Hatun Soup Kitchen)
Yeşil Cami Mahallesi
Tel: + 90 (224) 757 10 27
(Open every day except Monday)

İzmit Ayasofya Museum
İzmit City Centre
Tel: + 90 (224) 757 10 10
(Open every day except Monday)

İzmit District Administration Office + 90 (224) 757 10 01

Municipality + 90 (224) 757 10 10

Tourism Police + 90 (224) 757 10 52

Bursa Yenişehir Airport + 90 (224) 781 81 81

Post Office + 90 (224) 757 19 70

Bus Terminal + 90 (224) 757 81 90

Hospital + 90 (224) 757 75 80

Police + 90 (224) 757 10 52

Gendarme + 90 (224) 757 10 05

Fire 110

Medical Emergency 112

Police 155



Gendarme 156



Do not leave without:

Visiting the Ayasofya Museum which once witnessed the
7th Ecumenical Council,

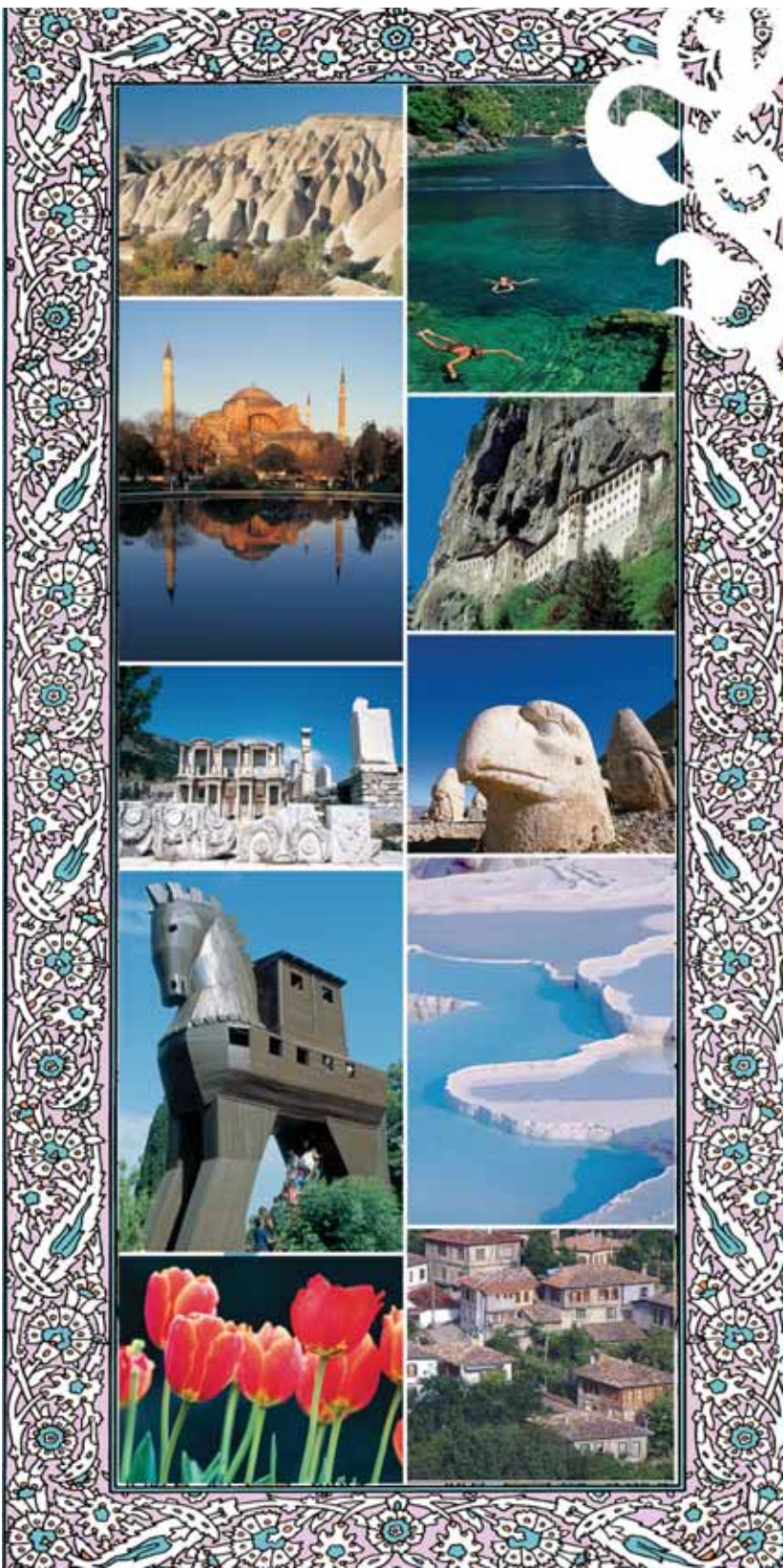
Walking around the İznik city walls, historic gates,
tumuli and grave monuments,

Seeing the Yeşil Mosque's unique minaret decorated with
turquoise coloured İznik Ceramics,

Tasting delicious fish dishes,

Buying İznik Ceramics...







Cultural Heritage is Fragile

The world's cultural heritage is like a big puzzle. Each monument, each object, is an irreplaceable part of the overall picture which gives us insight into our origins, our development and our lives today. It helps us to understand and appreciate other cultures. Each discovery, each new interpretation adds to the puzzle and makes the picture clearer. We must ensure the protection of every single piece today, so that future generations may have the opportunities to enjoy the puzzle.

Many people are not aware that our cultural heritage is under stress from natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, and from slower acting processes such as pollution or human actions. Even the most innocent gestures such as collecting ancient pieces of pottery or mosaics as souvenirs have a destructive impact if repeated by thousands. Touching an object of stone, metal or textile leaves traces of grease, acid or sweat on its surface. Climbing a monument wears down the structure underneath and can dismantle it. Writing or engraving names inflicts permanent damage. Strolling around narrow crowded places with bulky bags or backpacks might knock over an object or scratch a mural painting and ruin it. There are countless ways in which one can unknowingly contribute to the destruction of cultural heritage.

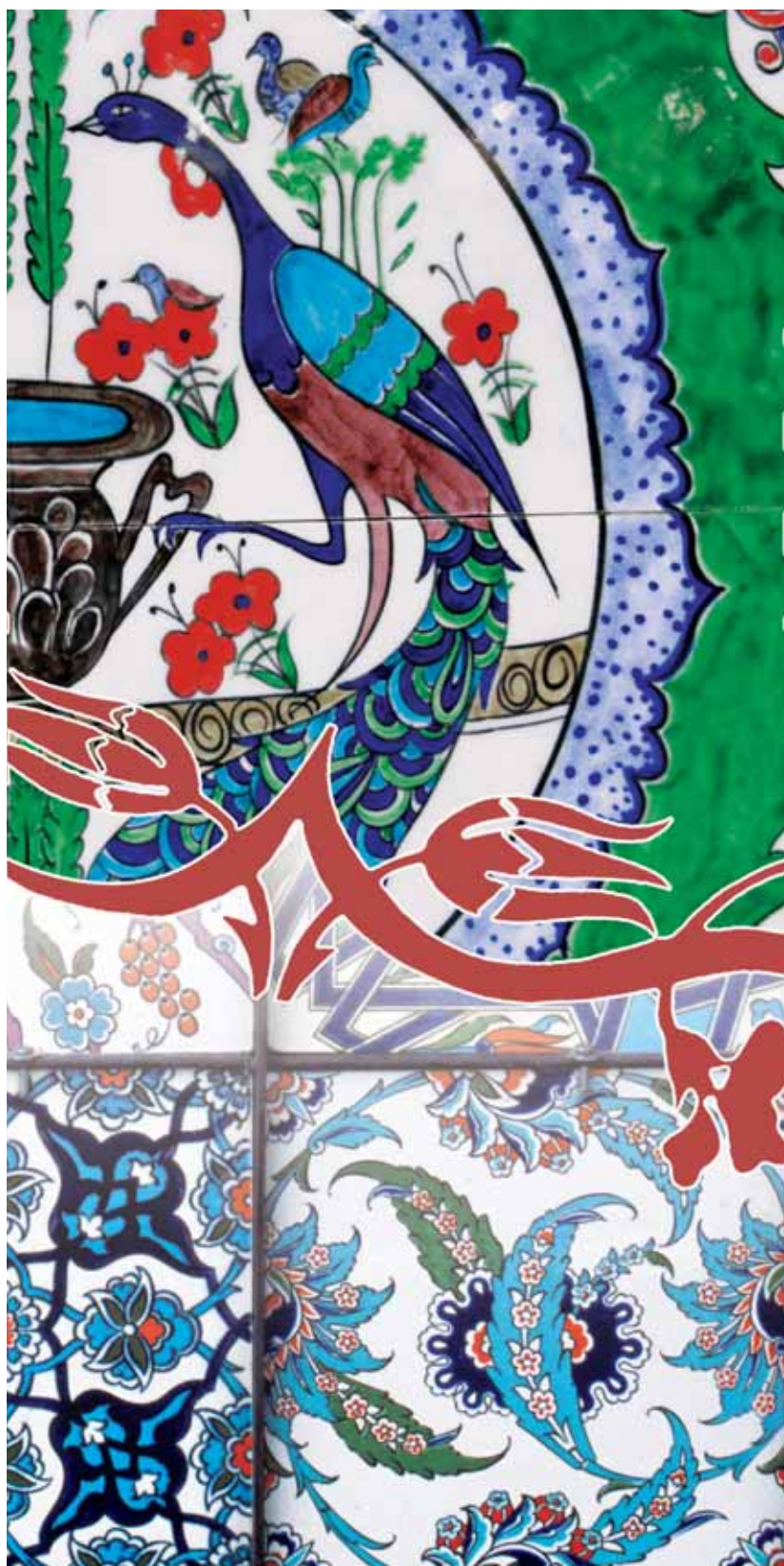
In 2020 there will be 1.6 billion visitors per year worldwide. Let us raise awareness of this issue so that we may join together to protect and enjoy the diversity and richness of our cultural heritage.



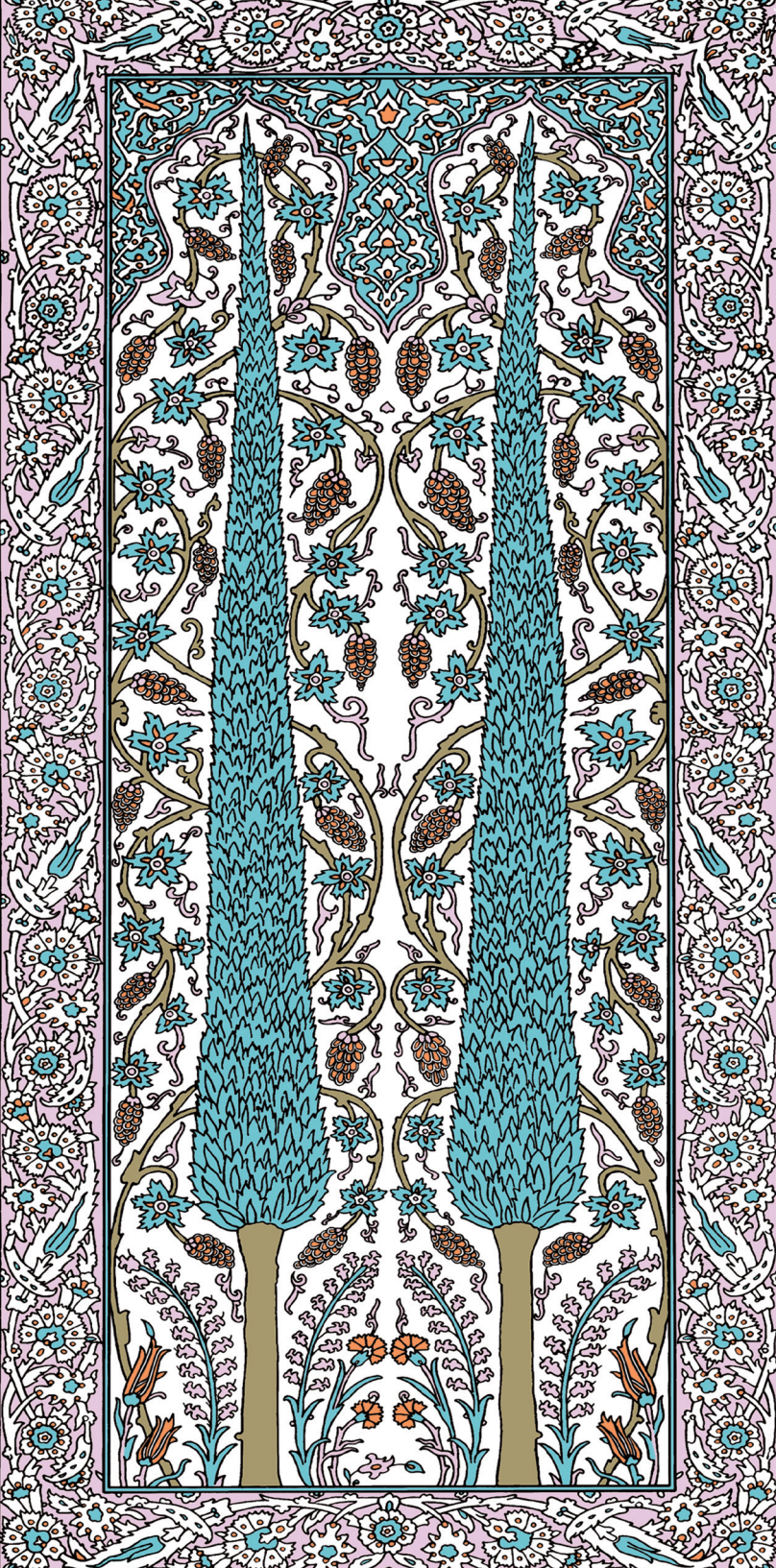
İznik

- | | |
|--|---|
| 26- Orhan Gazi Mosque and Hamam | 40- Abdülvahap Sancaktarı Tomb |
| 28- İsmail Bey Hamam | 41- Eşref Baba Tomb |
| 29- Hacı Hamza Hamam (Murat II Hamam) | 42- Namazgah (Open Air Prayer Place) |
| 30- Meydan Hamam (Murat I Hamam) | 43- Historic Topkapı Plane Tree |
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| 33- Sarı Saltuk Tomb | |
| 34- Çandarlı Hayrettin Paşa Tomb | |
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REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

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Ayasofya Museum

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