

## CULTURE: IN BRIEF



## GREEK TRAGEDY

*A film and a unique exhibition of rare, unseen photographs focuses on all the communities which lived in Smyrna, and the dramatic events of September 1922*

On 9th September 1922 Turkish forces stormed the Anatolian port town of Smyrna (now known as Izmir), which had been occupied by Greece after the end of first world war. On 13th September, a deadly fire broke out. In just four days nearly three-quarters of this historic and highly cosmopolitan city was destroyed by flames that raged unchecked through the Greek and

Armenian quarters and decimated centuries of rich architecture. For destruction, it rivalled the Great Fire of London itself—yet while the inferno in London was an unfortunate accident, there were no careless bakers behind Smyrna's deadly blaze.

Theories of who or what caused the blaze remain steeped in controversy. Eyewitness accounts of soldiers in Turkish uniform setting fire to businesses and houses in the worst affected quarters abound and this, combined with the fact that Turkish parts of the town escaped relatively unscathed, has led most historians to lay the blame at the door of the Turkish army. The purpose of this fascinating Hellenic Centre exhibition, however, is not to

### LINKS

**Smyrna: The destruction of a cosmopolitan city 1900-1922**  
*Until 11th February*

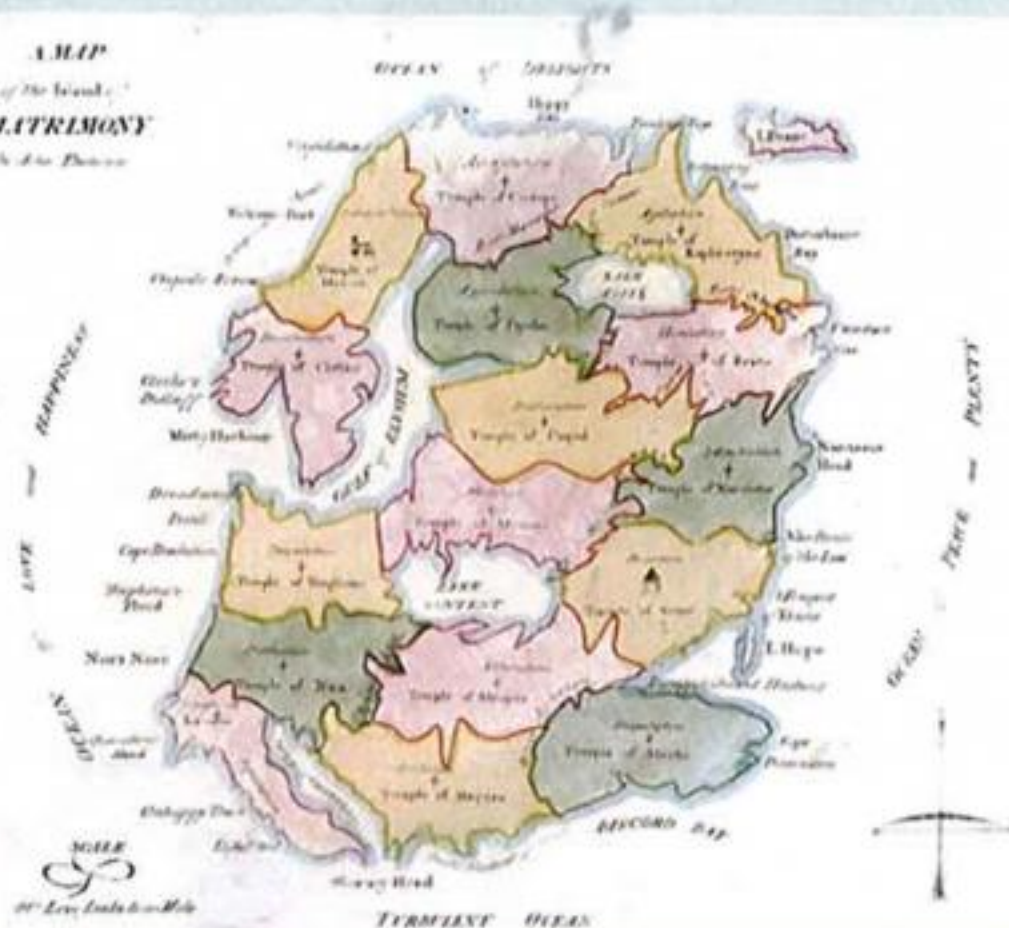
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020 7487 5060  
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point the finger, but to focus on the historicisation of the Smyrna fire and the personal experiences of those involved.

Previously unseen photographs of Smyrna and all the communities which lived in the city—Turks included—both before, during and after the tragedy, pay tribute to its cosmopolitan nature. The film of the same title talks to American and European historians, and second and third generation Smyrna residents about the events. The fire was a tragedy, killing thousands and destroying a city's heritage—but through these works Smyrna lives on, a lasting reminder of the beauty and precariousness of its cosmopolitan existence.

A MAP  
of the Island of  
**MATRIMONY**  
By John Thomson



## Map of the month

### A map of the Island of Matrimony J Thomson, Edinburgh (?), c1810

With names like 'Cupids Head', 'Ocean of Delights', 'Cape Dissention' and 'Lake Folly', this charming map is typical of a period of cartography when maps were no longer just about places, but were being used to illustrate a variety of ideas as well. From the later parts of the 18th century, cartographers began making maps for amusement. It is something you can still see today in the way maps are used in cartoons and various parts of the media. But this map comes from a time when you were beginning to see the emergence of that principle and its growth in popularity.

This is a map about marriage—a particularly popular subject for this style of map, printed to amuse young couples.

They tended to have a moralistic tone, comparing a happy marriage state with all the pitfalls that other romantic arrangements can bring. Even though they are found across Europe they are very much an English concept and are based firmly in romantic myths and the imagination.

The imprints are usually recognisable, so we know this map is by a John Thomson. However we have no other examples or even records of this map, making this version unique at the moment. However there was a John Thomson active in Edinburgh at the time whose work was typical of this type of engraving, so we have some confidence in placing it as being printed there.

This type of map remained popular and began to become much more serious and moralising as organisations like the Salvation Army and the Masons produced the likes of 'A map of the road to Salvation' and 'The road to Goodness'. However this one is from a time when the idea was a bit more playful, which definitely adds to its charm.

Jonathan Potter Limited  
52a George Street  
[jpmaps.co.uk](http://jpmaps.co.uk)