



## Physical Development and Change Process of Trabzon Kaleiçi (Hisar) Settlement Area

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### Abstract

Mankind faced difficulties in daily life, and this situation came together and contributed to the formation of the concept of the city. Although the city of Trabzon has been in an important position since ancient times, it has been preferred as a settlement by many civilizations. The area has a very high value in terms of forming the core of the city as well as containing its characteristic features. The study aimed to determine the factors that were effective in the shaping of Kaleiçi (Hisar) and its surroundings, the area where the city of Trabzon was first established, and the changes it has undergone from the past to the present. In this context, literature research was conducted, engravings, maps and visual documents related to the establishment and development of the city were examined. In order to determine the changes that have occurred as a result of the application studies carried out in recent years, field studies have been carried out and visual maps have been created. The study, which includes images of different points belonging to the area, allowed us to compare the area with the old version. The findings revealed that the region was under the influence of traffic and noise caused by daily living conditions, and was under pressure from the surrounding structures. In addition, in the region where the settler profile has changed drastically, it is seen that the protected houses have been abandoned for different reasons such as expropriation, material and structural conditions.

**Keywords:** Physical development, Trabzon, urban development, urban texture

### INTRODUCTION

There are many urban areas in the world that gain meaning with the historical and cultural relations of identity and space (Heath et al., 1996). Historical cities contain many settlers and are expressed as living forms of cultural heritage. For this reason, it is very important to protect the cultural diversity in the cities, to improve the social life and the local economy. Practices that will encourage this should be increased (Wang, 2011). Otherwise, historical city centers are negatively affected and lose their attractiveness over time.

In the literature, it is seen that researchers examine different studies about Trabzon from different perspectives. Some studies have dealt with the first installation area of the city, the castle and the development of the castle (Rice, 1932; Çelik, 2002; Eravşar, 2017), while some studies have dealt with the subject as the development process of the city (Aysu,1981; Trabzon Analytical Studies,1968; Özbilen,1991; Çapa ve Çiçek,2004; Albayrak,1998; Gerçek, 2011; Yılmaz,2013). In addition to physical development and urban dynamics (Tuluk,2010; Demirkaya and Tuluk,2018; Usta,2019), urban renewal (Var,2015; Günay,1995; Aydemir,1989), studies were carried out in terms of historical environmental protection and identity (Kuloğlu, 1994; Birlik, 2006; Kahya, 2007; Çevik, 1991).

This study aims to examine the development of Kaleiçi (Hisar), the first settlement of the city of Trabzon. The change in the city from past to present and the factors contributing to its urban formation have been tried to be determined. With this study, it can contribute to the steps that can accelerate the conservation work in Kaleiçi, the first settlement in Trabzon.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

### Research case

The population of the city is 808,974 according to 2019 data. It is bordered by Rize in the east and Giresun in the west. Located between  $38^{\circ} 30'$  -  $40^{\circ} 30'$  east meridians and  $40^{\circ} 30'$  -  $41^{\circ} 30'$  north parallels, the area of the city is 4,685 km<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1). The city has an average temperature of 14.7 °C and annual precipitation is 820.7 mm (General Directorate of Meteorology, 2019).

The material of the study is Trabzon Kaleiçi (Hisar) region. The region located in Ortahisar Central district is known as the first settlement area of the city. The area, which reflects the characteristics of the city, is in active use today and is bordered by Tabakhane Stream in the east and Zagnos Stream in the west. The area, which rises gradually from north to south, has a width of 200 m and a length of 600 m.

### Method

The formation process of Kaleiçi (Hisar) and the city walls was carried out with a method study based on observation and qualitative methods. Data collection, analysis and evaluation studies were carried out within the scope of the method.

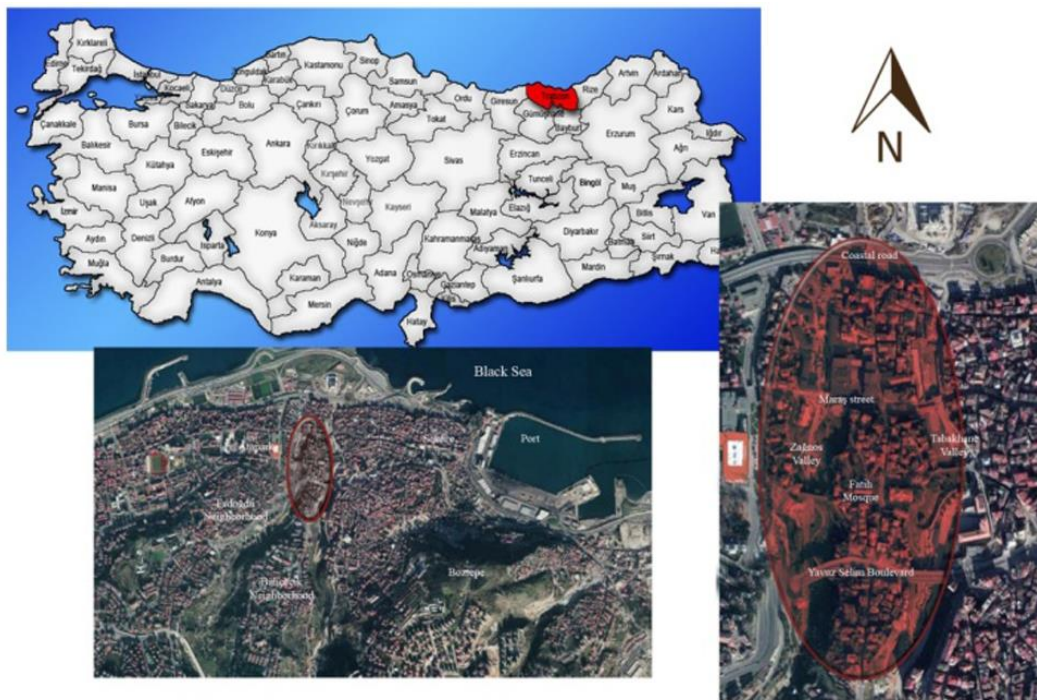


Figure.1 Location of the work area

Data related to the subject were obtained through literature study. At this stage;

1. Literature Search: scanning of engravings, maps, pictures, writings, historical documents, foreign and domestic scientific publications related to the field,
2. On-site observation,
3. Obtaining documents and information from institutions

In the analysis part;

Literature data, Observations and findings were examined and the change process was revealed by making analyzes.

## RESULTS

### Historical Development

Trabzon, which is assumed to be founded in 2000 BC by historians, has been influenced by many civilizations and different political formations such as Greek Colonies, Persians, Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans due to its geographical location and being on important trade routes (Yılmaz, 2013). While the southern shores of the Black Sea offer every advantage to sustain the large population, its geographical structure provides excellent natural barriers to defend the city. In this fertile and magnificent region, Trabzon can be expressed as the most noble and most beautiful city for more than six centuries (Finlay, 1877; Bramhall, 1916). It is also known that the agricultural economy on the coast is strong and it stands out with its vineyards and wine production (Bryer, 1980).

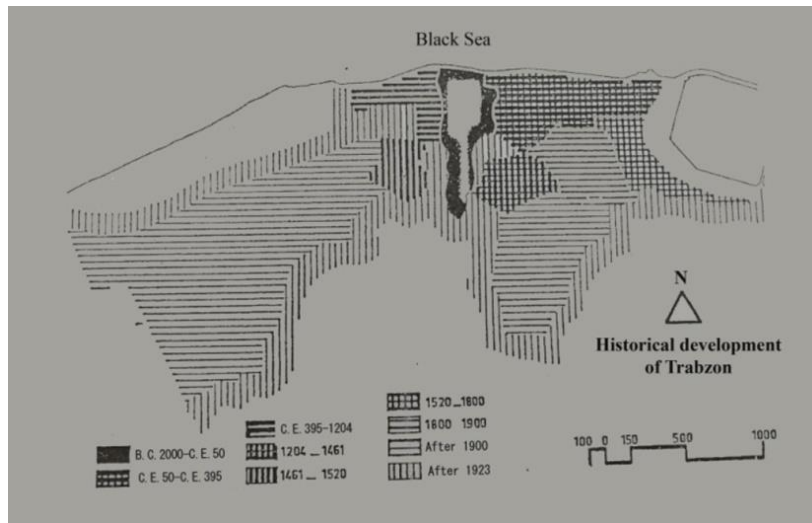


Figure.2 Historical development of Trabzon (Trabzon Analytical Studies,1968)

It can be said that the city was founded on a plain surrounded by two deep valleys with the motive of security and defense (Tuluk, 2010). Considering that the word "trapezus" means table, it may be strange that such a name was given to the city with a rough terrain. However, it is understood that the topographical effect of the city has a great effect, as the city extends towards the sea and is built on a rock that is an elevation between two valleys. The Upper Castle section, which is at the highest point, is the area where the palace is located. It is seen that the walls descend from south to north, and there are two deep valleys in the east and west.

The city has spread over the years from the Kaleiçi region, where it was first established. The direction of this development is east-west and north-south (Yılmaz, 2013). (Aysu, 1981) expresses this historical development of the city as follows;

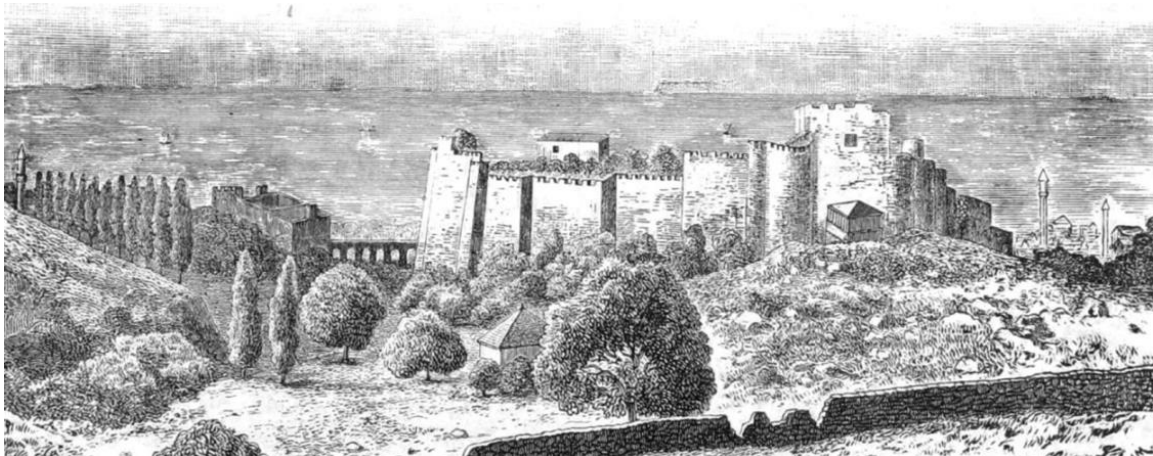
- ❖ **Establishment and Free City Era (BC. 200 - A.D. 50):** Some of Pazarkapı and Çarşı neighborhoods and the whole Ortahisar neighborhood
- ❖ **Roman Period (AD 50-395):** Çarşı, İskenderpaşa and Kemer kaya neighborhoods,
- ❖ **Byzantine Period (395-1204 AD):** a part of Gülbaharhatun and Hızır bey neighborhoods,
- ❖ **Komminus Period (1204-1461):** Cumhuriyet and Yenicuma neighborhoods
- ❖ **Ottoman Empire (1461-1923):** Gülbaharhatun, İskenderpaşa, Erdoğan, Cumhuriyet and Çömlekçi No. 1, some of the Hagia Sophia, Boztepe, Kavak-Meydan, Yenicuma neighborhoods and the entire Gazipaşa neighborhood,
- ❖ **Turkish Republic settlement after 1923:** It includes some parts of Yenimahalle, Kurtuluş, Yalı, Bahçecik, Çömlekçi, Zafer, Hagia Sophia,

Kavakmeydan, Erdoğdu, Boztepe and Gülbarhatun neighborhoods (Özbilen, 1991) (Figure 2).

When analyzed in terms of population structure, while the population was 6,000 in the 14th century, 60-65% of the population was Greek, 11-12% Armenian and 14-20% Muslim (Bryer, 1980). The city of Trabzon, of which 79.88% of the population was Christian in 1486, turned into a city where half (53.62%) of the population was Muslim in 1583 (Lowry, 2010) and the structural development was also affected in this sense.

### **Development of Trabzon Kaleici (Hisar) Urban Texture**

The city, which was built at the foot of rugged mountains, has dense green areas and slopes to the sea. There are two narrow and high bridges on both sides, while the city is built on a flat ground (Hamilton, 1842). The city, which we can describe as a rock formation, can be seen clearly when viewed from the sea (Janssens, 1966). As the steep slopes continue towards the sea, they are defined as green rocks due to the plant density they contain (Fallmerayer, 1877) (Figure 3). A cliff rises to the east of the white houses that climb the western skirts of the land. The face of this cliff is almost devoid of vegetation; but the flat summit is completely covered with grass. To the south, there is a large amphitheater embracing both the bays and the entire city (Lynch, 1901).



**Figure. 3** 1858 Heinrich Barth Trabzon Engraving (URL 1)

The city was founded in 756 BC for some writers and 2000 BC for others (Iller Bank, 1968). After the Fourth Crusades and the Latin Empire's influence on Constantinople, it became an empire in 1204 (Vasiliev, 1936). This first settlement, known as the Ancient City, was established between Tabakhane and Zagnos Stream. Its connection to the sea is provided by a port in the Moloz region (Özbilen, 1991). The city completed its development in 1700-1800 with the formation of civil and monumental structures (Candaş, 2002). Maintaining its importance after the Ottoman conquest, the castle has a busy port, making it a military and commercial base (Çelik, 2002). In addition, the castle has been a classical, Byzantine, Trabzon and Ottoman administrative center and palace for more than two thousand years. The fact that it was the place where the pasha lived until the middle of the 19th century in the Ottoman period ensured its protection, especially since detached houses were built inside. (Bryer and Winfield, 1985) (Figure 4).

If we define the castle, it was established between Tabakhane Stream and Zagnos Stream in the east. The area where it was established is on a steep rocky area extending from south to north. It has a width of 600 m in the south-north direction and 200 m in the east-west direction. Of its 600 m length, 440 m is Orta Hisar and 160 m is İçhisar (Trabzon Analytical Studies, 1968) (Figures 5 and 6).



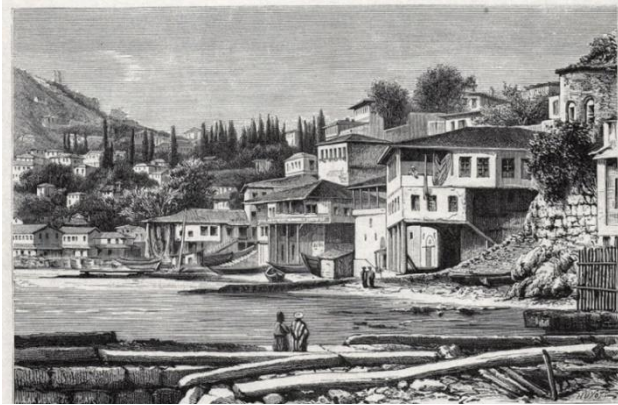


Figure.4 The view of the city in 1880 on the left (URL 2), the Tabakhane bridge in 1865 on the right (URL 3)

The city, which was founded in three different fortification areas, completed its development in 1324 (Bryer and Winfield, 1985). While the Yukarı Hisar section contains structures such as hippodrome, tower, bath, palace in some ancient sources, it is the protector of the inner castle section. There are many houses, bazaars, inns, fountains, mosques, madrasahs and baths in the area that developed more than the other two regions during the Ottoman period (Albayrak, 1998).

Ortahisar is defined as the region where important religious and administrative structures, the houses of the rulers and the wealthy are located, as well as the city administration (Gerçek, 2011). When the inner castle settlement area is examined, it is seen that it gradually rises from the seaside. Each section is smaller and higher than the previous one, while the lower part at sea level has an area of approximately 134,500 m<sup>2</sup>. There is a middle section of approximately 67,200 m<sup>2</sup> in the southeast corner. Finally, the small castle of 19,200 m<sup>2</sup> is located 950 m inland from the sea and at an altitude of 50 m (Bryer and Winfield, 1985) (Figure 7) The Kaleiçi (Hisar) area, whose settlement is on a ridge between two valleys, is connected to other parts of the city by Tabakhane and Zagnos bridges. depends (Figure 8). In a war situation, separating the bridges from inside the castle can be considered as a defensive strategy.

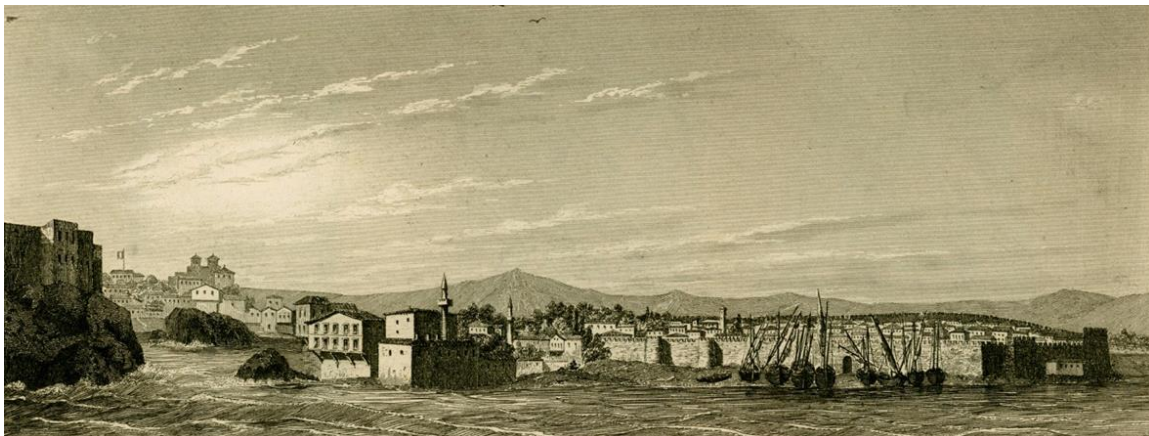


Figure.5 Engraving of the city in 1882 (Texier, 1882)









Figure.10 Aşağı Hisar Section (Lowry, 2009), View of the Walls on the right (Rice, 1932).

Bijışkyan, who visited the city in 1819, states that there are no dwellings in this section, but wide walls and ditches (Çelik, 2002). While the western wall is common to the acropolis and the palace and serves the same purpose up to two floors high, it extends from there only to the palace and rises above the acropolis wall. The walls facing other directions, which are sufficient in height, thickness and other aspects, extend down to the bottom. In this way, it will be possible to resist the approaching enemy and safely protect what they may be inside. The palace rises in the middle, leaving open space for rooms on both sides. There is a stepped staircase at the entrance. Once inside, one encounters magnificent anterooms and halls that can accommodate large numbers of people, surrounded by balconies overlooking all directions and exposed to all breezes. On the other side lies a very tall and beautiful building. Its floor is completely covered with white marble and its ceiling is painted in gold and various colors (Bryer and Winfield, 1985).

**Aşağı Hisar:** The Lower City walls completed by Alexios in 1324, are described starting from the southwest tower to the Zagnos Bridge. Lazaropoulos states that the Aşağı Hisar section was surrounded by walls in 1360, and its total area increased from 86,400 m<sup>2</sup> to 220,900 m<sup>2</sup> (Bryer and Winfield, 1985) (Figure 10). When Bijışkyan measured the Aşağı Hisar from the north, he stated that the width of the wall increased to 300 steps and the width of the wall to 12 steps in places. He mentions the existence of 4 gates in this section, which includes many houses, bazaars, inns, fountains, mosques, madrasas and baths (Çelik, 2002). There is a port belonging to the Roman and Byzantine era in the northern section, but there is no trace of the port in this area where the coastal road passes (Trabzon Analytical Studies, 1968).

#### **Current status of Kaleiçi (Hisar) settlement area**

With the effect of increasing population over the years, the structures built inside and outside the Castle have also put the historical settlement area under pressure. In this sense, Zagnos and Tabakhane Valleys in particular have become the settlements of people who migrated to the city and their silhouettes have changed (Figures 11). The Housing Development Administration (Toki) carried out reorganizations for both valleys with the Zağnos and Tabakhane Valley Urban Transformation Project. As a result of the studies, the images of the study area and its surroundings can be seen in Figure 12.



Figure.11 View of the walls from the Tabakhane bridge (Rice, 1932 on the right)





Figure.12 The current situation of Trabzon Castle and the settlement area

Yavuz Selim Boulevard, which was built in 2002, and Kaleiçi (Hisar) region caused the destruction of many historical buildings (Figure 13).



Figure.13 The view of Yavuz Selim Boulevard Bridge Legs from Zagnos Valley (URL 9)





Figure.14 Ortahisar Urban Renewal Project (Bimtaş, 2013)

Within the scope of Ortahisar Urban Renewal Project prepared in 2013, the restoration of 6 registered civil architecture examples in and around Kanuni House was completed. Housing and workplaces incompatible with the historical texture in the region were demolished, and the area was rearranged and put into service. The work has slowed down, but now the work has been accelerated again in the Yukarı and Aşağı Hisar Sections (Fig. 14).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the development of Kaleiçi (Hisar), the first settlement of the city of Trabzon. The change in the city from past to present and the factors contributing to its urban formation have been tried to be determined.

Trabzon, which hosted settlements in the early periods, came to the forefront as a port and a commercial city. When the formation of the city is examined, the walls, gates and deep valleys on both sides support the idea of defense in this sense. Thanks to its natural location, the city, which enabled the development of a defense-oriented settlement, has become one of the cities that are difficult to capture with this feature. The fact that it was dominated by different civilizations for many years and became a trade center played a major role in the development of the city. This development continued in the Byzantine and Roman periods as well. In recent years, the city has been under pressure with the increasing population, which has led to efforts to create a new road line. The study area was also affected by these pressures, the structures built over the years prevented the perceptibility of the area and caused some deterioration. With the expropriation works carried out in the valleys, these structures were demolished and the castle walls became fully visible. Urban transformation works were carried out in two valleys located in the east and west of the city and the pressures in this direction were partially reduced. However, the heavy traffic effect is still a negative factor for the area.

It is known that the settlement area of Kaleiçi (Hisar) was divided in east-west direction, especially with the last Yavuz Selim Boulevard, and some of the walls in this direction were destroyed. Yavuz Selim Boulevard, passing through the city walls bordering the Tabakhane and Zağnos valleys from the middle of Ortahisar, also damaged the castle, which is one of the most important symbols of the city. It also damaged the texture of the ancient city by destroying many historical buildings on the route during the implementation phase. Although the green valleys envisaged in the Lambert Plan are tried to be reconstructed by removing the bad construction in the valley within the scope of the Zağnos Valley Urban Transformation Project, Yavuz Selim Boulevard overshadows these arrangements (Zorlu ve ark, 2010). Günaydın and Taşçıoğlu, with their 2021 studies, determined that the accessibility of the castle and its immediate surroundings decreased over time, and that both vehicle and pedestrian movements were negatively affected. When evaluated in this respect Var, 2015 emphasized the necessity of reviving the historical texture of and making the old city center a point of attraction. Bogenç, 2009 mentions that the studies should be integrated with the urban protected area.

The study area has a very high value in terms of containing the core and characteristic features of the city. In particular, it is seen that the settlers in the area have left the protected houses for different reasons such as expropriation and financial conditions. It should be taken into account that conservation works can be evaluated as a whole and carried out with people who feel committed to these areas. Making mistakes that are difficult to compensate by making wrong decisions will accelerate the loss of the city's basic identity features.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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