

THE FALL OF CHRISTIAN SMYRNA THROUGH DUTCH EYES IN 1922¹

Dirk Roodzant

University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

Abstract

Besides the Greek majority who populated Smyrna, there were also Turks, Armenians, French, English and Italian minorities in city. Less known was that a mixture of these groups produced a new section of the population: the Levantines. This Dutch colony, comprised of only a few hundred people, was mostly inhabited by Levantines. The acting Dutch consul-general, Arnold Th. Lamping, was an eyewitness of the unfolding catastrophe of the retreat of the Greeks and the carnage inflicted on the Armenian-inhabited neighborhood of Haynots. He witnessed the looting, raping and murder of Christians in Smyrna. Lamping tried to save the Dutch Levantines with the assistance of Captain Wijdekop of the SS Deucalion, who also managed to save Armenian refugees in his ship. Dutch National Archives yield several pictures of the Dutch cemetery currently populated with Dutch Levantines, which was violated and plundered much like the other Christian cemeteries in Smyrna. Finally, Lamping proved with his reports that the film documenting the entry of the Turkish troops was a falsification of history by the Turkish authorities.

Keywords: Smyrna 1922, Armenians, persecutions, Dutch, Levantines, diplomatic Eyewitnesses.

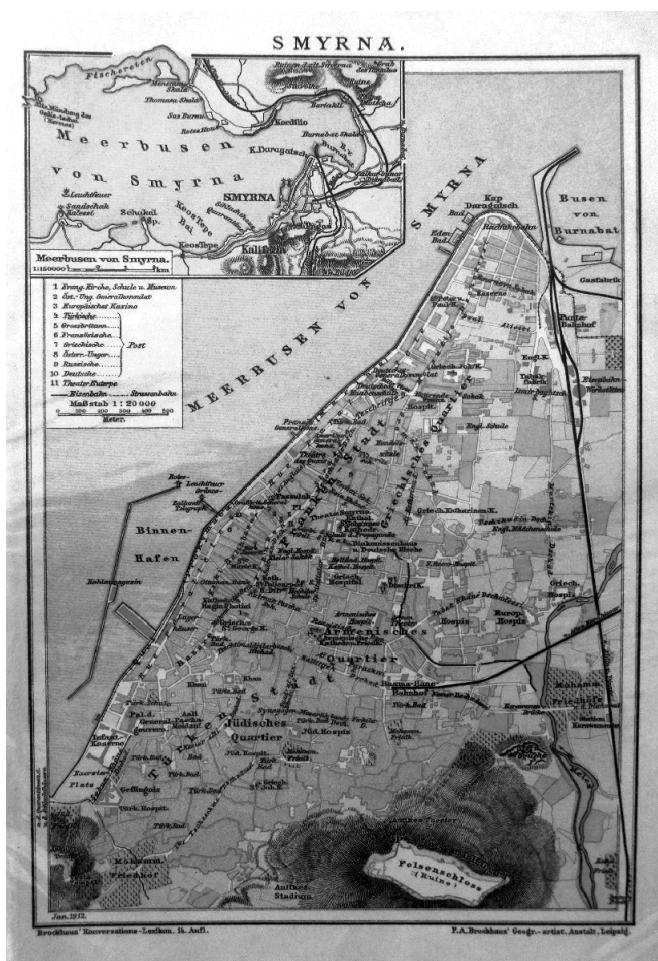
This article was submitted on 25.10.2022 and accepted for publication on 03.03.2023.

How to cite: Dirk Roodzant, "The Fall of Christian Smyrna through Dutch Eyes in 1922," *International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies* 8, no. 1 (2023): 83-100.

Introduction

The fall of Smyrna was no less dramatic than the far-earlier fall of Troy, the fall of Rome – or even, more recently, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the accompanying collapse of communism. The fall of Smyrna led to the violent end of over two thousand years of the Armenian and Greek Christian presence in Anatolia. The Treaty of Lausanne, ratified in 1923, officially sealed the fate of these civilizations which had endured for millennia. The tragic fate of the Christians of Smyrna and the remnants of Anatolian Christians (and

¹ These are a few translated pages from a book written as a PhD study at the University of Amsterdam called *De Armeense Gruwelen. Nederland en de vervolgingen van de Armeniërs in het Ottomaanse Rijk, 1889-1923* [The Armenian Horrors. The Netherlands and the persecutions of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1889-1923], published by Uitgeverij Verloren, Hilversum, 2021 (hopefully with an English translation in the future). The text was slightly amended for this article.



*Image 1. German map of Smyrna, around 1880.
(Sources: Author's Collection)*

perhaps, most prominently in this context, the Armenians) has been chronicled through eyewitness accounts of Greek, Armenian, Turkish and Levantine sources. In this small contribution to scholastic study of this event, I have made use of sources housed in the Dutch National Archives, as well as some Dutch papers of the day in combination with some more contemporary works. Through analyzing these sources, we can paint a picture of how the fall of Smyrna's Christian Armenians were viewed through Dutch eyes.

As the quintessential example of how Muslims, Christians and Jews could live together peacefully, Smyrna was often perceived as *the pearl of the Ottoman Empire* during the 19th and 20th centuries (**Image 1**). The majority of the population was Greek, but the city was also home to substantial groups of

Turk, Armenian, French, English, Italian and Dutch minorities. The mixture of all these groups produced a new “subsection” of the population: the Levantines. Smyrna was home to theaters, cafes, restaurants, coffeehouses, casinos and cinemas. Satenik Gouyoumdjian, an Armenian orphan whose parents were killed in 1915, described the wonders of Smyrna: she references her first visit with the other orphans to a cinema (**Image 2**) to view a film with Charlie Chaplin!²

The “eye-catcher” to many foreigners was Smyrna’s harbor, with its quay of four kilometers, called the *Kordon*. The tramline was proof of the city’s modernity – and, in the background of the city’s scenes, the silhouette of Mount Pagos could be found.³

2 See Eyewitness account of Satenik Gouyoumdjian in Verjine Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors* (Yerevan: Gitut'yun, 2011), 376.

3 Marjorie Housepian-Dobkin, *Smyrna 1922. The Destruction of a City* (New York: Newmark, 1998), 107;



Image 2. The Pathé cinema in Smyrna, where Satenik Gouyoumdjian went to watch a movie.
(Source: Author's Collection)

Before the catastrophe, there were approximately 15,000 Armenians in Smyrna. Many were lucky enough to escape the Hamidian massacres of 1894-1896 and the ensuing outbreak of massacres during the Armenian Genocide from 1915-onwards.⁴

The Dutch in Smyrna

The Dutch colony in Smyrna, which was founded in the seventeenth century, consisted of several hundred Dutchmen with names like De Hohepied, Van der Zee and Van Lennep. They prospered as traders and often held estates outside the city (known as a *çiftlik*). There was both a Dutch Reformed church (**Image 3**) and a Dutch hospital in Smyrna.⁵ Most Dutchmen did not speak their own language anymore, having fully become Levantines (**Image 4**).⁶

Vahram Dadrian, *To the Desert. Pages from my Diary* (Princeton-London: Taderon Press/ Gomidas Institute, 2003), 375.

4 *Genocide in the Ottoman Empire, Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks, 1913-1923*, ed. George N. Shirinian (New York: Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center, 2017), 231.

5 Jan Willem Samberg, *De Hollandsche Gereformeerde Gemeente te Smirna. De geschiedenis eener handelskerk* (Leiden: Ijdo, 1928), 229. See also M. A. Perk, *De Nederlandsche Protestantsche Gemeente te Smyrna* (Leiden, 1910), 48.

6 Samberg, *De Hollandsche Gereformeerde Gemeente te Smirna*, 232, note 2. See also *NRC (Dutch daily)*, 20 September 1924.



*Image 3. The Dutch Reformed Church in Smyrna
(Source: Author's Collection)*



*Image 4. Levantine (Dutch) girl
Yolande Ailsa van Heemstra
(Source: Dutch National Archives,
2.05.95/7.)*

By 1922, the tide in the battle between the Turkish nationalists, the *Kuvâ-yi Milliye*, the irregular Turkish militias and the Greek troops in the early period of the Turkish Independence, had totally turned in favor of the nationalists. According to documents attributed to Edmond de Hochepped, the Dutch consul in Smyrna, word had spread that the Greek forces had planned attacks against the Turkish population to murder, plunder homes and destroy Turkish settlements in Smyrna. In response to it, the Ottoman population fled to the Italian zone.⁷ Acting consul-general Arnold Th. Lamping (1893-1949) saw a disaster nearing: “The retreat continues and there is no way [of] escaping a debacle.”⁸

7 De Hochepped to Rengers, 28 February 1922, Smyrna, No. 246/46. *Nouvelles politiques*. Dutch National Archives at The Hague (DNA from now on) 2.05.94/486.

8 Lamping to Rengers, 4 September 1922, Smyrna, No. 863/166. DNA 2.05.94/486.

On 5 September 1922, the Kemalist government sent an ominous message to the League of Nations in Geneva (which was in session at the time). In the message, the Kemalists pointed to the Greek mass murders in Asia Minor as justification for retribution.⁹

To escape a violent fate, tens of thousands of Greek soldiers were picked up by Greek ships of all sizes and shapes. According to Lamping, there were two opposing images of the Greek retreat from Smyrna: on one hand, there was the “perfect disorderly retreat of the Greek infantry”. On the other, there was the image of the passage of the Greek cavalry on the way to the peninsula Tschesme in a tightly organized “endless[ly] long line of cavalry”.¹⁰ Despite these accounts, there was a relative calm in Smyrna during the Greek retreat. The messages from the front, however, were threatening. Lamping writes: “Everything is being burned down and the danger of Smyrna having to face the same ordeal partly or in whole is by no means excluded.”¹¹ In the meantime, Lamping had requisitioned (in the name of the Dutch government) the S.S. Deucalion as a ship for which they could evacuate the Dutch colony in case of a severe emergency.¹²

Advancing Turkish troops entered the city of Smyrna on the morning of 9 September 1922; their arrival led to great fear among the Christian population, from which cries were heard, “The Turks are coming.” The Turks in Smyrna tried to reassure the population by shouting: “Have no fear! Nothing is going to happen!”¹³ Yet the Armenians noted the Turkish cavalry coming closer with fear.¹⁴ Lamping observed a less organized Turkish army corps passing by: “What I’ve personally seen of the Kemalist army gave me the impression of more or less organized bands than that of a regular army.”¹⁵ Captain Wijdekop of the Deucalion saw Greek prisoners on the quay:

About twenty prisoners, bound two by two, among whom an Armenian priest, were being whipped on. They screamed heartbreakingly. At the same time the foxtrot was being played in a big restaurant. The music played, the prisoners wailed, on the water floated dead soldiers.¹⁶

9 Esther Pohl Lovejoy, *Certain Samaritans* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), 137. She was the President of the Medical Women’s International Association from 1919 to 1924. See also: Edward Hale Bierstadt, *The Great Betrayal. Economic Imperialism and the Destruction of Christian Communities in Asia Minor* (Chicago: Pontian Greek Society of Chicago, 2008), 23.

10 Acting Consul General Lamping to the envoy in Constantinople, Rengers, 25 September 1922. On board of the S.S. Deucalion, No. 893. DNA 2.05.38/1438.

11 Lamping to Rengers, 8 September 1922, No. 878. DNA 2.05.94/486.

12 Lamping to Rengers, 5 September 1922, No. 866. DNA 2.05.94/486.

13 Giles Milton, *Paradise Lost, Smyrna 1922. The Destruction of Islam’s City of Tolerance* (London: Sceptre, 2008), 256. See also Hovakim Uregian and Krikor Baghdjian, “Two Unpublished Eyewitness Accounts of the Holocaust of Smyrna, September 1922,” *The Armenian Review* 35, no. 4 (1982):365.

14 *Ibid.*, 365.

15 Lamping to Rengers, 25 September 1922. On board of the S.S. Deucalion, No. 893. DNA 2.05.38/1438.

16 “De ramp of Smyrna” [The disaster of Smyrna], *Haagsche Courant (Dutch daily)*, 8 November 1922. See also Dora Sakayan: *An Armenian Doctor in Turkey, Garabed Hatcherian: My Smyrna Ordeal of 1922* (Montreal: Arod Books, 1997), 10.



L'INCENDIE DE SMYRNE ET LA FUITE DE LA POPULATION

Image 5. The French Magazine L'Illustration, Saturday, September 30th 1922, 80e Année, No. 4152, page 277

The Dutch consulate was very close to the Armenian neighborhood of Haynots. This proximity gave Lamping a remarkable vantage point to observe the disturbances: “I estimate the amount of Christians that were killed that night on several hundred. It [was] especially the Armenians, who had to pay the highest prize. There was an awful lot of looting.”¹⁷ Haynots was soon closed off by the Turkish troops. Targeted killings soon followed. Several days of intimidation, looting and violence took place against the Christian population – but the excesses were in particular directed against the city’s Armenian minority.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ ‘De ramp van Smyrna,’ *Haagsche Courant*, 8 November 1922.

Lamping felt a deep sense of insecurity at his post, especially when he saw Turkish soldiers and civilians loot neighborhoods en-masse. His account, which noted both violent looting and the resale of looted goods, confirmed the participation of regular Kemalist troops in the orgy of plunder. Beyond simply looting property, however, Kemalist forces engaged in widespread rape and murder – which was concentrated in both the Armenian and the Greek neighborhoods.¹⁹ In the Frankish neighborhood (located in Smyrna's western environs), letters on Turkish and Jewish shops could be found written in Turkish as "İslam" (Islamic) or "Musevi" (Jewish), which could serve to identify businesses for plunder.²⁰ Lamping would soon learn from British consul Harry Lamb that the Dutch couple Oscar de Jongh and his wife Cleo (located on the other side of the bay of Smyrna) were murdered by Turkish soldiers.²¹ They were the first Levantines who fell victim to the advancing Turkish marauders.

Fleeing this violence, the city's Christians sought refuge at the Catholic hospital Saint Antoine, as well as at the city's English and Dutch hospitals.²² In light of this panic, Nouredin Pasha, Lieutenant-General of the Turkish Nationalists, wanted to make the impression that everything was peaceful and quiet in Smyrna under the control of the Kemalist troops.²³ Lamping described Nouredin as follows: "Further his notices were a glorification of the Turkish military operations and of his own abilities."²⁴ The day afterwards, Lamping wrote: "by half past ten, the Armenian quarter was being evacuated, whereby these unfortunates, leaving everything they owned behind them, were being rushed by Turkish soldiers."²⁵ Those in Lamping's care first sought refuge within the Dutch colony. For the first time, Lamping had a quiet night: "The night of Tuesday on Wednesday was quiet and also Wednesday morning was calm, but the streets were deserted, passersby were mostly Turkish soldiers who would bring to safety their looted goods."²⁶

On 13 September 1922 disaster struck all of the city's Christians. What had happened in Smyrna up until that day – where many Christian refugees from the inland had sought refuge preceding the city's invasion – was just the prelude of what the correspondent of the Chicago Tribune John Clayton called a "Biblical tragedy and an exodus."²⁷ That day,

19 Abraham H. Hartunian, *Neither to Laugh nor to Weep. A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*, trans. by Vartan Hartunian (Boston: Beacon, 1968), 194-195.

20 Sakayan, *An Armenian Doctor in Turkey*, 12.

21 Lamping to Rengers, 25 September 1922, On board of the S.S. Deucalion, No. 893. DNA 2.05.38/1438. See also: Lysimachos Oeconomos, *The Martyrdom of Smyrna and Eastern Christendom* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1922), 88.

22 René Puaux, *La mort de Smyrne. Les derniers jours de Smyrne*, Reunis et presentes par Varoujean Poghosyan (Erevan: Université d'état d'Erevan, 2012), 55-56.

23 Lamping to Rengers, 25 September 1922, On board of the S.S. Deucalion, No. 893. DNA 2.05.38/1438. See also report of the first dragoman De Hochepeid of October 1924, DNA 2.05.94/488.

24 Ibid.

25 Lamping to Rengers, 25 September 1922, On board of the S.S. Deucalion, No. 893. DNA 2.05.38/1438.

26 Ibidem.

27 Oeconomos, *The Martyrdom of Smyrna and Eastern Christendom*, 166. 'Plight of refugees,' John Clayton, 4 October 1922. See also Puaux, *La mort de Smyrne*, 55-56.

Lamping saw a fire that had started in the city's Armenian quarter.²⁸ This, for Lamping, was the catalyst to start the evacuation of the Dutch colony aboard the Deucalion. But not everyone of the small Dutch community was lucky enough to reach the ship. Lamping was witness of the panic among the Christians "who gathered on the quay and like madmen were jostling to get into the ships." Lamping saw from the Deucalion that the fire was not being fought by the Kemalist authorities:

Because of the great distance, I didn't see everything clearly what happened and in my opinion it will remain an undisclosed issue, who started the fire. A fact remains though, that the Turkish authorities did absolutely nothing to fight the fire and its extension and that the fire by the Turks, either not set up, was being maintained by them. A fact is that the fire taking into account the direction of the wind was started at such a point and maintained in a way, which provided, that the Turkish neighborhood would be spared and the Armenian and European neighborhoods would be destroyed.²⁹

Garabed Hatcherian (1876-1952), an Armenian doctor in the city, feared the worst for himself and his family. He had already seen large blazes during the war, but this sight surpassed everything: "There is no hope left for us anymore; our annihilation is only a question of hours."³⁰ Many Armenians had little hope left. A Dutch witness told the American consul Horton (1859-1942) the story of an Armenian young couple in Cordelio—a beautiful suburb of Smyrna located at the other side of the bay—who wanted to commit suicide out of fear of the advancing Turkish troops.³¹ Horton hoped that they could be saved miraculously, despite this not being likely.

From his ship, Lamping heard the panicked cries of the refugees on the quay, noting how the mass of people bounced back and forth like a cornfield blowing in the wind. They were completely encircled by the fire, the Turkish troops and the rough sea. The wind blew from the southwest to the northeast, scorching the neighborhood. The heartbreaking scenes on the quay left no one untouched: "It was estimated that by the morning the Armenian quarter and in the most important and prospering part of the European city was in fire."³² In the theater on the quay, some people noticed the disaster unfolding and played the piece *Le Tango de la Mort*.³³ From the ships, there was continuous music which blared while

28 Lamping to Rengers, 25 September 1922, On board of the S.S. Deucalion, No. 893. DNA 2.05.38/1438.

29 Ibid.

30 Sakayan, *An Armenian Doctor in Turkey*, 15.

31 George Horton, *The Blight of Asia: An Account of the Systematic Extermination of Christian Populations by Mohammedans and of the Culpability of Certain Great Powers; With the True Story of the Burning of Smyrna* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1926), 91.

32 Lamping to Rengers, 25 September 1922, Aboard the S.S. Deucalion, No. 893. DNA 2.05.38/1438.

33 Housepian-Dobkin, *Smyrna 1922*, 173. See also: Bierstadt, *The Great Betrayal*, 38; Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 242-243.



Image 6. The Italian Ship Scrivia Picking up Refugees
(Source: French magazine *L'Illustration*, Saturday, September 30th 1922, 80e Année, No. 4152, page 276)

a disaster unfolded on the quay (**Image 6**). Only foreign nationals were being picked up from the water by ships from their respective governments. For the majority of the Greek and Armenian refugees, there was often no vessel that would accept them. Instead of being verbally denied entry alone, some unlucky refugees were attacked with boiling water spilled on them from the decks of vessels.³⁴

³⁴ Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 425. See also Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 242-243.

The Deucalion left Smyrna after that taking 115 members of the Dutch community aboard. In addition, however, there were also Armenian refugees aboard: “They were so scared, that they hid in the hold of the ship and remained there sitting like mummies.”³⁵ Aboard an American destroyer, where Lamping had switched to, a Turk gloated about the fate of those left behind:

The male members from seventeen to forty-five years of the Greek and Armenian population were made prisoners of war; the others men and women alike were being evacuated to Greece, (...) or being transported abroad or murdered. A Turk proudly shared with me, that Kemal Pasha had seen a chance to do in a couple of weeks, what the Powers couldn’t achieve in a century: the solution of the question of Christian minorities! Plundering still goes on, although the matter is almost exhausted.³⁶

The Turkish cavalry soldiers, who drove through Smyrna and the quay on the following day, yelled that the Armenians had set Smyrna on fire. The Armenians they found were taken and “deported inland”.³⁷ The reality was that the mass of refugees on the quay were threatened by Turkish soldiers who robbed them; they were in danger of being pushed in the water or being burned alive by the fire. The looting of houses, churches, schools and hospitals in and around Smyrna would continue until the next year.³⁸

The destruction of Dutch properties was also considerable. Most Dutch Levantines had lost everything they owned through loss to fire or looting before, during and afterwards – save for what they wore or could take along with them when evacuating. The Dutch hospital, formerly a free port for refugees, had been reduced to ashes. While it had been robbed, the small Dutch church had miraculously survived the violence – yet the adjacent cemetery sustained damaging abuse (**Images 7 and 8**). It pointed to an antichristian mood prevailing among the Kemalists, as the city’s Armenian, Greek, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant cemeteries were “profanés et spoliés d’une façon infame” [violated and plundered in an infamous or outrageous way].³⁹

Furthermore, the old cemetery along the road to Boudja had not been spared: “Here it concerns in particular the burial vaults, who were destroyed and robbed. Further many crosses on the tombs are destroyed, while also the heads from the marble angels were cut

35 ‘De brand of Smyrna’ [The fire of Smyrna], *Het Vaderland* (Dutch daily), 9 November 1922.

36 Lamping to Rengers, October 10th 1922. American destroyer, No. 219, No. 1032/I DNA 2.05.94/486.

37 Uregian and Baghdjian, “Two Unpublished Eyewitness Accounts of the Holocaust of Smyrna, September 1922,” 389. The only serious source who has a different point of view is the commander of the fire brigade, Grescowitch, who blames the Greeks. *Journal d’Orient*, DNA 2.05.94/486. Envoy Rengers wrote with this note that “meant report by the strongly anti-Greek Journal d’Orient here is publicized, while one should take into account the attitude that some Levantines keep up towards the Turkish authorities by pleasing them.” Rengers to Foreign Affairs, 3 February 1923, No. 334/59. DNA 2.05.94/486.

38 Lamping to Rengers, 10 January 1923, Smyrna, No. 43/8. DNA 2.05.95/1.

39 Note Verbale, Smyrne, 25 Octobre 1922. DNA 2.05.94/486.

*Image 7. Dutch Graves which were
Desecrated and Destroyed
(Source: Dutch National Archives,
2.05.95/3.)*



*Images 8. Destroyed Dutch Graves
(Source: Dutch National Archives, 2.05.95/3.)*

off.”⁴⁰ Lamping insisted on a more thorough response from the Western Powers and the Netherlands itself⁴¹ to the violence and abuse sustained in the attacks; for this reason, he was put at ease by the news that the warship *Tromp* had been sent out to address the atrocities.⁴²

40 Lamping to Rengers, 15 November 1922, Smyrna, No. 1175/33. DNA 2.05.94/487.

41 Lamping to Rengers, 9 November 1922, Smyrna, No. 1132/23. DNA 2.05.94/486. See also Lamping to Rengers, 15 December 1922, Smyrna, No. 1286/41. DNA 2.05.95/1 and Lamping to Rengers, 14 December 1922, Smyrna, No. 1283/40. DNA 2.05.95/3.

42 Lamping to Rengers, 15 November 1922, Smyrna, No. 1149/24. DNA 2.05.94/486.

The disaster of Smyrna had painful consequences. It directly led to the exodus of many of the last Christians from Anatolia – of whom five million formerly lived in the Ottoman Empire. After the war, only hundreds or thousands remained. The Greek and Armenian presence on the Anatolian Peninsula, which dated back over two thousand years, came abruptly to a violent end. Only a few Christians remained in Anatolia following the atrocities. Only the abandoned churches, monasteries, *khatchkars*, schools, cemeteries and hospitals remained as silent witnesses of a history which was destroyed as part of a religious and cultural genocide: everything what reminded successive residents of the old inhabitants had to be erased.

The Greeks had suffered an ignominious military and political defeat in the Smyrna catastrophe. But even the victory of Mustafa Kemal was a pyrrhic one. Colonel Ismet said shortly after the fire: “We have taken Izmir (Smyrna). But what’s the use? The city and half of Anatolia have been reduced to ruins.”⁴³ This was an indelible stain on the blazon of Mustafa Kemal, who secured his victory in Anatolia – but did so amid a serious loss of prestige. The downfall of Smyrna was also shameful for the Allies, who were present in the harbor of Smyrna with an armada of ships at their disposal, filming the desperation of tens of thousands of refugees on the quay while failing to act to save refugees from widespread and visible plundering, rape, murder. “On the foreign transport ships and warships anchored near the shore, we can distinctly see filmmaking equipment pointed at us, making movies representing our misery.”⁴⁴

Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of Greeks and Armenians fled to the Greek islands, Thessaloniki or Piraeus. Greece, in this lens, became a state of refugees like Armenia had been beforehand (1918-1920). The number of refugees in Greece rose dramatically (**Image 9**). The Red Cross noted that there were about half a million refugees from Asia Minor who had arrived in Greece at the end of September 1922.⁴⁵ It was in this context that the work of heroes like Asa Kent Jennings (1877-1933) came to the fore. Jennings, a methodist from Mohawk Valley, New York, and a member of the Y.M.C.A. in Smyrna, near-singlehandedly organized an armada of Greek ships into lifeboats; per the authority of the United States Navy, these boats were permitted to go to Smyrna to rescue refugees.⁴⁶ During the Smyrna catastrophe there was no distinction between neutrals and belligerents.

The Dutch Red Cross from Asia Minor received alarming messages about hundreds of thousands of Christian refugees – among whom included refugees from the Dutch colony in Smyrna. The need for humanitarian assistance in the Balkans was also very high. Dutch companies and individuals provided generous assistance for the Dutch victims from

43 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 311.

44 Sakayan, *An Armenian Doctor in Turkey*, 18.

45 Roode Kruis [Red Cross] to the Dutch envoy in Athens, Mr. Beaufort, 6/19 September 1922. DNA 2.05.312/275.

46 Lou Ureneck, *The Great Fire: One American’s Mission to Rescue Victims of the 20-th Century’s First Genocide* (N.Y: HarperCollins, 2015), 338-347.



Réfugiés grecs attendant sur les quais pour s'embarquer.

Image 9. Greek Refugees Waiting

(Source: French magazine L'Illustration, 23 September 1922, No. 4151, 80e Année)

Smyrna and its immediate surroundings. There were generous gifts provided by the Philips Gloeilampen (Light bulbs) factories in Eindhoven, the Amstel Brewery in Amsterdam and the Dutch-Turkish Tobacco Company in Rotterdam.⁴⁷ A month later Fridtjof Nansen, famous polar explorer and (at that moment) High Commissioner of the League of Nations, wrote from Constantinople that there were 750.000 refugees particularly concentrated in Greece – of which most were women, children and elderly people. They lacked nearly everything, including food, clothes, shelter and money. The few goods that the Greek government could provide (namely, half a loaf of bread a day for each refugee) were woefully inadequate. Moreover, typhus, cholera and other diseases were prevalent in the relief camps.⁴⁸

The vast majority of Dutch Levantines lost nearly all of their possessions to the fire or through looting – save for what they could carry with them when evacuating. The Dutch consulate took account of all the losses of the Dutch Levantines through official documentation. Most of the victims hailed from Smyrna, although there were also Levantines from the suburbs and small communities like Cordelio, Boudja and Seidikeuy. Following the evacuation, they formed diasporic communities in places like Paris,

47 Charles van Ufford to W.H. de Beaufort, 26 September 1922, No. 3205/22. Main board Dutch Red Cross. DNA 2.05.312/275.

48 Résumé mensuel des travaux de la Société des Nations, Vol. II, No. 1 to 31 October 1922.

Marseille, Athens, Constantinople, in Egypt and on Cyprus. Among these diasporans were businessmen, doctors, auctioneers, bank clerks, tax consultants, landowners, farmers, a sexton and a seller of umbrellas. The losses consisted of (but was not limited to) cash and liquid assets, clothing, furniture, jewelry, securities, cameras and photography equipment, rugs and doctor's instruments. Stores were emptied and what was left was smashed to pieces. Moreover, Levantine fields were salted and Levantine-owned cattle were robbed; farmsteads were ruined and the harvest was taken. Fruit trees were torn loose and agricultural equipment was broken or destroyed.⁴⁹ In short: most Levantines lost close to everything, and a prospect of true compensation for the damage done failed to yield optimism from victims of the atrocities.⁵⁰

The claim forms themselves give some clues to the consequences faced by Dutch Levantines. Abraham de Pereira, for example, wrote that he had to flee and that being on board of the *S.S. Deucalion* meant that he wasn't able to save any of his possessions.⁵¹ The *çiflik* of Edward de Jongh from Boudja was looted by Turkish soldiers through orders from their commanding officer.⁵² Willem Heemstra, also from Boudja, lost his possessions from both Turkish and Greek looters alike.⁵³ The *çiflik* of Michel Maleozzi from Cordelio was robbed by Turkish soldiers.⁵⁴ Most Smyrniots had lost their houses everything contained within during the fire of 13 September 1922. The First Dragoman of the Dutch consulate-general, Edmond de Hochepped, was one of the last claimants to submit a form of his own. The town of Seidikeuy was just like the possessions of De Hochepped spared little, save for the memories of a "glorious past".⁵⁵ The Dutch Levantines never recovered from the human storm that the Turkish troops unleashed unto Smyrna in those autumn days of 1922.

Following the events that took place in Smyrna, Anatolia remained almost completely controlled by the Turkish Nationalists. Mustafa Kemal had, in his hands, a strong "trump card" for the imminent peace negotiations to secure this new territory; but with the forced departure of the Christian population, the intellectuals and educated citizens of Smyrna had left. Not only did teachers, professors, doctors and civil servants leave Anatolia, but also almost all craftsmen.⁵⁶ Large parts of the country were burned down, destroyed and

49 The claim forms of the Dutch Smyrniots are being archived in D.N.A. 2.05.95/2.

50 See the documents of the Dutch Smyrniots concerning the claim forms to both the Turkish and Greek governments in 2.05.312/200, 201, 202, 203, 204 en 205. There was not one compensation from both governments!

51 Claim form No. 74. Abraham Albert de Pereira was a Commissaire import/export representation (Commissioner Imports and Exports representative). Submitted 2 January 1923. N.A. 2.05.95/2.

52 Claim form No. 1151. Edward de Jongh was a farmer in Boudja. Submitted 13 November 1923. N.A. 2.05.95/2.

53 Claim form No. 1166. Willem J.H. Heemstra was a farmer and owner of a large land area. Submitted 8 November 1923. N.A. 2.05.95/2.

54 Claim form No. 1282. Michel Maleozzi was without a job at that moment. Submitted 16 December 1923. N.A. 2.05.95/2.

55 Exposé sur les dégats et pertes subis par le Comte E.J.P. de Hochepped, 1^{er} interprète du Consulat-général des Pays-Bas, Smyrne, 3 October 1924. N.A. 2.05.95/8.

56 Lamping to Rengers, 20 October 1922, Smyrna, No. 1065/11. DNA 2.05.49/294.

robbed. “Ghost villages and towns” arose because the indigenous population had left, had been deported or killed outright. The final act of the fall of Christian Smyrna was the filming of the entry of the Kemalist troops, which was *reenacted* because no images were shot on their actual entry on 9 September 1922; “A childish display,” Lamping aptly noted.⁵⁷

Conclusion

We could say that the Dutch officials bore witness of the disappearance, flight and murder of the Dutch Levantines, as well as of the Armenians of Smyrna, in the autumn of 1922. Acting Dutch consul-general Arnold Th. Lamping, in particular, constituted a key eyewitness who saw that the Armenians paid a brutal price when the Turkish soldiers marched into Haynots – Smyrna’s Armenian quarter. His testimony further corroborates with other documentation that the Armenians and Greeks in Smyrna were the victims of a bloody campaign by the Kemalist troops, and that such actions in Smyrna constituted the end of an era spanning millennia. Of further importance are the pictures which constitute proof of the many ruined cemeteries by Turkish soldiers, irregulars and citizens – of not only Dutch origin, but also of the Armenian, Greek, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant cemeteries which were violated and plundered. Lastly it shows prove of the fake film (which is still circulating today on the internet) of the arrival of the Turkish cavalry, which supposedly “took place” on the ninth of September 1922. In reality: it was a re-enactment and a falsification of the true history of the violence that engulfed Smyrna that autumn.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archives and Newspapers

Acting Consul General Lamping to the Envoy in Constantinople, Rengers, 25 September 1922. On board of the S.S. Deucalion, No. 893. DNA 2.05.38/1438.

Charles van Ufford to W.H. de Beaufort, 26 September 1922, No. 3205/22. Main board Dutch Red Cross. DNA 2.05.312/275.

Claim form No. 1151. Edward de Jongh was a farmer in Boudja. Submitted 13 November 1923. N.A. 2.05.95/2.

Claim form No. 1166. Willem J.H. Heemstra was a farmer and owner of a large land area. Submitted 8 November 1923. N.A. 2.05.95/2.

⁵⁷ Political and economic notes, without name and date. Interview of Mustafa Kemal by Lamping. DNA 2.05.94/486.

Claim form No. 1282. Michel Maleozzi was without a job at that moment. Submitted 16 December 1923. N.A. 2.05.95/2.

Claim form No. 74. Abraham Albert de Pereira was a Commissaire import/export representation (Commissioner Imports and Exports representative). Submitted 2 January 1923. N.A. 2.05.95/2.

“De ramp of Smyrna” [The Disaster of Smyrna]. *Haagsche Courant (Dutch daily)*, 8 November 1922.

De Armeense Gruwelen. Nederland en de vervolgingen van de Armeniërs in het Ottomaanse Rijk, 1889-1923 [The Armenian Horrors. The Netherlands and the persecutions of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1889-1923]. Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2021.

De Hoche pied to Rengers, 28 February 1922, Smyrna, No. 246/46. Nouvelles politiques. Dutch National Archives at The Hague (DNA from now on) 2.05.94/486.

Exposé sur les dégats et pertes subis par le Comte E.J.P. de Hoche pied, 1^e interprête du Consulat-général des Pays-Bas, Smyrne, 3 October 1924. N.A. 2.05.95/8.

Journal d'Orient, DNA 2.05.94/486.

Lamping to Ren Roode Kruis (Red Cross) to the Dutch envoy in Athens, Mr. Beaufort, 6/19 September 1922. DNA 2.05.312/275.

Lamping to Rengers, 10 January 1923, Smyrna, No. 43/8. DNA 2.05.95/1.

Lamping to Rengers, 14 December 1922, Smyrna, No. 1283/40. DNA 2.05.95/3.

Lamping to Rengers, 15 December 1922, Smyrna, No. 1286/41. DNA 2.05.95/1

Lamping to Rengers, 15 November 1922, Smyrna, No. 1175/33. DNA 2.05.94/487.

Lamping to Rengers, 20 October 1922, Smyrna, No. 1065/11. DNA 2.05.49/294.

Lamping to Rengers, 4 September 1922, Smyrna, No. 863/166. DNA 2.05.94/486.

Lamping to Rengers, 9 November 1922, Smyrna, No. 1132/23. DNA 2.05.94/486.

Lamping to Rengers, 9 October 1922. American destroyer, No. 219, No. 1032/I DNA 2.05.94/486.

Note Verbale, Smyrne, le 25 Octobre 1922. DNA 2.05.94/486.

Political and Economic Notes, without name and date. Interview of Mustafa Kemal by Lamping. DNA 2.05.94/486.

Rengers to Foreign Affairs, 3 February 1923, No. 334/59. DNA 2.05.94/486.

Books and Articles

Bierstadt, Edward Hale. *The Great Betrayal. Economic Imperialism and the Destruction of Christian Communities in Asia Minor*. Chicago: Pontian Greek Society of Chicago, 2008.

Dadrian, Vahram. *To the Desert. Pages from my Diary*. Princeton-London: Taderon Press/Gomidas Institute, 2003.

Hartunian, Abraham. *Neither to Laugh nor to Weep. A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*. Translated by Vartan Hartunian. Boston: Beacon, 1968.

Horton, George. *The Blight of Asia: An Account of the Systematic Extermination of Christian Populations by Mohammedans and of the Culpability of Certain Great Powers; With the True Story of the Burning of Smyrna*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1926.

Housepian-Dobkin, Marjorie. *Smyrna 1922. The Destruction of a City*. New York: Newmark, 1998.

Lovejoy, Esther Pohl. *Certain Samaritans*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927.

Milton, Giles. *Paradise Lost: Smyrna 1922. The Destruction of Islam's City of Tolerance*. London: Sceptre, 2008.

Oeconomos, Lysimachos. *The Martyrdom of Smyrna and Eastern Christendom*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1922.

Perk, M. A. *De Nederlandsche Protestantsche Gemeente te Smyrna*. Leiden: 1910.

Puaux, René. *La mort de Smyrne. Les derniers jours de Smyrne*, Reunis et presentes par Varoujean Poghosyan. Erevan: Université d'état d'Erevan, 2012.

Sakayan, Dora. *An Armenian Doctor in Turkey: Garabed Hatcherian: My Smyrna Ordeal of 1922*. Montreal: Arod Books, 1997.

Samberg, Jan Willem. *De Hollandsche Gereformeerde Gemeente te Smirna. De geschiedenis eener handelskerk*. Leiden: Eduard IJdo, 1928.

Shirinian, George (ed.). *Genocide in the Ottoman Empire, Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks, 1913-1923*. New York: Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center, 2017.

Svazlian, Verjine. *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors*. Yerevan: Gitut'yun, 2011.

Uregian, Hovakim and Krikor Baghdjian. "Two Unpublished Eyewitness Accounts of the Holocaust of Smyrna, September 1922." *The Armenian Review* 35, no. 4 (1982): 362-389.

Ureneck, Lou. *The Great Fire: One American's Mission to Rescue Victims of the 20th Century's First Genocide*. N.Y: HarperCollins, 2015.

About the Author

Dirk Roodzant is an independent researcher of the Armenian Genocide. He received his PhD in History at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) which was about The Netherlands and the persecution of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1889-1923, which was published as *De Armeense Gruwelen* (The Armenian Horrors) in 2021. Next to this, he is also a teacher in the education of genocides, with booklets and projects with among others Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. For this work in education at an international level, he received the James Bryce Medal of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI).

E-mail: dirkroodzant@hotmail.com