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# REPRESENTING THE 1909 ADANA MASSACRES IN ARMENO-TURKISH: GARABED ARTINIAN AND THE CASE FOR A HISTORICAL READING

*Bedross Der Matossian*

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA*

This article concentrates on the literary representation of the Adana Massacres of 1909. While most of the material lamenting these massacres was written in Armenian, this article deals with a rare and unpublished *destan* (lamentation poem) of the massacres in Armeno-Turkish. The author, Garabed Artinian, penned the longest *destan* that has existed on the massacres. Unlike a historical narrative, the *destan* is a poetic way of expressing sorrow and pain for the loss of lives, belongings, humanity, and honor. Artinian who witnessed both waves of the Adana Massacres in April, lost his wife and child, described in detail the unfolding of the horrifying crime. Artinian's *destan*, which is made up of fifty-seven stanzas, was written in the third person in a lyrical style, while delivering a chronological account of the massacres. He experienced these events first-hand and thus through his *destan* Artinian ventured to "speak" the "unspeakable." He wrote it to bear witness to the catastrophe. Hence, the *destan* is a work of art, a work of testimony, and an expression of pain and sorrow at the same time. The result achieved at least three things: a striking lamentation written in Armeno-Turkish about an incomprehensible catastrophe, a record and reconstruction of the trajectory of the events that transpired, written almost in real time, and a personal expression of pain and anguish by a survivor and witness to the massacres and their aftermath. Therefore, the *destan* has literary as well as historical value and should be treated as a uniquely informative source and expression. Through entering in dialogue with literary theories of the representation of the catastrophe and trauma studies, this article argues that the *destan* has literary as well as historical value and should be treated as a uniquely informative source and expression.

**Key Words:** Adana Massacres, lamentation, literary representation, survivor testimony, trauma.

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## Introduction

On June 4, 1909, only five and a half weeks after the Adana Massacres of 1909, Garabed Artinian, penned one of the longest *destans* (epic poems) known to exist in Armeno-Turkish, lamenting the catastrophic events. Artinian's life was marked by multiple traumas. Not only were his wife and child killed in the massacres in Adana, but his parents were also killed in the Hamidian massacres (1894-96) in the previous decade. His unpublished *destan*, written in the midst of fresh personal loss and incomprehensible catastrophe, provides a unique account of the Adana Massacres of 1909. Previously unpublished, a copy of Artinian's original *destan*, along with my transliteration to Turkish and translation into English, appear for the first time in the Appendix of this article. The *destan* consists of fifty-seven stanzas written in the third person and follows an *aaab* rhyme structure.<sup>1</sup> The work remained in the possession of the Artinian family until recently, when his great grandson Robert Artinian shared it with me.<sup>2</sup> While a few poems and songs have survived from the Adana massacres, nothing of this length, complexity, and sophistication was known to have existed. To our knowledge, Artinian did not produce any other work besides this *destan*.

The *destan* (*desdan*) genre is of Persian origin, and dates back to the 13th century. In the minstrel (*âşık* or *ashough*) literature or tradition of the region, the *destan* usually recounts the heroic deeds, romantic tales, and in some cases great events such as calamities. Given its secular nature, the *destan* was also used by Christians (Armenians, Greeks, Syrians), Jews, and Muslims of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup> Lament narratives were a sub-branch of this genre. For example, Crimean Tatars and Russian Muslims who fled to the Ottoman Empire as a result of the Russo-Turkish wars in the second half of the 19th century wrote *muhajir destans* (refugee epic poems) lamenting the loss of their houses, villages, and farms.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that we find the lament form of *destan* in Armeno-Turkish, in response to the catastrophic events of Adana.

From Siamanto to Taniel Varoujan and from Zabel Yesayan to Suren Bartevian, the literary responses by Armenians to the Cilician massacres attempted to describe the horrors of Adana through poetic and narrative forms.<sup>5</sup> Rubina Perroomian has argued

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\* I would like to thank Talar Chahinian, Nazife Kosukoğlu, Mehmet Polatel, and Barlow Der Mgrdechian for reading earlier drafts of this article and providing substantial feedback.

1 The general rhyme scheme of a *destan* is abab cccb eeeb. While the Armeno-Turkish original rhymes, the English translation does not.

2 According to Robert Artinian the *destan* was kept by his grandfather Frank (Garabed's son) for decades until his death in 1986, when he left it for his uncle James. It was then that his father and his siblings became aware of its existence. Frank must have been given the manuscript either by his mother Asanet (d. 1966) or, just as likely, by her brother Krikor Essayan (d. 1964), who stepped in as Frank's surrogate father after Garabed/Charles's death.

3 Özkul Çobanoğlu, *Âşık Tarzı Kültür Geleneği ve Destan Türü*. Kızılay (Ankara: Akçağ, 2000).

4 Brian Glyn Williams, *The Crimean Tatars: From Soviet Genocide to Putin's Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 29.

5 For books written in Armenian see Suren Bartevian, *Կիլիկիան արհաւիրքը* [The Cilician Horrors] (Con-

that Siamanto, in his nerve-shattering poem «Ռարը» [The Dance], “was in absolute defiance of humanity, its principles, and its values when portraying a despicable scene of Turkish atrocity.”<sup>6</sup> Taniel Varujan’s «Կիլիկեսն ւնիսրներուն» [In the Cilician Ashes] graphically described death and destruction, bodies and skeletons. Yesayan’s literary description of the human and material suffering of the city in «Աւերակներուն մէջ» [In the Ruins] provides a testimony of the Adana Massacres, but published two years later. Like many of her contemporaries, Yesayan was shocked by the horrors she saw in Adana.<sup>7</sup> The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 was seen by the Armenians of the empire as a promising beginning. More than any other group, the trinity of ideals of the Revolution – *liberty, fraternity, and equality* – found a strong echo among the Armenians who had suffered the most under the absolutist regime of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1878-1909). However, the hopes and expectations raised by the revolution and new constitutional era soon proved to be illusory and the Adana massacres came to prove otherwise. Armenians were unable to comprehend the catastrophe and its magnitude.

Artinian’s *destan* contributes to but stands apart from this literature in a few important ways. First, most of these literary works were written in Armenian, including the famous poem «Աղսանայի Ողբը» [The Lamentation of Adana] (1909) by Smpad Piwrad (Ter Ghazariants 1862-1915), sung to this day in different Armenian communities around the world. In addition, none of their authors were present during the massacres, although some went to Adana in their aftermath and bore witness to the destruction of the city and the anguished condition of the survivors. Artinian’s *destan* is therefore distinctive for its language (Armeno-Turkish), date of composition, and authorship by survivor-witness of the massacres.

This essay will analyze Artinian’s *destan* from historical perspectives, as a means of offering alternative, generative approaches to recent discussions on the (im)possibility of representing catastrophe and trauma in literary form. What does the *destan* tell us about the massacres? Why write in a poetic rather than narrative form? Why did the author choose to write in Armeno-Turkish and not in Armenian? Finally, to what extent can the *destan* as a genre represent the catastrophe?

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stantinople, 1909); Hagop Terzian, *Կիլիկիոն սղտարը* [The Catastrophe of Cilicia] (Constantinople, 1912); Arshagouhi Teotig, *Ամիս ւրի ի Կիլիկիսու* [A Month in Cilicia] (Constantinople: V. and H. Ter-Nersesian, 1910). For literary works see Daniel Varoujan, *Բանաստեղծական երկեր* [Poetic Works] (Antelias: Publishing of Daniel Varuzhan literature foundation, 1986); Siamanto, *Ամբողջական երկեր* [Complete works] (Antelias: Printing house of the Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, 1989) and Zabel Yesayan, *Ավերակներուն մէջ* [In the Ruins] (Constantinople: Armenian Publishing Society, 1911).

6 Rubina Peromian, “Religion: A Driving Force but not a Major Cause of the Turkish Genocide of Armenians,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Mass Atrocity, and Genocide*, ed. Sara E. Brown and Stephen D. Smith (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), 113.

7 On the literary importance of Yesayan, see Marc Nichanian, *Writers of Disaster: The National Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2002), 187-243, and “Catastrophic Mourning,” in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, ed. D. L. Eng and D. Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 99-124. See also the chapter on Zabel Essayan by Rubina Peromian in her book *Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and the Jewish* (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1993), 89-116.

This essay is divided into five sections. In the first section, I provide a brief sketch of Garabed Artinian's biography, followed by a brief history of the Adana Massacres in the second section. In the third section I discuss the literary and cultural contexts of Armeno-Turkish. In the fourth section I analyze the *destan* from historical perspective. In the final section, I consider Artinian's *destan* in terms of the limits and possibilities of representing catastrophe and trauma. I argue that instead of refuting the "unspeakability" of such catastrophic events in the literary form, we need to embrace an ethical approach to understand and interpret these texts that articulate various historical and emotional registers of traumatic events.<sup>8</sup>

## **Garabed Ozoone Artinian: The Author of the Destan**

Garabed Ozoone Artinian was born in Adana on August 20, 1879 (1880?) and died on May 22, 1925 in Malden, Massachusetts. His middle name Ouzun or Ouzoun (meaning tall, "uzun" in Turkish), appears only on his U.S. military registration form in 1918 as "Ozoone".<sup>9</sup> According to his family, Garabed began using the name Charles only after immigrating to the United States, and the name appears on his tombstone (see **Image 1**). Prior to the Adana Massacres, Artinian was a student at the Armenian Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and was therefore literate and well educated, as the seminary was renowned for providing excellent education. When his parents were killed during the Hamidian massacres (1894-1896), the church refused to give them a proper burial. This slight eventually prompted Artinian to leave the seminary at the age of twenty, sometime around 1899. He was twenty-nine years old when the Adana Massacres took place and claimed the lives of both his wife and child. According to his descendants, he was never the same after this devastating trauma. A few years later, he married again to a woman named Asante (or Annette). According to his great grandson, Robert Artinian, in the wake of the massacres, Artinian took what remained of his family in Adana to Argentina via Alexandria, where they stayed until 1917.<sup>10</sup> According to U.S. immigration records, Charles Artinian arrived in New York, in January 1917, on the ship *Vestiris* (**Image 2**, Artinian's Photo).<sup>11</sup> His wife Asante, and children (Marie and Frank) joined him five months later. The family settled in Malden, Massachusetts, where Charles began working as a shoemaker at the Converse Rubber Company between 1917-1918. After staying one year in Malden, Charles moved with his family to Detroit where he worked at

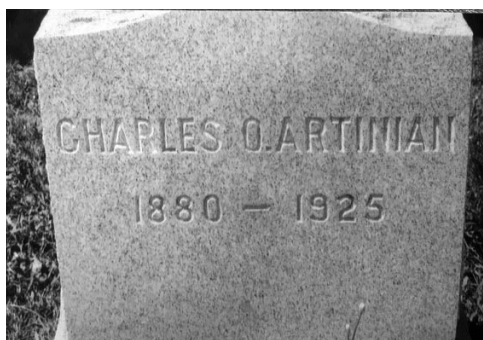
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8 Naomi Mander, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

9 U.S. Military Registration Card, Serial Number 1834, Order Number 2661.

10 Robert Artinian (grandson of Garabed Ozoone Artinian), interviewed by the author, 15 September 2021.

11 Armenian Immigration Project, View Ship Manifest/Border Crossing Entry, "Garabed Artinian," <https://mark-arслан.org/ArmenianImmigrants/Public-ViewDetail-ArmenianImmigrants-Main.php?submit=View&Staging=&SourcePage=Public-ViewSummary-ArmenianImmigrants-Main-ByPassengerLastName&SelectLastName=Artinian&argument1=VEST-25JAN1917-3-4-0010>, accessed 10.10.2022.



*Image 1. Charles Artinian's grave in Malden, Massachusetts (courtesy of James Artinian)*



*Image 2. Charles Artinian (courtesy of Kiri Manookin, a direct descendent of Charles's sister, Nora Artinian/Manookian)*

the Ford Factory in Highland Park and ran a fruit stand. The family traumas he endured, including the murder of his parents and his family, and the horrors he witnessed in Adana had taken a toll on him and his health. He frequently suffered from health complications. In 1925, at the age of forty-five, Charles passed away from a massive heart attack.

## **A Brief History of the Massacres**

During the second half of April 1909, the province of Adana in the southern section of the Ottoman Empire and present-day Turkey witnessed two major waves of violence that claimed the lives of thousands of people. More than 20,000 Christians (predominantly Armenian, as well as some Greeks, Syriacs, and Chaldeans) were massacred by Muslims, and around 2,000 Muslims were killed by Christians.<sup>12</sup> Despite being marginalized in the historiography of late Ottoman and Modern Middle Eastern history today, the massacres

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<sup>12</sup> See Bedross Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana: Revolution and Violence in the Early Twentieth* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2022), and “From Bloodless Revolution to a Bloody Counterrevolution: The Adana Massacres of 1909” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 6, no. 2 (2011): 152-73.

at the time were widely covered by the national and international press.<sup>13</sup> Thousands of documents and eyewitness accounts testify to the enormity and the cruelty of these massacres. From Ottoman and German archives to the Armenian and Vatican archives, these horrors were discussed in detail in contemporaneous political and diplomatic circles. Books, booklets, pamphlets, and articles were printed in dozens of languages to inform readers about the events.

At the time, the province of Adana had a diverse population of Muslims (Turks, Kurds, Circassians, and Arabs) and Christians (Armenians, Greeks, Syriacs, Chaldeans, and Arabs), and a large population of seasonal migrant workers. From the second half of the 19th century onward, Adana was one of the important hubs of cotton production in the Ottoman Empire. At the end of April 1909, over a period of two weeks, brutal massacres shook the province of Adana and its capital, the city of Adana. Armenian shops, churches, residences, were completely destroyed. The violence that began in the city of Adana spread eastward into the province of Aleppo. The central Ottoman government immediately sent two investigation commissions: one representing the parliament and the other the government. Furthermore, it established court-martials to try the perpetrators of the massacres. However, these courts failed to prosecute the main Turkish culprits of the massacres – a miscarriage of justice that would have repercussions in the years to come.

How can we, as historians, explain such horrendous events? As Jacques Semelin argues in his influential work *Purify and Destroy*, “‘massacre’ as a phenomenon in itself is so complex that it requires a multidisciplinary examination: from the standpoint of not only the historian but also the psychologist, the anthropologist and so on.”<sup>14</sup> In my recent book, *The Horrors of Adana*, I strove to provide an interdisciplinary explanation of the Adana massacres. I argued that the massacres were the result of long- and short-term factors. The former consisted of the major transformations that took place in the province in the 19th century as a result of global economic changes, the Tanzimat reforms, the sedentarization of nomadic tribes, migrations from the surrounding provinces, and the influx of Muslim refugees from the Caucasus. Adana’s economic importance also attracted Armenian as well as Muslim migrant workers who arrived in Adana twice a year (spring and autumn). Around 60,000-70,000 migrant workers came to the Cilician plain on an annual basis for tilling and harvesting. Muslim migrant workers composed the majority and Armenians were the minority by a ratio of 2:1. The modernization of tilling and harvesting implements towards the end of the 19th century led to a dramatic acceleration in the pace of cotton production. Armenians were at the forefront of the modernization of this industry. However, such innovation had a negative impact on migrant workers, who supported their families by itinerant labor in the fields. In the age of modernization, the increasing replacement of hand labor by mechanical labor in cotton production led to a growing resentment among migrant workers – as well as Muslim lower and lower-middle

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13 Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 168-182.

14 Jacques Sémelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 5.



classes – towards Armenians, who they considered to be the main beneficiaries of Adana's incorporation into the global economic system.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the sedentarization of tribes and the resettlement of Muslim refugees led to extensive competition over resources.<sup>16</sup>

The short-term developments that fueled the conditions leading to the Adana Massacres can be parsed into three processes: the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the emergence of opposing public spheres in the Empire, and the counterrevolution of 1909. The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 with its mottos of *liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice*, altered the power dynamics within the Empire, resulting in serious repercussions on political processes. In Adana, a power struggle developed between the *ancien régime*, represented by strong local notables, and the new order, represented by weak elements of the Young Turks' main political party, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). An important outcome of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 was the emergence of public spheres after a period of extreme censorship under despotic rule. The extensive activities of Armenians and Armenian revolutionary parties in the post-revolutionary public sphere alarmed the notables as well as the Young Turks of Adana. They were especially anxious about the intentions of the Armenian revolutionary movement. The inflated romanticism of the Armenians towards their historical past, combined with their purchase of weapons for purposes of self-defense were seen as provocative measures. Rumors spread that the Armenians were preparing an uprising to form an independent state, and erect an Armenian Kingdom. In this charged situation, fear, hatred, resentment, and rage became the lenses through which the dominant group viewed the activities of the Armenians. Rumors about the purported Armenian uprising played a critical role in the solidification of the ethno-religious boundaries of the dominant group, by giving them a sense of bonding and preparing the ground for a violent backlash against the non-dominant group.

The counterrevolution by the reactionary forces against the Young Turks in the capital, Istanbul, on 13 April 1909, echoed strongly in Adana. The underlying socioeconomic and political tensions, at a time in which thousands of migrant workers were present in the city, became a recipe for disaster. A few days before the massacres, an altercation between an Armenian and a few Muslims resulted in the death of two of the Muslims; this became a precipitating event.<sup>17</sup> After the termination of the first wave of massacres, the public sphere was not restrained. The Young Turk newspaper *İtidal* and its editor İhsan Fikri along with his colleagues played an important role in fomenting the second wave of massacres. In a

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15 The American Civil War of 1861-65 had a huge impact on Adana. When cotton production was disrupted in the American South which was Great Britain's main cotton supplier, the Ottoman government capitalized on the situation. See Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York, NY: Vintage, 2015), 242-273. In 1866, with the aim of encouraging cotton production, the government distributed free American cottonseed to the peasants. Ani Voskanyan, *Ադանայի նահանգի հայերի տնտեսական վիճակը. 1909 թ. նահանգում* [The Economic Situation of the Armenians of Adana Province. Expropriation of 1909] (Yerevan: Gitut'yun Publishing House, 2017), 35.

16 Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 27-50.

17 *Ibid.*, 67-96.

series of articles, they publicly “confirmed” the “prophecy” regarding the seditious plans of the Armenians to kill the Muslims of Adana and reestablish the Kingdom of Cilicia.<sup>18</sup> On April 25, three battalions from Rumeli arrived in the city of Adana to preserve law and order.<sup>19</sup> After their arrival the second wave of massacres began which lasted for two days. These soldiers played an important role in the killing of Armenians and the looting of their properties.<sup>20</sup>

The twin massacres in Adana resulted in the death of more than 20,000 Armenians and 2,000 Muslims. The massacres also inflicted tremendous damage on Armenian property. Many of the villagers, tribes, and immigrants who took part in the massacres were motivated not by ideology but by the prospect of plunder, compounded by economic resentment toward the Armenians. For these groups, it was a unique opportunity for personal gain and satisfaction. In the aftermath of the massacres the local government arrested more than 100 Armenians as well as some Muslims and threw them in prison. Those prisoners were tortured and forced to provide false statements that they were planning to rise against the government.<sup>21</sup> The local court-martial that was formed by the perpetrators used these testimonies to accuse the Armenians of instigating the events. The second court-martial from Istanbul also used these testimonies together with the biased findings of the local court-martial in passing its verdicts. It accused Armenians of being responsible for the events. However, after much lobbying by the Armenians, specifically by Hagop Babigian, a member of the parliament and one of the members of the parliamentary investigation commission, the government decided to send an “unbiased” court-martial. This final court-martial sentenced the main culprits of the massacres, but gave them light sentences.<sup>22</sup> However, more than thirty Muslims (some of whom were innocent) and six Armenians were sentenced to death, and hundreds received sentences ranging from life in prison to two weeks in prison and banishment. On 12 August 1909, the Council of Ministers officially exonerated the Armenians in Adana of an attempted uprising.<sup>23</sup>

In the aftermath of the massacres, selective humanitarian aid was provided to the victims of the massacres in order to alleviate their suffering. In this context, the international press played an important role in raising awareness about the condition of Adana. It became a medium that facilitated the fundraising efforts for the destitute of Adana.

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18 On 20 April 1909, thousands of free copies of Issue number 33 of *İtidal* were distributed in the streets of Adana. In this issue, Fikri, along with colleagues such as İsmail Sefa and Burhan Nuri, vehemently attacked the Armenians. See *İtidal*, no. 33, 20 April 1909.

19 These battalions were the first of the 81st regiment of the second Army, the second of the 83rd regiment, and third of the 10th regiment. See *İtidal*, no. 35, 28 April 1909, 3.

20 Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 142-151.

21 *Ibid.*, 183-184.

22 *Ibid.*, 183-223.

23 *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 300, 13 August 1909, 1.



## Lamenting through Armeno-Turkish

Lamenting the massacres of the pre-genocide periods through the genre of *destan* has been rare. In the context of the three phases of violence inflicted upon the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire (1894-1896, 1909, 1915-1923), it is the Armenian Genocide that has received the lion's share of lamentation and has preoccupied the attention of scholars due to its magnitude and reach.<sup>24</sup> What is unique about genocide lamentations is that some of them are written in Armeno-Turkish. The reason for this could be that a disproportionate number of those who survived the genocide were from Cilicia, who were predominantly Turkish speakers.<sup>25</sup> While most of the narratives on the Adana Massacres were written in Armenian, they were done so months or years after the event. In other words, they were written mostly by people who had not experienced the massacres firsthand.

Therefore, Artinian's *destan* presents an interesting case study with regard to language choice and proximity to the violence. Its appearance in Armeno-Turkish was not necessarily a given. Although the majority of the Armenians of Adana and Cilicia were Turkish speakers and some wrote in Armeno-Turkish, Artinian's education at the Armenian Seminary of Jerusalem (where instruction was in Armenian) would have allowed him the possibility to write his *destan* in Armenian. However, he chose to write it in his "mother-tongue".

Armeno-Turkish (Ottoman Turkish written in Armenian letters) played an important role in the lives of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>26</sup> At a time in which good portion of the Armenians of the Empire did not speak Armenian, Armeno-Turkish came to fill an important gap. It led to the proliferation of literacy among Armenians; it also enabled them to mark and strengthen their ethno-religious boundaries vis-à-vis other ethno-religious groups in the Ottoman Empire, while simultaneously allowing for the crossing of these boundaries, which were generally rather fluid. The development of Armeno-Turkish in the 19th century can be attributed to a host of factors, including the impact of the Armenian Zart'onq (awakening), the spread of Catholicism and Protestantism, the impact of the Tanzimat Reforms (1839-1876), the development of Armenian ethno-religious boundaries, and the role of print culture. Finally, Armeno-Turkish raises important questions regarding identity formation, belonging, and cross-cultural interaction. Artinian's choice of lamenting the massacres in Armeno-Turkish could have been the result of a few converging factors: first, it is possible he felt more comfortable expressing himself in

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24 See Verjine Svazlian. *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors* (Yerevan: Gitut'yun Publishing House, 2011).

25 During the first phase of the genocide, the liquidation targeted primarily the populations of the six eastern provinces. Convoys of deported Armenians were systematically destroyed and only a fraction of those survived and were able to reach their final destination. The second phase of the genocide targeted the convoys sent from the eastern provinces and Cilicia to Syria. See Raymond H. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

26 Bedross Der Matossian. "The Development of Armeno-Turkish in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire: Marking and Crossing Ethnoreligious Boundaries," *Intellectual History of the Islamic World* 8, no.1 (2019): 67-100.

Armeno-Turkish; second, Armeno-Turkish was the language for the people of Adana, and it made the most sense to write a lament in this common language; and finally, he may have wanted to reach a wider audience beyond Armenians.

### **Garabed Artinian's *Destan***

Artinian's *destan* tells the story of the Adana Massacres from the beginning to end, adhering to the historical events that took place in the city, and presenting testimony from a survivor who was present and bore witness to the massacre. It does not discuss the massacres in the other *sanjaks* or the province of Aleppo. Unlike a historical narrative, the *destan* is a poetic way of expressing sorrow and pain for the loss of lives, belongings, humanity, and honor. Artinian's *destan* is written in the third person in a lyrical style, while delivering a chronological account of the massacres. While narratives that seek to reconstruct events from eyewitness accounts the *destan* infuses the unfolding events with traumatic feeling. In this respect, the *destan* genre provides what singular eyewitness accounts and oral histories cannot: an in-depth emotional and harrowing manifestation of an incomprehensible crime. Through its repetitive *aaab* rhyme structure, the *destan* becomes a painful recitation of events by a witness and survivor. Each stanza ends with the word "cried". Uniquely, the lament meticulously tracks the chronological events of a heinous crime, while also evoking the impact of the massacres on the writer himself. It is an account that communicates on multiple levels, both historical and personal, in a register that is reflective yet still fresh, as the massacres and his immense personal loss had occurred just weeks before.

Critically, the information provided in the *destan* corroborates actual events. In the first two stanzas Artinian describes the beginning of the massacres. He presents the crime scene as the plain of Seyhan where a "smoke arose" (*tüttü bir duman*), referring to the burnt Armenian Quarter in the city of Adana. He then speaks about the slaughter (*kesilmiş*) of the Armenian notables Shadrig, as well as Tavit Urfalian, the latter being the president of the Armenian National Council and a member of the Court of Revisions. During the first day of the massacres, Urfalian along with Abdülkadir Bağdadizade, one of the most prominent notables of Adana, and a few other Muslim notables, went to the market to deliver the governor's (Cevad Pasha) assurances and persuade the Armenians to open their shops.<sup>27</sup> According to Hagop Terzian and other eyewitnesses, on their way to the market, Urfalian was killed on the orders of Bağdadizade.<sup>28</sup> Artinian goes on to lament the freedom that was obtained after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, only

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<sup>27</sup> Terzian, *The Catastrophe of Cilicia*, 24. See also FO 195-2306, From William Nisbett Chambers to Barton, Adana April 15, 1909.

<sup>28</sup> In an earlier article, Hagop Terzian, writing under the penname Hagter, did not mention Bağdadizade when discussing the murder of Urfalian. See Հասկումսի [Time], 154, 1 May 1909, 1.

to end in counterrevolution and violence.<sup>29</sup> Stanzas three through five present a chaotic situation. To evoke the magnitude of the agony, he describes pain as a sea (*bahri elem*) in which the Armenians were drowning (*gark oldu*). Armenians in the square were beaten. Many Armenians were sacrificed (*oldular kurban*). Artinian's choice of the word "sacrifice" (*kurban*) here seems intentional in order to signify a religious connotation of Armenians having been sacrificed like lambs for the sake of cleansing the sin of the constitution.<sup>30</sup>

### *The First Wave of Massacres (April 14-16, stanzas 6-22)*

Artinian describes the first day of the massacres as shops were closed and migrant workers joined the Turks (6). He then describes how Armenians found refuge in the churches (7-10). He describes how churches became "overcrowded" (*mahşer*) and the people inside turned "yellow and withered" (*sarardık solduk*). He calls Armenians "the children of Haig whose houses were destroyed on April 1 [14], 1909". To show the magnitude of pain, he says that "father, mother, and children cried blood" (*peder mader evlat hep kan ağlar*). Artinian then describes the resistance: "heroes" (*kahraman*) who "dug trenches" (*meterizler yapti*) and fought with "martini rifles in hand"<sup>31</sup> (*elde martin*) (11), and describes the Turks attacking the Armenian Quarter and setting it on fire (12). He also notes that numerous Turks were shot ( *vuruldu Türklerden*) by the Armenian youth in self-defense. After describing the looting that took place, he places the responsibility on the "vile Vali [governor] who ordered the massacre" (*emretti kıtala alçak valimiz*) (13-14). He recounts how the Vali sent telegrams to the periphery, calling in thousands of "savages" (*vahşiler*) to aid in the massacre and abduction of Armenians (15). He implicates villagers who came from the mountains to take part in the slaughter, looting, and raping girls, and laments the destruction of the latter's honor (*namus mahvoldu*) (16). He then elaborates on the fate of the Armenian "virgin girls" (*bakire kızlardan*) who were raped, and laments that "the past has not witnessed such a massacre" (*böyle kırgın görmemiş maziler*) (17-18). He then dwells upon the looting of the Armenian possessions and the conflagration of their houses (19), and discusses the magnitude of bullets that killed Armenians (20). Even those who tried to find refuge in foreign institutions were turned away, as these places were full. He remarks that Europeans sympathized with the Armenians (22).

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29 On the Young Turk revolution and the reaction of the Armenians, see Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* [Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2014].

30 Conservative elements within the empire saw the constitution as an abrogation of the Islamic Shari'a. On the theme of sacrifice in the Adana massacres see Nichanian, "Catastrophic Mourning," 116-119.

31 The type of firearm used by the Armenians was called Martini-Henry, a breech-loading single-shot rifle with a lever action that was used by the British Army. On the Martini-Henry see Stephen Manning, *The Martini-Henry Rifle* (London: Osprey Publications, 2013) and Julian Bennett, "The 'Aynali Martini': The Ottoman Army's First Modern Rifle," *Anatolica* XLIV (2018): 229-255.

*The Second Wave of Massacres (April 25-27, stanzas 23-33)*

Artinian says the massacres ended after three days (April 14-16), after which five thousand soldiers entered the city (23). Here, he is referring to the Rumelian battalions that entered the city of Adana on April 25th to bring law and order. He writes that these soldiers claimed to be the army of freedom, but then “suddenly struck and every side cried” (*vurdular birden her yan ağladı*). This is the beginning of the second wave of the massacres. There are multiple explanations from contemporaneous eyewitness accounts of the reasons for the second wave of massacres.<sup>32</sup>

Artinian provides his account of how the second wave took place, how Armenian houses (24) and people burned, lamenting how “many souls under the rubbles cried” (*enkaz altında çok cenan ağladı*) (25). He describes in detail how Armenians hid in St. Stepanos Church, and how the Jesuits saved them (26). At this point, his account follows the chronological order of events: the intervention of the British vice-consul, the taking of refugees to the government palace who were then accused by the soldiers of being solely responsible for the events (27-28). He elaborates on the experiences of the caravans as they moved from the Armenian Quarter to the government palace; on the way they stumbled over the corpses (29-30). He discusses the hopeless fate of three thousand Armenians who found refuge in the Mousheghian school after the first wave of the massacres, only to be “all burnt and shot” (*hep yandı vuruldu*) in the second wave (31).<sup>33</sup> Only in two stanzas does Artinian mention names of some of the other locations where the massacres spread; these include but are not limited to Karataş Adana, Tarsus, Sis, Bulanık, Osmaniye, Yarpuz, Payas Missis and Hamidiye (32). He notes, only Dörtyol did not suffer the fate of the other cities (33).<sup>34</sup>

*The Condition and Treatment of Armenians and Refugees (stanzas 34-57)*

After his description of the main events of the massacre, Artinian turns toward describing the arrest of Armenians, their condition as refugees, and the injustices they suffered. He describes how they became refugees and “fell on the roads” (34-35). Some found refuge in Cyprus and Alexandria, while 20,000 Armenians remained in Cilicia including many orphans who became homeless. He evokes the spectacle of displaced refugees “under the tents” and laments the arrests of Armenian being thrown into the “dungeons, and the dungeons cried” (*Attı zindanlara zindan ağladı*) (36-37). In addition, he castigates the constitution (39), criticizes the “dishonorable and vile officers” (*ahlaksız namussuz alçak memurlar*) for their treatment of the Armenians (39), and bemoans the condition of Armenian leaders in the prisons who “were chained” (40). He addresses the unjust ways in which innocent people were interrogated and punished (41-42). He deplores the

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32 Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 145-147.

33 Ibid., 143.

34 Ibid., 123-124.

fact that the heads of the courts were themselves criminals (*katillerdir meclislerin amiri*), and directly accuses İhsan Fikri and his *İtidal* newspaper of fomenting the second wave of massacres: “It was due to him that the second massacre took place” (*Hep yüzünden oldu ikinci kıtal*) (43-44). He bemoans that the Young Turks were once called liberals. He directly calls upon Europe and the United States to intervene, as “[Armenians] were all sacrificed on the road to freedom” (*hürriyet yoluna hep olduk feda*) (45).

At this point, Artinian dwells upon the condition and treatment of the refugees (46-49). He describes how Armenians were likened to rodents and treated as such. They had to eat whatever it was “no matter whether tough, bad, painful or cruel” (*Zor şer acı zulüm ney olsa yersin*). He laments the food that they were given (50). Conditions improved when some refugees were taken to the Armenian church (51), and Artinian describes this experience and the sympathy and role of the Germans in aiding them (52-55). He specifically praises the director of the Greek Trypani factory for housing thousands of refugees in its factory. He also praises the Armenians of Alexandria for hosting refugees from the massacres, and Boghos Nubar Pasha – the president of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) – and Apraham Partogh Pasha for the important role they play in aiding the refugees who arrived in Egypt (56-57).

Artinian ends the *destan* by informing the reader that on 4 July 1909, along with other refugees, he left Mersin, took a ship to Iskenderun and then to Latakia, from Latakia to Tarabulus (Tripoli), from Tarabulus to Beirut, from Beirut to Haifa, from Haifa to Jaffa, from Jaffa to Beirut, and then to Iskenderun.

## Historical Analysis of the *Destan*

Such an agonizing and detailed account leaves no doubt that Artinian himself was present during the massacres. As mentioned earlier, both his wife and child were killed during the massacres. Moreover, he composed this *destan* only weeks after these events, quite likely when his grief and traumatic experience remained fresh and consuming. His overwhelming pain and sorrow are heightened by the compacted rhyme scheme of *aaab*. Each *destan* ends with the word “cried” (*ağladı*). Hence, the *destan* generates emotional power in its shortened rhyme scheme that ends each stanza with ‘and x cried’. There is a powerful cumulative effect that conveys an entire world in pain and sorrow, weeping, which one could argue is an attempt at representing the magnitude of the catastrophe. The object that cries in the end of each stanza differs. It includes a wide variety of people, places and things including girl, man, group, rose, river, conscience, victims, fire, mothers, bodies, prisoners, the Patriarch, homeland, tongue, liberals, Dashnaks and Hnchaks, Jesuits and Americans, and so on. The effect of this enumeration is powerful, evoking the entire Armenian people in lament.

The *destan* coherently portrays the massacres and its impact on the Armenians of Adana in a way that corroborated to the real events. By doing so, Artinian himself becomes a

“poet-historian”. In addition to being an eyewitness to the events, he also records the most important phases of the massacres. For the sake of brevity, I would like to bring few examples in order to demonstrate this. At several points Artinian uses nature to embody the pervasiveness of the pain and anguish. He uses flowers such as roses, tulips, and hyacinth to describe sorrow, and invokes the sea as a metaphor to demonstrate the magnitude of the pain in which Armenians drowned. He mentions multiple times two major rivers, Seyan and Ceyhan, where Armenian bodies were dumped. Indeed, during the aftermath of the first wave of massacres (April 14-16), garbage carriages from the municipality collected hundreds of bodies from the streets and threw them in the Seyhan river.<sup>35</sup>

Surprisingly, religion or Christianity does not appear in the *destan*. God appears only twice: “Help us, oh just God” (*Yârdim et bize ey adil Allah*), and “Seeing this from the skies, God cried” (*gördü ta göklerde sübhan ağladı*). Churches on the other hand appear multiple times not as religious edifices but as physical locations of refuge. However, Artinian laments that even churches failed to protect the Armenians. Indeed, Armenians who survived the first round of massacres found shelter at the Gregorian Armenian, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Protestant, Jesuit, Syriac, and Chaldean churches. During the second wave of massacres Surp Step‘anos Church was besieged and set on fire. The people inside were able to escape to the nearby Syriac Church, where the Syriacs were hiding, but the mob soon broke into the church-yard and started killing. Armenians and Syriacs had no choice but to return to Surp Stepanos Church.<sup>36</sup>

Artinian’s lament focuses on women and children, as they are helpless and vulnerable. They are divided into three categories: mothers, daughters, and children. The mothers agonized and cried over the fate that would befall them. However, in one place Artinian indicates that “Father, mother, children — all cry blood” suggesting that anguish spared no family member, young or old. Even the Armenian “heroes” were unable to defend the Armenian girls from sexual violence.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, during the massacres of Adana there were numerous cases of rape. Most of those who violated minors, girls, or women were sentenced by the Courts Martial to three years in prison with hard labor according to the article 198 of the Imperial Ottoman Penal Code (IOPC). Girls and women were usually abducted to Muslim households and forced into marriage or becoming concubines.<sup>38</sup> Other girls and women were burnt alive or killed. In stanza sixteen, Artinian laments this loss saying: “so many tall and beautiful ones, burned and destroyed by you! – Ah, the fires!” (*nice suna boylu çok keman kaşlar, yaktı kül etti öf sizi ateşler*). Artinian emphasis on fire in his *destan* should not come as a surprise. During the second wave of massacres the mob destroyed the entire Armenian residential quarter, as well as most of the houses in the

35 S. Z., *Аданские черные дни* [The Black Days of Adana] (Baku: Electric Printing House of the Newspaper Baku, 1909) and from the Austro-Hungarian Consul of Mersin to the Consul of Aleppo, Mersin, April 15, 1909, no. 3368, in Artem Ohandjanian, *Österreich – Armenien: 1872-1936, Faksimilesammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke* (Vienna: Ohandjanian Verlag): 3368.

36 Terzian, *The Catastrophe of Cilicia*, 101.

37 Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 213.

38 *Ibid.*, 115.



outlying districts that were inhabited by Christians. The mob used kerosene liberally to ignite the houses.<sup>39</sup>

Resistance as a theme is mentioned in passing in the *destan*. Armenians fought back and attempted to stop the massacres, mainly during the first wave. Artinian dedicates two stanzas to such resistance, which was mainly carried out by the youths who “dug trenches and hastened to work” (*meterizler yaptı işe girdi*). They fought hard with “rifles in hand”. While he lists the other places leveled by the massacres (32), he suggests that resistance in Dörtyol was more successful, saying that while “Cilicia came to ruin, Only in Dörtyol are there houses [remaining]” (*hasılı Giligia oldu verane, yalnız bir Dörtyol tek hane*). Indeed, during the first wave of massacres, Armenians defended the Armenian Quarter and fortified themselves in their houses. Had they not mounted a strong defense, “destruction of life and property would have been complete”.<sup>40</sup> While outside the city of Adana most of the Armenian resistance efforts did not yield to any result, it was only in Dörtyol (Chorkmarzban), a city in the northern part of İskenderun, where Armenians were able to resist the massacres successfully.<sup>41</sup>

Artinian implicates the governor and officials and provides more specific details of the carnage:

The Vali and high officials had sent telegrams  
Thousands of savages had entered all places  
They killed all those who were Armenians  
Girls were abducted and women cried.

During the first wave of massacres the Vali of Adana Cevad Bey was in “state of panic” and did not know how to handle the situation. Observers at the time said that he “had done absolutely nothing” in order to find a remedy to the urgent situation.<sup>42</sup> He only sent telegrams lamenting the situation. It is a known fact that mob that Artinian calls them “savages” who participated in the massacres was composed of migrant workers, Kurds, Circassians, Cretan Muslims, Muslim refugees, and Başıbozüks (irregular soldiers) wearing white turbans (*sarüks*) around their fezzes in order to distinguish themselves from the Christians and carrying hatchets, blunt instruments, axes, and swords.<sup>43</sup>

Another fact explored by Artinian is the manner in which Armenians were killed by concentrating on two methods: fire and shooting. Indeed, primary sources corroborate

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39 Henry Charles Woods, *The Danger Zone of Europe: Changes and Problems in the Near East* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1911), 137.

40 From William Nesbitt Chambers to Barton, Adana, April 15, 1909, FO195-2306.

41 Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 123-125.

42 Doughty-Wylie to the British Ambassador in Constantinople, April 21, 1909, FO195/2306.

43 From the Consul of Austria-Hungary in Mersin to his excellency Marquis von Pallavicini Ambassador extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of his Majesty, Mersin, April 30, 1909, in Ohandjanian, *Österreich-Armenien*, 3397.

these details.<sup>44</sup> Fire and bullets engulfed the Armenians, and even some who escaped the fire later would be shot:

So many lambs that escaped the fire  
They are hit by the bullet and ache so intensely  
The bullets of the soldiers do not stop buzzing  
Seeing this from the skies, God cried.

Indeed, the use of firearms as a method of killing was widely used during both waves of massacres. For example, on April 21 – seven days after the first massacres – the British ship *Swiftsure* docked in Mersin. Dr. Richard Connell, the surgeon from the ship, rushed to the city of Adana in order to examine the condition of the wounded in the American Mission, the French nuns' school, the French Jesuits' school, the Armenian churches, and the hospital established by Lilian Doughty-Wylie. He estimated that 50-60 percent of the patients' wounds were caused by Martini rifle bullets; 15-20 percent by swords and other sharp instruments; 15 percent by clubs and sharp sticks; 10-15 percent by Mauser and revolver bullets; 5 percent by bayonets; and 3-6 percent by revolver and short-gun wounds. These figures show the superiority of the Martini rifles in causing bodily harm.

In his description of killing by fire Artinian uses the terms “flames” (*ateşler*) “immolated” (*yanan*) and “burnt” (*yandı*). In one place he says: “Fire has spread, people have been struck with terror” (*yangın sardı dehşetlendi halımız*). One of the worst conflagrations in the city took place at the Mousheghian-Apakarian<sup>45</sup> school during the second wave of massacres:

Those who came from village to city with great difficulty  
So many girls and women, so many brides  
The three thousand that entered the Mousheghian school  
All of them were burnt and shot, and those who escaped cried.

During the first wave of massacres, Armenians from the surrounding villages poured into the city of Adana in order to find refuge in the churches and schools including the Mousheghian-Apkarian school. During the second wave of massacres, those who were in the Mousheghian-Apkarian school were burned alive. Hagop Terzian, an eyewitness to the event describes:

Stepping barefoot on the piles of embers which blocked the streets, we were running for our life, with the aim of arriving to the Jesuit church as soon as possible. Not far away we saw hundreds of bodies in front of the Mousheghian-Apkarian school, which were burned during their

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 136.

<sup>45</sup> The school is also sometimes referred to as Mousheghian-Apkarian.



escape and were hit mercilessly, and some, half-naked, were rendering their souls with roaring agony.<sup>46</sup>

Artinian tends to concentrate on injustice. Only once does he refer to the perpetrators of the massacres as Muslims; another time he calls them “the hypocrite peasants who joined the Turks” (*Türklerle birleşti mürai fellah*). Here, he is likely referring to migrant laborers or the *fellahin* (Muslim agricultural workers), who took part in the massacres. He also singles out the “riffraff” (*çirpılılar*) and the “savage people who poured from the mountains” (*boşaldı dağlardan vahşi ahali*). For the second wave of the massacres, he implicates the Rumelian battalions saying:

Three days later, they say the massacre is over  
Five thousand soldiers entered the city altogether  
We are the army of freedom, they say do not be afraid  
Suddenly they struck and every side cried.

Indeed, on the morning of Sunday, April 25, three battalions from the second Army arrived in Adana in order to preserve law and order.<sup>47</sup> A day after their arrival, the second wave of the massacres began. The troops actively participated in attacking and burning the Armenian schools that housed the injured and the refugees from the first wave of the massacres and perpetrated attacks on the Armenian Quarter. Multiple explanations have been provided by contemporaneous eyewitness accounts about the reasons for the participation of the Rumelian soldiers in the massacres.<sup>48</sup> For example, one explanation contends that after the battalions set up camp in Adana, shots were fired at their tents and a rumor immediately spread that the Armenians had opened fire on the troops from a church tower in town.<sup>49</sup> Another argued that rumors spread that Armenians had attacked the Muslims neighborhood and killed all the Muslims. An additional explanation is that when the battalions arrived in Adana, they demanded that the Armenians of the Armenian Quarter surrender their weapons, to which the Armenians responded by shooting five soldiers, precipitating the second wave of the massacres.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to the battalion, he accuses İhsan Fikri the editor of *İtidal* newspaper for fomenting the second wave of the massacres:

Especially that İhsan and that evil İtidal!  
It was due to him that the second massacre took place

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46 Terzian, *The Catastrophe of Cilicia*, 109.

47 These battalions were the first of the 81st regiment of the second Army, the second of the 83rd regiment, and third of the 10th regiment. see *İtidal*, April 28, 1909, no. 35, 3.

48 Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 145-147.

49 Woods, *The Danger Zone of Europe*, 135.

50 SMS Hamburg, telegraph from Mersin, April 29, 1909, no. 202, in Ambassador in Constantinople (Marshal von Bieberstein) to the Foreign Office, April 30, 1909, DE/ PA-AA/R 13184.

It turns out that the catamite had no just judgment on violence  
He brought so much shame on himself, the language cried.

According to all sources, in the aftermath of the first massacres the *İtidal* newspaper and its editor, İhsan İfrikî, the CUP leader, along with his comrades, were instrumental in shaping public opinion and convincing the masses that Armenians had initiated a failed revolt in an attempt to reestablish their kingdom. Regardless of the veracity of the claims made by *İtidal*, they were vital in shaping public opinion in Adana, particularly the belief in an Armenian conspiracy. This played an important role in heightening the emotions of the Muslims of the city of Adana, who saw themselves as victims.<sup>51</sup>

He continues saying that “They are the murderers and they are the cruel” (*katil kendiler hem gaddar kendiler*) who “alas... were once called liberals” (*hayıf ki bir zaman ahrar dendiler*). Artinian here appears to be blaming the Young Turks without mentioning them by name. He calls upon Europe and America to help the Armenians who “were all sacrificed on the road to freedom.” This line refers to the Armenians who backed the revolution and constitution, and paid a high price for it.

Immediately after the massacres, Armenians were arrested and thrown into prisons. They were accused of fomenting an uprising. Artinian decries the attitude of the local government calling them “immoral, dishonorable and vile” (*Ahlaksız namussuz alçak*). He describes in detail the condition of the Armenians in the prisons saying:

The leaders in the dungeons – what a grief is this!  
They were chained – what type of court is this!  
Beatings were struck – what kind of belief is this!  
There is no justice at all, the Kuran cried.

Hagop Terzian, one of the people arrested at the time, explains in detail how confessions were forcefully extracted from the Armenians.<sup>52</sup> According to him, after the second wave of massacres, prominent Armenian figures in Adana were arrested and taken to the military barracks near the train station. Armenian prisoners were also brought from Mersin, Tarsus, Sis, and Haçin.<sup>53</sup> The Armenians who were arrested were tortured during the interrogation and forced to sign fake statements claiming that the Armenians were indeed planning an uprising.<sup>54</sup> Artinian continues:

The inquisition started in a discretionary manner  
Innocent people were summoned ten times a day

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51 Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 137-142.

52 Terzian, *The Catastrophe of Cilicia*, 340-364.

53 Ibid., 358.

54 Artin Arslanian, *Adana'da adalet nasıl mahkûm oldu* [How justice was convicted in Adana] (Le Caire, 1909 [1325]), 7.

Discretionary punishments, reprimands and sentences, all were issued unjustly  
Innocents who were convicted cried.

Artinian laments that those who issued the sentences were themselves the criminals. This corroborates actual events. In the aftermath of the massacres a local court-martial was formed by some of the participants of the massacres.<sup>55</sup> This court accused Armenians of initiating an uprising.<sup>56</sup> Although convicted by the biased court-martial under the presidency of Kenan Pasha, the Council of Ministers exonerated them a few months later.<sup>57</sup>

Artinian provides unique insight into the condition of the refugees through a visceral description of food. He dedicates a whole stanza describing the food:

Tasteless soups come to aid  
Full of bones and left-over meats  
It has a bad smell and the stomach cannot bear  
We gave up the soup and the compote cried.

Artinian here describes the food that was given to the thousands of refugees who were crammed in the Greek Tyrpani factory and the German cotton factory. Due to the fact that most of the mills and the bakeries were burned, making the task of supplying bread more difficult. Hence, the refugees had to comply with the quality of food that was given to them even if that meant to eat the inedible.

## The Representation of Catastrophe and Trauma

As discussed above, the literary responses to the Adana Massacres have attempted to represent the magnitude of the catastrophe, but many scholars debate whether or not it is possible to represent a crime of such a magnitude in literary form. Can a memoir, a novel, or a *destan* do justice to the victims of the catastrophe? Is a *destan* like Artinian's able to represent the echoes of death and the pain of the survivors? Were these texts written as a way of mourning the catastrophe? Was Artinian himself able to mourn the massacres through his *destan*?

Based on the above-mentioned examples that corroborates with historical events, I

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55 Major Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, 14 June 1909, enclosure in no. 149, in Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Received 29 June 1909), Constantinople, 22 June 1909, in *Further Correspondence*, April-June 1909 and Vice-Consul Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, 8 May 1909, in enclosure 4 in no. 103, in Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Received 24 May 1909), no. 346, Pera, 17 May 1909, in *Further Correspondence*, April-June 1909.

56 Ferriman Z. Duckett, *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana in Asia Minor, during April, 1909* (London, 1913), 104.

57 *Takvim-i Vekayi*, 13 August 1909, no. 300,1.

argue that Artinian's *destan* offers us more than a literary lamentation of the event itself. It provides us a detailed coverage of the anatomy of the massacres, from its beginning to its termination. Thus, in addition to its literary importance, it should also be considered as an important historical source. Artinian's attention to historical details coupled with his literary skills presents us a grim image. An image that was seen and experienced through one survivor who unlike thousands of other survivors had a voice and a style through which he was able to pen down the *destan*.

The question of a catastrophic event's representability has been discussed extensively in Armenian literary criticism. For example, the philosopher Marc Nichanian develops a thesis around the idea of the impossibility of representing the catastrophe. Nichanian argues that in both cases of the Hamidian and Adana massacres, Armenians were "barred from mourning."<sup>58</sup> He contends that the "collective murder imposed on the collective psyche of the victims a generalized interdiction of mourning."<sup>59</sup> Following Hagop Oshagan, Nichanian argues that massacres (*aghed*) are unrepresentable, since catastrophe "obliges us to imagine more than murder, pain, and death. It calls for, it demands, an image of the totality, the *sum*."<sup>60</sup> He elaborates:

This something beyond the representable, beyond all possible narration (a narration supposes in any case an unshattered language, but inversely, if a narration were possible, it would not say or represent the Catastrophe), has no name. One cannot fix it, look at it directly, make of it an idea or a concept, nor can one make of it an object of science or knowledge. No discipline could account for it in its essence and wholeness.<sup>61</sup>

Nichanian goes further by arguing that what is horrific about the catastrophe is not the murder of the collective, but the "will to annihilation that is expressed in justice redoubling the crime."<sup>62</sup> Such a will is not representable because it resists comprehension on any level:

Again, what is catastrophic for the victim is not extermination, it is the *will to extermination* ... not the deaths in tens of thousands or in millions. No, it is the will to annihilate, *because it cannot be integrated* into any psychological, rational, or psychical explanation whatever.<sup>63</sup>

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58 Nichanian, "Catastrophic Mourning," 100.

59 Ibid., 111.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid., 113.

62 Ibid., 115.

63 Ibid., 115-16. Italics appear in the original.

I concur with Nichanian that it is impossible to fully represent a catastrophe of such a magnitude in a literary form. However, some poetic forms, if they do not exactly “shatter” language, at least they seek to conjure that which is not directly expressible. It is not a matter of “imagining” catastrophe or presenting “an image of its totality, the sum.” Rather it is a form of expression that can or attempt to evoke an experience of shattering, to approach in some groping way, the “unrepresentable.” What is notable about Artinian’s *destan* is the way in which he juxtaposes a timeline of events reconstructed from his first-hand experience and transpired events with a lament that conjures an entire world crying out in pain and sorrow. If his *destan* does not represent a “totality”, it does summon a collective wail. Moreover, his response is valuable both as a historical source and as an expression of trauma’s infliction, both on the personal and the communal levels.

Unlike Zabel Yesayan, the works of whom Nichanian dwells upon, Artinian recounts the events of the month of April 1909. He experienced and witnessed first-hand what happened in the city. He wrote the *destan* to bear witness to the catastrophe. In this way, it is a *destan* of mourning written “against the interdiction of mourning.” The *destan* is, at the same time, a work of testimony and a historical record.

Most literary responses to the massacres were written in Armenian, while Artinian’s *destan* was written in Armeno-Turkish. This choice makes the work more striking as it was written in the language of both the perpetrator and the victim. Armeno-Turkish was the language that people wrote during the catastrophe. It was the language he heard crying out. It was his language and part of his culture. Indeed, employing Armeno-Turkish as a language of lament raises the question of how, among neighbors who share the same language and “culture,” a person decides one day to suddenly rise and kill a neighbor. In Hagop Oshagan’s words:

The naked, terrible and cold reality is that one spring morning one of the two peoples who had lived side by side for centuries took up arms against the other, and skewered with a sword everything they could get their hands on, woman, man, son and daughter. When the knife does not suffice, fire takes over. When the evening falls, there is nothing left but smoke, and bones to cover over. I repeat: the tragedy is not in the Why! It’s the How that revolted our conscience and our intellect. How the hearts of men could be transformed into stone from one instant to the next, in order to tolerate all the things that transform each page of this book into a miniature Passion, much more terrifying than anything similar one might read in Dante and the others?<sup>64</sup>

More importantly, it is necessary to confront the conundrum of how and why ordinary people can become perpetrators of violence in a very short period of time. The

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<sup>64</sup> Hagop Oshagan, Համապատկեր սրեւնտեսիս գրականութեան [Overview of Western Armenian Literature] Vol. 6 (Beirut: Hamazgayin, 1968), translated by Marc Nichanian in *Catastrophic Mourning*, 104.

literature on genocide and massacres in recent decades has demonstrated that in particular circumstances, ordinary men and women from many different religious and cultural backgrounds are capable of barbaric crimes.<sup>65</sup>

Literary responses to catastrophic events can also provide insight into the impact of the event on the author, the “poet-historian”. Especially in the case of Artinian – who, when writing his *destan*, must have still been engulfed in the catastrophe, in its wake – a literary response is a manifestation if not a representation of the emotional and mental state of the writer. Artinian not only witnessed the onslaught of massacre, but he also lost his wife and child to it. Who could ever “be the same” after suffering such trauma? This raises a question about catastrophe ancillary to the one Nichanian is asking: is trauma as an experience representable in literary form?

Much scholarly attention has been given to this question from a psychoanalytical perspective. While Nichanian focuses on the missing archive and missing testimony to develop his theory of irrepresentability, the field of trauma studies focuses on how trauma cannot be integrated into a person’s sense-making faculties. The concept of trauma “is generally understood as a severely disruptive experience that profoundly impacts the self’s emotional organization and perception of the external world.”<sup>66</sup> The first wave of scholars in trauma studies argued that trauma was an unrepresentable event.<sup>67</sup> Cathy Caruth, relying on Freudian theory, argued that “trauma’s latency and dissociation disrupts the ability to fully understand or represent a traumatic experience.”<sup>68</sup> Similarly, Michelle Balaev maintains that, “Since traumatic experience enters the psyche differently than normal experience and creates an abnormal memory that resists narrative representation, the unique process of this remembering results in an approximate recall but never determinate knowledge.”<sup>69</sup> As a critique of this early trauma studies approach, some scholars developed a new theoretical approach called the Pluralistic Model of Trauma.<sup>70</sup>

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65 Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2017), and James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Murder* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

66 Michelle Balaev, “Trauma Studies,” in *A Companion to Literary Theory*, ed. David H. Richter (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 360.

67 For the traditional model that follows the unrepresentability of trauma in literary form, see Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996); Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010); and Dominic La-Capra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

68 Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 11.

69 Balaev, “Trauma Studies,” 364.

70 On Pluralistic Trauma Theory see Michelle Balaev, *The Nature of Trauma in American Novels* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2012) and Michelle Balaev (ed.), *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Naomi Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006); Ann Cvetkovic, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); and Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

It challenged the trauma-as-unspeakable trope and argued that the “unspeakability of trauma is one among many responses to an extreme event rather than its defining feature.”<sup>71</sup> Instead, the pluralistic model contends that traumatic experience “uncovers new relationships between experience, language, and knowledge that detail the social significance of trauma.”<sup>72</sup> This approach acknowledges and accommodates flexibility in human experience and expression and “provides greater attention to the variability of traumatic representations.”<sup>73</sup> Critically, it at least allows for the possibility of language to convey different meanings or registers of traumatic experience.

Accepting the traditional approach to trauma, one might argue that Artinian’s *destan* could only ever fail to represent his traumatic experience. However, such a hardened stance effectively, even if unintentionally, devalues the experience of survivors like Artinian and his efforts to express or convey the magnitude of collective pain, sorrow and trauma. As human beings we have a moral obligation to engage with his text and to acknowledge the trauma, however ‘inadequately’ represented. Instead of refuting the “speakability” of trauma, we should adopt an ethical approach that embraces what is left by survivors and treat these as valuable, informative accounts that articulate various historical and emotional registers of traumatic, catastrophic events. Whether or not catastrophe is unexplainable or trauma is unspeakable, scholars, historians and descendants have the duty to understand and interpret these texts.

## Conclusion

Unlike the literary reactions to the Adana massacres that were written *ex post facto*, Artinian’s lamentation of these massacres represents a rare account written nearly simultaneously with the events as they unfolded. Through his *destan* Artinian ventured to “speak” the “unspeakable.” It was written in Armeno-Turkish, a language in which Artinian felt comfortable to lament the massacres. Artinian wrote the *destan* to bear witness to the catastrophe. He experienced these events first-hand. Hence, the *destan* is a work of art, a work of testimony, and an expression of pain and sorrow at the same time. Through mourning the massacres, Artinian provided us with a chronological order of the events that transpired over several weeks in the city of Adana. The *destan* was written on 4 June 1909, a mere five and a half weeks after the end of the second wave of massacres. There was no time to process the catastrophe. Each stanza in the *destan* is a testimony to that fact. It is full of anguish and pain. Through the *destan*, Artinian attempted to comprehend the incomprehensible. The result achieved at least three things: a striking lamentation written in Armeno-Turkish about an incomprehensible catastrophe,

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71 Balaev, “Trauma Studies,” 360.

72 *Ibid.*, 366.

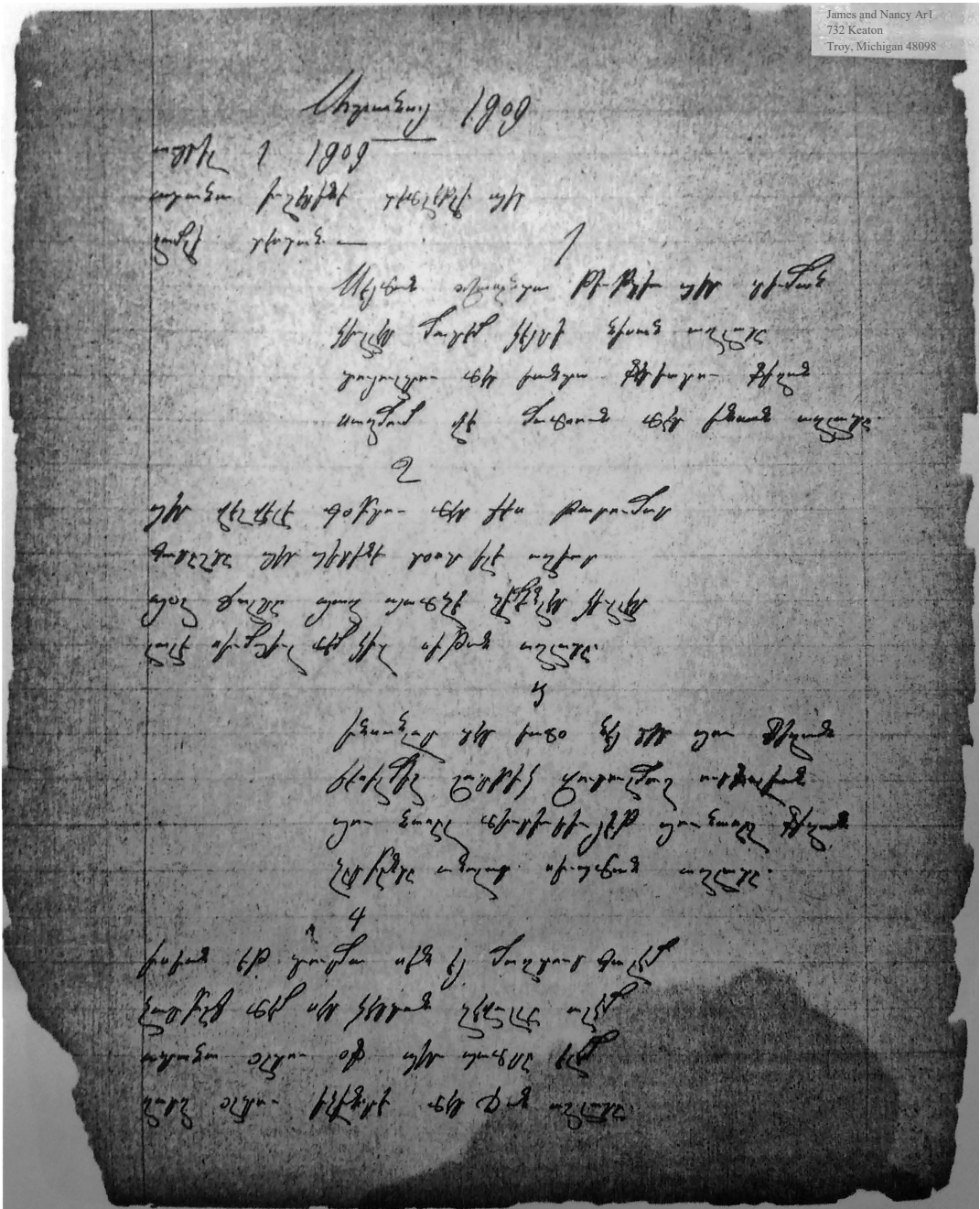
73 *Ibid.*



a record and reconstruction of the trajectory of the events that transpired, written almost in real time, and a personal expression of pain and anguish by a survivor and witness to the massacres and their aftermath. Hence, the *destan* has literary as well as historical value and should be treated as a uniquely informative source and expression.

Most of the lamentation *destans* written in Armeno-Turkish or conveyed orally pertain to the Armenian Genocide. This article introduces a unique *destan* written in Armeno-Turkish on the Adana Massacres. The unstudied material from the Adana Massacres as well as the Armenian Genocide deserve further consideration by historians, literary critics, and scholars of trauma and memory studies, as it provides potentially new and different perspectives on less studied phases and registers of the catastrophe, which could be illuminated by serious engagement with literary criticism and trauma and memory studies.





Charles Ozun Artinian - A Story of Adana (original manuscript\_pdf)

## **Appendix**

### **Turkish Transliteration**

Charles Ozun Artinian Poem  
Adana 1909 April 1 1909  
Adana üzerine dehşetli bir gamlı destan

1  
Seyhan ovasında tütü bir duman  
Güller matem geydi nisan ağladı  
Duyuldu her yanda feryat u figan  
Sağmum ve mahsun her insan ağladı

2  
Bir velvele koptu herkes tarumar  
Karıştı birbirine dost ile ağpar  
Boş kaldı bağ bahçe çimenler güller  
Lale sümbül hem gül-sitan ağladı

3  
İnsanlar der yahu neydir bu figan  
Kesilmiş Şadrig vurulmuş Urfalian  
Bu nasıl hürriyet bu nasıl figan  
Çırpında analar sıbyan ağladı

4  
İsyân et durma ey mağdur kalem  
Çarpık hem ser-gerdan zevallı alem  
Adana oldu öf bir bahrı elem  
Gark oldu içinde her can ağladı

5  
Meydanda ahali çırpışırılar aman  
Zira başladı bir harb-i nagehan  
Nice Ermeniler oldular kurban  
Nehirler doldu ta Cihan ağladı

6  
Dükkanlar kapandı alındı silah  
Türklerle birleşti mürâi fellah  
Yârdim et bize ey adil Allah  
Ümitsiz kaldı Seyhan ağladı

7

İmkânsız çaresiz meydanda kaldık  
Herkes her yerden camlara dolduk  
Camlar mahşer mahşer oldu sarardık solduk  
Sahab-ı servet hep üryan ağladı

8

Nisan 1dir dokuz yüz doksan senesi  
Altüst oldu Haig sübyan lânesi  
Çün insiz kaldı herkesin hanesi  
Herkesi merhamet vicdan ağladı

9

Derman mı kaldı hep çocuklar ağlar  
Bayılır evladın ciğerin dağlar  
Seyhan u Ceyhan usulden çağlar  
Peder mader evlat hep kan ağlar

10

Fırlarsın dışarı lakin ne çare  
Evlat u ayalın camda biçare  
Gezersin şorda ve şurda avare  
Şaşirdi evli kahraman ağladı

11

Kahraman gençlerdir derhal yetişti  
Meterisler yaptı işe girişti  
Tütün gibi sündü zalım vuruştı  
Elde martin her nev cihan ağladı

12

Gençler martinleri gümüşler yaman  
Hay mahallesine girmiş Müslüman  
Çok niyetler oldu kestiler duman  
Vuruldu Türklerden kalan ağladı

13

Talan oldu encam her bir malımız  
Emretti kıtala alçak valimiz  
Yangın sardı dehşetlendi halımız  
Çırpılılar geldi hep erkan ağladı

14

Boşaldı dağlardan vahşi ahali  
Her yeri kesmişler köyler hep hali  
Çok yaman oldu Adana hali  
Namus mahvoldu duhtirun ağladı

15

Vali ve erkanı teller vermişler  
Binlerce vahşiler her yere girmişler  
Ermeni olanı hep öldürmüşler  
Kızlar kaçırıldı nisvan ağladı

16

Gaddar pençelere düştü kardaşlar  
Nice suna boylu çok keman kaşlar  
Yaktı kül etti öf sizi ateşler  
Üstünüzde tüten duman ağladı

17

Artık Yetiş sen ey gaddar asuman  
Bakire kızlardan niceler üryan  
Adana şehrimiz oldu küllü han  
Nâleden mamul çok harman ağladı

18

Haylarda doğdu öf nice yazılar  
Her biri bin değer nice gaziler  
Böyle kırgın görmemiş maziler  
Yas libası geydi devran ağladı

19

Figan ve feryaddır gayrı halimiz  
Yandı yağma oldu bütün malımız  
Ateşler içinde hep ahalimiz  
Çırpımı çırpımı her ane ağladı

20

Yangından kaçan şol nice kuzular  
Kurşunu yer sızım sızım sızılar  
Asker kurşunları durmaz vızılar  
Gördü ta göklerde sübhan ağladı

21

Ahali pek çoktur yerler almadı  
Ecnebilerde boş bir yer kalmadı  
Hiçbir memlekette böyle olmadı  
Kül oldu şehrimiz veren ağladı

22

Avrupa der gayri nedir bu vahşet  
Çırpılılar gelir etmez merhamet  
Derler bu millete çoktur bu mihnet  
Yetişir artık çok zaman ağladı

23

Üç gün sonra kıtal hitamdır derler  
Beş bin asker birden şehre girerler  
Biz hür askeriz korkmayınız derler  
Vurdular birden her yan ağladı

24

Her mahallere ateş verildi  
Kudurgan alevler tekrar görüldü  
Kuzular vuruldu öf yere serildi  
Sorma ses rız oldu yanan ağladı

25

Sarıldı birbirine nice kız karı  
Kim duysa dayanmaz ol ah û zârı  
Yangınlar çok bisunçlar mezarı  
Enkaz altında çok cenan ağladı

26

Sp. Stepanosda figanlı sesler  
Ateşler içinde figanlı sesler  
Yangın sarmış dehşetlenmiş neferler  
Cizvitler kurtardı kesian ağladı

27

İngiliz konsülü derhal atıldı  
Bütün mağdurlar öne katıldı  
Nice gençler cansız yatıldı  
Sarayda her mihman olsun ağladı

28

Mihman oldu sarayda binlerce canlar  
Asker sitem eder ađlar insanlar  
Dizildi pakdamen kaşı kemanlar  
Esir gibi orda duran ađladı

29

Askerler bitakib yola dizildi  
Hiç kimsede hal kalmadı ezildi  
Çocuklar uykusuz gözler süzüldü  
Yürüdü bu esir kavran ađladı

30

Bu kervandır başlar sokađa yörür  
Dost nicelerinden harmanlar görür  
Evladını görsen derhal devrilir  
Ölüler başında Cenana ađladı

31

Köylerden zor şer şehre gelenler  
Nice kız karı ve nice gelinler  
Musheghian mektebine üç bin girenler  
Hep yandı vuruldu kaçan ađladı

32

Karataş Adana Tarsus ve Sis  
Bulanık Osmaniye Yarpuz ve Payas  
Misis Hamidiye her Kalata (?) kaya  
Vuruldu duydu Hayasdan ađladı

33

Hasılı Giligia oldu verane  
Yalınız bir Dört Yol tek hane  
Çeşitli Figanle olduk divane  
Patrik şol Izmirlian ađladı

34

Muhacir olduk düştük yollara  
Atıldık biçimsiz nice kollara  
Muhtaç olduk nice adi kullara  
El pençe durduk haneden ađladı

35

Kıbrıs İskenderiye'dir mekânımız  
Hep avara olduk yok imkânımız  
Kaldı vatanda 20,000 canımız  
Öksüz dul çıplak vatan ağladı

36

Vatanda hiç ev yok çadır kuruldu  
Yangından kıtalden herkes yoruldu  
Patrik Hanelerden haller soruldu  
Panasdeghdz Badriark şol Turian ağladı

37

Bu kafi değildir zalim hükûmet?  
Çoklarına da ettiniz eziyet  
Merhamet etmeye hiç etmiş niyet  
Attı zindanlara zindan ağladı

38

Bu mu meşrutiyet işit ey dünya  
Namustur dünyada ulyadan ulya  
Namus payumal oldu değildir ulya  
Ashabı namus duhteren ağladı

39

Ahlaksız namussuz alçak memurlar  
Verirler her gün çok adi emirler  
Hep adaletsizdir öyle umurlar  
Geldiğinde Vehabedian Ağladı

40

Zindanda büyükler bu ney figandır  
Zincirlediler bu ney divandır  
Dayaklar vuruldu bu ney imandır  
Hiç adalet yok kuran ağladı

41

Başladı istintak keyfine göre  
Çağrılır bir bisunç günde on kere  
Tazir tekdir hüküm hep hâksız yere  
Besunç bisunç mahkûm olan ağladı

42

Katillerdir meclislerin amiri  
Mümkün bu zalumun değer tamiri  
Mutaassıbdır hep bir nas-ı kerih  
Bu gaddar huzura çıkan ağladı

43

Hele şol İhsan alçak İtidal  
Hep yüzünden oldu ikinci kıtal  
Meğer yokmuş puştta ahkem cebir hal  
Pek çok rezillendi lisan ağladı

44

Katil kendiler hem gaddar kendiler  
Her bir çeşit rezaleti edenler  
Hayıf ki bir zaman ahrar dendiler  
Eğer var ise ahraran ağladı

45

Bu ney figandır işit Avrupa  
Ney duruyorsun ey Amerika  
Hürriyet yoluna hep olduk feda  
Tashnaksagan ve Hnchakian ağladı

46

Hayli düşkün fakir gurbet ellere  
Dayanılmaz adi mağdur dillere  
Benzettiler bizi gelengilere  
İhanet yeyen şu dehan ağladı

47

Ağlaya ağlaya yedik ihanet  
Fakiriz etmeyiz hiçbir bahane  
Biz başladık için için figane  
İş güç yoktur hep kahtagan ağladı

48

Zaman bizleri of bura getirdi  
Kuru topraklar üstünde yatırdı  
Bir ekmek için öf nice patırtı  
Remi olfa (?) gittik seğan ağladı



49

Seghanda çömllekler kime ney dersin  
Zor şer acı zulüm ney olsa yersin  
Unudur halini bir emir edersin  
Duymazlar aslını bilen ağladı

50

Suratsız çorbalar gelir imdada  
Kemikler karışık etler ziyade  
Menşur çok tüter yutamaz mide  
Vaz geçtik çorbadan koshhaf ağladı

51

Nasılsa sonrada hep acıdılar  
Yormadılar bizi Cama aldılar  
Kahtaganlar bundan memnun oldular  
Husa (?) edip hali duyan ağladı

52

Çadırlar altında kaldık biçare  
Alırsınız derler biz gibi ne çare  
Her bir ufak söz binler hançere  
Sükûta Mahkum Zadigian ağladı

53

Her kesin çeşitli derdi büyüktür  
Biz fakire zarar çok zalim yükür  
Ekmek yok derler bu söz çok tok dır  
Umutsuz kalmış her revan ağladı

54

Perişanız bir de olursa adem  
Biz Adanalıyız kalbimiz matem  
Böyle vakitte belli olur adem  
Bize değil siz, Alman Ağladı

55

Tyrpani Şartıye bizi aldılar  
Günlerce bizleri bir hal oldular  
Her ney lazım ise elden saldılar  
Şol Cizvit ve Amerikan ağladı

56

İskenderiye'deki millet sen yaşa  
Yaşasın Partogh ve Boghos Paşa  
Böyle felaketler Gelmessin başa  
Mağdur feryat etti cihan ağladı

57

Sanemin ağlattı beni ey Nubar  
Sensin hülya bize büyük iftihar  
Partogh ve Boghos etmeyiz inkar  
Bu gibi paşalar yaşasın her bar

Senemiz 1909 Hunis 4

Mersinden hareket hunis 4de bindik vapura avdet ettik İskenderun'a İskenderun'dan  
Latakya Latakya'dan Trablus'a Trablus'dan Beyrut'a Beyrut'tan Hayfa'ya Hayfa'dan  
Yafa'ya Yafa'dan Beyrut'ta Beyrut'tan İskenderun'a

İskenderiye'yi 1909 hulis 24 Alaturka hulis 6 Alafranga hulis 6da urpat günü eniştem  
vapura binmesi.

## **English Translation**

1

In the plain of Seyhan a smoke arose  
The roses dressed in sorrow and the April cried  
Lamentations and wails were heard in everywhere  
Every fit and strong cried

2

A cry broke out everyone scattered  
Friend and brother blended  
Vineyards orchards meadows roses remained empty  
Tulip, hyacinth too and rose garden cried

3

People are asking oh what is this lamentation  
Shadrig has been slaughtered and Urfalian has been shot  
What kind of a freedom is this what type of lamentation?  
Mothers agonized, children cried

4

Revolt don't stop oh betrayed pen  
Crooked and bewildered poor world  
Ah Adana turned into a sea of pain  
Within it, there was drowning and every living being cried

5

People in the square were beaten  
Because a sudden war began  
So many Armenians were sacrificed  
Rivers were filled even universe cried

6

Shops were closed and weapons were taken  
The hypocrite peasants joined the Turks  
Help us oh just God  
Remaining hopeless, Seyhan cried

7

Hopeless and desperate we remained helpless  
Everyone from everywhere we filled the churches  
Churches became overcrowded we turned into pale  
People of fortune all cried naked

8

It is April 1, the year nine hundred and nine  
The home of Haig's children was wrecked  
Whenever everyone's houses remained empty  
Everyone who had mercy and conscience cried

9

Has any remedy remained all children cry  
Your children faint and tear your heart out  
Seyhan and Ceyhan cascade silently  
Father mother children all of them cry blood

10

You burst outside but what good it would do  
Your children and family are helpless in the church  
You stroll here and there as a vagrant  
The married ones were perplexed and the hero cried

11

The heroes are the Youth who immediately arrived  
They dug trenches and hastened to work  
They wilted like tobacco, fought hard  
With martins in hand, all the worlds cried

12

The youth polished the martins formidably  
The Muslims entered the Armenian Quarter  
They had so many motives and they started the fire  
From the Turks many were shot, and the remaining ones cried

13

Finally, all our property was looted  
Our vile Vali ordered the slaughter  
The fire spread our condition became horrible  
The riffraff came and all great men cried

14

The savage people poured from the mountains  
They have slaughtered everywhere and villages were all empty  
The situation in Adana became terrible  
Honor was ruined and girls cried

15

The Vali and high officials had sent telegrams  
Thousands of savages had entered all places  
They killed all those who were Armenians  
Girls were abducted and women cried

16

Brothers and sisters fell into the cruel claws  
So many tall and beautiful ones  
Burned and destroyed you ah the fires  
The smoke hovering above you cried

17

Now come you oh brutal fate  
So many of the virgin girls are naked  
Adana our city became a house of ashes  
Made out of wailing many harvests cried

18

So many writings were born from Armenians  
Each one worth a thousand so many veterans  
The past has not witnessed such an injury  
It wore the mourning dress and the time cried

19

Now we are in a state of wailing and lamenting  
All our possessions were burned and looted  
All our people are in flames  
By striking their knees every mother cried

20

So many lambs that had escaped from the fire  
They are hit with the bullet and ache so intensely  
The bullets of the soldiers do not stop and buzz  
Seeing this from the skies, God cried

21

People were many, they could not fit  
No place was remained among the foreigners  
Nothing as such has happened in any country  
Our city turned to ashes and the giver cried

22

Now Europe says what is this savagery  
Riffraff come and show no mercy  
They say that this suffering is too much for this nation  
It is enough now, they had been crying for so long

23

Three days later, they say the massacre is over  
Five thousand soldiers entered the city altogether  
We are the army of freedom they say do not be afraid  
Suddenly they struck and many souls cried

24

All neighborhoods were put on fire  
The raving flames were seen again  
Lambs were hit ah and spread on the ground  
Don't ask the voice became lost, the immolated cried

25

So many girls and women held to each other  
Whoever listens cannot bear their wailing and cries  
The fires became a grave for many innocents  
Many souls under the rubbles cried

26

In St. Stepanos sounds of lament  
In the fire sounds of lament  
Fire has spread people have been struck with terror  
Jesuits have saved and people cried

27

The English consul immediately came forward  
All victims came forward  
So many young people lied down dead  
Everyone present in the palace cried

28

Thousands were taken to the palace  
Soldiers would rebuke and people would cry  
Honorable beauties with arched eyebrows were lined up  
Everyone who stood there as a slave cried

29

Soldiers heedlessly ran out to the road  
None was left with strength, everyone was crushed  
The children were sleepless their eyes swept away  
This caravan of slaves marched and cried

30

This caravan starts walking along the way  
Friends see so many turned into 'merchandise'  
Those whom their parents see immediately tumble  
Watching over the corpses, souls cried

31

Those who came from the villages to the city with great difficulty  
So many girls, women, and so many brides  
The three thousand that entered the Mousheghian school  
All of them were burnt and shot and those who escaped cried

32

Karataş Adana Tarsus and Sis  
Bulanık Osmaniye Yarpuz and Payas  
Misis Hamidiye and every mistaken rock  
Was struck, Armenian heard this and cried

33

In one word Cilicia became in ruin  
Only in Dörtyol there are houses (remaining)  
With so many lamentations we became crazy  
The Patriarch Izmirlian cried

34

We became refugees and hit the roads  
We were plunged into so many ugly hands  
We had to lean on so many vile men  
We waited hand and foot the dynasty cried

35

Our place is in Cyprus and Alexandria -  
We became idles and don't have any opportunities  
20,000 of our souls remained in the homeland  
Orphans widows and naked homeland cried

36

There is no home at all in the homeland tents were pitched  
Everyone became exhausted from the fire and the massacre  
From the Patriarchate they asked about our condition  
The Patriarch Poet Turian cried

37

Is not this enough the cruel government?  
You tortured so many people as well  
Did it ever intend to show mercy?  
It threw (people) to the dungeons, and the dungeons cried

38

Is this the constitution? Hear, oh World!  
In this world, honor is more sacred than the sacred  
Honor became trampled, it is not a sacred (anymore)  
Honorable daughters cried



39

Immoral, dishonorable and vile officials  
Every day they give despicable orders  
These types of affairs are all unjust  
Upon his arrival Vehabedian cried

40

The leaders in the dungeons, what a grief is this  
They were chained, what type of court is this  
Beatings were struck what kind of belief is this  
There is no justice at all, the creator cried

41

The inquisition started in a discretionary manner  
Innocent people were summoned ten times a day  
Discretionary punishment, reprimand and sentences were all issued unjustly  
Innocents who were convicted cried

42

The heads of the councils are murderers  
Is it possible to repair this cruelty?  
All those despicable people are conservatives  
Those who appeared before them cried

43

Especially that İhsan and that evil İtidal  
It was due to him that the second massacre began  
It turns out that the catamite had no just judgment on violence  
He brought so much shame on himself, the language cried.

44

They are the murderers and they are the cruel  
They are the ones who committed all sorts of wrecked deeds  
Alas once they were called liberals  
If there are any, liberals cried

45

What a lamentation is this, hear, Europe!  
What are you waiting for oh America  
We were all sacrificed on the road to freedom  
Dashnaks and Hnchaks cried

46

These miserable, poor, foreign lands  
These vulgar, injuring words are unbearable  
They likened us to rodents  
This betrayed mouth cried

47

We were betrayed in cries  
We are poor, we do not make any excuses  
We started grieving within  
There is no work all the refugees cried

48

Times have brought us ah to here  
Has made us sleep on dry lands  
So much quarrel for one bread  
We went to Remi Olfa (?) the altar cried

49

On the altar, there were clay pots, what can you say  
You have to eat it whatever it is, no matter whether it is tough, bad, painful or cruel  
You forgot your condition and gave an order  
They don't hear. Those who knew their original selves cried

50

Tasteless soups come to aid  
Full of bones and left-over meats  
It has a bad smell and the stomach cannot bare  
We gave up the soup and the compote cried

51

Somehow they later pitied on us  
They did not strain us and took us into the church  
The refugees were happy about this  
Those who felt sorry and heard this situation cried

52

We stayed in tents helpless  
"You can get used to it" they say to desperate people like us  
Every little word like thousands of daggers  
Zadigian who was sentenced to silence cried

53

Everyone has different and big troubles  
For us, the poor, the damage is very cruel burden  
They say there is no bread, this saying is very tough  
Every desperate wayfarer cried

54

We, especially the men, are miserable  
We are from Adana and our hearts are mourning  
It is at times like this a man's (true character) becomes evident  
Not you but the Germans cried for us

55

Thanks to Tyrpani's words they took us  
They took care of us for days  
They provided us whatever was needed  
The Jesuits and American cried

56

Long live the people of Alexandria  
Long live Partogh and Boghos Pasha  
Let calamities as such not occur  
The victim wailed and the world cried

57

Your statue made me cry oh Nubar  
You are a dream for us, a great pride  
We do not repudiate Partogh and Boghos  
Let pashas like them live forever

Year 1909 July 4

We left Mersin on July 4 and took a ship and returned to Iskenderun and from Iskenderun to Latakia and from Latakia to Tarabulus and from Tarabulus to Beirut and from Beirt to Haifa and from Haifa to Jaffa and from Jaffa to Beirut and then to Iskenderun

My brother in law took the boat on July 24, 1919

Artin Kelikian,  
Yetem, California

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## **About the Author**

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# A STEP TOWARDS IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OR GENOCIDE? IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND PROPAGANDA IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN 1911-1913

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## Abstract

This study explores two features of the Turkish nation-building process on the ideological level in the late Ottoman Empire in 1911-1913. The territory losses and population declines following the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars and the ensuing influx of Muslim refugees from the Balkans created a favorable environment for the Turkish government to coordinate and produce the propaganda of Turkism en-masse within the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire. The period of 1911-1913 stands as a crucial phase in the top-down nationalization of the Ottoman masses, which later would have a great impact on the developments in the country before, during, and after World War I. This period was severely detrimental for the indigenous Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, two particular aspects of the construction of a “Turkish” identity through the usage of state propaganda are stressed in the article: the construction of an “other” and the glorification of a common Turkish past. Both largely determined Turkish self-perception during the era and defined the code of action against non-Turkish elements of the Empire.

**Key words:** Nationalism, CUP, atrocity propaganda, minority, Muhajirs, “us” and “them”, Turan, glorification of past.

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## Introduction

Nationalism (as an ideology) and nation (as a social organization and a collective identity) has been a topic of scholarly discussion since the late 18th century, and it formed as its own subdiscipline of academic research in the 1980s. One of the core questions driving this research was whether the nation is a modern phenomenon or primordial in nature.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993); Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: VERSO, 2006).

Theorists who considered nationalism and the nation-state as modern creations singled out the French Revolution of 1789 as a conceptual point of origin, as it formulated the concept of a citizen from a subject of a sovereign. The Revolution also had an influence on the development and nature of nationalism in European and Asian countries, and the Ottoman Empire was no exception.<sup>2</sup> Elie Kedourie, for example, describes nationalism as “a doctrine invented in Europe.”<sup>3</sup>

According to Ernest Gellner: “Nationalism creates nations, not the other way around.” But this doesn’t mean that nations are merely thinker-elite driven constructs: they are necessary creations of the historical phenomenon of industrialization.<sup>4</sup> While John Armstrong and Anthony D. Smith state that nations precede nationalism, noting a continuity between old nations and modern entities, including medieval or ancient ethnic communities which formed the ancestral foundation of the modern nation.<sup>5</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, who considers the “nation” as a recent historical invention linking nationalism to industrialization and ensuing developments of communication and literacy, also acknowledges the existence of “proto-nations”.<sup>6</sup> This demonstrates that there is no universal theory of nation or nationalism of a global context; yet, certain factors are considered crucial in nation-building processes.

By analyzing the aforementioned literature, we are able to identify certain key factors which are crucial in nation-building processes. An entity to be perceived as a nation should unite people who speak the same language, have a perception of their “homeland”/the concept of territoriality, and retain some sense of a common past or “myth” of a common origin.<sup>7</sup> However, a crucial element in the nation-building process is not solely the various collective symbols and values that, as “cultural markers,” differentiate communities – but also divide “us/ingroup” from “them/outgroup”. As Anthony Smith formulates: “The fact that outsiders are ‘strangers’ to us, that we cannot communicate with them and that ‘their’ ways seem incomprehensible to us, derives its meaning and significance from an already existing sense of shared experiences and values, a feeling of community, of ‘us-ness’ and group belonging.”<sup>8</sup> Not only is the perception of a common past a unifying factor, but it creates shared meaning that group members “belong together” and “have a common destiny for the future.”<sup>9</sup> In Gellner’s words: “Two men are of the same nation if and only if

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2 Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1962), 12-13.

3 Ibid., 1.

4 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 55-56.

5 John Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (USA: Blackwell Publishing, 1988).

6 Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

7 Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 69.

8 Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 49.

9 Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise of Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1959), 95.

they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, nations maketh man; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities."<sup>10</sup>

A wide array of existing scholarship covers the Second Constitutional (1908-1918) and Republican (1923-present) periods from both historical and theoretical perspectives. Taking Smith's notion on Turkish nation as "a nation by design,"<sup>11</sup> with this article, we have set out to identify and illuminate two aspects in Turkish nation-building process led by the ruling Committee of Union and Progress: the construction of the "other" through propaganda, and the glorification of Turkic past. We have chosen to analyze the years 1911-1913, as the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars and the accompanying territorial losses and influxes of Muslim refugees – *muhajirs* from the Balkans – created a favorable environment for the Turkish elite to coordinate and disseminate propaganda of Turkish nationalism within a largely multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire. The year 1913 is chosen as the end date of this analysis, given that the radical ultra-nationalist wing of the CUP seized power in a coup d'état in 1913, concentrating the decision-making process into the hands of a single party and establishing a proto-fascist regime. This resulted in the institution of policies aimed at nationalizing the masses from above and forcibly "Turkifying" the state, radicalizing the methods used to do so prior to 1913. This chosen period of analysis is also important, given its status as a pre-genocidal period which reflected both state-led hate speech and the deliberate marginalization of victimized groups.

## **We – the Muslims, they – the Christians**

The Turkish nationalist elite's commitment to nationalization policies were influenced by both internal and external factors. Although the pursuit of modernization can be traced back to the second half of 19th century, it was largely instituted by the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, hereafter the "CUP" or "İttihadists"), who came to power in the Ottoman Empire as a result of a coup d'état in July 1908. The ideology of the Committee was Turkism, which was developed under the influence of European socio-philosophical and political thought and contrasted with official ideology of the empire: Ottomanism.<sup>12</sup> Nationalization, which was openly discussed in party periodicals (*Türk, Şûra-yı Ümmet, Osmanlı*) by party-affiliated ideologues and distributed through pamphlets and personal messages between CUP members before the coup, became a prominent agenda item after the CUP seized power. Theoretically, Ottomanism viewed all Ottomans as equals, and this view was reflected in the re-instituted constitution. However, high-ranking İttihadists assigned the Turkish segment of the population a dominant role in the Ottoman Empire. When the CUP began negotiating with various

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10 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 7.

11 Smith, *National Identity*, 100, 104.

12 Ottomanism was a type of nationalism originated by Tanzimat reforms in the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire. The aim of Ottomanism was to establish single citizenship from diverse religious and ethnic communities of the country. For the non-Muslims of the Empire, this would turn the empire into a melting pot.

ethno-religious groups of the empire to gain their support to dethrone Sultan Abdul Hamid II, their Turkic-centric interpretation of Ottomanism was strategically concealed.<sup>13</sup>

The ensuing Turkification of the Ottoman Empire was not solely generated by CUP ideology; its enactment was the outcome of several internal and external socio-political developments. Sociologist Ayhan Aktar describes the Turkification policies of the 1920s as “a set of policies aimed at establishing the unconditional supremacy of Turkish national identity in nearly all aspects of social and economic life” in the land that was to become the country of the Turks.<sup>14</sup> This definition of Turkification also applies to the Second Constitutional Period, although the policy was enacted and initially carried out under the cover of Ottomanism.

After 1908, many of high-ranking CUP officials and party ideologues used the term “Ottoman”, but in reference to Turks and Turkified Muslims, being brought up in Turkish traditions, and communicating in Turkish.<sup>15</sup> A professor at the University of Istanbul and journalist formerly affiliated with the CUP, Ahmed Emin (Yalman, 1888-1972), stressed that the Ittihadists used the phrases “Ottoman” and “unity of all elements of population in Turkey without distinction of creed and religion” not as a ground for establishing equal citizenship, but as a cover for assimilating non-Turkish elements of the population into a Turkified state. According to Emin, this policy deepened the gulf between Turks and non-Turks – who, after centuries of living together in some regions, had lived remarkably similar lifestyles.<sup>16</sup> This elite-driven policy of homogenizing the country would first lead to the assimilation of certain non-Turkish groups within the multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire, followed by state-sponsored genocides committed against non-assimilated and “undesirable” ethnic groups within the empire.

After the revolution, the Ittihadists needed a justification to harbor Turkism within the Ottoman Empire – and external developments provided exactly that. One particular aim of the coup in 1908 was to maintain the territorial integrity of the Empire by intercepting and halting the new Russo-British reform program for Macedonia and the possible secession of the Balkans.

However, after the coup, several geopolitical shifts occurred: Austria-Hungary officially announced the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been occupied since 1876. Bulgaria declared the adjunction of Eastern Thrace and the proclamation of an independent kingdom. Crete was joined to Greece. The country was involved in Italo-Turkish (or Tripolitanian War, 1911-1912) and the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), which

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13 Şükrü M. Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 299.

14 Ayhan Aktar, “Conversion of a ‘Country’ into a ‘Fatherland’: The Case of Turkification Examined, 1923-1934,” in *Nationalism in the Troubled Triangle: Cyprus, Greece and Turkey*, eds. A. Aktar, N. Kızılyürek, and U. Özkırımlı (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 22.

15 Arsen Avagyan, *Геноцид армян: механизмы принятия и исполнения решений* [The Armenian Genocide. The Mechanisms of Deceison-Making and Implementation] (Yerevan: AGMI, 2013), 32.

16 Ahmed Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press* (New York: Longmans, Green&Co., Agents, 1914), 101.

led to large losses of population and wide swaths of territory in Southeastern Europe.<sup>17</sup> Despite the impact of these losses, they served as organic catalysts for the strengthening of a national identity – and the CUP capitalized on it.<sup>18</sup> The situation of Muslims in the “lost lands” and the sufferings of *muhajirs* became a tool that was not only for external use in Ottoman foreign policy, but also comprised internal propaganda that was circulated within nationalist discourse.<sup>19</sup>

Several party members and ideologues acknowledged the impact of historic defeats on their own worldview on nationalism. As CUP ideologue Halide Edib (1884-1964) noted, the years 1910-1912 ignited her “final plunge into nationalism”.<sup>20</sup> Hussein Jahid, the editor-in-chief of the semi-official newspaper *Tanin*, shares the same opinion, asserting: “The present war represents a great defeat for Turkey, but it has at least had the effect of rousing all the Turks and Mohammedans in the world from their lethargy. It has put clearly before them the dangers to which they are exposed.”<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Edib noted that Turkish nationalism intensified within the Ottoman Empire as a result of the European “double-standard” practiced towards the state’s Christian and Muslim populations.<sup>22</sup> The Turkish daily publication, *İkdam*, generalized common sentiments in writing that the Balkan Wars were regarded by Europe “...as a war of civilization against barbarism, of knowledge against ignorance, in short, a war against Turkish oppression.”<sup>23</sup> The best summary of the Ittihadist mindset is given by Ahmed Emin, who stressed that the Turkish national self-consciousness was acquired through defeats, Turkophobia, and humiliation.<sup>24</sup>

The Italo-Turkish War also provided the conditions for nationalist intellectuals to start constructing the concept of the “other”, which served two purposes: the mobilization of the home front during the war, and the en-masse nationalization of the Ottoman Empire. The dichotomy of an in-group and an outgroup – of “us” versus “them” – comprises the basic elements of all nationalist movements. The rhetorical differentiation between the groups was steeped in the Empire’s longstanding Christian-Muslim division, since the majority of the Muslim population possessed a religious identity, rather than an ethnic or national identity.<sup>25</sup> Between 1911-1912, Russian journalist and writer Ariadna Tyrkova-Williams,

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17 Richard Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 11-12.

18 More on the links between the Balkan Wars and Turkish Nationalism see Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: the Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 82-83.

19 Erol Köroğlu, “From Propaganda to National Identity Construction in Turkey,” in *Nations, Identities and the First World War: Shifting Loyalties to the Fatherland*, eds. Nico Wouters, Laurence van Ypersele (London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 51-52.

20 Halide Edib, *Memoirs of Halide Edib* (New York, London: The Century Co., 1926), 312.

21 Tekin Alp, *The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal* (Constantinople: Admiralty War Staff, Intelligence Division, 1917), 13.

22 Edib, *Memoirs*, 333.

23 “A Pessimistic Prophecy,” *The Orient* (Constantinople), 4 December 1912, vol. III, No. 49.

24 Emin, *The Development of Modern*, 107, 108.

25 Roderic H. Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century,”

after meeting and interviewing several of the prominent CUP leaders in Constantinople, concluded that they referred to Islam with almost the same hatred as Voltaire's contempt for the Catholic Church. However, their situation was different in that they had to hide their hatred, as the national and religious self-consciousness was still merged together within the majority of the population.<sup>26</sup> According to the CUP ideologue Munis Tekinalp (Moiz Cohen, 1883-1961):

The Nationalists devoted their efforts from the very first moment to raising the economic life of the country. It is, however, interesting to note that they wisely refrained from lending the banner of pure Nationalism to economic agitators. They sought after a judicious mingling of the religious and national impulses. They realized very clearly that the still abstract ideals of Nationalism could not be expected to attract the masses, the lower classes, composed of uneducated and illiterate people. It was found more expedient to reach these classes under the flag of religion. Religion has a universal appeal, whereas Nationalism is a finer instrument which requires good training if it is to be properly handled.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the CUP affiliated press presented the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars as wars of the Christian world against the Muslim world. Hussein Jahid reflects on the question of Adrianople in *Tanin* in the same vein. The city was taken by Bulgarian and Serbian armies during the First Balkan War, and its status became the subject of fierce negotiations. The loss of Adrianople created a political scandal in Constantinople, as Adrianople was a former capital city and held immense symbolic meaning to the Ottoman Empire. Jahid presented the question of Adrianople's fate to that of Islam vs. Christianity: "They want to take Adrianople from us so as to insult and humiliate the Moslem world."<sup>28</sup>

The party ideologues constructed this differentiation through propaganda in press and literature, which not only targeted Christians who fought on the opposite front of the war, but also the Christian subjects of the Empire, including them into the artificially-constructed image of the "other".<sup>29</sup> Tekinalp described the Balkan nations as "false friends" who deceived Turks and "showed their true colors" during the Balkan Wars. These ideologues argued that the attitudes of the non-Turkish elements of the empire and the "betrayal" of the Muslim Albanians were eye-opening for Turks, as it demonstrated that the survival and future existence of Turks depended solely on their political,

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*The American Historical Review* 59 (1954): 844-864.

26 Ariadna Turkova, *Старая Турция и младотурки. Годъ въ Константинополе* [Old Turkey and the Young Turks: A Year in Constantinople] (Petrograd, 1916), 137.

27 Tekin Alp, *The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal*, 22.

28 "Noli Me Tangere," *The Orient*, 20 August 1913, vol. IV, No. 34.

29 Ümit Kurt, Doğan Gürpınar, "The Balkan Wars and the Rise of the Reactionary Modernist Utopia in Young Turk Thought and the Journal Türk Yurdu [Turkish Homeland]," *Nations and Nationalism* 21 (2015): 361.



social, intellectual, and economic power and unity. As Turks plunged into war with the Bulgarians, Serbians, and Greeks, as presented by Tekinalp, “...the revolt of the bad element among the people began, the revolt of former “friends” who now one by one left the poor desolated country and nation in the lurch.”<sup>30</sup> The image of Balkan “treachery” in the Balkan Wars – of peoples who “blinded” the Turkish nation with lies – was quickly adapted and transferred to the remaining Christians of the Empire, nourishing the image of the Christian “other” within the Empire who could also become dangerous.

These defeats also had a practical significance for the CUP. With the loss of the Balkans, the country became more homogeneous, and disseminated propaganda could more-effectively reach its target populations. The suffering of Muslim emigrants and refugees at the hands of Christian authorities additionally provided a ground for nationalistic propaganda to flourish and incited anger against the remaining Christian populations of the Empire to foment. In the eyes of the CUP ideologues, Balkan Muslim refugees became both a target and tool for propaganda. Policies of demographic engineering became common in the Ottoman Empire and would be practiced in all Christian-populated areas. In 1911, Mehmed Nazim submitted a plan to the CUP’s Central Committee that, if approved, would gradually populate Macedonia with Bosnian Muslims; the Empire’s defeat in the Balkan War ultimately prevented its implementation.<sup>31</sup> According to official sources, 500,000 to 600,000 refugees had been expelled from the former Balkan provinces of the Empire, and the state was looking for ways and means of settling them in Asia Minor. In an interview with a French diplomat, the Turkish ambassador to Austria-Hungary and former Grand Vizier, Hilmi Pasha, suggested to resettle them in “the district of Adana, [which] is so fertile that it is like a little Egypt,” and expressed hope that French government would assist with the project.<sup>32</sup> A communiqué from the Grand Vizier to the Vali of Adana, dated 25 March 1909, encouraged the countering of Armenian settlement in the empty lands near Sis and Kozan by promoting the settlement of Muslim tribes in the region.<sup>33</sup> Vahan Minakhorian,<sup>34</sup> an Armenian politician, stated that the authorities directed the Balkan emigrants to the eastern fringes of Armenian regions of the Empire. He recalled the appearance of the first wave of *muhajirs* in Samsun who (being purposely incited and agitated against Christians in the city) were opportunistically placed to stage an attack on the Greek or Armenian quarters of the city.<sup>35</sup>

30 Tekin Alp, *The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal*, 11.

31 Avagyan, *The Armenian Genocide*, 49.

32 Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: a Complete History* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 141.

33 Bedross Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana: Revolution and Violence in the Early Twentieth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022), 55.

34 Vahan Minakhorian (1884-1946) was an active Armenian public figure, a member of the Social-Revolutionary Party of Armenia. During the Armenian Genocide, he was deported from Samsun with the local population – yet he escaped and survived the Genocide. Shortly following his escape, he became an MP in the Parliament of the First Armenian Republic (1918-1920).

35 Vahan Minakhorian, *1915 թուականի արհաւիրքի օրեր* [The Year 1915: Days of Disaster] (Venice: St. Ghazar Press, 1949), 53.



The CUP's demographic engineering aimed to alter the demographic composition of Armenian regions by purposefully resettling Muslim refugees from the Balkan Wars in Armenian regions, but they also attempted to control Armenians through the *muhajirs*. In his memoirs, Minakhorian recalls that CUP party delegate in Samsun, Ismail Sidki reached out to the local branch of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in 1912 in the hopes of scheduling a meeting. Although Minakhorian was not a member of the organization, he was invited to the meeting and participated with ARF members. During the meeting, several questions were discussed: the condition of Armenians in the "eastern provinces" and Cilicia, the "Armenian reform project," and Ottoman promises of equality and protection given by the constitution six years prior that, to date, had remained unfulfilled. Sidki announced that the state's hands were effectively tied due to issues with foreign interference, state finances, and administrative problems, and the problem of Muslim refugees from the Balkans. Sidki would further claim that it was very hard to keep these refugees from attacking the Armenians, warning the attendees: "I am kindly informing you that they have a grudge against you. You cannot imagine what adversity they would have caused if we had not intervened. Try to avoid mistakes that could irritate the Turkish crowd." Minakhorian, in his reflections, noted that Sidki's "benevolent" warning sounded like a threat from a Turkish official.<sup>36</sup>

Ittihadist ideologues fed the refugees with fear of the new territorial losses and presented Christian national minorities as advocates of this potential danger. For example: during the Balkan Wars, the service of Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman army remained largely hidden from public view; their loyalty to their state was not covered by the Turkish press, as it clashed with the Turkish "national project" pursued by the CUP and Ottoman elites.<sup>37</sup> Press publications about Ottoman losses were rewritten to whip fear among Muslims and agitate the masses, claiming that a new disaster would befall the country if Turks did not resort to self-defense.<sup>38</sup> During the massacres of Armenians in Adana region in 1909, there were Muslims who spoke about the massacres with sorrow and fear. However, they too paid tribute to the state's propaganda, noting that this was the only way to address intersocial tensions, because otherwise: "they would have been attacked and overpowered by the Christians."<sup>39</sup> There is no doubt that the local CUP members were complicit in the massacres and played a primary role in instigating the Muslim population of Adana against the Armenians through publications like the *Itidal* newspaper, which spread notions that the Armenians instigated "riots" to reestablish the Kingdom of Cilicia.<sup>40</sup>

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36 *Ibid.*, 58.

37 Fikret Adanır, "Non-Muslims in the Ottoman Army and the Ottoman Defeat in the Balkan War," in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the end of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Ronald Suny, Fatma Gocek, Norman Naimark (NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 123.

38 Chirot Daniel, McCauley Clark, *Why Not Kill Them All? The Logic and Prevention of Mass Political Murder* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 208.

39 Charles Woods, *The Danger Zone of Europe: Changes and Problems in the Near East* (London: "T.F. Unwin," 1911), 171.

40 Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana*, 148-149.

According to the testimony of Vahan Papazyan, a member of the Ottoman Parliament: amid the outbreak of the Italo-Turkish War, the CUP clubs incited the masses against the Christians so much “as if we [Armenians] were the ones fighting against them in Tripoli.”<sup>41</sup> This anti-Armenian attitude and rhetoric was not limited to the Committee of Union and Progress: the original cabinet formed from the CUP was replaced with Kâmil Pasha’s cabinet on 30 October 1912, forcing CUP to be a political opposition in the country for almost six months. The new minister of the interior, Ahmed Reshid (Rey), who was affiliated with The Freedom and Accord Party (*Hürriyet ve İtilâf*), laid the blame for the Empire’s defeats in the Balkans squarely on the hands of two Armenians: the CUP-affiliated MP Bedros Hallajian, and his cabinet colleague Gabriel Noradunkyan.<sup>42</sup> In the press, Armenian and Greek deputies were caricatured as traitors of the nation; one particular cartoon depicted an art gallery with a painting of Hallajian, implying to readers that he was a “sellout”, a betrayer of the nation.<sup>43</sup>

Following the Balkan Wars, Armenians in the Empire’s eastern provinces were placed under more severe pressure. Propaganda generated in the wake of the state’s defeat in the Balkan Wars had a huge impact on society, igniting outbursts of fanaticism. The Turkish political elite was well aware of the fact that this could provoke reactions and incitements against local non-Muslims; incitements against Armenians in particular were chronicled in Ottoman Armenian newspapers of the era. For example, Armenian newspaper *Ashkhatanq* reported how the Mufti of Silvan (Diarbekir) preached against the Armenians during *Bayram*, as well as how the police of Adana publicly insulted the Armenian nation.<sup>44</sup> The newspaper also informed readers about the killing of an Armenian, Melkon Mir-Sakocian, during an armed *devriye* (patrol) attack – consisting of Balkan *muhajirs* – on a group of well-known Armenians at night.<sup>45</sup> In successive issues, journalists analyzed the situation, stating that:

Since the beginning of war ...we [Armenians] had a fear that Muslim refugees from occupied Rumelia, by pouring into Armenian provinces would pour their accumulated bile of revenge and religious fanaticism on the heads of the Armenian people. Unfortunately, not only were our suspicions justified, but this time, instead of the ignorant, fanatical crowd, the educated officials, whose sole duty is to guard public safety, began to act. ...From the point of view of sound state policy, the

41 Vahan Papazyan, *Իմ յուշերը* [My Memoirs], Vol. II (Beirut: Hamazgayin Ynkerutyun, 1952), 155.

42 Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 128.

43 Bora Isyar, “The Origins of Turkish Republican Citizenship: The Birth of Race,” *Nations and Nationalism* 11 (2005): 346.

44 «Ո՞ւր է պատասխանատուութիւնը» [Where is the Responsibility?], *Ashkhatanq* (Van), 10 August 1913, No. 39.

45 «Մէլքոնն Միդ-Սաքոյեանի սպանումը» [The Killing of Melkon Mir-Sakocian], *Ashkhatanq*, 31 August 1913, No. 42.

leaders of the government cannot be justified, when they surrendered the safety of life of the Armenian people in the conditions of anxiety and tension to the hands of Rumeli officials, who were burned in the furnace of hatred and revenge.<sup>46</sup>

In a dispatch to the Russian Foreign Minister from the Russian Empire's ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Mikhail Nikolayevich von Giers, dated 7 April 1913, the gravity of the situation was demonstrated. Cited in the dispatch was an incident in March of 1913, in which a Kurd was killed in the region of Bitlis; the victim's relatives accused the region's Armenians of this murder, and turmoil ensued. After a conversation between the ambassador and the Grand Vizier, the case was presented to the public as "an assassination of an Armenian by an Armenian" as not to incite Muslims of the region against Armenians.<sup>47</sup> On 5 April, the government issued a new statement regarding another crisis; this time, in connection with an explosion in Erzinka (Erzincan) and the discovery of other explosives in Armenian houses. In this regard, *Tanin* periodical clarifies that the blast was not motivated to attack the state, but rather to address "the ulcers with which Eastern Anatolia is covered."<sup>48</sup> Ambassador von Giers expressed hope in the dispatch that the local government authorities that started the reform-centric negotiations would work to prevent clashes between people. Based on a secret source, Giers was informed during a meeting with Interior Minister Hadji Adil that while incidents of such scope may happen all over the country the government would not blame a whole nation for that. This assurance, however, was followed by an attack on Armenian women by Turkish gendarmes on the streets of Hadjin.<sup>49</sup>

In another report sent to the Foreign Minister, Ambassador Giers recited the content of a memorandum of Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Hovhannes Arsharuni to Grand Vizier Mahmud Shevket Pasha from 29 April 1913. According to the Patriarch, the belief was intensifying among Muslims that Christians were the cause of all misfortunes experienced by the Empire's inhabitants. Citing other developments indicative of this escalation, the Patriarch then spoke of the reappearance of the organizers and perpetrators of the massacres of Armenians in Adana Province (who constantly visited the provincial governor), as well as the anti-Christian propaganda circulating within Adana's newspapers and press. The Patriarch also raised the issue of impunity: the memorandum provided the example of an event from Van, where (as of the memorandum's publication) 150 Armenians were imprisoned on charges of murdering a Muslim, while the Muslims who killed the Armenian teacher and priest were released. The memorandum further states

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46 Տագնապը անցավ բայց պատճառները կը մնան [Anxiety Passed, but the Causes Remain], *Ashkhatanq*, 7 September 1913, No. 45.

47 *Сборникъ дипломатическихъ документовъ. Реформы в Арменіи. 26 ноября 1912 года – 10 мая 1914 года* [Collection of Diplomatic Documents. Reforms in Armenia. November 26, 1912 - May 10, 1914 (Petrograd: State Printing House, 1915), 29-31.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

that Muslims were often simply rewarded for killing Armenians when tensions led to an outbreak of violence.<sup>50</sup>

The Christian-Muslim division on the ground, as a reflection and consequence of state-led propaganda, manifested in Armenian-Kurdish relationships, as well. In the aforementioned memorandum, Patriarch Arsharuni also appealed for establishing order in the Empire's Armenian regions; Armenians were broadly disarmed, while the majority of the Kurds were armed, and attacks on the Armenian peasantry by Kurds were frequent. In response to this, *Tasviri Efkar* published an open letter from Severeqli Pasha Zade Mehmed Fikri, denying the Patriarch's claims. Although the phrases "Kurdish nation" and "Armenian nation" were mentioned several times in the open letter, the author drew attention to the fact that Kurds were Muslims, while Armenians were Christians, and that this division should be taken into consideration by the government while approaching the Armenian-Kurdish question. In claiming that the most vital question for the Kurds was the question of land, the author expands: "The Kourds whom the Patriarch qualifies as pillagers and brigands, are a people that have always been faithful to the State. A large number of Kourdish officers and soldiers have shed their blood for the Ottoman Fatherland."<sup>51</sup>

Armenian Patriarch Arsharuni's multiple appeals to the *High* Porte also called attention to the distribution of free public lands to incoming Muslim refugees, but the Patriarch's appeals remained unanswered. The aim of allocating these lands to Balkan refugees was to increase the concentration of Muslims in the Empire's eastern fringes and expel the "unreliable" Armenian population from their indigenous lands.

In addition to this religious differentiation, there was also a sense of social "injustice" that pervaded the social fabric of the Ottoman Empire. The humiliation of defeat inflicted by the state's "former servants" is clearly evident in the writings of both Ittihadists and party ideologues. The defeats in the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars were presented by CUP intellectuals as a shameful, "humiliating catastrophe" because they were caused by former *rayah*.<sup>52</sup> In light of this context, the labelling of Christians gained new momentum. In his writings, Yusuf Akchura (1876-1935), an ideologue of Pan-Turkism, pondered how the "Ottomans" could be defeated by their former subjects: "The Bulgarians – the milkmen – the Serbians – the swineherds – even the Greeks – the tavern keepers – defeated us, the Ottomans who had been their masters for 500 years. This harsh truth, which we could not even imagine, may be a hard slap in the face that will open our eyes and lead us to think rationally."<sup>53</sup> After the fall of Yannena, an editorial in *Tasviri Efkar* exclaimed that the seizure of that Ottoman fortress by the Hellenes, whom Turks considered "even lower than

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50 Ibid., 32-35. On 20 May (2 June) 1913, the Patriarch handed over a new memorandum to the Grand Vizier on the ground that since the last memorandum the situation of Armenians had worsened. Ibid., 38.

51 "The Poor Maligned Kourds," *The Orient*, 4 June 1913, vol. IV, No. 23.

52 More on the discriminatory epithets given to the Christians in the Ottoman Empire see Davison, "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality," 855.

53 Cited in Kurt, Gürpınar, "The Balkan Wars," 352.

dogs”, was something unimaginable and called for silencing the pain through an act of revenge.<sup>54</sup>

The idea of the Balkan nations being the “former servants” of the Turks is one shared across publications; an editorial of *The Orient*,<sup>55</sup> in which *muhajirs* trekking in front of the advancing Bulgarian army were interviewed, concluded that their escape was not motivated by fear of the Bulgarian troops, but the will to live under Muslim rule. Moreover, the refugees also claimed that their villages were burnt by the retreating Turkish army – not by the advancing Bulgarian forces. Through this voyage, the Muslims of the Balkans chose: “... a long, weary migration and an unknown future, rather than the comfort of their ancestral homes under foreign rule, especially the rule of those who were once their *rayah*, – their flocks and herds.”<sup>56</sup>

The physical proximity of *muhajirs* to Armenian-inhabited regions of the Empire, their suffering and an emerging hatred towards Christians would be instrumentalized by the Committee of Union and Progress for a bigger agenda: during the implementation of the Armenian Genocide, *muhajir* refugees took a direct role in perpetrating the massacres.<sup>57</sup>

## Construction of the Past

An important factor to constructing a nation is the shared understanding of a common past; however, as Hobsbawm states, it is not inherently what has happened that has actually been preserved in popular memory – rather, it is what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by elites.<sup>58</sup> Nationalists or political elites often use narratives to unify intended audiences by developing a sense of solidarity to mobilize followers. The rhetoric of these narratives frequently shares similarities across contexts, generally depict three key elements: the “glorious past,” a “degraded present,” and the “utopian future”.<sup>59</sup>

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54 Aram Andonian, *Պատկերագրող ընդարձակ պատմություն Պարսեանեան պատերազմին* [Complete Illustrated History of the Balkan War], vol. V (Constantinople: Onik Arzuman, 1913), 887, 888. Dog was one of the derogatory epithets used against Christians in the Ottoman Empire. During the counterrevolution in 13 April 1909 a wave of Armenian massacres broke out in the region of Adana and surroundings. A Turkish soldier in a letter dated 20 May 1909 wrote to his family: “We killed thirty thousand of the infidel dogs, whose blood flowed through the streets of Adana.” See Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 70.

55 *The Orient* is an English-language weekly newspaper published in Constantinople from 1910 to 1922, with reporting on contemporary events, politics, and society. Each number contains reprints from Turkish, Armenian and Jewish contemporary press.

56 “Moslem trekking,” *The Orient*, 27 November 1912, vol. III, No. 48.

57 Akçam, *A Shameful Act*, 87; Erik-Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3rd ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 117.

58 Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 13.

59 Matthew Levinger, Paula Franklin Lytle, “Myth and Mobilization: the Triadic Structure of Nationalist Rhetoric,” *Nations and Nationalism* 7 (2001): 178.

For the construction of the Turkish national identity, the CUP elites used the same methods as the French, German and Italian nationalists. As the defeats in Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars, losses of territories, and poor economic conditions provided a composite image of the “degraded present”, the aim of the Ittihadist nationalists was to mobilize the population by feeding their audiences narratives about the “glorious past”, motivating them to work towards a “bright future”. Their aim was to reinvent/create a single, unified “past”, in such a way as to explain the present situation in accessible terminology and draw upon prospects for possible solutions.

Accordingly, CUP ideologues collected different interpretations of the past and wove these interpretations into strands of communal traditions in order to produce one single, coherent narrative that would provide an emotionally satisfying account of the present situation.<sup>60</sup> Ahmed Emin admits that after the loss of Crete in 1908, the island was declared a “sacred” totem, and the emotions of the people were systematically manipulated through social institutions to create an atmosphere of collective self-confidence, invincibility, and power to challenge the Empire’s neighboring states.<sup>61</sup> Assessment of this loss in contemporary rhetoric was important: Halide Edib referred to the outcome of the Balkan Wars as “one of the greatest defeats in Turkish history,” and the human loss of Muslims in Macedonia as constituting one of “the greatest massacres of the last hundred years.”<sup>62</sup> Defeats in wartime, however, were not the only signifier of the “degraded present” targeted by CUP ideologues: “polluted” language and culture, elements of social life and “harmful ideologies”, such as Ottomanism, were also attacked by CUP ideologues on this basis.

An unprecedented wave of study of Turkic history and creation of literature began during the Balkan Wars. Thanks to the efforts and finances of the CUP government, Turkish intellectuals were united in associations and clubs that targeted and structured the transmission of nationalistic propaganda. The central ideologue of the CUP and the father of modern Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gokalp (1876-1924), wrote that Bulgarians were inspired by their fiery traditions during the Balkan Wars, while the Turks were inspired by their “cold rules”, claiming that the result was the victory of history over geography. He suggested studying Turkish history from all aspects: “the stone engravings or deer skins, on the one hand, and on the folk poems, folk tales, and epics, on the other.”<sup>63</sup> Moreover, he argued that the Ottomanists’ belief that all peoples living in the Ottoman Empire constituted a single nation was a “grave mistake”, because “within this collection of peoples there were several culturally independent nations.”<sup>64</sup>

From the end of the 19th century onwards, Turkish studies started to develop within the Ottoman Empire, partially in response to the “Orientalist” movement within European academic institutions. Within this movement, many intellectuals and historians

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60 Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 191-192.

61 Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press*, 102.

62 Edib, *Memoirs*, 333.

63 Ziya Gokalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 95.

64 *Ibid.*, 136.



“reinvented” their past, language, and literature – in some cases, going back hundreds or thousands of years to reinterpret the past. Nascent research within the body of Turkish scholarship also embraced the nations of Central Asia, assessing their racial kinship and declaring that the Turks were their descendants.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore: before the revolution, racial and nationalist discourse was strong in the CUP’s periodical, *Türk*, published in Cairo between 1903 and 1907. The contributors of the journal had even chosen Turkic pen names such as “Oğuz”, “Uygur”, “Özbek”, “Tuğrul”, “Turgud”, “Kuneralp”, and “Uluğ.”<sup>66</sup> After 1908, this course was maintained by the CUP. The political ideal of Turan, as a national symbol and a place of origin of all Turkic peoples, was vital in strengthening a newly-constructed Turkish identity.<sup>67</sup> By contributing to the periodical, these ideologues created “national” mythical stories that exalted Turkic heroes and dedicated songs to Turan.

In 1910, CUP ideologues Yusuf Akchura (1876-1935) and Ahmet Aghagoglu (1869-1939) wrote to defend Genghis Khan against those who considered him a villain. During the Italo-Turkish War, Gokalp in his poem “The New Attila” reminded readers that the Turks were the generation of Attila and were going to defeat the Europeans as the Huns did.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, Omer Seyfeddin (1884-1920), in a patriotic story published during the Italo-Turkish War reminded his readers (through his protagonist, Kenan) that Attila trampled over the Europeans “as if they were dogs”.<sup>69</sup> In the poem entitled “Turan”, published in 1911, Gokalp refused to accept the contemporary description of Attila and Genghis Khan, claiming that the relevant academic historiography deliberately defamed these “Turkish national heroes”.<sup>70</sup> Comparing Attila and Genghis to Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, he concluded that these figures were “the heroic figures which stand for the proud fame of my race.” For Gokalp, the Turkish legendary ancestor Oghuz Khan was the greatest among the heroes that inspired him. At the end of the aforementioned poem, Gokalp emphasized that the fatherland of the Turks was not solely Turkey, but rather, “broad eternal Turania”. Claiming Gokalp to be “the great apostle of Turanianism”, Tekinalp concurs with him.<sup>71</sup>

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65 Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: from Irredentism to Cooperation* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 30.

66 Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 66.

67 *Turan* is a term widely used in scientific literature from the 18th century onwards to denote Central Asia. It includes modern Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and northern parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The idea of Turan as a cradle of the origin of Turkic people and as a future ideal extended beyond its geographical borders.

68 Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: the Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp* (London: Luzac and the Harvill Press, 1950), 79.

69 Umit Kurt, Dogan Gurpinar, “The Young Turk Historical Imagination in the Pursuit of Mythical Turkishness and its Lost Grandeur (1911-1914),” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43 (2016): 573.

70 The poem of the same with the same title was published by Gokalp in 1911 in the newspaper Rumeli under the signature Demirdash and in the periodical Genç Kalemler under the signature Tevfik Sedat (Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism*, 126; Aleksandr Safaryan, *Զիյա Գյոքալփի և «Թյուրքսուլսունության հիմունքները» [Ziya Gokalp and “The Principles of Turkism”]* (Yerevan: YSU publication, 2012), 127-128).

71 Tekin Alp, *The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal*, 13.



Later, in the “Principals of Turkism”, Gokalp highlights, that the poem “Turan” was written at a time when he was pondering the formation of Turkish national ideology. According to the author, the poem was published at a very deliberate time, as the “young souls”, glancing at the dangers of Ottomanism and Pan-Islamism,<sup>72</sup> were looking for a new ideology; the poem “Turan” became the first spark of this new national ideal.<sup>73</sup> This line of thought was retained and pushed forward by Halide Edib, who was ideologically influenced by Gokalp. The protagonist of the “New Turan”, a novel published in 1911 by Edib, was named after the Turkish ancestor Oghuz.<sup>74</sup> The novel demonstrates the contradiction between the two ideological currents – Ottomanism and Turkism – Oghuz represented the embodiment of Turkishness. Between 1911 and 1913, other prominent writers, such as Mehmed Ali Tevfik, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, and Tekinalp, devoted a series of works to Turan.<sup>75</sup>

Collective identity is, as a singular phenomenon, subjective and selective in accordance with accompanying nationalist ideologies. Accordingly, specifically-chosen historic characters and personalities of Turkic origin had an immense impact on shaping the collective Turkish perception of morality. Rhetoric not only frames the demands placed on literary protagonists, but also defines the ethical code of conduct of the actors in the work.<sup>76</sup> The aim of these narratives and the images of chosen heroes was also to show that the Turks comprised a courageous nation that was chosen to rule over Christian subjects and capable of punishing disobedience of their rule. The unilateral protection of this same narrative of the past by CUP ideologues excluded the possibility of conflicting versions or “multiple histories” proliferating that could have damaged this newly constructed national identity. Multiple interpretations of history within the Turkic public conscience could only weaken the sense of identity which external events succeeded in “awakening”.<sup>77</sup>

Together, amid the ideal of Turan and historic research of a pan-Turkic past, the idea of racial kinship with other Turkic people emerged, in which shared racial characteristics with neighboring peoples of Central Asia connoted the existence of a singular, common “Turkish race” across the region. Gokalp believed in the moral superiority and great mission of the Turkish race.<sup>78</sup> Despite experiencing setbacks in conflicts, many ideologues shared a belief that the “miserable and unlucky Turkish race” would regain its dominant position within the Empire. As historian Köprülüzâde Mehmed Fuad writes: “I am a Turk, the son of a race whose essence is upright and great.”<sup>79</sup> One of the CUP’s military leaders, Ahmed Djemal,

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72 Pan-Islamism is a political ideology advocating the unity of Muslims under the Ottoman Caliphate. Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) was the supporter of this ideology.

73 Safaryan, *Ziya Gokalp and “The Principles of Turkism”*, 128.

74 *Ibid.*, 184.

75 Tekin Alp, *The Turkish and Pan-Turkish Ideal*, 14.

76 Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 199.

77 *Ibid.*, 192.

78 Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism*, 114.

79 Cited in Kurt, Gürpınar, “The Balkan Wars,” 353.

stated in his memoirs: “I am primarily an Ottoman, but I do not forget that I am a Turk, and nothing can shake my belief that the Turkish race is the foundation-stone of the Ottoman Empire. The educational and civilizing influence of the Turks cements Ottoman unity and strengthens the Empire, for in its origins the Ottoman Empire is a Turkish creation.”<sup>80</sup>

Hussein Jahid, in an article published in *Tanin* (under the heading “The ruling element and ruled”), explicitly claimed that Christian subjects had to acknowledge the power and superiority of the Turks. In Jahid’s words, the equality that was proclaimed under the new regime was solely a word; the Old Turks did not accept it, the Young Turks would not either.<sup>81</sup> In the poem “Crossing the Greek Border”, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul (1869-1944) exclaimed: “The word “Turk” encloses the covenant of the ancestors. The Turkish nation grew up from infancy by saying ‘we are Turks.’ Turks run towards the enemy with a bare sword. What kind of Turk would allow a bell tower to be built next to a mosque? Our people will not be a slave.”<sup>82</sup> The concept of the Christian world being biased against the Turkish race was reflected in the collective perception of the “unjust” rebellion of the Balkan nations against the authority of the Turks.

In order to move forward, the rationalization of the losses of the Italo-Turkish War and Balkan Wars were also integrated into this collective rhetoric. An author in *Senin*<sup>83</sup> wrote that the Turkish government would need to demand the settlement of the “Balkan question” on its terms; until the point for negotiations arrived, the newspaper called for collective patience for the sake of the country, as the consequence of an outburst of revenge and outbreaks of massacres of the Empire’s Christian population would bring a foreign intervention – a tangible concern of the CUP.<sup>84</sup> An article echoing this sentiment appeared in *Ikdam*, as well. The newspaper stressed that the political situation surrounding the losses of the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars was manipulated by people who used to excite the hatred of Muslims against Christians. The article’s author claimed it to be the source of all of the country’s misfortune in the last 150 years: “Yes, in this war Christianity has been unjust towards Moslems. But it would also be an injustice and especially at this moment, a blunder, to make our Christian compatriot responsible for this.”<sup>85</sup> The newspaper called for patience – not for the sake of the Christian compatriots, as it would seem from a glance, but because former massacres of the Empire’s Christians resulted in foreign interventions and secession of Ottoman lands.<sup>86</sup>

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80 Djemal Pasha, *Memoir of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1916* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922), 251- 252.

81 “Turkey and the Turk,” *Armenia* (New York), June 1912, vol. V, No. 11.

82 Vladimir Gordlevskii, *Очерки по новой османской литературе* [Essays on the New Ottoman Literature] (Moscow: Krestnyi Kalendar, 1912), Issue XXXIX, 104.

83 For being a pro CUP newspaper and semi-official, *Tanin* was suspended several times, especially during the six months from CUP forming an opposition (August 1912 - January 1913). It appeared under the names *Senin*, *Jenin*, *Renin*, *Hakk*, before reappearing as *Tanin*.

84 “The Turkish Press on the War,” *The Orient*, 30 October 1912, vol. III, No. 44.

85 “Balkan Equilibrium and Adrianople,” *The Orient*, 30 July 1913, vol. IV, No. 31.

86 *Ibid*.

Ahmed Emin's analyses of the Balkan Wars perhaps demonstrates the strongest, most clear rationalization of the situation. The journalist claimed that the Balkan possessions constituted a foe of the Ottoman Empire; the regions' population, according to Emin, was "heterogeneous and troublesome". Having racial and religious ties with neighboring Slavs, the Balkan states created instability and posed an internal danger for Turks. Emin clarified that their loss decreased the imperial burden of the Turks, noting that the aim of the country was no longer "a struggle for survival". Rather, these losses led to a redirection of national resources towards the development of the country, which became more homogeneous. He suggests that it would be better after "the amputation of the sick and energy-absorbing parts of the territory" to concentrate on the existing "Armenian" and "Arab problems".<sup>87</sup> In February of 1913, Hussein Jahid, following Emin, also brought the attention to the fact that the Empire's new problem following the losses of the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars constituted answers to either the "Armenian question" or the "Arab question".<sup>88</sup>

## Conclusion

By engaging in an intensive study of the Turkic past and incorporating it into contemporary propaganda through literary pieces, newspapers, and open lectures, it becomes possible to view how Turkish intellectuals began to nationalize the masses. In the process of constructing a national identity, these ideologues fueled the idea of a "dominant race" that already had been present in CUP rhetoric and literature, presenting the public with the images of Mongol and Hun conquerors and stories of their former glories and promising of a return to dominance if Turkish society was guided in the correct manner toward that goal. Ideologues like Gokalp and his contemporaries explained that the Turkish nation had a historical mission, and that sacrifices that were "generally regarded as impossible are not beyond human strength."<sup>89</sup> Citing Gokalp's vision: "nation is not a voluntary association like a political party which he may join at his own volition."<sup>90</sup> He argues that the elites and ideologues of Turkish nationalism needed to define the nation by defining its members and those who existed beyond its limits; the Ottoman Empire's defeats in the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars played an instrumental role in the success of this social engineering project. Ottoman newspapers systematically published news from the reports of the Society for the Publication of Documents on Balkan Atrocities (Mezalimi Neşr-i Vesaik Cemiyeti), rather than publish direct interviews with the emigrants. The organization was founded in late 1912, having been given the directive to publish booklets on the suffering and plight of Muslims at the hands of Bulgarian

87 Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press*, 112.

88 "Unity in Domestic Problems," *The Orient*, 5 February 1913, vol. IV, No. 6.

89 Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism*, 113.

90 Gokalp, *Turkish Nationalism*, 136.

authorities. The compilation of these stories of atrocity was published in 1913 under the title of “The Red-Black Book.” Mehmed Ali Tevfik gave an account of his own feelings in *Tanin* upon reading the French version of the book: after learning about the atrocities committed against the Muslims and the Turks, “he turned into a wild animal seeking revenge.” Like other associated writers of the era, Tevfik places the culpability and blame of the disaster on Europe and highlights the potential of the atrocity to “awaken the national soul of the Turks and to give them a wolf’s nature.”<sup>91</sup>

Within the context of creating a “nation,” the aim of historians and public figures is to engineer a particular explanation of past grievances that can comprehensively explain the misfortunes of a present situation, before showing its target audience ways to solve these problems. According to contemporary journalist Aram Andonian, general call of the Young Turk press during this period was to take revenge for the losses in the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars in order to address the shame of defeat.<sup>92</sup> On 7 July, 1913, Jenab Shehabiddine, a poet, published a long article in the daily *Azm*, under the heading “A letter to my son,” which ends as follows: “The example of the Bulgarian army has taught us that every soldier facing the enemy must return to the days of barbarism, must have thirst of blood, must be merciless in slaughtering children and women, old and weak, must disregard others’ property, life and honor. Let us spread blood, suffering, wrong and mourning.”<sup>93</sup> The news of the atrocities committed against Muslims by the Bulgarian army also recounted the collaboration of local Christians with the armed forces. With the proper distribution of resources aimed at achieving this goal, national elites and ideologues could effectively “reimagine” the factors/peoples leading to the decline of the nation, set new national directives to ascend from a “degraded present” and instigate different patterns of collective action.<sup>94</sup>

During the Italo-Turkish and Balkan Wars – and within the wake of these conflicts – the image of the “other” was formalized and finalized: the nationalizing elite attributed the characteristics of the “other” to the Armenian and Greek citizens of the Empire. Following the Ottoman defeats in both aforementioned conflicts, the Turks were left face-to-face with their Christian compatriots, who were effectively depicted as a danger to the Empire and potential generator of a catastrophe similar to that which emerged in the Balkan Wars on account of deeply-established propaganda from the CUP ruling elite. In this context, the destruction of the “other” was not inevitable; however, this “atrocity propaganda” was meant to inspire the collective sentiment that the Turks had to exterminate the others in order to avoid extermination themselves – constituting a mindset which clearly corresponded to the CUP’s policy of creating a singular, homogeneous Turkish nation-state.<sup>95</sup> At the state

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91 Doğan Çetinkaya, “Atrocity propaganda and the nationalization of the masses in the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913),” *Middle East Studies* 46 (2014): 766-767.

92 Andonian, *Complete Illustrated History of the Balkan War*, 888.

93 Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press*, 108.

94 Levinger, Lytle, “Myth and Mobilization,” 190.

95 Edib, *Memoirs*, 333.

level, the Empire's press emphasized that no action or policy was deemed impossible to implement for the sake of saving the homeland; effectively predetermining the permissible limits that Turkish society could cross if placed in an "existential crisis."

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# THE GREEK GENOCIDE AND SMYRNA'S CATASTROPHE: AN OVERVIEW

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## Abstract

Genocide is a crime against humanity which should be universally condemned. Regardless of the time that passes or the scope of the crime itself, there should be no reduction of the importance of a crime against humanity or the responsibility of those who commit genocide. The 20th century is, without a doubt, an era where the crime of genocide appeared and reappeared consistently. The Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian Genocide and the Holocaust, constituted important genocides perpetrated by illiberal governments that violated numerous human rights, taking millions of lives and eliminating the history and civilization of cities dating back thousands of years. From World War II onwards, "genocide" was coined as a criminal form of behaviour that constitutes one of the most violent crimes one could be charged with.

The Greek Genocide, one of the first genocides of the 20th century, is one of the big crimes against humanity that remains unpunished to this day since a large part of a nation that lived on the territory of the Ottoman Empire was murdered. The Smyrna Catastrophe of 1922 constituted the symbolic end of the Greek Genocide.

**Keywords:** Greeks, Ottoman Empire, Moustafa Kemal's regime, genocide, Smyrna, catastrophe.

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## The Greeks of Asian Minor, Thrace, Pontos, and Cappadocia

The earliest presence of the Greeks in Asian Minor, Thrace, Pontos, and Cappadocia (within the former Byzantine Empire) as places where exchange and commerce prospered from the days of antiquity as a crossroad between the Mediterranean and the Aegean, Caspian Sea and the Caucasus – begins in myth and ends in reality. A famous legend brings Hercules to the Caucasus in order to free Prometheus, who was imprisoned for stealing fire from the Olympian Gods and giving it to human beings. The legend continues with Frixos and Elli, who travelled in Pontos on the Golden Fleece to avoid being sacrificed by the Olympian Gods; Elli's subsequent fall at the sea's entrance (creating its namesake "Ellispontos") further led to the safekeeping of the precious Fleece by king

Eitis.<sup>1</sup> The Argonautic crusade led by Jason and a crew composed of representatives from every Greek city strove to regain the Fleece and comprised the first attempt to colonize that rich area.<sup>2</sup>

The era of Greek colonization began immediately after the Trojan War, in 1100 B.C., with Militos' first contacts in the region in search of precious metals.<sup>3</sup> From the 9th until the 6th centuries B.C., a long succession of immigration waves ensued: Iones, Airolejis and the Dorians reached the coasts of Asia Minor as tradesmen, colonists, adventurers and soldiers. They built their cities (Fokaia, Klazomenai, Erythraia, Kyveleia, Pinnacle, Efesos, Militos, Pergamon, Adramytion, Alikarnassos, Kizikos, Lamsakos, Smyrna – one of seven cities of Revelation, with Pergamon, Theiatira, Sardeis, Philadelphia, Laodikeia, Efesos), Sinopi (founded in 785 B.C.), it was followed by Trapezunta (756 B.C.), Kerasunta (700 B.C.). Amisos (Sampsunta – 600 B.C.), Odessa, Dioskouria (Sokhumi), Pitiunta, Archaeopolis (Nikolakevi), Kotiora, Tripolis and other cities. The presence of Greeks brings the natives of the area, in touch with the Greek civilization.

Greek immigrants to Asia Minor were credited with the creation of the Greek language and pioneered several forms of science (philosophy, mathematics, geometry, architecture, history, etc.) planting the seeds of a flourishing cultural life in the region. During the Roman era, Christianity appeared as an *ally* to Hellenism; the faith was spread by apostles Andrew and Peter, while the Christian convents formed centres of faith and national conscience.

In 47 A.C., apostle Pavlos (from the Tarsus region of Asia Minor) toured the region to spread Christianity: he would organize the first churches and establish the first Christian institutions in the region. Christianity, through use of the Greek language as means to communicate and mixing with Greek philosophy, spread quickly. It was further established in Pontus as well, contributing to the creation of the Greek-Byzantine Empire.

When Constantinople was taken over by the Franks in 1204, Alexios Komninos, a descendant of the Komninos' imperial dynasty, created the empire of Trapezunta (Pontos)<sup>4</sup> while Theodoros Laskaris and John Ducas Vatatzes created the empire of Nice (Asia Minor). Trapezunta would be conquered in 1461, eight years after the capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453. The consequences of Trapezunta's occupation included the slaughter, forced religious conversion and the deportation of local populations to other regions of Europe, marking the start of Ottoman domination over the Greeks<sup>5</sup>.

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1 Mariana Koromila, *The Greeks at the Black Sea from the Time of the Copper up to the Rising of the 20th Century* (Athens: Efesos Press, 1991), 123-145.

2 Theofanis Malkidis, *The Greek Genocide* (Athens: Euxeinos Logos, 2016), 23.

3 Homer, *Iliada* (Athens: Ekdotiki press, 2020), 461.

4 Bryer Anthony and Winfield David, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of Pontos* (London: Dumbarton Oaks Studies Twenty, 1984), 34.

5 Theofanis Malkidis, "Les Communautés Grecques et Religion dans l'espace du Pont Ephxine (Mare Noire). L' Hellenisme de la Roumanie," *Grigorios Palamas* 803 (2004): 651-661.

From the mid-late 17th century and onwards, the Greeks faced persistent persecution. An example of this was the replacement of Greek public officials by “derebeides”, powerful feudal Turk lords who supplanted state authority and levied severe taxes on Greek subjects. Outbreaks of violence fuelled by religious conflict emerged during this period: during the rule of Sultan Mehmet IV, between 1648 and 1687, mass religious conversions of Greek populations took place. Among these Islamized populations are Crypto-Christians, who outwardly converted to Islam while retaining their Christian faith and (when the circumstances allowed it) use of the Greek language. Despite the peril of the religious conversion process, they remained loyal to the Orthodoxy and their national identity.

## **The Greek Genocide**

To this day, the documents of the European and the USA's State Departments, as well as the documents of international organizations, remain vivid witness accounts of the systematic crimes that were committed by the Ottoman state against the Greeks.

The period from 1919 to 1923 is the most intense phase of the Greek Genocide, in which the consolidation of power under Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) in the Ottoman interior concurs with the creation of the Soviet Union and its subsequent assistance to the nationalistic movement of Kemal, further paired with a shift in foreign policy among the powers of Western Europe. The genocide's “epilogue” is the violent uprooting of the survivors. With the treaty of population exchange<sup>6</sup> the last remnants of the Genocide arrived in Greece. At this time, many sought to emigrate; in less than a generation's time, many Greeks will be refugees again when the civil war ends. There, in the countries of the former Soviet Union, they will find their relatives and neighbours again and will find out what happened to the missing after the Genocide.<sup>7</sup>

The uprooting of the Greeks lists among other forgotten crimes in human history. After 27 centuries of continued presence, a part of a historical nation was uprooted. Expelled populations had to leave behind their family homes, their churches, and the graves of their ancestors while seeking refuge at the Greek coasts.<sup>8</sup> From this point, Greek Smyrna ceased to exist, and the fate of Greek-inhabited Asia Minor was sealed with the sacrifice of the Greeks of Pontus.<sup>9</sup>

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6 Stephen Ladas, *Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), 98.

7 Michalis Charalambidis, *Aspects of the New Eastern Question* (Athens: Gordios Editions, 1998), 123.

8 League of Nations, *L' Etablissement des Refugies en Grece* (Geneve, 1926), 90.

9 Centre of Asian Minor Studies, *The Last Greek Populations of Asia Minor* (Athens, 1974), 67.

## The Smyrna Catastrophe

The ratio of Christians to Muslims in Smyrna remains a matter of academic dispute, as different sources claiming either Greeks or Turks as constituting the demographic majority in the city. For example, according to Fleming Katherine Elizabeth, the Greek population in Smyrna formed the majority of the population, out numbering the Turkish by a ratio of two to one.<sup>10</sup> Alongside Turks and Greeks, there were also sizeable Armenian, Jewish, and Levantine communities within the city.

At the end of the 19th century, Vital-Cuinet accounted 96,250 Turks and 57,000 Greeks living in Smyrna. According to the Turkish census, there were, in 1905, 100,356 Muslims, 73,636 Greeks, 11,127 Armenians and 25,854 others; the updated figures for 1914 give 111,486 Turks against 87,497 Greeks.<sup>11</sup> According to George Horton, the US Consul at Smyrna, before the Catastrophe, there were 400,000 people living in the city of Smyrna, of whom 165,000 were Turks, 150,000 Greeks, 25,000 Jews, 25,000 Armenians, and 20,000 foreigners – 10,000 Italians, 3,000 French, 2,000 British, and 300 Americans.<sup>12</sup>

Horton further writes:

...the victims of the massacre – Greeks and Armenians – were estimated at 150,000. What was left of Smyrna was only its Turkish suburb. This very old and extremely beautiful Greek city had been founded in 3000 B.C. and restored by Alexander the Great. It used to be one of the most important economic centers of the Mediterranean. It used to be full of life and activity. It used to be prosperous. And now from one moment to the next[,] it was turned into a dead city. To a huge pile of ruins which emitted smoke. Those of its inhabitants who escaped the massacre fled, ousted and miserable, to Greece.<sup>13</sup>

According to Henry Morgenthau and Trudy Ring, before World War I, the Greeks alone numbered approximately 130,000 (excluding Armenian Orthodox Christians) out of a total population of 250,000. The Ottoman ruling class of that era referred to the city as *Infidel Smyrna* (“Gavur Izmir”) due to its strong Christian presence.<sup>14</sup>

In her work, literary scholar Marjorie Housepian Dobkin<sup>15</sup> concludes that the Turkish army systematically burned the city and killed its Greek and Armenian inhabitants. Her

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10 Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *Greece – a Jewish history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 81.

11 Salâhi R. Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire* (Ankara: TTK, 1993), 351.

12 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), 98.

13 Ibid.

14 Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgentau's Story* (New York: Gomidas Institute, 2000), 32.

15 Varoujean Poghosyan (comp.), *Le Desastre de Smyrne de 1922* (Recueil De Documents). Yerevan: Editions de l'Universite d'etat d'Yerevan, 2011, 56.

work is based on extensive eyewitness testimony from Western troops sent to Smyrna during the evacuation, foreign diplomats, relief workers, and Turkish eyewitnesses. A recent study by historian Niall Ferguson arrives at the same conclusion. Each element of the catastrophe was systematically hidden not to incriminate the Kemal regime who created these conditions with the collaboration of foreign forces. These groups interrupted the work of the "Interrogative Committee of East", for the slaughters of Greeks and Armenians and the benefit of each aggravating element.

Nourentin Bey, the Turkish governor of Smyrna, published the following decree regarding the evacuation of Christian populations of Asia Minor (on 3 October and 9 October of 1922): "All the Greeks and Armenians from the 18 to 45 years of age found to the released territories from our army, as well as the Greeks and Armenians transported from the Greek army to beach to embarkation and abandoned then our army should be delivered immediately. They will be kept as captives up to the end of the war..."<sup>16</sup>

On 13 August 1922, the counter-attack of the Kemalist forces began. These attacks were supported by signed collaborative pacts with Soviet Russia, and the Entente countries of France and Italy. The agreement reached with the French government, in particular, restored the economic and political sovereignty of Turkish forces in Asia Minor at the expense of Greeks in the region. Two weeks later, on 27 August, the Turks entered Smyrna and began the systematic destruction of the presence of Greeks within the city.

25,000 lives were initially lost in the fire, while 50,000 Greeks alone were murdered between 27 August and 4 September 1922.<sup>17</sup>

George Horton writes:

The burning of Smyrna and the massacre and scattering of its inhabitants has aroused widespread humanitarian and religious interest on account of the unparalleled sufferings of the multitudes involved... From the fact that not all the troops of Mustafa Kemal were provided with the smart uniforms of his picked troops, much has been made by Turkish apologists of the difference between "regulars" and "irregulars". Any one who saw those mounted troops passing along the quay of Smyrna would testify, if he knew anything at all of military matters, that they were not only soldiers, but very good soldiers indeed, thoroughly trained and under perfect control of admirable officers. And any one who knows anything of Turkish character will testify that the Turk is essentially a soldier, extraordinarily amenable to the orders of his superiors. The Turk massacres when he has orders from headquarters and desists on the second when commanded by the same

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16 Malkidis, *The Greek Genocide*, 198.

17 Victoria Solomonidou, *Bishop Hrysostomos and the Destruction of Smyrna* (Athens: Center for Asia Minor Studies, 2008), 50-54.

authority to stop. Mustafa Kemal was worshipped by that army of “regulars” and “irregulars” and his word was law...<sup>18</sup>

Henry Morgenthau US Ambassador in the Ottoman Empire reported:

The frightful catastrophe at Smyrna in 1922, when the victorious Turks killed Greeks by the uncounted tens of thousands, and forced the surviving hundreds of thousands to proceed at once to Old Greece, created in that tiny nation of five million people just such an emergency as we have imagined for America – the sudden influx of a 25 percent addition to its native population, requiring instant relief and eventual permanent rehabilitation. The Smyrna disaster of 1922 need only be briefly mentioned here. It was the cause of the great exodus of all the Greeks of Asia Minor, but it happened so recently that many of the details are still fresh in the public memory. Let me itemize a few of these details: the systematic burning of the Greek quarter of Smyrna by the Turkish troops under the very eye of Kemal; All these atrocities were clear evidence of the deliberate intention of the Turks to remove utterly all Greek population from Asia Minor, in pursuance of the programme of the Turkish Nationalists under Kemal, by which Asia Minor was to be completely “Turkified.”....<sup>19</sup>.

## **The Refugee’s Drama**

The number of casualties from the fire is not precisely known, but estimates reach up to 100,000 Greeks and Armenians killed in the blaze. American historian Norman Naimark gives a figure of 10,000-15,000 dead,<sup>20</sup> while historian Richard Clogg gives a figure of 30,000. Larger estimates include that of John Freely at 50,000 and Rudolf Rummel at 100,000.<sup>21</sup> Despite the fact that there were numerous ships from various Allied powers in the harbor of Smyrna, the vast majority of ships, citing a cause of “neutrality”, did not pick up Greeks and Armenians who were forced to flee from the fire and the incoming Turkish troops’ seizure of the city after the Greek Army’s defeat. Military bands played loud music to drown out the screams of those who were drowning in the harbor and those who were forcefully prevented from boarding Allied ships. Many refugees were rescued via an impromptu relief flotilla organized by Asa Jennings.

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18 Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, 105.

19 Morgenthau Henry, *An International Drama* (London: Jarrolds, 1936), 15, 38, 51-52.

20 Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hated: Ethnic Cleansing in 20th century* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002), 249.

21 Rudolph Rummel, Irving Horowitz, *Turkey’s Genocidal Purges. Death by Government* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 233.

The total number of refugees often fluctuates, according to each respective source. Some contemporary newspapers claim that there were 400,000 Greek and Armenian refugees from Smyrna and the surrounding area who received aid from the International Red Cross immediately following the destruction of the city.<sup>22</sup>

In 1922, roughly 1,5 million Greeks were forced to emigrate as refugees from Greece.

The majority of the refugees settled in Attica and Macedonia. The official refugee population in 1928 was divided as follows (per number of refugees and approximate percentages of the total refugee population):

Macedonia: 638,253 (52.2%) (with 270,000 in Thessaloniki alone)

Central Greece and Attica: 306,193 (25.1%)

Thrace: 107,607 (8.8%)

North Aegean Islands: 56,613 (4.6%)

Thessaly: 34,659 (2.8%)

Crete: 33,900 (2.8%)

Peloponnese: 28,362 (2.3%)

Epirus: 8,179 (0.7%)

Cyclades: 4,782 (0.4%)

Ionian Islands: 3,301 (0.3%)

Total: 1,221,849 (100%)

Numerous suburbs, towns and villages were established to house the additional population of Greece, which rose by about 1/3 in just a few months. To this day: every town in Greece has a quarter named in honour of the place of origin of their refugee inhabitants. In September 1922, a wide array of boats transported refugees, mainly women and children, to Piraeus and outlying islands. Morgenthau's report compares this movement of Greek refugees with the 26.000.000 men, women and children which had arrived on American shores at a similar time.<sup>23</sup>

## Conclusions

With the establishment of the Young Turk movement in the Ottoman Empire, the entrenchment of a nationalistic ideology formed following their rise to power in 1908; with it, a drive to eliminate all Christian populations of the Empire was expressed. That very same will was ultimately realised during World War I, and the Greeks of Asia Minor were a main target. The procedures aimed at eliminating the Greeks were similar to those

<sup>22</sup> Edward Hale Bierstadt, Helen Davidson Creighton. *The Great betrayal: A Survey of the Near East Problem* (New York: R. M. McBride & Company, 1924), 218.

<sup>23</sup> Morgenthau, *I was sent in Athens*, 245.



perpetrated against the Armenians: large-scale massacres, brutality against civilians, instances of mass violence, arrests of women and children, forceful religious conversions and death marches. Proof of these atrocities have been confirmed by first-hand accounts of survivors of the genocide, in addition to those furnished by foreign witnesses. In addition to the aforementioned atrocities, the burning of many Greek villages and towns and the destruction of cultural and religious sites of historic significance also took place during the course of the Greek Genocide.

The Smyrna Catastrophe constituted the fiery, symbolic end of the Greek Genocide. According to witness Giles Milton:

One of the first people to notice the outbreak of fire was Miss Minnie Mills, the director of the American Collegiate Institute for Girls. She had just finished her lunch when she noticed that one of the neighbouring buildings was burning. She stood up to have a closer look and was shocked by what she witnessed. “I saw with my own eyes a Turkish officer enter the house with small tins of petroleum or benzine and in a few minutes the house was in flames.” She was not the only one at the institute to see the outbreak of fire. “Our teachers and girls saw Turks in regular soldiers’ uniforms and in several cases in officers’ uniforms, using long sticks with rags at the end which were dipped in a can of liquid and carried into houses which were soon burning.”<sup>24</sup>

Every human has a right to memory; everyone further has the right to demand recognition of the crimes and injustices committed against them from the perpetrating authorities. The larger the injustice and the longer the duration of repression, the more intense the will is for such recognition. The recognition of atrocity constitutes an essential way to fight against the plague of Genocide – such recognition provides a confirmation of a people’s right to exist in peace, in accordance with international law.

The Smyrna Catastrophe and the Greek Genocide, which encompasses it, is an issue with multiple intersecting dimensions. The current political circumstances both in Europe and across the globe render it an important matter for the protection of democracy, human rights, freedom, dignity, and collaboration in hopes of achieving a victory in the fight for the historical truth.

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# THE FALL OF CHRISTIAN SMYRNA THROUGH DUTCH EYES IN 1922<sup>1</sup>

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## 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.

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## 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

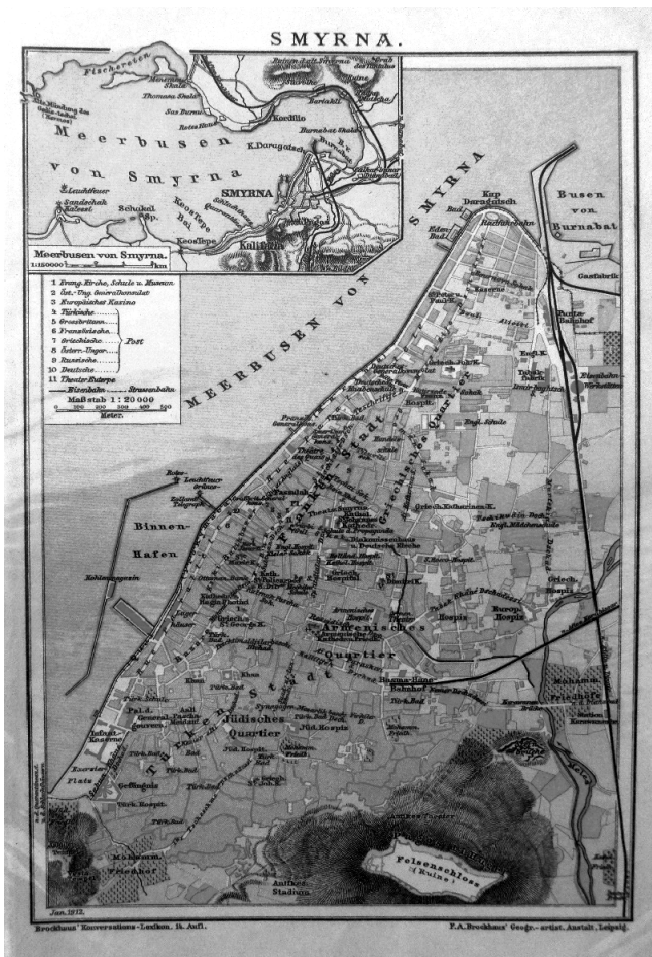


Image 1. German map of Smyrna, around 1880.  
 (Sources: Author's Collection)

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!<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

## 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 Hochepped, 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.<sup>5</sup> Most Dutchmen did not speak their own language anymore, having fully become Levantines (**Image 4**).<sup>6</sup>

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 Millye*, 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.<sup>7</sup> Acting consul-general Arnold Th. Lamping (1893-1949) saw a disaster nearing: “The retreat continues and there is no way [of] escaping a debacle.”<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup>

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”.<sup>10</sup> 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.”<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

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!”<sup>13</sup> Yet the Armenians noted the Turkish cavalry coming closer with fear.<sup>14</sup> 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.”<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

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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.”<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> ‘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.<sup>19</sup> In the Frankish neighborhood (located in Smyrna’s western environs), letters on Turkish and Jewish shops could be found written in Turkish as “Islam” (Islamic) or “Musevi” (Jewish), which could serve to identify businesses for plunder.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> Lamping described Nouredin as follows: “Further his notices were a glorification of the Turkish military operations and of his own abilities.”<sup>24</sup> 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.”<sup>25</sup> 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.”<sup>26</sup>

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.”<sup>27</sup> 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 Hochepped 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup>

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."<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> 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."<sup>32</sup> In the theater on the quay, some people noticed the disaster unfolding and played the piece *Le Tango de la Mort*.<sup>33</sup> From the ships, there was continuous music which blared while

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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 Scrvia 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.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> 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.”<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

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”.<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup>

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].<sup>39</sup>

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.”<sup>40</sup> Lamping insisted on a more thorough response from the Western Powers and the Netherlands itself<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup>

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.”<sup>43</sup> 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.”<sup>44</sup>

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.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> 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

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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.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup>

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.<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup>

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.<sup>51</sup> The *çiflik* of Edward de Jongh from Boudja was looted by Turkish soldiers through orders from their commanding officer.<sup>52</sup> Willem Heemstra, also from Boudja, lost his possessions from both Turkish and Greek looters alike.<sup>53</sup> The *çiflik* of Michel Maleozzi from Cordelio was robbed by Turkish soldiers.<sup>54</sup> 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".<sup>55</sup> 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.<sup>56</sup> Large parts of the country were burned down, destroyed and

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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<sup>e</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup>

## 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.

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

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### **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).

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# **STRUGGLING AGAINST ALL ODDS: THE SCHOLAR WHO PUT THE BASIS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IN MEMORIAM RICHARD G. HOVANNISIAN (1932-2023)**

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On July 10, 2023, the fields of Armenian Studies, Armenian Genocide Studies, and the Armenian nation, both in the homeland and the Diaspora, lost one of its most prominent icons of the modern period: Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian (b. 1932). Hovannisian was a monumental figure in the field of Armenian Studies and Armenian Genocides Studies. Considered as the Dean of Modern Armenian History, he established the field of Modern Armenian History in the Western Hemisphere. He also supported the establishment of some of the most important chairs and programs of Armenian Studies in the United States.

Hovannisian was the child of Genocide survivors. His father, Kaspar Gavroian, was born in the village of Bazmashen near Kharpert in 1901. Unlike others, he survived the Genocide and arrived in the United States. He changed his last name from Gavroian to Hovannisian after his father Hovannes. In 1928 Kaspar married Siroon Nalbandian, the child of another Genocide survivor. They had four sons: John, Ralph, Richard, and Vernon. Richard was born in Tulare, California, on November 9, 1932. Being the son of Genocide survivors played an important role in his academic path. In 1957, he married Dr. Vartiter Kotcholosian in Fresno and had four children: Raffi, Armen, Ani, and Garo. Raffi would become the first Minister of Foreign Affairs (1991-1992) of the Modern Republic of Armenia.

Hovannisian began his academic life in 1954 by earning a B.A. in History, followed by an M.A. in History from the University of California, Berkley. In 1966, he earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). His dissertation was published in 1967 with the title *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, which was the precursor to the four-volume magnum opus, *The Republic of Armenia*. Hovannisian played an important role in establishing the teaching of Armenian history at UCLA. In 1987, he became the first holder of the Armenian Education Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA, which after his retirement was named in his honor as the Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History, with Prof. Sebouh Aslanian a prominent scholar in the field as its first incumbent.

Hovannisian was a Guggenheim Fellow and received numerous prestigious national and international awards for his service to the field and civic activities. He served on the Board of Directors of multiple national and international educational institutions and was a member of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences. After finishing his four-volume *The Republic of Armenia*, he dedicated his research and career to battling the denial of Armenian Genocide, resurrecting the history of Armenian towns and villages of the Armenian Provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and writing textbooks on modern Armenian history. Although not a scholar of Armenian Genocide, he has contributed more to the discipline than many others in the field. He edited multiple volumes on different facets of the Armenian Genocide, including historical, literary, and artistic perspectives. What drove Hovannisian to dedicate his time and effort to exploring the field of Armenian Genocide? In one of his essays, he provides the answer:

It was the Turkish government's campaign of denial that pushed me into the arena of Armenian Genocide studies through what may be called the back door. I had not chosen this depressing subject. It was the reprehensible action of a government to wipe clean the slate of history, just as its predecessor had wiped clean an entire people, that aroused in me a sense of moral indignation and a commitment to engage in the struggle of memory against forgetting despite the highly unfavorable odds.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Hovannisian concentrated on exploring different facets of the Armenian Genocide. He and his peers were acting in a different time where denial of the Armenian Genocide was considered as the norm. Along with his colleagues, he resisted the stifling of Armenian voices within the fields of Middle Eastern and Ottoman Studies, which had relegated Armenian Studies to second-class status. He fought for the relevance of Armenian Studies within these fields and tirelessly fought against the efforts to marginalize Armenian issues and the denial of the Armenian Genocide. Hovannisian was not only fighting the denialist propaganda propagated by prominent figures in the field of Ottoman and Middle Eastern studies but also that of the Turkish state that poured millions of dollars into Western academia to obfuscate the historical veracity of the Armenian Genocide.

Hovannisian is considered as the pioneer scholar who put the basis of interdisciplinary approaches to the field of Armenian Genocide Studies. In the course of a half century, he was able to bring together more than 50 scholars to contribute to his edited volumes on the Armenian Genocide. These volumes demonstrated the multifaceted and interdisciplinary approaches to the Armenian Genocide that included but not limited to philosophy, literature, art, music, history, historiography, denial, education, politics, and law.

Hovannisian's first book on the Armenian Genocide, *The Armenian Holocaust: A Bibliography Relating to the Deportations, Massacres, and Dispersion of the Armenian People, 1915-1923* was published in 1980. It included a bibliography of books in Western languages relating to the Armenian Genocide: memoirs; eyewitness accounts, especially by non-Armenians; general studies; and archival materials. While literature on the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard G. Hovannisian, "Confronting the Armenian Genocide," in *Pioneers of Genocide Studies*, edited by Samuel Totten and Steven Jacobs (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2002), 33.

Armenian Genocide was mostly published in Armenian and inaccessible to the Western academic audience, Hovannisian took upon himself the task of furnishing the history of the Armenian Genocide in English by adhering to the highest academic standards.

His first edited volume *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective* (1986) was the result of the 1982 International Conference on Genocide in Tel Aviv, where out of 200 papers only 10 were dedicated to the Armenian Genocide. Despite the extensive pressure and lobbying by the Turkish government, the conference still took place without official sponsorship and the absence of half of the participants.<sup>2</sup> To Hovannisian this was a “learning experience about the lengths to which perpetrator regimes and their successors are willing to go in order to avoid facing up to their deeds and their history.”<sup>3</sup>

Hovannisian’s second edited volume *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics* was published in 1992. The volume examined the investigation and interpretation of the Armenian Genocide from a multidisciplinary perspective by concentrating on comparative approaches to genocide, political analysis, archival research, and literary responses among others. With the development of the field of Armenian Genocide studies in the 90s, denialism of the Armenian Genocide also became more sophisticated. Hovannisian was relentless in fighting denialism in all its forms. His third edited volume *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide* (1998) dealt specifically with the denial of the Armenian and its remembrance. Through bringing together fourteen leading scholars, Hovannisian aimed at demonstrating the denialists techniques, German complicity, victims and perpetrators responses among others. Hovannisian fourth volume *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies* is considered as the lengthiest and the broadest edited volume to have ever been published on the Armenian Genocide in English. By bringing together 23 scholars, Hovannisian was able to provide a unique fusion of the literary, philosophical, historical, musical, art, and educational aspects of the Armenian experience. Furthermore, the volume highlighted the comparative dimensions of the Armenian Genocide in relation to the Holocaust as well as the Assyrian and Greek genocides.

Besides writing and publishing extensively on the Armenian Genocide, Hovannisian also spearheaded a monumental project to preserve the eyewitness accounts of the Armenian Genocide survivors. He considered the survivors of the Armenian Genocide as the last eyewitnesses to the crime and recording their testimonies as a cardinal duty. His aim was to eternalize the voices of the remnants of the Genocide both for the future generations and also for the field of oral history of the Armenian Genocide. For him, the Genocide survivors and their horrendous stories constituted the irrefutable proof of the macabre crime that befell the Armenians. Thus, in the 1970s, he launched the Armenian Genocide Oral History Project. He and his students interviewed more than 1,000 Armenian Genocide survivors in California. In 2018, Hovannisian donated the collection

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2 Israel W. Charny, *Israel’s Failed Response to the Armenian Genocide: Denial, State Deception, Truth versus Politicization of History* (MA, Brookline: Academic Studies Press, Brookline, 2021).

3 Hovannisian, “Confronting the Armenian Genocide,” 36.

to the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive to be available to scholars around the world.

In addition to the Armenian Genocide, Hovannisian also conceived a monumental project of publishing the history of the historic Armenian towns and provinces based on the latest research in the field. The aim was to rekindle the interest in the Armenian past and make the history accessible to Western academic and nonacademic audiences. In a period of two decades Hovannisian single-handedly edited and published 15 volumes with Mazda Press as part of the UCLA Armenian History & Culture Series. The 15 volumes, featuring more than one hundred scholars from around the globe, covered the history of Armenian communities of Van/Vaspurakan (2000); Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush (2001); Tsopk/Kharpert (2002); Karin/Erzerum (2003); Sebastia/Sivas and Lesser Armenia (2004); Tigranakert/Diarbekir and Edessa/Urfa (2006); Cilicia (2008) (together with Simon Payaslian); Pontus: The Trebizond-Black Sea Communities (2009); Constantinople (2010) (together with Simon Payaslian); Kars and Ani (2011); Smyrna/Izmir (2012); Kesaria/Kayseri and Cappadocia (2013); Communities of Asia Minor (2014); Northeastern Mediterranean: Musa Dagh – Dört-Yol – Kessab (2016); and Persia/Iran (2021). By bringing together the most prominent scholars in the field of Armenian Studies, Hovannisian also edited *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times Volume I & II*, which is considered a classic Armenian History textbook.

Besides his contribution to the field, Hovannisian also mentored and educated multiple generations of scholars and thousands of students. He was a strict mentor who demanded that his students work to reach their full potential. He wanted to make sure that they would survive and thrive in the tough terrain of the academic job market. Many of his students went to occupy the Armenian studies chairs in the United States.

In his lifetime, Hovannisian was especially influenced by two people: his wife Vartiter and Simon Vratsian (the last Prime Minister of the First Republic of Armenia). Vartiter was his life's partner for more than half a century. Her dedication to Richard and the field of Armenian Studies played an important role in shaping who Richard became. Vartiter was an intellectual companion who read and reviewed every piece that he wrote. She was also a constant presence at every conference he planned or attended. In the early 1950s, Vratsian, the author of a major book on the First Republic, became Hovannisian's mentor when he studied Armenian language at the Hamazkayin Nishan Palanjian Jemaran in Beirut, Lebanon. To Hovannisian he was a fatherly figure and a standing testament to the perseverance and the resilience of the Armenians. Vratsian's influenced Hovannisian to write the first academic work on the First Republic of Armenia paving the path for a flourishing academic career.

Hovannisian was also involved in multiple academic organizations. In 1974, Hovannisian along with Dickran Kouymjian, Nina Garsoñan, Avedis Sanjian, and Robert Thomson spearheaded the project to establish a Society for Armenian Studies (SAS). Considered as the pillars of Armenian Studies, the main objective of this group was the development of Armenian Studies as an academic discipline. With access to very limited

resources, this group of scholars was able to establish the foundations of a Society that would play a dominant role in developing Armenian Studies in North America and beyond. From a handful of chairs and programs that supported the initiative at the time, today Armenian Studies as a discipline has flourished in the United States with more than thirteen chairs and programs providing their unconditional support to the Society. Hovannisian was the president of SAS for three terms (1977, 1991-1992, 2006-2009). During his tenure the Society flourished and achieved major accomplishments in the field. In 2019, the Society for Armenian Studies awarded Hovannisian with the *SAS Life-Time Achievement Award* in recognition and appreciation for his outstanding service and contribution to the field of Armenian Studies.

Besides his extensive participation in Armenian educational organizations in the Diaspora, Hovannisian was also very active in Armenia. He served on the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) Foundation in Yerevan. On October 23, 2019, AGMI awarded him *The Henry Morgenthau Medal* for his significant contribution to the study and recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

While historical events and transformation in history play an important role in shaping the course of history, historical agents also shape the history of their own nations, communities, and states. Hovannisian himself became a historical agent who shaped the field of Armenian Studies and fought singlehandedly against denialism orchestrated by one of the strongest states in the globe. While he has physically passed away, his perseverance, contributions to the field, and scholarship should stand as an ultimate model to every young scholar who strives to walk in his footsteps.

## About the Journal

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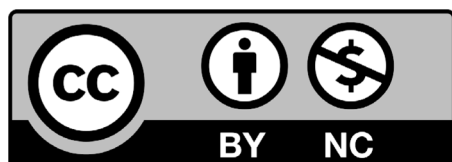
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1920s

20th century

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