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BOOK REVIEW

THE INSTITUTIONS OF TURKIFICATION AND ASSIMILATION IN THE EYES OF ARMENIAN ORPHANS WHO FLED THEM

Rubina Peroomian
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Abstract

Although Armenian orphans are the focus of this paper, taken in a broader context, the treatment of Greek, Assyrian, and Armenian orphans – with all commonalities and differences – is a signifier of intent to destroy targeted groups of people as the Genocide Convention defines.

This paper addresses the methods the Ottoman government undertook and the supplementary measures necessary in the implementation process of dealing with the myriad of children within the policy of total extermination. This involved setting up Turkish orphanages, some euphemistically called *mektebs* (religious schools) – with their brutal methods of forced conversion – pushing them into Muslim households – with all the torture and molestations that came with it but also serving the ulterior motive of improving the race – as institutions of Turkification, and in addition, the abhorring treatment of these children, torturing, raping, killing, along the roads of deportation. It will shed light on the experiences of these children in defined categories of victimization, those who lost their lives in this machination, those who survived and reached the outside world or continued living in Turkey as Muslims, true or pretending, as well as Christians upholding their faith against all odds. Based on interviews and first-person accounts of these orphans and newer studies on the state of mind of their offspring, this paper will outline the short-term effects, having turned this generation mostly into one that is socially dead unable to fully contribute to the perpetuation of the Armenian nation, as well as the long-term, that is the transgenerational effects of the genocide, a psychological burden upon the nation aggravating the situation and blocking the process of healing to begin.

The Genocide Convention does not project the effects of these genocidal treatments which the Armenian nation still struggles to overcome.

Keywords: Technics of mass-killing, oral history interviews, survivors' memoirs, American, European, and Armenian orphanages, Turkish orphanages, Muslim households, technics of survival, orphan gathering, transgenerational effects, nightmares, iconic images.

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Introduction

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide recognizes "forcible transfer of children of the group to another group" (Article II, act e) as the only clause openly related to the children-specific acts. There is no mention of targeted genocidal policies against this group. It was not meant to project the effects of the traumatic experience of the surviving children, thereupon the survivor nations in their unending struggle to overcome and remediate. This paper will focus on Armenian children to further expound and explain the Armenian case. However, in its broader setting it can also shed some light on the treatment of Greek and Assyrian orphans – with all commonalities and differences – to substantiate the bigger picture as signifier of the Young Turks' intent to destroy by way of genocide.

For a long time, Armenian scholars' and historians' main concern was to prove the veracity of the Armenian Genocide mainly focusing on historical documentation of the event. Incorporating memoirs and literary responses for better understanding the Calamity and the human aspect of it is a recent phenomenon. After all, the Armenian Genocide cannot be treated as a strictly historical event, since its repercussions in the present are undeniable; the nation lives in its consequences, which are not duly recognized and addressed.

This paper examines the methods the Ottoman government undertook and the supplementary measures necessary in the implementation process of dealing with the myriad of children within its policy of total extermination. It also explores the debilitating impact of the past, the never-healing wounds these orphans carried all their lives effecting their behavior, their outlook on life. But before that, I'd like to acknowledge the work of Prof. Vahakn Dadrian, the utmost scholar in Armenian Genocide studies, who initiated the discussion and laid the groundwork for the study of children as a distinct subcategory within the overall victim population.[1]

To provide a backdrop for this discourse on the children-specific government policies of extermination, I first sketch a general overview of better known and deeper studied methods (from Henry Morgenthau to Vahakn Dadrian), corroborated by examples extracted from memoirs of those who survived. Then I address the Turkish orphanages that are the least documented and scarcely addressed in survivor memoirs – the ostensible reason being the fact that very few escaped or were rescued from these establishments. Obviously, if children locked in these Turkish institutions were too young to remember their roots, they were totally absorbed in Turkish society and untraceable, and if they were old enough to remember, they lived struggling with an unreconciled painful memory of the distant reality but condemned to silence.

1 Vahakn Dadrian, "Children as Victims of Genocide: The Armenian Case," *Journal of Genocide Research* 5, no. 3 (2003): 421-437.

Children as Part of Deportees on the Roads of Deportation

Orders of deportation initiated the first stage of the final solution. It is almost always preceded by the arrest and slaughter of the adult male population leaving mostly women, children, and old men to start off the death march. But evidently, deportation alone, even with deliberately intensified hardship on the road, did not result in an absolute and quick solution. Gendarmes accompanying the caravans would beat to death those old men and women who could not keep pace. Starvation, thirst, and disease raging and sweeping through the refugee camps, did not finish the job. The organized attacks by Turks and Kurds of nearby villages, looting, killing, snatching children and young women proved more effective.

Hovhannes Mugrditchian of Lapajle (a village in Amanus Mountains) attests: "… with hatchets, scythes, shovels, truncheons, and sickles. They slew nearly five hundred persons. Not content with that slaughter, they took with them as captives many of the younger men and women." Further down he describes, "A thirteen-year-old Armenian girl had been seized from a caravan by Salih, the village chief's son-in-law. He starved her, and when she stole an egg to satiate her hunger, he "punished her by throwing her into a forty-meter-deep dry well. Inhumanity knows no limits!"[2]

While on the subject, these testimonies and many others like them show a reality contrary to the government's claim that gendarmes accompanied the caravans for their protection. Dirouhi Kouymjian Highgas of Konia refuses the Turkish notion that gendarmes protected the caravans, and bandits and terrorists were the ones to blame for the crimes against Armenians. "I am living witness to these outrageous lies and attest to the fact that they did *not* protect us; that *they* were indeed the originators and the perpetrators..."[3]

The sporadic attacks and random shootings did not suffice either. Still, thousands of deportees, surviving all the hardships, affliction, and anguish on the road, reached the end of the line in the Syrian Desert, albeit in the most dreadful condition. Many local officials used mass killing with different methods as a tactic to get rid of the large groups of refugees gathered on their territories. Garo Poladian depicts in his memoirs the method applied by newly appointed "the bestial Ahmed Bey," in the Syrian Desert, dispatched from Constantinople to replace the more lenient one. Ahmed Bey recruited Chechens (the most ferocious tribe in the Desert), promised them booty, distributed rifles, and put them in charge of the final liquidation. "Rifles in hand on horseback, they smashed people underfoot, they shot randomly killing some and injuring others." They raped young girls and left them to die. "Then the few survivors of the carnage were lined up."[4]

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2 Hovhannes Mugrditchian, *To Armenians with Love: The Memoirs of a Patriot* (Hobe Sound, FL: Paul Mart, 1996), 56, 71. For further analysis of this memoir, see Rubina Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature, Perceptions of those who Lived through the Years of Calamity* (Yerevan: Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, 2014), 260-268 and elsewhere in the book.

3 Dirouhi Kouymjian Highgas, *Refugee Girl* (Watertown, MA: Baikar, 1985), from the "Prologue." Further analysis in Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature*, 253-259 and elsewhere in the book.

4 Garo Poladian, *Արծիւներր անապատին մէջ* [Eagles in the Desert] (Paris: Araxes,1958). For page references, see Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature*, 111-115.

More often than not the surviving deportees reaching the desert were scattered in that wasteland and abandoned to perish with no shelter, no food and water.

Children as Part of the Victims of Mass-Killings

Another method of mass-killing that was applied as an alternative to deportation was locking people in churches and burning them alive by setting the church on fire. Kostan Zarian depicts one instance in the *Voices in the Church*.[5]

Hripsimé Zeneyan (Ajemian) of Malgara remembers another incident of burning the deportees alive. The remnants of their caravan had reached Deir Zor when the gendarmes began collecting and separating children. Eight-year-old Hripsimé's mother, only survivor of their large family, could not stand the agony of this separation and in front of Hripsimé's eyes ran to the river and threw herself in it. A group of the remaining refugees were burned alive, and the rest were pushed into the Euphrates to drown. Children could see the blaze, smell the burning bodies, and hear the screams.[6]

Shogher Tonayan depicts the day when the Turkish askyars invaded their village, Vartenise near Mush, gathered all the villagers into two large stables and set them on fire. Shogher was fourteen. In that interview by Verjiné Svazlian, Shogher tries to depict the tragedy that went on inside the smoke-filled flaming stable. Some had survived this inferno only because before the flames consuming everyone, the roof had collapsed. She and her sister were able to climb up the ruins and escape. But she keeps saying during the interview, "I wish I did not survive. Oh, the hardship that I went through."[7] So many years later, the memories are still alive, still making her life miserable.

There is no special treatment of little children in all the above testimonies. Children are part of the targeted general population subjected to liquidation along the road of deportation.

Children-Specific Methods

Vahakn Dadrian enumerates and documents the monstrous methods by which the Turkish government, or its local representatives implemented to get rid of thousands of little children, the surplus orphan population in the process of massacres and deportations.[8] He

5 Kostan Zarian, *Ձայներ եկեղեցում* [Voices in the Church], in Arby Ovanessian ed., *Մէկ արար հայկական թատերկաշար* [Anthology of Armenian One-act Plays] (Paris, Yerevan: Spiurk, 2001), 11-27.

6 I interviewed Hripsimé Zeneyan, Ajemian on April 30, 1980, as part of my oral history coursework at UCLA with Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian. The audiotapes were kept at UCLA and later trusted to the USC Shoah Foundation in Los Angeles for indexing and digitization. The collection is accessible on their website.

7 Verjiné Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide, Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors* (Yerevan: Gitoutyoun, 2011), 97, Testimony # 9.

8 Dadrian, "Children as Victims of Genocide: The Armenian Case."

speaks of mass poisonings and "the steam bath" – killing babies by hot steam – drowning, raping girls and even young boys, burning or burying children alive, and the children picked out and carried by the Turks, Kurds, and Arabs to keep or sell them in the slave market.

In the "Thematic Indexing" of her monumental collection of hundreds of interviews of survivors, mostly in Soviet Armenia, in *The Armenian Genocide Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors,* Verjiné Svazlian lists 131 interviews with those who either witnessed a sibling being raped or they were raped themselves; 32 accounts of attacks on the caravans of deportees by Chechens and Circassians, with purpose of separating children to slaughter, kidnaping older children to use them as sex slaves and forced laborers, or sell them; among those are 126 accounts of forced Turkification/Islamization of those victims who later escaped and returned to their original faith; 74 accounts of children and infants burned, buried alive, thrown down a cliff, thrown in a pit, drowned, or raped and killed; 78 accounts of survivors who somehow escaped from the schools, churches, houses, stables, barns, pits, caves filled with Armenians and set on fire.

Poisoning - Gevorg Chiftchian was six when soldiers raided their village Kabousieh and drove the villagers out before they had a chance to climb up the Musa Mountain and defend themselves. He remembers the caravan reaching Hama where 55 children of 5-6 years were locked in a cave to die of starvation and insect bites. A Turkish pasha, as the little boys remember, took Gevorg to his house to sweep the floors, then beat him until he fell unconscious. Gevorg managed to run away and later heard that the same pasha had poisoned the children in the cave to expedite their death.[9]

Eight-year-old Levonti Azadian describes the hardship of the deportation and how the gendarmes killed the refugees to reduce the numbers. She remembers a Turkish orphanage where she lived a short time. One day they gathered all the Armenian orphans in the orphanage as if to give them food. She did not know what was in the food that children went blind eating. They then threw these blind children out to die. How did she survive this atrocity, or whether she was among these children and survived by a miracle, it is not clear.[10]

Drowning - Nargiz Zhamkochian of Kutora (Kotyora, modern Ordu), by the Black Sea, recounts. All the townsmen were driven out of the town and slaughtered before the deportation began. Her grandmother trusted four-year old Nargiz and her two-year-old brother, Hagop, to a Greek neighbor. The children were sheltered until the government's decree to execute anyone harboring or hiding Armenians. The children were thrown in the street. Nargiz was too young to remember all these, but the story was trusted to her much later by her mother and grandmother. What has been fatefully imprinted in her mind though, and what she can never forget is the moment when with an animal instinct to survive, she abandoned her sick brother in the pile of children that the gendarmes had rounded up on the seashore and crawled away. From behind the bushes, she saw how the *zaptiehs* drove away the Turkish women, who were gathered there to help the children

9 Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 488-89, Testimony #295.

10 Interviewed by Michael Hagopian on July 17, 1985, in Detroit, Michigan. The interview is a part of Michael Hagopian's Armenian Film Foundation collection at the Shoah Foundation, Interview code: AFF288.

with a piece of bread and a mug of water. She heard the *zaptiehs* shouting, "don't worry about them going thirsty, pretty soon they will have plenty of water to drink." With horror she watched how the *zaptiehs* pushed the crying and moaning children into the sea to drown. That was the last she saw her brother, but she lived all her life with the memory of that scene and the terrified look on her brother's face visiting her in her waking hours and in her sleep.

Although Nargiz spent all her adult life in Sukhumi on the beautiful shore of the Black Sea, she was never able to reconcile herself to the sight of the sea. To her, "its seemingly indifferent waters held the bodies and souls of the perished Armenians, the drowned and unborn, their tears and cries felt through the salt and bitterness of the dark water and nightly laments of its waves, and their pains and fears which still drive me mad if I dare to come close to the sea after so many years!"[11]

Mass drowning was not limited to the Trapizon Province. Vahakn Dadrian presented examples of mass drownings that occurred in different areas of the Euphrates River.[12] Citing an Armenian survivor, Dadrian describes the drowning of 2000 Armenian children by the order of Mustafa Sidki, Deir Zor's police chief, on October 24, 1916. "They were thrown into the river two by two to the visible enjoyment of the police chief who took special pleasure at the site of the drama of drowning."[13]

In a most poignant narrative of her harrowing experience, written after she reached the United States in 1917, Arshaluys Mardigian (Changed to Aurora Mardiganian in the U.S.) describes in graphic details the incredible brutality, barbarism, and inhumane torture she went through or witnessed.[14] The brutal execution of little boys by drowning them in the river is one. The caravan had reached Malatia, she recounts, and camped outside the city like others who had arrived earlier. There

> [S] oldiers visited all the camps and took children more than five years old. I think there must have been eight or nine thousand of these. The soldiers came even to the house in which I was with 'turned' [apostate] Armenians, and despite the promises of the mayor they took our boys and girls. … They took the children to the edge of the city where a band of Aghja Daghi Kurds was waiting. … The Kurds drove them off toward the Tokma River … like a flock of sheep. At the River banks the boys were thrown into the river. The girls were taken to Kurdish cities to be raised as Mohammedans"[15]

11 Vitali Ianko, *The Promise at the Sea* (New York: Vintage Press, 2004), 221. For further analysis of her memoir, see Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature,* 282-292, 382-387.

12 Dadrian, "Children as Victims of Genocide: The Armenian Case," 427.

13 Ibid.

14 *Ravished Armenia: The Story of Aurora Mardiganian, the Christian Girl Who Lived through the Great Massacres,* interpreted by H. L. Gates (New York: Kingfield, 1918).

15 Anthony Slide, *Ravished Armenia and the Story of Aurora Mardiganian* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press,

Selling in the slave market – The slave markets were always a scene of torturous experience for the boys and girls exhibited by such humiliating, dehumanizing way. Aurora Mardiganian remembers her terror in the house of Bekran Agha the notorious slave dealer of Mush. "Ten thousand Armenian girls, delicate and refined daughters of Christian homes, college girls, young school-teachers, daughters of the rich and the poor, have experienced the terror of the same feeling that came over me that day when I realized I was a captive in the house of this notorious slave dealer" (179). And she describes the disgusting process and the pitiful girls subjected to it. The market was full of this merchandise, so the price was very low. Arshaluys was bought for one *medjidie* (approximately 85 cents) and taken to the house occupied by Jevdet Bey, Vali of Van, and afterwards commander of the Turkish army operating against Russians (181).

Eight-year-old Hripsimé Zeneyan (Ajemian), as we saw before, was among the group of children separated from their mothers in the Deir Zor refugee camp. She relates that the children gathered in the nearby canyon were screaming and crying. That night, they kept the children with no food and water. Children were thirsty. It was dark. Finding a stream of water, they fell on it and drank. The next morning with terror they saw each other's face stained with blood. The stream they had drunk from was bringing the blood of their relatives. The children were taken away and sold to the Bedouins. Hripsimé's name was changed to Hamdé, and she was tattooed on her face and arms, as all Bedouin tribeswomen were. She lived in that Arab house until she was rescued by Ardranik and his troop in 1919.[16]

Raping – Raping girls and women young and old and even boys was rampant. According to Dadrian, in some areas "Armenian churches [were used] as temporary brothels."[17]

Henry Morgenthau attests to the widespread practice of rape without using the word: "Behind was left a small army of girls who had been sold as slaves – frequently for a medjidie, or about eighty cents – and who, after serving the brutal purposes of their purchasers, were forced to lead lives of prostitution."[18]

Kerop Bedoukian, the nine-year-old boy from Sivaz on the deportation road remembers the terrible shock he experienced when he stood witness to an ugly violation against a pretty girl by six Turkish boys. They ripped her clothes off, molested her, ordered her to stand up and dance naked; then he saw how she frantically ran to the river (Euphrates) and drowned herself.[19]

By writing her life story, Dirouhi Kouymjian Highgas, made it her mission to speak up for thousands of Armenian girls and women who "were left ravaged, forever, by Turkish rapists."[20]

1997), 121. All subsequent references to Mardiganian's memoir are from this publication. See also Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature*, 314-324 and elsewhere in the book.

16 See ft. #8 for reference.

17 Dadrian, "Children as Victims of Genocide: The Armenian Case," 424-425.

18 Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (New York: Garden City, 1918), 317.

19 Kerop Bedoukian, *Some of Us Survived: The Story of an Armenian Boy* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1979), 49-50. Further analysis in Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature,* 232-237 and elsewhere in the book.

20 See ft. #5 and Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature,* 254.

Margaret Anherst Ajemian's mother, Ester/Gezeer Kateejeh had begun a new life in America but lived tormented by the memory of her dreadful experience: "The only thing I brought with me to America was my memory – the thing I most wanted to leave behind."[21] Even before she entrusted her story to her daughter, she had inadvertently transmitted to her the psychological impact of that harrowing experience. Margaret grew up fearing the Turks and the evil of an ominous shadow hovering over their home. At the age of 98, Ester decided to tell her story, "When I die, the truth will die with me. You must know and your children must know what I lived through" (10). Ester and her family started off from Amasia, she was thirteen years old. Succumbing to the hardship of the deportation road the family dwindled, and Ester found herself alone, sick, emaciated, almost dying of hunger. She was rescued and cared by a Turkified Armenian woman, who then gave her to a Turkish childless elderly couple. In that Turkish house her name was changed to Gezeer Kateejeh, and she was treated as a daughter but also raped by her "father," Yousouf Bey, a retired military officer. The horrible irony is that Hanum, Yousouf's wife, who had promised to take care of her as the daughter she never had and always wanted, "took me as a whore for her husband" (111–117). Ester ran away to an orphanage where every week the surrounding Turks and Kurds would come to get a helper, a child, or a wife. A young Turkish man picked Ester and took her home as a wife, but after he found out she was not a virgin, he beat her regularly and cursed her religion, "*dinini siktir"* (138). She endured the beatings and the cursing and the insults to her religion and her ancestors with the hope and the determination to flee to freedom one day. She was a sex slave in that house, but fortunately, she did not bear children. She had stopped menstruating since she experienced the shock of the horrors of the death march. In spite of the brutalities against her, she confesses, she grew to love that crude and cruel man (144). Is there a psychological explanation to this type of relationship which is not uncommon among abducted women during the Genocide?

Maltreated, battered, and sexually abused, Ester dragged her life in that house for three years until she found an opportunity to escape to her birthplace. And when she finally did escape and returned to her hometown, she was chastised and insulted by those who had avoided deportation by converting to Islam and who wanted to forget the dark years. "*Mortseer* (forget!) became the word they all used" (173). Ester was scorned because she "fell in 'black dye' [an Armenian euphemism for someone who had slept with the enemy] and will never be pure again" (167). She was finally harbored by an Armenian family and taken to the United States.

At the beginning of her autobiography written by Mae M. Derdarian[22] Vergeen declares

21 Margaret Ajemian Ahnert, *The Knock at the Door: A Journey through the Darkness of the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Beaufort Books, 2007), 177. The subsequent page numbers in parenthesis refer to this publication. Further analysis of the author's rending of her mother's story in Rubina Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature, The Second Generation Responds* (Yerevan: An Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute publication, 2015), 128-133 and elsewhere in the book.

22 Mae M. Derdarian, *Vergeen: A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide* (Los Angeles: Atmus Press, 1997). The page numbers in parenthesis refer to this publication. Further analysis of the author's rending of Vergeen

to the world, "I was THERE! I was an EYEWITNESS! I was a VICTIM!" (1) And what she witnessed and endured is beyond imagination. Vergeen takes the reader to the killing fields to hear the cries of pain, the supplication for mercy, and the helpless call, *"Allah nerdehseen?"* (God, where are you?). Vergeen lost her innocence, her spirit, and her faith to the atrocities: "My faith in religion destroyed, I hadn't prayed or gone to church since fleeing from my Arab captors; and my aversion to prayer has continued since then" (213).

Vergeen was thirteen years old when she started on the deportation route from her childhood home in Kayseri with her widowed mother, who had rejected the option of being spared by conversion to Islam. They passed Qatma, then Aleppo, and finally reached Ras el-Ayn in the Syrian desert where the surviving refugees were cramped in a camp to die of starvation and disease. Four months later, soldiers raided the camp and rounded up the remaining refugees for liquidation. Vergeen was at death's door when a Bedouin offered to take her in. She agreed, on condition he also take her mother and a few other women, and for a while she was spared. Her name was changed to Noura and her face was tattooed. But the Bedouin had other plans. He killed Vergeen's companions, lured her away from the tribal encampment and raped her. The wretched thirteen-year-old tried to run away and was caught several times. She finally managed to escape to Aleppo. Vergeen began writing her memoir more than half a century after coming to America: the horrible images were still gnawing on her soul. It would have been inconceivable to forget them, and the tattoos on her face were a constant reminder and a source of embarrassment and depression. She finally got rid of them through a lengthy series of surgical procedures, but she never got rid of the burden of her memories of the past.

Leonardo Alishan's grandmother, Gayané was not raped, but the incident that saved her honor and her life tortured her all the time. She "stopped being a girl and became the statue of Guilt," Leonardo writes. She cried when she was alone, or she thought she was alone, as Leonardo remembers, and was periodically taken to a mental clinic for rehabilitation. Leonardo was only nine years old when she chose to tell him why she was so miserable and why she cried all the time:

> One day the Turkish captain rode past her on a dappled horse. She was wearing a red scarf which was her most cherished possession. The captain said, 'Tonight I will come for you.' An old woman told Granny to throw her scarf away. She did. That evening she saw the captain ride away with a girl who had picked up Granny's red scarf and had worn it. The captain returned without the girl. Granny cried tears of relief on that night for which she paid with tears of remorse for the rest of her life.[23]

Meghruni's story in Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature, The Second Generation Responds*, 119-122 and elsewhere in the book.

23 Rubina Peroomian, "The Restless World of Leonardo Alishan (March 1951–January 2005), A Burnt Offering on the Altar of the Armenian Genocide" in *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 1, no. 3 (2006): 289-303. Citation from p. 291, from the story "The Lady-Bug and the Persian Rug."

Gayané became the omnipotent face of the nation's suffering, appearing in Leonardo's poetry as a mad woman who sees Turkish horsemen around her deathbed in a mental hospital in London. Leonardo Alishan, a third-generation survivor of the Armenian Genocide, lived in the grip of the nightmare of the Catastrophe. He shared his grandmother's agony; he was part of it. "I try to be the spectator of that tragedy which culminated in a London hospital room in 1978 where Granny saw Turkish horsemen around her bed before she died. But, alas, I am not the spectator. I am a character caught in that play which never, never, never reaches its equilibrium."[24] The pernicious psychological effect of the past not only ruins the life of the subject but continues to affect the generations to come.

I interviewed and read the testimonies of many survivors who were young girls during the Genocide. It was most painful for them to admit having been raped or forced into conjugal life with a Turk or a Kurd or an Arab, and very few did. That was a dark page in their life, they preferred to keep it a secret. Satenik Kenossian didn't mind admitting that out of great need in Mosul, the end of her torturous march from her hometown Kartzi (Nikomedia), she had to work in Turkish and Arab houses as a maid. Fifteen-year-old Satenik, however, had to escape these houses to save her honor. But one day, again out of an unsurmountable need, her brother sold her to Helmi Bey, a Turkish engineer. And she surrendered to him. In 1918, when the British army captured Mosul, Helmi Bey fled to Constantinople leaving Satenik behind. Satenik was able to return to her village, and there she married Samuel Spandararian, a member of the Armenian volunteer army.[25] Was this marriage out of pity like in many others? Did he know that his bride was violated? This was a dilemma for many girls rescued or run away from their Muslim captors.

These were a scant sampling of testimonies of those who endured and survived to tell their stories. and there are so many more untold stories of suffering, torture, rape, and then suicide to put an end to their disgraced existence.

Another loathsome method of disposing the mass of Armenian children as Dadrian documents, was **burning, or burying children alive.** "In the mass burning of Armenian orphans, plain sadistic fiendishness was mostly at work. After eliminating the rest of the Armenian population, these remnants had become a nuisance to the perpetrators. In several regards it was deemed most economical to end their misery by torching them *en masse*." [26]

Garo Poladian depicts a scene in the Syrian Desert, as the Chechens are carrying out the carnage by Ahmed Bey's order, "An uproar of screams and cries! A big fire was in sight. Chechens were burning alive the children they had collected. The gendarmes' random shootings quieted the screams."[27]

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24 Leonardo Alishan, "An Exercise on a Genre for Genocide and Exorcism," in *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 340-54. Quotation from pp. 352-3.

25 Iinterviewed Satenik Spandarian on May 28, 1980. See ft. # 8 for reference.

26 Dadrian, "Children as Victims of Genocide," 429.

27 Poladian, *Eagles in the Desert*, 509.

Hayko Vardanian, a young boy in Sharur came home from the day's work in the fields to find a ghastly scene. His two hysterical sisters told him that the askyars entered their hut and raped them in front of the parents and two little brothers. They tortured and murdered their parents and threw the boys in the *tonir* [Middle Eastern type oven dug in the ground] to burn alive.[28]

Harutiun Grigorian, already a teenager in 1915, describes in detail the deportation route from Avrdnik village in Erzerum and the places they passed and the hardship they endured. Their caravan finally reached the outskirts of the town of Deir Zor. The new mayor, a true executioner, ordered the slaughter of the sick. Harutiun remembers "one day, they gathered 40 carts of children and a man named Ismayil Hakki took them and burned those innocent creatures."[29]

> According to Dadrian **episodic massacres** is another method of liquidation of children:
>
> Another sizable portion of Armenian children fell victim to the vast array of episodic massacres carried out in all corners of the Empire, massacres that were in and of themselves exceptionally atrocious. As American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau stated, to save "powder and shell," the Moslem peasant population in the countryside, acting as support groups to the criminal gangs recruited for massacre duty, used "clubs, hammers, axes, scythes, spades, and saws. Such instruments... caused more agonizing deaths than guns and pistols "[30]
>
> Aurora Mardiganian remembers:
>
> There must have been 500 boys with us who were between eight and fifteen, and these all were gathered. … soldiers marched them away, all the little ones crying and screaming. We heard the cries a long time. When we arrived at Arabkir, we were told by other refugees there that all the boys were killed as soon as they had crossed the hills into the valley just outside Hasan Chelebi. The soldiers tied them in groups of ten and fifteen and then slew them with swords and bayonets. Refugees passing that way from Sivaz saw their bodies on the road.[31]

Ohannes Akarakian of Egin (Aghen) describes his family's ordeal during the eight-day march from Egin to Furunjular near Malatia. He was already fifteen, a strong boy able to bear the hardship. Many died from starvation and disease. The road was covered with the

28 Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 501, testimony #308.

29 Ibid., 213, testimony #87.

30 Dadrian, "Children as Victims of Genocide: The Armenian Case," 423; Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, 312.

31 *Ravished Armenia*: *The Story of Aurora Mardiganian,* 65.

dead bodies of earlier deportees; the water was infected by rotten corpses floating in it. In Furunjular the gendarmes gathered all the younger boys in the caravan and slaughtered them. Ohannes was saved by a mule owner, who took him back to Aghen. The rest of the family perished on the road to Aleppo.[32]

At the tail end of the years of calamity a significant campaign of gathering children and putting up orphanages by American and European, even German missionaries worked against the ongoing process, clashing with the government's intent of total annihilation. These orphanages operated on a scant budget and could not provide livable conditions to orphans crowding these institutions. But the major problem was that they could not provide safety against Turkish or Arab attacks. In many instances, especially amidst the post war uncertainty, these orphanages were raided by Turkish soldiers and the children were snatched away to be killed or to be sold in the slave market.

A Recap of the Experience of Children in Muslim Households

Armenian children ended up in Muslim households in different ways. The children-specific treatments, discussed in this paper, pointed to 1) Turkish soldiers, or *zaptiehs* who accompanied the caravans, separating children along the routes of deportation, slaughtering especially very small ones outright and having others sold in the market by slave dealers; 2) Chechens and Circassians attacking the caravans, slaughtering small children, kidnaping older children to use them as sex slaves and forced laborers, or sell them; 3) Muslim villagers along the deportation routes having given the liberty to choose their booty from the passing caravans, working age children as helpers and slave-laborers and young women as wives, concubines, and sex slave; 4) parents, out of desperation, trusting their children to Muslim families, before the deportation or along the debilitating hazards of the road; 5) Turkish soldiers raiding Armenian and missionary orphanages and driving the children out and dealing with them as in point 1; 6) Turkish officials choosing their own booty to keep or send them as gifts to their superiors; 7) local Turks, or Kurds, or Arabs "visiting" the orphanages and taking home girls and boys as helpers, slave laborers, wives, concubines, and sex-slaves. These were only the major conduits leading children toward the final Golgotha where the suffering began with name change, insults to the child's religion and ancestors, in most cases recurring sexual violations on boys and girls, and of course coercion and torture of conversion, the latter because Sultan Abdul Hamid's Fetva prohibited the enslavement of Armenian and other Christians in Turkish households unless they were Islamized.

Pushing these children and young women into Muslim households was a calculated policy with the aim to absorb them into Turkish society. The government encouraged this practice promulgating an order to that effect, even paid stipends through a special budget called the Refugee Fund to alleviate financial burden of such families. In some cases, the

32 Iinterviewed Ohannes Akarakian on May 31, 1980. See ft. #8 for reference.

possession of the family of the kidnapped child was transferred to the Muslim family.

Judging from the experiences of Armenian children in Muslim households in testimonies discussed in this paper and the recap above, I would like to underline the evidence that these households were indeed each an institution of Islamization not very different from the Turkish orphanages examined below.

The Harrowing Experiences of Armenian Children in Turkish Orphanages

Taking Armenian children in Turkish orphanages that operated as institutions of ruthless and unrelenting Turkification, was a later development, or an afterthought in anticipation of using the leftover orphans and producing a generation of Turks of which only some could have been old enough to remember their Armenian roots. And although these operations required organization, staff, and designated budget, albeit scant, they promised the government better results compared to outright killing with primitive methods that cost the war-torn government next to nothing. But as Poladian, Surmelian, and many others attest, the government was not equipped to set up orphanages in every corner and nook of the country and the mass-killings continued.

Altogether, there is no evidence of the existence of orphanages or shelters even for Turkish orphans. This was a WWI phenomenon. The state saw the need to provide such facilities for children of Turkish soldiers who died or were seriously injured and handicapped in the War especially in the Russian front. These newly organized orphanages operated in many areas throughout the Empire, mostly set up in buildings confiscated from European establishments as the war began. There were about 80 orphanages,[33] some of which also took in Armenian children despite the government's objection at the beginning not to accept Armenian children and feed them.[34] Sadly, some Armenian mothers, in destitute, exhausted, and starving on the road of deportation, took their children to these institutions with a flicker of hope for their survival. Armenian children, once admitted, were immediately given a Turkish name, forced to convert to Islam and circumcised if boys. They were forced to learn the Kuran, do the Turkish *namaz* (prayers) multiple times every day and repeat "There is only one God and His prophet is Mohammad." They were prohibited to use any language but Turkish. The coercion worked. After a while these children, especially the very young ones, forgot their past and adopted the forced identity. This children-specific treatment took shape in time and became an official and encouraged method of total extermination.

33 Nazan Maksudyan, "For the Holy War and Motherland. Ottoman State Orphanages (Darüleytams) in the Context of the First World War and the Armenian Genocide," L' Homme 34, no. 1 (2023): 44.

34 In her recent work Narine Margaryan has identified 30 orphanages where Armenian children were Turkified during the Armenian Genocide. See Narine Margaryan, "The Turkification of Armenian Children in the Ottoman Empire's State Orphanages (1915 -1918)," in *Silenced Crime: Forcible Child Transfer during the Armenian Genocide*, edited by Edita Gzoyan (Brill, 2025), forthcoming.

Obviously, testimonies about life in Turkish orphanages are not many. But they all speak of the horrendous physical and psychological tortures the Armenian orphans were put through to force them forget their name, their parents, their culture, language, and religion, evidently the first shock for all of them being the Turkish name they were given and the agonizing act of forced circumcision.[35]

In *Tantane*, Hagop Oshagan describes a five-year-old Armenian boy's escape from a Turkish orphanage in Constantinople.[36] The narrative echoes the child's psychological impairment experiencing the traumatizing separation from his mother – as he somehow lost her during the death march – and the terrible awe, horror, and disgust this orphanage aroused. According to Oshagan, a "benevolent Turk" had discovered the boy alive under a pile of massacred deportees and inspired by the "unique piety of his race and with the just gratification of having done a good deed,"[37] took the child to an orphanage established to raise Armenian children as Muslims. Oshagan's story is a powerful representation of the psychological predicament of all children of the same fate in their present situation and later in their adult life as they pace down the memory lane. In his memories the five-year-old walks in a caravan of death, barefoot and hungry, a white rag on his head. His brothers and sisters are all with him, all the children of the town … and his sisters diminish day by day … and his brothers lie scatter on the road one by one" (35). The child's memory has stored a confusion of scenes of horror and suffering, together with the familiar colors and sounds of his native village and his happy home. And one day he finds the small door of the large gate of this prison-like old palace left ajar, and the boy impulsively slips out. The surrounding buildings are alarmingly dark and empty, and he runs. Farther away, he meets a crowd of people with a priest leading the procession. He recognizes the chant and the man's long cloak. "Ter papa" (priest-father) (39) he shouts, but nobody hears him. He is upset but follows the crowd. And suddenly streets become livelier. He even hears familiar words spoken in the houses with open windows. Then he hears the ringing of bells, "tan, tan, tan" just like the bells of their village church. He runs in and straight toward the old man pulling the rope of the church bell. The narrative ends with a dramatic scene of discovery and a woman in black, whose children and her entire family have perished in the desert, taking the boy's hand and the two going away with a desperate hope to begin a new life.

Hampartzoum Chitjian too experienced all the fright and degradation that Turkish institutions could cause. He and his brothers were placed in a Turkish *mekteb* (school).

35 Edita G. Gzoyan, Regina A. Galustyan, Shushan R. Khachatryan & Narine V. Margaryan, "In the Beautiful Heaven, a Golden Cage: Race, Identity and Memory in Turkification of Armenian Children in State Orphanages During the Armenian Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 26, no. 3 (2024): 243-263. DOI: 10.1080/14623528.2023.2237700.

36 *Tantane* [Տանտանը] was first published in *Chakatamart* newspaper (June 27 and July 4, 1920) in Constantinople and belonged to a collection of stories Hagop Oshagan intended to publish separately under the title *Կայսերական յաղթերգութիւն* (Imperial Song of Triumph) which, due to ominous political developments and his exodus from Constantinople, he never did. The book was later published in Beirut in 1983.

37 Hagop Oshagan, *Կայսերական յաղթերգութիւն* [Imperial Song of Triumph] (Beirut: Altapress, 1983), 35.

The four brothers, together with 150–200 boys between the ages of four and sixteen, remained in the *mekteb*, that "dreadful building," as Hampartzoum recalls, with a Turkish soldier guarding the door. The first night they brought bulgur pilaf, from an abandoned Armenian house, but it was old and rotten. The pot was swarming with worms. The boys were hungry, but nobody touched it.

This Turkish school was certainly a center of Turkification by force, by any type of coercion. Hampartzoum's name was changed to Rushti. The boys were given a piece of dry bread and allowed to drink water from the fountain. But the most devastating experience for these boys was not the uncertainty of their fate, or being away from their parents, but the shameful work they were forced to do for days on end. The older and stronger boys were sent out to pillage Armenian homes, all vacant now, and to bring items to the confiscated Armenian church where the booty was locked up as the property of the Turkish government. Of course, Turkish officers supervising the operation carried home what they liked. There was no law, no accountability. About a year later, during the Kurdish rebellion and assault on Perri, the Kurds set the town on fire. The vestiges of Hampartzoum's childhood went up in smoke. As he watched from afar, the Armenian church too burned down, and he remembered all the Armenian treasures and valuables that the children in the Turkish school had been forced to haul in and store there. He felt the pain of losing forever what he had cherished, mixed with a feeling of vindication in knowing that the perpetrators would not enjoy the Armenian wealth either (122).

For days in the *mekteb* the teachers and the mullahs tried to teach the boys about Islam, but then, perhaps thinking that Turkifying the older boys would be too difficult, they separated them out. Hampartzoum and his twin brother Kaspar were among the ones destined to be killed. Hampartzoum miraculously escaped – he calls it "my first escape" – and was taken in by a Turk called Korr (blind) Mamoe. But his conscious tortured him. He had abandoned his little brothers and left them in the hands of those tyrant Turks. He would jump up at night and call his brothers names in his sleep (107). Korr Mamoe was kind. Seeing his grief, he even arranged for him to secretly meet his younger brothers still in the Turkish orphanage and give them food. The last time Hampartzoum saw his brothers, they told him that the Turks were going to take them to their fathers. He knew what that meant, but he had no choice other than to let them go.

Hambartsum's ordeal continued with detailed description of the places and people he met, his deplorable life, the multiple times he came close to dying of starvation of injuries he received on the torturous road he paced as a fugitive in a constant fear of being caught and murdered.[38]

Chiftjian's memoir is not unique, but only one of those that gives you a glimpse into that hellish world of Turkish atrocities. These are books, many in their original Armenian-language, few others translated into English, that we have to read. These are books that can leave us depressed and bewildered for days. They ask more of us than we are willing to

38 For details of his "journey," see Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature,* 293-302 and elsewhere in the book.

give if we want to comprehend the unremitting genocide of Armenians. Kafka said once: these books "come upon us like ill-fortune and distress us deeply, like the death of one we love better than ourselves, like suicide …. [they are] an ice-axe …. to break the sea frozen inside us."[39]

The most infamous Turkish orphanage where a large number of Armenian orphans were housed was in Antoura, Mount Lebanon on a property previously owned by the French Lazarist Fathers who had established there a church, a college, and a dormitory all with their facilities and staff. After the War broke out the French left and the property was naturally confiscated by the Turkish government and converted to a Turkish orphanage. This institution of Turkification housed about one thousand Armenian orphans, mostly boys, gathered throughout the country, and about 400 Kurds. Apparently, Djemal Pasha took special interest in this orphanage and recruited Turkish feminist Halidé Edib to run the establishment with a large staff of teachers, guards, cooks, etc. Despite her fame as an educated, progressive thinker, Halidé Edib became instrumental in implementing the most inhumane means to break every trace of Armenianness in these children in order to produce the Turkish citizen Djemal Pasha desired.

Although during the past decade or so, a significant amount of information has been unearthed about this ferocious institution and the atrocities committed there, although the records of the orphanage with the names of all the orphans – Armenian names crossed out and Turkish names added – was discovered and a memorial was erected in 2010 to honor those orphans who perished succumbing to torture and starvation, I found only two memoirs by the former residents of this orphanage: Harutiun Alboyajian and Karnig Panian.

Harutiun Alboyajian's testimony, very brief with very scant information and laconic descriptions, is recorded by Verjiné Svazlian.[40] In this testimony, Harutiun first describes the deportation of the entire village of Fendejak, near Zeitun, then, he begins with his experience in "Djemal Pasha's Turkish orphanage," without saying how he was taken there. His name was changed to Shukri with number 535 as his surname, and he was circumcised. He describes the punishment for children who dared to speak Armenian, or cried for their mother, or stole food because they were starving. The methods were abhorring, the lightest punishment being no food for days. Then there was having the sinners stand outside and look at the sun for hours until their sight was damaged, and they went blind albeit temporarily. Another bodily punishment was with *falakhka*, hitting the soles of the victim's feet with steel wire or stick. The child would scream of unbearable pain, faint, but the punishment would continue.

He attests that children were always hungry, emaciated, and many of them fell ill with scurvy and died (a disease caused by malnutrition, lack of fresh fruit and vegetables and vitamin C). The secret of his survival was his skill in crafts he had learned from his father who was a blacksmith. He rendered small services to fellow orphans and the staff and

39 Cited in Alvin Rosenfeld, *A Double Dying Reflections on Holocaust Literature* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1988), 18.

40 Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 426-28, Testimony #247.

earned an extra piece of bread or even money. He remembers a visit by Djemal Pasha, and how he was introduced to him as a gifted boy. Important information in his testimony is about the day the orphans woke up to see there was no one left. The Turkish army had retreated. Beirut was liberated and the entire staff, the guards, the director, were all gone, escaped, except for Ezra bey, the pharmacist. There was also a certain Kurd Silo left behind, who got a terrible beating from the older boys, because he used to say to Khoren, an orphan boy, that he had killed 99 Armenians and if he kills the boy, it will be a hundred. Harutiun remembers Ezra bey ordering orphans to gather in the mess hall and going from table to table, asking the orphans what their Armenian names was and then announcing, "from now on keep your Armenian names. You are Armenians." He confided to children that he was instructed to poison the orphans, but he did not obey the orders. He knew that he would be punished for his past in the orphanage.

It was thanks to Karnig Panian and the posthumous publication of his memoirs in Armenian, *Ամթուրայի որբանոցը* (The Orphanage of Antoura, 1992) that the Armenian community was let into that dark world of Djemal Pasha's orphanage with its site still unknown.[41] Meanwhile, researcher Misak Kelechian pinned down the site of the orphanage. He continued his research, found the records and the graves of 300 orphans who died succumbing to torture and starvation. The Lazarist Fathers had discovered the bones when they began construction to add new classrooms in 1993. They buried the bones in unmarked graves in the compound's cemetery. Kelechian was also instrumental in the fundraiser and erection of the memorial on the site of the orphanage and the burial ground.

Karnig Panian's memoirs, like most in this genre, begins with a plush description of a happy childhood, in an idyllic atmosphere, a house full of love and joy, parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. And then the Calamity befell. Karnig Panian was only five when the disastrous deportation began. During the death march from his hometown Kyurin (Gurun) to Hama at the edge of the Syrian Desert, Karnig lost his mother, his brother and sister. And each one's demise is a tragic account by itself (pp. 56-57). His father had been drafted in the Turkish army, and he never returned. Karnig was alone, an orphan in the care of his ailing grandparents. Life was unbearable at the refugee camp outside Hama. Hunger and disease took a heavy toll every day. To save the little boy, the grandparents reluctantly agreed to send him away to an orphanage in the town run by a protestant pastor. For him the orphanage was a heaven compared to his life of the last weeks in the camp. The children lived with half-full stomach because food was hard to find, but they were well-treated. Karnig was eventually placed in the orphanage, where he remembers the process beginning with changing children's Armenian names, with heavy beatings to those who resisted and clung to their Armenian names, or those who still spoke Armenian. Many children were condemned to silence because they did not know a word

41 The English translation with the addition of Chapter 9, left out in the Armenian publication, was published in 2015. See Karnig Panian, *Goodbye, Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015).

of Turkish. It was Karnig's turn. The schoolmaster slapped on Karnig's face because he insisted that his name was Karnig. Then, he kicked the sides of the poor boy fallen on the floor. Karnig passed out from the pain and was taken to the clinic with no doctors and no medication, and a daily ration of a piece of bread and a cup of water (80-81). He walked out with a Turkish name Mahmoud and a number, 551 for family name. Malnutrition was threatening. Many children fell ill. The "doctor" examined the patient and gave them medication. "Instead of recovering, many boys died" (84).

The boys were rebellious. They resisted any way they could against Djemal's plans implemented by the most ferocious methods. "It was an unequal battle between the administration and the students. Clearly, Djemal Pasha's plan was to Turkify us, but we were determined to resist – not out of rabid nationalism, for which we were too young, but simply because we wanted onto our identities, which were all we had left" (83).

Karnig remembers Djemal Pasha's visit, an extraordinary event in the orphanage, and the lady in his entourage, who stayed behind and assumed the role of the director of the operation. She was Halidé Edib, whom Karnig remembered as a callous woman, uninterested toward the fate of the children and her job. She did not communicate with children but was always present at the sessions of evening punishments and torture. Rumors about her strange, inhuman, and diabolic behavior went on among the children (94-95).

Djemal Pasha's visit did not go smoothly. As he was inspecting the ranks of the orphans, a few of the older boys stepped forward and boldly complained about the scant ration of food, "We were starving to death, and you rescued us. But Pasha, we are still starving! They give us only two tiny buns of bread per day. We are as hungry as we were before we came here, and soon we'll die if you don't help us!" (86). A pandemonium broke out. Children were shouting "we're hungry," then climbed on the trees and began picking the wild fruits and eat them. Amidst the ensuing chaos and confusion Djemal Pasha turned around and left the premise together with his entourage. Curiously, Harutiun Alboyajian does not talk about such a significant incident during Djemal Pasha's visit. Of course, orphans were punished for their "rebellion." No food, that is, no bread was served that day. Meanwhile the all-out war against speaking Armenian was continuing and those caught uttering an Armenian word were punished harshly, "pitiless beating and verbal abuse" (89). And then there was the most horrible one, the *falakha*,[42] as Harutiun remembers too. The episodes of barbaric treatment of children of six or eight or ten is despicable, just because they cried and called their mothers name or made the sign of the cross. The punishment with *falakha* went on with the child screaming from the excruciating pain and then losing consciousness which did not stop the procedure. Another horrible punishment was making the child stand in the direct sunlight for days without food or drink and a ferocious guard watching over him. This happened to Apraham,

42 The translator of Panian's memoirs explains in a footnote what *falakha* is: "A cane or strap used to strike the soles of the feet, also known as a bastinado, falanga, and falaka. In the modern world, its use is considered a form of torture.

Karnig remembers, "After three days, the poor boy was utterly destroyed" (92). Instead of addressing the huge wave of discontent, the headmaster devised a new method of torture. Every evening, orphans were gathered in the courtyard and the names of those to receive the *falakha* that day was read. The number of strikes depended on the seriousness of the "crime," up to two hundred, even three hundred… The headmaster usually delivered the first blows; then, the guards took over when he was tired. One day, Karnig's name was called. He spent ten days in the clinic until his soles were healed and he could walk again.

Children were constantly reminded that "being Armenian was a punishable crime" (93). Karnig attests that Turkish became the prevailing language, and gradually there were less children punished for violating that rule. But the terrible pangs of hunger drove children to steal, to eat anything they find, paper, ink, dead insects. Karnig joined a group of orphans who regularly raided the kitchen at night or slipped out of the compound and stole fruit and vegetables from nearby homes. They brought back the bounty, hid their findings, which helped them fight against hunger for a few days. They sometimes found bones of animals or dead orphans, which the jackals had dug up from shallow graves and eaten the flesh. They learned to grind the bones with stone and eat the powder with water. Karnig admits that "hunger made us desperate and dehumanized us. I didn't feel much revulsion at the idea … We had sunk that low" (105-106).

Efforts to Turkify Armenian orphans in Turkish orphanages were not successful, perhaps due to the methods implemented with absolute brutality. Karnig Panian rightly observed: "the administration's attempt to Turkify us was a miserable failure" (118). He provides the reasons in rhetorical questions "Did our teachers realize that *they* were the ones who strengthened our resolve against them? How could we strive to be like our teachers when they were brutal, sadistic fiends? How could we accept our new Turkish identities when the Turks tasked with our care mercilessly insulted and beat us at the slightest provocation?" (119).

Problems in Post-war Efforts of Orphan Gathering

The situation in the post-war Ottoman Empire, and especially the Allied-occupied Constantinople, lent a favorable atmosphere for surviving Armenians and re-established organizations to launch a massive campaign of recovering Armenian orphans from Muslim households and orphanages. That was not easy, even though the post-war Ottoman government was cooperative or pretending to be. After the escape of the Young Turk leaders and under the pressure of the Allies as a condition to the Armistice, the new government had ordered to release and surrender Armenian boys and girls held captive in Muslim households. Hampartzoum Chitjian records the fateful event when in 1918 the government ordered Turks and Kurds to bring the Armenian children in their possession to a square in Kharbert. "Frantically, relatives were searching for lost loved ones. Orphans were crying out their family names, if they still remembered them. But so

many younger children could remember no more than 'Mama, Papa.'" If no one claimed the orphan, the master could take him/her back. It is in this square that a relative had found Hambartzoum's younger brother Kerop.[43]

Arch. Zaven Der Yeghiayan, the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople, attests that many Turks "worried that they might be subjected to punishment by the Allies, immediately delivered these orphans to the Armenian church in their neighborhood or to Armenian neighbors."[44] They were the minority. In most cases they threatened the Armenian orphans in their keeping that if they revealed their Armenian identity, they would be murdered. Arch. Der Yeghiayan attests that some orphans were "taken by force from Turkish homes, with the support of Allied police and at times even with Turkish police" (182). At the same time, though, the Turkish police claimed to have received many complaints that Armenian demands were false, and the orphans taken away were real Turks not Armenians. The "Neutral House," established on behest of the British Embassy, was to keep children whose identity was contested. Meanwhile, rumors and accusation of corruption and misjudgment on the part of the staff and internal skirmishes among the leadership of governing bodies endangered the prestige, even the existence of the Neutral House. In any event, according to the Patriarch, 3000 orphans were liberated mainly from Constantinople.

Collecting orphans was a harder task in the interior of Turkey, where many thousands of orphans remained captive in Turkish households and orphanages. According to the Patriarch, the reason was the fact that the Allied armies did not penetrate the interior of the country (185). That may have been also the reason why the Kemalist movement proved successful in a short time and changed the course of the developing Armenian revival as well as the recovering Armenian children so crucial for the perpetuation of the Armenian nation.

Another difficulty against the campaign of orphan collection was the reluctance of orphans themselves to leave the Muslim family after years of getting used to the environment, having forgotten their mother tongue and their parents, and having become adapted to their Turkish identity, especially when they were treated well. Others were afraid of the uncertainty ahead of them in the Armenian community or were ashamed of having converted to Islam and accepted the identity forced upon them. Still others, mostly teenage girls raped and forced into a Muslim house, especially when they bore a child or children from their captors, would not want to leave them like the motherless orphans they were. Making this fateful decision was a trauma for some young women who were treated well, like Loosentag whose story Kerop Bedoukian recounts. She cried and cried because she did not know what to do: leave her Turkish "husband" who had been good to her, or return to her roots, her nation. Loosentag ultimately decided to stay.[45]

Kerop Bedoukian remembers how the Armenian volunteer groups, with the help of the

43 Chitjian, *A Hair's Breadth, 156*.

44 Zaven Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs* (Barrrington, RI: Mayreni, 2002), 181.

45 Bedoukian, *Some of Us Survived: The Story of an Armenian Boy*, 153–156.

European and American Missionaries and backed by the British army, collected orphans, sometimes forcibly taking them away from their adoptive parents, that is when the child wanted to go, and the "parents" would not let.[46]

It is impossible to know how many of these children and young women stayed in Turkish or Kurdish or Arab households. Some grew up completely unaware of their origin, but those who were old enough to remember, psychological trauma must have accompanied them all their lives. In any case, they were both lost to the Armenian nation.

By the time these orphans finally reached the refugee receiving center in Aleppo, called the *keshla* (barracks), Bedoukian attests, they were already a miserable bunch being transferred from a place to another. When Kerop, newly reunited with his mother, two older sisters, and younger brother, began working there (only nine of the sixty members of his extended family had survived), about a thousand women and children were housed in the *keshla*. Kerop attests that orphans were brought in every day, registered, and sent on to the orphanages. Some children remembered their Armenian names; a few of them only gave their Turkish names. About a half of them knew where they had been born, but none knew the date... If they did not know their name, one was given them. If they did not know where they were born, the nearest city to where they had been picked up was recorded as their place of birth. More difficult was the date of birth almost none of them knew. The date was guessed by their size. Only the date – the day and the month – of their arrival in the *keshla* was precisely recorded.

John Minassian wistfully recalls his encounters with Armenian girls in Arab or Kurdish captivity in the desert. At Nissibin he met a pale, blonde, young Armenian woman who begged him to help her rejoin her people.[47] Another woman, younger and less attractive, named Makroohy, was desperate because her master had decided he did not want to feed another mouth, and had gone away leaving her behind. Minassian also remembers an Armenian boy, about nine years old, who appeared in the camp one day. He had been beaten for stealing bread. Hungry for days, he had fled the Arab household where he worked as a shepherd. He did not remember his parents and he did not speak Armenian, but he did remember his Armenian name, Kikor. Minassian took the orphan under his wing and grew attached to him. The boy called him "my Papa Habib" (John Minassian had adopted the name Habib to pass as an Arab). Now there were Kikor, Makroohy, and the blonde woman, the "strange flowers" of the desert, as he called them, and they all depended on him and his promise to get them out of that desolate place in the middle of nowhere.[48]

Makroohy was the least fortunate, Minassian had abandoned her in the desert camp after he found her in bed with an Australian POW. But he felt guilty about it. "[H]ad I been a friend or put the last stab in her back? Or... maybe from one tent to another, she

46 Ibid., 154.

47 *Many Hills Yet to Climb,* 158–163 and Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature*, 249.

48 *Many Hills yet to Climb,*165-168.

had fallen lower and lower?"[49] But was Makroohy to blame? How many young Armenian women suffered the same fate, abandoned to die, or plunge ever deeper into the tainted life of a prostitute or concubine in the Kurdish and Arab towns and villages in that suffocating desert? How many of them, even in big cities like Aleppo, refused to return to their families not to embarrass and disgrace them? Vartouhy, whom Hovhannes Mugrditchian met in Aleppo, was one such "spring butterfly caught in a net, a broken bud never to bloom, handled by many admirers, soiled and cruelly crushed, and thrown into the gutter."[50]

The post-war orphanages, run by Armenian organizations or the missionaries as well as the "Neutral house," were operating on a scant budget and in very poor conditions. The management made a special effort to find relatives of these orphans and send the children out to live with them. The problem was with the young women who had been violated in their life with their captor as his wife or concubine. Some of these women had escaped carrying their child; some were pregnant and gave birth in the orphanage; others had left their children and run away. In her memoirs, titled *Refugee Girl*, Dirouhi Kouymjian Highgas assumes the mission to speak up for the "thousands of Armenian girls and women [who] ran away from enforced 'marriages' with Turkish husbands," some "with their half-Turkish babies in their arms, leaving behind the children they could not carry," and for the many "who were left ravaged, forever, by Turkish rapists."[51]

In all cases, these poor creatures faced a psychological trauma that was never healed. As Hagop Oshagan observed, this was the generation "released from the orphanages directly into life outside, only to become orphans once more among life's deprivations,"[52] depravations indeed and psychological hang-ups. And on top of their own pain, the Armenian society, especially in Constantinople, that had not experienced the massacres and deportations, looked down to these victims.

The management in post-war orphanages tried to marry these women off to Armenian male survivors and send them off in the world to manage on their own. But most of these men resented the tattooed women knowing that they had been used, literarily used as sex slaves in Muslim households. It was a big surprise for me to learn about an Armenian doctor performing, one can say, the first plastic surgery to remove tattoos on Armenian women. This good doctor removed the tattoos, but he did something more incredible and unusual for that time. He performed hymenoplasty, patching up the hymen to restore virginity. The violated Armenian girl was given a chance to claim virginity with the man who agreed to marry her.

Clearly, children, be it girls or boys, who survived rapes and sexual molestations, carried the guilt and shame throughout their lives.

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49 *Ibid.,* 193 and Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature*, 250.

50 *To Armenians with Love*, 196 and Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature,* 251.

51 Peroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature,* 254.

52 Hagop Oshagan, *Վկայութիւն մը* (A testimony) (Aleppo: Nairi Press, 1946), 36.

The Unhealed Scars of the Past

The wretched orphans, survivors of the Armenian Genocide, tried hard to forget, or as psychologists would have it, reconcile the thoughts, images, and memories associated with the traumatic experience with their existing cognitive-world models of schemata. However, as Mardi Jon Horowitz maintains, and as was discussed throughout this paper, this trauma-related information is capable of breaking through the victim's defenses and intruding into consciousness in the form of flashbacks, nightmares, and unwanted thoughts. The terrifying, debilitating images of their parents being tortured and murdered, their sisters being raped or dragged away, or their own experience, rape and sexual molestations, visited them at night, and they jumped up screaming in horror. The mental picture of the traumatic experience would pop up unbidden with the smell, the sound, the sight, or the touch of something; the subconscious would begin to override the conscious taking the victim back to the traumatic experience.

Hamparzoum Chiftjian's nightmares were recurrent. He was never able to absorb and deal with the harrowing and sometimes despicable experiences he endured. They remained alive, buried in the deep layers of his mind and, significantly, resurfaced in the form of horrifying nightmares when he was free and in a safe environment. Those "tightly stored images begin to emerge and unravel. To this day they reoccur in my nightmares…. I never learned to cope with those images. *They haunt me eternally* (italics by the author)" (115).

Nightmares were not the only threatening occurrences in these wretched survivors' lives. As psychologists, Marian MacCurdy among them, describe, trauma creates an iconic image, "a mental picture that is stored deep within the brain in the limbic system and is not easily available to the cerebral cortex," but "pop[s] up sometimes unbidden when we smell, hear, see, or touch something that takes us back to the time the traumatic event occurred."[53] Often a particular sound, a place, or a smell is enough to trigger the resurfacing of a memory, happy or sad, associated with a past experience. All the survivors speak of such sensations linked to their harrowing ordeal during the Genocide. Hampartzoum Chitjian was startled by the sight of the frozen corpse of an Armenian boy with whom he had worked in a Kurdish house. He and an Armenian woman were trying to give the boy a Christian burial, digging with their hands in the ice-covered earth. Sixty-five years later, on January 6, 1980, observing his wife handling a frozen chicken to prepare for dinner on the Armenian Epiphany, Hampartzoum experienced the same feelings all over again; his suffering was renewed, and he felt the same pain in his soul. "Akh, akh try to forget Generation of Armenians. Children of grief" (136). With no reason at all and with nothing to trigger the horrifying memory to resurface, Hampartzoum often heard voices in his ears. "Even today, my body trembles." He hears shouting from the minarets, "Whoever harbors an Armenian will be jailed for five years with a chain around his neck!" And he feels the same fear he felt as a fugitive, wandering aimlessly, what would happen if he got caught.

53 Marian MacCurdy, "From Trauma to Writing," in *Writing and Healing, Toward an Informed Practice, ed. C. M. Anderson and M. MacCurdy* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2000), 162.

Financially successful but psychologically tainted, this man carried the wounds with him never able to reconcile with the memory of the calamity he endured and the atrocities he witnessed. He defines himself not as a *survivor* but a *victim*, and expounds, "One never survives from a Genocide. You may escape *physically*, but your mind and soul are tormented forever. If you have been in an inferno, you are *scarred* for life" (xvi). And the scar he transmitted to his children, unknowingly, unwillingly. "I soon began to empathize about the horror of being left alone, an orphan – a terrifying fear that still lurks in my psyche…" Sara, Hampartzoum's daughter confesses (xii). By the time she was ten years old, Sara was let into the incomprehensible world of tears and sadness her parents shared. She was the second generation to inherit the pain. "What I do remember most about my mother were the many times I found her alone with tears flowing down her face. I knew she was reliving the atrocious moments when her mother, brothers and she witnessed the barbaric Turks viciously beheaded her beloved, innocent father…. The pain of that wretched moment was etched in her soul forever. *Her tears never stopped*…" (4).

Leonardo Alishan was only nine-years-old when his grandmother chose to let him into her dark world of agony. A third-generation survivor of the Armenian Genocide, he lived in the grip of the nightmare of the Catastrophe. He shared his grandmother's agony; he was part of it.

Aurora Mardiganian's suffering continued even after she reached the United States. She had bravely committed to playing the part of her own character in the movie, "Ravished Armenia" (1919), based on her memoirs. Relived her ordeal during two years of telling her story and playing it took an extra toll of her health. She cannot forget a particular night in her long journey through the hell. Outside the house Chechens were guarding their booty of Armenian women, and the mass murder of the refugees was going on all night. She could hear the piercing shrieks and hoofbeats of horses. "Sometimes even now I cannot sleep, although I am safe forever. Those screams come to me in the nighttime, and even with my friends all about me I cannot shut them out of my ears" (125). The impact was indelible, and although she was married to an Armenian and bore a son, she isolated herself from the society and lived a life of a recluse, imagining the Turks behind her door ready to storm in, until she died alone. Her body was picked up by the government and was buried in an unmarked grave.

The Armenian survivors never had access to psychological therapy to bring the accumulated harmful information to the active memory and make the reconciliation possible. It was impossible to forget. The orphans of the Genocide remained tainted for good. Life was not for them to enjoy, even if the New World provided them with new opportunities and a comfortable family life. So even though I am safe in America, my nights are not peaceful, one admitted. Another one was affected so badly that she chose never to marry, to live alone, to suffer alone, without fear of leaving an orphan child behind.

And the effects of the traumatic experience were passed on to the next generation, even through genetic transmission[54] in the absence of testimonies and family stories told.

54 See the discussion of Kellermann Nathan's theory of genetic transmission of trauma applied to the expe-

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ON THE ARMENIAN DEATH TOLL AND DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACT OF THE 1909 ADANA MASSACRES

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Abstract

This article examines the Armenian death toll and the demographic impact of the 1909 Adana massacres. It analyzes statistics on the number of Armenians who perished in these massacres and the distribution of casualties across various regions of Cilicia, using primary source evidence. Additionally, the article explores discrepancies between Ottoman and Armenian statistical data on the number of victims, noting that the figures reported by the Ottoman government are approximately 4 to 5 times lower than those reported by Armenian ecclesiastical authorities.

The comparison of Ottoman and Armenian statistics before and after the massacres reveals that these killings did not result in a relative decrease in the permanent Armenian population within the Adana Vilayet – the region most severely affected by the massacres. This outcome can be attributed to the following factors:

1. Based on the most reliable data, it is estimated that approximately 15,000 to 18,000 Armenians were killed during the 1909 Adana massacres. Of these, at least one-third – between 5,000 and 7,000, though estimates may range from 8,000 to 10,000, constituting up to half of the total death toll – were labor migrants. Consequently, the demographic impact of the massacres affected both the Armenians of Cilicia and those who had migrated to Cilicia from Western Armenia and other regions of the Ottoman Empire.
2. Following the massacres, Adana and other regions of Cilicia quickly returned to a relatively normal economic activity, thanks to substantial foreign investments in infrastructure (notably the Berlin-Baghdad railway), industry, trade, and agriculture. The population loss in the city and Sanjak of Adana – the areas most affected by the massacres – was rapidly offset by a new influx of Armenian labor migrants.

Keywords: statistics, demography, Ottoman Armenian population, Cilicia, 1909 Adana Massacres, Armenian Genocide.

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Introduction

The massacre of Armenians in the city of Adana, which escalated into a series of anti-Armenian pogroms across the Adana Vilayet in April 1909, has been characterized by many scholars as a "dress rehearsal" for the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923.[1] Similar to the Armenian Genocide, estimates of Armenian casualties in the 1909 Adana massacres vary significantly. Armenian sources report death tolls as high as 20,000 to 25,000, whereas official Turkish data estimates the number of Armenian deaths at approximately 4,000 to 5,000.[2]

Most scholarly research on the 1909 Adana massacres has focused on general estimates, typically ranging from 20,000 to 25,000 casualties,[3] with some estimates extending up to 30,000.[4] Some studies present conflicting figures from Armenian and Turkish sources without drawing definitive conclusions.[5]

In this article, I will provide an estimate of the number of Armenians killed and examine the demographic impact of the 1909 Adana massacres on the permanent Armenian population of Cilicia by analyzing detailed statistical data from primary sources.

Estimates of the Armenian Death Toll from the 1909 Adana Massacres

Detailed statistics on the Armenians who died in the massacres, broken down by regions of Cilicia, are presented in a 1909 report by Hakob Papikian, a member of the committee established by the Ottoman Parliament to investigate the Adana massacres,[6] and in another

1 Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia* (Providence-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), 181; Bedross Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana; Revolution and Violence in the Early Twentieth Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022), 3.

2 Fuat Dündar, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question (1878–1918)* (New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers, 2010), 144.

3 See, for example, Dadrian – 25,000 (Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide,* 181), Kévorkian – 25,000 (Raymond H. Kévorkian, "The Cilician Massacres, April 1909," in *Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces, Volume 7: Armenian Cilicia*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian and Simon Payaslian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2008), 353); Der Matossian – exceeding 15,000 in Adana Vilayet alone (Der Matossian, *The Horrors of Adana,* 132).

4 Azat Hambaryan – 30,000 (Azat Hambaryan, «*Կիլիկիայի 1909 թ. հայկական կոտորածները*» [Armenian Massacres in Cilicia in 1919], *Patma-banasirakan Handes* 4 (1988): 25); Ruben Gasparyan – 30,000 (Ruben Gasparyan, *Կիլիկիահայությունը 20-րդ դարի սկզբին* [Cilician Armenians at the Beginning of 20th century] (Yerevan: Institute of History of NAS RA, 1999), 43-46); Arpine Bablumyan – above 30,000 (Arpine Bablumyan, «*1909 թ. Ադանայի և Հալեպի վիլայեթներում տեղի ունեցած կոտորածների ժողովրդագրական հետևանքները*» [Demographic Changes after 1909 Massacres in Adana and Aleppo Vilayets], *Ts'eghaspanagitakan handes* 1, no. 1 (2013): 17).

5 Dündar, *Crime of Numbers,* 144-145.

6 *Ադանայի եղեռնը. Տեղեկագիր Յակոբ Պապիկեանի* (Օսմանեան երեսփոխան Էսիրնէի), հայացուց՝ Յակոբ Սարգիսեան [Adana Crime. Report by Hakob Papikian (The Deputy of the Ottoman Parliament from Edirne). Translated by Hakob Sarkisian] (Constantinople, 1919), 48.

report published by writer and publicist Hakob Terzian in "Cilicia Disaster" (1912).[7] A further study documenting these casualties is "History of Armenian Adana," written by Armenian researcher Byuzand Yeghiaian.[8] Additionally, Abraham Gulkhandanian, an Armenian public figure and member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, estimated the number of victims in his article series titled "Adana Massacres," published in the "Horizon" newspaper (Tiflis) in 1910 under the pen name "Erminio."[9] The 1911 report by Jacques Sayapalian, the investigator-delegate of the "Widow Care ("Ayriakhnam") Commission," contains important information on the Armenian population in some settlements in Cilicia before and after the atrocities.[10]

Papikian's and Terzian's statistics share several common features, although Terzian references a report from the Investigative Special Group established by the National Administration of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople to investigate the massacres.[11] Yeghiaian's statistics are compiled from the aforementioned sources as well as others (unfortunately, the author does not specify all the sources used). Gulkhandanian's calculations are independent, based on various sources and information extracted from the press.

Below, we present the data compiled by Papikian, Terzian, Gulkhandanian, and Yeghiaian in a comparative table:

7 Hakob Terzian, *Կիլիկիոյ աղէտը. ականատեսի նկարագրութիւններ, 5 հատորով (պատկերազարդ)* [Cilicia Disaster: The Testimonies of Eyewitness in 5 volumes (illustrated)](Constantinople, 1912). All references are from the 1964 edition (Hakob Terzian, *Կիլիկիոյ աղէտը (պատկերազարդ)* [Cilicia Disaster (illustrated)] (Beirut, 1964), 243-245.

8 Byuzand Yeghiaian, *Ադանայի Հայոց պատմութիւն: Պատմագրական, եղեռնագրական, ազատագրական, մշակութային, ազգագրական, վաւերագրական, ժամանակագրական* [The History of the Armenian Adana. Historical, Liberational, Ethnographic, Documentary, Chronological] (Antelias, 1970), 268.

9 The series of articles of Abraham Gyulkhandanian in complete: Erminio, «Ադանայի ջարդերը» [Adana Massacres], *Horizon* (Tiflis), 1910, nos. 22, 24, 27, 33, 39, 40, 42, 45, 47, 52, 54, 55, 56, 64, 66, 72, 73. For the examination of the Armenian death toll question by the author, see nos. 64, 66, 72, 73.

10 *Տեղեկագիր այրիախնամ Ցանձնաժողովի. 1910 սեպտ. 11- 1912 սեպտ. 11: Ցաւելուած տեղեկագիր, քննիչ- պատուիրակ Պ. Ժագ Սայապալեանի* [Report of Widow Care Commission. 1910, September 11 – 1912, September 11. Attached – Report by Jacques Sayapalian] (Ghalatia, 1912).

11 Terzian, *Cilicia Disaster*, 243. These data were also used by Western authors. See, for example, *Turkish Atrocities. The Young Turks and the Truth about Holocaust at Adana in Asia Minor, during April 1909. Written and compiled in April, 1911 by Ferriman Duckett* (London, 1913, Yerevan: AGMI, 2009), 57.

Table 1. Estimates of the Armenian Death Toll from the 1909 Adana Massacres

	Administrative unit	Papikian[12]	Terzian[13]	Gulkhandanian[14]	Yeghiaian[15]
1	Adana Sanjak				
1.1	Adana city and its surrounding areas	9,780	9,780	6,682[16]	13,913[17]
1.2	Tangri Verdi	1,280	1,280		
1.3	Msis, Abdoglu, Sai Kechit	850	850		850
1.4	Karaisali, Hamidie, Karatash, Nal-Gulag, Isa-Hacili	1,558	1,558		1,558
	Total Adana Sanjak	**13,468**	**13,468**	**6,682**	**16,321**
2	Jebel Bereket Sanjak				
2.1	Osmanie (Osmanie, Erzin, Dort Yol, Ocakli, Yozerli, Najarli)	1,111	1,171	5,800[18]	1,171
2.2	Ekbez- Entilli (Armenian populated settlements of Hassa and Islahiye kazas)	1,277	1,577		1,577
2.3	Kurtlar (Hasanbeili-Bakhche)	3,623	2,623		2,623
	Total Jebel Bereket Sanjak	**6,011**	**5,371**	**5,800**	**5,371**
3	Mersin Sanjak	–	–	-	642
4	Kozan Sanjak	–	–	967[19]	–
5	Marash Sanjak	–	1,151	777[20]	783
6	Antioch, Beylan Jisr i-Shugur kazas	-		1,650[21]	368
	Grand total	**19,479**	**19,990**	**15,876**[22]	**23,485**

12 *Adana Crime. Report by Hakob Papikian*, 48.

13 Terzian, *Cilicia Disaster*, 243-245.

14 Erminio, «Ադանայի ջարդերը» [Adana Massacres], *Horizon* (Tiflis), 1910, no. 73, 3.

15 Yeghiaian, *The History of the Armenian Adana*, 268.

16 Including 4,825 locals, 1,857 migrants.

17 Including 9,780 in Adana suburbs, 2,762 in guest-inns, 1,371 neighboring Armenian populated villages.

18 Including 4,542 locals, 1,258 migrants.

19 Including 488 locals, 479 migrants.

20 Including 443 locals, 334 migrants.

21 Including 1,150 locals, 500 migrants.

22 Including 4,428 migrants. Gulkhandanian rounds up the number of direct victims to approximately 15,000. He then adds to this figure an estimated 8,000 individuals who perished due to hunger, disease, and homelessness in the aftermath of the conflict, as well as about 500 people who were kidnapped, forcibly converted to Islam, or reported missing. Consequently, Gulkhandanian's total estimate of casualties resulting from the Adana massacres reaches 23,500.

According to the sources presented in Table 1, estimates of Armenian deaths from the 1909 Adana massacres vary: 16,000 (Gulkhandanian), 20,000 (Papikian and Terzian), and 23,500 (Yeghiaian). The highest number of casualties was recorded in the city of Adana and surrounding settlements within the Adana Sanjak. Papikian and Terzian estimate 13,468 deaths in this area, representing 67-69% of the total. Gulkhandanian's estimate for this region is 6,682 (42%), while Yeghiaian reports 16,321 (69%).

The Jebel-Bereket Sanjak was the next most affected. Papikian estimates 6,011 deaths (31%), Terzian reports 5,371 (27%), Gulkhandanian provides 5,800 (36.5%), and Yeghiaian estimates 5,371 (23%).

Thus, approximately 95% of the total victims were registered within the Adana Vilayet. Papikian estimates 19,479 deaths, Terzian 18,839, Gulkhandanian 12,482, and Yeghiaian 21,692. This data indicates that the Armenian population of the Adana and Jebel-Bereket Sanjaks experienced the most significant demographic impact from the pogroms.

There is a significant discrepancy between the death toll reported by the Ottoman government and the figures provided by Armenian sources, with Ottoman estimates being approximately 4-5 times lower. According to Papikian's report, the Young Turk government officially announced a death toll of 6,000, which included 1,900 Muslims.[23] An Ottoman list from August 1909 documented 5,243 Christian victims, distributed as follows: 2,740 in Adana City (of whom 2,093 were Armenians), 422 in other regions of the Sanjak (Hamidie – 378, Karaisali – 44), 1,415 in the Jebel-Bereket Sanjak (Bakhche – 752, Osmanie – 372, Erzin – 208, Islahie – 50, Hassa – 33), 476 in the Mersin Sanjak (Tarson – 463, Elvanli – 13), and 190 in the Kozan Sanjak (Sis – 114, Hadjin – 14, Kars Bazar – 60, Feke (Vahka) – 2).[24]

Another Ottoman parliamentary investigative commission recorded the names of 4,196 Christians and 1,487 Muslims (including policemen and soldiers) who died in the massacres.[25]

Summarizing the official Ottoman data, the estimated Armenian death toll from the massacres was no more than 5,000, with the highest number of victims reported in the Adana and Jebel-Bereket Sanjaks.

The Ottoman authorities justified their lower casualty estimates by referencing Ottoman statistics on the total Armenian population in Adana Vilayet. They argued that the reported figures of 20,000-30,000 casualties in Armenian and foreign newspapers were "imaginary," claiming that the entire Armenian population of Adana Vilayet was no more than 48,000.[26]

To counter these claims and support the higher casualty estimates, Gulkhandanian highlights five key factors:

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23 *Adana Crime. Report by Hakob Papikian,* 17.

24 Raymond H. Kévorkian, *La Cilicie (1909–1921): des Massacres d'Adana au mandat français* (Paris, Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine, 1999), 100.

25 Dundar, *Crime of Numbers*, 144.

26 Hrachik Simonyan, *Հայերի զանգվածային կոտորածները Կիլիկիայում (1909 թ. ապրիլ)* [Massacres of Armenians in Cilicia (April 1909)] (Yerevan: YSU Publishing, 2009), 202.

1. **Flaws in Data Collection:** The Ottoman data collection system was generally flawed and, in this case, further compromised by the authorities' interest in underreporting the true number of victims.

2. **Unregistered Victims:** Many victims were buried without religious rites and therefore were not recorded in church records.

3. **Hidden Graves:** Numerous hidden graves of Armenian victims were found outside settlements, "in fields, valleys, forests, the sea, rivers, and other remote locations."

4. **Displacement of Survivors:** The flight of many survivors to other regions affected casualty calculations, as refugees were often mistakenly counted as killed or missing.

5. **Presence of Labor Migrants:** Many labor migrants from other regions of the Ottoman Empire were present in Cilicia and became frequent targets of the perpetrators.[27]

Similarly, Papikian challenges the Ottoman data with two main arguments: first, that Ottoman registers were unreliable due to the authorities' interest in concealing the true number of Christian casualties; and second, that the official count did not include Armenian labor migrants present in Adana Vilayet during the massacres. He notes that the atrocities occurred in spring – the peak period for work and trade – when between 40,000 and 50,000 laborers, artisans, and merchants from various provinces of Asia Minor and Western Armenia gathered in Adana, with at least half being Armenians.[28]

Papikian further supports his argument by recounting a conversation with Zihni Pasha, who was appointed governor of Adana Vilayet immediately after the massacres. Initially, Zihni claimed it was impossible for the Armenian death toll in Adana to have reached 15,000, citing official Ottoman statistics that suggested no more than 13,000 Armenians lived in the city. However, Papikian countered this assertion by reminding Pasha of his self-proclaimed "success story" in organizing the transportation of approximately 10,000 Armenian labor migrants who had survived the massacres and had set up tent encampments near Adana's central railway station.[29]

Papikian's stance is supported by Terzian, who asserts that the actual Armenian population of Adana City before the massacres was approximately 30,000, including labor migrants. In contrast, the official Ottoman census data of 1908 lists the recorded number of Armenians as 17,844.[30]

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27 Erminio, «Ադանայի ջարդերը» [The Adana Massacres], *Horizon*, 23 March 1910, no. 64, 2. At the same time, Gulkhandanian notes that these factors have been partially neutralized, and a more realistic calculation of the number of victims has been made possible through data collected by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, commissions sent to Cilicia by various humanitarian aid societies and local religious structures, and information compiled from press publications.

28 *Adana Crime. Report by Hakob Papikian*, 18: Adana sanjak alone hosted between 12,000 and 15,000 labour migrants each year, who were engaged in cotton cultivation. See «Ադանա» [Adana], *Zhamanak,* 10/23 April 1909, no. 147. Terzian reports that the number of labor migrants coming to Adana vilayet varied with the seasons, averaging around 20,000 migrants. This number increased during the winter months, as artisans and retailers arrived from other regions of Cilicia and neighboring areas (Hadjin, Marash, Caesarea, etc.). In the spring, the number rose further with the influx of Armenian and Kurdish workers from regions of Western Armenia (Kharberd, Tigranakert, Mush, Erzeroum, etc.). See Hakob Terzian, *Ադանայի կեանքը* [Life in Adana] (Constantinople, 1909), 6.

29 *Adana Crime. Report by Hakob Papikian*, 18.

30 Terzian, *Life in Adana*, 7.

Further corroborating the significant presence of Armenians in the region, Gulkhandanian reports that 20,000-30,000 Armenian labor migrants were in Adana Vilayet before the massacres, having come from distant areas to work on farms owned by both Armenian and Muslim landowners.[31]

Hambardzum Ashchian, an eyewitness to the massacres, provides an even higher estimate, stating that approximately 40,000-50,000 labor migrants from across the Ottoman Empire arrived in Adana each spring. This influx, combined with the permanent population, suggests that over 100,000 Armenians were present in the region during the pogroms. Ashchian asserts that the death toll was proportional, affecting both Armenians from other provinces and local residents.[32]

According to sources, during the first wave of massacres in Adana City (April 1-4, 1909), markets and inns (such as Acem-khan, Duz-khan, Haydach-Oglu-khan, and Deli-Mehemed-khan), which housed many Armenian merchants and artisans from other regions, were primary targets. Statistics from an Armenian investigative commission report that 2,762 people were killed in these *khans*. In comparison, 3,974 individuals from Adana's permanent Armenian population were killed, making migrants approximately 41% of the total fatalities in Adana City.[33]

The massacres had a particularly severe impact on labor migrants in the rural areas of Adana Sanjak, with estimates placing the death toll among these migrants between 1,280[34] and 1,371.[35] Specific examples illustrate the extent of the violence. On farms located about 15 km from Adana, 194 out of 200 Armenian labor migrants were killed. In Abdoglu village, which had a permanent Armenian population of 66 households, 180 local Armenians and 242 migrant Armenians were killed. In Sheikh Murad, with a permanent Armenian population of 60 households, around 200 Armenians were killed. The Muslim village of Gat-koy saw all 10-15 families of migrant Armenians living and working there massacred. On the Amir-Tatman farm in an Adana neighborhood, 180 out of 188 migrants (including 20 Greeks and 168 Armenians) were killed.[36]

According to various calculations by Armenian authors, between 5,000 and 10,000 Armenian labor migrants were killed during the massacres in Adana. Thus, Gulkhandanian estimates that approximately 15,000 Armenians died in the Cilician massacres of 1909, with about 4,500 to 5,000 – one-third of the total fatalities – being Armenians from other provinces.[37]

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31 Erminio, «Ադանայի ջարդերը» [The Adana Massacres], *Horizon*, 23 March 1910, no. 64, 1.

32 Hambardzum Ashchian, *Ատանայի եղեռնը և Գոնիայէ յուշեր (պատմութեան համար)* [The Adana Calamity and Memoirs from Konia] (New York: «Kochnak», 1950), 15.

33 H. Shahpazian, «Ինքնապաշտպանութիւնը Կիլիկեան աղէտին մէջ» [Self-Defence in Cilicia Calamity], *Azatamart* (Constantinople), 2/15 April 1910, no.249, 1. Later, these data were used by Terzian and other authors. See Terzian, *Cilicia Disaster*, 137; Yeghiaian, *The History of the Armenian Adana*, 232.

34 Shahpazian, "Self-Defence in Cilicia Calamity."

35 Terzian, *Cilicia Disaster*, 137.

36 Erminio, «Ադանայի ջարդերը» [The Adana Massacres], *Horizon*, 23 March 1910, no. 64, 2.

37 Erminio, «Ադանայի ջարդերը» [The Adana Massacres], *Horizon*, 2 April 1910, no. 73, 3:

According to Papikian, the majority of the 20,000-25,000 Armenian labor migrants who had come to Adana Vilayet from other regions were massacred.[38]

Shahpazian's calculations indicate that approximately 8,147 Armenians were killed in the massacres within Adana Sanjak, including about 3,500 labor migrants. Shahpazian also reports that in other regions of Adana Vilayet, 10,293 Armenians were killed, with the majority being labor migrants. He states, "*Armenian labor migrants were killed in 254 Turkish villages and other places... These massacred individuals included labor migrants and some craftsmen from Hadjin, Kharberd, Kapan-Maden, Furnuz, Erzeroum, Everek, Yerepagan, Antioch, Keavur-Tagh, Kemerek, Sivas, Adiaman, Behesni, Malatia, Sgherd, Urfa, Mush, Alpistan, Tivrik, and other places*."[39]

Ottoman and Armenian Statistics on the Permanent Armenian Population of Adana Vilayet Before and After the Massacres

A comparison of Ottoman and Armenian statistics concerning the permanent (excluding labor migrants) Armenian population of Adana Vilayet reveals that the violence did not cause a significant reduction in the Armenian presence. Ottoman records from 1906/07 and 1914 indicate that the overall Armenian population in Adana Vilayet even increased by approximately 5% during this period. Specifically, the Armenian population in Adana Sanjak grew by around 8%, while in the Jebel-Bereket Sanjak, it declined by only about 1%. The most notable decrease was observed in the Mersin Sanjak, where Ottoman statistics report a reduction of 1,127 individuals, or roughly 21% (see Table 2).

At the same time, it should be noted that the Ottoman authorities systematically undercounted the Armenian population, resulting in a discrepancy between recorded and actual figures. The actual number of permanent Armenian residents in Adana city and other settlements prior to 1909 significantly exceeded the officially recorded figures. This discrepancy allowed officials conducting subsequent censuses to register previously uncounted individuals in place of those who had perished, thus maintaining population figures and ensuring the continuous collection of state taxes and duties.[40]

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38 *Adana Crime. Report by Hakob Papikian*, 18.

39 Shahpazian, "Self-Defence in Cilicia Calamity."

40 The phenomenon of statistical growth of the Armenian population after the massacres was recorded in other Armenian-populated regions as well. In one of his editorials, Misak Gochunian, the editor of the Constantinople-based newspaper "Zhamanak" newspaper, recounts a noteworthy incident that took place after the Hamidian massacres in Urfa (Edessa). According to the journalist, "*When the massacres in Edessa happened (October 1895), more than 4,000 Armenians died in that merciless carnage. In order to understand how many Armenians perished, the local authorities carried out a census of Armenians and, surprisingly, despite the destruction of so many Armenians, not only did the number of Armenians not decrease, but, on the contrary, it increased by 5,000.*" See Kasim (Misak Gochunian), *Օրուան մտածումներ (1908-1913)* [Daily Toughts] (Istanbul: Jamanak, 2014), 434). The author adds that "the phenomenon is the same for every province' and points out the reason: *"The common people, fearing that new distribution of army conscription and/or state taxes will emerge as a result of these statistics, avoided registration"* (ibid, 435).

Table 2. The Armenian Population of Adana Vilayet According to Ottoman Government Statistics from 1906/07 and 1914

№	Administrative unit	1906/07[41]	1914[42]	Increase /decrease,%
1	Adana Sanjak	16,325	17,738	+ 7.9
2	Mersin Sanjak	5,391	4,264	- 20.9
3	Jebel Bereket Sanjak	14,132	13,920	- 0.9
4	Kozan Sanjak	18,854	21,556	+14.3
	Total Adana Vilayet	**54,702**	**57,478**	**+5**

A comparison of Armenian ecclesiastical-diocesan statistics from 1902 (Ormanian) and 1913 ("Mshak") (see Table 3) reveals that the permanent Armenian population of Adana Vilayet increased by approximately 39% during this period. Specifically, the Armenian population in the area covered by the Adana diocese grew by about 47%.

Grigor Zohrap's analysis of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople's statistics from 1882 and 1912 further supports this trend, showing a rise in the number of Cilician Armenians. Zohrap's data indicate that the Armenian population in Cilicia grew by approximately 7% over this 30-year span, increasing from 380,000 to 407,000.[43]

Table 3. The Armenian Population of Adana Vilayet According to Statistics Compiled from Armenian Ecclesiastical Sources (1902–1913)

№	Administrative unit	1902 Ormanian[44]	1913 «Mshak»[45]	Increase / decrease,%
1	Adana diocese (Adana and Mersin Sanjaks, Osmanie, Bakhche and Islahie kazas of Jebel-Bereket Sanjak)	37,900	55,603	+46.7
2	Payas diocese (Dort-Yol (including Erzin) and Hassa kazas of Jebel Bereket Sanjak)	11,000	13,050	+18.6
3	Sis and Hadjin dioceses (Kozan Sanjak)	30,700	42,673	+39
	Total Adana Vilayet	**79,600**	**111,326**	**+39.8**

41 Including Catholic and Protestant Armenians. See Karpat, *Ottoman population 1830-1914*, 162.

42 Including Catholic and Protestant Armenians. See Karpat, *Ottoman population 1830-1914*, 172.

43 Marcel Léart, *La Question arménienne à la lumière des documents* (Paris: A Challamel, 1913), 62.

44 Including Catholic and Protestant Armenians (Malachia Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia: Her History, Doctrine, Rule, Discipline, Liturgy, Literature, and Existing Condition* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1912), 241, the distribution of data by dioceses is ours).

45 «Հայերը Կիլիկիայում» [Armenians in Cilicia], *Mshak* (Tiflis), 31 July 1913, no. 166, 2 (The distribution of data by dioceses is ours).

The comparison of statistics on the number of permanent Armenian residents in individual settlements before and after the 1909 massacres also reveals no significant decline in the demographic dynamics of the Armenian population in Adana Vilayet. On the contrary, it appears that the loss of the Armenian population was rapidly offset in the years following the massacres.

For instance, according to Jacques Sayapalian, the permanent Armenian population of Adana Sanjak was 21,850 in 1909 and 20,855 in 1912. Over these three years, the number of Armenians in the Sanjak decreased by only 995, or 4.5%. This decrease was confined to the villages within Adana Sanjak, while the Armenian population in the city itself remained stable.[46]

Additionally, French-Armenian researchers Kevorkian and Paboudjian, using statistics compiled in 1913 by the Catholicosate of Cilicia and archived in the Nubar Library in Paris, report the Armenian population of Adana Sanjak as 27,990, with 26,430 residing in the city of Adana[47] (see also Table 4).

Table 4. The Number of Armenians in the Settlements of Adana Sanjak According to Various Statistics

	Settlement	**1908 Serovbian**	**1911 Sayapalian**		**1914, Kevorkian-Paboudjian**
			1909 թ.	1911 թ.	
1	Adana city	17,844	20,000	20,000	26,430
2	Giavur-koy	190	-[48]	-	190
3	Abdoglu	340	500	150	340
4	Indjirlik	250	400	150	250
5	Msis	500	400	50	480
6	Sheikh Murad	160	300	300	300
7	Ceyhan (Hamidie)	418	250	205	-
	Total	**19,702**	**21,850**	**20,855**	**27,990**

46 *Report of Widow Care Commission*, 78-83:

47 Raymond H. Kevorkian, Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Armeniens dans l'Empire ottoman a la veille du Genocide* (Paris, ARHIS, 1992), 267-271.

48 Giavur-koy constituted one of Adana's suburbs; consequently, Sayapalian incorporates its Armenian inhabitants into the aggregate population figures for the city of Adana.

Conclusions

Analysis of primary source evidence yields the following key conclusions regarding the Armenian death toll and demographic impact on the permanent Armenian population of Adana Vilayet resulting from the 1909 massacres:

1. **Casualty Numbers and Distribution:** According to reliable data from primary sources, approximately 15,000 to 18,000 Armenians were killed in the 1909 Adana massacres, with at least one-third of these victims (5,000 to 7,000) being labor migrants. Estimates suggest that more than half of the fatalities (8,000 to 10,000) could have been labor migrants. This distribution indicates that the burden of human loss was shared relatively evenly between the permanent Armenian population of Cilicia and those who had migrated from Western Armenia and other regions of the Ottoman Empire.
2. **Undercounting of Victims:** The Ottoman authorities undercounted the victims of the 1909 Adana massacres. This undercounting resulted from both general flaws in the Ottoman data collection system and, in this case, the authorities' interest in underreporting the true number of victims, which further compromised the accuracy of the figures.
3. **Economic Recovery:** Following the massacres, Adana and other regions of Cilicia experienced relatively rapid economic recovery, driven by substantial foreign investments in infrastructure (including the Berlin-Baghdad railway), industry, trade, and agriculture. Consequently, the population loss in the city and Sanjak of Adana was quickly offset by an influx of new Armenian labor migrants.
4. **Impact on Permanent Population:** As a result of the aforementioned factors, the 1909 massacres did not significantly alter the recorded and actual numbers of the permanent Armenian population in Adana Vilayet, as indicated by both Ottoman and Armenian statistics.

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THE NAMELESS CRIME: REFLECTIONS ON THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF GENOCIDE

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Abstract

The term "genocide," introduced by Raphael Lemkin, represents a groundbreaking milestone in the conceptualization and prevention of mass atrocities. Genocide is uniquely defined by the deliberate intent to annihilate specific human groups, earning its designation as the "crime of crimes" due to its profound legal and moral implications. Lemkin's work unified disparate historical and linguistic precedents into a comprehensive legal framework, addressing the prior absence of a formal term for such heinous acts.

Although genocide was once referred to as "a crime without a name," historical evidence reveals that many cultures and languages had long acknowledged and described this phenomenon using terms such as *Völkermord*, *folkmord*, and "the murder of a nation." Lemkin's true innovation lay in synthesizing these fragmented concepts into a single, cohesive definition, firmly rooted in international legal discourse to promote recognition and accountability.

This study explores the historical, linguistic, and legal evolution of the term "genocide," emphasizing its enduring universal relevance and the challenges surrounding its classification in modern international debates.

Keywords: Raphael Lemkin, mass atrocities, barbarism, vandalism, legal terminology, linguistic precedents, *Völkermord, folkmord*.

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Introduction

The creation of the term "genocide" by lawyer Raphael Lemkin is one of the most pivotal developments in the field of genocide studies. Central to this concept is its distinction from other crimes due to the specific presence of intent to destroy ethnic, religious, and racial groups. This intent elevates genocide to the status of a particularly serious international crime, often referred to as the "crime of crimes."[1]

Lemkin emphasized its unique nature, describing it as a crime that targets the foundations of civilization and threatens the collective interests of humanity.[2] In this regard, genocide is not merely a crime against a single nation or group but one of universal significance. This global dimension explains why genocide is widely regarded as the gravest crime against humanity.[3] Given this gravity, the classification of mass atrocities as genocide continues to generate debate. Modern international discussions often revolve around whether specific events meet the legal definition of genocide. Unfortunately, these debates are frequently influenced by political considerations, sidelining the legal and humanitarian dimensions of genocide prevention and punishment.

It's important to understand the historical and also legal background of this crime and its use. Understanding this historical context is crucial for appreciating the universal significance of the term. The concept of genocide is rooted in a long-standing recognition of the need to protect human groups from targeted annihilation, a principle that transcends political interests and speaks to the shared moral and legal responsibilities of the global community.

From Barbarity to Genocide

Lemkin's journey toward defining genocide did not begin in 1944; it was shaped by years of observation and study. A key milestone in this process was the Madrid Conference of 1933, where Lemkin introduced proposals concerning the crimes of "barbarity" and "vandalism."[4] These terms, which were not invented by Lemkin, served as precursors to the concept of genocide. Lemkin argued for the establishment of a multilateral convention that would categorize the destruction of human groups as an international crime, laying the groundwork for the eventual definition of genocide.

The term "Barbaros" originates from the Greek word "βάρβαρος" (plural: "βάρβαροι,"

1 Robert Cryer, Håkan Friman, Darryl Robinson, and Elizabeth Wilmshurst, *An Introduction to International Criminal Law and Procedure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 203.

2 AJHS, Raphael Lemkin Collection, P-154, Box 7, Folder 3, Stop Genocide Now, 4.

3 Samuel Totten, *Teaching and Learning About Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity: Fundamental Issues and Pedagogical Approaches* (Charlotte, NC: IAP, 2019), 33.

4 Raphael Lemkin, "Acts Constituting a General (Transnational) Danger Considered as Offences Against the Law of Nations," Special Report presented to the 5th Conference for the Unification of Penal Law in Madrid (14 -20 October 1933), http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/madrid1933-english.htm , accessed 01.05.2024.

"barbaroi"). In ancient Greece, it was used to describe those who did not speak Greek or adhere to classical Greek customs. The term extended to include Greeks living on the fringes of the Greek world, who had their own distinct dialects.[5] The Greek historian Herodotus was the first to provide an explanation of this term, linking it to the linguistic and cultural distinctions perceived by the Greeks.[6]

In Ancient Rome, the term "Barbaros" was adopted and applied to non-Roman peoples and tribes, such as the Berbers, Germans, Celts, Iberians, Thracians, Illyrians, and Sarmatians. By the later period of the Roman Empire, "barbarian" referred broadly to foreigners who lacked Greek and Roman traditions, particularly the tribes that posed military threats to Rome's borders. Over time, scholars expanded the term's use to describe attacks on cultures deemed "civilized" by external enemies.[7]

In modern usage, "barbarian" often conveys a metaphorical sense, describing actions considered cruel, savage, or primitive. A "barbarian" thus refers to individuals characterized by ignorance, rudeness, or the destruction of cultural values. This evolution of meaning likely influenced Raphael Lemkin's adoption of the term. He defined "barbarism" as a crime directed against human life, aimed at destroying a specific national, religious, or social group.[8]

The term "vandalism" similarly carries historical and symbolic weight. It refers to the intentional or senseless damage or destruction of property, both private and public.[9] This term is rooted in the history of the East Germanic tribe known as the Vandals, who ravaged Gaul, Spain, and North Africa and famously sacked Rome in 455 AD. The Latin term "Vandalus," is believed by many to have given rise to the modern name of Andalusia, Spain's southernmost region. The Vandals, ultimately defeated by the Romans at the Battle of Tricamarum in 533 AD, became emblematic of those who destroy objects of cultural or aesthetic value.[10]

This historical association with destruction and savagery made the terms "barbarism" and "vandalism" fitting precursors to Lemkin's conceptual framework. Both terms underscore acts of violence or destruction targeting not just individuals but the cultural and societal fabric of human groups.

During the Age of Enlightenment (17th–18th centuries), the legacy of Rome was idealized, while the Goths and Vandals were vilified as the destroyers of its civilization. In

5 Panagiotis Filos, "The Dialectal Variety of Epirus," in *Studies in Ancient Greek Dialects: From Central Greece to the Black Sea,* ed. Emilio Crespo, Georgios Giannakis; Emilio Crespo, Georgios Giannakis, Panagiotis Filos (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 218.

6 Jan Willem van Henten, "Martyrdom, Jesus' Passion and Barbarism," in *Violence, Scripture, and Textual Practice in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Ra'anan S. Boustan, Alex P. Jassen, and Calvin J. Roetzel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 238.

7 Sarah Pruitt, "Where did the word "barbarian" come from?" https://www.history.com/news/where-did-the-word- barbarian-come-from, accessed 28.06.2024.

8 Raphael Lemkin, "Acts Constituting."

9 Oxford English Dictionary, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/vandalism, accessed 28.06.2024.

10 Julia Cresswell, *Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 472.

1794, French Bishop Henri Grégoire de Blois coined the term "vandalisme" to describe the widespread destruction of artworks during the French Revolution. The term quickly gained traction, adopted by journalists across Europe within months and officially included in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* by 1798. By the early 19th century, "vandalism" had become a universally recognized term in all major European languages, symbolizing the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage.[11]

It is likely that Raphael Lemkin drew upon this historical context when he used "vandalism" to define a new category of crime. At the 1933 Madrid Conference, Lemkin proposed the term to describe the destruction of cultural and artistic works that reflect the unique genius and achievements of a collective in fields such as science, art, and literature. Lemkin argued that the cultural contributions of any group are part of humanity's collective wealth and that their destruction harms all of humanity.[12] Thus, he asserted, the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage should be recognized as an act of vandalism against global culture.

Despite the depth of Lemkin's arguments, his proposals were not accepted at the Madrid Conference.[13] Over the following years, he persisted in advocating for the recognition of such crimes at international legal conferences in Budapest, Copenhagen, Paris, Amsterdam, and Cairo. While his presentations were well-received in academic and legal circles, they failed to result in significant legislative action.[14] Lemkin later attributed this failure to the prevailing view among legal experts that such crimes were too rare to justify new international legislation.[15]

Undeterred by these setbacks, Lemkin continued his work to define the destruction of ethnic, religious, and racial groups as a distinct international crime. Even during the Second World War, he persisted in advocating for his proposals on "barbarism" and "vandalism." In a speech to the North Carolina Bar Association in May 1942, Lemkin argued that adopting his Madrid proposals could help prevent future wars.[16]

In June 1942, Lemkin accepted an invitation to serve as chief consultant for the U.S. Board of Economic Warfare, chaired at the time by Vice President Henry Wallace. This position provided Lemkin with a unique opportunity to directly address President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He submitted a one-page proposal advocating for an international treaty

11 Andy Merrills and Richard Miles, *The Vandals* (Chichester, Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 9-10.

12 Lemkin, "Acts Constituting."

13 Brendan January, *Genocide: Modern Crimes Against Humanity* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books, 2007), 25.

14 William Korey, "Lemkin's Passion: Origin and Fulfillment," in *Rafał Lemkin: A Hero of Humankind*, ed. Agnieszka Bieńczyk-Missala and Sławomir Dębski (Warsaw: The Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2010), 79.

15 William Schabas, *Genocide in International Law: The Crimes of Crimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 30.

16 Raffael Scheck, "Raphaël Lemkin's Derivation of Genocide from His Analysis of Nazi-Occupied Europe," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 13, no. 1 (2019): 124. https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.13.1.1584124.

to outlaw "barbarism and vandalism."[17] Reflecting on this period in his autobiography, Lemkin wrote: "I was urging speed. It was still possible to save at least a part of the people."[18]

President Franklin D. Roosevelt responded affirmatively to Raphael Lemkin's proposal for an international treaty to address crimes of "barbarism" and "vandalism."[19] However, with World War II raging, Roosevelt advised patience, as the creation of such a treaty would take years. Lemkin, however, was far from satisfied. In his autobiography, he expressed his frustration, writing: "When the rope is already around the neck of the victim and strangulation is imminent, isn't the word 'patience' an insult to reason and nature?"[20]

During this same period, from 1942 to 1944, Lemkin was writing his seminal book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*.[21] Published in November 1944 by the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, the work marked a significant shift in Lemkin's approach. In this work, he introduced the term "genocide" as a replacement for the crimes he had previously described as "barbarism" and "vandalism." Lemkin explained in the book: "By 'genocide,' we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word, coined by the author to denote an old practice in its modern development, is made from the ancient Greek word genos (race, tribe) and the Latin -cide (killing)."[22]

Lemkin's linguistic background[23] likely influenced this shift. Having studied philology at the University of Lviv in 1920 before specializing in law, Lemkin believed in the transformative power of language.[24] The term "genocide," with its brevity and stark implications, was designed to shock and resonate deeply with audiences. Lemkin likely recognized that this new, concise term would have a greater impact than the more abstract concepts of "barbarism" and "vandalism."

What is particularly notable is that, with the introduction of "genocide," Lemkin abandoned his earlier proposals related to "barbarism" and "vandalism." This shift is evident in a 1946 article in which Lemkin argued that, prior to his definition, the crime

17 Paul R. Bartrop, *Modern Genocide: A Documentary and Reference Guide* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2019), 6.

18 Raphael Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin*, ed. Donna-Lee Frieze (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 114.

19 Paul R. Bartrop, *Genocide: The Basics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 2.

20 Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial,*

21 Steven L. Jacobs, "Raphael Lemkin," in *Encyclopedia of Human Rights*, ed. David P Forsythe (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 425.

22 Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for Redress* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.

23 John Cooper, *Raphael Lemkin and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 15.

24 Raphael Lemkin grew up speaking Russian, Yiddish, and Polish as his first languages. During his early childhood, he became fluent in Hebrew and German, along with local dialects of Russian and Belarusian. By early adulthood, he had expanded his linguistic repertoire to include French, English, Spanish, and Italian, showcasing his exceptional aptitude for languages. See Douglas Irvin-Erickson, "Raphaël Lemkin, Genocide, Colonialism, Famine, and Ukraine," *East-West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 8, no. 1 (2021): 194.

of genocide had no name. He even referenced Winston Churchill's description of the atrocities committed during World War II as a 'crime without a name."[25]

From the History of Word "Genocide"

Raphael Lemkin sought to justify the creation of the term "genocide" by highlighting the absence of a precise definition for the crime it represented. He argued that, prior to his efforts, such atrocities lacked a distinct name, which hindered their recognition and condemnation. Following its introduction, the term "genocide" quickly gained traction, being translated and adopted into multiple languages, thereby solidifying its place in both legal and public discourse.

However, this raises a critical question: Was this crime truly "without a name," as Lemkin suggested, or were there existing definitions of similar crimes prior to 1941, during and even before the Second World War? Lemkin's assertion was supported by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's famous statement during a radio broadcast in August 1941, in which he declared, "We are in the presence of a crime without a name."[26]

This evolution underscores Lemkin's strategic adaptation to ensure that the destruction of human groups would be recognized as a distinct international crime. The creation of the term "genocide" not only solidified his legacy but also laid the groundwork for future legal and humanitarian efforts to prevent and punish such atrocities.

Even during the Armenian Genocide, the actions of the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians were described as crimes. On May 24, 1915, in a joint declaration, England, France, and Russia used the term "crime against humanity" to define these atrocities.[27] Similarly, the U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, remarked, "I am firmly convinced that this is the greatest crime of the ages."[28]

Years before Winston Churchill's famous broadcast in 1941 referring to a "crime without a name," he had already characterized the Armenian massacres as a 'holocaust."[29] In 1929, Churchill described these events as an "administrative holocaust" and noted, "This crime was planned and executed for political reasons. The opportunity presented itself for clearing Turkish soil of a Christian race."[30] Churchill's remarks demonstrate that he had been addressing the atrocities committed during the Armenian Genocide since their occurrence.

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25 Raphael Lemkin, "Genocide," *American Scholar* 15, no. 2 (1946): 227-230, http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/americanscholar1946.htm, accessed 25.06.2024.

26 John Heidenrich, *How to Prevent Genocide: A Guide for Policymakers, Scholars, and the Concerned Citizen* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001), 3.

27 Edita Gzoyan, "From War Crimes to Crimes against Humanity and Genocide: Turkish Responsibility after World War I," *Genocide Studies International* 15, no. 2 (2023): 81, https://doi.org/10.3138/GSI-2022-0020.

28 Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003), 421.

29 Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis*, *vol. 4, The Aftermath* (London: Thornton Butterworth 1929), 98.

30 Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis*, *vol. 5, The Aftermath* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), 158.

Furthermore, historical evidence indicates that the actions of the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians had already been defined in terms consistent with the concept, even before the term "genocide" was coined. Descriptions of the destruction of a people, nation, or race appeared in reports and accounts of the massacres and deportations of Armenians. Remarkably, such formulations were not limited to the genocide of 1915 but were also used to describe the mass killings of Armenians during the Hamidian massacres of 1894–1896, which were called "crimes against humanity and civilization."[31]

These early characterizations reflect the recognition, even at the time, of the systematic and targeted nature of the atrocities committed against the Armenian people. They underscore that the concept of genocide, though unnamed, was already understood and articulated in descriptions of the Armenian Genocide and earlier mass atrocities.

The German equivalent of the term "genocide," *Völkermord* (derived from *das Volk*, meaning "people" or "nation," and *der Mord*, meaning "murder"), has a history predating Raphael Lemkin's coining of the term "genocide." The concept and terminology were already in use by the late 19th century. The term *Völkermord* was used in 1831 by the German poet August von Platen-Hallermünde to describe the brutal suppression of the Polish revolution by the Russians.[32] Notably, in 1896, the German Protestant theologian Willibald Bäschelag, a professor at the University of Halle-Wittenberg, referenced the term in the magazine *Deutsch-evangelische Blätter*. In his article, Bäschelag wrote: "However much one wants to subtract and doubt, it is not possible anymore to deny that for some years now the Turkish government and population have undertaken a bloody endeavor that at least comes close to the attempt at *Völkermord*."[33]

By the late 19th century, the term had entered political discourse. For example, in 1899, Mustafa Reshid, a prominent Young Turk in exile in Europe, condemned the actions of the Ottoman Sultan, describing his regime as a *volkmörderischen Regierung* (genocidal government) in German. Reshid explicitly included the massacres of Armenians among the genocidal actions perpetrated by the Ottoman authorities.[34]

During World War I, German diplomats used the term *Völkermord* to describe the atrocities committed by the Ottoman Empire against Armenians.[35] In 1919, the German clergyman, public figure, and orientalist Johannes Lepsius used the term in the preface to the revised edition of his 1916 report *Der Todesgang des armenischen Volkes* [The Death March of the Armenian People]. Lepsius wrote: "However bad our plight may seem in

31 Gzoyan, "From War Crimes to Crimes against Humanity and Genocide," 81-82.

32 Kurt Jonassohn and Karin Solveig Björnson, *Genocide and Gross Human Rights Violations: In Comparative Perspective* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 140.

33 Stefan Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 55.

34 Matthias Bjørnlund, "'The Big Death': Finding Precise Terminology for the Murder of the Armenian People," April 23, 2015, *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, https://mirrorspectator.com/2015/04/23/the-big-death-finding- precise-terminology-for-the-murder-of-the-armenian-people/#_edn2, accessed 20.06.2024.

35 Wolfgang Gust, ed., *The Armenian Genocide: Evidence from the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915-1916* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014), 126.

our country, it cannot be compared to this Völkermord (genocide) on the conscience of the Young Turks."[36] Even today, *Völkermord* remains the standard term for genocide in German.

Lemkin was well aware of the term *Völkermord* and used it when appropriate. He even considered it synonymous with "genocide." This equivalence is evident in the German version of Chapter IX of his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe,* where Lemkin uses *Völkermord* in parentheses to clarify the meaning of "genocide."[37] However, rather than adopting the term directly, Lemkin sought to establish a new designation with his own authority.

Remarkably, the term *Völkermord* continues to be widely used in German to describe genocide. This is evident in the German Bundestag's resolution on June 2, 2016, recognizing the Armenian Genocide.[38] The resolution exclusively employs *Völkermord* without referencing the term "genocide." Similarly, on April 23, 2015, German President Joachim Gauck referred to the massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as genocide, using *Völkermord* and describing the Armenian tragedy as part of the "genozidale dynamik" (genocidal dynamics) of the Ottoman Empire.[39]

Before Lemkin's creation of the term "genocide," equivalent expressions also appeared in Swedish. The term "*folkmord*," the Swedish equivalent of genocide, was used by Swedish writer and missionary Maria Anholm in her 1906 book *Det dödsdömda folkets saga* [The Story of the Condemned People]. In this work, which recounts the Hamidian massacres of Armenians (1894– 1896), Anholm observed: "The fairy tale of Armenia is written with blood and tears. The *folkmord* we have witnessed is only the last act of a great bloody drama, the end of an age-old battle for faith and freedom. Until today, an Armenian die for his faith."[40]

Swedish politician Carl Hjalmar Branting, who served as Prime Minister of Sweden from 1920 to 1925, also employed the term *folkmord*. During a rally in Stockholm on March 26, 1917, Branting described the persecution of Armenians as an "organized and systematic *folkmord,* worse than anything ever seen in Europe."[41] The significance of

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36 Hans-Lukas Kieser, "Johannes Lepsius: theologian, humanitarian activist and historian of "Völkermord": an approach to a German biography (1858-1926)," in *Logos im Dialogos: Auf der Suche nach der Orthodoxie*, eds. Anna Briskina, Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan, and Axel Meissner (Berlin: LIT Verlag Münster, 2011), 225.

37 AJHS, Raphael Lemkin Collection, P-154, Box 5, Folder 8, "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe," by Lemkin, Chapter 9 of Manuscript (German) on Genocide, 1944, 1.

38 Deutscher Bundestag, "Erinnerung und Gedenken an den Völkermord an den Armeniern und anderen christlichen Minderheiten in den Jahren 1915 und 1916," https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/18/086/1808613.pdf, accessed 01.06.2024.

39 Joachim Gauck "Worte des Gedenkens im Anschluss an den ökumenischen Gottesdienst anlässlich der Erinnerung an den Völkermord an Armeniern, Aramäern und Pontos-Griechen," April 23, 2015, https://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Joachim-Gauck/Reden/2015/04/150423-Gedenken-Armenier.html, accessed 07.06.2024.

40 Maria Anholm, *Det dödsdömda folkets saga* (Stockholm: Aktienbolaget Ljus, 1906), 3.

41 Vahagn Avedian, red., *Armeniska Folkmordet 1915: Frågor och svar. Armeniska riksförbundet i Sverige* (Lund: Lund University, 2010), 29-30.

this usage was later highlighted in the Swedish Parliament's March 11, 2010 resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide, which explicitly credited Branting as the first person to use the term *folkmord* before Lemkin.[42]

During World War I, the Swedish military attaché to the Ottoman Empire, Einar af Wirsén, witnessed the Armenian Genocide firsthand. In his 1942 memoirs, Wirsén dedicated a section titled *Mordet på en nation* [Murder of a Nation] to the organized destruction of Armenians, detailing the methods and systematic nature of the killings.[43]

Lemkin's connection to Sweden further underscores the influence of Nordic perspectives on his work. After fleeing Poland following the Nazi invasion, Lemkin relocated to Sweden via Lithuania. From 1940 to 1941, he lived in Stockholm, where he taught at a local university college and learned Swedish, becoming proficient enough to lecture in the language after only five months. During his time in Sweden, Lemkin collected significant material for his seminal work, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe.*[44] This exposure to Swedish legal and cultural contexts likely deepened his understanding of terms like *folkmord* and their implications, contributing to his development of the concept of genocide.

> In 1917, Norwegian literary historian Christen Collin wrote:
>
> They (the Turks) were not content with driving a whole people from their dwellings into a foreign country, but they killed and sometimes even tortured the grown men, robbed and sold into slavery the most attractive women and children, and drove the rest into deserts or marshes, where the vast majority were to die. Read the story of this 'folkemord' (genocide) that began in April 1915.[45]

That same year, Norwegian writer Arne Garborg used the term "folkemorde" in his published diaries to describe the Armenian Genocide.[46]

Danish intellectual, linguist, and geographer Åge Meyer Benedictsen also employed the term "folkemord" in 1925.[47]

In Poland, before Raphael Lemkin's introduction of the term "genocide," similar expressions were already in use. In 1943, Krystyna Witulska, a member of the Polish resistance and the Polish Intelligence Service, described German atrocities in Poland as a cold-hearted genocide. She used the German word *Volksmord* and the Polish word

42 Swedish Parliament Resolution, March 11, 2010, http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/Sweden_Parliament_Resolution.php, accessed 07.06.2024.

43 Einar af Wirsén, *Minnen från fred och krig* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1942), 220-226.

44 Mark Klamberg, "Raphaël Lemkin in Stockholm – Significance for his Work on 'Axis Rule in Occupied Europe,'" *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 13, no 1 (2019): 64-87.

45 Christen Collin, *Verdenskrigen: og det store tidsskifte* (Kristiania, København : Gyldendalske, 1917), 161.

46 Arne Garborg, *Dagbok 1905-1923* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Company (W. Nygaard), 1926), 81.

47 Bjørnlund, "'The Big Death."

ludobójstwo.[48] In Polish, *ludo* means "people" and *zabójstwo* means "murder." Notably, *ludobójstwo* was employed even before World War II and later became widely used in Poland during trials of German war criminals after Lemkin's term "genocide" gained international recognition.[49]

The phrase "The Murder of a Nation" also appeared in English in 1918, when Henry Morgenthau, the U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, titled the 24th chapter of his memoir with this expression.[50] Morgenthau's accounts of the Armenian Genocide, including his attempts to save the Armenian people, were profoundly influential on Lemkin. After emigrating to the United States, Lemkin referenced Morgenthau's work in his lectures at Duke and Yale universities. He frequently drew historical parallels to explain Hitler's plans to conquer territories and annihilate populations, citing the Armenian Genocide as a key example.[51]

The Greek term for genocide, *γενοκτονία* (*Genoktonia*), has ancient linguistic roots.[52] Derived from the word *γένος* (*genos*),[53] meaning generation, family, nation, or race in ancient Greek, and *κτονία* (*ktonía*),[54] meaning to kill, the term reflects a deep historical and cultural understanding of the concept of exterminating a group. Influential Swiss eugenicist Zurukzoglu defined *Geneoktonie* as the "elimination of a generation (or an important family) before achieving its optimal reproduction."[55]

In the early 20th century, the term *Genoktonia* was commonly used in Greece to describe the persecution and massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.[56] Over time, it also came to define the systematic extermination of Greek populations during the same period. Known as the *Genocide of the Greeks* (*Γενοκτονία των Ελλήνων*, *Genoktonia ton Ellinon*), this term encompasses the atrocities committed against Greeks in the Ottoman Empire from 1914 to 1923.[57]

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48 Krystyna Wituska, *Inside a Gestapo Prison: The Letters of Krystyna Wituska, 1942-1944*, tr. and ed. Irene Tomaszewski (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), xiii.

49 Grzegorz Motyka, "Were the Massacres of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia in 1943–1945 Genocide? A Discussion about the Legal Classification of the 'Anti-Polish Operation' Conducted by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army," in *Social Engineering in Central and South-East Europe in the Twentieth Century Reconsidered* (Warszawa: Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2017), 58.

50 Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1918), 301.

51 Narek Poghosyan, *Հայոց ցեղասպանության խնդիրը Ռաֆայել Լեմկինի ուսումնասիրություններում* [The Problem of the Armenian Genocide in the Studies of Raphael Lemkin] (Yerevan: AGMI, 2020), 44-45.

52 Jeremy Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century: The Socio-Legal Context of Claims under International Law by the Herero against Germany for Genocide in Namibia, 1904-1908* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2009), 109.

53 WordSense Dictionary, "γένος," https://www.wordsense.eu/%CE%B3%CE%AD%CE%BD%CE%BF%CF%82/#Greek, accessed 08.05.2024.

54 WordSense Dictionary, "κτονία," https://www.wordsense.eu/-%CE%BA%CF%84%CE%BF%CE%BD%CE%AF%CE%B1/#Greek, accessed 09.07.2024.

55 Sevasti Trubeta, *Physical Anthropology, Race and Eugenics in Greece (1880s–1970s)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 251.

56 Ibid.

57 "Hellenic (Greek) Genocide," https://www.greece.org/genocide/, accessed 07.06.2024.

These historical uses of terms analogous to "genocide" underscore that the concept of systematic mass murder was recognized well before the coining of the term. Lemkin's introduction of "genocide" unified these scattered expressions, providing a precise and universal term for the crime that had long been acknowledged in various forms and languages.

The concept of genocide has equivalents also in languages of indigenous peoples. For example, in the Zulu language of South Africa, the term *izwekufa* emerged as early as the 1830s.[58] From 1810 to 1828, the Zulu Kingdom, under Emperor Shaka Zulu, conducted one of history's most extensive campaigns of expansion and destruction. Shaka built a formidable military force that ravaged large regions of present-day South Africa and Zimbabwe. By 1828, he ruled over 250,000 people and commanded an army of 40,000 warriors, reportedly responsible for the deaths of up to 2 million people during his reign.[59] Genocide scholar Adam Jones highlights that the scale of destruction and extermination under Shaka was so vast that relatively little historical evidence remains, with most accounts preserved through the oral traditions of the affected peoples.[60] Historian Michael Mahoney characterizes Shaka's actions as genocide, emphasizing that the Zulu military's objective extended beyond defeating enemies to annihilating them entirely. This included entire armies, prisoners of war, women, children, and even dogs.[61] The term *izwekufa* composed of *izwe* (nation, people, politics) and *ukufa* (death, dying) – was used in the Zulu language to describe Shaka's campaigns, reflecting the totality of destruction inflicted.[62]

In the Turkish language, the term for genocide is *soykırımı*, which translates to "racial extermination."[63] However, some Turkish scholars and intellectuals engaged in "discussions about the Armenian Genocide" often prefer the term *kırım* [extermination], removing the ethnic component of *soykırımı*. This approach reduces the interpretation of the events of 1915 to "slaughter" or "massacre," often employing the term *katliam*, which is roughly equivalent to "pogrom" in meaning. This linguistic choice is used to minimize the systematic and ethnic nature of the atrocities.[64]

Interestingly, in Ottoman Turkish, the term *taktil* (meaning "massacre") was used during the trials of Young Turk leaders. On July 5, 1919, a military court in Istanbul convicted several leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in absentia,

58 Jeremy Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide*, 109.

59 "Shaka Zulu andHis Deadly Spear," *Africa Defense Forum*, 31 January 2022, https://adf-magazine.com/2021/12/shaka-zulu-and-his-deadly-spear/#:~:text=By%201828%2C%20Shaka%20ruled%20250%2C000,genocide%2C%20even%20after%20his%20d eath.

60 Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006),7.

61 Michael R. Mahoney, "The Zulu Kingdom as a Genocidal and Post-genocidal Society, c. 1810 to the Present," *Journal of Genocide Research* 5, no 2 (2003): 254.

62 Ibid., 255.

63 Tureng multilingual dictionary, https://tureng.com/en/turkish-english/soykirim, accessed 02.06.2024.

64 Fatma Müge Göçek, "Turkish Historiography and the Unbearable Weight of 1915," in *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*, ed. Richard Hovannisian (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 338.

finding them guilty of *taktil*. Modern Turkish scholars have sometimes translated *taktil* into *soykırım* ("genocide") to align with contemporary legal and historical interpretations of the crime.[65]

The development of the term "genocide" by Raphael Lemkin also drew upon linguistic traditions of naming crimes, such as "homicide" and "fratricide."[66] However, similar terms existed well before Lemkin's time. During the French Revolution in 1794, Gracchus Babeuf coined terms like "populicide," "plebiscite," and even "nationcide" in his book *La Guerre de la Vendée et le système de dépopulation* [The War of the Vendée and the System of Depopulation].[67] Babeuf analyzed the massacres in Vendée,[68] describing how troops sent from Paris executed an extermination plan aimed at eradicating the populations of the region.[69]

Thus, while Winston Churchill famously referred to genocide as a "crime without a name," the reality is that this crime had long been characterized by various terms across languages and cultures. The critical difference, however, was the lack of a unified legal definition. Lemkin's innovation lay not only in creating the term "genocide" but also in attempting to provide a comprehensive legal framework to define and prosecute this crime. By abandoning his earlier proposals on "barbarism" and "vandalism," Lemkin synthesized existing concepts describing the murder of peoples and races into the term "genocide," ensuring its place in both legal and historical discourse.

Conclusion

The formulation of the term "genocide" and its legal definition by Raphael Lemkin was shaped by significant historical and linguistic precedents. Lemkin justified the necessity of creating the term by asserting that such crimes, despite their catastrophic scale and impact, lacked a formal name – a point underscored by Winston Churchill's 1941 description of genocide as "a crime without a name." Lemkin's efforts aimed to bridge this linguistic and legal gap, providing not only a new term but also a comprehensive framework to address these atrocities.

However, historical evidence challenges the idea that genocide was entirely nameless

65 Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 415.

66 James Martin, *The Man Who Invented Genocide: The Public Career and Consequences of Raphael Lemkin* (Torrance: Institute for Historical Review, 1984), 3; Raphael Lemkin, "Genocide - A Modern Crime," *Free World* 9, no. 4 (1945): 39-43, http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/freeworld1945.htm.

67 Stéphane Courtois, "Raphael Lemkin and the Question of Genocide under Communist Regimes," *in Rafał Lemkin: A Hero of Humankind*, ed. Bienczyk-Missala A. and Sławomir Dębski (Warsaw: The Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2010), 127-128.

68 War in the Vendée was a royalist counter-revolution of 1793-1796 in the Vendée region of France during the French Revolution.

69 Douglas Irvin-Erickson, *Raphael Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 83.

before Lemkin. Various terms describing the systematic destruction of peoples and nations existed across different languages and contexts long before the mid-20th century. For instance, during the Vendée Wars in late 18th-century France, terms like "populicide" and "nationcide" were used to describe the revolutionary government's actions against the Vendéen population. In German, *Völkermord* had been coined as early as 1831 and was widely used to describe atrocities, including the Armenian Genocide, during World War I. Similarly, terms like *folkmord* in Swedish, *izwekufa* in Zulu, and *ludobójstwo* in Polish reflect a recognition of the crime's nature, albeit in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

Of particular importance is the way the atrocities committed by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians were characterized. Long before the term "genocide" was introduced, these crimes were described in various languages as the systematic murder of a race or people. For example, the German term *Völkermord* and the Swedish *folkmord* were used explicitly to refer to the Armenian Genocide. In English, expressions like "The Murder of a Nation" appeared in contemporary accounts, such as the writings of U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau. These linguistic examples illustrate that the crime of genocide was not truly nameless but instead lacked a unified legal definition and terminology.

Lemkin's innovation lay in synthesizing these historical and linguistic precedents into a single, universally recognized term. By coining "genocide," he provided not only a name but also a legal framework for identifying, condemning, and preventing such crimes. His work built upon centuries of implicit acknowledgment of genocide, transforming a fragmented understanding into a cohesive concept with profound legal and moral significance.

In summary, while Lemkin sought to address the absence of a formal name and legal definition for genocide, the historical record reveals that the phenomenon had already been recognized and described in various languages and contexts. Lemkin's achievement was not in creating the concept of genocide but in formalizing it and embedding it within international legal discourse, ensuring that such crimes could no longer evade recognition or accountability. His contributions remain a cornerstone in the ongoing global effort to confront and prevent genocide.

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HASANCHELEBI: A KILLING STATION FOR ARMENIAN MEN ON THE SEBASTIA DEPORTATION ROUTES

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Abstract

This article investigates Hasanchelebi, a key station on the Sebastia deportation routes, as the principal site for the systematic extermination of deported Armenian men from Sebastia and surrounding regions during the Armenian Genocide. Drawing on Armenian survivor testimonies and corroborating Ottoman documents, the study reconstructs the phases of atrocities, beginning with the plunder and abuse of women and culminating in the mass arrest and execution of men. It highlights the strategic role of Hasanchelebi in the genocidal machinery and demonstrates the unique opportunities provided by Armenian sources for documenting and understanding the Armenian Genocide**.**

Keywords: Hasanchelebi, Sebastia (Sivas), Armenian Genocide, deportation routes, Ottoman empire, survivor testimonies, massacre sites, killing sites, deportation centers.

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Introduction

One of the mechanisms of the Armenian Genocide was the forced deportation of the Armenian population, which uprooted them from their ancestral homeland and led to their systematic annihilation along the routes to the Syrian desert. The Ottoman Empire deployed gendarmes to escort each caravan as a supposed "security measure" accompanying them to their final destinations. Along this route and in the areas between the designated stops, there existed a network of "deportation centers" or "transit stations" where Armenian deportees were held temporarily. These "stations" became sites where deportees were systematically subjected to looting, abduction, rape, and murder, each with its own particular focus. This paper specifically examines the events at Hasanchelebi, a station located at the border of Kharberd (Mamouret-ul-Aziz) and Sebastia (Sivas) provinces.[1] The primary aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive and nuanced

1 An earlier version of this paper was published in Armenian in *Tsèghaspanagitakan handes*, Robert Sukiasyan, «Հասան Չելեբի. Սեբաստիայի տեղահանության ճանապարհի մի կայանի շուրջ» [Hasanchelebi: A Station on the Deportation Route of Sebastia], *Tsèghaspanagitakan handes* 6, no. 2 (2018): 44-61.

representation of the events, reconstructing the circumstances through a systematic and detailed approach. This effort seeks to offer a vivid portrayal of the unfolding situation while showcasing the richness of Armenian sources and the unique opportunities they offer for nearly minute-by-minute reconstructions of the events.

The deportation experience during the Armenian Genocide is primarily documented through the accounts of Armenian survivors, who serve as the only witnesses capable of narrating the full sequence of event from the onset to the culmination of the genocidal process. Unlike perpetrators, who observed and participated in specific stages of the deportations, survivors endured and chronicled the entirety of this harrowing experience. Ottoman sources, on the other hand, tend to emphasize interactions among imperial or provincial elites, often omitting detailed accounts of massacres, deportations in different regions, or the fate of survivors. This makes survivor testimonies particularly significant for understanding the history of the deportations. Armenian accounts offer an indispensable resource, rich in descriptive and factual details about local events. These sources exist in various forms, including archival documents, personal monographs, serialized newspaper publications, *hushamadyans* and collections of survivor testimonies.[2] A cornerstone source for this study, and one of the earliest comprehensive works on

2 Archival documents - Fonds A. Andonian, - Matériaux pour l'histoire du genocide, Dossier 49 Massacres et déportations à Sébaste, *Ամբաստանագիր-տեղեկագիր Սեբաստիոյ կուսակալութեան* [The Indictment-Report on Sebastia Province], 0177-190v; Unknown author, *Սվազ-Շար-Գիշլա* [Sivas-Sharkishla], 0117-134, 0138-0139; Haiganoush Zaratsian, *Սվազ* [Sivas], 0113-0116; Kassmanian Vartanush, *Պատմութիւն Վարդանուշ Գասմանեանի սիվասցի* [*The Story of Vartanush Kassmanian from Sebastia*], 0171-0176; Fonds A. Andonian, - Matériaux pour l'histoire du genocide, Dossier 6, Amasia, Bekian Heghine, *Ամասիայի հայ տարագրեալներ* [The Armenian Deportees of Amasia], 0001-0013v; Sebuh Lusararian, *Մի կեանքի պատմութիւն* [A Story of a Life] (Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Section of Handwritten memoirs, files 127, 128, 129); Suren Sarkisian, *Պատմության կարմիր, սև էջեր, սատանայական գործեր, եղեռնը* [Red, Black Pages of History, Satanic Deeds, the Yeghern] (RA, NAA, Institute of Archelogy and Ethnography, archives of the department of ethnography, folder № 121/2); Aleksandrian Ohannes, *Օհաննես Ալէքսանդրեանի հուշերը 1915թ. Եղեռնի մասին* [Ohannes Aleksandrian's Memories of the Yeghern of 1915] (National Archives of Armenia, section 439, f. 3, file 115). Personal monographs - Payladzo Kaptanian, *Ցավակ* [Tsavag] (New York: Armenia, 1922); Edward Racoubian, *Եղեռնաքաղ որաներ* [Reaped by Yeghern] (Beirut: Shirak Press, 1968); Papken Injearapian, *Մեծ Եղեռնի շրջանին հայ որբի մը ոդիսականը* [An Odyssey of an Armenian Orphan in Time of the Medz Yeghern] (Paris: H. Turabian, 1951). Serialized newspaper publications - Shahen Derderian, *Արիւնի ճամբէս* [My Bloody Road] *Hairenik Monthly* 29, September 1951, 72-78; June 1951, 95-97; Vahan Chookaszian, *Քզքռուած Սեբաստիան* [Destroyed Sebastia], *Eritassard Hayastan* 24, 23 July, 1919; 18 October, 1919. Memory books - Durtad Durtadian, *Ցաղեր եւ յաղեցիներր* [Haght and Haghtetsis] (Boston: Hairenik, 1959); Kapriel Simonian, *Յուշամատեան պոնտական Ամասիոյ* [Memory Book of Pontic Amasia] (Venice: n.p., 1966); Vahan Hampartsumian, *Գիւղաշխարհ. Պատմական, ազգագրական ուսումնասիրութիւն* [Village World: Historic-Ethnographic Study] (Paris: Taron Press, 1927); Collections of survivor testimonies - Verjine Svazlian (ed.), *Հայոց ցեղասպանություն. Ականատես վերապրողների վկայություններ* [The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors] (Yerevan: Gitut'yun, 2011); Aram Giureghian, *Մեր սերունդն դուն ողջ մնաս և մեր վրէժր լուծես* [You, from our Generation Must Stay Alive and Take our Revenge], 188-207; Armenag Giureghian, *Միասին էինք տառապել, անցել Գողգոթայի ճամբան* [We Suffered Together Passing through the Golgotha's Way], 208-220, published in, *Հուշագրական ժառանգություն* [Collected Memoirs] (Yerevan: Research on Armenian Architecture Foundation, 2011); Levon Mesrob, *1915. Աղէտ եւ վերածնունդ* [1915. Catastrophe and Renaissance] (Paris: Araks, 1952); Hagop Kosian, *Աքսորի ճամբան (1915)* [The Path of Exile (1915)], edited by Father Boghos Vrt. Gochnanyan and Meruzhan Karapetyan, *Handes Amsorya* (Vienna-Yerevan), 2015, nos. 1-12, 345-483.

the Armenian Genocide, is *Yeghernabadum.*[3] This seminal volume is the most detailed account of the genocide in the province of Sebastia, authored by Garabed Kapigian, whose intimate knowledge of the region's social dynamics and political transformations informs the text. As both a perceptive eyewitness and a diligent researcher, Kapigian offers a unique combination of firsthand testimony and analytical rigor. His work provides invaluable insights into the lead-up to the genocide and the atrocities that followed, detailing the events with precision and offering thorough geographical and numerical data. The data presented is cross-referenced with information from foreign eyewitnesses and Ottoman documents emerging from the courts-martials.[4]

Background and Context

Starting in 1913, the Ottoman authorities, under the leadership of Ahmed Muammer Bey, the newly appointed governor of Sebastia province, enacted a series of measures designed to undermine the economic stability and future prospects of the Armenian population in the region. These measures included economic boycotts and the widespread dissemination of anti-Armenian propaganda throughout the province, contributing to the growing belief among the Turkish population that Armenians were a threat to the prosperity of the Turkish community. As World War I broke out, the Ottoman government escalated its actions against the Armenians.

One of the first actions was the conscription of Armenians into the Ottoman army. However, this was accompanied by a strategy to isolate Armenian soldiers by assigning them to labor battalions, thus separating them from their communities and disarming them. These men, once soldiers, were subjected to forced labor under harsh conditions, leading to the death of many. Those who survived the grueling labor would eventually be executed as part of the genocidal campaign.[5] This period was marked by widespread

3 Kouzhgan Sepastio (Garabed Kapigian), *Եղեռնապատում Փոքրն հայոց եւ նորին մեծի մայրաքաղաքին Սեբաստիոյ* [The Story of Genocide of Armenia Minor and Its Grand Capital, Sepasdia] (Boston: Hayrenik, 1924), an abbreviated English translation of the book by Aris Sevag, Garabed Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum* [Story of Genocide] (New York: Pan-Sebastia Rehabilitation Union, Inc., 1978), and a complete Russian translation by Ter-Davtyan Knarik*, Габикян Карапет, История уничтожения Малой Армении и ее великой столицы Себастии* [The Story of Genocide of Armenia Minor and Its Grand Capital, Sepastia] (Yerevan: Nairi, 2015).

4 Yervant Kassouni, *Քննական ակնարկ «Միշրնեղի Հերլոտ» 1915-1918 թթ. հայ ժողովրդի ցեղասպանութեան եւ վերածնունդի մասին արձանագրած վկայագրութիւններուն* [A Critical Overview of Testimonies on 1915-1918 Armenian Genocide and Renaissance by Missionary Herald] (Beirut: M.A.H.A.E.); Guerguerian, Krikor, "03 Captain Fazil Bey III" (2018). *Fazil Bey*. 3. https://commons.clarku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=pd_fazil_bey.

5 On February 25, 1915 the Ottoman General Staff released Enver's Directive 8682 ordering removal of all ethnic Armenian soldiers and officers from command posts and headquarters, for a detailed discussion of these events see Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 98; Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: the Ottoman Empire and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 168; Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and the National Awakening: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010),

mistrust of Armenians, which, along with persecution, disarmament, and forced labor, led many Armenian soldiers to desert their posts. Deserters were hunted down, and searches were conducted in Armenian homes, deepening the resentment and unrest within the community.

In the broader context of Sebastia province in the lead-up to the genocide, 1915 was marked by a series of significant events, most notably the assassination of Bishop Sahag Odabashian and the alleged poisoning of Turkish soldiers.[6] The Ottoman authorities had begun disarming Armenians in Sebastia and implemented harsh punitive measures against those who had deserted the army. These actions neutralized two essential resources: fighting-age men and access to weapons. At the same time, the government engaged in widespread confiscations of Armenian property to support the war effort. In March and April 1915, raids targeted Armenian political party offices, seeking to dismantle any potential resistance and depriving Armenian communities of their leadership. This disarmament process led to further arrests and persecution.

Between May and June 1915, Armenians who had managed to survive the massacres or avoid conscription were systematically targeted, with many being imprisoned. The authorities segregated these men into groups and executed them in secret, effectively eliminating any potential for organized resistance.

Taken together, these actions set the stage for the mass deportations that followed. The order to execute the deportations was communicated to the Armenian population through various channels, including official announcements by the governor and religious leaders, posted notices, and verbal messages from the police and local officials. On July 1, 1915, Governor Muammer met with the leaders of the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic churches, Knel Kalemkiarian and Levon Kechejian.[7] During this meeting, he informed them of the government's decision to deport the Armenian population to Mesopotamia and instructed them to share this news with their congregations. Deportation notices were also posted on buildings in major settlements within the province. Additionally, the administrative system facilitated the spread of the announcement, with reports being sent to the city police, who then communicated the information to district and village heads.

In certain areas, such as Gemerek, Karagueul, Tamzara, and the village of Sim Hajigegh town criers publicly announced the eviction order, which was sometimes presented as a royal decree. The amount of time given for preparation before the deportations varied, with notices ranging from just a few hours to several days. For example, in Sebastia, the population was given five days' notice before the first deportation took place on July 5, 1915.[8]

171-173.

6 Robert Sukiasyan, «Սահակ վարդապետ Օդաբաշեանի սպանութիւնը օսմանեան եւ հայկական աղբիւրների լոյսի տակ» [The Murder of Sahak Vardabet Odasbashian in the Light of Ottoman and Armenian Sources], *Handes Amsorya* no. 133 (2019), 455-470; Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide. A Complete History* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 431-432.

7 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 91.

8 Ibid.

As the deportations approached in Sebastia, Marzvan, and Amasia, the population focused on addressing essential needs like food and clothing. At the same time, they made efforts to discreetly protect their valuables and money. These possessions were hidden in various ways: tucked inside containers, sewn into the edges of blankets, or concealed in children's clothing. The intention was to ensure that at least some of their valuables would remain safe in case of unforeseen events.[9]

The government's deportation orders included a provision to arrange transportation for the deportees. However, this commitment was only partially met, often resulting in either inadequate or no transportation being provided. The deportations were strictly enforced across Sebastia and other towns and villages in the province. In some cases, residents were forcibly removed from their homes, and their essential belongings, including food and clothing, were either stolen or confiscated.[10]

The deportations proceeded systematically, district by district. In the city of Sebastia, as Garabed Kapikian reported, a daily caravan was organized from July 5 to July 18, with each caravan corresponding to a specific district. This process led to the forced deportation of most of the city's population, including 5,400 households and a total of 37,000 individuals.[11] Although the Protestant Armenians of Sebastia resided in different neighborhoods, they were allowed to be deported together as a group.[12]

The Hasanchelebi Station in the Armenian Deportation System

The village of Hasanchelebi and its roadside station were located in the sub-district of Akchadagh, in the northern part of the Malatia district, within the Kharberd province. It was situated approximately 52 kilometers southwest of Arabkir, along the Sebastia-Malatia Road. The village had a population of 200 households, consisting of Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian residents.[13] It succeeded the *Kotu Han* station, situated at the border of the Sebastia and Kharberd provinces, which was designated as a site for plunder

9 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 101; Aleksandrian, *Ohannes Aleksandrian's memories*, 15v-16; Simonian, *Memory Book of Pontic Amasia*, 655; Armen Marsoobian, *Fragments of a Lost Homeland. Remembering Armenia* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 205.

10 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 102-103, Kassouni, *A Critical Overview*, 55; Injearapian, *An Odyssey of an Armenian Orphan*, 24; Racoubian**,** *Reaped by Yeghern*, 56; Durtadian, *Haght and Haghtetsis,*108; Sarkisian, *Red, Black Pages of History*, 85.

11 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 103-104.

12 Ara Sarafian (ed.), James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916, Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce* (Princeton: NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2000), 333.

13 T. Kh. Hakobyan, St. T. Melik-Bakhshyan H. Kh. Barseghyan, *Հայաստանի և հարակից շրջանների տեղանունների բառարան* [Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Adjacent Regions], vol. 3 (Yerevan, YSU Publishing house, 1991), 370; Raymond Kévorkian and Paboudjian P. B., *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire ottoman à la veille du génocide* (Paris: ARHIS, 1992), 391; Unknown author, *Sivas-Sharkishla*, 0124.

and massacres, primarily targeting men of prominent social status.[14] At Hasanchelebi, however, the primary target shifted to adult men, regardless of their social standing. For the few disguised men, women, and children who survived this phase of deportation, the subsequent stations/killing sites they were forced through were Hekimhan, Hasanbadrig, Kirk Goz Bridge, leading to a major deportation hub - Firinjilar.[15]

In the context of deportation routes, Hasanchelebi station was a pivotal station for the Armenians from Sebastia, the city and its surrounding villages, as well as for displaced individuals from adjacent regions. As Raymond Kévorkian rightly notes, Hasanchelebi was chosen as a site for the systematic extermination, with the valley extending from the village being strategically advantageous, nestled between towering mountains.[16] The site became a major part of several key deportation routes.

One of these routes, designated for the Armenians from the city of Sebastia and surrounding areas, began in Sebastia and extended to Tecirhan, Maghara, Kangal, Alacahan, Kotu Han, and, within Mamouret-ul-Aziz, reached Hasanchelebi. It then continued to Hekimhan, Hasan Patrick, Firinjilar, and extended southward.

A second route was designated for the northwest of Sebastia province and its surrounding regions, passing through Samsun, Marzvan, Amasia, Tokat, Sharkishla, Kangal, Kotu Han, and also passed through Hasanchelebi station.

These two routes also merged with a third route that began from Black Sea coastal settlements, such as Ordu and Giresun, extended to Shapinuva, Sushehri, Zara, Hafik, city of Sebastia, and joined the Kangal, Kotu Han route, reaching Hasanchelebi station.[17] As in other stations, Ottoman state, Young Turk party organs, representatives of the Special Organization, the gendarmerie, local authorities, *chetes* and the local Turkish and Kurdish populations were involved in the actions against the deported Armenians.

The kaymakam of Akchadagh, Vasfi Bey, appointed on 27 March 1914, was dismissed on 23 July 1915 and swiftly replaced by Asim Bey, who remained in office until 12 June 1916. This unexpected change coincided with the arrival of numerous deportation convoys converging on Akchadagh from the north and west. While one explanation for Vasfi Bey's removal could be his perceived lack of zeal in carrying out orders, a more plausible interpretation, supported by Raymond Kévorkian, is that he was removed due to conflicts over the distribution of assets expropriated from deportees.[18] During this

14 Robert Sukiasyan, «Քյոթու Խան. Սեբաստիայի տեղահանության ճանապարհի մի կայանի շուրջ» [Kötü Khan. A Station on the Deportation Route of Sebastia] *Tsèghaspanagitakan handes* 6, no. 1 (2018), 44-61.

15 For a detailed discussion on the decision-making behind the "resettlement areas" and the situation on the ground, see Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 625–696; Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 125–285; Hilmar Kaiser, *Regional Resistance to Central Government Policies: Ahmed Djemal Pasha, the Governors of Aleppo, and Armenian Deportees in the Spring and Summer of 1915*, *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 12, iss. 3-4, 2010, 173–218; Khatchig Mouradian, *The Resistance Network: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

16 Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 440.

17 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 234-235.

18 Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide,* 418.

period, the commander of the gendarmerie in the district was Ali Chavush, who also directed operations at the Hekim Khan transit station. Among those directly involved in the atrocities at Hasanchelebi were Muhtar Mirza and the merchant Ulashoglu Ibrahimoglu Huseyin. These individuals were responsible for the massacre of the Armenian caravans and large-scale theft of goods. They were also suspected rapists, Huseyin kept an Armenian girl for two months for his pleasure after which he killed her.[19] Burhan Effendi, a scribe at Akchadag, in that capacity went to Hasanchelebi, abducted two Armenian girls whom he abandoned after raping, the girls died.[20] The census director at Akchadagh, participated in the acts of plunder and rape of young girls between the Hasanchelebi and Hekim Han stations.[21] Mahmud Chete was reported to have led deportation convoys and participated in looting and massacres near Hasanchelebi, according to a December 1918 questionnaire issued by Hasan Mazhar, the head of the government commission of inquiry, to Rifat Bey, the police chief of Sebastia. In the same report, another figure, Cherkes Kadir, a *chete*, was accused of transporting significant loot alongside five accomplices. This included 48 sacks full of jewels and one sack containing 30,000 Turkish pounds in gold, taken from Hasanchelebi and Hekimhan to Sebastia, where the valuables were handed over to Muammer.[22]

The composition of individuals overseeing and executing the actions at the station suggests that the organization and implementation of these activities involved key state and party actors and, in some instances, as in the case of Sebastia governor Muammer, this even included overstepping state boundaries.

Phase One: Plunder and Violence Against Women

Hasanchelebi was a site that had been chosen for the systematic extermination of all the males in the convoys from Samsun and the sub-districts of the Sebastia province. The advantage of the valley that ran from the village outward was that it lay squeezed between high mountains. Deportees reaching Hasanchelebi were stationed at the foothills of nearby mountains, situated in a ravine along the riverbank.[23] After the caravans set up camp, groups of villagers, numbering up to a thousand, would enter the ranks of the deportees under the pretense of trade. According to Sebuh Lusararian, the main purpose of these

19 Krikor Guerguerian, "03 Captain Fazil Bey III" (2018). *Fazil Bey*. 3, 235, https://commons.clarku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=pd_fazil_bey.

20 Ibid., 127.

21 Ibid., 246.

22 Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 464-466.

23 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 170; Aleksandrian, *Ohannes Aleksandrian's memories*, 22-22v; Racoubian, *Reaped by Yeghern*, 72; Kosian, *The Path of Exile*, 400; Derderian, "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 72; Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 167; Kaptanian, *Tsavag*, 65.

visits was reconnaissance, to identify targets for plunder.[24] The villagers were armed with swords, axes, and other metal tools. During this phase of the operations at the station, women and girls became the primary focus. They were warned of an impending massacre and pressured to surrender gold and jewelry in exchange for their survival.[25] According to Vartanush Kassmanian from Sebastia's fourth caravan, a pregnant woman named Anna Chatrjian was ordered to surrender her gold, suspecting she might have swallowed it, her abdomen was brutally cut open, yet the gold was never found.[26] The process was accompanied by widespread acts of sexual violence and looting targeting women and girls. In an effort to protect themselves from these dangers, women attempted to disguise themselves by smearing dirt, mud, and ash on their bodies. However, their efforts were ultimately in vain.[27] These actions of plunder and abuse served a dual purpose: enriching the perpetrators while deliberately depleting the resources essential for the caravan's continued survival.

Second Phase: The Discovery and Arrest of Men

The second phase marked the commencement of the station's primary function: the separation and killing of men. Following orders, all men within the caravan were to be identified and arrested. To achieve this, the gendarmerie collaborated closely with the Kurdish villagers in the area. Acting under the orders and in cooperation with the gendarmerie, armed Kurdish villagers conducted thorough searches of the caravans. According to various sources, they arrested men ranging in age from as young as 8 to as old as 80 and beyond. The perpetrators systematically searched the caravans, forcibly entered tents, and deliberately sought out men.[28] To expose hidden men, women were subjected to torture, and under the threat of execution, men were separated from the women.[29] Aware of the danger threatening the men, the exiles resorted to various methods of concealment. Women attempted to hide the men under textiles, blankets, carts, and carpets, or sat on top of them to further conceal their presence.[30] To deceive the gendarmes and Kurds into thinking their husbands had already been arrested, women would weep

24 Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 167.

25 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 171; Derderian, "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 72; Hampartsumian, *Village World*, 227, 237; Kaptanian, *Tsavag*, 66.

26 Kassmanian, *The Story of Vartanush Kassmanian*, 0171-0172.

27 Derderian, "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 78; Bekian, *The Armenian Deportees of Amasia*, 0008v; Hampartsumian, *Village World*, 227, 234; Kassmanian, *The Story of Vartanush Kassmanian*, 0171-0172.

28 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 178; Derderian, "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 72.

29 Chookaszian, "Destroyed Sebastia," 1919, no. 46.

30 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 177; Derderian, "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 72; Giureghian, "You, From Our Generation Must Stay Alive," 191; Simonian, *Memory Book of Pontic Amasia*, 670; Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 170-171.

conspicuously, which, in some cases, effectively deterred searches.[31]

One of the most prevalent strategies employed by men to evade detection was disguising themselves in women's attire.[32] Some individuals went so far as to hold small children in their arms, pretending to nurse them, in an effort to enhance their disguise.[33] Through this identity concealment, individuals such as professors Ruben Racoubian, Senekerim Dalyonjian, Hambardzum Bledjian and others survive the station.[34]

Several memoirs have recorded accounts of men successfully escaping. There are also accounts of men who contemplated escape but ultimately chose not to flee, only to be arrested and executed.[35] Accounts also detail men's efforts to evade capture, with many taking advantage of Hasanchelebi's mountainous terrain to hide in the surrounding ravines. However, once discovered by the Kurds, those in hiding were handed over to the gendarmes.[36]

One of the methods of plunder during this phase was extorting ransom in exchange for refraining from imprisoning the men. For instance, in the case of the caravan at St. Sarkis Church district of Sebastia, as Haiganoush Zaratsian reports, a bribe of five gold liras was demanded for the release of the men and the failure to provide the payment resulted in the threat of imprisonment.[37] While there were instances where bribes proved effective, such as when several women bribed a Kurdish *müdir* to secure the release of dozens of men,[38] this was not always the case, as the bribe did not always yield the desired outcome.[39] In some cases, bribes were deceitfully collected under the pretense of releasing prisoners who, unbeknownst to the payers, had already been executed, a cruel and exploitative scam.[40] Bribes that fell short of the demanded amount were also insufficient to save the lives of those detained, further underscoring the extortionate and merciless nature of these practices.

Following the separation and imprisonment of the men, there were instances where the rest of the caravan was forced to proceed on its journey.[41] There were also instances where caravans were held for several days, during which searches, arrests, and plunder

31 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 178; Simonian, *Memory Book of Pontic Amasia*, 670.

32 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 198, 200; Derderian, "My Bloody Road," June 1951, 95.

33 Aguni Sebuh, *Միլիոն մը հայերու ջարդի ամբողջական պատմութիւնը (1914-1918)* [A Complete History of Massacres of a Million Armenians (1914-1918)] (Constantinople: Hayasdan, 1921), 96; Derderian "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 72.

34 Aguni, *A Complete History,* 96.

35 Kassouni, *A Critical Overview*, 57; Derderian, "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 72-73; Aleksandrian, *Ohannes Aleksandrian's Memories,* 22v-23.

36 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 176; Derderian, "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 75.

37 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 199.

38 Kapigian, ibid., *The indictment-report on Sebastia province*, 0179v; "My Bloody Road," 73; Kassmanian, *The Story of Vartanush Kassmanian*, 0172.

39 Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 171; Derderian, "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 72.

40 Hampartsumian, *Village World*, 237.

41 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 178; Giureghian, "You, From Our Generation Must Stay Alive," 191, 212.

continued.[42] The women of the caravan from Sebastia St. Kevork district reportedly heard the cries of men being killed as they left the village. Some attempted to return to their husbands but were prevented from doing so, those who resisted were killed.[43] There is also a documented instance of a caravan resisting and remaining in the village for some time.[44]

Despite the aforementioned exceptions and the unique circumstances of each caravan, it can be asserted that the primary function of this phase was the separation and arrest of men. This process was invariably accompanied by plunder, either directly or through the extortion of bribes.

Phase Three: The Imprisonment and Massacre of Men

The massacre of men from the caravans arriving at Hasanchelebi station as reported by the survivors, was carried out in accordance with an *irade*, an imperial decree, and a *fatwa* issued by the Sheikh-ul-Islam, as stated by the administrator of Hasanchelebi.[45]

The arrested men were imprisoned in buildings located in the village square, where the administrator's office was also situated, overseeing the station's operations. According to testimonies, these included two distinct structures: one resembling an inn and the other a large, rundown barn. According to one survivor, the buildings could accommodate 40-50 people, yet more than 150 men were often imprisoned there at once.[46] The capacity of the halls and the severe mismatch with the number of people imprisoned created life-threatening conditions, leading to suffocation, fainting, and death. Notably, the buildings, which had been transformed into prisons, were supervised by two unarmed guards.[47] According to Sebuh Lusararian, who was part of the caravan from the Pekmez Sokak district of the city of Sebastia, the conditions of imprisonment for the men were so unbearable that the detainees pleaded for execution, just to be released for a breath of air.[48] A survivor from this prison told Armenag Giureghian that the men from his group were left without food or water, enduring an entire day on their feet.[49] There is a recorded case where, in an effort to revive the collapsing detainees, they were taken outside one by one to be given water. Additionally, it is noted that after the detainees were brought outside, they were provided with bread and water.[50]

42 Derderian, "My Bloody Road," September 1951, 72-78; Kosian, *The Path of Exile*, 400-403.

43 Chookaszian, "Destroyed Sebastia," 1919, No. 46.

44 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 181-183.

45 Ibid., 186:

46 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 180; Aleksandrian, *Ohannes Aleksandrian's Memories*, 22v; Kaptanian, *Tsav-ag,* 65; Kassmanian, *The Story of Vartanush Kassmanian*, 0172; Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 174; Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 326.

47 Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 171-174.

48 Ibid.

49 Giureghian, "We Suffered Together," 212.

50 Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 173.

Instances are also documented of detainees attempting to break down the doors and resist.[51] According to Payladzo Kaptanian, when the number of those who fainted increased, all of them were taken outside and seated against the wall of the prison.[52] After being detained for some time, the men were taken to be presented to the administrator. Although the gendarmes tried to release the detainees one by one, due to overcrowding and suffocation, the men poured out in a chaotic manner and rushed to the nearby stream (which was actually a latrine) to drink water.[53] After the detainees were brought outside, they were taken to a nearby building, the administrative office, where they were required to present themselves to the administrator, surrounded by armed Kurds.[54] The meeting with the administrator was thought to be the exiles' last opportunity to avoid death, as their fate had already become apparent to them. Seizing this chance, the men pleaded for salvation. In this way, the men of the caravan from Sebastia Pekmez Sokak district were saved. The administrator offered the group leaders, Manug Efendi Hekimian, the supervisor of the National Hospital, his brother Mihran, and several others, to pay a ransom of five gold coins for each individual. As a result of this agreement, 18-20 men were freed through ransom, while another 15-20 men were released without payment.[55] One such case occurred when, at midnight, supposedly moved by compassion, the administrator of Hasanchelebi village ordered the release of the men and, in return, demanded a ransom, which he was to receive the following day through 2-3 selected Armenians. The exiles, supporting each other, gathered the money and handed it over. However, the following evening, a group of armed Kurds detained them again.[56]

A greater number of pardons were granted to the men of the last caravans leaving Sebastia, this presented as imperial pardons, though it did not extend to certain prominent individuals.[57] According to the testimony of Hovhannes Aleksandrian, who does not provide specific details of the event, around 50 men from his caravan were released from imprisonment.[58] After this final opportunity for salvation, under the pretext of relocating the men, they were taken out, bound in pairs, and led to a prearranged massacre site, first through the mountains and then across a plain to the edge of a ravine. This phase of the men's extermination process primarily took place after midnight.[59] The group was accompanied by armed gendarmes and guard soldiers, and at times, also by armed villagers.[60] As the group approached the designated location, the accompanying

51 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 180.

52 Kaptanian, *Tsavag,* 65.

53 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 181.

54 Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 173.

55 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 181.

56 Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 168-170.

57 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 186.

58 Aleksandrian, *Ohannes Aleksandrian's Memories*, 23.

59 Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 174-175; Giureghian, "We Suffered Together," 212; Kosian, *The Path of Exile*, 401; Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 175; Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 326.

60 Kaptanian, *Tsavag,* 66; Giureghian, "We Suffered Together," 212.

gendarmes fired shots into the air, signaling the Kurds who were lying in ambush and waiting to attack. Following the signal, the Kurds launched their attack, with women also participating in their groups.[61] The groups were led to the edge of the ravine, where they were stripped off naked, stabbed, hacked with axes, shot, looted and finally thrown into the gorge.[62] During one such case, when 8-10 pairs of young men from Sebastia Pekmez Sokak district caravan were left bound together, a cavalryman in military uniform approached. Calling one of the Turkish-speaking perpetrators over, he reminded him of the order to spare the minors. After receiving a promise of conversion to Islam from the young men, he freed them.[63]

This final phase of the killings lasted 3-4 hours and was accompanied by dismemberment, decapitations, and other extreme acts of brutality. The Kurds who carried out the killings stole even the bloodstained clothing of the victims, wearing them or holding them in their hands as they returned to the village.[64] According to the literal testimony of a Sebuh Lusararian, an armed Kurd declared that all the men, as enemies of Islam, should be exterminated, and anyone who paid one or two gold coins, the price of a bullet, would be executed by shooting.[65] When the women from one of the Kochhisar caravans expressed their desire to visit their husbands and bring them money and food, they were informed that the men had been killed behind the mountain, and the women were beaten and driven away.[66]

There were survivors who escaped the mass killings and those who were severely wounded from axe blows or other forms of torture. These individuals later joined their caravans, through whom we know about these actions in detail. According to survivors, there were also others left behind, severely wounded and unable to escape from beneath the bodies. However, the survivors did not dare to take them along.[67]

A well-documented case of mass detention of women occurred after the killing of the men from one of the Samsun caravans. Around 100 women were gathered and imprisoned in a house, where they were searched and robbed. As with the previously described process, the women were crammed into a small room that was incompatible with their number, without being allowed to attend to their basic needs. A government official offered to release the women from detention if they converted to Islam.[68] Those who

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61 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 175, 182; Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 175.

62 Sarkisian, *Red, Black Pages of History*, 91-92; Hampartsumian, *Village World*, 223; Giureghian, "We Suffered Together," 212; Kaptanian, *Tsavag,* 66-67; Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 175-176.

63 Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 176.

64 Kassmanian, *The Story of Vartanush Kassmanian*, 0172; Bekian, *The Armenian Deportees of Amasia*, 0008v; Kaptanian, *Tsavag,* 66.

65 Lusararian, *A Story of a Life*, 175.

66 Unknown author, *Sivas- Sharkishla*, 0124.

67 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 179, 184; Kassmanian, *The Story of Vartanush Kassmanian*, 0172; Giureghian, "We Suffered Together," 212; Sarkisian, *Red, Black Pages of History*, 91; Hampartsumian, *Village World,* 223; Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 326.

68 Kaptanian, *Tsavag,* 67-68.

accepted the offer were released, while around 35 individuals who refused, including 6-7 Catholic abbesses, were taken to the ravine to be killed. However, they were not executed, with the justification that they were spared due to the pardon of the Sultan. In exchange for marrying one of the beautiful women of the caravan, the village administrator provided guarantees for the caravan's safe arrival in Malatia.[69]

To give an idea about the scale of the killings that took place at the Hasanchelebi station, we present the available data regarding the number of arrested and executed men. According to Garabed Kapigian, 300 to 500 men were killed from each of the 15 caravans that departed from the city of Sebastia.[70] From the caravan of the Pekmez Sokak district, which included Garabed Kapigian, 300 people were killed at the station and over 300 from the third caravan of Sebastia. Similarly, as many were killed from the caravan of Sebastia Sari Sheikh district. From the caravan of the Mother Church district, up to 500 men were detained, of whom around 300 were killed.[71] From one of Samsun's caravans, in which Pailatso Gabtanyan was deported, over 400 men were arrested and killed.[72] One unsigned testimony reports that between 100 and 200 were killed from the village of Kochhisar.[73] A survivor from Amasia, Heghine Bekian, reports 200 men killed.[74] At Hasanchelebi station, the wealthy individuals from the city of Sebastia were a special target.[75] A prominent example of this can be seen in the events that occurred with the caravan from the Mother Church district of Sebastia, which arrived at the station on the first days of August. This district, one of the largest Armenian-populated areas of Sebastia, was home to many wealthy families. The benefactors, priests, teachers, and national figures resided here, and naturally, a caravan from such a renowned district was particularly susceptible to targeted persecution. Approximately 500 men from the caravan were imprisoned, and a ransom of 500 gold coins was demanded for their release, which was paid. Afterward, without waiting for further orders, the caravan set off on its journey. After receiving the money and releasing some of the men, the authorities attempted to arrest the same men again. However, upon seeing that the caravan was already on the move, no further actions were taken at the point. Two to three hours after leaving Hasanchelebi, the caravan was stopped again, and the men were looted and arrested. Many managed to hide. Over 400 men were detained and imprisoned in a nearby building, where a ransom of two gold coins per person was demanded once again. Many paid with money, while others offered valuable items. Afterward, around 100 men were released. The remaining approximately 300 men

69 Ibid., 67-70.

70 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 169-170.

71 Ibid., 184-190.

72 Kaptanian, *Tsavag,* 66.

73 Unknown author, *Sivas- Sharkishla*, 0124.

74 Bekian, *The Armenian Deportees of Amasia*, 0008v.

75 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 183-186; Aguni, *A Complete History,* 96; Mesrob, *1915. Catastrophe and Renaissance*, 272.

were killed in the manner previously described and thrown into a nearby gorge.[76]

The events at Hasanchelebi station during this phase were marked by the mass imprisonment and execution of Armenian men, who endured overcrowding, starvation, and inhumane conditions before being taken to prearranged massacre sites. Survivor accounts detail the brutal killings, including shootings, beatings, and looting, underscoring the calculated and merciless nature of this phase of the atrocities.

For the few disguised men, women, and children who survived this phase of deportation, the next stations and killing sites they were forced through, as briefly mentioned earlier in the text, included Hekimhan, Hasanbadrig, and the Kirk Goz Bridge, culminating at the major deportation hub of Firinjilar. Here, a policy was enforced to separate children, with Armenian boys and girls either sent to Turkish orphanages, killed, or abandoned to die. After several days of confinement at this station, the operations resumed in the surrounding mountains and valleys known as Kanli Dere. Here, two Kurdish leaders, Zeynel Bey and Haji Bedri Agha, led the massacre of the surviving men. Meanwhile, women and children were relentlessly abducted, robbed, and raped as the survivors were driven along routes extending from Firinjilar into Mesopotamia.

Conclusion

Based on Ottoman documents and the testimonies of survivors, it is evident that the operations at Hasanchelebi station were meticulously orchestrated under directives from the highest political authorities of the Ottoman Empire. These operations followed a systematic progression, beginning with plunder and violence against women, culminating in the mass arrest and execution of men. This phased approach underscores the calculated nature of the atrocities committed at this transit station. The systematic nature, scale, and outcomes of the actions carried out in Hasanchelebi provide a strong basis to assert that the station served as a central site for the extermination of adult Armenian men from the Sebastia province and surrounding regions.

To facilitate the extermination process and distribute culpability, local Kurdish residents were involved, incentivized by promises of material gain. This delegation of violence not only spread the burden of guilt but also minimized the logistical costs associated with these mass killings. Entrusting the most brutal aspects of the genocide to local actors underscores the regime's reliance on grassroots complicity to achieve its genocidal objectives, reflecting the calculated social engineering employed to incite communal violence.

The atrocities at Hasanchelebi also exemplify the interplay of state control and local dynamics. The coordination between Ottoman officials, local gendarmes, and irregular militias highlights the layered structure of the genocide, where national directives were seamlessly integrated into localized acts of violence. The involvement of community

76 Kapigian, *Yeghernabadoum*, 183-186.

leaders, coupled with systematic exploitation and humiliation, turned sites like Hasanchelebi into emblematic arenas of state-sponsored terror. This study emphasizes also the importance of the survivor testimonies in exposing the strategies and methods employed at Hasanchelebi.

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THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA IN RIO DE JANEIRO: MICRO-HISTORIES OF IDENTITY, MEMORY AND SOLIDARITY DURING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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Abstract

This article examines the role of Mihran Latif, an Armenian immigrant and a key figure among the elite of Rio de Janeiro, in supporting survivors of the Armenian Genocide and promoting the Armenian cause in Brazil. Using a micro-historical approach, the study explores Latif's personal trajectory within the broader context of the Armenian diaspora in Rio, a community often overshadowed by the larger Armenian presence in São Paulo. The research draws on primary sources, including immigration dossiers, naturalization records from the Brazilian National Archive's SIAN system, and periodicals. These sources provide insights into the solidarity networks Latif helped establish, illustrating how local elites mobilized resources to support genocide survivors and preserve cultural identity. By focusing on Latif's initiatives and those of other key figures, the article sheds light on the mechanisms of community building, the intersection of citizenship and diasporic identity, and the significance of elite involvement in post-genocide solidarity efforts. This analysis contributes to the historiography of the Armenian diaspora in Brazil, offering a fresh perspective on the role of elites in shaping collective memory and identity. The article challenges the dominant focus on the São Paulo community, emphasizing the importance of individual narratives in understanding the broader dynamics of the diaspora.

Key words: Armenian Genocide, Armenian diaspora, Brazil, Migration Studies, Mihran Latif

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Introduction

"*Swept by the storm of fate, the Armenians who arrived in this far corner of the world faced unimaginable difficulties in the early days, primarily due to their unfamiliarity with the language and the harsh climate (the heat).*"[1]

1 Yeznig Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil: Informações Históricas e Cronológicas: de 1860 ao Fim de 1947* (São Paulo: Labrador, 2020), 75.

The Armenian community is believed to have settled in Brazil as early as 1886, with Rio de Janeiro serving as its initial focal point. The first recorded presence of an Armenian in the country dates back to 1879, with the arrival of Dr. Mihran Latif. Latif's naturalization process reveals his significant contributions to Brazil, including his role as a government engineer from 1880 to 1891 and his recognition by Emperor Dom Pedro II for his work on the D. Pedro II Railroad.[2] His early involvement with the Brazilian government highlights the Armenian community's initial integration into Brazilian society, setting the stage for a more extensive presence in the decades that followed.

Migration patterns in Latin America can be understood through both global historical-social contexts and regional specificities. The primary drivers of migration include environmental disasters, political and religious persecution, armed conflicts, and economic opportunities. For the Armenian diaspora, the key catalysts were the Hamidian Massacres (1894–1896) and the Armenian Genocide (1915–1923), which led to forced migrations. These events spurred the displacement of Armenians, many of whom found refuge in Latin American countries, including Brazil, during the early 20th century.

Armenian immigration to Latin America occurred in three distinct waves, each shaped by unique historical and social dynamics. The first wave, known as the pioneering migration, coincided with the Hamidian Massacres and the early years of the Armenian Genocide, spanning the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This phase saw initial Armenian refugees seeking safety in countries like Brazil and Argentina, where immigration policies aimed to meet labor demands.[3]

The second wave, marked by mass migration, took place during the 1930s and 1940s, following the Treaty of Lausanne. Despite restrictive measures such as Brazil's *Law of the Undesirables* (*Lei dos Indesejáveis*, 1907, enforced in 1920) and Argentina's *Residence Law* (*Ley de Residencia*, 1902), Armenians continued to migrate, often relying on the Nansen Passport – a League of Nations-issued document for stateless refugees.[4]

The third and final wave, described as late migration, extended into the 1950s, occurring amidst economic and political transitions in Latin America. During this period, immigration policies grew increasingly selective, favoring migrants aligning with nationalist and racialized population projects, exemplified by Brazil's "Two-Thirds Law" of the 1930s.[5]

At that time, the distinction between being a war refugee and an immigrant was not clearly defined. Armenian migrants were often not identified as Armenians but rather as immigrants from Western Europe, frequently mistaken for Syrians and Lebanese who were also arriving in South American cities. These Armenians faced additional challenges

2 Arquivo Nacional, *SIAN*, Processo de Naturalização de Mihran Latif, Notação BR RJANRIO A9.0.PNE.9248, Rio de Janeiro Brazil.

3 Silvia Regina Parvechi, *Memória da Diáspora Armênia nos Relatos de seus Descendentes na América do Sul: Cidades São Paulo e Buenos Aires* (Curitiba: Appris Editora, 2021), 64-65.

4 Nélida Boulgourdjian-Toufeksian, "Del Imperio Otomano a la Argentina. Recepción de los armenios post genocidio. ¿Inmigrantes o refugiados?," *Jornadas de Trabajo Exilios Políticos del Cono Sur en el Siglo XX*, La Plata, 2012, 4-5.

5 Silvia Regina Parvechi, *Memória da Diáspora Armênia*, 62.

in integrating, as this misclassification hindered both statistical data collection and the establishment of Armenian identity in their new contexts.[6] For this reason, statistical data on the Armenian diaspora in Brazil and South America often vary, making precise figures difficult to determine. Researchers rely on census data collected in destination cities over two decades ago, when Armenians were sometimes recorded under the nationalities they had acquired post-war. This lack of consistency between researchers' classifications and official records further complicates the accuracy of the data.

According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, the estimate number of Armenians in Brazil is 50,000.[7] However, other sources provide divergent estimates. Grün's research suggests a figure between 20,000 and 25,000 Armenians,[8] while Bogossian-Porto's study offers an estimate of 40,000.[9] The Armenian Embassy in Brazil, on the other hand, reports a figure of 100,000 Armenians and their descendants in the country.[10] This number was also referenced in a resolution passed by the Brazilian Senate in 2015, which recognized the Armenian Genocide and honored its victims.[11] To this day, no updated census or statistical survey has been conducted to accurately account for the number of Armenians who arrived in Brazil or for the descendants currently living here.

Studies indicate that most Armenian migrants to South America came from Adana, Aintab (present-day Gaziantep), Marash (present-day Kahramanmarash), and Hadjin.[12] The Armenian community in São Paulo, in particular, was predominantly made up of individuals from Marash.[13]

Despite the challenges they faced, Armenians in Brazil developed robust networks of solidarity, especially through religious, cultural, and philanthropic associations. Apostolic churches and organizations like the Armenian General Benevolence Union (AGBU) played vital roles in preserving cultural identity and facilitating integration of newcomers into Brazilian society.[14] These networks also served as mediator between immigrants and the host society, fostering community cohesion and cultural continuity.

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6 Nélida Boulgourdjian-Toufeksian, "Del Imperio Otomano a la Argentina," 13-14.

7 "Brazil," Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia, accessed 06.10.2024, http://diaspora.gov.am/en/pages/5/brazil#.

8 Roberto Grün, "Intelectuais na comunidade judaica brasileira," in *Identidades Judaicas no Brasil Contemporâneo*, edited by Bila Sorj (Rio de Janeiro: Centro Edelstein de Pesquisas Sociais, 2008), 111.

9 Pedro Boghossian-Porto, "Construções e Reconstruções da Identidade Armênia no Brasil (R.J. e S.P.)" (Master's thesis, Instituto de Ciências Humanas e Filosofia, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2011), 52.

10 "Community Overview," Embassy of Armenia in Brazil, accessed 06.10.2024, https://brazil.mfa.am/en/community-overview.

11 Federal Senate of Brazil, "Resolução n° 13, de 2015," accessed 06.10.2024, https://legis.senado.leg.br/sdleg-getter/documento?dm=1470650&disposition=inline.

12 Kim Hekimian, "Armenian Immigration to Argentina: 1909-1938," *Armenian Review* 43, no. 1(1990): 85-113.

13 Heitor de Andrade Carvalho Loureiro, "O Comunismo dos Imigrantes Armênios de São Paulo (1935-1969)," (Master's thesis, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 2012), 16.

14 Nélida Boulgourdjian-Toufeksian, "Rol de las Redes Asociativas y Vínculos con la 'Madre Patria' en la Conformación y la Permanencia de la Diáspora Armenia en la Argentina," *E.I.A.L.* 24, no. 2 (2013), 7-33; Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*: 80-83.

While São Paulo has often been the focal point of studies on the Armenian diaspora in Brazil, the contributions of the Rio de Janeiro's community still offer grounds for research. Building on existing scholarship, this article examines the contributions of Mihran Latif to the Armenian diaspora in Rio de Janeiro, shedding light on his influence and the networks he helped establish. By exploring Latif's trajectory, the article investigates the roles of key individuals in shaping the preservation of Armenian identity and memory in Brazil, focusing on the organizational strategies and actions taken by the community in Rio de Janeiro to support the survivors of the Armenian Genocide. During the early 1900s, Rio de Janeiro played a crucial role as the country's political and economic capital, offering a strategic platform for humanitarian and diplomatic efforts.

As ties to the broader Armenian diaspora began to weaken, concerns about the potential loss of cultural identity became more pronounced, particularly as the younger generations became increasingly distanced from their heritage. This fear of erasure, highlighted by Vartanian,[15] drove efforts not only to protect Armenian history but also to ensure that it remained an integral part of the community's identity. Figures like Latif, who provided vital support to incoming Armenians, were motivated not only by humanitarian concerns but also by a shared understanding of the importance of preserving Armenian identity in the face of historical trauma.

In this context, the Armenian Genocide emerged as a central narrative in shaping the collective memory and identity of Armenians in Brazil, serving as the founding myth of the community, as Bogossian-Porto notes.[16] It was through this myth and the collective remembrance of the Genocide that the community in Brazil forged its identity.

This article is grounded in elite theory to analyze the role of influential figures in constructing networks of support for the victims of the Armenian Genocide. Elite theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals in privileged positions utilize economic, social, and cultural capital to mobilize resources and influence collective action.[17] In the case of the Armenian diaspora in Rio de Janeiro, leaders like Mihran Latif acted as crucial mediators, connecting local initiatives to the broader transnational struggle for recognition and support.

To complement this theoretical foundation, the article adopts microhistory as the primary method of analysis.[18] Microhistory, which focuses on specific individuals and events to reveal broader social dynamics, is particularly useful for understanding Latif's trajectory and his networks.[19] This approach allows local actions to be connected to global

15 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 55.

16 Boghossian-Porto, "Construções e Reconstruções da Identidade," 15.

17 Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, Vol. 4, The General Form of Society (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935): 1433–2612; Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939), 50-69; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 2018), 287-318.

18 Giovanni Levi, "Sobre a Micro-História," in *A Escrita da História: Novas Perspectivas*, edited by Peter Burke (São Paulo: Editora da UNESP, 1992), 133-134.

19 Carlo Ginzburg, *O Queijo e os Vermes: O Cotidiano e as Ideias de um Moleiro Perseguido pela Inquisição* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2006).

contexts, offering insights into aspects of the diaspora that could have been overlooked by the historiography.

This study draws on primary sources such as immigration dossiers from the Maritime and Border Police of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, naturalization records from the SIAN system of the Brazilian National Archive, and vital records (birth, marriage, and death certificates) available on the Family Search platform. Periodicals like *Correio da Manhã*, *O Paiz* and *Jornal do Comércio* were consulted to explore news related to meetings, appointments, and correspondence between individuals in the Armenian community, available through the open-access Brazilian Digital Newspaper Archive (*Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira*). The study also draws on secondary sources to provide context and support for the primary sources analyzed.

This article seeks to address two central questions: how did the Armenian community organize itself in Rio de Janeiro, and what roles did prominent individuals like Latif play in this process? Latif's story not only exemplifies the agency of Armenian immigrants in navigating their new environments but also underscores the significance of collective solidarity in diasporic identity formation. Through this lens, the article contributes to broader discussions on migration, memory preservation, and the interplay between individual narratives and community dynamics in shaping cultural identities.

Theoretical Concepts

This study employs concepts from diaspora studies, transnationalism, and memory studies to analyze the Armenian diaspora in Brazil. The analysis draws on Khachig Tölölyan's theorization of diasporic communities as "transnations" sustained by networks of elites and institutions. Astrid Erll's concept of *travelling memory* complements this by emphasizing the movement and adaptation of collective memories across sociocultural contexts. Finally, Jelin highlights the role individuals and groups play in transmitting and institutionalizing memory through social and political actions.

Travelling Memory and Agents of memory

Memory serves as a cornerstone for the Armenian diaspora's identity in Brazil. Astrid Erll's concept of "*travelling memory*" is helpful to understand how the collective memory of the Armenian Genocide adapted to Brazil's cultural and political realities, becoming a unifying force for the community. In the absence of extensive written or oral records, this memory is enacted through community-driven actions, such as establishing cultural and educational institutions and organizing commemorative events.[20] Elizabeth Jelin expands on this by emphasizing that memory is a dynamic process shaped by interactions between groups, particularly those who have experienced trauma. She highlights the idea

20 Astrid Erll, "Travelling Memory," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 4–18.

of individuals or groups actively preserving and transmitting collective memories, often advocating for recognition and justice ("agents of memory").[21]

The application of these ideas is evident in the Armenian diaspora's leaders, educators, and institutions, who ensure the intergenerational transmission of memory. Drawing on Erll and Jelin, these efforts not only sustain memory but also adapt it to the evolving realities of their host society.

Diaspora and Transnationalism

Khachig Tölölyan argues that being Armenian in the diaspora involves more than mere self-identification; it requires discursive and representational practices.[22] Building on this, Vartanian highlights that belonging to the Armenian diaspora demanded active participation, extending beyond the first generation in Brazil.[23] This interplay between identity and participation underscores the dual nature of diasporic experiences, which unfold transnationally – through cross-border networks – and locally, within the national context.

Therefore, following Bauböck and Faist's argument, this study integrates diaspora and transnationalism to account for the dynamic interplay between identity formation and network mobility.[24] While diaspora studies traditionally emphasize collective identity and cultural preservation, transnationalism examines how these same phenomena emerge from cross-border mobility and the creation of networks.[25] By adopting both perspectives, this analysis demonstrates how transnational networks have enabled the Armenian diaspora in Brazil to maintain its collective identity while advancing local and global political agendas. Despite their transnational reach, diasporic actors often define their agendas within national contexts, bridging the local and the global.

The Role of Elites in Diasporic Networks

Elites play a pivotal role in sustaining diasporic networks, as Tölölyan theorizes.[26] Their actions encompass cultural preservation, institutional development, and the navigation of complex political and social landscapes, ensuring the resilience and adaptability of the diaspora. These individuals mobilize economic, social, and cultural capital to connect local communities to transnational networks, fostering cohesion and advancing

21 Elizabeth Jelin, *Los trabajos de la memoria* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica Argentina, 2022), 71-92.

22 Khachig Tölölyan, "Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 15-16.

23 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 55.

24 Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 5.

25 Ibid., 22.

26 Khachig Tölölyan, "Elites and Institutions in the Armenian Transnation," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 9, no. 1 (2000): 109, 114.

diasporic causes. In Brazil, Mihran Latif linked Armenian communities to global efforts for recognition, while reinforcing cultural identity through the establishment of institutions.[27]

Armenian Associative Networks in Brazil: Preserving Identity and Political Mobilization

The preservation of the collective identity of the Armenian diaspora is rooted in its churches and partisan associations. According to Loureiro, these institutions are instrumental in articulating and consolidating social networks among community members.[28] While the diaspora exhibits diversity in its institutional organization, these networks are often branches of larger associations whose structures vary depending on the regional context.[29]

In Brazil, the first Armenian organizations were established to support compatriots in need, both in the country and in regions devastated by the genocide, such as Western Armenia and the Middle East. One notable initiative was the creation of the Armenian Red Cross in São Paulo during World War I in 1915. Led by Vahé Boghossian, a native of Kharpert, this institution focused on raising funds for the National Salvation Fund based in Paris, which was headed by Boghos Nubar. Under the stewardship of Vertanés Gebelian, a treasurer originally from Odjakhlu in Deort Yol, the group successfully organized events and collected a total of 10,924.45 French francs.[30] These funds were gradually sent to Nubar in Paris, highlighting the transnational ties between Armenians across the globe. This exemplified not only solidarity within the Armenian diaspora in Brazil but also their connection to broader efforts to aid survivors and rebuild the communities impacted by the genocide.[31]

The Armenian Red Cross completed its final recorded activity on 20 March 1917, when it transferred its remaining funds. Following this achievement, its founders began exploring the establishment of a more formal national organization. This effort culminated on 8 November 1917, with the establishment of the Armenian Benevolent Union, led by Elia Naccach (also found as Elias, Elia, or Elian Naccach/Naccache), an Armenian originally from Aleppo with origins in Tchemechkadzak. Unlike the Armenian Red Cross, this new organization adopted a more localized approach, aligning with Brazilian laws and operating independently. Between its founding and 1921, it continued to send financial support to Armenians affected by the war, maintaining its focus on humanitarian aid.[32]

27 Ibid., 109.

28 Loureiro, *O Comunismo dos Imigrantes Armênios*, 17.

29 Boulgourdjian-Toufeksian, "Rol de las Redes Asociativas y Vínculos," 19.

30 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 77.

31 Loureiro, *O Comunismo dos Imigrantes Armênios*, 60; Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 80-81.

32 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 79-81.

Charitable organizations tied to the Armenian Apostolic Church began emerging in the Middle East during the late 19th century, establishing a framework that would later influence similar efforts in other parts of the diaspora, including Brazil. This tradition gained momentum with the creation of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) in Cairo in 1906. In Brazil, an AGBU chapter was eventually founded in São Paulo in 1964. Although established later than in other diaspora communities, the organization quickly consolidated itself, thanks to the economic success of its founding members.[33]

Beyond charitable networks, Armenian political parties were instrumental in organizing the diaspora communities. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), known as Dashnaktsutyun, developed several affiliated organizations, including the Armenian Relief Association (HOM) and the Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural Association. These organizations focused on preserving Armenian culture and reinforcing a shared collective identity in the diaspora.[34]

In addition to the ARF, other political parties, such as the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party and the Liberal Democratic Ramgavar Party, were active within the Armenian diaspora in Brazil, though their influence was more limited. Despite their smaller reach, these parties played a role in fostering political and cultural discussions within the community. They organized events and initiatives that connected Armenians in Brazil to global efforts advocating for the recognition and reparation of the genocide.

A key feature of these networks was their collaboration with religious institutions, particularly the Armenian Apostolic Church. Functioning as a space for social, cultural, and political activities, the Church played a unifying role within the community. Despite divergences among political parties and other organizations, it remained a symbol of cohesion and a central agent in preserving the sense of belonging and "Armenianness."[35]

These associative networks played a dual role in supporting the integration of Armenians into Brazilian society and shaping a collective narrative about the genocide. Grounded in principles of solidarity and justice, this narrative mobilized the diaspora to advocate for recognition of the genocide, both within Brazil and on an international scale. However, official Brazilian narratives, often shaped by diplomatic pragmatism, framed the genocide through a humanitarian lens without fully addressing the political responsibilities of the Ottoman Empire. While civil society and diaspora organizations were vocal in calling for recognition, the Brazilian government maintained a more cautious stance, reflecting its geopolitical interests and diplomatic neutrality at the time.[36]

As previously noted, Armenians, like other migrants from Asia or Middle East, were not considered "desirable migrants" in the early 20th century. Despite this, the Armenian diaspora in cities like Buenos Aires and São Paulo took root through both formal and informal mutual aid associations. These networks helped Armenians integrate into the

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Boulgourdjian-Toufeksian, "Rol de las Redes Asociativas y Vínculos," 17.

36 Loureiro, "Pragmatismo e Humanitarismo," 203-206.

labor market, often providing newcomers with opportunities to work in businesses established by earlier Armenian families, such as haberdasheries and shoe stores, or by offering support to operate within these industries.[37]

These practices, which were common at the time, were further reinforced by specific economic conditions in each country. In Argentina, a recession led to increased urban unemployment, while in Brazil, restrictive foreign labor policies during the 1930s limited access to other employment opportunities.[38] Over time, the perception of the Armenians as "undesirable migrants" shifted. By the late 20th century, Armenian communities in Argentina and Brazil had achieved notable economic integration and growth. In Argentina, Armenians expanded their influence in key industries and gained prominence in the business sector.[39] Similarly, the Armenian community in São Paulo experienced significant commercial growth, expanding from 57 stores in 1936 to a broader presence in retail in shopping malls by the 1990s.[40]

The Profile of the Armenian Community in Rio

The Armenian immigrants who arrived in Brazil in the early 20th century primarily settled in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, with a smaller group scattered across other states, such as Minas Gerais, Ceará, and Mato Grosso. Boghossian-Porto points out that the choice of destination significantly influenced the formation of Armenian communities in the country. In São Paulo, Armenians quickly formed cohesive collectivity, while in Rio de Janeiro, integration with other immigrant groups, particularly Arabs, led to a more assimilated coexistence that was less distinct. This contrast is evident in sociocultural practices, as Rio de Janeiro's Armenians often integrated into institutions founded by other communities, including Lebanese and Syrians, facilitating a smoother but less visibly assimilation.[41]

Boghossian-Porto further highlights that the sociability dynamic in Rio de Janeiro also involved a mutual support network, often involving Arab immigrants who assisted in the reception and integration of newcomers. This collaborative process reflected a gradual transition toward assimilation, which hindered the establishment of a firmly consolidated Armenian community, as seen in São Paulo. However, the memory of their Armenian origins remained, albeit somewhat diluted within the broader context of Arab immigration.[42]

In contrast, the Armenian community in São Paulo quickly established its own institutions, including churches and schools, which helped preserve and reinforce

37 Grün, "Intelectuais na comunidade judaica brasileira," 117-119.

38 Parvechi, *Memória da Diáspora Armênia*, 68.

39 Hekimian, "Armenian Immigration to Argentina," 109.

40 Parvechi, *Memória da Diáspora Armênia*, 74.

41 Boghossian-Porto, "Construções e Reconstruções da Identidade Armênia," 152.

42 Ibid.

Armenian cultural identity. As Boghossian-Porto notes, this process created strong institutional ties and facilitated the development of international communication networks with other diaspora communities.[43]

Despite this distinction, the first and second generations of Armenians in Rio de Janeiro present a more nuanced story than the broader narrative often suggests. While the community in Rio may not have developed the same strong institutional structures as in São Paulo, many of the most vocal and influential Armenians during the Armenian Genocide were based in Rio. This is partly due to the city's unique position as Brazil's capital until 1960, where political discourse flourished. At the same time, São Paulo, as an emerging commercial and industrial hub, gradually became the dominant center for Armenian community life, especially after the capital moved to Brasília in 1957.

The establishment of churches and associations in São Paulo was undeniably significant, but it doesn't fully explain the dynamics of Armenian identity and community in Brazil. As Vartanian points out, many Armenian families in both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro saw their descendants gradually move away from community life, particularly those from influential families.[44] This trend can be attributed to several factors, such as intermarriage with Brazilians, Italians, and other nationalities, and the lack of a strong community anchor in Rio that would have tied younger generations to their Armenian roots. Furthermore, the decision to remain in São Paulo or move there was also influenced by the city's industrial and commercial significance, as well as the climate, both of which were attractive to newcomers seeking economic opportunities.

In Rio de Janeiro, many Armenians worked in industries such as diamond cutting, tailoring, baking, carpentry, photography, shoemaking and trade. A significant number initially arrived as farmers, aligning with Brazil's migration policies at the time, although few pursued agricultural lives after their arrival. Instead, they transitioned into commerce or industry, establishing themselves in a variety of trades. Armenians who settled in the city came from diverse regions, reflecting the broader geographic distribution of the Armenian diaspora. The Armenians that immigrated to Rio de Janeiro were from cities and villages such as Alexandretta (Iskenderun), Kork Khan, Maadan, Dortyol, Aintab (present-day Gaziantep), Marash (present-day Kahramanmaraş), Urfa, Istanbul, Kesaria (Kayseri), Kessab, Smyrna (İzmir), Kharberd, Fendejak, Akshehir, Knik, Amassia, Yozgat, Erznka, Akkine, Adraca, Kaskina, and Adapazar.[45]

It is important to note that the origins and profiles of the Armenian community in Rio de Janeiro evolved significantly across different migratory waves. While this article focuses on the formation of the initial community in Rio and its efforts during and shortly after the genocide, subsequent waves, particularly between the 1940s and 1960s, brought

43 Ibid.

44 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 55.

45 Arquivo Nacional do Brasil, *Registros de Imigração (Parte 6), 1930–1970*, digitized by FamilySearch International (Salt Lake City, UT, 2011), manuscript, Portuguese, accessed 14.09.2024, https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2513689?availability=Online.

Armenians from countries such as Egypt, Syria, Cyprus, and Lebanon. These later migrants were often displaced again due to conflicts in those countries, having initially sought refuge there after the genocide. Despite these differences, the Armenian community in Rio de Janeiro reflects a rich and diverse history of resilience and adaptation, which deserves recognition even though it is not the central focus of this study.

The Early Life of Mihran Latif(yan)

As previously mentioned, Dr. Mihran Latif appears to have been the first Armenian to arrive in Brazil. He was born Mihran Latifyan, on May 20, 1856, in Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul). The son of Bedros Latifyan and Izar Kuskyikhanlian,[46] Mihran studied engineering at the University of Ghent in Belgium.[47] During this time, he met some of the most prominent Brazilian architects of the era, including Joaquim Monteiro de Barros, with whom he developed a friendship and later a professional partnership that would yield significant results. As described in a 1943 newspaper article commemorating his life: "Elegant, bohemian, sometimes romantic – interpreting various languid melodies on the piano, and at other times exuberant – displaying our southern gaiety, Quincas [nickname for Joaquim] Monteiro de Barros contrasted with the serious and studious Mihran (…) They never parted again." After completing his studies, Latif came to Brazil in 1879, introduced by Buarque de Macedo to Emperor Pedro II of Brazil.[48]

Here, Mihran married Emiliana Monteiro de Barros, the sister of Joaquim Monteiro de Barros, shortly after his arrival in Brazil. Together, they had six children: Izar (1887), Emiliana (1889), Alice (1891), Pedro (1893), Julio (1895), and Mihran (1902).[49] Both Pedro and Mihran followed in their father's footsteps and became engineers.

Throughout his career, Latif held several prominent engineering positions across Brazil, contributing to significant infrastructure and industrial projects. In southeastern Brazil, he served as chief engineer for the Dom Pedro II Railroad, overseeing its extension from Barbacena to Sabará and contracting the section that connected Sabará to Pirapora (in the state of Minas Gerais). He also played a key role in designing and constructing the

46 "Falecimentos," *Jornal do Comércio (RJ)*, July 25, 1898, reports the passing of Mihran Latif's mother at the age of 70 in Paris, where Latif and his family were staying at the time. A mass was held in her honor at the Armenian chapel in the city, and she was buried at the Père-Lachaise cemetery, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=364568_08&pesq=%22Mihran%20Latif%22&pasta=ano%20189&hf=memoria.bn.gov.br&pagfis=29089.

47 Arquivo Nacional, *Fundo: Série Interior – Nacionalidades (IJJ6) (A9)*, Seção/Série: Processos de Naturalização, Notação BR RJANRIO A9.0.PNE.9248. Processo de Naturalização de Mihran Latif, October 11, 1916, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

48 Roberto Macedo, "Notas Históricas," *Correio da Manhã (RJ)*, October 26, 1943, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/docreader/DocReader.aspx?bib=089842_05&pagfis=17959.

49 "Eng Mihran Latif Family Tree," *FamilySearch*, accessed 21.10.2024, https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/9FST-71H.

challenging Ouro Preto branch line, which served an important mining region.[50]

During Brazil's Republican era, Latif worked on projects in the northeast, including serving as chief engineer for the Central Railroad, which connected Recife (the capital of Pernambuco) to Caruaru, and as an engineer for the Central Railroad of Ceará. In the southeastern state of Espírito Santo, he managed public works projects, including constructing a railway segment crossing the *Serra do Mar* mountain range to link Espírito Santo with Minas Gerais.[51]

Beyond his railway contributions, Latif organized and directed several companies. These included the *Ribeirão Preto Power and Light Company* and the *Jahu Power and Light Company*, both in the state of São Paulo, as well as the *Companhia Norte Paulista de Combustíveis*. He also served as a director for the *San Paulo Coffee States Co. Limited* and the *Companhia Estrada de Ferro Minas de São Jerônimo*, and he presided over the Beira-Mar Avenue Construction Company, which was responsible for developing a major coastal avenue in Rio de Janeiro (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1. *Marc Ferrez, Panorama da Enseada de Botafogo, Morro do Pão de Açúcar e Avenida Beira-Mar, ca. 1906, gelatin silver print, 30 x 40 cm, Coleção Gilberto Ferrez, Instituto Moreira Salles, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, https://brasilianafotografica.bn.gov.br/brasiliana/handle/20.500.12156.1/10512.*

In addition to his great achievements, a newspaper article that offers a historical note recalling Mihran Latif's trajectory – who had passed away in 1929 – mentions that Latif's uncle had accepted, "to alleviate the suffering of Armenians under Ottoman rule, the position of prime minister under Abdul-Hamid II," and that his family was part of the

50 Roberto Macedo, "Notas Históricas," *Correio da Manhã (RJ)*, October 26, 1943, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/docreader/DocReader.aspx?bib=089842_05&pagfis=17959.

51 Ibid.

Armenian *Amira* elite of Constantinople.[52] While the title attributed to Artin Dadyan Pasha is historically inaccurate, it is possible that Latif was indeed related to him.[53] However, this connection remains difficult to verify.[54]

The article also states that Latif returned to Constantinople after his marriage to work on the planning of the Berlin-Baghdad railway and engaged in political activities at the invitation of his uncle. This information is corroborated by another news report published on 1 March 1889, announcing a public auction of all the furniture belonging to Mihran Latif and his family, due to their relocation to Europe.[55] However, with the onset of the persecutions against Armenians, he decided to return to Brazil.[56]

According to the same report, Mihran was also said to be the nephew of Boghos Nubar, but due to the inability to confirm this claim, Loureiro raises questions about the lack of support for Latif as a representative of Armenian interests in the country during the discussions on the matter.[57]

The fact is that, in Brazil, Latif accumulated many titles beyond that of chief engineer, becoming a banker, businessman, farmer, and coffee trader in the São Paulo region, one of Brazil's most important coffee-producing areas. He managed his company, which later evolved into a family business with the incorporation of his children, called "Empreza Constructora Avenida Beira Mar," and worked in the coffee sector in São Paulo. Additionally, Latif played a key political role within Brazilian diplomacy, working closely with the country's president at the time, Epitácio Pessoa (president from 1919 to 1922), at the Palácio do Catete, the former presidential palace in Rio de Janeiro.[58]

In addition to his accomplishments, Latif's marriage to Emiliana Monteiro de Barros, the daughter of one of Brazil's most influential families, also played a crucial role in his life in Brazil. The Monteiro de Barros family, descending from a noble lineage in Portugal, arrived in Brazil in the mid-18th century, initially interested in mineral exploration, particularly in Minas Gerais. Their interests later expanded into coffee cultivation in

52 Ibid.

53 Hagop Kechichian, "Os Sobreviventes do Genocídio: Imigração e Integração Armênia no Brasil, Um Estudo Introdutório," (PhD diss., FFLCH/USP, 2000), 313-332.

54 According to a letter preserved in the Latif family archive, written by Mihran Latif's son, Miran Monteiro de Barros Latif, Artin Dadyan Pasha was actually Mihran Latif's great-uncle, who had raised him. The letter, titled *Letters to an Armenian* and addressed to Anastas Mikoyan, provides key insights into Mihran Latif's family history and the erasure of the Armenian identity from his surname. Miran Monteiro recounts: "They removed the suffix from my surname, Latifyan – a suffix that clung too tightly to a past that might disturb everything Uncle Ohannes had dreamed for my father, whom he had raised. This great-uncle, to remain an influential minister, must surely have had to bow his head low when passing through the small gate connecting his house to the Yildiz Palace, suppressing the 'ian' in his nephew-son's name, free of any suspicion […]."

55 "Bons Móveis," *Jornal do Comércio (RJ)*, May 1, 1889, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=364568_07&pesq=%22Mihran%20Latif%22&pasta=ano%20188&hf=memoria.bn.gov.br&pagfis=22338.

56 "Falleceu hontem, inesperadamente, em sua residência o dr. Mihran Latif," *Correio da Manhã (RJ)*, May 21, 1929, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=089842_03&pagfis=40269.

57 Loureiro, "Pragmatismo e Humanitarismo," 117.

58 Ibid.

regions such as Minas Gerais and São Paulo. Over time, the family established itself within the imperial court, surviving the end of the colonial period and becoming the "coffee barons." With a strong presence across southeastern Brazil, the Monteiro de Barros family remained at the top of the country's elite, forging important alliances through marriages with other prominent families. This legacy continued when Latif's daughters, Izar and Emiliana, married descendants of Pedro Betim Paes Leme, with whom Latif had collaborated on the Dom Pedro II Railroad. Izar married Luiz Betim Paes Leme,[59] and Emiliana married André Betim Paes Leme.[60]

The Immigration of 108 Armenians to the Canaã Farm in 1926

Despite numerous attempts since 1895, efforts to rescue Armenians during the massacres and genocide with the support of the Brazilian government met with little success.[61] The main problem began in the early 1900s when the Brazilian government was more focused on attracting Italian immigrants to major cities. Fearing a large influx of Chinese and Japanese migrants, it issued a decree that prohibited the entry of Asian ethnic groups, including Armenians. In 1926, after several failed attempts, Mihran Latif, together with his son-in-law, Dr. André Betim Paes Leme, and a relative, Hrant Fendekelian, once again acted in an attempt to bring 22 Armenian families to the country, totaling 108 immigrants.[62]

Since the Brazilian government would only financially support the arrival of laborers for farm work, an agreement was made that these families would work on the Canaã farm, part of the San Paulo Coffee States Co. Limited. At that time, Latif's son-in-law had taken over as the director of the company,[63] which managed the farm, located in the municipality of São Simão in the Mogiana region – an important coffee-producing area in the southeastern state of São Paulo. The farm was connected by agricultural rail with a station of the same name. With the help of Hrant Fendekelian and Leon Curiatis, the owner of the shipping company *Transportes Marítimos*, who resided in Thessaloniki, the families were brought to Brazil, although it remained uncertain whether they had any experience in agriculture or farming.[64]

The goal was to have a successful first experience so that other families could follow the same path, helping additional Armenian families seeking refuge in Greece. Since the

59 "Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Registro Civil, 1804-2013," *FamilySearch*, https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XJ35-BXC, entry for Luiz Betim Paes Leme and Pedro Betim Paes Leme.

60 "Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Registro Civil, 1804-2013," *FamilySearch*, https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XJ35-JPD, entry for André Betim Paes Leme and Pedro Betim Paes Leme.

61 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 133.

62 Ibid.

63 *San Paulo Coffee States Co. Limited*, material on microfiche (1961-1980), ZBW - Leibniz Information Centre for Economics, https://pm20.zbw.eu/folder/co/071657.

64 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 135.

initial negotiations led by James Procter, a representative sent by the League of Nations to Brazil, for the arrival of Russian and Armenian immigrants were unsuccessful, the Latif family decided to initiate their own mobilization.

As Latif mentions in a letter to the Armenian priest in Brazil, Gabriel Samuelian, attempts were made to bring a larger wave of Armenians to the country, working with the government in both Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. However, the government only agreed to this under the condition that the new immigrants would work in agriculture and not settle in the cities. At the time, his son-in-law, a member of Brazil's Economic Council, had managed to convince the government to authorize the arrival of 10,000 Armenians, with the government covering the costs. This would only happen if the initial success with the 22 families could be achieved first.[65] However, as reported by Vartanian, after the families arrived in Rio de Janeiro, where they were supposed to continue their journey to São Paulo, they refused to travel to the farms and fulfill their contract to work on the farms for a period of four years.[66]

After much persuasion from the Armenian community in Rio de Janeiro and the Armenian Catholic priest Hagop Nessimian, these families went to the farm in São Paulo in September. However, it did not take long for them to organize another movement, this time leaving the farm for the city of São Paulo, dissatisfied with the conditions they had found there.[67] As a result, with the failure of this initiative, the plan for a mass arrival of Armenian immigrants to Brazil with government support was definitively discarded.

To better understand the scale of migration, research was conducted using the Brazilian National Archive's database, focusing on records from the Maritime Police and the Immigration Police. These records provide data on steamship arrivals at the port of Rio de Janeiro, mentioned by Vartanian in his account, during 1926. The research focused on arrivals up to September of that year, when these families were reportedly taken to the farm in São Paulo. Only two ships and their passenger lists stood out in the records, corresponding to significant waves of Armenian migration. These ships departed from Genoa, Italy, as no direct routes to Rio de Janeiro from Greece existed at the time. This match is particularly significant because, during this period, Armenian families likely had to travel to intermediary ports before embarking on voyages to Brazil. Their departure dates closely align with both the families' relocation to the farm and their subsequent return to São Paulo, arriving on September 15.

Based on these passenger lists, *Table 1* was compiled, presenting the relevant data. As some names and surnames were misspelled in the original documents, adjustments were made, which are indicated in parentheses. Other information was corrected using official migration records, marriage, and birth registrations found on the FamilySearch platform for these families after their settlement in Brazil.

Interestingly, it was found that some of these Armenians likely never left Rio de

65 Ibid., 141-142.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid., 139.

Janeiro, having married shortly after their arrival or started families. Others are recorded as being in São Paulo not long afterward, employed in Armenian-owned shoe factories or industries. Another important point raised by the data is that more than 22 Armenian families did indeed arrive in Brazil on these two ships, although the total number of Armenians did not reach 108, as initially suggested.

Name	Last Place of Residence	Destination	Date	Profession	Steamship
Garabed Malakian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Edouard Tobdjian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Haig Adourian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Apraham Pochoglomian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Marie Pochoglomian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Artin Pochoglomian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Movses Sarkissian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Sarkis Koumronyan	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Kuleya (Gohar) Koumronyan	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Armenak Koumronyan	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Marie Koumronyan	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Ardache (Artashes) Koumronyan	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Chean Koumronyan	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Farmer	Valdivia
Yessay (Yeghsay) Kamrousyan	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Sannos (Sanoush) Mouradian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926	Farmer	Valdivia
Terminada (Termine) Mouradian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Sarkis Mouradian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Cysanna (Shushan) Mouradian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Garabed Mouradian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Souren Davidian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Varthes Davidian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Boghos Davidian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Vergine Davidian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Terfanda Davidian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Ohannes Keldeyan	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Mariam Keldeyan	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Menas (Minas) Keldeyan	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia

Name	Last Place of Residence	Destination	Date	Profession	Steamship
Artin Vartanian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Garabed Noghochian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Louisa Noghochian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Antranik Noghochian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Le(v)on Mardiros(sian)	Aleppo	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Carpenter	Valdivia
Missak Havhedjian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Farmer	Valdivia
Nevart Havhedjian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Sarkis Havhedjian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Agop Havhedjian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Sosa (Sose) Havhedjian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Tacfor (Takvor) Kuchulian	Damascus	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Stefan Zeitoun Oglomyan	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926		Valdivia
Garabed Meguerditchian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Samuel Gendelekian	Beirut	São Paulo	06/07/1926	Shoemaker	Valdivia
Hampartsoum Metezersian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Stephan Darakdjian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Ossana Darakdjian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Rastoun Darakdjian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Asniv Darakdjian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Hagop Simonian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Eva Simonian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Le(v)on Simonian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Sarkis Simonian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Le(v)on Kalian	Marash	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Avedis Kiskissian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926	Farmer	Plata
Makronki (Makruhy) Kiskissian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Hatoun Kiskissian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Haigaziun Aharonian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926	Shoemaker	Plata
Azchagouki (Arshagouhi) Aharonian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Bedros Aharonian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Hampartsoum Metezersian	Beirut	Rio de Janeiro	16/08/1926		Plata
Mihran Kirasian	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926	Farmer	Giulio Cezaré

Name	Last Place of Residence	Destination	Date	Profession	Steamship
Issa Oh(a)nian	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926	Farmer	Princesa Mafalda
Jabra Kartichian	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926	Farmer	Princesa Mafalda
Mehran (Mihran) Hartalian	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926	Farmer	Princesa Mafalda
Ternouch Hartalian	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926		Princesa Mafalda
Mehran (Mihran) Wanassian (Vanassian)	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926	Farmer	Princesa Mafalda
Eva Wanassian (Vanassian)	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926		Princesa Mafalda
Mihran Chanakian	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926	Farmer	Princesa Mafalda
Armenak Orfalian	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926	Farmer	Princesa Mafalda
Avedis Kurdian	Syria	Rio de Janeiro	26/08/1926	Farmer	Princesa Mafalda

Table 1. *Author's production based on the SIAN – Sistema de Informações do Arquivo Nacional, dossiers: BR RJANRIO OL 0 RPV PRJ 21332 D0001DE0001; BR RJANRIO OL 0 RPV PRJ 21312 D0001DE0001; BR RJANRIO OL 0 RPV PRJ 21227 D0001DE0001; BR RJANRIO OL.0.RPV, PRJ.21311, Arquivo Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.*

Another event that took place on 24 September 1926 in São Paulo and was reported by the *O Jornal* (RJ) was the lack of shelter for around 200 Armenians who had reportedly arrived in the city via Santos.[68] Some figures previously mentioned are featured in the news. What is particularly interesting is that the journalist speaks with a certain Mr. Garabed Korruquian, who claims to have acted as an intermediary in the immigrants' arrival and their settlement in various parts of the country. He also mentions that one of the first waves of immigrants had arrived in Rio de Janeiro ten months earlier and that he was the one who arranged their accommodation at Mihran Latif's property in Rio, where they were working. Other Armenians were sent to the state of Goiás to work with his brother on Elia Naccach's farms. The issue that led to the newspaper article was that the government was doing nothing to support these immigrants, which forced the entire Armenian community to step in and help them establish themselves in the country. According to Korruquian, the immigrants would not work in the farms, as they were skilled in other trades such as carpentry, blacksmithing, tailoring, and shoemaking. Therefore, the Armenian community

68 "Imigrantes armênios em S. Paulo," *O Jornal (RJ)*, September 26, 1926, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=110523_02&pesq=%22colonia%20armenia%22&pasta=ano%20192&hf=memoria.bn.gov.br&pagfis=28576.

had put in place an aid that guaranteed them 15 days of accommodation and subsistence until they were able to find employment and new housing.

Although it is unclear whether these events directly relate to the group mentioned by Vartanian, the article reveals the intricate network that was in place at the time to assist new arrivals. It also introduces a previously unmentioned figure, Mr. Garabed Korruquian, who apparently played a crucial role as an intermediary in facilitating the arrival and settlement of Armenian immigrants across the country.

Diplomatic Relation and Efforts for the Armenian Cause

The unsuccessful attempt to establish the Armenian families on the Canaã farm marked a significant setback for Latif's vision of facilitating large-scale migration, but it was far from the full extent of his contributions to the Armenian cause. Years earlier, Latif had collaborated with Etienne Brasil, another influential figure within Rio de Janeiro's Armenian community, on a series of ambitious diplomatic and advocacy efforts. Together, they urged the Brazilian government to intervene during the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide and pushed for Brazil's recognition of the short-lived Republic of Armenia.

For instance, in January 1920, Latif, using his title as President of the Armenian Colony in Brazil, published a telegram in the newspaper *O Jornal*, he addressed to Lloyd George, the then British Prime Minister. In the telegram, Latif declared:

> As in other great capitals of the world, here too in Rio, there is a large, hardworking, and united Armenian colony that lives and works alongside us. But the Armenians of Rio do not forget their long-standing dream of reclaiming their national freedom (...). Martyred Armenia, our ally, expects justice from magnanimous England. We request the return of all our territories, devastated and massacred by the Turks for centuries. The proud and hardworking Armenians are ready to pay their share of the Ottoman debt.[69]

Their efforts culminated in the successful recognition of the Armenian Republic,[70] a milestone for Armenians in the diaspora. Latif's influence and standing led to his

69 "Pela Republica da Armenia," *O Jornal (RJ)*, January 3, 1920, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=110523_02&pesq=%22colonia%20armenia%22&pasta=ano%20192&hf=memoria.bn.gov.br&pagfis=32, translated by the author.

70 Ibid.; "Um apello da colonia armenia á imprensa brasileira," *Correio da Manhã (RJ)*, January 3, 1920, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=089842_03&pesq=%22colonia%20armenia%22&pasta=ano%20192&hf=memoria.bn.gov.br&pagfis=36; "Republica Armenia," *O Jornal (RJ)*, February 9, 1920, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=110523_02&pesq=%22Etienne%20Brasil%22&pasta=ano%20192&hf=memoria.bn.gov.br&pagfis=507; "Edição de hoje, 12 páginas," *O Paiz (RJ)*, November 6, 1920, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=178691_05&pesq=%22Etienne%20Brasil%22&pasta=ano%20192&hf=memoria.bn.gov.br&pagfis=3749.

appointment as ambassador for the Republic of Armenia in South America, a role he ultimately declined, believing it carried too much responsibility for an undefined term.[71] Instead, Etienne Brasil wanted to take on the position, which eventually due to political problems did not come, to use it as a platform to continue advocating for Armenian interests in the region, including the possibility of a Brazilian mandate in the Armenian territories, as the British and French mandates were being decided.[72]

Nevertheless, the former Catholic priest, intellectual, and lawyer in Rio de Janeiro, Etienne Brasil became the first diplomatic representative of Armenia in Brazil. Throughout his career, he dedicated himself to promoting Armenian memory and demands, employing diverse strategies, including writing articles, delivering lectures, publishing books, and engaging actively with the Brazilian government to secure political recognition and solidarity for Armenia.

According to his naturalization records, Etienne Brasil (an adopted name from Etienne Ignace, though his original name remains unknown) was born on December 25, 1882.[73] He arrived in Brazil in 1907 from Paris, initially settling in Bahia to work as a professor at the *Seminário Arquiepiscopal da Bahia*. In 1911, he relocated to Rio de Janeiro, where he lived until his death.

Alongside Mihran Latif, Etienne Brasil became a central figure in fostering diplomatic relations between Brazil and the Republic of Armenia after World War I. A leader of the Armenian cause in Brazil, he relied on his extensive network, including his partnership with Latif.[74] Latif's social and economic influence played a crucial role in granting Etienne access to Rio's elite circles, opening doors to Brazil's political and diplomatic centers, as well as establishing connections across South America.[75]

Etienne Brasil used this access to amplify Armenian demands, launching an intense propaganda campaign in the Brazilian press to bring the "Armenian Cause" to national attention. With the support of the diaspora elite, he established himself as a mediator for the Armenian diaspora and a staunch advocate for their cause, mobilizing public opinion and gaining visibility for Armenian issues among Brazil's middle and upper classes, particularly through newspapers and magazines.

Another initiative led by Etienne Brasil, as president, alongside Latif and other Armenians from the Rio de Janeiro community, was the creation of the Armenian Center (*Centro Armênio*) around 1916. The goal of this organization was to raise funds and political support to assist Armenians suffering during the genocide.[76] Similarly to the work done by the *Sociedade Armênia de Beneficência* in São Paulo, the Armenian Center in

71 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 97.

72 Loureiro, "Pragmatismo e Humanitarismo," 19.

73 Arquivo Nacional, *Fundo: Série Interior – Nacionalidades (IJJ6) (A9)*, *Seção/Série: Processos de Naturalização*, notação BR RJANRIO A9.0.PNE.24391. Processo de Naturalização de Etienne Brasil, May 29, 1936, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

74 Heitor de Andrade Carvalho Loureiro, "Pragmatismo e Humanitarismo,", 116.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., 99-100.

Rio served as a key support and resistance entity during this period. From this center, they issued reports on the ongoing plight of their compatriots, raised awareness of the genocide, and organized fundraising efforts to support the victims and facilitate their migration to Brazil.[77]

To advance the Armenian Cause on the international stage, Mihran Latif leveraged his personal connections with prominent Brazilian figures, including Rui Barbosa. A renowned Brazilian lawyer, politician, and writer, Barbosa was a key intellectual force in the country, known as the "Eagle of The Hague" for his eloquent defense of Brazil's position in II International Conference for Paz, in Hague-Netherlands, in 1907. He was also one of the directors of the Brazilian League for the Allies in 1915 and served as Latif's personal lawyer.[78] In 1918, as Barbosa was being considered to lead Brazil's delegation to the Peace Conference – an appointment he would later decline – Latif wrote him a heartfelt letter pleading for support for the Armenian cause:

> At the moment when the Brazilian nation unanimously acclaims Your Excellency as its delegate to the most important gathering of men since humanity has existed, I take the liberty, as a Brazilian citizen of Armenian origin, to present an appeal to Your Excellency, who has always sympathized with the weak and protected the abandoned, on behalf of the most unfortunate, the most miserable, and the most forsaken of oppressed nations. The poor Armenians who escaped the heinous massacres of 1915, which claimed the lives of more than a million innocent souls, continue to face extermination. Hunger is completing the sinister work of the sultan's soldiers. If the Allies do not act immediately, the peace they will establish will be that of a cemetery for the region once inhabited by this industrious people, victims of their fidelity to the religion of their ancestors.[79]

Latif's appeal demonstrates not only his profound personal commitment to the cause but also his strategic use of his connections to advocate for international action. By addressing Rui Barbosa, Latif sought to amplify its reach during a critical moment in history, acting as a mediator between the Armenian diaspora and global powers.

As Latif's health declined, his involvement in community efforts diminished, although he remained a significant figure, frequently mentioned in the community's initiatives in Rio.[80] Despite his reduced activity, Latif's earlier contributions laid the groundwork for

77 "Os Armenios no Brasil," *Jornal do Comérico (RJ)*, December 24, 1916, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=364568_10&pesq=%22Centro%20Armenio%22&pasta=ano%20191&hf=memoria.bn.gov.br&pagfis=59550; "Annexação da Armenia Menor a' Syria," *Correio da Manhã (RJ)*, February 20, 1919, https://memoria.bn.gov.br/DocReader/DocReader.aspx?bib=089842_02&pesq=%22Centro%20Armenio%22&pasta=ano%20191&hf=memoria.bn.gov.br&pagfis=38288.

78 Loureiro, "Pragmatismo e Humanitarismo," 171.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid., 141.

future community efforts. Unfortunately, after Mihran Latif's passing in 1929, his sons and daughters did not continue his work with the Armenian community in Brazil.[81]

In the aftermath of his pivotal work, new initiatives emerged to address the evolving needs of the Armenian diaspora. In 1945, under the leadership of the *Sociedade Cultural Armênia* [Armenian Cultural Society] and with the support of the Brazilian Red Cross, the *Comitê de Auxílio para os Armênios Vítimas de Guerra* [Aid Committee for Armenian War Victims] was established. This was later formalized as the *Conselho Administrativo dos Armênios do Rio de Janeiro* [Administrative Council of Armenians in Rio de Janeiro]. The Council, composed of prominent community members such as Alexandre Khatchadurian, Boghos Boghossian, Mihran Kelekian, Boghos Nercessian, Hrant Mardirossian, Mikael Kerekdjian and Sarkis Minassian, embodied the ongoing efforts of the Armenian diaspora to foster solidarity, advocate for humanitarian aid, and preserve their collective identity amidst the challenges of post-war displacement.

Among the prominent figures in the Administrative Council of Armenians in Rio de Janeiro, Alexander Baghdassar Khatchadourian stands out for his achievements and remarkable life journey. Born in Ibrahim El Charkié, Egypt, in 1887, Khatchadourian arrived in Brazil on 16 August 1943, bringing with him a wealth of expertise in cotton inspection.[82] His specialized knowledge, honed during his studies at the Université de Louvain in Belgium in 1910 and further developed in Paris and London, attracted the attention of then-president Getulio Vargas. Prior to his arrival in Brazil, Khatchadourian had collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture in Chile, where his work in the cotton industry earned him recognition. After settling in Rio de Janeiro, Khatchadourian's expertise became instrumental in securing a special concession from the Vargas government in 1945 to cultivate cotton in the state of Bahia with the support of foreign capital.[83]

Another name mentioned is Boghos Nercessian, born in Hayni, in the Dikranagerd region, on 14 April 1907. He was the son of Estepan (Stephan) and Sonig Nercessian and came to Brazil in 1923, adopting the name Paulo Nercessian.[84] Boghos initially settled in Ceará, working in commerce, before moving to São Paulo in 1933 and later relocating to Rio de Janeiro in 1939 to work in the crystal trade for a relative named Mardiros Atamian, as mentioned by Vartanian. It is also stated that Boghos came to Brazil with the help of a cousin, Donabed Atamian.[85]

However, there appears to be an error in the spelling of their surnames. Cross-referencing records available from the Brazilian National Archive and the FamilySearch

81 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 55, 100.

82 Arquivo Nacional. *SIAN*, Notação BR RJANRIO OL 0 FCN RTE 034802050 D0001DE0001, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

83 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 101.

84 Arquivo Nacional, *Fundo: Série Interior – Nacionalidades (IJJ6) (A9)*, Seção/Série: Processos de Naturalização, Notação BR RJANRIO A9.0.PNE.72024. Processo de Naturalização de Boghos Nercessian, April, 13, 1945, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

85 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 103.

platform reveals that Donabed adopted the name of Domingos, while Mardiros took the name José, and both are listed with the surname Adamian, not Atamian.[86] Mardiros is further identified as a council participant by Vartanian, also originating from Hayni, where he was born on 22 October 1898. He reportedly came to Brazil in 1933, arriving in Fortaleza, Ceará, with the assistance of his brother Ruben.[87]

Additionally, Vartanian indicates that Mardiros married a Brazilian woman in Diamantina, Minas Gerais, in 1922 – a detail confirmed in José Adamian's dossier. By 1926, he began working in the crystal trade, including mining gold in the states of Amazonas, Goiás, and Minas Gerais. Another fact mentioned by Vartanian and corroborated in José Adamian's dossier is that he served as the mayor of Cristalina, Minas Gerais, between 1931 and 1933.[88] Later, he moved with his family to Rio de Janeiro, establishing his diamond trading business there, including owning his own mine. This is further supported by documentation of his company, registered on April 17, 1939, at Rua da Alfândega, 124, 1st floor in the city center of Rio de Janeiro – the same year that Boghos Nercessian moved to Rio to work as the general manager at his cousin Mardiros Atamian's establishment, according to Vartanian.

Given all these facts, it seems evident that despite the spelling or translation errors – either in Vartanian's book or in official documents – Mardiros Atamian was, in fact, José Adamian, and Donabed Atamian was Domingos Adamian. The only relative mentioned by Vartanian who could not be located in the records was Ruben.

Lastly, another name listed and mentioned by Vartanian as a member of the council, who could also be identified in official Brazilian records, is Hrant Mardirossian. Hrant Mardirossian, who adopted the name Aram Oxene Minas Mardirossian in Brazil, was born on 7 August 1918, in Cairo, Egypt, and arrived from Antwerp, Belgium, in 1939.[89] The son of Minas Mardirossian and Arennack Stephanian, he specialized in diamond cutting in Belgium, a profession he also pursued in Rio de Janeiro.[90] Later, he married Lusine Nazarian, an Armenian native of Aintab, in 1941.[91]

All in all, the micro-histories of these members of the council in Rio de Janeiro reveal important contributions to the community's development and support. By examining these individuals, a broader understanding of the leadership diversity within the diaspora is gained. Their varied backgrounds, professions, and migration experiences illustrate how

86 Arquivo Nacional, *Fundo: Série Interior – Nacionalidades (IJJ6) (A9)*, Seção/Série: Processos de Naturalização, Notação BR RJANRIO A9.0.PNE.122. Processo de Naturalização de Domingos Adamian, April 4, 1931, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Arquivo Nacional, *Fundo: Série Interior – Nacionalidades (IJJ6) (A9)*, Seção/Série: Processos de Naturalização, Notação BR RJANRIO A9.0.PNE.37570. Processo de Naturalização de José Adamian, May 10, 1939, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

87 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 101-102.

88 Ibid.

89 Arquivo Nacional. *SIAN*, Notação BR RJANRIO OL 0 FCN RTE 001504067 D0001DE0001, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

90 Yeznig Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 104.

91 "Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Registro Civil, 1804-2013," *FamilySearch* https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QGJ1-DT4T, entry for Aram Oxene Minas Mardirossian and Lucin Nazarian.

different sectors of the community worked together to preserve Armenian identity and foster solidarity. The profiles of figures like Boghos Nercessian, Mardiros Adamian, and Hrant Mardirossian, provide valuable insights into their roles as intermediaries, advocates, and entrepreneurs, as these individuals played an important role in organizing support for their fellow Armenians, helping them settle in Brazil, and ensuring the community's continued presence and integration. Additionally, their stories connect local experiences in Rio to the broader experience of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and the complex patterns of migration and displacement that followed. Together, these narratives offer a richer and more nuanced understanding of the Armenian community in Brazil, highlighting their significant yet often underappreciated contributions to both the diaspora and their new home country.

Epilogue

The micro-histories explored in this study illuminate not only the resilience of individuals within the Armenian community but also the profound ways in which migration theories, particularly those emphasizing networks and elites, manifest in real-world contexts. The Armenian diaspora in Rio de Janeiro, forged amidst the traumas of genocide and displacement, serves as a testament to the critical role of community structures and networks in supporting migrants during periods of acute crisis and resettlement.[92]

Migration studies emphasize that integration is a collective process,[93] as exemplified by the Armenian community's mutual aid. This embrace was not merely symbolic. It involved tangible acts of mutual aid: paying for passage on steamships, offering jobs in stores, industries, and farms, and opening their homes to those in immediate need. These gestures were underpinned by the community's economic stability, which allowed them to act as a lifeline for those fleeing the genocide.[94]

These actions align with the concept of *memory agents*, as members of the diaspora actively preserved and transmitted collective memory through their actions. By fostering networks of support and creating spaces where cultural practices could thrive, these agents ensured that memory was not only preserved but also adapted to the Brazilian context. The commemorative events they organized and the advocacy for genocide recognition served as bridges between past traumas and present identities, solidifying the community's place within broader historical and transnational narratives.

Moreover, the diaspora's efforts extended beyond immediate survival. Through the networks they built, the Armenian community was able to articulate their collective voice, raising awareness about the atrocities of the genocide both within Brazil and

92 Boghossian-Porto, "Construções e Reconstruções da Identidade Armênia," 152.

93 Stephen Castles, "Entendendo a Migração Global: Uma Perspectiva Desde a Transformação Social," *Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana*, 18, n. 35 (July-December 2010): 11-43.

94 Vartanian, *A Coletividade Armênia do Brasil*, 350; Loureiro, "O Comunismo dos Imigrantes Armênios," 54.

internationally. Figures like Mihran Latif and Etienne Brasil exemplified the agency of individuals and groups who operated at multiple levels of power – engaging with Brazilian elites, local political structures, and international organizations to amplify the Armenian Cause during and after the genocide.

In addition, these networks underscore the importance of solidarity. The Armenian diaspora's ability to maintain mutual aid despite linguistic and cultural barriers reflects the power of shared identity and purpose. For new immigrants who could not speak Portuguese or understand Brazilian societal norms, these community structures provided not only practical assistance but also a sense of belonging and continuity. This resilience is echoed in Erll's concept of "travelling memory,"[95] as the shared memory of the genocide was adapted to new sociocultural environments, becoming a unifying force within the diaspora. This study shows how the Armenian diaspora shaped its sociopolitical environment through migration, memory, and elite theories. Furthermore, their advocacy and diplomacy illustrate the broader social and political impact of this community, exemplifying how diasporic networks can operate as agents of resilience and transformation.

Ultimately, this research aims to honor the memory of these individuals and their collective achievements. By bringing these stories to light, we not only preserve their legacies but also deepen our understanding of how the Armenian diaspora has worked – and continues to work – as an agent of social transformation.

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95 Erll, "Travelling Memory," 4–18.

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BOOK REVIEW

Vartan Matiossian, *The Politics of Naming the Armenian Genocide: Language, History, and "Medz Yeghern,"* London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2021, 296 pages.

Reviewed by
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"Words do not change the past, but the ultimate goal of their corruption is, needless to say, to rewrite the facts," (139) warns Vartan Matiossian in the concluding paragraph of *The Politics of Naming the Armenian Genocide: Language, History, and "Medz Yeghern."* In this book, Matiossian – a prolific writer and scholar of Armenian studies – examines the complex history behind naming the late Ottoman state violence against Armenians. He explores the profound influence of language in shaping collective memory and our understanding of historical events.

The book is structured into two main parts, complemented by an introduction, conclusion, and two extensive appendices. The first part, titled *"Language and History,"* comprises three chapters. The first two chapters trace the origins and usage of the term *"yeghern"* (եղեռն) from written sources dating back to the fifth century AD to its application during the late Ottoman massacres of Armenians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period, *"yeghern"* evolved from its original meaning of "evil" to "crime," a connotation that persisted through the violence of the Hamidian and Young Turk regimes. In 1915, Armenians first used the term *"Medz Yeghern"* (Great Crime) to describe the destruction that took place that year (11). In the third chapter, the author explores how the meaning of *"yeghern"* as "crime" or "heinous crime" further developed into "collective crime" between 1920 and 1950. By 1965, the term *"yeghern"* gradually became synonymous with "genocide," while *"tseghasbanutiun"* (ցեղասպանութիւն) emerged as the most widely accepted Armenian translation of "genocide." Since then, *"Medz Yeghern"* has been commonly used as a proper name for the destruction of Armenians, however it has been subordinated to *"Hayots"* or *"Haygagan Tseghasbanutiun"* (Armenian Genocide). The second part of the book contains four chapters examining the mistranslation and misuse of *"Medz Yeghern"* and its implications for the political misrepresentation of the Armenian destruction. The author delves into specific examples, including Pope John Paul II's visit to Armenia (Chapter 4), the Turkish apology campaign (Chapter 5), and the presidential statements of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump (Chapter 6). The final chapter underscores the critical role of the Armenian language in the discourse surrounding the Armenian Genocide and its naming.

Matiossian's summary of the book's content – that it addresses "the use, misuse, and abuse of the proper name *Medz Yeghern*" (135) – succinctly encapsulates his central argument concerning the naming of the Armenian Genocide and the semantic and political complexities surrounding the term. These issues are explored in detail throughout the book's first and second parts. His proposal to adopt *"Medz Yeghern"* as a proper name stems from a careful examination of three essential questions beyond its usage: the *meaning* it conveys, whether it *highlights the perpetrator's agency*, and *its relationship to the term "genocide,"* which carries distinct legal implications. Regarding meaning, the author traces the term's evolution from its original definition as "evil" to meanings such as "(heinous) crime," "massacres," and ultimately "genocide." He argues that the most accurate translation of *Medz Yeghern* should be "Great Crime" or "Great Genocide." Matiossian emphasizes that the term's logical connection between a malevolent action and its outcome makes it unlikely for *yeghern* to simultaneously represent both cause (e.g., crime, massacre, genocide) and effect (e.g., tragedy, calamity, catastrophe, disaster) in modern Armenian (12). He critiques alternative translations such as "tragedy," "calamity," "catastrophe," and "disaster" for erasing the agency of the perpetrator, stripping the term of its proper historical and contextual significance. Such translations, he contends, lead to a misrepresentation of the Armenian destruction, resulting in what he calls "interpretive denial," a concept borrowed from sociologist Stanley Cohen. This form of denial, he argues, transcends linguistic barriers and enables external parties to dictate other narratives of the past. Matiossian further asserts that the "perversion of language" has rendered *Medz Yeghern* "collateral damage in the war of words" (137). He emphasizes that the term not only underscores the agency of the perpetrator but has also become synonymous with *"genocide"* (ցեղասպանութիւն). As evidence, he highlights the usage of *yeghern* in phrases like "cultural genocide" (*մշակութային եղեռն*) and "genocide recognition" (*եղեռնի ճանաչում*), which, he argues, reflect the interchangeable nature of *yeghern* and *genocide* (83, 136). Lastly, the author observes that *yeghern* has the potential to serve as "a meaningful carrier of memory in English," much like foreign terms such as *Shoah, Holodomor, Reconquista, Renaissance,* and *Risorgimento* (138).

This work advances our understanding of one of the under-researched aspects of the Armenian Genocide. Overall, the author succeeds in achieving his goal of analyzing the politics of naming, a feat made possible by his encyclopedic knowledge of sources in multiple languages, particularly Armenian and English. In this regard, Matiossian's contribution is difficult to overstate. One of the book's significant contributions, it is hoped, will be to inspire further research into the memory of the Armenian Genocide. As Matiossian himself observes, "words may sometimes be an embodiment of collective memory" (135), and *Yeghern* has become "a concept of intergenerational transmission" (11). His critique of the term *"aghed"* as a proper name for the Armenian Genocide reflects a broader issue in the study of its memory. Matiossian is particularly critical of the problems this term poses for historical research. Having literary origins and later developed into a metahistorical concept by Marc Nishanian, *aghed* never prevailed in

popular culture, remaining confined to literary contexts. Moreover, framing *aghed* as a metahistorical or metaphysical event risks detaching the Armenian Genocide from its broader historical context, potentially transforming it into a myth and creating conceptual barriers to understanding the memory process, especially for the period prior to the 1960s. This perspective aligns more closely with historians who emphasize contextualizing memory within historical frameworks.

By tracing the evolution of the naming of the Armenian Genocide, the author takes a step toward a more satisfactory way of historicizing its memory. While conventional scholarship has not thoroughly addressed how genocide memory evolved during the interwar and postwar years leading up to the 1960s, the evidence presented in this book demonstrates that the memory of the Armenian Genocide has always been "in work" in Armenian world, and did not suddenly emerge during the "National revival" of the 1960s. Therefore, for future research in this vein, one might consider how commemorative practices evolved in the post-genocide period not only after the 1960s but also before that.

About the Journal

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7,000; 41,000.

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1920s
20th century

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