

## Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870–1915

# The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage

Politics, Society and Economy

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# Social Relations in Ottoman Diyarbakir, 1870–1915

*Edited by*

Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij



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## CONTENTS

List of Tables .....	vii
About the Authors .....	ix
Note on Names and Spelling .....	xi
Introduction .....	1
<i>Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij</i>	
Confusion in the Cauldron: Some Notes on Ethno-Religious Groups, Local Powers and the Ottoman State in Diyarbekir Province, 1800–1870 .....	15
<i>Suavi Aydın and Jelle Verheij</i>	
Elite Encounters of a Violent Kind: Milli İbrahim Paşa, Ziya Gökalp and Political Struggle in Diyarbekir at the Turn of the 20th Century .....	55
<i>Joost Jongerden</i>	
Diyarbekir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895 .....	85
<i>Jelle Verheij</i>	
State, Tribe, Dynasty, and the Contest over Diyarbekir at the Turn of the 20th Century .....	147
<i>Janet Klein</i>	
A “Peripheral” Approach to the 1908 Revolution in the Ottoman Empire: Land Disputes in Peasant Petitions in Post-revolutionary Diyarbekir .....	179
<i>Nilay Özok-Gündoğan</i>	
Some Notes on the Syriac Christians of Diyarbekir in the Late 19th Century: A Preliminary Investigation of Some Primary Sources .....	217
<i>Emrullah Akgündüz</i>	

Relations between Kurds and Syriacs and Assyrians in Late Ottoman Diyarbekir .....	241
<i>David Gaunt</i>	
Disastrous Decade: Armenians and Kurds in the Young Turk Era, 1915–25 .....	267
<i>Uğur Ümit Üngör</i>	
Annexes	
A. Provisional List of Non-Muslim Settlements in the Diyarbekir Vilayet Around 1900 .....	299
B. Diyarbekir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895—The Fate of the Countryside .....	333
C. Telegraphs from Diyarbekir and Piriñçizade Arif Effendi’s Speech .....	345
D. Family Tree of Ziya Gökalp .....	353
E. British map of Diyarbekir and Surroundings, 1904 .....	355
Name and Subject Index .....	357
Place Index .....	365
Tribes ( <i>aşiret</i> ) Index .....	371

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Different types of local government in the Diyarbekir <i>eyâlet</i> in the later 16th and early 19th centuries .....	17
2. Arab and Kurdish <i>aşirets</i> in the southern part of Diyarbekir, around 1870 .....	26
3. Estimates by British Vice-Consul Hallward in Diyarbekir of the Christian population and number of victims of the conflict in 1895 .....	344
4. Community (Christian) schools in Diyarbekir and numbers of students, 1898–1901 .....	229
5. Statistics on the number of Syrian villages and families, submitted to the Peace Conference in Paris by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, 1919 .....	245

## PROVISIONAL LISTS OF NON-MUSLIM SETTLEMENTS

1.1. Diyarbekir central subprovince ( <i>merkez sancak</i> )—Diyarbekir central district ( <i>merkez kaza</i> ) .....	304
1.2. Diyarbekir <i>sancak</i> —Siverek <i>kaza</i> .....	309
1.3. Diyarbekir <i>sancak</i> —Silvan <i>kaza</i> .....	310
1.4. Diyarbekir <i>sancak</i> —Lice <i>kaza</i> .....	314
1.5. Diyarbekir <i>sancak</i> —Derik <i>kaza</i> .....	316
1.6. Diyarbekir <i>sancak</i> —Beşiri <i>kaza</i> .....	316
2.1. Mardin <i>sancak</i> —Mardin central district <i>Mardin merkez kaza</i> .....	320
2.2. Mardin <i>sancak</i> —Midyat <i>kaza</i> .....	320
2.3. Mardin <i>sancak</i> —Avine <i>kaza</i> .....	324
2.4. Mardin <i>sancak</i> —Nusaybin <i>kaza</i> .....	324
2.5. Mardin <i>sancak</i> —Cizre <i>kaza</i> .....	327
3.1. Maden <i>sancak</i> —Maden central district <i>Maden merkez kaza</i> .....	329
3.2. Maden <i>sancak</i> —Palu <i>kaza</i> .....	330
3.3. Maden <i>sancak</i> —Çermik <i>kaza</i> .....	332





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## NOTE ON NAMES AND SPELLING

The names of people and places are given in the Turkish form in this book, employing the standard Turkish spelling systems. The Latin letters in the Turkish system are pronounced more or less the same as their English equivalents, with the following exceptions:

- a* generally softer than the English, like the *a* in *bah* (rather than *hat*)
- c* *j*, as in *jam*
- ç* *ch*, as in *church*
- ğ* lengthens preceding vowel; thus *ağa* is pronounced *a-a*
- ı* like the *a* in *gentleman*
- j* like the *s* in *measure*
- ö* like the *i* in *bird*
- ş* *sh*, as in *ship*
- u* like the *u* in *put*
- ü* like the *e* in *few*, but shorter

Contemporary Ottoman place names are used throughout rather than the current Turkish names (thus 'Diyarbakir' instead of 'Diyarbakır'), though generally using Latin script and modern Turkish spelling (thus 'Mamuretülaziz' instead of 'Māmūratül'aziz'). For names ending with the letter 'd', the modern Turkish 't' has not been used (thus 'Abdülhamid' and not 'Abdülhamit', and 'Murad' instead of 'Murat').

For some terms English forms exist (such as 'pasha' or 'sheikh/shaikh'), but here as well Turkish spelling is preferred (thus '*paşa*' and '*şeyh*').

The following English translations for Ottoman administrative divisions have been used: 'province' for '*vilayet*', 'sub-province' for '*sancak*', 'district' for '*kaza*' and 'sub-district' for '*nahiye*'.



## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Joost Jongerden and Jelle Verheij

In the early 20th century, the British traveler, officer, honorary attaché and conservative politician Mark Sykes<sup>2</sup> wrote about Diyarbekir:

The country between Mount Ahmedi and Diarbekir is as dull and uninteresting as its inhabitants—brown, stony, and unwooded, it offers no attractions of any kind. Even in a remarkable green and balmy spring, it seemed desolate and unpleasing. What it must be like in winter and summer, I can hardly imagine. The town Diarbekir has a sombre and ominous appearance from without. The great dark walls, which bulge out in frowning bastions (...) the funeral black of the basalt, of which the whole of the dwellings are constructed, has a depressing effect. The native artists have endeavoured to relieve the dreariness of the picture by introducing white stone ornaments and decorations; but the effect is that of a mourning-card, and fails to cheer the eye. The inhabitants, who must trace their origin to the low villagers who dwell without, are obviously of the same debased race, though paler and less well formed, and whether Christian or Moslem, are equally displeasing.<sup>3</sup>

Sykes described the city, its surroundings and inhabitants in unremittingly bleak terms—‘funeral black’, ‘depressing’, ‘debased’, etc.—and yet not without reason, for he had found a city in distress and pain, one which had paid a heavy toll over the course of the 19th century. This was a city exhausted by a long series of Ottoman wars from 1783 onwards, waves of epidemic diseases (in 1799/1800, 1815/1816, 1848 and 1894), and, most importantly, a series of local violent conflicts and confrontations, including the Armenian-Muslim confrontation of 1895. Various political elite groups competed for power and resources. Tensions emerged between a

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<sup>1</sup> We are indebted to Andy Hilton, who took responsibility for copy-editing several contributions to this book, and for his valuable remarks.

<sup>2</sup> Known best as co-author of the Sykes-Picot agreement, a secret agreement between the governments of the UK and France to divide the provinces of the Ottoman Empire into areas under British and French control, Mark Sykes traveled extensively in the Middle East as a young man, both before and during his period as honorary attaché to the British Embassy in Constantinople, in the period 1905–07, but also later, in 1908–09 and 1913.

<sup>3</sup> Sykes 1915: 357–8.

newly constituted class of landlords, and dispossessed peasants and villagers, and between various groups and peoples (ethno-religious communities), exacerbated, among other things, by a newly developing political ideology (nationalism). Diyarbekir at the turn of the 20th century was a city in despair, occasionally raised to its feet by glimmers of hope, such as the constitutional revolution of 1908, when virtually all, Muslims and Christians alike, celebrated the fall of the régime of Abdülhamid II. Initially creating high expectations among the population, however, the revolution and the Second Constitutional Era that it ushered in brought political repression and genocide, the greatest upheaval of all. The age-old presence of the Armenians was terminated by massacres and deportation, and other Christian groups like the Syrians were also violently uprooted. Untold numbers of Muslims died in military service, and starvation and disease were rife. Kurds regarded as disloyal had already been deported from the region during the war, but, with the failure of tentative diplomatic advances towards a Kurdish homeland in Anatolia,<sup>4</sup> the war of 1919–23 and subsequent proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, the confrontation between the government (now in Ankara and overtly Turkish nationalist) and the Kurds reached new levels, culminating in the Şeyh Said Revolt of 1925—which had its centre in Diyarbekir.

As editors of this book, our motivation derives from a long-term personal commitment to the area under study. But we are also moved by a strong element of dissatisfaction with existing historical studies: Diyarbekir, like many other places in the region, has nearly never been properly studied as an area in its own right. Countless related investigations covering the late 19th and early 20th centuries have included Diyarbekir, but always in other, generally wide-ranging contexts. One dominant perspective has been the imperial one. The central focus here is on the developments in the imperial capital Istanbul, the center of formal power, and the acts of elites, be it the Palace (Porte) or the Committee of Union and Progress. In these works, Diyarbekir—like any other area or city in the empire—figures as a ‘periphery’, and political activity outside the geographies of central power is largely neglected. Another tendency has been to view the period as a kind of pre-history of later developments, largely caused by the tremendous changes associated with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and birth of nation-states across its territories. The foundation of the

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<sup>4</sup> See Olson 1989.

Republic of Turkey was certainly one of these, with 1923 as its 'year zero', and many studies look at the preceding period simply as the pre-history of the Republic (and into which Diyarbekir may be incorporated). The characterization of this period is thus made on basis of a post-facto event, which can be understood in retrospect only. The Armenian genocide discussion has had similar implications, with scores of authors searching for clues and evidence for what was later to occur, teleologically tending to ignore elements which are not 'useful' for or even militate against their perspectives. Of the same order also is the tendency to view the history of the area through 'ethnic' and 'nationalistic' glasses, be it Armenian, Kurdish, Turkish or other, and the usurpation and appropriation of other issues and narratives by and within nationalist discourses.

The contributions in this volume focus on events and relations through which Diyarbekir was produced; they specify the time period of the end of (19th) century without any determining reference to subsequent (or previous) events; and they step outside the confines of nationalist historiography. Overall, they may be characterized by two inversions of perspective. The first is a shift of attention from the so-called center to the so-called periphery, and the second a move from an exclusive focus on the acts and deeds of the elite alone, to one that includes also those of multiple subaltern categories. It may be argued, furthermore, that the approach underlying this book is marked by two concepts, poly-centricity and poly-activity.

'Poly-centricity' refers to the idea that the social does not have one single center, but many. Following this, developments in Ottoman and post-Ottoman society were and have been shaped by actions and activities in regional centers throughout the Empire. Diyarbekir was one such center of activity, a place where history was shaped. Political actors in the region contributed considerably to politics and social relations in the Empire as a whole, and the interrelationships between Diyarbekir and various other centers become significant in their own right. 'Poly-activity', meanwhile, refers to the approach by which the deeds and actions of several agents are considered. Attention is given to a range of actors and dynamics, networks and interactions, not on just one group or class. In fact, location specific history directly militates against this kind of exclusivity. Exclusion here is in the geographical dimension, within which all and everything needs to be considered, and even this level of exclusivity is ameliorated by the consideration of interaction between centers (i.e. the considerations of external influences, which introduce actors from out of the region). In this book, the actions of a wide range of actors are considered, including

state-wide leaders and organizations along with regional and localized, urban and rural, emerging and decaying, elite and subaltern groups as structured by both traditional and modern forms, such as peasants and the urban lower classes, and tribesmen and nationalists, as well as the various ethnic identity groupings and religious sects and denominations. In doing so, we have strived for a multi-faceted image of developments in the Diyarbekir region.

The contributions to this volume bring into focus dramatic and violent events. By taking different perspectives—those of peasants, *Hamidiye* regiments, officials and activists—and focusing on practices—land-grabbing, struggles for power, violence and genocide—the book gives shape to the idea of poly-centricity and poly-activity. At the same time, this implies, or turns our attention to, some of the practices and social relations through which events and trajectories are constructed. The implication of this is that we should try to go beyond the hierarchy of scale—‘the central state’ above ‘the province’ above ‘local officials’—but rather look for the ways in which connections are made and relations constructed. Thus, for example, the land-grab in Diyarbekir does not appear as something that resulted from centrally enacted legal reforms passed down to the provinces and met with peasant resistance as the struggle of local actors against their effects on the ground (sic). Instead, by taking the practice of grabbing and peasant resistance as a starting point, or, resistance against land-grabbing, all of a sudden we may see how different actors, peasants, and urban and rural elites try to establish relations and mobilize resources and support for their cases. Center and periphery, then, do not appear anymore as entities standing in opposition to each other, but become interrelated spaces of action. The petitioning peasants discussed in this book seek connection to those who make up the central state, just as others try to make connections. The Diyarbekir activists in the Committee of Union and Progress or the *Hamidiye* regiments are not simply to be considered local members of something larger, but also its constituents. They are at the same time both that ‘something bigger’ and ‘the local’, as two sides of the same coin. This is a theme prominent in the contributions of Joost Jongerden, Janet Klein, David Gaunt and Emrullah Akgündüz. Jelle Verheij, in his contribution shows how actors active in the province and reforms introduced following the Berlin conference of 1878 co-produced the anti-Armenian violence in 1895, while Uğur Ümit Üngör argues in his contribution: ‘Mass murder can develop from this mutual dependence and tacit pact: local elites depend on the center to secure a power base, and the center depends on local elites to carry out genocide.’



In a way, the emphasis on poly-activity and poly-centricity marks a shift from time-centered analyses focusing on succession to spatial-analyses focusing on simultaneity. The focus on centers—as Istanbul, for example, leading the course of development, with the periphery, the provinces, as lagging behind and catching up or just following the developments in the center—or the retrospective explanation of history—such as from ‘1923’—are illustrations of what we may call the ‘time-centered analysis of succession’. In such analyses, we see a marshalling of space under the sign of time, which leaves no space to tell different stories about the world (Massey 2005: 82).<sup>5</sup> Time tends to crowd out space in such history-telling—including social, economic, etc. space (as well as the physically or politically/administratively defined)—or rather, time orders space, according to the logic of the sequences analyzed. Looking back, history may appear as unfolding, but when we look seriously at ‘then’, societies—or places, if one likes—were heterogeneous and multiple, and options for the future ‘open’. There were different practices, linked to different trajectories, and the question one of understanding which ‘events’ seem to have emerged from which practices, how they became ‘successful’, and what the submerged trajectories were. This is an approach to history which regards ‘place’ seriously. It is what this book, through the different contributions, focusing on different practices or events as practices, is attempting.

#### DIYARBEKIR

In the pre-ambule to this book, Suavi Aydın and Jelle Verheij make extensive introductory notes about state and ethno-religious groups in Diyarbekir province, both city and countryside. Yet a few words here on the city and the larger region, province if one likes, may be in place. Situated on the River Tigris in the Fertile Crescent, in what was once northern Mesopotamia, the city of Diyarbekir has an ancient history. For most of this time it was known as ‘Amida’.<sup>6</sup> The city was part of an Aramean kingdom, the Neo-Assyrian and the Median Empires, and later the Persian, Roman

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<sup>5</sup> Although national(ist) narratives do also tend to construct the temporal, of course—again, such as in the case of ‘1923’.

<sup>6</sup> Other Latinate forms, variously recorded over the past millennia include ‘Amad’, ‘Amid(i)’, ‘Amed(i)’ and ‘Media’. See, e.g., Mizouri 2007: 24–5.

and Byzantine Empires. Amida was an early Christian center, enlarged and strengthened under the Roman emperor Constantius (Kōnstantios) II, who also erected new walls around the city (349). After a long siege, it fell to the king of Persia in 359, and then, in 639, to Islamic Arabs including the Bekr tribe, from whence the modern name. Between the 11th and the 16th century, the Diyarbekir area was under the control of different Islamic rulers.<sup>7</sup> In 1515, the city of Diyarbekir was conquered by local Sunni forces allied to (Sunni) Ottoman rulers which had emerged as a force in the region. With the fall of the citadel of Mardin at the turn of 1516–17 the Ottoman conquest of the Diyarbekir area was complete. In the Ottoman Empire, the city of Diyarbekir was from the start an important administrative center and remained so until World War I.

The name 'Diyarbekir' refers to the province (*eyalet*, *vilayet*, *il*), the smaller, more local sub-province or county (*sancak*) and district or borough (*kaza*, *ilçe*), and the provincial capital (*merkez*), the actual city itself. The borders of the regional area centered on and referred to as 'Diyarbekir' changed several times during the 19th century, as did the administrative divisions within it. The *eyalet* of around 1800 included a huge swathe of land, from Malatya in the west to Mosul (now in Iraq) in the southeast, and from Kemah (currently in the Turkish province of Erzincan) in the north to parts of current Syria in the south. During the *Tanzimat* Reform period until 1867, Diyarbekir was named *Eyâlet-i Kurdistan* (Kurdistan Province), and for a period also included parts of the provinces of Bitlis and Van. The general trend of the various administrative adjustments was towards reduction in size; nevertheless, Diyarbekir Province of the end of the 19th century remained an impressive stretch of land, encompassing parts of the modern Turkish provinces of Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Elazığ, Batman, Siirt and Şirnak, as well as parts of today's Northern Syria and Iraq.<sup>8</sup> After the Conference of Berlin (1878), it became known to Europeans as one of the six 'Armenian *vilayets*', the area in which reforms for the benefit of the Armenians were to be applied.

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<sup>7</sup> At the end of the eleventh century, following the entry of the Turkic peoples into Anatolia in 1071, control of the city changed hands from the *Merwanî* dynasty to the *Oğuz*. The city then became the capital of the *beylik* of the Artuklu dynasty. In 1507, Shah Ismail I succeeded in taking the region for the Persian Shi'ite Safavid Empire from the Akkoyunlu dynasty, which had ruled over eastern Anatolia for a century. Safavid rule lasted only eight years, however.

<sup>8</sup> See maps in Yılmazçelik 1995.

In temporal terms, the opening contribution by Aydın and Verheij stops short of the Berlin conference. Entitled ‘Confusion in the Cauldron: Some notes on Ethno-Religious groups, local powers and the Ottoman state in Diyarbekir Province, 1800–1876’, this offers a detailed introduction to the ethnic and political structure of the Diyarbekir area and an exploration of the relations between the central (Ottoman) state and the local powers of Diyarbekir and its environs. Around 1800, the central state had hardly any influence in the region. Aydın and Verheij describe how the state gradually tightened its grip during the *Tanzimat* period, a process beset by many twists and turns. Covering a time frame that precedes that of the main focus of this book, this contribution constitutes an essential background to the various developments in the last quarter of the century, and provides a historical introduction to several of the themes covered by other contributors.

The subject of the contribution from Joost Jongerden, ‘Elite Encounters of a Violent Kind: Milli İbrahim Paşa, Ziya Gökalp and political struggle in Diyarbekir at the turn of the 20th century’, is the nature of a conflict between two elite groups, which he refers to as ‘Hamidian’ and ‘proto-nationalist’, and which he claims to have had a profound influence on social and political life in Diyarbekir in the period between 1890 and 1910. While discussing the conflict between the elite-groups, he makes two arguments. The first argument is that the formation of these elite-groups and their overall influence was by no means a local affair only. The development of the proto-nationalist elite group in Diyarbekir was influenced by the emergence of the Turkish nationalist movement, in particular the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). However, it would be wrong to consider the nationalist elite-group just as an ‘instance’ of the CUP. Participants of the nationalist elite-group in Diyarbekir played an important role in the formation of the CUP and its ideological transition from Ottomanist to nationalist. It is not the local shaping the center or the center shaping the local: local-center shaping is a two-way process. The second argument Jongerden makes is related to the extent to which the *Hamidiye* in Diyarbekir were involved in the anti-Armenian massacres of 1895. While it is often suggested—or assumed—that the *Hamidiye* regiments were involved on a large scale in the persecution and killing of Armenians, in the case of Diyarbekir, it is argued here, this was not the case. In fact, not only was it not the existence and activities of the *Hamidiye* that caused harm to the Armenians and other Christians here, but the exact opposite: it was the disbandment of the local *Hamidiye*

headed by Milli İbrahim Paşa that proved detrimental. In respect of the main themes of this book, Jongerden's contribution focuses attention first on locality as *constitutive* of general developments (rather than just as an expression of them), and second on the problem of over-generalization.

In 'Diyarbakir and the Armenian crisis of 1895', Jelle Verheij explores the bloody confrontation between Armenians and Muslims in November, 1895. The conflict in Diyarbakir was one of a series of similar conflicts all over the eastern provinces that erupted following the Hunchak demonstration in Istanbul and proclamation of reforms, under strong European pressure, for the benefit of non-Muslims. Despite the availability of a comparatively large number of primary sources, these events have never been studied in detail. Using both foreign (British and French) and Ottoman texts and documents, the author compares the Armenian/Western/Christian view, which has always been to regard the conflicts as a largely unprovoked attack on the Armenians, with the Ottoman/Turkish/Muslim view, which claims that there to have been an (incipient) armed Armenian uprising, but ignores the ensuing conflict. After detailed analysis of what transpired in Diyarbakir, both the events themselves and the periods before and after, Verheij concludes that although there was an element of Armenian protest (which was largely ignored by Armenian-Western sources), local Muslim protest against the Sultan and the reforms introduced following the Berlin conference were the most important factors. In Diyarbakir, a segment of the urban Muslim population was led by a number of notables described as 'Young Turks' and, by this time, in clear opposition to the Sultan. Violence was by no means confined to the city of Diyarbakir alone after 1895, but spread into virtually all the rural areas, where other actors and motivations also came into play. Attempting to present a comprehensive list of incidents for the whole of the province of Diyarbakir, Verheij explains (see Annex B) how, in the countryside, it was the role of the Kurdish tribesmen that was paramount: in many cases they do seem to have attacked Armenian and other Christian rural settlements unprovoked. Verheij's contribution is innovative in more than one sense, particularly in his attempt to reconcile the opposing views of the 1895 conflict, and in his extensive use of Ottoman sources. His analysis also makes clear that the conflict was shaped by a number of specific, local social and political factors, which have seldom been considered until now.

Several contributions make reference to the local *Hamidiye*. The chapter 'State, Tribe, Dynasty, and the Contest over Diyarbakir at the Turn of the 20th Century', by Janet Klein, takes as its central subject of inquiry the *Hamidiye* Light Cavalry, a Kurdish tribal militia created by Sultan Abdül-

hamid II to serve as a proxy force to deal with perceived threats to his imperial authority, both internal and external. Janet Klein argues that the dynamics exemplified by the power struggles that were exacerbated by the existence of this tribal militia were central in the social shaping of Diyarbekir at the turn of the twentieth century. Most of the regiments were located in areas where Armenian revolutionists were active or which they traversed as they smuggled men and weapons into the Empire from across the borders. This is why Kurdish tribes formed the overwhelming bulk of these regiments: it was they, and not Arabs and Turkmen, who were the ones that lived near and amidst the perceived Armenian threat. While discussing the case of the *Hamidiye*, Klein demonstrates that we need to look at Diyarbekir within a larger—but still regional, and provincial—unit of analysis, that of the six eastern ('Armenian') provinces. Indeed, the province and the wider region may be difficult to separate from each other, implying that in the making of micro-histories we need to take into account the wider struggles unfolding at the time (yet without assuming a centralist perspective), which both inform and are shaped by local particularities. She does that through a close examination of the career of Mustafa Paşa, head of the Miran tribe of Cizre, and known as a notorious robber before he became a *Hamidiye* commander. Klein shows that significant tensions and rivalries were played out on the ground in attempts to acquire local power and resources between and among tribes and urban notables, and between peasants and their overlords, and the state, which endeavored to utilize these local struggles for its own ends. As such, the national (imperial) becomes part of the local (provincial, or regional), and vice versa. Klein's plea is that we unravel the specificities of such dynamics and 'learn' from history.

In 'A "Peripheral" Approach to the 1908 Revolution in the Ottoman Empire: Land disputes in peasant petitions in post-revolutionary Diyarbekir', Nilay Özok-Gündoğan focuses on one of the most pressing social-economic issues in the region: peasant dispossession. The problem of dispossession became urgent after the Land Code of 1858, adopted in the spirit of *Tanzimat* reforms. The objective of the Land Code had been to increase tax revenues, but it also changed the nature of landownership, leading to the formation of a new class of owners of large land estates. In the Ottoman Empire, the vast majority of agricultural land was owned by the state and cultivated by tenants who had a right to cultivation (which they could pass to their heirs). Taxes of agricultural lands were not collected by the state, but transferred to third parties. In the course of the 14th century, this right to collect taxes was granted to military officers and

notables, who would use the money in order to raise and arm forces that would fight in the Sultan's wars. Over time, limited time period grants became indefinite and inherited, and the revenues not used to maintain an army, but for personal wealth acquisition. And with the enactment of the Land Code, formal private ownership became possible on a large scale. Ottoman feudalism was instituted. Local notables and persons of wealth usurped land extensively, but, as Özok-Gündoğan shows through an analysis of petitions sent by peasants to the authorities, the usurpation of land and dispossession of peasants was contested in word and deed. By doing that, she introduces two new perspectives to the historiography of the region. Firstly, as indicated, her analysis does not revolve around ethnicity and religion, the dominant paradigms in Ottoman local and regional studies, but around socio-economic relations and conflict. Secondly, she introduces the peasantry, not as an object of action, but as subject, and in so-doing, offers an insight into the peasant struggles that occurred in the Diyarbekir region at the beginning of the 20th century.

In 'Some Notes on the Syriac Christians of Diyarbekir in the Late 19th Century: A preliminary investigation of some primary sources', Emrullah Akgündüz gives a sketch of the Syriac Christian communities in the city. Diyarbekir at the end of the nineteenth century was host to a variety of Christian communities, including the Syriac Christians. Although community constitutes a standard analytical lens for local histories, studies of Syriac-Christians in the city are virtually absent. Employing primary sources such as the *salnames* and the Mardin Collection, Akgündüz here expands our knowledge of the Syriac-Christians of Diyarbekir with regards to population, economics, education, printing and social relations. The information found shows that the Syriac Christian community, the second largest Christian community in Diyarbekir after the Armenians, was growing during the late nineteenth century. Less information is available regarding their economic status, as it is difficult to ascertain the sectors in which the Syriac Christians worked, though an overview of Diyarbekir's economy at the time is provided, which along with other clues, suggests they may not have been unprosperous. The Syriac children attended their own community schools by the end of the nineteenth century as well as the Ottoman schools. Finally, this investigation also looks at the social relations of the Syriac Christians with other ethno-religious communities and with each other. Relations with the Armenians, though not cordial at the clergy level, Akgündüz argues, were cooperative. Despite a willingness on the part of the Syriac Orthodox clergy to work with the Ottoman authorities, however, everyday relations between Syriac Christians and Muslims were

strained. Intra-relations among the Syriac Christians were characterized by the split between the Catholics and non-Catholics, which, together with the strained clergy-level relations with the Armenians, encouraged the quest on the part of the Syriac Orthodox to become a separate *millet* (people, nation).

David Gaunt, in his contribution 'Relations between Kurds and Syriacs and Assyrians in Late Ottoman Diyarbekir' is concerned with the development of socio-economic and political relations between the two, with a focus on the 'Syriacs' or 'Assyrians' (these terms referring to various Christian communities in the Mesopotamian region sharing a common background as speakers of Aramaic dialects, i.e. assuming a linguistic basis for ethno-cultural definition). The basis of his research is formed by observations of the close relationship between Syriacs/Assyrians and Kurds at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries—a subject, however, inadequately researched. Gaunt starts his article with a brief discussion on the size of the populations and their settlements in Diyarbekir, which had one of the greatest concentrations of Syriacs/Assyrians among Ottoman provinces. Syriacs or Assyrians were never a category used by the Ottoman census-takers, and available figures on various communities from which the category Syriac/Assyrian is composed should be treated with caution. Relations, or integration, between Syriacs/Assyrians and Kurds had been good, Gaunt argues, as indicated by the existence of Syriac/Assyrian sub-sections within Kurdish tribal confederations in the Tur-Abdin region in the southeast of the Diyarbekir province. But Gaunt also makes a reservation. The good relations between Syriacs/Assyrians and Kurds that marked the southeastern area were not representative of the whole province, and so we are minded (again) to be careful of over-generalization and simplification. Gaunt also shows that relations between the Syriacs/Assyrians and Kurds were deteriorating rapidly during the course of the 19th century, culminating in increasingly brutal violence in the first decades of the 20th century, to which an unequal balance in rifle power also contributed. Gaunt argues that the tendency for a struggle over territorial control combined with the CUP policy of separating populations were constitutive in the deteriorating relations and rising violence between the two groupings.

The CUP in particular and Young Turk rule in general as related to the issue of violence forms the main subject of the last contribution, by Uğur Ümit Üngör. In 'Disastrous Decade: Armenians and Kurds in the Young Turk Era, 1915–25', Üngör links the occurrence of mass violence against the Armenians to the Young Turks' political program of nation-state building,

in which the Empire, a heterogeneous space, was to be transformed into the homeland of a Sunni-Turkish population. In this process of transformation, options in respect of 'the other' ranged from assimilation to annihilation. Üngör is especially concerned with questions revolving around the issue of the axis of tension between direction from above (the state) and local initiatives (the provinces)—or, as it might be rephrased, between centralist and peripheral perspectives. In his inquiry, he distinguishes between three phases: the process in which people become categorized and the subject of genocide, the dynamic of persecution and violence, and how perpetrator, survivor and bystander live with each other after genocide. A main conclusion from this investigation is that competition between urban elites was a major contributory factor to the intensity of the violence in Diyarbekir. City and province had become the scene of a fierce struggle for political and economic power, among them a local branch of the CUP, which in Istanbul had won control of the state in 1908. This success became translated at the local (regional) level in Diyarbekir as a decisive advantage in the ongoing, increasingly bitter competition. Genocide, the author argues, emerged as an opportunity for perpetrators to pursue self interest.

Further information on specific subjects and some source materials have been added to the book as annexes. Annex A represents an attempt by Jelle Verheij to list all the non-Muslim villages in the Diyarbekir *vilayet*, with specification of their ethnic/religious composition, their administrative connection and old and new names. Since many discussions center on inter-ethnic relations and population figures while surprisingly few attempts have in fact been made to present a full picture of the settlement situation in the province, we consider this annex to be an important addition to the book.

Clearly, many contributions to this book explore subjects that have been rarely researched until now. The contributions presented here, their information and analyses and arguments, should not, therefore, be interpreted as the final word on the issues raised. Naturally many subjects that could have been treated were passed by, and remain still to be researched. Finally, authors were not supplied with binding guidelines other than the general perspectives explained. It should thus be stressed that the authors themselves, and not the editors of this volume, are ultimately responsible for the contents of the contributions.



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CONFUSION IN THE CAULDRON  
SOME NOTES ON ETHNO-RELIGIOUS GROUPS, LOCAL POWERS AND  
THE OTTOMAN STATE IN DIYARBEKIR PROVINCE, 1800–1870

Suavi Aydın and Jelle Verheij

INTRODUCTION

Like many parts of the Ottoman Empire, Diyarbekir province in the eighteenth century was a potpourri of ethnic and religious groups, which had lived intermingled for centuries. It was also very much on the periphery of the main part of the Empire—in Rumelia and western Anatolia—and far away from the seat of imperial authority, the capital, Istanbul, which made it more prone to regional trends and local powers.

Historically, the region had been defined as a hinterland, or confluence, the westward extent of Iranian and northward extent of Arab as well as eastward extent of Roman/Byzantine and then Ottoman influence. Diyarbekir had become part of the Ottoman Empire during its eastwards expansion at the beginning of the 16th century. The Ottomanization of Diyarbekir proceeded slowly thereafter, especially outside of the provincial capital and a few other urban areas. Over the course of the nineteenth century, however, the central state managed to strengthen its grip on the region, profoundly changing the local political landscape and also affecting the complex relations between the different population groups. The two paramount issues in the history of the area during this period (and after), the Armenian and Kurdish questions, both have important links with this centralization process.

This article does not aspire to an exhaustive treatment of all that happened and how, listing and detailing each of the competing forces and leading personalities and every critical juncture of this shift towards the center. It just aims to set the scene—the socio-political situation of the province prior to Ottoman modernization and the development of ethno-nationalism—and outline the main course of events that followed to change this—essentially, two phases of military-backed political reformation during the second quarter of the century, followed by the revived *Tanzimat* movement of the third—in order to provide further historical background to some of the themes covered in this volume. Since parts

of the centralization process are poorly researched, we do sometimes employ primary sources.

In detailing the political structure of Diyarbekir at this time, four local groups can be identified as important actors in addition to the central state and its local representatives. Three of them were predominantly Muslim and distinguished especially by geo-social considerations: the men of the elite families (or 'notables') of the towns and cities, the rural Kurdish chiefs (*'mirs'*) controlling territories in the mountainous parts of the province, and the tribes of the plains (*aşirets*).<sup>1</sup> From the mid-century on, the Christian communities of the province, particularly the Armenian urban segment, profiled themselves as a fourth local power group. These groups were operating to a large extent in different geographical spaces. Not unsurprisingly, therefore, they each developed different relations with the central state.

#### THE AREA: DIYARBEKIR AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

The early sixteenth century city and surrounding territory of Diyarbekir, or *'Diyâr-ı Bekir'* in Ottoman, was still known in some areas and by some parts of the population by its historical, i.e. pre-Arab name, 'Amed', or a variant of this.<sup>2</sup> Diyarbekir as an administrative unit was defined when the Ottomans conquered the eastern part of Anatolia, and, in 1515, the city was made the centre of a large province, or state (*evâlet*) named after the city, which was divided into several sub-provinces, counties or districts (*sancaks*), including the central one containing the city, again with the same name. In this respect, it resembled any other Ottoman province. Unlike the other, new eastern provinces, however, the standard administrative format was complicated by the local ethnic geo-history. Particularly in the mountaneous areas, a multitude of local Kurdish lords existed, who had ruled their small dominions for centuries.

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<sup>1</sup> Because of the connotations of the English term 'tribe', the Arabic, Ottoman and Turkish term *'aşiret'* is preferred here. The term 'tribe' points anthropologically to kinship groups of hunter-gatherers, horticulturalists or agriculturalists in African, American, Asian or Oceanic environments. *Aşirets* are (1) specified by the Middle Eastern context and their pastoral-nomadic character, shaped by the necessity to move of large herds of animals (transhumance), and (2) different insofar as common descent is almost fictive: the *aşiret* is predominantly a formation on the basis of common political and economic goals (Aydın & Özel 2006: 52).

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction, in this volume.

In many parts of the new province the borders of the *sancaks* were drawn according to the borders of these dominions or ‘emirates’ (Turkish: ‘*beylik*’). Their hereditary rulers continued to reign there, the lineages left untouched. In the so called *Ekrad Beyliği* (Kurdish *beyliks*) in principal, the rulers and their tribesmen supplied soldiers and paid taxes, the Ottoman feudal system of fiefs being extended to these areas under the statute known as ‘*yurtluk-ocaklık*’.<sup>3</sup> The most inaccessible areas, however, were left completely to their own devices. They had no obligations to the central government and the government did not interfere with their internal affairs. They effectively became principalities—know as ‘*hükûmets*’ (governments)—and in fact, only nominally part of the Empire.

Table 1: Different types of local government in the Diyarbekir *eyâlet* in the later 16th and early 19th centuries

Type of district	Second half of 16th century	1821
Normal <i>sancak</i> , ruled by Sultan appointed governors	Harput, Ergani, Siverek, Nusaybin, Hisnkeyf (Hasankeyf), Çemişkezek, Siirt, Miyafarkin, Akçakale, Habur, Sincar	Amid, Harput, Mafarkin/Miyâfârikîn (Silvan), Mazgird, Çapakçur (today Bingöl), Sağman (today village in southern Tunceli), Çermik, Kulp, İlkis (see note below), Sincar, Siirt, Siverek, Ergani, Hasankeyf, Çemişkezek, Nusaybin, Penbek (not identified), Pertekrek (= Pertek, currently in Tunceli) Hani, Atak
<i>Ekrad Beyliği</i> or <i>sancak</i> with ‘ <i>yurtluk-ocaklık</i> ’ status	Sağman, Kulp, Mihrani, Tercil, Atak, Pertek, Çapakçur, Çermik	
<i>Hükûmet</i>	Cizre, Eğil, Genç, Palu, Hazro	Palu, Kih (from Yılmazçelik, thought to be Genç, today in Bingöl province), Cizre, Eğil, Hazo (modern Kozluk, in Batman province), Tercil, Savur
Source	Van Bruinessen 1992: 199, note 67, on the basis of a <i>kânunnâme</i> mentioned by Evliya Çelebi	Akbal 1951; Yılmazçelik 1995: 133

Notes: In a list of 1795 Miyafarkin (Silvan) was still listed as a district with *hükûmet* status (Yılmazçelik 1995: 130); according to Yılmazçelik İlkis was probably Boşat, north of Silvan (ibid., pp. 133–134).

<sup>3</sup> Van Bruinessen 1992: 158–159; Özoğlu 2004: 56–57.

Over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries, new borders were drawn, with some principalities disappearing while others emerged. Some areas were taken under direct government control, but others kept their *status aparte* or even acquired such. Most importantly, though, the system enabling Kurdish local rulers to maintain their power in some parts of the Diyarbakir *eyâlet* survived well into the 19th century.<sup>4</sup> The prolongation of this system of Kurdish self-rule into modern times, virtually ignored in Turkey's 'official history', is of course an important backdrop to the 'Kurdish question' as it developed in recent times.

The borders of the province of Diyarbakir changed many times. As during its constitution in the 16th century, it mostly encompassed (parts of) the modern provinces of Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa, Elazığ, Tunceli, Mardin, Bingöl, Batman and Şırnak and parts of northern Syria and Iraq. Occasionally it was expanded to include still larger areas. This was the case between 1841 and 1845, when parts of the modern provinces of Adıyaman, Malatya and Erzincan also belonged to Diyarbakir.<sup>5</sup> Between 1846 and 1867 Diyarbakir was renamed '*Kurdistan Eyâleti*'.<sup>6</sup> The administrative area of Diyarbakir temporarily came to include even the Van, Bitlis, Muş and Hakkari regions. In 1867, the Kurdistan province was abolished and Diyarbakir reconstituted, this time as a smaller province than in 1846, but still including Malatya and Mamuretülaziz (*Mâmûratül'aziz*). This situation did not last long either. In the (Ottoman) State Yearbook (*Devlet Salnâmesi*) of 1876, Mamuretülaziz is shown as a separate province, along with Ergani Madeni.<sup>7</sup> In the era of Abdulhamid II (1876–1908), the province was composed of three *sancaks*—Diyarbakir, Mardin and Ergani Madeni—with the sancak of Mardin extending into the territory of modern Iraq and Syria.

Although the administrative area of the Diyarbakir *vilâyet* became gradually smaller towards the end of the 19th century, events continued to evolve in the larger area defined by its earlier borders and the adjoining provinces of Mosul, Haleb, Bitlis and Mamuretülaziz. In speaking about the province of Diyarbakir during the period prior to the history covered

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<sup>4</sup> Van Bruinessen assumed that in the 16th and 17th centuries there was an overall increasing level of localized autonomy (Van Bruinessen 1992: 160). More recently, Özoğlu has defended the opposite view (Özoğlu 2004: 59). Savur was clearly not a Kurdish *hükûmet*, but governed by urban Arabs.

<sup>5</sup> See the map in Yılmazçelik 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Özoğlu 2004: 61–61. The center of this new province seems to initially have been in Erzurum (Hakan 2002: 108).

<sup>7</sup> *Salnâme-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osman*, Sene 1294, Def'a 32.

in this book (i.e. the 19th century up until 1870), therefore, we refer to the politically (Ottoman) defined territory specified as an *eyâlet* and a *vilâyet* (both translated here as 'province'), but which was not always known by the name of 'Diyarbakir'. We refer, moreover, to an area, which, while including the territory of the current province (*il*), was considerably larger, at times consisting of a large chunk of the area known today as the South-east (i.e. of Turkey), and extending even into today's Iraq and Syria and the area known as 'Central Kurdistan' (see below, p. 27).<sup>8</sup> Thus, although the focus here is the province as it was by the later part of the nineteenth century, we prefer not to confine our treatment to strict borders, but to include also developments in the general region.

#### THE GEOGRAPHY AND PEOPLE OF DIYARBEKIR: FOUR ZONES

On the basis of geographical and socio-cultural characteristics, Diyarbakir and its borderlands in the nineteenth century may roughly be divided into four zones: (1) The central part: the city itself (*nefs-i Diyârbekir*) and its immediate surroundings, (2) the mountains to the north and northeast, (3) the plains in the south, including the hilly area of Tûr Abdin, to the East of Mardin, and (4) the western part of central Kurdistan. A short description of each of these zones is given here, introducing their geography, ethnic structure and local power holders at the beginning of the 19th century.

#### THE CENTRAL PART OF DIYARBEKIR

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Diyarbakir was an important centre of both traditional industry and trade, with a sizable population of some quarter of a million people (Yılmazçelik 1995) at a time when the population of the entire Ottoman Empire was probably not very much more than seven to ten million.<sup>9</sup> The regional Imperial administrative center, it was a city on which the urban culture of Istanbul had left a strong imprint. The political authority of the capital was strong also at times. And as the

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<sup>8</sup> Western Europeans and Americans in the nineteenth century, it may be noted, regularly referred to areas in the region by their ancient, Biblical and/or ethnically based names, such as (in English) 'Mesopotamia', 'Armenia', and 'Assyria'.

<sup>9</sup> The population recorded by the first full imperial census of 1831 was seven and a quarter million people.

focal point of a trading crossroads on the borders of empires stretching back over millennia, it was also ethnically and religiously very mixed, a place where Turks, Kurds, Zazas, Arabs, Armenians, Syriacs, and Jews, and Greek-Orthodox all lived together. The lively economic environment and multi-ethnic structure combined with the cultural influence of Istanbul certainly must have given the city a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Indeed, despite the loss of almost all the Christian population by deportations and massacres during the First World War, this culture was preserved well into the 20th century.<sup>10</sup>

The Muslim population of the city consisted largely of the descendants of Turkic groups who had settled in the (Turkoman) Akkoyunlu and (Persian) Safavid periods, and of Turkified Kurds, Zaza, and Arabs. These people identified themselves primarily as Muslim and Ottoman. They would generally have used Ottoman Turkish but also knew other languages (Arabic, Kurdish, Zazaki). Many inhabitants were probably multilingual.

The city of Diyarbekir possessed a strong and probably quite affluent urban Muslim elite, consisting of a number of important families in the city from *ayân* and *eşrâf* origins—(generally referred to in English as the ‘notables’). The men from these families usually held the important government posts and dominated local politics. Their influence reached far beyond the walls of the city.

The Christian population was principally made up of Armenians and Syrian Orthodox. The town of Diyarbekir had had an Armenian population since at least the 8th century AD.<sup>11</sup> The Syrian Orthodox were probably the descendants of the main body of the ancient Aramaic population who had survived in the territory, spanning from the line Adiyaman-Malatya-Elazığ to the line Siirt-Midyat-Cizre, thus roughly the stretch of land between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers.

The identity of the Christians was based on their religious communities. These intersected ethnicity with church, and were formerly recognized in the Empire as *millets*. Around 1800 there were still only two Christian *millets*, the Armenian (sometimes called ‘Gregorians’)<sup>12</sup> and the ‘Greek’ (*Rum*) Orthodox. The largest Syriac group in Diyarbekir province, the

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<sup>10</sup> After the War, Diyarbekir attracted migrants from the few remaining Christian communities in the rural areas. See Margosyan (1994) for an impression of multi-ethnic social life in mid 20th century Diyarbakır.

<sup>11</sup> See Verheij 2012: 89 (in this volume).

<sup>12</sup> Reputed as the first nation-based church, the Armenian Orthodox became known as ‘Gregorians’ after Saint Gregory the Illuminator, first official head of the church (from 302). Armenians themselves prefer to refer call their church the Apostolic Church.



Syrian Orthodox (*Süryanî*, often called ‘Jacobites’ by outsiders)<sup>13</sup> belonged to the Armenian *millet*.<sup>14</sup> The status of the smaller Syriac groups like the Nestorians (*Nesturî*)<sup>15</sup> and Catholic Nestorians, known as Chaldeans (*Keldânî*)<sup>16</sup> was less clear. Certainly these various Syriac denominations did not see themselves as one group.<sup>17</sup> Like the Nestorians, the main groups of Armenian and Syriac (Oriental) Orthodox had also spawned Catholic churches.<sup>18</sup> Later, Protestant Christians (converts of foreign missionaries, from both Armenian and Syriac origin) were added to the mix. There was thus a total of eight denominations, if we include the small groups of Greek-Orthodox and Catholicized Greek Orthodox.<sup>19</sup> There was also a small number of Jews, the third non-Muslim *millet* of the Ottoman Empire, in Diyarbekir city (presumably diasporic descendants of the original exiles from Roman times).

At the beginning of the century there seems to have been a large Muslim majority in Diyarbekir, which had evaporated by 1870, when approximately half of the population of Diyarbekir consisted of Muslims, and half of non-Muslims (of whom Armenians were in the majority).<sup>20</sup> Also, a large

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<sup>13</sup> Syriacs came to be known as ‘Jacobites’ due to the seventh century Syriac Orthodox Church reformation under Yağob Baradai, a term they themselves reject, preferring the older reference of the name ‘*Süryanî-i Kadim*’ or ‘*Süryanî Kadim*’ (Ancient Syriac).

<sup>14</sup> Formerly recognized under the Armenian *millet* from 1783, the Syriac Orthodox were not able to gain recognition as a *millet* in their own right until 1882 (Makko 2010: 3).

<sup>15</sup> ‘Nestorians’ were (are) members of the Apostolic Church of the East, which had been founded to the east of the Roman Empire, became linked to the Persian Sassanids and then split from the Byzantines over the excommunication of Nestorios (then Patriarch of Constantinople) by the Council of Ephesos in 431. Nestorian territory in the Ottoman Empire stretched from the eastern side of the Tigris to the Iranian border (there was also a concentration of Nestorians West of Urmiah Lake in Iran), including the mountainous Hakkari and İmadiye (Bahdinan) regions. Their official status was unique, but unclear: the church in Diyarbekir was led from Hakkari by the Mar Shimon, a hereditary position and thus non-Porte appointed *millet* head—the only such.

<sup>16</sup> From as early as the 1550s, dissent in the Church of the East led from Diyarbekir had resulted in a communion with Rome and the establishment of a recognized line of Catholic Nestorians, known as Chaldeans, with Diyarbekir the seat of the Chaldean patriarchate from 1672. The Chaldean *millet* was officially recognized in 1846.

<sup>17</sup> Makko 2010: 3.

<sup>18</sup> The Syriac Catholic Church was formerly recognized (as a *millet*) by the Ottoman state in 1829, and the Armenian Catholics in 1831 (Masters 2001: 107–8).

<sup>19</sup> Greek Catholics are also recorded in the city during the latter part of the century, although whether and when this group came to the city or converted as a resident group (from the Eastern Orthodox church) is unclear. Greek Catholics gained effective recognition in 1821, albeit only locally, as the *millet-i Rum* in the *eyalet* of Haleb (with its capital in today’s northern Syria).

<sup>20</sup> According to the Provincial Yearbook (*salnâme*) of 1288 (1871/72) a little over half (55.8%) of the (male) population of Diyarbekir city was non-Muslim. In the first half of

number of the rural population around the city was non-Muslim. In the nearby villages there was a particularly high presence of Syrian Christians (primarily Orthodox). In the vicinity of Diyarbekir there was also a Turkic population segment. Some *Türkmen* groups had lived for a long time here. Turkmen villages could be found in the Çermik-Çüngüş area, northwest of the city, and to the southeast, in the present-day district of Bismil, which in the 19th century was known as *Şark Nahiyesi* ('the Eastern sub-district'). Some *Türkmen* were Kurdified in the course of the centuries, notably the large tribes of the *Karakeçi* (Black Goats) and *Türkmen* near Siverek.<sup>21</sup>

### THE NORTHERN PART

The mountain chain to the north of Diyarbekir city, stretching from west to east and geographically part of the Anti-Taurus range, was populated by a mix of Zazaki (*Dumili* or *Kırđki*) speaking populations and *Kırmancî* speaking Kurds and Armenians. Many villages here had a mixed population of these three groups. Some of the Zazas belonged to the Alevi (in the contemporary terminology, '*Kızılbaş*') sect, but the bulk of this group lived in areas more to the north, Dersim (currently Tunceli) and Bingöl.

There were few large *aşirets* in this zone. Instead it was characterized by relatively small, autonomous units, ruled by local rulers. It was in this part of Diyarbekir, that most districts with *hükümet* status survived, retaining the autonomy allowed to them during the incorporation in the Empire. The *beyliks* were roughly from west to east: Çermik, Eğil, Piran (nowadays Dicle), Palu, Tercil (near Hazro), Silvan, Atak (near Lice), Ilıcak, Hani and Kulp. Thus the northern mountains were largely dominated by (semi) autonomous local rulers. The reports made by the British traveler and Consul in Erzurum, Captain James Brant, who visited this region in the late 1830s, offers some interesting insights into the power of these rulers. Each of the beys ruled over 50–70 villages and could summon thousands of horsemen and footsoldiers in case of war. Interestingly, among

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the 19th century, however, according to Yılmazçelik (1995), only 20% of the Diyarbekir population of 262,275 consisted of non-Muslims. He admits that it is impossible to be very certain about the size of the respective communities, and does seem to rely too much on the assumption that non-Muslims had less children than Muslims (ibid., pp. 117–18). Historically, however, Brant (1836: 210) had suggested a similar proportion, mentioning a population of 8,000 *hane* (households) of which 6,300 were 'Turkish' (= Muslim). There is thus reason to believe that between 1830 and 1870 the Christian population, for unknown reasons, grew considerably more strongly than did the Muslim.

<sup>21</sup> Sykes 1908: 472. For Siverek, see below, p. 23.

them were also Armenians, who were armed and apparently had a status very similar to that of their Muslim neighbors. In Brant's time, the most powerful of the beys was Recep Bey of Tercil. Reputedly, his enormous wealth was partly based on the plundering of trade caravans.<sup>22</sup> The north counted a number of small towns, usually around or close to the residence of the beys. Many of the inhabitants of these towns were Armenians.<sup>23</sup> Siverek, west of the Karacadağ chain, was also a city of importance, with a mixed Muslim-Christian population. Geographically this town belonged more to the central part of Diyarbekir.

The hilly area connecting the northern mountains with the Tûr Abdin region (Zone 3, see below), roughly the current province of Batman, was also dominated by strong local potentates, although they did not have traditional *hükümet* status: the Silvan *aşiret*, the Bey of Garzan, and the Yezidi Bey of Rıdvan.<sup>24</sup> The Garzan Beys had somehow managed to bring part of the Mutki area, in the triangle Silvan-Muş-Bitlis under their control.<sup>25</sup> In this area as well, an important part of the population was formed by Armenians.<sup>26</sup> Also there was an important concentration of Yezidis.<sup>27</sup>

#### THE SOUTHERN PLAINS

The southern part of Diyarbekir province was largely flat and the terrain relatively easily accessible. The Karacadağ chain (running north to south, west of Diyarbekir) and the Tûr Abdin, east of Mardin, were the

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<sup>22</sup> Brant 1841: 359–360. Brant visited the area shortly after the fall of the beys in the 1830s and collected information about the *ancient régime* from informants in the area. Regarding the plundering by Recep Bey, Brant added that 'it is admitted that many acts of the kind, committed by others, were attributed to him' (p. 359).

<sup>23</sup> By example over 90% of the population of Lice and some 76% of Silvan were Christian, mostly Armenians (see Çukurova & Erantepli 2008: 359). Three-quarters of the 207 households of the town of Çüngüş were Armenian in 1890, with the other quarter Muslim (travel report by Arifi Paşa, in Korkusuz 2003: 149).

<sup>24</sup> Alternatively named Rizvan. Brant 1841: 354, 376; Taylor 1865: 32.

<sup>25</sup> Brant 1841: 376. Probably a result of the fact that the Kurds of Garzan were (semi-) nomads who had their summer pastures in Mutki and neighboring Sasun.

<sup>26</sup> According to Brant, two-thirds of the population of this region was Armenian (Brant 1841: 377). Kevorkian & Paboudjian (1992: 505) mention 76 Armenian villages in the Garzan area.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor 1865: 32. According to the British ethnologist, Francis Ainsworth, the Yezidis were 'all parcelled out into four great divisions, for the purpose of the annual visitations by the Kawals . . . or Preachers, [who] go from village to village as teachers of the sect'—one of these four divisions was 'Khurzen or Dyarbekir', which would seem to have referred to the whole of the Anatolian southeast (Ainsworth 1861: 13, 20).

only elevated areas of importance. Two sub-zones can be distinguished. The northern part of the area, from Urfa in the west to the Tigris in the east had traditionally been an integrated geographical zone with a large degree of social continuity and age old urban centers, including Mardin, Derik, Savur, Midyat, Nusaybin and Cizre. The city of Mardin, the second largest in the province, was undisputedly the main urban centre of the area. Like the capital, Mardin too had a mixed Muslim-Christian population and a strong Muslim elite, mostly of Arab descent, which also exerted influence outside the city.

The southern part was completely flat, and formed the northern tier of the great Arabian desert. In the Ottoman sources of the time, this zone was designated by terms such as ‘the desert side of the *sancak* of Mardin’, ‘the Mardin *sancak* desert mouth’ or simply ‘the Mardin desert’.<sup>28</sup> There were few settlements in this area. The population consisted largely of Kurdish and Arabic (semi-)nomadic tribes, which are listed below (Table 2). Some of these extended into the northern part of Zone 3.<sup>29</sup> Economically, these *aşirets* were linked to the urban centers, partly by their production of dairy products, but particularly by wool. The textile industry of the urban centers thrived because of the wool produced by the *aşirets*.<sup>30</sup>

The population of the northern part of Zone 3 was extremely mixed. The following Christian groups can be distinguished:

- *Syriacs*: With the patriarchate situated in Mardin (Syriac: *Marda*) since the 13th century, the Syriac Orthodox had long regarded this area as their spiritual center. In the nineteenth century, all the urban settlements in this zone, including Midyat and Kerburan (contemporary Dargeçit), as well as Mardin, and a large number of villages around them and in the Tûr Abdin area were Syriac Orthodox.

There were also relatively small urban communities of Nestorians and Chaldeans, the latter the fruits of French Capuchin missions over the previous two centuries. Small Syriac Catholic communities had also emerged

<sup>28</sup> Although this area is no longer a desert, but an irrigated, well cultivated agricultural area, locally it is still called ‘*çöl*’ (desert).

<sup>29</sup> Some of the Arab tribes used the territory of Diyarbekir province as summer pasture, camping the winter in far away parts of the desert to the south (Henderson to Salisbury, 2.12.1878, in Şimşir 1982 dl.1: 271).

<sup>30</sup> For a note on the importance of wool production in the province of Diyarbekir, see Taylor 1865: 57.

in Mardin,<sup>31</sup> Kerburan and Killit (nowadays Dereçi), a village in Savur district.

- *Armenians*: In this area most Armenians were Catholic and lived in the towns (such as Mardin, Derik, Nusaybin). Nearly the whole Armenian community of Mardin had turned Catholic.<sup>32</sup> There were just a few, but large villages with Armenians, like Tel Armen (today, Kızıltepe) and Dara (Oğuz). The number of Armenians was by no means as high as in the northern parts of Diyarbekir.

Some Nestorians were catholicized as early as the 14th century. The number of conversions to Catholicism had been mounting again in the 19th century. From the 1840s on, as a result of American missionary activities, Protestants too were added to the population mix.

There were no *Zaza*, *Alevi* or *Turkish* populations in the northern part of Zone 3, but several other groups did inhabit the area:

- *Settled Arabs*: The cities/towns of Mardin, Urfa, Savur and Nusaybin especially had settled Arabic populations. There were also villages populated by Arabs.
- Settled, non-tribal *Kurds*.<sup>33</sup>
- *Jews*: Jewish colonies were to be found in some urban areas (including Mardin and Nusaybin).
- *Yezidis*: Among the Kurdish speaking population, there were great numbers of Yezidi (*Yazidi*) Kurds. Yezidis could be found between the Sincar Mountains (currently in Iraq) and the Tûr Abdin.
- In approximately ten villages located to the west of Midyat lived a settled Arabic speaking community, known as *Mahalmi* or *Mahallemi*. Allegedly, they were Christians who had converted to Islam in the 17th century. According to others the Mahalmi were descendants of the first Arabic tribal conquerors of the region.<sup>34</sup>
- Also reportedly still surviving in the city of Mardin were the descendents of a hundred families of *Şemsi*, an ancient sun-cult.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> In 1850, the Syriac Catholic patriarchate was moved to Mardin (from Haleb).

<sup>32</sup> Aydın, Emiroğlu et al. 2000: 248 (table 1), 286.

<sup>33</sup> Sykes (1908: 472) speaks of 'a vast quantity of nameless non-tribal Kurds . . . between Diarbekir and the Tur Abdin.'

<sup>34</sup> Sykes 1908: 473. In the Arabic dialect of the Mahalmi, the influence of Aramaic is clearly discernible. Most probably the Mahalmi were formerly Syriac Orthodox, who were Islamicized in the 17th century. Some however view the Mahalmi as 'mixed' grouping of Arabs and Kurds or Turks and Arabs (see Çetin 2007: 59–68).

<sup>35</sup> Guest 1987: 55.

Table 2: Arab and Kurdish *aşirets* in the southern part of Diyarbekir, around 1870<sup>36</sup>

1) Arab <i>aşirets</i>		
Şammar	±10.000 tents	Largest of the Arab <i>aşirets</i> , divided into three sections, each headed by a <i>şeyh</i> family, the al-Jerbe, az-Zeydan, and al-Omar. The Şammar spread over a large area including the districts of Siverek, Urfa, Akçakale, Harran, Mardin, the Abdulaziz Mountain (Cebel-i Abdulaziz, to the South-west of Hasakah), Rakkah, Mosul, Tel Afar and the Sincar Mountains.
Tay	300–400 at the beginning of the century, 3,000 tents towards the end	Along the Çağçağ River, between Midyat and Hasakah (currently in Syria). The Tay grew strongly in size because of a merger with a number of smaller tribes, the Bekari, Ganame, Hacış, Harb and es-Sade. They were nomadic, but were also involved in subsistence agriculture.
Şerabi	500 tents	West of the Karacadağ mountains. They grew barley, but also raised water buffalo and cattle, selling butter to centers like Urfa and Siverek.
Bekari	1,000 tents	Herded camel and sheep along the Zerkan River (running from the southwest of Mardin to Kızıltepe and Tel Tamir).
Cubur	600 tents	Vicinity of Nusaybin, nomads.
2) Kurdish <i>aşirets</i>		
Milli		The Milli were a confederation of <i>aşirets</i> , divided in two branches. The so-called Timavizade branch lived around Viranşehir. A second branch of the Milli was situated between Resulayn and Mardin. Most Millis were semi-nomads, living in settlements in winter, and camping with their animals on higher ground in summer. The Timavizade also practiced agriculture.

<sup>36</sup> This list is not intended as exhaustive. For an attempt to list all the Kurdish tribes around 1900, see Sykes 1908. A list of Arab and Kurdish tribes can also be found in Taylor 1865: 54–55. Taylor claims that both the Kiki and the Milli were 'Turcomans... erroneously called Kurds' (p. 55), a claim that we have not found elsewhere and is not very plausible.

Table 2 (*cont.*)

Kiki	Between Resulayn and Mardin. Also divided in two branches, known as the Kiki-i Çınkan and the Kiki-i Helecan. Nomads.
Dekori/Dakori	Between Resulayn and Mardin. Nomads.
Kırgıcı/ Sürgücü/ Sürgücü	Between Siverek and Viranşehir and north of Mardin. Partly agriculturists, partly nomads.
Miran	Around Cizre. Raised sheep, horse and cattle.
Karakeçili	Between Viranşehir and Siverek and on the Karacadağ. Partly nomadic, partly settled.
Heverki	In the Tûr Abdin.
Dekşuri	In the Tûr Abdin.
Mahmutki	In Ömergan (Ömerli) district, north of Mardin.
Atmanki	In Ömergan (Ömerli) district, north of Mardin.

Sources: *Salnâme-i Diyarbekir*, Sene 1288 [1871–72], Def'a 3, pp. 210–211; *Salnâme-i Diyarbekir*, Sene-i Hicriye 1319, Sene-i Rumiye 1327 [1901–2], Def'a 18.

#### THE EAST: THE WESTERN PART OF CENTRAL KURDISTAN

North of Cizre, the Tigris forms an important geographical divide. The character of the region to the east of the river is different from that of the southern plains. This is the western section of the extremely mountainous area of central Kurdistan. At the beginning of nineteenth century, the Kurdish leaders here were more powerful than those to the north of Diyarbekir. They were referred to as '*mir*' (emir). From west to east there were the emirates of Botan, Müküs (current Bahçesaray), and Hakkari.<sup>37</sup> To the south, in the territory of modern Iraq, there were Baban and Soran. Apart from some small areas, central Kurdistan did not belong to the province of Diyarbekir, with the exception of the most western emirate of Botan.

In Botan there were no towns of importance. The rural population of the fertile valleys consisted of Kurds, both tribal and non-tribal, Gregorian (Orthodox) Armenians, Eastern Syriacs (Nestorians) and Chaldeans (Catholic Nestorians). In the summer, nomadic Kurdish tribes from the plains in the south camped in the high mountain meadows. Unlike its

<sup>37</sup> Along with smaller beyliks, like Hizan, to the southeast of Bitlis, and Espayert/Espayirt (Hakan 2002: 6,16), between Hizan and Müküs. A remark from Taylor (1865: 48) indicates that Espayirt at that time was still a geographical entity.

eastern neighbors, Müküs and Hakkari, which had comparatively strong leaders, Botan in the beginning of the 19th century was an emirate without unity, with various tribes competing for power.<sup>38</sup>

#### 1800–1830: STRUGGLES FOR THE MAIN CITIES—DIYARBEKIR AND MARDIN

In the 18th century the grip of the Ottoman government on the provinces loosened. In many parts of the empire the power of the central government was weakened to such a degree that even its local representatives, the provincial governors or acting governors, were members of local urban elites, who started to hold these positions more or less hereditarily. Diyarbekir and neighboring provinces were no exception. In the main administrative centers, local families dominated the government, and the Sultan had no choice other than to cooperate with them. Since 1788, the important government posts in Diyarbekir city and the district centers had mostly been occupied by members of the *Şeyhzâdelers*, a family of Albanian descent, or the *Gevranlızâdelers*.<sup>39</sup> In Mardin governors were also selected from local notable families, although none of them seems to have dominated the administration to the same degree as the Şeyhzadeler. Hereditary occupation of governorships also developed in other administrative centers like Van,<sup>40</sup> Muş, Bitlis<sup>41</sup> and Mosul.<sup>42</sup>

In the absence of strong central governance, the local powers of Diyarbekir and Mardin became locked in a series of complex power struggles. While the elite of the provincial capital tried to exert its influence in the—formally subordinate—centre of Mardin, the urban elites of both cities faced formidable competition for power from the tribes of the area.

<sup>38</sup> Van Bruinessen 1992: 177–179.

<sup>39</sup> Çetinsaya 2006: 5; Cevdet Paşa 1983, Vol. V: 2611–16; Levy-Daphny 2008: 237; Marufoğlu 1998: 37; Yılmazçelik 1995: 194–195, 216. Local notables held power usually as *mütesellim*, a kind of *chargé d'affaires* or acting governor who ruled in the name of the governor (*vali*) (Yılmazçelik 1995: 192).

<sup>40</sup> Around 1800 Van was governed by Derviş Paşa, who 'maintained his independence of the Porte'. With difficulty he was defeated by the Ottoman government (Brant 1841: 395). The governor in 1838 was also a native of Van.

<sup>41</sup> A local dynasty reigned in Muş since 1730, which at the at end of the 18th century had also absorbed power in the adjoining venerable Beylik of Bitlis, and taken the governorship of Hınıs (in the province of Erzurum) (Brant 1841: 350).

<sup>42</sup> Mosul had been dominated by the Celili dynasty since 1749 (Çetinsaya 2006: 5; Marufoğlu 1998: 37).



Pushed to the north by the Arab Anezes<sup>43</sup> around this time, the Milli especially became a force of importance. In their position as governors of Diyarbekir, the Şeyhzadeler launched numerous campaigns against the Milli in the period 1790–1820.<sup>44</sup>

The positions of the various parties in these power struggles were relatively fluid, with alliances changing all the time. The central government too changed position when it considered this advantageous, particularly if certain local powers gained too much influence over the others. Thus, in 1819, Istanbul went as far as abandoning its traditional ‘allies’ in Diyarbekir, the Şeyhzadeler, and appointing as *vali* a leader of the Milli, Behram Paşa. This brought open war within the walls of the city when the Şeyhzadeler refused to accept their demotion and mobilized the townsfolk and friendly tribes against the Milli. Fighting in the city raged for three months.<sup>45</sup> That the government was just engaged in *realpolitik* cannot be better illustrated than by the fact that just two years later a member of the Şeyhzadeler was appointed ruler of Mardin.

Mardin was the theatre of still more complex intrigues in this period, since in this city there also was strong inter-familial competition. In 1827, rivalry between two factions led even to a temporary division of the city, one controlled by the governor and the other by the military commander.<sup>46</sup> From 1832 Mardin saw a period of Milli rule, this time against the wishes of the central government. An appointment of a Şeyhzade as governor sparked a general revolt against ‘the power of Diyarbekir’ (and indirectly Istanbul). The Milli were able to use the situation to their advantage and conquer the city.<sup>47</sup>

The net result of this period of political uncertainty and armed conflict was severe disruption of social and economic life. During the fighting in Diyarbekir in 1819 alone, a fifth of the city is said to have been demolished, and many citizens killed. Outside the cities, meanwhile, it was the Kurdish tribes that controlled the roads.<sup>48</sup> British Consul Brant, who visited Diyarbekir in 1835, when the Ottomans had just effectively established

<sup>43</sup> Orhonlu 1987: 113.

<sup>44</sup> Beysanoğlu 1996: 689; Salzmann 1995: 349, 458–59. Rivalry between the urban notables from Diyarbekir and the Milli continued into the second part of the 19th century. See Jongerden 2012 (in this volume).

<sup>45</sup> Yılmazçelik 1995: 251–253.

<sup>46</sup> Beysanoğlu 1996: 690.

<sup>47</sup> Abdülgani Efendi 1929: *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> Brant 1836: 209–210; Pollington 1841: 449–450.

their authority there for the first time (see below), noted that for years the inhabitants of the city had lived in a state of siege, unable to leave except in the company of a caravan. The city seems to have lost an important part of its population during these years. According to Brant the population had been reduced from 40,000 to just 8,000 houses, and trade connections with Baghdad and Aleppo were severely damaged. The Englishman noted that ‘all this desolation and depopulation was produced by the Kurds, and that too, in the memory of [his] informant, within 25 years.’<sup>49</sup> The episode provides important clues to the aspirations of the Milli later in the century.<sup>50</sup>

THE FIRST PHASE OF CENTRALIZATION: THE CAMPAIGNS OF REŞİD  
MEHMED PAŞA AND ÇERKEZ HAFİZ MEHMED PAŞA, 1834–1839

Towards the end of the 1820s, external pressure on the Ottoman Empire reached unprecedented levels. Like his predecessor, Selim III, Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839) sought the solution for the problems of the Empire in reform, primarily military reform. In 1826, he decided on the radical move of doing away with the traditional but now largely ineffective army of Janissaries and building a new army along European lines instead. Even while this was being implemented, however, the Empire found itself in retreat on all fronts.

In the west, in 1829 the Greeks attained independence. In the north and east, Russia drew closer, conquering large parts of Transcaucasia in a war with Iran (1826–1828), and then in a war with the Ottomans (1828–1829) penetrating deep into the northeastern provinces. Worst of all for the Ottomans was the revolt of the powerful governor of Egypt, Kavalalı Mehmed (Mohammed) Ali Paşa. He transformed Egypt into a *de facto* independent state. Seemingly convinced that the end of the Ottoman Empire was imminent, his army conquered Syria in 1831, and a year later penetrated deep into Anatolia.

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<sup>49</sup> Brant 1836: 209–210. Another British witness of the period, Viscount Pollington, visited Diyarbakir in 1838 and wrote: ‘I saw many ruined houses and wretched mud huts within the walls. The appearance of the town is as though it had not been repaired since its destruction by an earthquake’ (Pollington 1841: 449–450). The German general Von Moltke, who was attached to the Ottoman army under Hafız Paşa (see below), provided similar impressions from places like Hasankeyf and Cizre (Von Moltke 1917: 251).

<sup>50</sup> See Jongerden 2012, in this volume.

In the war between Russia and Iran, many Kurdish tribes had supported Iran, but during the Ottoman-Russian war the Kurdish *mirs* and beys preferred a 'wait-and-see' policy and stayed neutral. None of the important Kurdish leaders contributed troops, however,<sup>51</sup> and after a period some Kurds even took the Russian side.<sup>52</sup> Sultan Mahmud II thus had serious reasons to hold a grudge against the Kurds. Nevertheless, it is still surprising that even while the Ottoman government was still under direct threat from the Egyptians, it decided on a strong campaign against the Kurds.

The man to lead the operations was Reşid Mehmed Paşa. In 1834 this general was appointed governor of Diyarbekir, with extraordinary powers.<sup>53</sup> Decades of domination of the local administration by the Şeyhzadeler and other *ayân* families came to an end. In the space of two years, Reşid Mehmed Paşa led sweeping and bloody military actions all over the province. He turned against the Milli, the Yezidis of Sincar and Rıdvan,<sup>54</sup> the tribes of Garzan, and Bedirhan (or Bedr Khan) Bey of Botan.<sup>55</sup> Three quarters of the Yezidis of Sincar were killed,<sup>56</sup> while those of Rıdvan were almost annihilated.<sup>57</sup> In 1835 he succeeded in liberating Mardin from Milli rule;<sup>58</sup> and in 1836 he ousted the important *Mir* of Soran (currently in Iraq).<sup>59</sup> From an Ottoman viewpoint his most striking

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<sup>51</sup> Hakan 2002: 48.

<sup>52</sup> Nikitin 1991: 339. But when the Russians approached the Diyarbekir region, they encountered stiff resistance from Kurds (Lazarev & Mihoyan 2001: 199–121).

<sup>53</sup> To extend his power he was simultaneously appointed vali of Rakka and *mütesellim* of Muş. BOA, HAT, 1588/39, 9 Zilhicce 1249 (20 March 1834); BOA, HAT, 1589/35, 23 Rebiyülahir 1250 (29 August 1834).

<sup>54</sup> Longrigg 1925: 285–286.

<sup>55</sup> Ainsworth 1841: 21.

<sup>56</sup> Ainsworth 1861: 15.

<sup>57</sup> British Consul J. G. Taylor who visited the area some 20–25 years later wrote about this event: 'The population of Redhwan [Rıdvan/Rizvan] and the plain in which it is situated, although still extensively peopled by the Yezidees, was about twenty years ago nearly exclusively confined to people of that sect, who were always in a state of semi-rebellion against the government; but since the death of their chief, Meer Zig [A corruption of *Mir İshak*], who was killed by the Turks, the country became more directly under their control, and they have consequently comparatively abandoned the place for Sinjar and the neighbourhood of Mosul . . .' (Taylor 1865: 32). Only a few *Yezidi* villages survived there into the 20th century.

<sup>58</sup> Abdülgâni Efendi 1929: 172–174; Ainsworth 1888: 114. See also BOA, HAT, 450/22347–B, 17 Rebiyülahir 1251 (12 August 1835); BOA, HAT, 450/22347–B, 17 Rebiyülahir 1251 (12 August 1835).

<sup>59</sup> The *Mir* of Soran, or the Blind *Mir* of Rowanduz as he was nicknamed, had greatly expanded the territory of this old emirate in the preceding years (Jwaideh 1999: 107–111, 115–116; Van Bruinessen 1992: 176–177), venturing even into Iran (Hakan 2002: 58). Indeed, before being removed by the Ottomans, the leader of the Soran Emirate had himself

successes were realized in the north of the province, where he defeated the beys of Hazro, Hani, Ilıcak and Silvan. Their residences were burnt, their properties confiscated and the beys exiled.<sup>60</sup> The 300 year-old *hükümet* status of their territories was over, wiped out by one, brief military campaign determined from the Imperial capital.

After Reşid Mehmed Paşa's death in 1836, the equally energetic general Çerkes (Circassian) Hafız Mehmed took over as *vali* of Diyarbekir. He campaigned in the Bahdinan area,<sup>61</sup> and renewed hostilities against the Yezidi of Sincar and the Turcoman of Tel Afar.<sup>62</sup> He was also active in the north and the east of the province. Whatever resistance remained there was eliminated. Contemporary observers were particularly impressed by his victory over the Garzan Kurds, who were seen as one of the most powerful groupings in this area, and whom his predecessor had failed to bring under control.<sup>63</sup>

Instructed by Mahmud II to concentrate his army in Malatya (in preparation to retake Egypt), Hafız Mehmed had to curtail his mission in the summer of 1838,<sup>64</sup> so not every single local power in the province could be brought to heel. Actions in the Van area, against the ruler of Müküs, Han Mahmud, had been inconclusive,<sup>65</sup> while the Arab tribes of the south

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embarked on a devastating campaign against the Yezidis, which cost them their last independent chief, Ali Bey (Ainsworth 1861: 14–15).

<sup>60</sup> Brant 1841: 359–360. The local powers cooperated in their resistance against Mehmed Reşid Paşa. According to Ottoman sources the call for unity came from Mirza Ağa of Silvan (BOA, HAT, 450/22351-Ü, 11 Rebiyülevvel 1249—29 July 1833). The Bey of Atak along with the Rojki, Hasanlu, Cibranlu and Zirki *aşirets* had immediately given him their support (BOA, HAT, 450/22351, 13 Rebiyülevvel 1249—31 July 1833). On the expulsion of the beys and *ağas* and confiscation of their property, see BOA, 1597/65, 29 Zilhicce 1251—16 April 1836.

<sup>61</sup> Currently in north Iraq, against a rebellious governor, İsmail Paşa, who was defeated (BOA, HAT, 521/25456-D, 1 Muharrem 1253 (25 February 1837), BOA, HAT, 396/20890, 29 Zilhicce 1253 (26 March 1838).

<sup>62</sup> On the Sincar: BOA, HAT, 449/22340-B, 7 Rebiyülahir 1253 (11 July 1837); Forbes 1839: 409, on Tel Afar: BOA, HAT, 448/22332, 29 Zilhicce 1253 (26 March 1838), Forbes 1839: 411.

<sup>63</sup> Brant 1841: 354. Operations against the Garzan Kurds started in the winter of 1836–1837 (BOA, HAT, 532/26195-B, 21 Şevval 1252–29 January 1837). As a testimony to the rudeness of the campaign, in March 1837, the warriors of Garzan were reported to have been all killed (see BOA, HAT, 453/22433-C, 17 Zilhicce 1252—25 March 1837 and BOA, HAT, 453/22433-A, 19 Zilhicce 1252—27 March 1837). It should be reminded that the influence of the Garzan Kurds reached far into the mountains of Sasun (above, p. 23).

<sup>64</sup> Guest 1987: 72.

<sup>65</sup> Hakan 2002: 63. Since the 1820s, profiting from the weakness of the governor of Van, this *mir* had expanded his dominions far beyond his original territory in Müküs, even conquering land near the Iranian border. See Brant 1841: 386–387 and Hakan 2002.

could not be controlled either.<sup>66</sup> Bedirhan, Bey of Botan cleverly avoided defeat and destruction by offering to cooperate with the Ottomans.<sup>67</sup> It was Bedirhan Bey's cooperation with the Ottoman forces that, allegedly, afforded him the opportunity to eliminate local rivals in Cizre and was one of the keys to his rise of power (below, p. 35).<sup>68</sup>

The success of both Ottoman governors can partly be explained by the new army they commanded, which included foreign (Prussian) military advisers. From subdued regions, whether urban centers like Mardin or rural tribal areas, men were immediately forced into military service<sup>69</sup>—a shocking novelty for that time.<sup>70</sup> Kurdish tribal leaders were assigned as officers. The extraordinary success of the *paşas* caused such awe throughout the region that others gave up without a fight<sup>71</sup> and a general improvement of law and order was observed.<sup>72</sup> The fame of the generals thus extended even to areas where they never set foot.<sup>73</sup> Both Mehmed Reşid Paşa and Hafız Paşa tried to improve the infrastructure and economy of the area, by the construction of roads<sup>74</sup> and government buildings, and by stimulating mining.<sup>75</sup> They even caused new towns to be built, like new Malatya,<sup>76</sup> and Mezre (the later Elazığ<sup>77</sup>), near Harput. Also in the newly subjugated areas, however, ruthless taxation was introduced. For many in the rural areas of Diyarbekir this was the first experience with their

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<sup>66</sup> Orhonlu 1987: 113. In the Summer of 1837, Hafız Paşa moved against the Tay and the Aneze, but achieved nothing (BOA, HAT, 450/22350-G, 21 Cemaziyülahir 1253).

<sup>67</sup> BOA, HAT, 449/22339-D, 13 Ramazan 1252 (22 December 1836); BOA, HAT, 449/22340-B, 7 Rebiyülahir 1253 (11 July 1837).

<sup>68</sup> Hakan 2002: 64; Özoğlu 2004: 71.

<sup>69</sup> The so called *redif* or reserve army units, established in July 1834 and based on the Prussian *Landwehr* (on this organization, see Zürcher 1999: 80–81).

<sup>70</sup> In Mardin it caused panic. In the words of a local historian '*çok adem mallarını sattılar, parasını ailelerine vürüb kaçtılar*' ('many men sold their possessions, gave the money to their families and fled') (Abdülğani Efendi 1929: 174).

<sup>71</sup> Like the *şeyh* of the Şammar, who, after the first campaigns of Mehmed Reşid Paşa, made known that he was ready to comply with any order he would be given (BOA, HAT, 451/22362-K, 29 Safer 1250 (7 July 1834).

<sup>72</sup> Brant 1841: 348.

<sup>73</sup> When Consul Brant's watch was stolen in Çapakçur (modern Bingöl), a simple threat from his Ottoman guide that the local bey would be brought before Hafız Paşa in chains was enough to have the watch returned (Brant 1841: 371).

<sup>74</sup> Notably, a road from the Black Sea port of Samsun to Diyarbekir (Brant 1836: 206, 215; Brant 1841: 365).

<sup>75</sup> Brant 1841: 362, 369.

<sup>76</sup> New Malatya, then called Aspuzi, was traditionally the place where the inhabitants of old Malatya (Eskimalatya, now Battalgazi) stayed in the summertime.

<sup>77</sup> The name Elazığ derives from Mamuretülaziz ('*Mâmûratül'aziz*'), as Mezre/Mezire and the province of which it became the capital was called after Sultan Abdülaziz.

Ottoman 'citizenship', one clearly defined in terms of responsibilities, and without rights. This new position was probably quite traumatic, and hardly understood. When James Brant spoke with an old Kurdish chief in the Garzan area who had resisted Hafız Paşa and subsequently lost all his power and property, the man stated that '*neither he nor his fathers were ever subjected to Pashas, or paid taxes to the Sultan.*' According to Brant, '*... he could not understand why he should be forced to do so; he had therefore resisted as long as he could...*'.<sup>78</sup> This perception, in accord with the centuries-old semi-independent position of large segments of the region, would not disappear overnight.

#### OTTOMAN DEFEAT AT NIZIP (1839) AND THE DRIVE FOR MORE CHANGE

In 1833, a peace had been brokered between Sultan Mahmud II and Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt, who kept his large area of occupied Anatolia. However, Mehmed Ali Paşa's announcement that he would break away from the Ottoman Empire (May 1838) initiated a new confrontation. The hero of the east, Hafız Paşa, reportedly convinced the Sultan that he could crush the mighty rebel *vali*, and was placed in command of the Ottoman army.<sup>79</sup> In June 1839, the Ottoman and Egyptian armies clashed near Nizip, between Ayntab (Gaziantep) and the Euphrates River. Many of the newly subdued Kurdish tribesmen took part, on the Ottoman side.<sup>80</sup> Hafız Paşa had been busy in the region of Malatya and Hısn-ı Mansur (Adıyaman) to the very last moment, subjugating tribes to his authority and collecting men for his army.<sup>81</sup>

The Ottomans were defeated at Nizip. The fact that a large part of the Ottoman army consisted of recent conscripts forcibly enlisted made it quite vulnerable. The many newly-enlisted Kurdish irregulars performed poorly and headed for home as soon as possible.<sup>82</sup> Hafız Paşa was conscious of the fact that he had suffered a historical defeat.<sup>83</sup> In Istanbul,

<sup>78</sup> Brant 1841: 361.

<sup>79</sup> BOA, HAT, 375/20435, 19 Safer 1255 (4 May 1839). For the *firman* on the appointment of Hafız Paşa see BOA, 207/10332, 29 Zilhicce 1254 (15 March 1829).

<sup>80</sup> Von Moltke 1917: 393.

<sup>81</sup> See BOA, HAT, 454/22445, 2 Ramazan 1254 (18 November 1838). The British traveler Ainsworth, who was in the region at the time, testifies to the great anger this provoked among the Kurds (Ainsworth 1841b: 328–329, 332, 339).

<sup>82</sup> Von Moltke 1917: 397–422. According to Von Moltke some Kurds even shot at their own officers (p. 417). For a first hand impression of the chaotic aftermath, see also Ainsworth 1841b: 337–338.

<sup>83</sup> Ainsworth 1841b: 339.

Sultan Mahmud II, architect of the centralization in the east, died before the news was received. Mehmed Ali Paşa of Egypt could not cash in on his victory, however. Under pressure from the European powers, who did not want a complete disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, he retreated to Egypt.

Interestingly, the defeat at Nizip stimulated the Ottoman government, backed by the European powers, to yet more change and more centralization. Mahmud II's son and successor Abdülmeçid (1839–1861) issued an imperial edict (*Gülhâne Hatt-ı Hümayûnu*), which is generally seen as the official beginning of the Ottoman Reform Movement, the *Tanzimat*. The Hatt-ı Hümayun promised security of life and property, proportional taxation and a modern conscription system for military service. The most innovative part of the edict, which pleased the Christian powers, was its affirmation of the legal equality of all citizens, Muslims and non-Muslims. This opened the way for the emancipation of the Empire's non-Muslims, which in time would also reshape the relations between Muslims and Christians in the eastern provinces (below, p. 45).

In Diyarbekir, the immediate effect of the Ottoman defeat at Nizip was a setback for the centralization process. The results of the campaigns of Reşid Mehmed Paşa and Hafız Paşa were partly annulled. Public order collapsed. Kurds, including those returning from the battle-field, regained control over rural areas. Banditry and murder multiplied.<sup>84</sup> In Mardin that year (1839), a rebellion broke out against the central government and 'the rule of Diyarbekir'. The Milli captured the governor of Mardin and tribesmen entered the town.<sup>85</sup> Not for the first time, the people of Mardin wanted their *sancak* to be detached from Diyarbekir province.<sup>86</sup> Revolts occurred also in Palu and Eğil.<sup>87</sup> Resentment against the novelties of the reform edict apparently also played a role in these rebellions against the central authority.

For the government the most threatening development took place in the east of the province. The *mir* of Botan, Bedirhan Bey, who throughout the 1830s had worked to consolidate his position in the previous disordered emirate, reached the height of his power in this period. He had (unsuccessfully) participated on the Ottoman side in Nizip, but turned

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<sup>84</sup> Asahel Grant, an American missionary who happened to be in Diyarbekir at that time described the situation in vivid terms (Grant 1841: 20).

<sup>85</sup> Sykes 1915: 319–320; Southgate 1840, vol. 2: 286; Ainsworth 1841c: 524–525.

<sup>86</sup> Ainsworth 1888: 114–115.

<sup>87</sup> Çadircı 1987: 100.

away after the defeat.<sup>88</sup> He collected taxes in his territory, had high officials modeled on those of the Ottoman state, delivered justice and applied capital punishment, minted coins<sup>89</sup> and had his name evoked in the Friday prayers.<sup>90</sup> The territory dominated by Bedirhan Bey reached its greatest extent in this period, including large portions of the eastern part of Diyarbekir province. In 1840, Bedirhan Bey entered into an alliance with his old rivals Han Mahmud of Müküs (Bahçesaray) and Nurullah Bey of Hakkari, both still rulers of emirates with *hükûmet* status. A bloc of semi-independent Kurdish rulers was thus born, one that was later to inspire generations of Kurdish nationalists. It has been claimed that Bedirhan tried to found a independent Kurdish state.<sup>91</sup> He certainly must have come very close to modern state building. The government tried in vain to rein him in by trying to assign part of his territory to the *vilâyet* of Mosul, then ruled by the powerful governor İncebayraktar Mehmed Paşa. This move only resulted in Bedirhan Bey giving up his remaining loyalty and triggering his 'revolt'.<sup>92</sup>

The extent of the breakdown in the relationship between Ottomans and Kurds by this time was recorded by the narrative of the American Episcopal missionary bishop, Horatio Southgate, journeying south from Trabzon to investigate 'the Syrian Church'. Southgate entered Diyarbekir city in the summer of 1841 to be assailed by 'the dead and dying', the result of a famine caused by two years of failed rains. Four or five thousand Kurds had died in the city he learnt, driven there from their villages by the famine. Armenians were helped by other Armenians (or Christians), but the Kurds did not receive any help. The 'very respectable Mohammedan' with whom he walked into the city is reported as saying, 'Let the dogs die! We have had enough trouble with them. We should like to see them all, the whole race of them, dying in the same way.'<sup>93</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Von Moltke 1917: 393.

<sup>89</sup> Ottoman author Süleyman Nazif says that he saw a coin dated 1258 (1842–3), on which was written 'Amîr-i Bohtan Bedîrxan' (Suleyman Nazif, 'Nesturiler', *Son Telegraf*, 22 Teşrinievvel 1343/22 October 1924, p. 2, quoted *ibid.*, pp. 261–265).

<sup>90</sup> Malmîsanij 2000: 49–52.

<sup>91</sup> Bruinessen (1992: 179–180), however, states that no indication can be found of such an intention in contemporary sources. See also Özoğlu 2004: 71. Ahmet Kardam's study on Bedirhan (Kardam 2011) was published as this book went to press, we have not been able to consult his work.

<sup>92</sup> Çadircı 1987: 10; Kodaman 1987: 117; Yıldız 2000: 25; Sevgen 1982: 66–69; Özoğlu 2004: 71–72.

<sup>93</sup> Southgate 1856: 96–100.



It would appear that the provincial government of Diyarbekir managed to reassert itself quite soon after the debacle of 1839, at least in the vicinity of the city. After 1845 especially, there are signs of a revitalization of the local administration there. The provincial bureaucracy expanded and a population census was at last executed, for the first time, which was essential for the implementation of taxation and systematic military conscription. In the same period, the gendarmerie (*zabtiye teşkilâtı*) was founded, and the system of neighborhood heads (*muhtars*) introduced.<sup>94</sup> Through the 1849 institution of administrative councils, advisory bodies for provincial and district governors, the central government found a way of appeasing the urban notables.<sup>95</sup>

#### THE SECOND PHASE OF CENTRALIZATION: THE DEFEAT OF THE RULERS OF CENTRAL KURDISTAN

It was, in a sense, the very effectiveness of the triple alliance of Bedirhan Bey, Han Mahmud and Nurullah Bey that brought about its end. In 1843, Nurullah Bey asked his allies for help against the Mountain Nestorians, who, traditionally dependent on him, were behaving increasingly independently. The Kurds were particularly concerned about the activities of American and British missionaries among the Nestorians. In 1843 and 1846, the tribesmen of Bedirhan Bey and his allies carried out massacres in Hakkari, leaving thousands of Nestorians dead and laying waste to whole valleys.<sup>96</sup> These bloodbaths caused an outcry in Europe and the United States, where the 'discovery' of the Mountain Nestorians had been making headline news for some years. The Great Powers, particularly France and Britain, put strong pressure on the Sultan to take action against Bedirhan and its allies. The Ottomans first tried to persuade Bedirhan to surrender himself, by seeking mediation by *şeyhs* (sheikhs) from the Nakşibendi order.<sup>97</sup> The failure of these attempts left the Porte with no alternative but

<sup>94</sup> Çadırcı 1991: 192; Yılmazçelik 1992: 185, 212, 218. Yılmazçelik notes that *Tanzimat* regulations were officially applied in Diyarbekir only from 1845 (*ibid.*, p. 183).

<sup>95</sup> Yılmazçelik 1995: 185.

<sup>96</sup> For a summary of the conflict with the Nestorians, see Gaunt 2012, in this volume, and also Layard 1853, Foggo 2002, Eber 2008, Hakan 2002: 83–88, and Kieser 2000: 64–67.

<sup>97</sup> BOA, A.MKT.MHM., 2/61/ 17 Cemaziyülahir 1263 (2 June 1847). The *vali* of Diyarbekir wrote to *şeyhs* in Cizre—Ibrahim, Salih and Azrail—to solicit their mediation (Sevgen 1982: 80–81).

to use force. Bedirhan was assisted by his allies in the fierce fighting that followed, but finally surrendered in July 1847, and was exiled.<sup>98</sup>

The Ottomans managed to oust Han Mahmud (1846) and Nurullah Bey (1849) in a surprisingly short time,<sup>99</sup> and they too were both exiled. A new province was formed, named 'Hakkari' and ruled by an Ottoman governor from Başkale.<sup>100</sup> By 1850, only a very small portion of central Kurdistan remained that was not yet conquered by the Ottomans. Visiting the region at that time, Austin Henry Layard, the English traveler-archeologist (later politician and for a few years ambassador, at the Porte), described the Bey of Şemdinli, as 'almost the only chief in Kurdistan who had not yet made a formal submission to the Turkish government'.<sup>101</sup> In the territory of Diyarbekir province, no Kurdish *mîrs* remained, and no territory either with special status.

In his time, Bedirhan Bey had been a revered figure among the Kurds, and he remained so afterwards. Many members of his large extended family were later to play key roles in the Kurdish nationalist movement.<sup>102</sup> While Bedirhan's reign was essentially a vestige of the old order, it thus had an important place in seeding the development of a modern nationalism among the Kurds. In Europe, Bedirhan Bey's image was largely negative. His actions were probably more instrumental than any other factor in creating an image of the 'terrible Kurd' in European nineteenth century (travel) literature. His actions were certainly a defining moment in the history of the Nestorians. Among the Syrian Christians of the Tûr Abdin, stories of Bedirhan's anti-Christian behavior are still a part of the collective memory.<sup>103</sup> The *Yezidis* also had few reasons to remember his rule with positive feelings.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> He was treated with great honor throughout his exile (Özoğlu 2004: 72).

<sup>99</sup> Hakan 2002: 97–109.

<sup>100</sup> Layard 1853: 327.

<sup>101</sup> Layard 1853: 325.

<sup>102</sup> Malmîsanij 2000.

<sup>103</sup> Even today the villages that Bedirhan Bey destroyed are clearly remembered. A story circulates that he roamed on horseback over the remains of a church his men destroyed in Arbo (Taşköy) (field research by Suavi Aydın, to be published).

<sup>104</sup> The *Yezidis*, who suffered considerably during the centralization campaigns of the 1840s, were persecuted by Bedirhan as well. A contemporary British observer claimed that 'yearly expeditions' against the *Yezidis*, in which adults were slaughtered and children captured and sold as slaves was 'one of the sources of revenue of Badir Khan Bey.' (Ainsworth 1861: 14).

## RURAL SOCIETY AFTER THE CENTRALIZATION

The removal of the top level of local rural leaders in the mountainous areas of the province (Zones 3 and 4) and the penetration of Ottoman administration had a deep impact on rural society there, the first manifestation of which was taxation. Peasants who had never paid taxes other than traditional tithes to their beys were suddenly confronted with Ottoman tax collectors. The demands of the state were harsh. After the campaigns in the north in the 1830s, British traveler James Brant heard that taxes had multiplied 6-fold or more after the fall of the beys.<sup>105</sup> In Hazro, the government representative explained that high taxes were necessary to keep the subjects obedient, what Brant called '*quite a Turkish mode of keeping subjects to their duty*'.<sup>106</sup> Similar stories were noted by Layard in the Hakkari region, after the fall of Nurullah Bey. The poor Nestorians who had next to nothing left after the devastating campaigns of the Triple Alliance, were asked to pay taxes in arrears, even having to hand over their last livestock and seeds.<sup>107</sup> High and unfair taxation remained the main complaint of the rural population throughout the century. Despite the intentions of the authorities to organize fairer methods of taxation, first announced in the reform edict of 1839, old ways of collection were not abandoned easily. Neither were the descendants of the beys prepared to give up their 'rights'.<sup>108</sup>

Linked to the taxation issue was that of military service. The modern system of universal conscription introduced in Napoleonic France and associated with nation-state citizenship was not employed in the Empire, which continued on the traditional *ad hoc* basis (i.e. conscription in case of war). According to Islamic principles, Ottoman military service was only to be performed by Muslims. Non-Muslims paid exemption taxes instead, and therefore faced still higher taxation pressure. With regard to the importance given by the Ottoman government to taxation of the

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<sup>105</sup> Brant 1841: 360. See also pp. 364, 368.

<sup>106</sup> Brant 1841: 363. Brant did not fail to notice that these higher taxes stood in contrast to the insecurity before the Ottoman penetration, when everyone was constantly in danger of being plundered or killed. The new subjects tended to close their eyes to this advantage (*ibid.*, p. 361).

<sup>107</sup> Layard 1853: 365, 367–368, 372.

<sup>108</sup> For an example from Palu, in the north of Diyarbekir province, see Yarman 2010 vol. 1: 83. Apparently the beys were still collecting tithes in the 1890s (see Annex B, p. 340).

newly 'conquered' territories, it has been suggested that the centralization was, in fact, aimed at filling the treasury from the very first.<sup>109</sup>

For around a decade after the campaigns of Hafız Paşa, the Ottoman actions against the *mirs* had a strong psychological effect. The traveler Layard was surprised about the level of subordination showed to the Ottomans.<sup>110</sup> Even in areas where the army had not penetrated, the Ottomans were easily able to evoke fear and respect. Layard noted that Kurdish tribes who had never paid taxes before were now willing to do so, even though no tax collector or soldier had yet set foot in their area. Probably they hoped thus to avoid conscription, clearly something more terrible, than paying taxes.<sup>111</sup>

This state of affairs was doomed only to last a short time. In a sense the removal of the *mirs* was a Pyrrhic victory for the Ottomans as it soon became clear that they did not have enough manpower and resources in the rural areas to replace the Kurdish leaders. Law and order deteriorated. With little in the way of higher authority to intervene and control things, *aşirets* becoming involved in endless feuds and felt free to rob and terrorize the sedentary, non-tribal population. Local Ottoman administrators typically tried to improve the situation by seeking some sort of agreement with the tribal leaders. In the 1850s, it became quite usual for local administrative posts, like governor of a district or a sub-district (*nahiye*) to be given to local Kurdish chieftains. In this way, they were made responsible for security and taxation in their own area.<sup>112</sup> The government sometimes even redefined administrative borders to adapt them better to zones of influence of the various tribes.<sup>113</sup>

Nothing better illustrates the limited number of options available to the government, than that in the district of Cizre, in the old Botan emirate, a nephew of the ousted *mir*, İzzeddin (or Yezdan) Şir Bey was appointed to head the local administration (i.e. placed in the position of *kaymakam*). This man then revolted against the government during the Crimean War, defeating troops belonging to the governor of Mardin and even attacking Bitlis while his men also plundered Armenian monasteries and killed

<sup>109</sup> Özoğlu 2004: 60.

<sup>110</sup> Layard 1853: 35–37 (on the situation in Bitlis).

<sup>111</sup> Layard 1853: 321.

<sup>112</sup> Çetinsaya 2006: 75.

<sup>113</sup> Özçoşar 2008, pp. 144–145. Thus, in 1865–66 the *kazâ* of Midyat was divided into two districts, named Halilbegli and İsabegli, after the chieftains of two tribes, the Heverki and Dekşuri (BOA, İ.MVL., 267/10220, 25 Cemaziyelâhir 1269 (5 April 1853); Gökalp 1992: 31.

priests.<sup>114</sup> The authorities were only able to suppress him with the assistance of tribes from the north of the province (Lice, Şirvan, Garzan).<sup>115</sup> A leader from Garzan, Fettah Bey, and the Bey of Şirvan, Mehmed Şir, were decorated for their response to the Ottoman request for help—ironically, men who were soon themselves to become a nuisance to the authorities. Emboldened by his new status, back home Fettah Bey became increasingly tyrannical. He tortured villagers and even killed several of his close relatives. Eventually both Fettah and Mehmed Şir were banished.<sup>116</sup> Their descendants continued to harass the settled peasant population, particularly the Armenians, right until the First World War.<sup>117</sup>

The general lack of stability continued, highlighted by specific episodes of disorder. During periods when the attention of the authorities was directed to events elsewhere, for example, the local security situation in the Diyarbekir countryside would further deteriorate. This occurred during the Crimean War (1853–1856), and again, two decades later during the Russian-Ottoman War (1877–1878).<sup>118</sup> And from the second half of the nineteenth century, there were several revolts headed by *şeyhs*, leaders of the mystical religious sects (*tarikâts*) who came to play increasingly prominent political roles after the 1850s. The largest and most significant of these revolts were those led by Şeyh Übeydullah (in 1880) and, ultimately, Şeyh Said (in 1925).<sup>119</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, in his *Agha, Shaikh and State*, has demonstrated that this rise to power of the *şeyhs* and the resulting tensions and conflicts was partly a consequence of the Ottoman approach to centralization, which involved the elimination of the top layer of Kurdish leadership, the *mirs* and their fiefdoms, in short, the integrated regional system of authority. In Kurdish rural society of the late 19th century, *şeyhs* were virtually the only figures able to mediate between the multitude of tribal leaders. This greatly enhanced their importance

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<sup>114</sup> Ade 2008: 218. Also see Guest 1987: 113; Halfin 1992: 53–60; Celil 1992: 161–166; Bedirhan 1998: 29.

<sup>115</sup> BOA, HR.MKT., 108/46, 24 Şaban 1271, and BOA, HR.MKT., 108/46, 24 Şaban 1271—12 May 1855.

<sup>116</sup> BOA, MVL. 650/88, 7 Muharrem 1280 (24 June 1863); BOA, MVL., 656/88, 8 Rebiyülahir 1280 (22 December 1863); BOA, MVL., 676/18, 5 Safer 1281 (10 July 1864); BOA, MVL., 689/15, 26 Cemaziyülahir 1281; BOA, MVL., 697/34, 7 Şaban 1281 (5 January 1865).

<sup>117</sup> For an example of a complaint (from Kazaroğlu Mardinof of Garzan), see BOA, DH.H., 15/64, 15 Rebiyülevvel 1332 (11 February 1914).

<sup>118</sup> During the Russian-Ottoman War of 1877–1878 again *Bedirhanis* tried to revive the emirate (Bruinessen 1992: 181).

<sup>119</sup> On the Şeyh Said Revolt of 1925, see Üngör 2012, in this volume.

and that of the *tarikâts* generally, a factor, through the Şeyh Said rebellion especially, in the subsequent Republican secular reforms of the 1920s.<sup>120</sup>

In the light of all this, therefore, it is a little surprising to note that a rather different process occurred in the province's southern plains (Zone 4). The *aşirets* in southern Diyarbekir had remained largely untouched while the *mirs* of the northern and (south)eastern mountains were being eradicated or tamed by the state, and during the 1850s and 1860s the grip of the government on the *aşirets* actually seems to have weakened. A report from the district councils of Mardin and Midyat of 1853 shows that both the Kiki and Milli tribes were uncontrollable, causing damage to peasants and urban dwellers alike with their plundering and violence.<sup>121</sup> And the Milli in particular continued to expand their zone of influence. Shortly after the battle at Nizip they penetrated into the centre of the province, attacking the Şikaki *aşiret*. In the south, Milli tribesmen (re)captured land from the Aneze *aşiret*, and were involved in battles with the Kiki as far as Mosul. Ottoman authorities sought a solution in trying to settle the tribesmen, with some success.<sup>122</sup> The Arab Aneze and Şammar, however, remained as unruly as before. An Ottoman report of around 1850 describes these two tribes as the masters of the Great Desert (*Çöl-i Kebîr*), who plundered wherever they wanted.<sup>123</sup> In 1857 the authorities tried to appease the Şammar by paying their leaders a monthly salary,<sup>124</sup> but within a year and a half the tribesmen were on the rampage again, obliging the government to send troops.<sup>125</sup> Among the most employed remedies of the government was to play one tribe off against the other—in 1853, for example, we find the Kiki as 'protectors' of the sedentary population against the Şammar and Aneze.<sup>126</sup> No long-term, effective administration could be based on this kind of improvised measure.

<sup>120</sup> Bruinissen 1992: 210–232. See also Jongerden 2012, in this volume.

<sup>121</sup> Özçoşar 2008: 142, 172.

<sup>122</sup> Yılmazçelik (1995: 173) assumes that the authorities in the 1840s managed to settle the Kiki. At the end of the century they seem to have been at least semi-nomadic (Sykes 1908: 473). Apparently the authorities had also success in settling the Ömergan *aşiret* just northeast of Diyarbekir (ibid., pp. 171–72).

<sup>123</sup> Mehmed Hurşid Paşa 1997: 229. British Consul Taylor described the Şammar in 1865 as 'the curse of the country,' who had 'totally put a stop to everything like cultivation and improvement in the tracts they call their own,' where they were 'all-powerful' and according to the consul even received tribute from the Kiki and Milli (Taylor 1865: 54–55).

<sup>124</sup> BOA, A.MKT.NZD., 229/65, 26 Zilkade 1273 (18 July 1857); also Taylor 1865: 54.

<sup>125</sup> BOA, MVL., 578/62, 28 Rebiyülahır 1275 (5 December 1858); BOA, A.MKT.UM., 336/84, 29 Rebiyülahır 1275 (6 December 1858).

<sup>126</sup> BOA, MVL., 255/13, 17 Cemaziyülevvel 1269 (29 February 1853); BOA, A.MKT.NZD., 78/77, 7 Şaban 1269 (16 May 1853).

## TANZIMAT REFORM IN DIYARBEKIR: VALI KURT İSMAIL PAŞA

With the proclamation in 1856 by Sultan Abdülaziz of a new reform edict, the *İslahât Hatt-ı Hümayûnu*, the Ottoman reform movement revived, and an era of more radical reform was initiated. Within a decade, a series of important new laws were issued that modernized key sectors of the Ottoman state. Perhaps the most far-reaching of all was the Land Law of 1858, which created a uniform land registration and property system. The state became the owner of all the land, but private property was enabled through the issue of deeds. New regulations in 1869<sup>127</sup> and 1870<sup>128</sup> aimed at the provincial and local administration, created town municipalities<sup>129</sup> and a uniform system of provinces, sub-provinces and districts, as well as consolidated the system of local participation by advice councils comprised of local notables and strengthening the power of the provincial governors. Also in 1869, a regulation<sup>130</sup> was adopted shaping a system of government education with schools on different levels and modern curricula. These were the days of the *Osmanlılık*, the endeavour to create an Ottoman patriotism on a non-religious basis. In that spirit, a previously unheard level of equality between Muslims and non-Muslims was aspired to. Thus the new schools were open to everyone, while the local councils consisted of members of different religious communities.<sup>131</sup> The *millet* system was not dispensed with, however.

Application of the new laws and regulations in Diyarbekir province started in earnest in 1869, with the appointment as *vali* of Hatunoğlu Kurt İsmail Paşa (branded the 'Midhat Paşa of Diyarbekir').<sup>132</sup> He founded an

<sup>127</sup> 'Province Law' (*Kânûn-ı Vilâyet*).

<sup>128</sup> 'Regulation of the General Administration of the Provinces' (*Nizamnâme-i İdâre-i Umûmiye-i Vilâyet*).

<sup>129</sup> Even today Turkey does not have municipalities in small rural settlements.

<sup>130</sup> Text in *Düstûr* vol. I/2 (İstanbul, Matbaa-i Âmire, 1289 [1872]) (Hanioğlu 2008: 102).

<sup>131</sup> For instance, in the *Meclis-i İdâre-i Liva* of Mardin (Administrative Council of Mardin Liva), founded in 1869, there were representatives of the Christian community of Mardin, Şemmas, Abdulmesih and Hanna Efendi. In the *Meclis-i Vilâyet-i Diyarbekir* (Provincial Council of Diyarbekir) there were two selected Christian and two Muslim members until 1884, and three of each thereafter. Leaders of seven Christian communities of Diyarbekir (Armenian Orthodox and Syriac Orthodox, Chaldean, Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Syriac Catholic, and Protestant), were added to the *Meclis-i Vilâyet* from 1874, under the name of *Rüesâ-yı Rûhâniye* ('Clerical leaders'). In Mardin also, religious leaders of six non-Muslim communities (Syriac Orthodox, Chaldean, Syriac and Armenian Catholic, and Syriac Protestant) were added to the *Meclis* as 'natural members' in 1876 (see Özcoşar 2009: 135–141; Çadircı 1991: 236–259).

<sup>132</sup> Karaman 1995.

impressive number of new institutions in Diyarbekir, including a court of appeal (*İstinaf Mahkemesi*), a department and commission for education (*Maârif İdaresi* and *Maârif Komisyonu*), a registration commission (*Sicil-i Ahval Komisyonu*), a department for public works (*Nafia Dairesi*), a telegraph department, a regiment of gendarmerie, a provincial council (*Vilâyet Meclisi*), and the municipality of Diyarbekir. Similar institutions were created in the sub-provincial (*sancak*) and district (*kaza*) centers. Some other municipalities in Diyarbekir province, such as Mardin and Lice, also date from this period. Kurt İsmail Paşa also established Diyarbekir's first newspaper, the provincial government's official gazette, published in Arabic and Armenian script.<sup>133</sup> The Paşa was reputed to have won the confidence of both Muslims and non-Muslims, and years later he was still remembered with affection.<sup>134</sup>

Few of the new laws and institutions had a profound influence in the countryside. The *Tanzimat* reforms remained largely confined to the urban centers of the Empire, which was even more the case in peripheral provinces like Diyarbekir. Thus the divide between urban and rural life certainly widened during this period. In terms of influence on the rural areas, only the Land Law was very significant. Rural and urban leaders and wealthy people succeeded in registering land in their names, causing long and bitter disputes with peasants working the land and thus claiming it as a natural right of their (historical) labor. Some of these land conflicts lingered on for decades.<sup>135</sup> The Land Law played an important part in enriching urban notables, both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Kurt İsmail Paşa had previously gained a reputation for robust action against nomadic tribes. In 1865 he had led the *Fırka-ı Islahiye*, a campaign against local power holders in Cilicia (South Anatolia) in which he—and his colleague Derviş Paşa—had success in settling Turkoman and Kurdish nomads.<sup>136</sup> The Paşa now advocated the same kind of measures in Diyarbekir. The problems caused by the Arab Aneze and Şammar *aşirets* especially in the south of the province had reached unprecedented levels in this period. They plundered land and crops in the immediate vicinity of urban centers like Mardin or Nusaybin, causing food shortages. Kurt İsmail Paşa

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<sup>133</sup> Atalay 2006. The print of Ottoman Turkish texts in other alphabets (Greek or Armenian by example) was a common practice in the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>134</sup> Report from Diyarbekir of Baker Paşa (A British General in the Ottoman army) to British Ambassador Layard, 1.2.1880, in: Şimşir 1989 vol. 1: 685.

<sup>135</sup> See Özok-Gündoğan 2012, in this volume.

<sup>136</sup> Gould 1976: 496–499; Orhonlu 1987: 115–118.



was prompted into action in 1871, when the Şeyh of the Şammar, Abdülkerim, devastated hundreds of villages because he felt insulted by the district governor of Nusaybin. A major campaign was launched against the Şammar, but the *vali* was unable to attain the same level of success as he had in Cilicia.<sup>137</sup> Uncontrollable *aşirets* remained part of life in Diyarbekir, particularly in the south.

#### THE CENTRALIZATION AND THE NON-MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Somewhat ironically perhaps, the Ottoman centralization in the Eastern provinces opened up the area for foreign powers. Several European countries, particularly France and Great Britain established consulates in the area. In 1856 France opened a consulate in Diyarbekir, and Britain followed a few years afterwards,<sup>138</sup> naming its diplomatic representation in the city 'the Consulate for Kurdistan'.<sup>139</sup> Establishing themselves in the area also in the same period were missionaries, who were generally enthusiastic supporters of the efforts at centralization of the Ottoman state.<sup>140</sup>

Catholic missionaries had been present in the Middle East since the 16th century, but apparently their influence had dwindled in the 18th century. The French Capuchin order (re)established mission stations in Diyarbekir and Mardin in or shortly after 1841.<sup>141</sup> The main protestant missionary organization, the Presbyterian *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (ABCFM) was stationed in the cities from 1857 (Diyarbekir), and 1858 (Mardin),<sup>142</sup> British Anglican missionaries were also active in Mardin in the 1860s.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Dolabani 1972: 98.

<sup>138</sup> Probably in 1861 (see Dickie 2007: 63).

<sup>139</sup> We should note that this was during the period when 'Kurdistan' was used as the official name of the province (above, p. 18), but the term was also used for the British Consulate in Erzurum (and well into the 1880s), which became the regional centre of the British consular system in the Eastern provinces (e.g. see Şimşir 1983 vol. 2: 689).

<sup>140</sup> For some examples see AMH 1849: 98, 158, 195. Missionary Perkins in January 1849 spoke about 'the sway' of Sultan Abdülmecid 'here [in the mountains of Hakkari] as equitable and humane, as it is efficient.' (ibid.: 195). The missionaries' warm feeling for the Ottoman state were partly a product of the permission given by the Ottoman government for the foundation of a separate protestant *millet* in this period (1847, confirmed by the Sultan in 1850, see Kieser 2000: 55).

<sup>141</sup> Kieser 2000: 63.

<sup>142</sup> Between 1849 and 1869, a total of eight missionaries were sent to Mardin, as part of the Mission to East Turkey, which was run at an annual cost by the end of this period of over \$45,000 (ABCFM 1869: 86, 92).

<sup>143</sup> Gates 1940: 32; Geary 1878: 167.

The most obvious, immediate effect of these missions was the development of small Protestant communities in the cities. Because of the strict ban on proselytism from Islam, all these missionaries worked on winning over members of the native churches (Armenians, Syrians Christians). In Diyarbekir, like elsewhere, this created bitter conflicts with the old churches, and further splits within the various Christian communities.<sup>144</sup> Through their education system, the missionaries, particularly the Americans, were also instrumental in opening new channels of communication with Europe and the United States. Indirectly, they also had a profound influence on the development of modern Armenian nationalism, and also the expansion of the Ottoman education system (insofar as this was in part a response to the progress in this area among the empire's Christians).

It seems that the urban Armenians in the Empire generally at this time—profiting from a variety of factors (including expansion and improvement of trade connections, a stronger orientation to the outside world, and improved education in the *Tanzimat* period)—assumed a more prominent role in trade, finance and industry. There is no reason to suppose that this process did not take place in Diyarbekir as well. Surprisingly, virtually no research has been done into this area. Most historians working on Armenian history concentrate on political events and conflict, and research on socio-economic history is still in its infancy.<sup>145</sup>

After the centralization the Christians of the Eastern provinces were exposed to a complex set of partly contradictory influences. Some developments clearly tended to bind them closer to the state, like the moderate participation in the local administration through the councils, and the growing demand of the state for specialized civil servants. Nevertheless, and somewhat paradoxically, while the *Tanzimat* politicians aimed to reinforce the Empire by integrating the Ottoman Christians into the Ottoman fabric, their politics actually contributed to the development of a stronger particularism, an identification with ethno-religious communities imagined as nations, particularly among the Armenians. The most important development in this respect was the adoption of a new organization structure for the Armenian *millet*.

Accepted only after years of bitter discussions within the Armenian community between vested interests and the opposition, the regulation

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<sup>144</sup> For some cases in the Syrian Orthodox community, see Akgündüz 2012, in this volume.

<sup>145</sup> A recent publication on the Armenians in Diyarbekir (Hovannissian 2006), by way of example almost completely avoids the subject.

(*nizamnâme*) of 1867 secured a stronger voice of laymen in the affairs of the Apostolic Church by founding a kind of parliamentary democracy within it. This gave strong encouragement to the further development of an autonomous Armenian education system and reinforced the Armenian cultural renaissance of the period. Although representatives from the provinces were in a minority in the central church council, the regulation still prompted an increase in official contacts between the Armenians of the capital and the east, thus contributing to a greater sense of community and practical solidarity.<sup>146</sup> With the creation of the new *millet* council, for example, the Armenians of Istanbul gained more familiarity with the difficult position of many of their fellow brethren in the Eastern provinces.<sup>147</sup> Symbolic of the rising nationalism of the period, the Armenian name for the regulation was the 'National Constitution' (*Azgayin Sahmanadrutiun*).<sup>148</sup>

Remarkably, the *Tanzimat* is mainly remembered for the change it brought, but not for the opposition to the change. That many in Diyarbakir were against reforms is clearly evident. For conservative Muslims, who strongly adhered to the hegemony of religious principles in society, the main stumbling block was the stress on equality of the religions—in respect of which European powers being seen to support and stimulate the reforms was of no help at all. An American missionary who happened to be in Diyarbakir, shortly after the defeat at Nizip, noted that a strong belief existed that the misfortune of the Ottomans was due to the 'foreign' (read: Christian) influence, such as the reform of the army along western lines and the involvement of foreign (Prussian) officers.<sup>149</sup> The more local Christians were seen to be connected to the foreigners (through their contact with missionaries and consuls, or because of their personal cultural transformation), the stronger was the Muslim reaction to the growing European influence and the greater was the backlash on

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<sup>146</sup> Barsoumian 2004: 197–198.

<sup>147</sup> A special commission was founded to receive complaints from the provinces. In 1872, this resulted in a formal petition to the Ottoman government (Sarkissian 1938: 36–42; Davison 1963: 125–126, Arpee 1909: 190–192). The *millet* council had 140 members, of whom 120 were laymen. 40 of them were from outside İstanbul (Davison 1963: 124–125).

<sup>148</sup> Thus the Turkish and Armenian names and hence perspectives of the new regulation would seem to have been, from the beginning, quite different. A contrary view has recently been suggested by an Armenian historian, however, who calls the idea that the new rules constituted a Constitution 'only an illusion, even a delusion', and argues rather that the 'European ring' of the name 'pleased its liberal framers' (Barsoumian 2004: 198).

<sup>149</sup> Grant 1841: 20. He sensed even a 'determination . . . to kill all the Europeans in the place'.

them. During the *Tanzimat* period a growing juxtaposition of Muslims and Christians (in Diyarbekir particularly Armenians) evolved, in times of tension bursting into open hostility.<sup>150</sup>

#### EPILOGUE

It cannot be stated that the Ottoman centralization in Diyarbekir created anything like a stable local government. While in the cities, particularly Diyarbekir and Mardin, a number of new institutions were established and an obviously more orderly administration came into existence, large swathes of the countryside were plunged into chaos. In the 1870s, the *Tanzimat* statesmen ran into financial trouble, strongly affecting the economy of the Ottoman Empire. A new war with Russia in 1877–1878 took an almost unbearable toll. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers (exclusively recruited from the Muslims population) died.<sup>151</sup> Public order, particularly in the rural areas, deteriorated to previously unseen levels. Kurdish *aşirets* harassed and plundered Armenian villagers, whom they saw as collaborators with the Russians, unhindered, with the government unwilling and/or unable to take any action.<sup>152</sup> The situation only worsened with severe food shortages during this period, which resulted in a famine affecting not only the eastern provinces but large parts of the Empire.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Southgate 1856: 103–104 mentions an incident in Diyarbekir in 1841 which left 20 Christians dead. The ‘principle leaders’, Southgate learns, ‘were among the most respectable Mussulmans in the city’, one of whom ‘was no less a personage than the Kadi [Islamic judge] himself. Order was restored, apparently, by the spreading of a rumor that the Paşa of Moussul [Mosul] was on his way, after which, on instruction from Constantinople, around twenty of the perpetrators were seized and taken by armed guard to the Paşa of Kharput [Harput, near Elazığ] to whom the province of Diyarbekir was subject at this time.

<sup>151</sup> A British observer estimated that a third of the men called to military service, did not return (Report by Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson to Ambassador Layard, 2.4.1880, in: Şimşir 1989 vol. 1: 708).

<sup>152</sup> See by example the report of British representative Rassam to British ambassador Layard, 15.10.1877, in Şimşir 1989 vol. 1: 97–101. The governors of Diyarbekir and Van confessed to Rassam that they had to be very cautious in suppressing this ‘long-established evil’ (the abuses against Christians) when their country was engaged in its titanic struggle war with Russia: ‘They are afraid,’ reported Rassam, that ‘by trying to be very severe they might increase the hatred of the Islam, and bring about greater misfortunes on the Christians, than what they now complain of’ (ibid.: 100).

<sup>153</sup> See British reports from the period in Şimşir 1989 vol. 1: 643–644, 656–657, 658–659, 683–684, 691–692 (mainly Erzurum and vicinity), 695–701 (Provinces of Diyarbekir and Haleb), 709–710 (Western Anatolia).

When, in 1879, the British military attaché Colonel Chermside, long-time resident in the Ottoman Empire and experienced observer, traveled through the province of Diyarbekir, he delivered the following bitter observations:

Apart from the immediate considerations of the famine, the whole extent of the country I have visited is in a most miserable condition. Not a village but has seen better days, not a village but curses the oppressive Government, not a place but too well grounded complaints pour in. The country with all its capabilities and its magnificent climate for agriculture, is a ruin. Not a tree but the scanty scrub of the Karaja Dagh [Karacadağ] from the hills above Scanderun [İskenderun] to Diarbekir. Villages [are] collections of mere mud hovels in treeless plain, no fountains, no gardens, no vegetables, coarse fare, coarse clothing. From Aleppo to Diarbekir, from Diarbekir to Mosul, except a few small towns, a few wooded valleys and mountain villages, it is the same everywhere. Not a road, only the ruins of the ancients, marking with wonderful clearness by their noble bridges, ruins, and causeways, the great natural arteries once the main thoroughfares of a rich noble land, now only followed by little-frequented bridle paths, or the more modern ruins of those roads the outcome of the brief fruitless spurt of reform of a few years since. Hardly a Government building that is not partly ruined within or without. Ruined bridges, ruined barracks, ruined villages and towns.... it is not only the *zaptiehs* [Ottoman gendarmerie] who curse the Government, the Mesopotamian peasant[s] near Seruj [Suruç, west of Urfa] speak with bitter curses of the 'Osmanlis'. Kurds, Arabs, Armenians, Jacobites, Chaldeans, all hate the dominant race. None, however, seem, like the Turks, to possess the spirit or aspiration to rule, they long only to be free from the yoke that oppresses them...<sup>154</sup>

Successor to the Ottoman imperial throne in 1876, Abdülhamid II, would deviate considerably from the lines set out in the *Tanzimat* period in his Endeavour to preserve the Empire over the next three decades. While continuing the *Tanzimat* reforms in some fields, particularly in administration and infrastructure, he broke with the equality ideal. First and foremost, he tried to reconnect the Muslim population to the state, thus alienating the Christians. He managed to gain the loyalty of the greater part of the Kurds by measures such as the institution of the *Hamidiye*,<sup>155</sup> and the careful cultivation of relations with the important *şeyhs*, but only at great and irreparable cost for the already severely battered social cohesion of Diyarbekir and the other eastern provinces.

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<sup>154</sup> Report of Chermside to British Ambassador Layard, 3.4.1880, in Şimşir 1989 vol. 1: 703–704.

<sup>155</sup> See Klein 2012, in this volume.

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ELITE ENCOUNTERS OF A VIOLENT KIND  
MILLI İBRAHİM PAŞA, ZIYA GÖKALP AND POLITICAL STRUGGLE  
IN DIYARBEKİR AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Joost Jongerden

INTRODUCTION

New emerging conflicts shaped Diyarbekir at the turn of the 20th century. This contribution will bring into focus a conflict between two elite groups which had a profound influence on social and political life in the area between 1890 and 1910. Both elite groups discussed here were predominantly composed of ethnic Kurds. One group was primarily tribe-based, nomadic and rural, loyal to the Sultan and with the Hamidiye (cavalry) regiments as an important focal point of power. A principal leader of the Hamidiye in the Diyarbekir region was Milli İbrahim Paşa, head of the Milan tribal confederation. The other elite group was composed of Kurdish notables and prominent families residing in Diyarbekir city, but having substantial rural possessions and major long distance trading interests. This elite was close to, even a constituent part of, the nationalist Young Turk movement, in particular the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki*). One of the main leaders of this group was Arif Piriinççizade, and later his son-in-law, Ziya Gökalp. This elite group will be referred to as 'nationalist' or 'proto-nationalist'.

In discussing the conflict between the two elite groups, the overall objective here is to investigate the forces shaping and thus advance our understanding of political life in Diyarbekir at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Discussion will concentrate on the backgrounds of the two groups and confrontations between them during the period 1905–08, as well as on their stance toward a major event in the area, the anti-Armenian (anti-Christian) pogrom of 1895. The position of the elite groups in the 1895 violence itself will not be considered, since these events are amply discussed elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Verheij 2012, in this volume.

Two arguments are developed here. The first is that the dissolving of the Hamidiye worked to the detriment of the Armenian/Christian population in Diyarbekir. This was because—in contradiction to established ideas about the role of the Hamidiye regiments (at least in Diyarbekir, if not elsewhere)—the Hamidiye under the command of Milli İbrahim Paşa were actually involved in the *protection* of the Christians. The second hypothesis is that the political role of Ziya Gökalp in the rousing of anti-Armenian sentiments and his involvement in conflicts and violent confrontations at the time has been more important than generally acknowledged.

#### METHODOLOGY

An elite group or elite is defined here as a small network of individuals who wield a level of influence in a society that is extremely disproportionate to their number—in the hands of whom there is thus a ‘concentrated power’.<sup>2</sup> Members of an elite group occupy influential positions in important spheres of social life,<sup>3</sup> positions in administration, business and trade, cultural and ideological life, or in military establishments. The decisions they make have major consequences for others.<sup>4</sup> An elite group acts in concordance; it has some form of cohesion, based on common economic or political interests, ideological conviction or status, or a combination of these. Elite groups may be strictly defined, for example as composed of the members of a certain association, or otherwise, in which case individuals may be regarded as more or less closely identified with (part of, involved in) the group and its activities. And an individual with particular (concentrated) power within or among an elite group or groups (at ‘the center’) can be said to be the holder of an ‘elite position’.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and turn of the twentieth, Milli İbrahim Paşa occupied an elite position as the principal leader in his confederation of tribes, as a general in the Hamidiye and a protégé of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Piriñçizade Arif Efendi and Mehmet Ziya (Gökalp) too were part of an elite group, related to and part of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki*). Piriñçizade Arif Efendi held an

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<sup>2</sup> Giddens 1989: 747.

<sup>3</sup> Shore & Nugent 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Mills 1956.

important position in the media, as he was responsible for the *Diyarbakir Gazetesi*, a newspaper read by the Diyarbakir educated and higher circles (closely related if not exactly identical to the area's elite groups); he held an important position in politics and administration, among others as member of the city's council (local authority), eventually rising to the position of mayor; and he was a prominent figure in the local economy, as a successful businessman. Ziya, meanwhile, was a key figure in the (Diyarbakir) Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and local politics, and held an influential ideological position, through, among other ways, his publication activities and (home) lectures.<sup>5</sup>

Both popular sources and academic literature suggest that the Hamidiye regiments were involved in the persecution and killing of Armenians on a large scale, to the extent that the violence that occurred in and around 1895 and known as the Armenian massacres is also popularly referred to as the Hamidiye massacres. Akçam argues that with the establishment of the Hamidiye regiments the generalized, informal tendency for 'reward' for dealing harshly with the Armenians that had been operating gained a systematic character.<sup>6</sup> Gaunt describes the Hamidiye generally as 'highly disruptive of civilian life': the soldiers were 'used to settle scores in local vendettas' and the regiments 'a bad influence on local politics'.<sup>7</sup> Although he depicts the Diyarbakir events in 1895 as a 'wave of plundering and killing Christians' committed by 'mobs', citing 'rioters who plundered, burned and killed' and 'officials, police and the military' who participated, however, these are still referred to as 'the Hamidiye massacres'.<sup>8</sup> Lewy reports that survivors of massacres implicated 'irregulars' or 'volunteers', which he says probably refers to Kurdish irregulars, especially the Hamidiye.<sup>9</sup> Contemporary accounts refer to the Hamidiye as 'convicts who were invited to rob and kill', who 'fulfilled their job with scrupulous exactness',<sup>10</sup> or 'notorious brigands and criminals', a 'regiment of the

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<sup>5</sup> Home lectures were an important part in the consciousness raising and ideological groundwork of CUP formation and its early growth. Though the CUP had elitist world view it came from an illegal movement that organized itself partly in exile before developing into the political party that ruled Turkey for most of the period from 1909 to the end of the First World War.

<sup>6</sup> Akçam 2006: 46.

<sup>7</sup> Gaunt 2006: 35.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 41–2.

<sup>9</sup> Lewy 2005a: 223.

<sup>10</sup> Dillon 1895: 6.

cut-throats'.<sup>11</sup> Although such characterizations may have been appropriate in the context of particular events, one should be alert to the possibility—the likelihood, perhaps—of over-generalization. Indeed, although these descriptions may well have been applicable in relation to events in Van or Sasun, in the case of Diyarbekir, it is argued here, the contrary was the case: it was not, in fact, the existence of the Hamidiye that adversely affected the Armenians and other Christians, but quite the opposite, their disbandment. The current piece, therefore, certainly refutes any generalization that indicates or explicitly incorporates Diyarbekir and names the Hamidiye as complicit to the slaughter of Armenians in 1895.

Several scholars<sup>12</sup> have argued that it was the teaching of Ziya Gökalp that set the tone for the eradication of the Armenians in eastern Anatolia. As chief ideologue of the CUP and pioneer of Turkish nationalism, that is, Gökalp had laid the ideological groundwork for the 1915 genocide. Others<sup>13</sup> do not agree with this reading, or consider it outright wrong. First, Gökalp's nationalism is regarded as cultural, not racial. This argument suggests that cultural nationalism is incompatible with or unconnected to ethnic cleansing and genocidal killing, however, which is not consistent with work on nationalism.<sup>14</sup> Second, even though, as a Central Committee or leading committee member of the CUP, Gökalp was responsible for, among other things, what was called the question of the minorities, and within that issue especially the Armenians and Syriacs, it is typically argued that he was never an important figure in the party in terms of political decision making.<sup>15</sup> In this paper, I argue that Gökalp was an important CUP leader, and deeply involved in political matters in his hometown of Diyarbekir.

This contribution is only a very modest attempt to engage with queries concerning the violent events in Diyarbekir at the end of the nineteenth century, a modesty of both object and method. Regarding the second of

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<sup>11</sup> MacColl 1896: 318–9.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Kazarian 1976; Reid 1984; Dadrian 2003.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Lewy 2005a.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, the work of Ernest Gellner, an authority in nationalism studies, who argues that the nationalist condition *is* a cultural one (in the modern world, culture marks the boundaries of political units). Gellner explicitly describes how expulsion, assimilation and murder are among the options open to the nation-state in respect to those who do not fit its paradigm (and migration, resistance and rebellion options for those that reject the dominant nationalist discourse). Gellner considers this simply a logic of modernity (Gellner 1997: 239–40).

<sup>15</sup> Lewy 2005.

these, the source material is restricted to just a few autobiographical texts (those of Ziya Gökalp's brother, Nihat Gökalp, his daughter, Senihe Göksel, nephew, Feyzi Pirinçizade, and son-in-law, Ali Nüzhet Görsel) and accounts by contemporaries of Ziya Gökalp and Milli İbrahim Paşa (such as Ziya's friend, Cemil Asena, his teacher and fellow Diyarbekir CUP member, Mustafa Akif Tütenk, and the British diplomat Mark Sykes), along with some transcribed Ottoman sources.

This restriction of sources is intended to be keeping with the object of the study, with a focus kept firmly on the involvement in and responsibility for the Diyarbekir violence of Milli İbrahim Paşa, the Hamidiye and Mehmet Ziya Gökalp, or lack thereof. The specific, very limited subject matter is offered less as a case study to advance a wider thesis than as a micro-study intended to contribute one piece of a mosaic. This single piece stands as a higher definition corrective to (in) the full mosaic of local level descriptions, which themselves serve to complement to work on the large scale of 'national politics, the highest decision makers and the question of ultimate responsibility'.<sup>16</sup> If we really want to advance our understanding of the broader picture of the 1895–6 violence—and its place in the co-development of Turkish and Armenian (and Kurdish) nationalism concomitant with the collapse of Empire, the Christian (Armenian/Syriac and Greek) 'genocides' and the creation of the Turkish Republic—we should endeavor to work towards a series of such investigatory and analytical micro-studies.

#### ELITE GROUPS IN DIYARBEKIR

Kurdish leaders of prominent origin ('notables') had been members of the Ottoman high bureaucracy and as such an integral part of the Ottoman State for many centuries.<sup>17</sup> They were not simply representatives of the state in the region, yet neither, however, were they autonomous local leaders. The Ottoman state and regional elite groups can be regarded as having co-created each other in the East. In the 19th century this eventuated in the establishment of emirates. Recognition by the Palace and its delegation of powers to them solidified these emirates as political

<sup>16</sup> Gaunt 2006: 2; see also Gaunt, Üngör and Verheij 2012, in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> Özoğlu 2001: 384.

units, but also organized a loose integration of the regions in the Ottoman Empire that they covered, later to include also urban elite groups (in Diyarbekir) and rural Hamidiye elite groups.

One of these emirates was the Emirate of Botan, ruled for many centuries by a family that claimed descent from one of the Prophet's most famous generals, Khalid ibn Walid. The most important member of this family was Bedirhan Bey, who became the ruler (*mîr*) of the emirate in 1835 and again in 1847. The center of the Botan emirate was Cezire (now Cizre, in the Turkish province of Şırnak), but at the time of its greatest expansion the borders of the Botan emirate stretched from Rowanduz to Sincar (in northwestern Iraq) and from Diyarbekir to Van<sup>18</sup> Bedirhan carried an Ottoman title—as *mütesellim*, tax collector, he was entitled by the state to collect tax revenues and obliged to pay a lump sum of taxes to the Ottoman state—but his authority surpassed that of an Ottoman governor.<sup>19</sup> He controlled the area between Diyarbekir-Mosul and the border with Iran.<sup>20</sup>

In 1847, after an uprising against the Ottoman government, most likely to protest the administrative division of Bedirhan's land into the provinces (*eyalets*) of Diyarbekir and Mosul, Bedirhan was forced to resign.<sup>21</sup> In the power vacuum created by the collapse of the Botan emirate, the area became the scene of rivalry between tribes and chieftains. The Ottoman state had no effective control over the area. And it was in this period of disintegration and disorder that new elite groups emerged. 'As an increasing number of emirates were dissolved,' writes Janet Klein, 'their component units—tribal confederations, and then simply tribes—progressively became the most important social and political units in the region.'<sup>22</sup> It was against this historical background that in November 1890 a decree was published announcing the establishment of irregular cavalry regiments (*aşiret*) in the southeast of the Empire, named 'Hamidiye' to indicate the intended personal bond of loyalty of the militia to the Sultan under whom they were established (Abdülhamid II). During the second half of the 19th

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<sup>18</sup> Bruinessen 1978: 222–3.

<sup>19</sup> Özloğlu 2001: 397.

<sup>20</sup> Bruinessen 1978: 226.

<sup>21</sup> The Kurdish emirates were broken up in the mid-nineteenth century as part of the policy of power centralization and cultural 'Ottomanization', a major thrust of the reforms introduced during the *Tanzimat* period (Bruinessen 1978: 397; Aydın & Verheij 2012, in this volume).

<sup>22</sup> Klein 2002: 118.



century there also emerged a new urban elite, gaining wealth not from trade but land,<sup>23</sup> and political power from reforms.<sup>24</sup>

### *Hamidiye*

In November 1890, Sultan Abdülhamid II published a decree which announced the establishment of irregular cavalry forces in the southeast of the Empire. Their name ‘Hamidiye’ (*aşiret*) regiments was a reference to Abdülhamid himself, indicating the intended personal bond of loyalty of the militia to the Sultan. The first Hamidiye tribal militia were formed in 1891 and abolished in 1909, in the Second Constitutional Era, following the Young Turk Revolution and the coming to power of the CUP the year previously.<sup>25</sup> Hamidiye regiments were intended as a parallel system of control, independent of the army and regular civil bureaucracy, and under direct order of the Sultan, Abdülhamid II, and his brother-in-law Zeki Paşa, the commander of the Ottoman military units in the region who had his headquarter in Erzincan. At the end of the 19th century there were 55 Hamidiye cavalry regiments, commanded by their own tribal chiefs. The smallest regiment comprised about 500 men, the largest 1,150. Only (Sunni Muslim) Kurdish, Turkmen, and Arab tribes were allowed to form regiments—yet non-Muslim regimental units did exist. One of the regiments raised by İbrahim Paşa, chieftain of the Milan confederation,

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<sup>23</sup> The Land Code of 1858 gave rise to (formal) individual property rights (for a discussion of the Land Code see Özok-Gündoğan 2012, in this volume). In 1895, Armenian land and property had been seized by Kurdish notables from the city of Diyarbakir, and this agrarian question—competing claims over land ownership—became a persistent problem between Kurds and Armenians.

<sup>24</sup> Shaw and Shaw 1977; Seker 2007; Ozcosar 2009. The Provincial Municipal Code (*Vilayet Belediye Kanunu*) was adopted by parliament during the First Constitutional Era, in 1877. The code stipulated that every town would have a council with 6–12 members according to its population and importance, with biennial elections to select half the members (and membership restricted by property and income provisions). One of the council members was to be chosen as mayor (*belediye reisi*) (Shaw and Shaw 1977: 95). In Diyarbakir, Arif Piriñçizade became member of the council, and later rose to the position of mayor of the city (above).

<sup>25</sup> In 1910, twenty-nine tribal cavalry regiments were created from out of the Hamidiye and integrated into the regular army. These regiments were then reclassified in the army reorganization of 1913 as reserve cavalry (*ih̄tiyat s̄ivari*) regiments of the regular Ottoman army and grouped into four divisions in 1914 before being mobilized into the Reserve Cavalry Corps in August 1914, and, apparently, failing—‘The tactical performance of this corps was abysmal, and its levels of discipline and combat effectiveness low’—the end result being that all but seven of the original twenty-nine cavalry regiments were dissolved (Erickson 2006).

had a division from the Yezidi (*Êzidî*) Torînan tribe, headed by a Yezidi commander named Bîsarî Koloz.<sup>26</sup>

It has been argued that the real target of the regiments was the Armenians and that the Ottoman government used increased activity by Armenian revolutionary organizations as a pretext to establish these irregular Kurdish cavalry forces.<sup>27</sup> However, the idea for the cavalry came from one of the Sultan's close advisors who thought that a Cossack-like institution would help to address a number of issues. Primarily, the Hamidiye were to take state control to the frontier districts with Russia and Iran. Nor had the tribal militia only to counteract possible outside interference. Establishing effective control over the local population was also a central objective. 'This was the case not only for the mostly Kurdish mobile (semi-nomadic) tribal population, whom the government was barely able to tax, let alone conscript, but also for the Armenian and Kurdish peasantry, for whom the state seemed largely redundant as they were already taxed by local notables and Kurdish *ağas*'.<sup>28</sup> A larger objective in the establishment of the Hamidiye, therefore, was the integration of the (Sunni Muslim) Kurds into the Ottoman state system.<sup>29</sup> This was enabled, among other ways, through the Tribe Schools (*Aşîret Mektepleri*), which provided (boarding school) education to the children of tribal leaders.<sup>30</sup> Thus, within the region, the Hamidiye became a conduit for the power relationship between the imperial capital and the local rulers, functioning on the one hand as a means for tribes to gain influence, and on the other for the Sultan to extend indirect rule over the region.<sup>31</sup>

### *Millî İbrahim Paşa*

Chief of the Milan confederation of tribes, Millî İbrahim Paşa (Brahim Paşayê Milî) may have been the most important commander of the Hamidiye regiments, not only because of the many regiments he headed and the high number of armed men under his command, but also for his close ties to the Sultan, who referred to him as 'my son'.<sup>32</sup> In the first years

<sup>26</sup> See also see Janet Klein 2012, in this volume.

<sup>27</sup> Akçam 2006: 40.

<sup>28</sup> Klein 2006; see also Klein 2012, in this volume.

<sup>29</sup> Duguid 1973.

<sup>30</sup> Aytar 1992: 166.

<sup>31</sup> Bruinessen 1978: 227.

<sup>32</sup> Aytar 1992: 253.

of the Hamidiye, Milli İbrahim raised six regiments<sup>33</sup> from the Milan confederation. Later, after having managed to gain control over other tribes in the region, he was eventually able to number some twenty regiments as under his (direct and indirect) control.<sup>34</sup> The regiments he raised totaled some 16,000 armed men,<sup>35</sup> and the Sultan gave him the rank of *paşa* (equivalent to a brigadier-general) following a visit in 1902 by Milli İbrahim to Abdülhamid in Istanbul. İbrahim's sons—Abdülhamid, Mahmud, Halil and Temur—all reached the rank of *kaymakam* (equivalent to lieutenant-colonel) and commanded a regiment.<sup>36</sup>

At the beginning of his career as regimental leader, Milli İbrahim established authority over a region extending from Viranşehir to Siverek, Derik and Diyarbakir; by the height of his power at the turn of the 20th century, the *paşa* held sway over a very wide area, known now as the (Turkish) provinces of Mardin, Urfa and Diyarbakir.<sup>37</sup> Janet Klein refers to the area under his control as a 'little empire'.<sup>38</sup> In 'Journeys in North Mesopotamia' Mark Sykes described him thus:

İbrahim Pasha is, without a doubt, the most interesting person in the *Jazirah* [Al-Jazira, Upper Mesopotamia]. When he started life [at] ten years of age, his father was a prisoner in *Diarbekir*, and he himself a penniless refugee in Egypt. He now stands out a brigadier-general in the Turkish army, the master of fourteen thousand lancers and horseman, the leader of twenty-two distinct tribes, and Chief of the Milli Kurds. İbrahim Pasha's mother was an Arab of the noblest race, his father a Kurdish chieftain of renown. In İbrahim we find the racial characteristics of both his parents—the constructive and practical powers of the Kurd combined with the mental faculties and humanity of the Arab.<sup>39</sup>

Having been enrolled into the Hamidiye, İbrahim continued the efforts of his father to develop Viranşehir into an important regional centre (in addition to and in competition with Diyarbakir). İbrahim Paşa established a bazaar in Viranşehir and encouraged Christians (Armenians and Chaldeans) to settle in the town, as artisans and craftsmen.<sup>40</sup> Viranşehir

<sup>33</sup> Regiments 41, 42, 43, 44, 63 and 64.

<sup>34</sup> Arslan 1992: 49; Idikurt 1995: 71.

<sup>35</sup> Kansu 1997: 69.

<sup>36</sup> Aytar 1996: 60.

<sup>37</sup> Idikurt 1995: 49.

<sup>38</sup> Klein 2006: 201.

<sup>39</sup> Sykes 1907: 385–6.

<sup>40</sup> Klein 2006: 362.

grew rapidly, and İbrahim Paşa revealed himself as a city builder.<sup>41</sup> The growing importance of Viranşehir brought caravan traffic into his dominions and thus commodities and money. Viranşehir itself counted some 600 Christian families (i.e. not including the Christians living in surrounding villages). Most of them were Armenian Catholics, but there were also Syriac Catholics, Syriac Orthodox, Armenian Gregorians and a small number of Chaldeans. İbrahim Paşa protected Christians of all denominations. According to Winter,<sup>42</sup> İbrahim Paşa impressed ‘the Europeans with his exemplary treatment of the region’s Christian populations’. Mark Sykes wrote the following:

[...] İbrahim is a man with many enemies, his position requires him to be at constant war with his neighbours, the Arab and the Kurdish tribes without his confederation long to see him killed, but I have never heard anyone accuse him of a disgraceful or dishonourable act. Indeed, although he has personally no bias in favour of the Armenians, he did not hesitate to threaten to destroy Siverek if they were massacred there, and so saved hundreds of lives; and when matters were at their worst at *Diarbekir* and *Urfa*, he actually succoured some thousands at his headquarters at *Veranshehr*. For two months he fed this people for nothing, and when troubles subsided, he gave such as chose to remain lands on which to live and work in peace. I am sure no one can grudge him the wealth which his action has brought him, and his statement that the terms imposed on settlers in his country are not unreasonable is proved by the fact that Armenian immigrants are increasing at *Veranshehr* every year.<sup>43</sup>

İbrahim Paşa was detested by the notables of Diyarbekir. Indeed, the relationship generally between the city-elite of Diyarbekir and the family of İbrahim Paşa had a tempestuous history. Milli İbrahim Paşa’s great-grandfather, Eyüp Bey, had ruled in the Jazirah (Cizre region, ‘Upper Mesopotamia’) from Lake Bingöl to Sincar at the beginning of the 19th century, his principality bordering that of Mohammed Bey to the east and one ruled by a Bedouin *şeyh* in the south. The chiefs in the region and the notables in the cities were in a state of constant war with each other and paid little heed to the Ottoman rulers, who, eventually, took action. Eyyüp Bey was taken prisoner and carried off to Diyarbekir, where he was hanged (Mohammed Bey was seized and killed, too, and the Bedouin *şeyh* also died after he was imprisoned). İbrahim’s grandfather, Timawi,

<sup>41</sup> Idilkurt 1995: 70–1.

<sup>42</sup> Winter 2006: 470.

<sup>43</sup> Sykes 1907: 385–6.

marched against the Ottoman troops stationed in Mardin and managed to capture the city, but the Milan were not able to hold it for long. Timawi was killed in a quarrel soon after he captured Mardin.

By the time Timawi's son Mahmud Bey (İbrahim's father) took over the headship, the confederation was in disarray. The number of tents (a means to estimate the size and power of a tribe) had fallen from 50,000 to a couple of hundred.<sup>44</sup> Hostile tribes drove the remnants of the confederation into refuge at Karacadağ, a mountain chain between Diyarbekir and Urfa. Mahmud Bey succeeded, however, in regrouping his tribe at Viranşehir, and within a few years had attained prosperity and wealth. He built a castle at Viranşehir as an expression of his growing power, but then this was destroyed and burned by troops from Diyarbekir. İbrahim's father was incarcerated in Diyarbekir and only released years later on the order of Sultan Abdulaziz. Shattered by his long stay in prison, Mahmud Bey died soon after his release.

Thus it was that İbrahim came to take over the headship of the Milan in 1863. İbrahim occasionally plundered the merchants' caravans from Diyarbekir, the city that had hanged his great-grandfather and wrecked his father, until the government had him seized and exiled to Sivas, along with six other tribal leaders. Together with İbrahim, these leaders represented the seven tribes that formed the core of the Milan confederation, the Xedrik (Hedrik) or Xedrikan (Hedrikan), Torınan, Hacikan, Kuran, Kumneşan (Kumnehşan), Çemikan, and Sikan. The seven leaders escaped from Sivas after some six months of exile, and managed to reach Viranşehir after a hazardous journey with soldiers in hot pursuit.<sup>45</sup> Years later, in 1909, İbrahim, on the run and chased by an army of volunteers from Diyarbekir and regular soldiers, died near Nusaybin following a dysentery infection. Some of his close relatives managed to escape. Descendants of İbrahim Paşa continue to live in Damascus to this day.<sup>46</sup>

### *Nationalists*

Led by Milli İbrahim, the Hamidiye in Diyarbekir were locked in a local power battle with city notables, among them the *Cemilpaşazadeler* and *Pirinççizadeler*. Arif Pirinççizade and later Ziya Gökalp turned out to be important leaders in the battle with Milli İbrahim. At the peak of his

<sup>44</sup> Winter 2006: 467–8.

<sup>45</sup> Sykes 1915: 302, 319, 321.

<sup>46</sup> Kiran 2003.

power İbrahim Paşa threatened the authority of the Diyarbekir notables and merchants in three ways: i) he controlled the trade routes into and out of Diyarbekir, ii) he was able to establish a certain leverage over the land and villages in the area surrounding the city, and iii) he attempted to develop Viranşehir into a regional urban center, threatening the preeminent position of Diyarbekir. İbrahim's rising power was a matter of great concern to the notables of Diyarbekir, whose wealth was gained through trade and also their substantial rural possessions, former fiefs (*timar/zeamat*), of which they had gained legal ownership during the *Tanzimat* ('reorganization'), the 19th century (1839–1876) reform period of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>47</sup>

One of the prominent Diyarbekir notables was Arif Piriñçizade (1853–1909), a man of considerable influence and wealth. Piriñçizade had become a large landowner,<sup>48</sup> possessing some thirty villages near Diyarbekir.<sup>49</sup> In his younger years, Arif Piriñçizade worked at the provincial printing office in Diyarbekir, and became editor of the Diyarbekir Gazette, from which he resigned in 1877. He then concentrated on agriculture and trade, gaining wealth, and purchasing land and a number of farms.<sup>50</sup> In the years that followed, Piriñçizade rose to such posts as Member of the Provincial Council (*Meclis-i İdar-î Vilayet*), Chairman of the Diyarbekir Chamber of Public Works and Trade (*Nafia ve Ticaret Riyasetleri*) and the provincial Court of Appeal (*İstinaf Mahkemesi*), before becoming Mayor of Diyarbekir and being elected to Parliament in 1908, as independent candidate for the district of Diyarbekir (*Meclis-i Mebusan*).<sup>51</sup> He was elected while leading a military operation against Milli İbrahim Paşa.<sup>52</sup>

After Arif Efendi died, from a heart attack in 1909,<sup>53</sup> he was replaced in the National Assembly by his son, Feyzi Piriñçizade.<sup>54</sup> In the parliament elected in 1912, Feyzi Piriñçizade was re-elected as independent candidate for the district Diyarbekir.<sup>55</sup> Feyzi Piriñçizade stands accused

<sup>47</sup> Above, note 23.

<sup>48</sup> Arslan 1992: 52.

<sup>49</sup> Kiran 2003: 188.

<sup>50</sup> Reference is not made to village names or to exact years. Most likely this occurred in the 1870s and/or 80s.

<sup>51</sup> Kara Amid 1909.

<sup>52</sup> Beysanoğlu 2001: 773–778.

<sup>53</sup> He was buried at the Sultanmahmud Cemetery.

<sup>54</sup> Kansu 1997: 282–3.

<sup>55</sup> For some reason he was not candidate for the CUP. It was Mehmed Zülfi [Tigrel] who was elected in parliament as Diyarbekir candidate for the Committee of Union and Progress (Kansu 2000: 478).

of having been crucial in the operation of the Diyarbekir branch of the Special Organization (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*), a special force charged with having taken the lead in the mass murder of the Armenians, liquidating the convoys of Armenian deportees at designated sites.<sup>56</sup> Though being a suspect, this certainly did not prevent his rise to the post of Minister of Public Works, a position he held in three different governments between 1921 and 1925, under prime-ministers Fevzi Çakmak (1921–22) and Ali Fethi Okyar (1923–25).

### *Ziya Gökalp*

Arif Pirinçizade was maternal uncle to Ziya Gökalp, and his son Feyzi a close friend—Gökalp stayed with Feyzi in Istanbul, and the two were held prisoner together in Malta by the English for some two years (see below). Though often referred to as a Kurd (or Zaza), Gökalp considered himself a Turk. He did not regard ethnic origin to be relevant, arguing that a person's national identity is determined by cultural traits not physical ones. In an illuminating analogy, Gökalp recalled that Alexander the Great said that his real father was not Philip but Aristotle, because the first was the source of his materiality while the second was the source of his cultural being, and for human beings, culture takes precedence over materiality.<sup>57</sup> In an essay entitled 'My Nationality', he wrote: 'I have learned also that I am racially a Turk, since the two grandfathers of my father came a few generations ago from Çermik, which is a Turkish area

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<sup>56</sup> Dadrian 1993. According to Erickson (2006), the Special Organization was a multi-purpose, special volunteer force led by professional officers, equivalent to a modern special operations force.

It sought to foment insurrection in enemy territory, fight guerrillas and insurgents in friendly territory, conduct espionage and counterespionage, and perform other tasks unsuited to conventional military forces. While many histories suggest the Special Organization received orders from the Committee of Union and Progress or the Ministry of the Interior, the archival record suggests that the Ministry of Defense commanded the Special Organization during World War I (Erickson 2006).

It should be noted, though, that one high-ranking member of the governing CUP, Bahaeddin Şakir, is known to have commanded the Special Organization force. These details are important in assigning responsibility for the genocide/cleansing of the Armenian/Christian population in eastern Anatolia on the assumption that it was the Special Organization that carried it out. Using records of unit assignments and locations on the Caucasian front, however, Erickson claims that it appears that Special Organization units were *not* redeployed from that front to deport and massacre Armenians. His claim supports the view emphasized here, that a series of microstudies is needed to reconstruct history and rescue it from the blunt generalizations and entrenched positions of nationalist historiography.

<sup>57</sup> Gökalp 1922.

(...) However, I would not hesitate to believe I am a Turk even if I had discovered that my grandfathers came from the Kurdish or Arab areas, because I learned through my sociological studies that nationality is based solely on upbringing'.<sup>58</sup> In 'The Principles of Turkism', Gökalp, while dismissing the idea of ethnic purity as a fiction, wrote 'sociology holds that individuals enter the world as non-social creatures (...) [S]ocial traits are not transmitted through biological inheritance but only through education, which means that ethnic origin plays no role whatever as regards national character'.<sup>59</sup>

Born in Diyarbekir to Mehmed Tevfik Bey and Zeliha Hanım on March 23, 1876, Gökalp grew up as Mehmet Ziya, adopting the name 'Gökalp', meaning sky-warrior, when he stayed in Salonica (today Thessalonica) in 1909. Gökalp's family history in the area (see Annex C) can be traced back to the 18th century, when Çermikli Hacı Ali Ağa, moved from the village of Alyoz (or Alos) in the Çüngüş district in the mountainous northwest of Diyarbekir into the city itself. Çermikli Hacı Ali Ağa settled in the Karacami Quarter, a neighborhood with a mixed population, and his son, Abdullah Ağa became involved in trade, being granted five villages as a fief (*timar*) in return for services rendered to the army. The son of Abdullah Ağa, Müfti Hacı Hüseyin, bought a house in the Karacami Quarter, which was where Ziya was born three generations later (the house is now known as the Ziya Gökalp Museum, established in 1956). Ziya's father had a professional career as a head (*müdür*) of the provincial registry (record office), the public registration office, a member of the provincial administration, and editor-in-chief (*başyazar*) of the local newspaper (*Diyarbakır Gazetesi*). Ziya was just four years old when his father died, after which, aged seven, he started at elementary school (*Mercimek Örtmesi*, 1883–86), going on first to the army junior high school (*Mekteb-i Rüştiye Askeriye*, 1886–91), where he studied together with his nephew Feyzi Pirinççizade (Pirinççioğlu 1979: 351), and then to the state's vocational or senior high school (*Mekteb-i İdadi Mülkiye*, 1891–94). In 1895, aged eighteen, he left for Istanbul, where, primarily to take of the free tuition and accommodation provided, he studied at the School of Veterinary Medicine (*Baytar Mektebi*).<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Cited in Parla 1985: 10.

<sup>59</sup> Gökalp 1968: 13.

<sup>60</sup> *Diyarbakır Tanıtma Dergisi* 1956; Gökalp 1977.



Ziya Gökalp had learned Arabic and Persian from his uncle, Hacı Hasib Efendi, who also introduced him to Turkish nationalist thought. Gökalp's major works, in which he explains his principles of Turkish nationalism, are 'Turkification—Islamization—Modernization' (*Türkleşmek—İslâmlaşmak—Muasırlaşmak*), published in 1918, and 'The Principles of Turkism' (*Türkçülüğün Esasları*) published in 1923.<sup>61</sup> His first publication was a political poem, 'The Epic of Bandit İbrahim' (*Şaki İbrahim Destanı*), published in 1908 by the Diyarbekir branch of the CUP (Filizok 2006), of which he was the co-founder. In the poem he taunts Milli İbrahim Paşa.

It generally goes unmentioned that Ziya Gökalp was a petty landlord, of five small settlements in the northeast of the city.<sup>62</sup> Three of these villages are Şükürlü, Bacervan (a hamlet, or *mezra*, of Şükürlü) and Pornak.<sup>63</sup> The fiefdom granted to Ziya's great-grandfather Abdullah Ağa had become family property. At least two of these settlements, Şükürlü and Bacervan, had mixed populations of Christians and Muslims.<sup>64</sup> A historiography of these villages might add new information about Ziya Gökalp's relations with Christians in Diyarbekir. After Ziya's death, the land was inherited by his younger brother Nihat Gökalp<sup>65</sup> and part of the land—Bacervan—is still family property (according to the 2005 cadastre, and confirmed by villagers).

Ziya Gökalp became a leading figure in the local branch and later the central committee of the CUP. The CUP had been a loose association from its foundation in 1889 until 1902. Established by medical students—as the Society for Ottoman Progress (*İttihad-i Osmani Cemiyeti*)—the CUP was composed of groups and people who had very little in common beyond a positivist-elitist *Weltanschauung* and a desire to overthrow Abdülhamid II.<sup>66</sup> A major theme in the thought of the 'Young Turks', as they were dubbed, was their opposition to a system that required loyalty to the Sultan, not the fatherland or the state.<sup>67</sup> Apparently, this had been an issue which had also occupied the mind of the young Ziya Gökalp.

<sup>61</sup> These titles were published in English by Brill, in 1968.

<sup>62</sup> Göksel 1949: 5.

<sup>63</sup> Gökalp 1979: 163.

<sup>64</sup> Erpolat 2004: 198. For a provisional list of non-Muslim settlements in Diyarbekir vilayet, see Annex A in this volume.

<sup>65</sup> Göksel 1956.

<sup>66</sup> Strikingly, not one of the main founders was even an ethnic Turk: İbrahim Temo was Albanian, Abdullah Cevdet and İshak Sükuti were Kurd, Hüseyinzade Ali Azeri and Mehmed Reşid Circassian.

<sup>67</sup> Hanioğlu 1995: 213–6.

According to his nephew Feyzi Pirinççizade, Mehmet Ziya became politically active when he was 16, at a time when several secret committees were active in the city.<sup>68</sup> In 1894, at just 17 years old, Ziya Gökalp was already under criminal investigation, accused of having shouted at an official ceremony 'Long live the nation!' instead of 'Long live the Sultan!' Gökalp was acquitted after testimonies that he had in fact shouted 'Long live the nation and the Sultan!'<sup>69</sup>

In its first years, the CUP did not have a clear political aim other than that of replacing the Sultan's regime by a parliamentary one, although even on that count the political conviction of its members was rather elitist.<sup>70</sup> Essentially, it was thought that the Ottoman state could be saved by developing a nation that included all the subjects of the Empire.<sup>71</sup> From its 1902 Congress onwards, however, the CUP started to articulate an increasingly radical Turkish nationalist political program. This would eventually lead to the decision by two of the founding members, İbrahim Temo and Abdullah Cevdet, to leave the party, and even to fiercely oppose it.<sup>72</sup> Abdullah Cevdet became a prominent name in the Kurdish nationalist movement, involved in several Kurdish organizations formed after the 1908 revolution,<sup>73</sup> while İbrahim Temo became an important figure in the Albanian nationalist movement.

It was through Abdullah Cevdet that Ziya Gökalp had come into contact with the CUP. The two met in 1894. Mehmet Ziya had attempted to commit suicide, but the bullet from his gun only injured his head. Abdullah Cevdet, a medical doctor, was the first to give him medical aid, and would follow his case when he stayed in hospital.<sup>74</sup> After arriving in

<sup>68</sup> Pirinççizade 1979.

<sup>69</sup> Kara Amid 1956: 218. Gökalp would be under arrest and investigation again before being exiled to Malta by the British in 1919. In 1897 he was arrested in Diyarbakir, and the following year in Istanbul, the scene of political unrest and opposition to the Sultan, when he was imprisoned in the Taşkılla jail for some ten months for publishing illegal material and membership of a prohibited organization.

<sup>70</sup> Hanioglu 2001: 3.

<sup>71</sup> Gökalp 1968: 14.

<sup>72</sup> Hanioglu 1995: 213–6.

<sup>73</sup> Cevdet became a prominent member of the 'Kurdistan Rise' (*Kürdistan Teali*) organization, advocating independence, and was a contributor to various publications, including the newspaper of the Society for the Mutual Aid and Progress of Kurdistan (*Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) and two journals published by Hevi, the Kurdish Day (*Roj-i Kurd*) and Kurdish Sun (*Hetev-i Kurd*) (Hanioglu 1995).

<sup>74</sup> Yeşilyurt 2002: 8. Nihat Gökalp was later to write that it was insufficient medical treatment after the suicide attempt that resulted his brother's early death at the age of

Istanbul in 1895, Gökalp would again contact Abdullah Cevdet, who had gone there before him. Gökalp was initially attracted to Cevdet, but the latter's radical secularism and anti-Islamic writing—he earned the nickname 'Aduvullah' (enemy of God)—was in conflict with Gökalp's attempt to synthesize a Turkist program with Islam. In the end, according to his brother's memoirs, Ziya Gökalp came to develop a strong aversion to the doctor, whom he accused of not having strong convictions, but rather a passion for money and working with the English.<sup>75</sup>

Although he was later to be recognized as the most influential of Turkish nationalist thinkers and writers, Gökalp's influence within the CUP and the Turkish nationalist movement at the time is subject to debate. Today, Gökalp is hailed as one of the ideological founding fathers of the Republic of Turkey, yet Lewy and Suny argue that Gökalp and his followers constituted a fringe movement in the Young Turk politics of the emerging nation.<sup>76</sup> At a local level, however Ziya Gökalp was clearly a central figure. Back in his native Diyarbakir in 1900 after being banished from Istanbul upon release from jail, he was among the founders of the Diyarbakir branch of the CUP.<sup>77</sup> This was established years before it was officially registered as the Responsible (or Accountable) Siege (*Mes'ûl Muhharasi*) on July 23, 1908, shortly after the Young Turk revolution and restoration of the constitution.<sup>78</sup> As the Second Constitutional Era got underway, in December the central committee of the CUP gave Gökalp the assignment of inspector (*müfettiş*) for the provinces of Diyarbakir, Bitlis and Van. In the following month, January 1909, he also became inspector for Viranşehir and (on the 7th) participated in the CUP Congress organized there—the very city, of course, that had until recently been the power center of Milli İbrahim.<sup>79</sup>

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48 (Gökalp 1979)—though Nihat Gökalp does not hide his dislike and even contempt for Abdullah Cevdet, so this opinion may not be unbiased.

<sup>75</sup> Gökalp 1977: 172–5. Cevdet was a convinced positivist and radical secularist, believing in the role of science for developing society, and advocating a complete separation of religion and state; his public attacks on the clergy and the *şeyhs* were outspoken (see Zürcher, <http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/tcimo/tulp/Research/MUNCHEN2.htm>).

<sup>76</sup> Lewy 2005: 35; Suny 1998.

<sup>77</sup> The branch was officially established in 1909. Its first members were Mehmet Ziya (Gökalp), Attarzade Hakki (Tekiner), Erzurumlu Yüzbaşı Mazhar, Reji Müdürü Abbas Fadıl, Mirikatibzade Ahmet Cemil (Asena), Cerciszade Yusuf (Göksü), Yasinzade Şevki (Ekinci), Özdemiroğlu Kemal Şakip, Mustafa Akif (Tütenk), Velibabazade Veli Necdet (Süngütay), Müftüzade Şeref (Uluğ) and Lalizade Mustafa Yüzbaşı Eşref (Beysanoğlu 2001: 780).

<sup>78</sup> Kara Amid 1956: 222.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.; Tanyu 1981.

In 1909, he receives an appointment at the Istanbul University (then the Istanbul House of Multiple Sciences, *İstanbul Darülfünûnu*) to teach sociology, but he resigned and returned to Diyarbakir for personal reasons (in 1912 he would be appointed at the Education Faculty of this university and become professor in sociology). In Diyarbakir, he started to publish the newspaper *Peyman*. In September 1909, Gökâlp participated in the CUP party congress held in Thessalonica and was elected to the party's Central Committee. In the party, he became responsible for, among other things, the issue of minorities, while staying on in Thessalonica, where he co-founded a nationalist journal named *Genç Kalemler* (Young Pens) in 1910. In 1912, Gökâlp was elected to Parliament for the Diyarbakir sub-province of Ergani-Maden, but the parliament was closed just a few months later.<sup>80</sup> After the fall of the CUP, Gökâlp was arrested by the English occupation forces in January 1919 charged with responsibility for the deportation and killing of Armenians in Southeast Anatolia.<sup>81</sup> In response on his interrogation, Gökâlp allegedly said that 'there was no Armenian massacre, there was a Turkish-Armenian arrangement. They stabbed us in the back, we stabbed them back.' In May 1919, he was taken from Istanbul to Mudros at Lemnos Island in the Aegean Sea and in September that year detained as one of the 'Malta Exiles', but released almost two years later, on May 19, 1921.<sup>82</sup>

In the years of Gökâlp's detention, political turmoil continued in Diyarbakir, where the Freedom and Entente Society (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Cemiyeti*) had seized power. The Freedom and Entente Society was established in 1911 by former CUP members İbrahim Temo and Abdullah Cevdet among others, but dissolved in 1913 (after the CUP coup). After the fall of the CUP in 1919, it was re-established and briefly came to power as the government in Istanbul (under Damat Ferit Paşa, May–November of 1919). The Diyarbakir branch of the Freedom and Entente Society had sought prosecution of those held responsible for the massacre on the Armenian population.

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<sup>80</sup> Against the background of a disastrous war in the Balkans for the Ottoman Empire and rapidly losing ground, the CUP launched a *coup d'état* in January 1913, which caused the closure of parliament.

<sup>81</sup> Kara Amid 1956: 222–4.

<sup>82</sup> Under the provisions of the Mudros convention and Sèvres Treaty concluding Ottoman involvement in the First World War, some 150 people, mostly politicians and military personnel, were taken to the island of Malta to face tribunals for their roles in various activities during the war period, including the 'massacres'. For various legal and political reasons (including lack of evidence on individuals and a British desire to do prisoner swaps), the process was abandoned and nearly all the prisoners released.

Against this, however, a secret, armed organization called the SOS Society (*İmdad Cemiyeti*) along with the Defense of the Fatherland Society (*Müdafaa-i Vatan Cemiyeti*) established in Diyarbakir in 1919 actively countervailed the prosecution attempts.<sup>83</sup> Those resisting the Freedom and Entente Society associated themselves with the insurgents headed by Mustafa Kemal, who would, after the 'War of Liberation', announce the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

Gökalp became Member of Parliament in August 1923, short before the Republic was announced that October, but died a year later, in October 1924. In the decades that followed, Ziya Gökalp became a rather marginal figure, with little interest shown in his ideas or work. Ziya Gökalp's son in law, Ali Nüzhet Göksel, testifies that it actually became rather difficult to publish and republish Ziya's work. The book '*Çınaraltı*', written shortly before his death in 1924, was only published by Ali Nüzhet Göksel in 1939.<sup>84</sup> In 1955, Ali Nüzhet complained that 26 years after Gökalp's death he had not been able to find a publisher.<sup>85</sup> One explanation for this is that in the first two decades of the Republic, the 1920s and 30s, a radical secularist political course was followed, with which Ziya Gökalp's ideology of a Turkish-Islamic synthesis did not fit well.

#### CONFLICT AND CONFRONTATION

In 1895, Diyarbakir (city, district and province) was the scene of extensive anti-Armenian rioting and killings. These pogroms did not take place only in the city of Diyarbakir and its environs, but spread to surrounding areas, such as Lice, Silvan, Palu, Ergani, and Çermik. In the city of Diyarbakir, houses and shops of Armenians (Christians) were torched and burnt to the ground, and villages in the immediate surroundings were 'cleansed' and people killed. Mustafa Akif Tütenk, director between 1884 and 1910 of the Diyarbakir branch of the School of Servants of Progress (*Hadim-ı Terakki Mektebi*) and prominent member of the Diyarbakir section of the CUP, left behind four books (*defter*) with handwritten notes on the history of Diyarbakir, including entries on the anti-Armenian violence of 1895. According to Tütenk, the villages of Alıpınar (southwest of the old city of Diyarbakir) and Kırtrbül (northeast of the old city)—both

<sup>83</sup> Göksel 1956: 134.

<sup>84</sup> Göksel 1939.

<sup>85</sup> Göksel 1955.

areas with high proportions of Christian-inhabited settlements, and where Pirinççizade and Gökalp had rural possessions—were ‘cleansed’ of their Armenian (Christian) populations within a week or so of the commencement of the pogroms (on November 1, 1895).

In order to restore order in the city and province, the Sultan detailed to Diyarbekir the Erzincan-based general, Zeki Paşa, under whose authority the Hamidiye regiments fell.<sup>86</sup> The local notable Arif Pirinççizade was identified as one of the instigators of the anti-Christian pogrom and exiled to Mosul,<sup>87</sup> but he was soon called to Istanbul and returned to Diyarbekir within a year.<sup>88</sup> The Hamidiye were not held responsible. On the contrary, it is claimed that İbrahim Paşa gave protection to the Armenian/Christian populations. On November 3, 1895, Kurdish tribes surrounded Viranşehir and started to plunder and destroy Christian shops and market stalls there—but İbrahim Paşa stopped them. Because of the protection provided at Viranşehir, Christians started to migrate there from Urfa, Siverek and Mardin.<sup>89</sup>

This account, exonerating İbrahim Paşa, receives further credibility from the fact that in the city of Diyarbekir it was the notables who had firm control over the local governance (not the central state, let alone the Hamidiye).<sup>90</sup> It is also in accord with oral history locally passed down through the generations. Although such accounts need triangulation for reliability, which calls for further research, they do paint the same general picture. People in the area explain how, at the start of the massacres, Milli İbrahim Paşa, chief of the Milan tribal confederation and commander of several Hamidiye regiments in Diyarbekir province, ordered one of his cavalry units to Diyarbekir. They were not to participate in the violence and plundering, but to give protection to the Christians and take action against the instigators of the pogroms. A regiment raised from the Hedrik (Hedrik) tribe (one of the seven tribes constituting the core of the Milan confederation), and under the command of one of the sons of Milli İbrahim, was moved from its strategic location at the Malabadî bridge 100 kilometers east of Diyarbekir into the city itself. The Paşa ordered the regiment to camp on the bank of the Tigris River, which runs east of the

<sup>86</sup> See Klein 2012, in this volume.

<sup>87</sup> Two investigative delegations were sent to Diyarbekir, a *Heyet-i Tahkikkiye* and a *Heyet İslahiyye*. Arif Bey was exiled to Mosul by a military decision related to the *Heyet-i Tahkikkiye* (Kiran 2003).

<sup>88</sup> Tütenk 1956/1957/1958; Beysanoğlu 2001.

<sup>89</sup> Gaunt 2006: 267.

<sup>90</sup> Duguid 1973.

city, but gave no precise location. The contemporary Kurdish villagers of Matrani (Kuşlukbağı), village guards, claim that they are the descendants of that Xedrik (Hedrik) Hamidiye regiment. They recount how the regiment quartered in a village near the city in 1895, which was found empty, already plundered by brigands from Diyarbekir.<sup>91</sup>

In the first years of the 20th century, unrest continued. Tax revolts and food riots as well as unrest under provincial bureaucrats and revolts among soldiers plagued Anatolia between 1905 and 1908. In Diyarbekir, September 1907, an army mutiny broke out because of non-payment of wages. The conflict between İbrahim Paşa and the notables of Diyarbekir also smoldered on during this period, occasionally igniting. By 1900 İbrahim Paşa his sphere of influence extended toward the villages in the direct proximity of the city of Diyarbekir. Apparently, İbrahim Paşa was sending his representatives to villages, which were left with the choice either paying a tribute or else being plundered. Among these villages were some that belonged to notables resident in Diyarbekir. Considering the fact that the villages visited by Milli İbrahim Paşa's men 'accepted' the payment of a tribute,<sup>92</sup> the power of İbrahim Paşa over the area must have been great.

City notables accused troops of İbrahim Paşa of having plundered Alıpınar and Kıtırbıl, two villages so close to the city that they were considered quarters of the city itself.<sup>93</sup> In his recollections of his friend Ziya Gökalp, Cemil Asena wrote that irregular forces under Milli İbrahim Paşa were active in and near Kıtırbıl, where Ziya had his rural possessions.<sup>94</sup> According to a British Diyarbekir Consul report from 1902, İbrahim Paşa was active in the proximity of the city, but it was thought that the damage inflicted by İbrahim Paşa was exaggerated by the notables and officials in Diyarbekir, and that the Christian population, in whose fate the consul was mainly interested, had much more to fear from the notables. In 1905, a group of prominent figures from Diyarbekir headed by Arif Piriñçizade and Ziya Gökalp occupied the city telegraph office, of crucial importance to the Ottoman Government in Istanbul as the main means of communication with territories in the East (including the province of Mosul),

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<sup>91</sup> Jongerden 2007: 243.

<sup>92</sup> Klein 2006: 200, 204.

<sup>93</sup> *Diyarbekir Tanıtma Derneği* 1956: 78. Arif Piriñçizade and Mehmet Ziya Gökalp themselves had rural possessions in Kıtırbıl, but no information is available of whether Milli İbrahim Paşa's men raised taxes in their villages.

<sup>94</sup> Asena 1979: 84.

and to European powers for communication with territories in Asia. The occupiers sent a telegram to the Sultan accusing İbrahim Paşa of criminal activities (robbery and theft) and asking the Sultan to take measures:

The rebellious actions of the Milli tribe [constitute] a big stain (...). İbrahim Paşa is the enemy of the *sadat*,<sup>95</sup> *ulema*,<sup>96</sup> *sheiks*,<sup>97</sup> and the entire obedient subjects as well as security and order. Giving military titles and arms to these brigand gangs which lack hierarchy, discipline and obedience has destroyed the security and peace of the people (...). [We] request from you, for the sake of our commander Akdes and Azam, the removal of İbrahim Pasha and his sons who gave up the honor of being a soldier through brigandage and murder.<sup>98</sup>

The *mufti* and the assistant-governor, who supported the demonstrators, sent telegrams too, requesting government action be taken against Milli İbrahim Paşa. In November 1905, with no action forthcoming, fresh demonstrations broke out. Fearing more and larger demonstrations of discontent, the government installed a commission to investigate the complaints. In January 1906, again demonstrations took place in which hundreds of sheiks, *ulema*, notables, merchants and other citizens of the city participated. Again conciliatory promises were made, but no action taken.<sup>99</sup>

Eventually, the discontent would result in a revolt in the city of Diyarbakir in November 1907, while armed forces of Milli İbrahim Paşa surrounded the city. The leaders of the revolt were notables of the city, among them Piriñçizade Arif Efendi, and Ziya Gökalp.<sup>100</sup> Significantly perhaps, neither the Diyarbakir Armenians nor their organizations participated in the demonstrations.<sup>101</sup> The protestors organized the occupation of local government offices and again, and more importantly, the Telegraph Office. Under the protection of a citizen's militia of about 400 armed men, they occupied the Telegraph Office again, this time for eleven days (from November 14 to 24, 1907), sending hundreds of telegrams to the Palace demanding the dismissal of the Governor of Diyarbakir, who had escaped by taking refuge in a foreign consulate (see Annex B). Yet their real target

<sup>95</sup> '*Sadat*' is plural for '*seyit*', a descendant of the prophet Mohammed.

<sup>96</sup> A '*ulema*' is a learned religious person.

<sup>97</sup> A '*sheik*' is a saintly person, head of mystical order.

<sup>98</sup> Beysanoğlu 2001: 771–2.

<sup>99</sup> Hanioglu 2001: 107.

<sup>100</sup> Kansu 1997: 69. Others whose names were mentioned included Cemil Paşazade, Mustafa Bey, Hacı Circisoğlu Ağa, Abdülkadir Bey, Faik Bey and Nessi Efendi.

<sup>101</sup> Hanioglu, op. cit. 107.



was Milli İbrahim Paşa, whom they accused of assault and plundering.<sup>102</sup> Intending to compel the Sultan to take action against İbrahim Paşa with forceful words, the complaints also included the claim that İbrahim Paşa had been helping Armenian revolutionaries to flee to Egypt and Europe instead of fighting against them:

The degree of [the] disloyal Ibrahim Pasha's terrifying brutality and oppression prevails in a terribly worse manner than cholera, plague and Black Death (...). We state that we are ardently looking forward to the issuing of the order (for the removal of İbrahim Paşa) by His Highness (the Sultan). Otherwise, we, with the unification of the population of the province, we will attempt to exterminate the oppression of İbrahim Paşa, who pretends to be powerful using government power and influence but in reality is easy to discipline using minimal force against his gang. We beg for justice. The decision is yours.<sup>103</sup>

A special envoy, General Talat Paşa, was sent from Istanbul for the investigation, but instead of looking into acts conducted by Milli İbrahim Paşa and his militiamen, the general turned his attention to the organizers of the occupation of the telegraph office. According to information provided by General Talat Paşa, the instigators of the revolt had been Piriñçizade Arif Efendi, Hacı Circisoğlu, Hacı İbrahim and Cezirelioğlu Aziz, and had to be punished. However, in a telegram sent to Diyarbekir on March 30, 1908, a few months before the second constitutional revolution in July 1908 that would bring the CUP to power, these people were granted imperial clemency.<sup>104</sup> In 1908, Arif Piriñçizade ascended to the office of mayor and became a Member of Parliament.<sup>105</sup>

At the time the CUP came to power in Istanbul in July 1908 and the rise of his enemies to power in Diyarbekir, İbrahim stayed in Damascus (where he had been in 1906 too, in order to protect the construction of the Hicaz railway). Then, from Diyarbekir, İbrahim Paşa decided to return to Viranşehir, news of which was sent to the city by a branch of the CUP in Aleppo. Under the general command of Arif Piriñçizade, an army of 2,000 volunteers was raised and with support from some 500 Ottoman troops embarked on a military campaign against İbrahim Paşa. Arif Piriñçizade reported his efforts in a speech he delivered to Parliament:

<sup>102</sup> *Diyarbakir Tanıtma Derneği* 1956: 78; Kansu 1997: 69.

<sup>103</sup> Beysanoğlu 2001: 772.

<sup>104</sup> Kansu 1997: 69

<sup>105</sup> Kansu 1997: 282–83; Beysanoğlu 2001: 773–78.

[T]he Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress and the people wished and the Governor and the Commander proposed to gather the battalions (...) In two days I gathered (...) two thousand (volunteer) soldiers.<sup>106</sup>

Instead of being praised for making an end to the rule of the 'robber' İbrahim, however, Arif Piriñçizade and his men were accused of looting and plundering of gold, weapons and cattle and grain.<sup>107</sup> In a parliamentary speech, he did not deny the looting and plundering in Viranşehir, claiming to have informed the Governor of Diyarbakir of the looting and plunder, but that the Governor did not send soldiers: 'It is the soldiers who are supposed to arrest the plunderers, it is not my business!' Accusations against him in person he brushed aside as slander. 'If I had the smallest part in the plundering' he said, 'Then I would not have dared to complain about the officers and the Kurdish chiefs'.<sup>108</sup>

Ziya Gökalp was among those who volunteered to take part in the campaign, but was forced to give up this idea under pressure from family and friends due his poor physical condition.<sup>109</sup> Gökalp's daughter Senihe Göksel would later recall the matter thus:

[T]wo things had disrupted the rest and peace of the family. One was my father's political life in the Committee for Union and Progress. (...) The other was my father's regular returning illness. (...) On just two occasions did defiance on the part of my mother strike like a lightning over the family. The first was when my father wanted to join as a volunteer with the government troops that were mobilized to fight the chief of the Milan tribe İbrahim Paşa (...) The second was during the First World War, when my father wanted to go volunteer as a soldier to the front at the Caucasus.<sup>110</sup>

#### FINAL REMARKS

Politically, there was clearly a world of difference between the two elite groups outlined and their respective leaders in Diyarbakir at the end of the 19th and turn of the 20th centuries. These differences are to be understood against the background of a political transformation of land

<sup>106</sup> Beysanoğlu, *op. cit.*

<sup>107</sup> Kıran 2003: 200.

<sup>108</sup> Beysanoğlu, *op. cit.*

<sup>109</sup> Beysanoğlu 1956: 154–71; Göksel 1956: 128.

<sup>110</sup> Göksel, *op. cit.*

empires into nation-states.<sup>111</sup> In the 18th century context of all-embracing empire—as in the Ottoman case—political theorists had taught that a disciplined, productive population was the true wealth of a sovereign. The goal was to maximize the population, by marriage or conquest, without much regard to peoples' (cultural) characteristics. However, by the turn of the 20th century the idea of ethno-nationalism had spread to the Ottoman Empire, a political idea holding that the borders of political units (states) and cultural units (nations) should coincide, and teaching that the power of a state depends on the degree to which its subjects respond to the ideal of the particular cultural identity.<sup>112</sup>

Actually, we can see the transformation of empire into nation-state in the history of the CUP. As mentioned, the CUP emerged from a secret committee (*İttihad-i Osmani Cemiyeti*) founded in 1889. The initial political outlook of the CUP was Ottoman, not Turkish-nationalist—indeed, not one of the founding members was a Turk.<sup>113</sup> In its first years, the CUP had as its goal the restoration of the constitution and parliament as a mean to safeguard the Empire from the centrifugal forces of disintegration. In order to counteract separatist minority (Christian) nationalism, a unity of the ethnic (religious) communities was emphasized, to be achieved by giving the different communities 'a stake in the empire through parliamentary representation'.<sup>114</sup> The Ottoman nation, was envisaged as a 'body created by the incorporation of various peoples who have different languages such as Turks, Arabs, Albanians, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Jews (...) who possess different religions and nationalities.' Religion was not considered an obstacle for the creation of a nation: this was 'a matter of the next world' it was argued, not this one<sup>115</sup>—an idea Gökalp would have radically disagreed with, however, since he thought Islam an important part of Turkish culture and a source for social solidarity.<sup>116</sup> At the organization's second congress, organized

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<sup>111</sup> Historically, land empires have tended to grow out from a centre, gradually changing character (culturally, ethnically, etc.) according to the territory they transit. Their transformation into nation-states has generally required a (re)definition of the center (as opposed to the situation of maritime empires, in which colonies are established that are geographically and culturally disconnected from the imperial, pre-defined 'mother country', and whose loss little affects the identity of the center).

<sup>112</sup> Koehl 1953: 231.

<sup>113</sup> Above, note 66.

<sup>114</sup> Zurcher 2002b.

<sup>115</sup> Hanioglu 2001: 301.

<sup>116</sup> Gökalp 1968.

in Paris in 1907, and at which a joint decision was made to overthrow the regime of Abdülhamid II, Armenian nationalists were among the several opposition groups participating. Even in the first decade of the 20th century the Armenians considered their interests—realizing the ambition of independent statehood—to be best served by throwing their lot in with the other Ottoman reformers and radicals. Yet in just a few years, the CUP would develop a Turkish nationalist *Weltanschauung*.

Gökalp joined the CUP in 1909 and, according to Parla,<sup>117</sup> became the party's theoretician, holding an influential position within the organization until 1918, when the CUP was officially dissolved after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I.<sup>118</sup> Gökalp rejected Ottomanism, regarding it as a mistake for several reasons. First, the Empire contained 'several nations possessing independent cultures'.<sup>119</sup> Second, the Ottoman reformers were trying—or had tried—to reconcile Ottoman with Western civilization, but these two civilizations conflicted, according to Gökalp, and could not live side by side without corrupting each other. The Turkists, he argued, would discard the Ottoman (Byzantine) civilization and 'adopt Western civilization *in toto* while remaining Turks and Muslim'.<sup>120</sup> Gökalp was convinced that just as inconceivable as it was for more than one person to win the love of one individual, so also was it impossible for there to be a common home and fatherland for diverse peoples, and thus that the takeover of the state by one nation (the Turkish) was a vital (inevitable) process.<sup>121</sup> Such a spatial binding of polity and culture—as if they were instances of the same substance, the nation—marks the modern project of nationalism, with cleansing as one of the options to create the required congruence.<sup>122</sup> In 1914, shortly before the Armenian genocide, Gökalp wrote the following stanza in his poem Red Apple (*Kızıl Elma*):

The people is like a garden,  
we are supposed to be its gardeners!  
First the bad shoots are to be cut  
and then the scion is to be grafted.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Parla 1985: 10.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*: 13.

<sup>119</sup> Gökalp 1968: 14.

<sup>120</sup> Gökalp 1968: 33.

<sup>121</sup> Gökalp's argument for the need for a secular state, for a contemporary civilization (*çagdaş uygarlık*) did not, however, prevent him from attributing to Islam a constitutive position in the making of a Turkish culture (*Türk kültürü*). Gökalp 1959: 81.

<sup>122</sup> Gellner 1997: 239–40; Jongerden 2007: 1–3.

<sup>123</sup> Translation taken from: Kinloch and Mohan 2005: 50.

These are not just words, as words are never simply words: they are intimately related to deed. In these words, Gökalp clearly outlines what is to be done with 'bad shoots'.

If Ziya Gökalp was the embodiment of the idea of the modern nation-state, İbrahim Paşa, we may say, was the embodiment of the old order of an imperial mode of politics. He ruled over a confederation of tribes whose members were of mixed religions and ethnicities. His political authority was 'trans-ethnic' and 'trans-religious', both accepting of (as Milan) and recognized by those who considered themselves (ethnic) Kurds, Zaza, and Arabs and (religious) Sunni, Alevi and Yezidi. He did not adhere to a political ideology with an intrinsic hostility towards 'the other' and did not see any self-interest in the persecution of Christians. If we are to believe reports from Mr. Shipley, the British consul in Diyarbekir, the presence of a man of power like İbrahim Paşa gave them protection: his disappearance from the stage would mean bad news for the Christian populations.<sup>124</sup>

The tribal and Ottoman outlook and rule of İbrahim Paşa was quite different from the convictions idealizing the nation-state with its homogenized population, which eventually came to challenge the imperial system of rule. Thus it was that Mark Sykes remarked, 'In him [İbrahim Paşa] we see in the flesh a type of man [...] for whom even Turkey will soon have no room'.<sup>125</sup> In Ziya Gökalp, on the other hand, we see a type of person whose life was imbued with nationalist ideas. The clash between the imperial and nationalist ideologies can thus be seen as embodied in the differences between İbrahim Paşa and Ziya Gökalp, the dispute between these prominent figures from Diyarbekir expressive also of a confrontation between two very different world-views.

Finally, although the Armenian massacres are generally ascribed to the Hamidiye, evidence suggests that the Hamidiye in Diyarbekir headed by Milli İbrahim Paşa were not involved in the 1895 pogrom there. The combined effect of a number of contemporary sources placed in a historical context suggests that İbrahim Paşa played a protective role. Rather, the violence unleashed in 1895 in the city of Diyarbekir and its surroundings should be ascribed to an urban elite group, in which Arif Piriçizade, maternal uncle of Ziya Gökalp, played an important role. No information is available about Ziya Gökalp's role at the time, but in the years that

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<sup>124</sup> Klein 2006: 205.

<sup>125</sup> Sykes 1915: 326.

followed he became an important intellectual and political actor in Diyarbakir, involved in major political disturbances—notably the occupation of the telegraph office in 1905 and 1907, and the armed campaign against İbrahim Paşa—while he held important political positions in the CUP as it forged an ethnically-based nationalist agenda. The weight of documented and circumstantial evidence certainly points to the culpability of Diyarbakir's notables rather than its Hamidiye in the 1895 violence and slaughter. This may indeed be a clear case of the winners writing history.

Only an active engagement with micro-studies can contribute to a further understanding of the dramatic events which took place in Diyarbakir. More research on 1895 (the anti-Armenian pogrom) in Diyarbakir, but also on '1905', '1906' and '1909', or, in other words, the occupations of the telegraph office and the military campaign against Milli İbrahim Paşa, could shed new light on the matter. A micro-history of villages owned by Ziya Gökalp, Arif Pirinççizade and (other) notables from Diyarbakir could also develop our knowledge and generate new insights about Diyarbakir in the period 1890–1910.

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## DIYARBEKIR AND THE ARMENIAN CRISIS OF 1895<sup>1</sup>

Jelle Verheij

### INTRODUCTION

The city of Diyarbekir was a truly cosmopolitan Middle Eastern city prior to the First World War. It had an official newspaper that appeared in three languages, Ottoman Turkish, Armenian and Syriac—we may safely assume that many residents were multi-lingual—and housed followers of all three major Middle Eastern religions, Islam, Christianity and Judaism. The Muslims and Christians were themselves composed of various groupings, divided by ethnicity/language and sect, with the Christians particularly mixed. Along with the Gregorian Armenians, the largest group, there were Catholic Armenians, Orthodox and Catholic Syrians or Syriacs (*Suryani*), Greeks (*Rum*), again both Orthodox and Catholic, the Nestorians and Catholic Nestorians, Protestants (both Armenian and Syriac), and a handful of European residents.<sup>2</sup> Nearly all of these Christian religious groups had been officially recognized by the Ottoman Government by the end of the nineteenth century, had their own places of worship and sometimes schools, and were represented to the authorities through their own community heads. Because Diyarbekir was an important regional centre, several bishops resided in the city. The Muslim population was less heterogeneous than the Christian, but still used at least three languages: Turkish, Kurdish (both Kurmanci and Zazaki)<sup>3</sup> and Arabic. Notably, most Muslim city dwellers at the time in question would have defined their

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Hans-Lukas Kieser, Martin van Bruinessen, Joost Jongerden, and Egbert Ottens for proofreading early drafts of this article, and Ömer Türkoğlu and Suavi Aydın for translating Ottoman documents into contemporary Turkish.

<sup>2</sup> The Catholic communities had developed through the work of the Capuchin Order, established in Diyarbekir since the 17th century, and Protestant communities through the American missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) frequenting the city.

<sup>3</sup> Whether Zaza ought to be considered a form of Kurdish is a moot point, with linguist scholarship supporting the view that it is not. An interesting indication that Zaza-speaking citizens were seen as a distinct population group at this time is found in an official Ottoman document on the 1895 crisis which makes explicit reference to the death 'of one Zaza' (BOA A.MKT.MHM 637-3).

identity simply as ‘Muslim’ or ‘Ottoman’ regardless of the language(s) they spoke. From a contemporary perspective, ‘Kurds’ were the tribesmen from the countryside.

Diyarbakir was a city that often struck visitors with the seemingly peaceful coexistence of its numerous religious and ethnic groups<sup>4</sup>—but in 1895, it experienced a sudden eruption of unprecedented ethnic violence. On November 1, Muslims attacked the Armenians and other Christians. After three days of clashes, between 300 and 1,200 Armenians and other Christians and between 70 and 200 Muslims had lost their lives.<sup>5</sup> Other towns in the province of Diyarbakir, particularly Siverek and Palu, saw similar carnage. For weeks, the countryside, even parts of the *vilâyet* where almost no Armenians lived, became a stage for continuing violence, leaving many villages pillaged, burned or even completely destroyed.

Diyarbakir was by no means the only province in the Ottoman Empire to witness such events in the autumn of 1895. In the capital, Istanbul, and all over the Asiatic provinces of the Empire, clashes between Armenians and Muslims erupted. Because Muslims were generally the aggressors and a much larger number of Armenians perished, this has become aptly designated the ‘(Armenian) massacres’. The conflict in Diyarbakir was particularly violent and enormous damage to property was inflicted. The year 1895 was probably the most catastrophic during the 19th-century history of the city, and, in a way, it never really recovered. In the months and years following the crisis, many Armenians who had the means fled to Istanbul or overseas to the United States. Thus, when the Ittihadist (CUP) Government decided to deport the Armenians two decades later, Diyarbakir’s Armenian community had already lost most of its former strength.

Essentially, this article is a micro-level attempt to unearth facts regarding events that are often mentioned but still largely shrouded in mystery when it comes to causes and details. Naturally, the situation in Diyarbakir cannot be isolated from the general development of the Armenian Question in the 19th century or the events occurring elsewhere in the region and beyond in 1895. With this in mind, therefore, I will first set out the main lines of the Armenian Question during the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II, particularly in the years immediately preceding 1895, before returning to the situation in Diyarbakir. Obviously, an extensive treatment of the

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<sup>4</sup> For fragments on Diyarbakir from various travel reports, translated into Turkish, see Korkusuz, M. Şefik. *Seyahatnamelerde Diyarbakır* (Istanbul: Kent Yayınları, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> To get an idea of the relative scale of this death toll in the city, these figures would have to be multiplied tenfold today.

Armenian Question lies outside the scope of this article. However, this issue is surrounded by so much controversy and subject to so many conflicting views that discussion of at least some of its main aspects is necessary before we can enter into the details of the Diyarbekir case.

### *The Armenians*

The Armenians could boast a long history in the eastern region of Asia Minor. They were one of the first peoples to accept Christianity and had used an alphabet of their own since the 4th century. During the early Middle Ages, Armenian rulers dominated large parts of the area and at times managed to establish their authority over the whole of what is currently eastern Turkey and Transcaucasia. By the 19th century, however, those days lay in the distant past. Centrally located at the crossroads between Asia and Europe and the Caucasus and the Middle East, Armenia had been overrun again and again by Arabs, Byzantines, Mongols, Turcomans and Kurds. Due to the influx of new population groups, emigration and conversion to Islam, the number of Armenians in the historical homeland had steadily declined (at least in relative terms). Although in some isolated areas Armenian communities retained a degree of independence until the 19th century, generally from the 12th century onwards the Armenians had no longer enjoyed self-rule. The overlords were now Muslim.

Having penetrated eastern Asia Minor from the west, the Ottomans were the reigning power after around 1500, although in many places it was the local Kurdish beys or tribes, only nominally under Ottoman control, who were the real rulers (indeed, Kurds comprised the largest single ethnic group in the region). Either way, Armenians, as non-Muslims, were more or less governed by the prohibitions of Islamic law, disqualified from carrying weapons or serving in military or political capacities. While this ostracized them from state power, it was probably also a factor in their (primarily urban) specialization in trade and crafts which, in turn, led to their eminence in the local economy. The central institution in Armenian life, the keeper of culture and traditions and representative of the people before the Muslim rulers, was the ancient Armenian Church.<sup>6</sup>

During the late 19th century, the Armenians were still the largest non-Muslim community in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Their

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<sup>6</sup> Much of this history is valid also for the other Christian communities in the area, notably the Syriac Christians. These had far fewer links with the outside world than the Armenians, however.

numbers were highest in the centre of the ancient homeland, the area round Lake Van. However, one could also find sizeable communities of Armenians in both urban and rural areas across large parts of the provinces of Bitlis, Diyarbekir, Erzurum, Mamuretülaziz and Sivas.<sup>7</sup> Centuries of emigration had created Armenian communities outside this region, in cities such as Istanbul, Bursa, Ankara and Kayseri in the west, Haleb (Aleppo) and Cilicia in the south, and Trabzon and Samsun in the north. An Armenian Diaspora was already in existence by the 19th century, and Armenians could be found in various places in Asia, the Middle East, Russia, Europe and the United States. According to official Ottoman records, the number of Armenians in the so-called 'Six (Armenian) Vilayets' was something round 550,000, or 20 to 25% of the total population.<sup>8</sup> Their distribution throughout this area was quite uneven however. While in some districts Armenians were a dominant element of the population, in others they were nearly absent.

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<sup>7</sup> Known as the 'Six (Armenian) *Vilayets*' in the diplomatic language of the time, this was the area for which a number of Great Powers wished reforms for the benefit of the Armenians in 1895 (see below, p. 92). Actually, it included areas with few Armenian communities (like the southern part of Diyarbekir), but excluded areas with a very high concentration of Armenians, like the mountainous parts of Cilicia. The term 'Six Vilayets' came into use during the last quarter of the 19th century—the Treaty of Berlin (1878) referred to reforms for the 'provinces inhabited by the Armenians'. Western and Armenian authors often use the term 'Six Armenian Vilayets', while the Ottomans just speak of 'the Six Vilayets' (*vîlâyet-i sitte*).

<sup>8</sup> The reliability of the population statistics of the Ottoman Empire has been a subject of fierce debate for nearly one and a half centuries. On this subject, balanced analyses of Ottoman figures offered by French author Vital Cuinet and a contemporary Russian statistician, put the proportion of Armenians in the Six Vilayets at 19.3% ('Die Verbreitung' 1896: 8, from Table 1), while an Ottoman table from 1894 gives 25%, excluding Catholics and Protestants (Karpát 2003: 191–192, from Table I.9), although it is generally assumed that there was an undercount. The British Vice-Consul in Diyarbekir quotes a high Ottoman official who told him that 'all official statistics of the population were utterly unreliable as there were thousands of Kurds and also many Christians who were never entered in the Government registers' (FO 195/1930 Nr. 93).

A different dimension is added with the possibility of deliberate manipulation of population figures. The Ottomans are often accused of inflating Muslim and decreasing non-Muslim figures (in particular after the rights of the Christians became an international political issue), and various representatives of minority groups seem to have resorted to exactly the same tactics. This war of statistics found its apogee during the Peace Conference after the World War I when everyone endeavored to carve out the best result on the basis of pre-war figures. For a compilation of Ottoman figures, see Karpát (1985); for an ardent defense of the Ottoman figures, McCarthy 1983; and for a recent analysis of the importance of statistics related to the Armenian Question, Dündar 2010.

In Diyarbekir province, the 60,000 or so Armenians made up between 15% and 20% of the population.<sup>9</sup> The Tigris river functioned more or less as a boundary: while to the north and east of the river, Armenians could be found in both towns and villages, to the west and south they mainly resided in urban areas. The city of Diyarbekir had an Armenian population dating back at least to the 8th century AD.<sup>10</sup> The Armenians of Diyarbekir (or 'Tigranakert' as the city is known in Armenian)<sup>11</sup> developed a peculiar dialect of their own over the centuries.<sup>12</sup> Virtually all district centers in Diyarbekir Vilayet had sizeable Armenian minorities. In Çüngüş, a town in the north of the province, the majority of the population was Armenian.

Because of their geographical dispersion and dominant roles in trade and traditional industry, the Armenians were more strongly connected to the outside world than other population groups. This brought them into early contact with foreign influence and modernization, which was one of the main factors determining their fate in the 19th century. Indeed, it may be argued that few peoples have been exposed to so many different and contradictory influences as the Armenians.

### *The 'Armenian Question'*

During the 19th century, the territory of the Ottoman Empire was gradually reduced. Starting in Greece in 1821, Christians throughout the Balkans slowly began acquiring independence, while in the east, Russia's advance resulted in stepwise occupation of the Caucasus region. These developments had various implications for the Empire's Armenian population. First, the Russian expansion into Transcaucasia in the late 1820s brought many Armenians under Russian rule and into a totally different cultural environment. Then the Ottoman reacted to the Russian threat with drive to gain greater control over the eastern provinces, a move toward centralization that had various effects on the Armenians. Rural Armenians

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<sup>9</sup> According to official Ottoman figures: 16.8% ('Die Verbreitung' 1896: 8) or 16.1% (Karpas 2003: 191–192 from Table 1.9). Other Christians (mostly Syrians) made up something more than 10% of the population of the vilayet.

<sup>10</sup> The city had been the seat of an Armenian bishopric since the 8th century (Hewsen 2006: 62). It is unclear when Armenians settled in the city, which, unlike the mountains to the north, is outside the area considered to be their historic homeland.

<sup>11</sup> This name is based on the erroneous assumption that the city was once the capital of the Armenian King Tigranes. The ruins of Arzn or Erzen, east of Beşiri, are generally considered to be the remains of this city now (Hewsen 2006: 52; Avdoyan 2006: 94).

<sup>12</sup> On the Armenian dialect of Diyarbekir, now almost extinct, see Vaux 2006.

were burdened with higher taxes and confronted with dual obligations to both the Ottoman Government and local Kurdish leaders, while the urban Armenian population faced stronger integration into the Ottoman system. Meanwhile, with the separation of the Balkan Christians, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire came to hold more state functions and thus influence. Forced by circumstance to offer Armenians more responsibility, the Ottomans, honored them with the nickname 'reliable community' (*sadık millet*).

Over the course of the 19th century, however, the gap between the Empire's Christians and Muslims widened. Although Russian and Ottoman Armenians were separated by a border and embedded in very different social and political environments, they maintained contact and continued to mutually influence each other. Indeed, the Christians increased their contact and began to feel a greater connection with Christian powers outside the Empire generally, with those of Europe and the United States, that is, as well as Russia. Through the work of foreign missionaries, moreover, Western influence became quite tangible even in the most remote corners of the eastern provinces.<sup>13</sup> Muslims, on the other hand, changed little. Although some, particularly in the Ottoman capital Istanbul and other major cities, particularly in the southern Balkans, partook of westernization, the bulk remained true to their traditional values and ways of life. Socially, Christians were on the rise. Many acquired a better education and learned foreign languages in their own schools or those of the foreign missions, while the Muslims remained dependent on the slowly emerging state education. And because of their growing preponderance in foreign trade and industry, urban Christians also became wealthier.<sup>14</sup> Politically also, Ottoman Christians progressed as they gained more rights with the gradual erosion of the age-old religious inequality. For Armenians, the newly acquired rights and functions in the state system combined with their increasing wealth, improving education and growing international contacts prompted a cultural 'renaissance', and, in time, fuelled nationalist aspirations.

Of course, these developments were concentrated in the towns. Many rural Armenians, particularly in the eastern provinces, continued to live

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<sup>13</sup> In the eastern provinces these were mainly Presbyterian missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), but also Catholic organizations from different countries.

<sup>14</sup> For some figures about the economic importance of Armenians at the time of the First War, see Üngör & Polatel 2011: 17–18.

very traditionally under harsh conditions that presumably even worsened during the 19th century as a result of the shifting balance between local powers (mostly Kurdish tribes) and the state. Ottoman tax collectors tried to extract as much money as possible from the peasants, while local Kurdish leaders upheld their traditional demands.<sup>15</sup> Armenian peasants complained of land usurpation by Kurds throughout the century.<sup>16</sup> Generally, it appears, material progress was largely absent in the Armenian villages. The contrast between the affluence enjoyed by some urban Armenians and the squalor in which many rural Armenians lived during the 19th century is striking.<sup>17</sup>

Many Muslims viewed the 'rise of the Christians' in the cities with apprehension and jealousy. According to Islamic principles, they were the 'rulers' and non-Muslims the 'subjects', but the new reality seemed to invert the 'natural' order, at least in the towns. Every small change in a Christian's behavior became a possible source of irritation, and Muslims began feeling discriminated against. It appears that by 1895, whatever the Armenians did in Diyarbekir was offensive in Muslim eyes. Armenians were accused of monopolizing import/export trade. They built a clock tower that was higher than a minaret. When a cholera epidemic broke out, it was said that more Muslims than Armenians fell victim.<sup>18</sup>

During the second half of the 19th century, the position of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire became an international political question, deeply involving the (Christian) European powers as they competed for influence over the waning Ottoman Empire. Historians generally date the birth of the Armenian Question at the Ottoman–Russian War of 1877–78. The war was disastrous for the Islamic Empire defending its territory in the Balkans and Caucasus against a Christian (Eastern Orthodox) coalition led by the Russian Empire, and rural Armenians suffered greatly from Muslim reprisals. As the Russians pushed the Ottomans back towards Istanbul and made inroads into northeastern Anatolia, the Armenian Patriarch was moved by the freedom being won by peoples in the Balkans and sought Russian support for some sort of autonomous status for the Armenian inhabited provinces. This did not materialize, but in the peace treaty

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<sup>15</sup> Barsoumian 1997; Joseph 1961: 87, 98–99; Report of British Military Attaché Cherm-side, in SB2 (Nr. 331, pp. 660–661).

<sup>16</sup> Astourian 2011.

<sup>17</sup> The pictures of urban and rural Armenians in Kevorkian-Paboudjian 1992: *passim* are instructive.

<sup>18</sup> Beysanoğlu 2003 vol. 2: 724–726.

agreed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, a clause was included stipulating that improvements and reforms be made in the Armenian provinces without delay and the people protected (from the Kurds and Circassians).<sup>19</sup> Under international pressure—particularly from Britain which always feared Russian influence in Asia—some of the agreements between the Russians and the Ottomans were rescinded in the negotiations that followed the bilateral agreement.<sup>20</sup> In the final agreement that emerged, however, the Treaty of Berlin, the provision for the Armenians was retained.<sup>21</sup>

Significantly, the Sublime Porte was required under the terms of the Treaty to keep the powers informed of the steps taken toward security and development for the Armenians. It was particularly Britain, not Russia, which assumed the task of overseeing this, thereby occupying herself with taking account of every administrative detail in this part of the eastern region of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>22</sup> This influence was also felt in Diyarbakir, where Great Britain was represented diplomatically. The Diyarbakir Vice-Consulate (before the 1877–78 War called the ‘Kurdistan’ consulate) was but one of over ten British (vice-)consulates in the eastern provinces, which provided detailed reports on Ottoman affairs and enabled the government in London to watch over the intricacies of local government in the region.

The Armenians got much less than they had hoped for from San Stefano / Berlin, and could not easily forget this disappointment. The Ottomans, at the other hand, knowing what the Patriarchate had requested, felt deeply betrayed by their ‘faithful community’. Sultan Abdülhamid II, who endeavored to create a Muslim ‘rebirth’ of a society in which non-Muslims would assume their traditional roles, viewed the Armenians with great suspicion. Partly as a spill-over from the emerging socialist and anarchist opposition in Russia, nationalist and militant Armenians founded underground ‘revolutionary’ societies, which struggled to obtain further

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<sup>19</sup> ‘... la Sublime Porte s’engage à réaliser sans plus de retard les améliorations et les réformes exigées par les besoins locaux dans les provinces habitées par les Arméniens et garantir leur sécurité contre les Kurdes et les Circassiens’ (Treaty of San Stefano/Yeşilköy, March 3, 1878, Art. 16).

<sup>20</sup> It was the entry of British warships into the waters around Istanbul that had led the Russians to halt their advance on the capital and effectively brought the conflict to an end, the British bolstering the Ottoman Empire against the Russians for their own interests in southern Asia just as they, and the French, had done two decades previously, in the Crimean War.

<sup>21</sup> Treaty of Berlin, July 13, 1878, Art. LXI.

<sup>22</sup> Sarkissian 1938; Hovannisian 1997: 203–212.



rights and even independence. Before 1895, such organizations gained few followers and their actions appeared of little consequence other than to contribute to the worsening of communal relations. However, the strong reactions of Abdülhamid II and his bureaucrats to their guerrilla activities bestowed an importance upon these organizations that far exceeded their numbers and thus increased their influence both in and outside the Empire. Naturally, mounting Ottoman suspicion and the resulting increased oppression of Armenians generally tended to strengthen support for the 'revolutionaries'.<sup>23</sup> While there are no indications to suggest that the movement was particularly important in Diyarbekir, research on this subject is clearly insufficient.<sup>24</sup> Abdülhamid II tried to balance the Armenian revolutionaries by patronizing the Kurds and organized Kurdish tribesmen into light-cavalry units, the so-called 'Hamidiye' regiments. As the largest Muslim group in the area, the Kurds were much favored by the Sultan. In time they would even feel free to defy local Ottoman authorities on the basis of the power he had granted them.<sup>25</sup>

#### *The Crisis of 1894–95*

In 1894, in the remote mountain areas of Sasun and Talori, on the border of the provinces of Bitlis and Diyarbekir,<sup>26</sup> the various components of the Armenian Question suddenly combined to ignite a conflagration.

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<sup>23</sup> The main parties were the Hnchakian Revolutionary Party (founded in 1887 in Geneva) and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, or Dashnaksutiun (founded in 1890 in Russia), the Hnchaks being the more active of the two prior to 1895. On the Armenian revolutionary parties, see Nalbandian 1963, Hovannisian 1997: 212–218, and Ter Minassian 1983. For a recent discussion of the goals and strategies of the parties, Libaridian 2011.

<sup>24</sup> Certainly inciting placards produced by Armenian revolutionists were posted in Diyarbekir (Nalbandian 1963: 120), which probably means that there was a Hnchak cell in the city. Existing studies of the Armenian Revolutionary Movement lack detail on the practical activities of the parties. Turkish treatments of the Armenian Question typically carry a highly standardized chapter on the actions of the Armenian revolutionaries, but there is a striking lack of fresh research.

<sup>25</sup> On the Hamidiye, see Bruinessen 1992: 185–189, Duguid 1973, Kodaman 1987 and Dorronsoro 2006. On the Hamidiye in the Diyarbekir Vilayet, see Atabay 2007 and Klein 2012, in this volume.

<sup>26</sup> In the 19th century, Sasun and Talori were two separate areas with a majority Armenian population, to the north and the south of Mount Andok. Presently, the Talori area is part of the district of Sason (in Batman Province). The area called Sasun in the 19th century lies north of this district and at present belongs largely to the central district of Muş Province. Sason from the Republican period should thus not be confused with the Sasun of the 19th century. Although an important part of the action took place in Talori, the events became largely identified with Sasun and are usually known as the 'Sasun revolt' or 'Sasun massacres'. It should be noted that Sasun also refers to the whole of the mountainous area between Muş, Bitlis, Hazo (Kozluk) and Kulp. This Greater (or historical) Sasun covers

Mobilized by members of the Hnchak party, Armenian peasants in the area refused to pay taxes to the state or fulfill their customary obligations to their Kurdish overlords. The local authorities reported this refusal to Istanbul as a major revolt. Sultan Abdülhamid II, fearful of foreign interference, gave orders for an immediate and harsh response. Government troops and Kurdish tribesmen (the role of the Hamidiye has still not been fully clarified, but appears less important than often assumed) then moved into the area, killing between 1,000 and 3,000 Sasunis and burning their villages to the ground. Reports of these events were widely published in the European press and soon took on an exaggerated life of their own, with reports of up to 20,000 Armenian villagers being killed.<sup>27</sup> British public opinion in particular pressed for some sort of action against the Ottomans, and Great Britain, France and Russia re-embraced the San Stefano / Berlin solution of bureaucratic reforms for the Armenians. The plight of the Armenians was suddenly high again on the European political agenda, where it would remain for the next year and a half.

Diyarbakir was closely linked to occurrences in Sasun: the theatre of events was on the very border of the province, and several Kurdish tribes involved in the conflict were actually from Diyarbakir Vilayet. Unsurprisingly, repercussions from the conflict in Sasun were felt in the provincial capital. A report from Diyarbakir city signaled a marked increase in animosity towards Armenians. 'Threats of extermination' prompted the *kadi*, 'pale and trembling', to wonder whether they would turn his town into 'another Damascus'.<sup>28</sup> Armenians who complained to the police were insulted by the police chief.<sup>29</sup>

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the modern districts of Sason and Kozluk (Batman), Kulp (Diyarbakır), Mutki (Bitlis) and the central district of Muş.

<sup>27</sup> Verheij 1998: 238–246; Verheij 1999: 81–84; Walker 1990: 136–151. The events in Sasun and Talori are difficult to reconstruct, notwithstanding the relative abundance of sources, both Ottoman and foreign, and thus still await detailed investigation. Problematising reconstruction are the remoteness of the area, the numerous local actors involved (local Armenians, the revolutionaries, Armenian clergy, various Kurdish tribes, sheiks, and various local and central Ottoman authorities), and apparent moves of the local authorities to cover up the incidents. The most important source is the Proceedings of the Official Ottoman Commission of Inquiry, which held numerous hearings between January and June 1895. Diplomatic representatives of Britain, France and Russia in their capacity of observers to this Commission tended to think that the Commission did its best to minimize the role of the Ottoman troops in the suppression of the revolt (see PP95-1; Ottoman military documents, partly published and translated in *Talori olayları* 1989, are also useful).

<sup>28</sup> *Kadi*: judge ruling in accordance with sharia law; 'another Damascus': referring to the anti-Christian (Maronite) violence of 1860, partly orchestrated by the Ottoman authorities, which had led to the deaths of several thousand people, the destruction of the Christian quarter of the city and, ultimately, the intervention of a large European military force.

<sup>29</sup> FO424/182 Nr. 87/sup.

Several Kurdish tribes and leaders involved in suppression of the 'revolt' were from Diyarbekir's Silvan district, notably the influential Şeyh Mehmed of Zilan<sup>30</sup> and Hacı Reşid Ağa from Miyafarkin (Silvan town). Both of these men acquired great prestige with part of the Muslim population because of their role in the Sasun events, and later became major participants in the events of 1895.<sup>31</sup> During Ramadan, in March 1895, the Şeyh was said to have incited Diyarbekir's Muslims with the interesting argument that 'the Muslim Kurds appear more religious and patriotic in defending the authority of their Sovereign than the Turks'.<sup>32</sup>

Complicated negotiations between European Powers and the Sultan over the proposed reforms lasted for months,<sup>33</sup> with the Sultan skillfully winning time by opposing every detail and hence creating the impression that reforms of truly revolutionary proportions were to follow. Then the Hnchak party took the initiative. On September 30, 1895, the party staged a public demonstration for reform in the centre of Istanbul. A public demonstration of Christians in the Ottoman state capital was in itself an extraordinary event of great symbolic importance. After demonstrators shot a police officer, innocent Armenians across the city became subject to reprisals from police and civilians alike, leading to the imposition of martial law in the city on October 9.<sup>34</sup> News of the events in the capital sent shock waves through the Empire; everywhere Armenians fearing a massacre and Muslims fearing an Armenian revolt turned against each other. Just days after the unrest in Istanbul, a second Armenian massacre occurred in the Black Sea coastal city of Trabzon after a high official was shot in the leg, according to Ottoman authorities by an Armenian.<sup>35</sup> Diyarbekir did not escape this dramatic rise of mutual suspicion.

Britain, France and Russia decided to press harder for reforms, this time supported by other European powers. On October 17, a frightened Sultan

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<sup>30</sup> A line of Nakşibendi *şeyhs* resident in the village of Zilan (Yeniçağlar), near the Malabadi bridge, presently in the Kozluk district of Batman province. British and French sources persistently speak about 'the' Şeyh of Zilan, without mentioning his name. Locally, his important role in bringing together a coalition of Kurdish tribes is still remembered (private conversation with local Kurdish leader in Silvan, October 2010.).

<sup>31</sup> MY Nrs. 8 and 30.

<sup>32</sup> FO424/182 Nr. 87/sup. An occasional indication of town Muslims being seen as non-Kurdish.

<sup>33</sup> Documents on the negotiations in PP96-1. Şaşmaz (2000) is useful for details of the reform projects and the negotiation process after the 1877-78 war (although not recommended for the Armenian question).

<sup>34</sup> Nalbandian (1963: 122-125); PP96-2 Nr. 50.

<sup>35</sup> PP96-2 Nrs. 83/1, 113, 183/1, 122/2. The British Consul in Trabzon evidently did not exclude the possibility that the incident was faked (ibid., Nr. 183/1). For a report of the trial of the accused Armenians, see Halaçoğlu 2005.

Abdülhamid yielded. These reforms were actually a weakened version of the original reform project that itself did not amount to much, certainly not from the perspective of Armenian political goals. The Sultan, however, refrained from publishing details, apparently fearing a Muslim reaction.<sup>36</sup> Thus, when news of the acceptance of 'reforms' pressed for by the Europeans for the benefit of the Armenians reached the provinces a few days later, almost no one knew their content. Among Armenians and Muslims alike, but certainly among the latter, the wildest ideas circulated regarding the revolutionary changes the reforms would bring. In such an overheated atmosphere, fed by rumors and hearsay, the smallest incidents caused eruptions of violence. A long series of attacks on Armenians followed in towns and villages all over the eastern provinces.<sup>37</sup> Armenian defense was generally ineffective, with the area around the traditionally rough mountain town of Zeytun (Haleb province) as the main exception, where under the command of some Hnchaks local Armenians rose in revolt and killed the Ottoman garrison to the last man. In this area, something resembling a civil war between Armenians and Muslims raged for months before being brought to an end through mediation by the Great Powers.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Essentially the reforms arranged for: (1) Representation of non-Muslims at all levels of local government, as assistant-governors and members of administrative councils, from the highest (vilayet) to the lowest (nahiye) level; (2) Inclusion of non-Muslims in the police and gendarmerie; (3) Control of Kurdish nomadic tribes during their seasonal migration; (4) Prohibition of Hamidiye members from wearing uniforms and carrying weapons in daily life, and their subjection to regular, non-military, courts; (5) Evaluation of landownership and abolition of tax farming; and (6) Institution of a mixed Muslim/non-Muslim Commission of Control with participation of the representatives of Great Britain, France and Russia (text of the reform program in FO424/184 Nr. 140/sup). Interestingly, there is no mention of the area where these reforms would be implemented, and when implementation of several reforms began in 1896, this was not restricted to the Six Vilayets alone. Indeed, and notwithstanding the provisions for Hamidiye prohibition and curtailment of the tithe system (tax farming), the fact that non-Muslims had been included in the various administrative councils since the days of the Tanzimat—see Aydın & Verheij 2012: 43, in this volume—indicates that the reforms proposed did not really amount to anything very radical.

<sup>37</sup> In Erzincan on 21st October, in Maraş on 23rd October, in Arapgir, Bitlis and Gümüşhane on 25th October, in Bayburt, Karahisar (Şebinkarahisar) on 28th October, and in Erzurum on 30th October (Verheij 1999: 85–87, 126).

<sup>38</sup> Zeytun was exclusively inhabited by Armenians, who were strongly independently minded and had a reputation for boldness, even maintaining that they had been granted independence by the sultans (Nalbadian 1963: 68). On the Zeytun revolt, see documents in PP96-2. Because the events in the Zeytun revolt were much more clearly an Armenian revolt, it is not surprising that they are extensively covered in Turkish historiography. For a recent work, see Halaçoğlu 2007.

*A General Overview of the Historiography of the 1895 Crisis*

There have been few studies on the 1895 massacres. However, the crisis is included in the countless accounts of the Armenian Question in general, usually as a preamble to the events of World War I. What immediately catches one's attention is the deep split between Christian/Armenian/Western and Muslim/Ottoman/Turkish lines of interpretation. Initiated by the intense concern in Europe for the plight of the Armenians in 1894, a rich corpus of work on the Armenian Question has developed. Perhaps the most important characteristic of this vast amount of literature, and typical of the strong divide between the European Powers and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, is that it has been almost exclusively based on Western and to a lesser extent Armenian accounts. Until recently, most authors writing on Armenian affairs come from the Christian/Western camp and have clearly been unable or unwilling to use Ottoman or Turkish sources. This general lack of interaction and use of alternative points of view has certainly helped to create a number of *idées fixes* on the 1895 crisis, which even now continue to remain largely undebated.

Thus, since the days of the events themselves, Armenian, European and American authors have generally assumed that the attacks on the Armenians were organized and even planned by Sultan Abdülhamid II. Various arguments are presented: recurrent patterns in the events (like signals to start and end, selection of victims, occurrence on Fridays), the participation of Ottoman officials, police and/or army, and interpretations of (or assumptions about) the mindset of the Sultan.<sup>39</sup> It is true that many Muslims who took part in the violence thought that they were acting completely in line with the Sultan's wishes. Some Muslim reports, particularly those of Kurds, even assert that the Sultan gave them orders to act.<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, however, the direct involvement of the Sultan remains difficult to prove. Moreover, the development of events leaves a strong impression that the situation veered out of control and that the Sultan could not even decide how to act, far less direct events. In many places it also became painfully apparent that the Ottoman authorities, with so very few police

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<sup>39</sup> E.g. Kurkjian 1964: 296; Pasdermadjian 1971: 348; Walker 1990: 171; Bournoutian 1994: 45; Hovannisian 1997: 226 ('The beleaguered Sultan resorted to massacres in his futile efforts to maintain the old order').

<sup>40</sup> PP96-2 Nrs. 319/2, 390/1, 416/1, 448/2, 483/1. See also Verheij (1999: 125, note 208).

or soldiers at their disposal locally, had little power to wield over their Muslim populace.<sup>41</sup>

Generally, the Armenian-Western line of interpretation insufficiently addresses a number of important questions. Despite lengthy descriptions of massacres, there is remarkably little interest in the motives of the Muslims for perpetrating so much violence. In many of the conflicts, it was civilians, not soldiers and police, who used violent means. However, the mindset, perspectives and motives of the Muslim civilian population are generally left unexplained. The importance of the 'fear factor', that not only did Armenians fear Muslims but that Muslims also feared Armenians, has seldom been fully appreciated, or even recognized. Neither the impact of the Armenian revolutionary movement and the reforms on Muslim opinion. As mentioned above, objectively, the actions of the revolutionaries were not so important, and the (undisclosed) reforms not actually particularly far-reaching: rather, it was the impact in the contemporary Islamic context that counted. The fact that the reforms, which European politicians and diplomats assumed to be a panacea for all Ottoman problems and for which they pressed so hard, actually worsened the situation was probably just too absurd or incongruous to be discussed in Europe. Consequently, this important fact did not receive the place in the historiography it deserves.<sup>42</sup> Some Armenian writers have criticized the Powers for half-hearted involvement ('intercession unsustained by force' as historian Richard Hovannisian puts it).<sup>43</sup> Indeed, a critical view of the role Europe played is one of few subjects on which Armenian and Turkish authors seem to share an opinion. Turkish authors often argue that the reforms were the result of an unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman State, or an instrument of imperialism.<sup>44</sup>

Turkish historiography, which developed in almost complete vacuum from the Armenian/European tradition, has taken a completely different approach to the events of 1895. The Turkish 'creed' is still repeated incessantly by hundreds of authors writing mostly for their own market, defending the interests of the state and sticking to an officially sanctioned set of ideas, often with open or covert official support.<sup>45</sup> According to this

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<sup>41</sup> Verheij 1999: 99–105.

<sup>42</sup> The opinion of the German Kaiser Wilhelm II and his staff came closest to this realization (*Die Grosse Politik*, vol. 10).

<sup>43</sup> Hovannisian 1987: 25.

<sup>44</sup> Öke 2001: 83–89; Sevinç 2004: 138.

<sup>45</sup> Critics of this type of traditional historiography refer to it as the '*resmi tarih*' (official history).

approach, the Armenian Question is the history of a rebellious minority struggling for an independent Armenia. They single out the years 1894–1896 as a period of particular activity by Armenian revolutionists usually portrayed as a series of revolts.<sup>46</sup> Authors not wishing to blame the Armenians directly generally choose to describe them as *victims* of foreign powers and their imperialist policies. Important questions such as whether all or just a few Armenians supported the revolutionary movement or whether this movement was really as important as perceived are usually ignored.

Rarely do ‘official’ Turkish historians actively deny the massacres; rather they more typically ignore them or play their importance down. In many instances, the massacres are not mentioned at all. Thus although 1894–1896 are often designated as a period of important revolts, paradoxically details are avoided. Minimal attention is given to the violent actions of the Ottomans, which are paramount in the Armenian-European tradition. Vague designations as ‘events’ or ‘incidents’ abound, while the term ‘massacres’ is clearly shunned. Many authors reckon it quite important to present the (barely described) acts of Muslims as reactions to ‘provocations’ of Armenians.<sup>47</sup> One gets the impression that thus provoked, these acts were understandable, reasonable, even fair and just. Discussion of the reasons for this perspective would lead us far beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that even contemporary official Turkish opinions on the events seem deeply rooted, perhaps largely unconsciously, in the traditional Islamic perspective on the ‘subjected’ non-Muslims. Another factor is the strong nationalist inclination to defend the perceived interests of the state and Turkish people. A recent cultural shift in Turkey has led to a change in perspective in Turkish historiography, which is now increasingly prepared to face historical reality and produce studies that will not necessarily avoid drawing daring conclusions. However, the ‘official history’ still retains its dominant position. In Turkey many people still consider the most important asset of a historian to be his/her ability

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<sup>46</sup> E.g. *Belgelerle Ermeni Sorunu* 1992: 108; Öke 2000: Halaçoğlu 2002: 28; 2005: 44–45; 2007: 29; Saray 2003: 384; Karacakaya 2005: 46; 101; Sakin 2006: 19; Özcan 2007: 53–55; Nazır 2009.

<sup>47</sup> In Shaw & Shaw 1977: 204 similarly, with heavy emphasis on the *provocateur* role of the (foreign) Armenian ‘terrorists’, together with the inciting and leading role of the ‘millions of refugees’ who were ‘flowing in to the empire from Russia, Bulgaria and Bosnia’ with tales of murder and theft, and restraint on the part of the state and (generally) its forces, which were only really intent on keeping order—and yet with the massacres themselves dispensed with in half a sentence.

to defend the national interest. Thus, particularly in the case of sensitive topics, accounts are frequently and deliberately blurred in order to avoid shedding bad light on Turkish history.

Another, more imperceptible factor that shaped Turkish historiography on the 1894–96 massacres is the peculiar character of the reign of Abdülhamid II. Understandably, Turkish historians first turn to their own sources. However, many fail to take into account the extraordinary character of the sources from that period. Both the ideology and strict censorship of the Hamidian period have had far-reaching consequences. Many topics considered dangerous were not open to discussion. For example, the Islamist ideology of the day prescribed a kind of notion that the virtues, but not the faults, of the Muslim community should be discussed. Regarding conflicts with non-Muslims, this meant that Muslims were not supposed to be the first to use violence.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the extreme degree of obedience to the Sovereign prevailing during the Hamidian period created a strong element of anticipation of his wishes. Public documents, such as newspaper articles, were skilful constructions, carefully molded according to the (assumed) preferences and dislikes of the Sultan. Documents for official internal use often show the same character, although to a lesser extent. Researchers who wish to stay close to their sources face a struggle with a myriad of concealing terms and understatements. In brief, Ottoman sources from the Hamidian period are problematic for an historian trying to reconstruct events and require a careful approach. This is truer still for sources on delicate subjects such as the Armenian Question. Just as it is impossible to analyze objectively the 1894–96 conflict on the basis of Western sources alone, so also are attempts to work solely on the basis of Ottoman sources likely to fail. When comparing Western/Armenian and Ottoman/Turkish interpretations of events in autumn 1895, it is striking that both historiographic traditions, despite their separate development and for different reasons, avoid discussion of the factors inspiring Muslim action. This element is therefore given extra attention in this article.

#### *Historiography and Sources on the Crisis in Diyarbekir*

A number of national archives contain data on the crisis in Diyarbekir. First and foremost are the reports by Gustave Meyrier, the French Vice-Consul in the city. Meyrier found himself in the midst of events and

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<sup>48</sup> For a discussion of these elements in a recent study, see Deringil 2009: 350–351.



actively participated to save lives. He was the only foreign representative in Diyarbekir at the time. The Armenian Boyadjian, who was British Vice-Consul, died in September 1895 (of natural causes) and his successor, the Vice-Consul Hallward, only arrived in February 1896. Although Hallward did not witness the massacres himself, his reports are quite valuable for an understanding of the ramifications and aftermath of the conflict, and the situation in the outlying districts.<sup>49</sup> A non-exhaustive search of the Ottoman archives in Istanbul revealed hundreds of documents on the events in Diyarbekir, regarding both the town and countryside, and reports both from and to local authorities (the provincial government, police and military in Diyarbekir) and Istanbul (the Grand Vizirate, and several ministries). Most of these documents, although nowadays easily available, have hitherto gone unused by historians.

Among useful unofficial sources are the reports of foreign missionaries. The (French, Catholic) Capuchin Order was established in Diyarbekir, while the American missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had a mission in nearby Mardin. The almost complete absence of Armenian sources (in the sense of reports produced by local Armenians) is striking. While Armenian sources are easily available for incidents in other areas in 1895, for events in the city of Diyarbekir I did not find such sources.<sup>50</sup>

No attempt at a critical study of the events in Diyarbekir has been made to date. Descriptions of the crisis included in general works on the Armenian Question in the Western/Armenian tradition are rather scanty and almost fully rely on the reports by Meyrier. The reports of the Consul were partly published in 1897 by the French Government,<sup>51</sup> and re-published recently, with the addition of hitherto unpublished material.<sup>52</sup> The only existing article on the subject, by Mouradian,<sup>53</sup> offers little more than a summary of Meyrier's reports, of which Mouradian was the co-editor.

Although in recent years publications have appeared in Turkey on some phases of the 1895 events, Diyarbekir has not drawn anyone's particular

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<sup>49</sup> To my knowledge, Hallward's reports, only some of which were published in the Confidential Print Series of the Foreign Office, have not been studied before.

<sup>50</sup> See the extensive bibliography on the 1894–1896 massacres of Shirinian 1999. In *Les Massacres*, an 1896 collection of letters from Armenians, reports from Diyarbekir only relate to events in Çüngüş and Palu. There are local histories of Diyarbekir in the Armenian language, which for this research unfortunately could not be studied.

<sup>51</sup> *Documents diplomatiques. Affaires arméniennes* (1897).

<sup>52</sup> Meyrier 2000.

<sup>53</sup> Mouradian 2006.

attention. Turkish works are mostly limited to small references to the 'Armenian revolt' in the town.<sup>54</sup> A recent article by Selim Deringil for the first time covering mass conversions during the 1894–1896 massacres does explore Ottoman archives, and also contains valuable information on events in the Diyarbekir countryside, but does not particularly focus on the vilayet.<sup>55</sup> The description below is therefore completely based on primary sources as outlined above: Meyrier's reports, British Consulate files from 1896, and a number of official and unofficial Ottoman sources, with several letters written by American missionaries proving particularly useful for the outlying districts. The potentially crucial archives of the Capuchins have not been located.

#### THE CRISIS IN DIYARBEKIR TOWN

##### *Description of the Events*

The following is mainly the account of the massacre as given by French Consul Gustave Meyrier, supplemented with information from Ottoman and Western sources.

On October 4, 1895, just four days after the disturbances in Istanbul, Mehmed Enis Paşa was appointed Governor-General (*Vali*) of Diyarbekir. The new governor, who was already acting *Vali* and former Governor (*mütessarif*) of Mardin *sancak* (sub-province), had a very bad reputation among the Christians. He was accused of having caused a fire the year before in the centre of Mardin that destroyed all the shops of the Christian inhabitants. Various stories circulated about his hatred of Christians.<sup>56</sup>

One of the first acts of the newly appointed governor, who probably felt the need to reassure the Sultan regarding his reputation, was to press the notables and heads of the various non-Muslim communities of Diyarbekir to undersign a telegram of gratitude to the Palace for his appointment. This caused an immediate and surprising reaction. Armenians and other

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<sup>54</sup> E.g. Halaçoğlu, Ahmet 2005: 45; Halaçoğlu, Yusuf 2005: 35–36; Süslü 1999: 61; Süslü 2001: 176; Gürün 2005: 224–226; Karacakaya 2001: 167–168; Binark 2005: 40.

<sup>55</sup> Deringil 2009.

<sup>56</sup> MY Nrs. 20, 21, 94. Enis Paşa, nicknamed 'Selanikli' (from Thessaloniki) (?–1906) was born in Thessaloniki, reputedly a son of Jewish parents who converted to Islam when he was four years old. It was said that one of his parents was among a group of Muslims arbitrarily executed for their (supposed) role in a mob attack on the French and German Consuls in 1877, in which both Consuls were killed (MY Nr. 20). Enis Paşa appears to have been a person deeply troubled by his past.

Christians closed their shops in the market in protest, occupied their churches and even prevented the clergy from offering mass on Sunday.<sup>57</sup> Church bells in Armenian and Chaldean churches were rung incessantly, according to Ottoman sources, for 'three days and three nights'.<sup>58</sup> Another source mentions 'road blocks' in the streets.<sup>59</sup> A total of 1,200 people signed a telegram to the Armenian Patriarch in İstanbul, denouncing church leaders for their support of the *Vali*.<sup>60</sup> The Syriac Bishop, threatened and fearing for his life, fled to the French Consulate.<sup>61</sup> This 'state of anarchy' (in the words of the French Vice-Consul) prevailed for ten days and only ended when the Armenian Gregorian and Catholic Patriarchs sent official replies to the protest telegram. People feared a violent reaction from the Muslim population.<sup>62</sup> The army commander of Diyarbekir reportedly prevented Muslims from setting fire to the market where Christian shops were located.<sup>63</sup>

The commotion caused by the appointment of Enis Paşa had hardly died down when, on October 22, news through various unofficial channels reached Diyarbekir about the acceptance of the reforms pressed for by the Foreign Powers.<sup>64</sup> In the days that followed it became obvious that the Muslims were preparing for something. Weapons were fetching exorbitant prices, and 'most sinister rumors' circulated in the town.<sup>65</sup> On the evening of October 30, upon hearing about meetings of Muslims and their 'most disquieting projects', French Consul Meyrier went to the *Vali* to urge him to take measures. Enis Paşa waved away the danger, stressing that, for Muslims, their religion forbade killing. He declared that they would do nothing as long as the Christians kept quiet.<sup>66</sup> On October 31, the official appointment of Enis Paşa took place. Reportedly, the heads of the Christian communities did not attend.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> MY Nrs. 22, 94 (p. 126).

<sup>58</sup> Report of the Ottoman Commission of Investigation, in: Beysanoğlu 2002–2003, Vol. 2: 730.

<sup>59</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 637-3 (p. 4).

<sup>60</sup> MY Nrs. 23, 94 (p. 126).

<sup>61</sup> MY Nr. 24.

<sup>62</sup> MY Nrs. 24, 25, 29, 94 (p. 127).

<sup>63</sup> PP96-2 Nr. 310/4.

<sup>64</sup> MY Nrs. 94 (p. 127).

<sup>65</sup> MY Nrs. 30, 94 (p. 127). An Ottoman report later claimed that it was the Armenians in particular who had bought weapons.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 128).

<sup>67</sup> Beysanoğlu 2001–2003 Vol. 2: 726.

The next morning, on Friday November the 1st, Catholics attended church for All Saints' Day. When the French Consul left the church, he was told that people were going around inciting the Muslims 'to massacre the Christians'. The Armenian Gregorian bishop visited the *Vali* to inform him about this situation but was reassured. Throughout the morning Armenians were urged not to be afraid and to open their shops in the market. The bishop was later to regret his actions.<sup>68</sup>

Around noon, during or after the Muslim midday prayer, shots were heard in the town centre. Meyrier was informed that the first shot was fired by a policeman at a Chaldean who happened to be in the vicinity of the *Ulu Cami* (Great Mosque).<sup>69</sup> As we will see (below, p. 120), Ottoman sources claim that Armenians started to shoot while Muslims were in the mosques. Disturbances occurred during the remainder of the day, concentrated in the market area (*çarşı*) where the shops were located. Christians who could not flee were shot at. A general pillage followed, in which leading Muslims took part. Even the personal secretary of the *Vali* was seen passing the French Consulate with a cart load of looted goods.<sup>70</sup> Later in the afternoon, the market was set afire. A huge uncontrollable blaze ensued, destroying the entire area with its hundreds of shops and workshops. The smoke could be seen as far as Ergani, 55 kilometers to the north.<sup>71</sup> By evening, the fire had reached the French Consulate, which only escaped destruction by a sudden change in the direction of the wind.

On Saturday the 2nd, bands of assailants moved through Christian neighborhoods, breaking into houses and killing the inhabitants. Young women and girls were frequently carried off. In some quarters Christians managed to retreat and defend themselves successfully against their attackers. Many people tried to flee to the French Consulate or the French Mission. Because the streets were too dangerous, people escaped over the flat roofs of the houses, using improvised 'bridges' to cross streets. French Missionaries took in 3,000 refugees while the French Consulate accommodated 1,500. The Consulate was pounded intensively by the attackers, leaving its walls riddled by bullets. Many people failed to reach these foreign safe havens and some were shot on the doorstep. At a certain moment the French Consul feared that the Consulate could soon be overrun by the

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<sup>68</sup> MY Nr. 94 (pp. 128–129).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. (p. 129).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. (p. 130).

<sup>71</sup> Gates 1940: 111, letter from Gates d. 8.11.1895 (ABC reel 700).

attackers.<sup>72</sup> It is reported that he ordered his assistant to kill his wife and children if the attackers succeeded in getting inside,<sup>73</sup> but the Consulate staff, Ottoman guards and Muslim neighbors were able to defend the building.<sup>74</sup> On the second day, the Consul managed to send a short telegram to the Embassy in Istanbul with the concise plea: '*La ville est a feu et à sang. Sauvez nous*' (The city burns and bleeds. Save us.).<sup>75</sup>

Violence continued for a third day (Sunday, November 3). Towards the evening, on the order of the *Vali*, several Muslim and Christian notables persuaded their community members to lay down their weapons. Criers went around town proclaiming that any use of a weapon would be punished severely. Seemingly, this was the first significant action the authorities had taken in 48 hours.<sup>76</sup> The French Consul observed that policemen and gendarmes (*zaptiyes*) took an active part in the disturbances, siding with the Muslims.<sup>77</sup> There was no significant participation of Kurds from outside the town (below, p. 134). It was reported that 2,500 Kurds were waiting outside the walls but were denied entry.<sup>78</sup>

The disturbances in the centre of the vilayet marked the onset of troubles in nearly every part of the province where Armenians and other Christians lived.<sup>79</sup>

### *The Number of Victims*

No precise number of victims of the disturbances of November 1895 in Diyarbekir has been established. Meyrier wrote that many corpses were thrown into the fire at the market and that afterwards the authorities burnt many of the dead.<sup>80</sup> According to the provincial government's official report, 130 Muslims and 480 Christians died, with the last figure including casualties in the nearby villages of Alıpınar and Kırırbıl.<sup>81</sup> An

<sup>72</sup> MY Nr. 94 (pp. 130–132); FO 195/1930 Nr. 18.

<sup>73</sup> Meyrier 2000: 89.

<sup>74</sup> MY Nr. 54.

<sup>75</sup> MY Nr. 32.

<sup>76</sup> MY Nrs. 40, 41, 94 (p. 133).

<sup>77</sup> MY Nrs. 39, 94 (p. 134).

<sup>78</sup> MY Nr. 41.

<sup>79</sup> For an overview of events in Diyarbakır province, see Annex B in this volume.

<sup>80</sup> MY Nr. 55.

<sup>81</sup> BOA A.MKT.MHM 637-03. An earlier police report from Diyarbekir stated that 70 Muslims died and 300 or more 'assailants' (*mütecaviz*), i.e. Christians (HNP, Diyarbekir Police telegram, 8.11.1895/27 *teşrinevvel* 1311, p. 102). Alıpınar was a small village to the west of the town, which has since been incorporated into the city. Kırırbıl (different spellings

Ottoman source states that six soldiers were killed on the third day of disturbances, a number later reduced to three.<sup>82</sup>

The first foreign reports, evidently based on hearsay, mentioned 5,000 victims.<sup>83</sup> In his main report dated December 18, 1896, Meyrier gives a total of 1,191 Christian fatalities (1,000 Gregorian Armenians, 10 Catholic Armenians, 150 Syrians, 3 Catholic Syrians, 14 Chaldeans, 3 Greek Orthodox and 11 Protestants) and 195 dead Muslims.<sup>84</sup> Moreover 2,000 Christians were missing and, evidently, often assumed to have died. Since Meyrier's report was widely published, this is the data that acquired a place in most of the historiography on 1895. The British Vice-Consul Hallward appointed in Diyarbekir the following February felt the need to revise the initial data, however, concluding that in Diyarbekir itself about 1,000 Christians were killed,<sup>85</sup> which suggests that the people who went missing were later largely accounted for.

Whether one accepts the Ottoman or foreign numbers, there is no doubt that, hundreds of people lost their lives in the three days. The relatively high number of Muslim casualties as compared with other towns indicates that the Armenians of Diyarbekir were not defenseless and had fought fiercely. Elsewhere Muslim casualties were usually minimal, giving stronger validity to the accusation of 'massacre'.<sup>86</sup>

### *The Aftermath*

Large parts of Diyarbekir were transformed into ruins. Many hundreds of houses were plundered, perhaps more than a thousand;<sup>87</sup> at least 900 shops and workshops were burned to the ground.<sup>88</sup> Describing the city two weeks after the events, Meyrier wrote that *'l'aspect de la ville est*

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are used) was opposite the city on the east bank of the Tigris, later to make way for Dicle University.

<sup>82</sup> BOA A.MKT.MHM 636-10 (4); BOA A.MKT.MHM 637-03.

<sup>83</sup> PP96-2 Nr. 214.

<sup>84</sup> MY Nr. 94 (pp. 134–136). The Muslim death toll, according to Meyrier, including 70 people who were killed by fellow Muslims in quarrels over booty (*ibid.*, p. 136).

<sup>85</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 5, 18.

<sup>86</sup> See table in Verheij 1999: 126.

<sup>87</sup> On 13.11.1895, Meyrier stated that between 300 and 400 houses were plundered (MY Nr. 63). In a report written one month later, he mentions a total number of 1701 plundered houses (MY Nr. 94 pp. 134–135).

<sup>88</sup> 870 shops according to the Ottoman investigation commission (Beysanoğlu 2003: 731), 2,448 shops and workplaces according to Meyrier (MY Nr. 94 pp. 134–135). The rather high number of business premises ruined may attest to economic resentment on the part of the Muslims.

*lamentable*'.<sup>89</sup> More than 1,000 families lost their houses and needed shelter.<sup>90</sup> Travelers passing through the city some fifteen years later noted that traces of the destruction were still clearly visible.<sup>91</sup> Clearly, and regardless of the causes, the Armenians were the principal target and suffered the greatest casualties, but Syriacs and other Christians were swept up in the violence too. In fact, Meyrier's fatality proportions for Armenians-to-other Christians of approaching 6:1 compares with about 3:1 for the city population as a whole.<sup>92</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the violence, both Ottoman authorities and foreign consulates tried to organize emergency aid,<sup>93</sup> which was no easy task. According to a report by Diyarbekir authorities dated November 12, more than 10,000 people in the city and surrounding area needed assistance, and the numbers kept on rising because of villagers coming to the city in search of food.<sup>94</sup> Another Ottoman source states clearly that the large majority of these destitute people were Christians.<sup>95</sup> The numbers for the province as a whole are still more staggering. Meyrier estimated the total number of people in need of food and shelter in Diyarbekir province to be 50,000;<sup>96</sup> Hallward mentions that between 20,000 and 30,000 in Diyarbekir, excluding Palu and Mardin, were in need.<sup>97</sup> In the last two regions, the American mission stations of Harput and Mardin organized distributions, which were viewed with deep suspicion by the Ottoman authorities. Several agents giving aid employed by the missionaries were arrested.<sup>98</sup>

The relief effort was by no means sufficient. In April 1896, Hallward wrote of the district of Silvan, where the destroyed villages had left some 10,000 people homeless, that 'the little money that is available from outside merely touches the fringe of the need existing there'.<sup>99</sup> Even during the summer, the number of poor seemed 'to increase rather than to diminish'. Towards the autumn of 1896, the relief campaign gained

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<sup>89</sup> MY Nr. 66.

<sup>90</sup> MY Nr. 54.

<sup>91</sup> Wigram & Wigram 1922: 34–35.

<sup>92</sup> See Akgündüz 2012: 223, in this volume, for population figures.

<sup>93</sup> MY Nr. 146.

<sup>94</sup> Ottoman archives, A.MKT.MHM 636-20 (7); figure confirmed by a British report (FO 195/1930 Nr. 29).

<sup>95</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 636-20 (11).

<sup>96</sup> MY Nr. 146.

<sup>97</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 10.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* Nrs. 2, 12, and 22.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 24.

strength. Hallward personally supervised the rebuilding of up to 35 villages in the Silvan district.<sup>100</sup> Generally, the foreign consuls were not satisfied with Ottoman relief efforts. They found government initiatives, generally limited to the towns, insufficient, and criticized the hindrances put in the way of unofficial activities.<sup>101</sup> It seems that part of the funds sent by the Ottoman Government from Istanbul was not used for relief efforts but rather for payment of the reserve troops (*redif*).<sup>102</sup> Despite Ottoman claims to the contrary, few stolen or plundered goods seem to have been restored to Armenians.<sup>103</sup>

During the violence, scores of Armenian and Syrian women (and children) were kidnapped by Muslims. In the city of Diyarbekir, about fifty Christian women and girls were carried off,<sup>104</sup> and in the villages there were far more kidnappings. In Kırtebil alone, for example, more than seventy cases occurred.<sup>105</sup> The foreign consuls closely watched the efforts to find and return the women. Just a handful returned. The authorities instituted a special commission, composed of one Muslim and one Christian notable that spent a fortnight in Kurdish villages. Overtly threatened by kidnappers, they were only able to return with one woman, one girl and two boys. By mid-1896, no substantial progress could be reported, and the majority of the kidnap victims probably never returned.<sup>106</sup>

The British and French consular reports show that, for months after November 1895, the situation in Diyarbekir remained extremely unstable. Time and time again, the town was full of rumors that the Muslims would attack again.<sup>107</sup> Not all of these rumors were mere gossip. On November 28, a riot started in an Armenian quarter of the city that had previously been spared.<sup>108</sup> On December 31, armed Kurds from the countryside entered the city in such large numbers that Armenians and other Christians again fled in panic to churches and the French Consulate.<sup>109</sup> Two

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid. Nr. 79.

<sup>101</sup> MY Nrs. 86, 118, 140; FO 195/1930 Nr. 24.

<sup>102</sup> BOA. A.MKT.MHM 636-20 (10).

<sup>103</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 36, 44.

<sup>104</sup> MY Nr. 94 (p. 136).

<sup>105</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 15. In August 1896, 60 of the kidnapped women and children were still in the hands of the Kurds (FO 195/1930 Nr. 62).

<sup>106</sup> MY Nrs. 126, 132, 133, 139 and 140; FO 195/1930 Nrs. 7, 8, 18, 24 and 36. Meyrier believed that the Muslim commission member had secret orders from the *Vali* not to press too hard on the subject (MY Nr. 140 p. 184).

<sup>107</sup> MY Nr. 90.

<sup>108</sup> MY Nr. 79.

<sup>109</sup> MY Nr. 99 p. 142; Nr. 101 p. 147.



high military officials, a personal envoy of Sultan Abdülhamid, Abdullah Paşa<sup>110</sup> and military commander Ziya Paşa,<sup>111</sup> personally went into the streets beating Kurds with their sticks. During a meeting with the town's notables, they announced that everyone who disturbed the peace would be summarily executed.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, on March 8, 1896, the streets were again full of armed Kurds.<sup>113</sup> Towards the summer of 1896, the situation deteriorated again. Ziya Paşa prevented more anti-Christian disturbances at least three times (in May, during the Muslim Feast of Eid—*Kurban Bayram*—and twice in June).<sup>114</sup> In November 1896, *Vali* Enis Paşa was dismissed, after which the situation quietened down substantially. British and French Consuls were of the opinion that he had played an important role in maintaining the unrest (below, p. 129).

Lack of security in Diyarbekir prevented economic recovery. Reportedly, the authorities did nothing to rebuild the destroyed market—reconstruction of the market area lasted three years<sup>115</sup>—and trade did not revive. Authorities had cash flow problems and demanded extraordinarily high taxes from people who had lost their ability to pay. In the countryside, some people were again forced to flee, this time from their newly rebuilt houses in order to avoid the tax collectors.<sup>116</sup> Because of the excessive taxation, relief money distributed to Armenians basically went straight to the government.<sup>117</sup>

Many Armenians wanted to migrate out of the area. Interestingly, the authorities did all they could to prevent Armenians from leaving and put severe restrictions on the issue of travel licenses and passports. Nevertheless many people managed to obtain passports and went to Istanbul or abroad, leaving their homeland forever.<sup>118</sup> Those who left still had to brave

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<sup>110</sup> Brigade General, later Field Marshall Abdullah Paşa (1846–1937) presided over one of two commissions sent by Sultan Abdülhamid to the eastern provinces to restore order. He stayed in Diyarbekir from December 1895 until April 1896.

<sup>111</sup> Ziya Paşa was at that time a division general. He was stationed in Diyarbekir from December 1895 until October 1896.

<sup>112</sup> MY Nrs. 99, 101.

<sup>113</sup> MY Nr. 125.

<sup>114</sup> MY Nrs. 151, 152, 154, 158–160, 162, 164, and 165. FO 195/1930 Nrs. 37, 40–42, 46 and 48.

<sup>115</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 39.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. Nrs. 24, 39, 41, 62, 91; Annex to letter from Paul Cambon to Gabriel Hanotaux, 31.11.1896 (Meyrier 2000: 212).

<sup>117</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 49, 91.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. Nrs. 24, 26, 29, 41, 53. During the reign of Abdülhamid II, a travel license or internal passport was required for travel within the Empire. Failing to make any connection with the earlier violence, Diyarbekir's local historian Şevket Beysanoğlu described the Armenian emigration as a kind of 'fashion' (Beysanoğlu 2003: 733).

the dangers on the road. When the French Consul's wife and children departed for Istanbul in April 1896, more than 200 people requested to travel with them in order to benefit from the presence of security guards.<sup>119</sup>

Strangely, it was in the course of 1896 that Abdülhamid II, apparently largely of his own accord and on his own terms, finally actively started to implement some of the reforms agreed upon with the Powers, and a High Commission, headed by Şakir Paşa, began touring the country to supervise reforms, with, for example, some Christian policemen and Christian assistant governors appointed.<sup>120</sup> This was done in Diyarbekir also, with the appointment of a Greek as Assistant Governor in April and a few policemen in June of 1896. The Assistant Governorship appointment appeared 'to excite little interest', however<sup>121</sup>—which is hardly surprising given the timing. As Hallward wrote towards the summer of 1896:

Summer is now advancing and harvest approaching, and thousands of Christians are still homeless and without means of reaping or storing whatever crops there may be. Throughout the *Vilayet* there is the greatest anxiety among Christians not for the application of reforms, but simply for their existence in the near future.<sup>122</sup>

#### OTTOMAN EVIDENCE

A search of the Ottoman archives made to investigate how the Ottoman Government reported on the events in Diyarbekir has brought to light some hundreds of relevant documents, dealing in varying detail with the situation in various parts of the province. Primarily quantitative data from some of these documents pertaining to events in rural areas are included below.<sup>123</sup> The most extensive report found on the conflict in Diyarbekir city is a twelve-page provincial government *fezleke*,<sup>124</sup> undersigned by Governor Eniş Paşa and a number of other officials, including an army mayor and the police chief.<sup>125</sup> A report by an investigation commission

<sup>119</sup> MY Nr. 146.

<sup>120</sup> Karaca 1993.

<sup>121</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 24; FO 195/1930 Nr. 53.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. Nr. 44.

<sup>123</sup> See annex B, 'The fate of the Countryside'.

<sup>124</sup> A (police) report or memorandum, more particularly a summary report of a cross-examination.

<sup>125</sup> A.MKT.MHM 637-3.

after its visit to the city in 1896 published by Hocoaoğlu more or less summarized the account of the *fezleke*, in addition to offering a summary of events occurring in the countryside.<sup>126</sup> Among other reports that deserve attention are a number of telegrams from the police in Diyarbekir and an English language account distributed by the Ottoman Ministry for Foreign Affairs in April 1896.<sup>127</sup> All these sources reflect the viewpoint of the authorities. There is also some important non-official Muslim evidence, which will be discussed later.

The brief telegram from the Diyarbekir police reporting on the initial events runs as follows:

The Muslim people were in the mosque performing the Friday prayer, when upon the sound of a weapon from the side of the Armenians, a riot occurred and the people poured out, resulting in an unknown number of dead and wounded at each side, and just at that moment in the market place a fire broke out that burned . . . shops. . .<sup>128</sup>

This is the account of the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs:

A month before the Diyarbekir incident took place, some Armenians had attempted to disturb the public peace, by shutting without any apparent cause their shops and by retiring within their churches. The authorities endeavoured however to maintain order by help of the police.

At this moment a rumor tending to excite the minds and having had its origin in the French Consulate was circulated throughout the city. According to this rumour six *Vilayets*, including that of Diyarbekir, had been ceded to the Armenians for the formation of Armenia as a separate country or kingdom. The Government of course redoubled its efforts to preserve order. During the day of the 20th of October<sup>129</sup> at the very moment when the Musulman population was assembled in the mosque to say its prayers: armed Armenians suddenly attacked them and firing on these unfortunate killed a great number of them. On the other hand they burnt the Bazar, and a hundred or more houses by means of bombs and of torches dipped into petroleum and burning oil. They also succeeded in lighting a large conflagration in the center of the town, and to start a great agitation. The agents of the public safety and the troops sent in every direction by the authorities, succeeded however, after the most extraordinary efforts, in stopping this bloody havac (*sic*), on the same day. Notwithstanding the Armenians

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<sup>126</sup> This seems to be another commission than that mentioned in Gaunt 2006: 42–43 and evidently headed by Abdullah Paşa.

<sup>127</sup> The spelling and punctuation in this citation are unchanged.

<sup>128</sup> Telegram of the Diyarbekir Police Department, 21 *teşrinievvel* 1311/2 Nov. 1895 in HNP p. 100.

<sup>129</sup> Old calendar, equivalent to 1st November.

succeeded in keeping up the conflagration for some twenty hours, in throwing in every direction, petroleum, rags soaked in kerosene, and bombs and by firing on the firemen who were attempting to put out the fire. The next day about twenty Armenian conspirators, well known to the authorities, attacked the hamlet of Severe<sup>130</sup> situated at about eighteen hours distance from capital of the *Vilayet* and commenced suddenly their wild firing, also attempting to burn down the bazar, thus surrounding by flames the unfortunate musulman who were peacefully attending to their affairs.<sup>131</sup>

Taking a broadly similar approach to these accounts, the twelve pages of the *fezleke* cover both the disturbances themselves and the preceding weeks. This document, which seems to have remained unpublished and indeed to have gone unnoticed by historians, gives considerable detail of the provincial government's view of events. The bulk of the document is devoted to five aspects of what is seen as a series of provocative actions and evidence of guilt on the part of the Armenians: the church demonstrations in response to the telegram to the Palace in September, the continuation of Armenian actions thereafter, a number of seditious documents found in Armenian houses, and reports on Armenian attacks on mosques and acts of arson. Whilst being essentially an incrimination of the Armenians, clearly great pains are taken also to clear the Muslims from any wrongdoing. In order to uphold this impression, the document excels in carefully chosen language, which needs to be dissected equally carefully in order to explore what really happened.

Considerable space is devoted to the demonstrations and occupation of churches in October 1895, although there is no allusion anywhere to this as a protest against the appointment of the *Vali*. Instead, given the order and the peace in the country, the protest is described as unnecessary and the protesters as looking for a fight—literally, 'eager for rebellion' (*ihtilal-cûyâne*). Details of the events as explicated by the *fezleke* are almost exclusively extracted from statements of the leaders of the non-Muslim communities, Armenian and non-Armenian. Most of these leaders appear cowed and reluctant to express their opinions. The general tone is that the demonstrations were the work of 'hotheads' in the Armenian community and that the leaders either had nothing to do with these actions or were forced to follow the directives of the real instigators. Thus the head of the Syrian Orthodox community (the same person who took refuge in the French Consulate) is reported to have declared that some Armenians

<sup>130</sup> This 'hamlet' is the town of Siverek (!).

<sup>131</sup> In *Şimşir* 1999: 274–275.

wanted to disturb the peace and that he strongly warned his community not to get involved. The representative of the Greeks stressed that his community did not take part.<sup>132</sup> The deputy head of Armenian Catholics stated that he supported the telegram to the patriarchs, 'to calm down the tensions',<sup>133</sup> while İstevan Kazazyan, another prominent member of his community, professed not to have seen any reason for the protests and not to know anyone who caused them.<sup>134</sup> The deputy head of the Gregorian Armenians, Hezakil Efendi, apologized for the behavior of his community and declared that, during the disturbances, he saw 'Muslims and Christians shooting at each other'. Under the circumstances, indicating even this degree of (shared) culpability on the Muslim side was probably a very brave thing to do.<sup>135</sup> Hosep Kazazyan, an Armenian notable whom the provincial government singled out as one of the prime suspects, accusing him of throwing bombs and opening fire from his house during the massacre, also boldly declared that 'that some Armenians from the lower classes claimed that the Hamidiye perpetrated misdeeds'. He did not produce a clear answer as to what had caused the disturbances, claiming merely that the shooting from his house was necessary because of 'certain circumstances'.<sup>136</sup> Repeatedly the driving forces of the demonstrations are described as 'stupid', 'lower class' and 'young'. One Armenian claimed that 'boys of 13–14' threatened shop owners to close their shops. During one of the church meetings, these boys had adopted a motion that the area should be declared 'Armenia'.<sup>137</sup> Since the elements of youthfulness and ignorance of the perpetrators are repeated time and again, the authorities apparently concurred with this view.

One deviant statement was made by two Armenians who informed the authorities, seemingly on their own initiative, that they had heard a number of notables, among them Hosep Kazazyan, saying to the assembled Armenians in the church that 'in Istanbul, Armenians have been killed, and Armenians therefore should not hesitate to kill Muslims'. According to the informants, the head of the Armenian community had remarked, 'You order Armenians to kill Muslims, but most of them are poor, why don't you distribute weapons?'<sup>138</sup> Another statement by three Protestants

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<sup>132</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 637-3 p. 3.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

from Kırırbil contains a clear reference to the reforms pressed for by the foreign powers. They said that the Armenian notables had explained that Armenians would get a share in the government and that initiatives for innovation and equality were on the way. A petition had supposedly been prepared to support these ends.<sup>139</sup>

What most interested the provincial authorities was that all these actions had been calculated to provoke the Muslims—but that due to the resolute measures of the government, reactions were prevented. The *fezleke* continues to mention events that stirred up the Muslims. In the vicinity of Alipınar village, a Muslim was killed by Armenians; during the night, Armenians had snatched the turban from Hafız Ömer, a widely respected *Imam* of the Sin Mosque;<sup>140</sup> and the Armenians ‘gave themselves the task of preparing meticulously for the beginning of large disturbances by insulting behavior, causing excitement and similar behavior appropriate for rebels’.<sup>141</sup>

The report signals that the Armenians had anticipated trouble with the Muslims. Fifteen days before the outburst of violence, Christians had ordered gun powder, bullets, and made bombs. Four such bombs were found.<sup>142</sup> One Armenian witness declared to the authorities that on the morning that the conflict began, he had inquired about why the Armenians were excited. ‘There was a conflict in Istanbul, the same will happen here’, was the reply.<sup>143</sup> Although the *fezleke* clearly perceives Armenian design for disturbances everywhere, the cases cited in the report seem to refer more to an apprehension about upcoming conflict rather than to actual planning. The strongest instance of an Armenian keen on conflict is a man who shouted in the market in the presence of ‘thousands’ of Muslims and Christians: ‘I want an Armenia, you can’t stop me even by cutting my throat, we have 70,000 soldiers’. Significantly, the report adds that this incident took place ten days *after* the disturbances.<sup>144</sup>

After the three days of carnage, the provincial government arrested a number of prominent Armenians and thoroughly searched their houses. Considerable space in the *fezleke* is devoted to what was discovered in the house of Thomas Mendilciyan Efendi. Besides an Armenian book with

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>141</sup> ‘[B]una müimâsil harekât-ı ihtilal-cüyâne ile bir fesâd-ı azîmin mukaddemâtını tehyie ve ihzâra nasb-ı nefis-i ihtimam etmekte bulunmuşlar idî’ (ibid.).

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

incendiary poems, hidden within a French book, a letter written by a certain Ohannes was found that in unequivocal language called for revolt in Diyarbekir, claiming that the last hour of the Muslims and the first hours of Armenian freedom had come. Ohannes complained that while the foreign Powers had promised help, there was a disconcerting inertness among the Armenians in Diyarbekir, referring to this as the Armenians' 'homeland', *memleket*), and to the Muslims as 'fiends' and 'beasts without feeling'. While the Muslims were capable of staying quiet under every circumstance, Ohannes had apparently written, they absolutely could not stand to be disturbed while praying in the mosque. Thus a provocation was needed. According to Ohannes, some simple attacks on the places of worship would undoubtedly bring success. Among Mendilciyan's papers were also found handwritten lyrics of a song exalting Armenia, describing it as occupied by Turks and Kurds. Those 'impure people' should be obliterated (*mahvolmak*) and Armenia governed by an Armenian king. Mendilciyan denied knowing anything about the letter or song text, but the authorities did not believe him.<sup>145</sup> He died in custody in April 1896, under dubious circumstances.<sup>146</sup> Another document to emerge was an anonymous letter in English found by an ex-district governor, asking for the results of a (church) meeting and the 'state of the other subjects'. Despite the vague wording, the *fezleke* judged that 'the character, contents and style' of this letter showed that it was 'seditious'.<sup>147</sup>

Next, the *fezleke* devotes two pages to the events of November 1–3, essentially continuing the narrative of a provocation. On Friday, the 1st of November, it is recorded, at noon when the Muslim community was gathered together for the Friday prayer, Armenians attacked not less than six mosques,<sup>148</sup> mainly by firing bullets into the buildings. During the ensuing clashes, fires suddenly erupted. Armenians were accused of actively preventing the fires from being extinguished by shooting at Muslims who were trying to cope with the situation.<sup>149</sup> We shall return to the details

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<sup>145</sup> The *fezleke* gave as reasons for this that the letter was found in a secluded place by a trustworthy official Commission, and that they had heard from one of the Muslim servants of Mendilciyan that he had a son named Ohannes who 'was thankful that no letters had been confiscated indicating that Britain would guarantee the damage caused by disturbances in the name of Armenia' (*ibid.*, p. 8).

<sup>146</sup> FO 424-187 Nr. 76/1. The prison authorities declared that he suddenly died of apoplexy.

<sup>147</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 637-3 p. 9.

<sup>148</sup> Besides the Great Mosque (Ulu Cami), the Behrampaşa, Alipaşa, Sa'sa', Fatih, Sin and Arapşeyh Mosques.

<sup>149</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 637-3 p. 12.

of these incidents. Meanwhile, parallel to the central theme of Armenian provocation, the official Ottoman report portrays the Muslims as basically a community in defense. Clearly, particular pains are taken to avoid references to Muslim aggression. Some references to Armenians being killed are made,<sup>150</sup> but always in response to Armenian action. Thus when Muslims left the Fatih Mosque after their prayer and caught sight of three men and one woman 'lying in their blood'—and elsewhere one Muslim whose throat was cut—they also became excited and killed 'two Armenian *fedayeen*'. During the following 48 hours, we learn, four Christians were killed and 43 Muslims were left 'dead and wounded'.<sup>151</sup>

If the *fezleke* is to be believed, even on Friday 1st November the Muslims were unprepared for a clash with the Armenians. It is repeatedly stressed that they defended themselves with anything they could find, poles, sticks and even candleholders.<sup>152</sup> The report claims that Muslims only attacked Armenian houses from which gun shots came, and that the 2,500 Christian families who lived in the predominantly Muslim quarters were entirely unharmed.<sup>153</sup> The detail of attacks on houses from which guns were fired might be taken as a continuation of the response-to-provocation account, but it seems more likely, I would argue, to be an implicit admission that Muslim mobs ventured into the Armenian quarters where they encountered opposition (and hence accounts, at least partially, for the numbers of Muslim dead). Otherwise, if the Muslims *were* generally unarmed, and the Armenians *had* previously gone to the mosques as aggressors, why should they now be firing from their houses?<sup>154</sup>

Actually, the *fezleke* is equally interesting for the topics it does not address. Not only is there no mention of Muslim preparations for a confrontation, nor also is there any reference to inflammatory speeches by influential religious figures, the role of the *Vali* in failing to prevent unrest, the kidnappings of Armenian women and children or the extensive looting of Armenian houses. No explanation is offered as to how four times more Armenians than Muslims could have been killed when the latter

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. No specification is given for the number of dead and wounded and for the part of the city where this occurred.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., pp. 2, 9, 10, 11.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>154</sup> Other explanations for this might be found, of course. Maybe the Armenians had retreated to defensive positions, or maybe these were isolated events in mixed neighborhoods. But such accounts can only be constructed by stretching the imagination, considerably.



were unarmed, or how the bulk of the Armenian population in the town could be reduced to poverty and required relief for months. Some of these issues, such as the attempts to recover kidnapped women and children and the relief efforts, are widely covered by other documents from the provincial government, but they warrant no comment here.

Clearly, European and Ottoman sources on the 1895 crisis in Diyarbekir present very different views. An effort is made in the following sub-section to critically compare the two and try to ascertain the contours of some of the main elements of the events.

### *Discussion of the Main Elements*

#### *The Run-up: Protests Against the Government*

The important run-up to the crisis, the protests of the Armenians and other Christians and the occupation of the churches in October 1895, is noted in both French and Ottoman reports. There are important differences, however, in their appraisal. Meyrier describes the protests as having mass support and being directed against the governor. The Ottoman *fezleke* makes no mention of this, instead calling the protests senseless and unnecessary. Meyrier does not identify instigators, while the *fezleke* tends to blame irresponsible, young and stupid adolescents who coerced others to join. In fact, the document is in fact quite ambiguous on this point since the affair is also presented as a serious rebellion. If Meyrier's rationale for the disturbance is valid it could account for this ambiguity, as deriving from the position of the *Vali*, who was simultaneously the object of the protests as well as the most prominent signatory of the *fezleke*. Later Ottoman sources were more outright. In 1896, the Ottoman investigation commission claimed that Armenian revolutionaries (*komitacı*) were involved in the protests.<sup>155</sup> If this is true, then it is remarkable that it was not only completely ignored by European representatives in Diyarbekir but also unaddressed by and in fact unmentioned in the initial Ottoman report.

We simply do not know enough about the history of the Armenian Revolutionary Movement in Diyarbekir to draw definite conclusions on this matter. However, a combination of the two accounts suggesting that the protests were simultaneously directed against the Ottoman authorities

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<sup>155</sup> I did not see the original document, but only its summary by Hocaoglu. 'Komitacı' may be this author's term. In connection with the supposed attack on the mosques, the *fezleke* uses the word '*fedaî*'.

and the Armenian elite fits well with what is known about the strategies of the Hnchak party. In the contemporary social setting, which required overt compliance and allowed only for silent defiance, especially on the part of non-Muslims, the Christian protest against the *Vali* in the vilayet capital was unprecedented and very disquieting to both the government and Muslims. French Consul Meyrier's initial reports show clearly that he was aware of this, but the protests and their effects seem to have been forgotten afterwards. Surprisingly, British Vice-Consul Hallward, who arrived in Diyarbekir after the disturbances, did not allude to these events at all. On the contrary, he stated that not only was there 'no particular ill-feeling between the creeds here'—thus echoing the somewhat unlikely Ottoman version of communal violence and mass killings without any significant previous enmity—but also that 'the Christians had done nothing to provoke the anger or fanaticism of the Muslims'.<sup>156</sup> Perhaps the ensuing events were so shocking that memories of the preceding period were erased or seemed trivially unimportant. Perhaps there was a resistance to playing into the hands of the Ottomans and their discourse of 'Armenian provocations'. The effect, however, was that in Western sources an important part of the preceding history was detached from the November crisis, accentuating the view that the Armenians were motionless victims of Muslim aggression.

It should be noted that a non-political event, a cholera epidemic raging in Diyarbekir in August 1895, was mentioned in the Ottoman report by way of defense of the Muslim population. As noted (p. 91), some Muslims were convinced that they fell more frequently victim to cholera than the Armenians. Indeed, this may have helped to pit religious communities against each other, but the official *fezleke* makes the intriguing comment that even while thousands of Christians stayed in tents and makeshift huts (during the epidemic), no instances of aggression from Muslims had occurred.<sup>157</sup> The Christians were not attacked, it is implied, at a moment when they were much more vulnerable and the Muslims were considered to have important reasons to be dissatisfied, leading us to infer this as support for the provocation thesis.

#### *Mutual Distrust and Fear*

Western and Ottoman sources agree that in the month preceding the massacres there was a dangerous build up of distrust between Armenians and

<sup>156</sup> Vice-Consul Hallward wrote on 17 March 1896: (FO 195/1930 Nr. 18).

<sup>157</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 637-3 pp. 2, 12.

Muslims. As noted, Meyrier reported that ‘most sinister rumors’ circulated among the Armenians about the intentions of the Muslims. Part of this may have been just feverish fear, based on stories about what was befalling the Armenians elsewhere. In the autumn of 1895, the whole of the Empire was in the grip of wild gossip and scaremongering.<sup>158</sup> In Diyarbekir, the Armenian fear of conflict was in itself considered a factor causing Muslims to think that they too would be attacked, with the Armenians talking about impending attacks<sup>159</sup> and removing valuable items from their shops preceding the massacre<sup>160</sup> interpreted in the *fezleke* as signs of planning. A wise governor might have quelled such anxieties, as indeed sometimes occurred elsewhere. In Diyarbekir, however, such authority was absent. Governor Eniş Paşa appears to have chosen sides from the beginning, and as we will see below, in time became deeply involved in stirring up unrest himself.

That both sides at least anticipated trouble seems clear insofar as it is fairly evident that both communities prepared for conflict by arming themselves. The casualty figures alone—whichever are accepted—would appear to be proof enough of that. Meyrier, moreover, signaled an increase in the purchase of weapons by Muslims, while according to the Ottomans, Armenians also armed themselves, with home-made bullets and bombs being found.<sup>161</sup> Given the traditional ban on arms for non-Muslims, one may safely assume that many more weapons were in circulation among Muslims.

### *The Reforms*

After news had spread in Diyarbekir that the Sultan had accepted reforms, tensions clearly mounted. While the *fezleke* does not touch on this subject at all, the account of the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs does, even going so far as to blame the French Consulate for having spread the rumor that the six Armenian provinces would be declared independent. The Consulate’s *dragoman* (translator), an Armenian named Kassabian, was held responsible for this rumor. Consul Meyrier, interrogated by his ambassador on the subject, denied the story fiercely. According to Meyrier, the news of the reforms spread through the town after deciphered telegrams

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<sup>158</sup> One British Consul complained that of the many rumors that reached him only one tenth were true, but he could never be sure which tenth (PP96-2 Nr. 435/1).

<sup>159</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 637-3 p. 7.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

from Istanbul had arrived, and he claimed ‘that everyone knew the truth exactly and immediately’—in other words that they were aware that the reforms did not provide for any granting of independence.<sup>162</sup>

The accusations against the *dragoman* seem to have been dropped, but the Consul’s assumption that everyone knew exactly what the reforms were about proved to be very wrong. Two weeks after the bloodbath, Meyrier learned that Muslims really had believed that the autonomy of the Six Provinces was to be announced. They earnestly expected war and the occupation and partition of the Empire by the Christian Powers. The Consul was clearly astonished.<sup>163</sup> This revelation portrays the French representative as having been unaware of the degree of dissatisfaction and extent of panic among the Muslim population. As discussed below (p. 124), there is further evidence that Muslim opinion was strongly influenced by exaggerated views on the reforms. In explaining the conflict in Diyarbekir, this element was clearly undervalued, and by both sides.

*The Start: Did the Armenians Attack the Mosques?*

All sources, foreign and Ottoman, agree that the bloodbath in Diyarbekir started at noon on 1 November during the Friday prayer. It began suddenly, prompted by shooting while Muslims were still in the mosques. The French Consul heard that the first shot, in the vicinity of the Great Mosque (*Ulu Cami*), was fired by a policeman. The Ottoman government, however, said that Armenians attacked the mosques. The supposed Armenian attack was first mentioned on 2 November by the Grand Vizier when the bloodshed was still ongoing and the French Ambassador inquired of his Consul whether it was true.<sup>164</sup> Meyrier replied within two hours, calling the account by the Grand Vizier ‘false’ (*mensonçère*). He wrote: ‘*Depuis plus jours, les musulmans préparent ce massacre; ils l’ont mis à l’exécution de plain gré et sans provocation. L’invasion des mosquées par arméniens est de pure invention.*’<sup>165</sup>

<sup>162</sup> MY Nr. 64. See also Nr. 63.

<sup>163</sup> MY Nrs. 80 and 81.

<sup>164</sup> MY Nr. 35.

<sup>165</sup> MY Nr. 36. A few days later he wrote: ‘Je dois à ma conscience de déclarer fermement que les massacres ont été faits, sans provocations, par les mussulmans de la ville’ (MY Nr. 94). Vice-Consul Hallward, confronted by his Ambassador in May 1896 with the question of whether a mosque was changed into a church, as the Ottoman Government contended at the time, replied: ‘No mosque here has been injured in any way by the Armenians. No ruined mosque exists in the town. On the other hand an Armenian Church was considerably damaged by the Turks’ (FO 195/1930 Nr. 34).

What do Ottoman documents reveal in the face of this flat denial? Interestingly, the first report of the Diyarbekir police cited earlier mentions only one incident at the Ulu Cami, and it does not call this an attack. It just mentions shots outside the mosque while the Muslims were in prayer, upon which the Muslims 'poured out' of the mosque.<sup>166</sup> The account of the *fezleke* largely concurs with this interpretation. Here as well Muslims left the *Ulu Cami* without finishing their prayers, upon hearing shots outside. Reportedly, they found themselves facing a group of two to three hundred Armenians who shot at them, wounding two Muslims (a remarkably small number for such an attack, one would think).<sup>167</sup> Thus it would appear that the *Ulu Cami* itself was not attacked. At this point, the French and Ottoman accounts are not essentially at variance.

According to the *fezleke*, attacks occurred at no less than six mosques, with shots being fired into five of them and Muslims running outside being faced with armed groups of Armenians who, in some cases, fired directly at them. Although the reports suggest that these armed groups also fired the first shots, only in two instances (in the Sa'sa' and the Arapşeyh mosques) were the individuals who fired the shots into the mosque clearly identified as Armenians.<sup>168</sup> The events at the Behrampaşa Mosque were slightly different. Here it was said that a stranger was found in the mosque's courtyard who apparently did not know how to perform the ritual ablutions. Asked where he was from, he drew a revolver and started shooting.<sup>169</sup>

If we assume that the conflict did begin with simultaneous shooting incidents at several mosques, then what lines of interpretation are available? Notably, several incidents in other cities in 1895, before and after those in Diyarbekir, started with a sudden sound or shot. In the Western/Armenian historiography there is a strong notion that these shooting incidents were simply pre-arranged signs for an attack on the Armenians. An interesting alternative thesis has been proposed by historian Stephen Duguid. Using Bitlis as example, where Muslims attacked Armenians after

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<sup>166</sup> Telegram from the Diyarbekir Police Department, 21 teşrinievvel 1311/2 Nov. 1895, in HNP p. 100 (Ottoman original p. 139).

<sup>167</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 637-3 p. 11.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. Testimonies on the attacks of the mosques can be found on pp. 9–11. In the Arapşeyh case, men were seen firing in the direction of the mosque by a group of Jews, amongst them the Rabbi. They identified them as Armenians (a Hamal, two persons from Hazro, and one from an unidentified location called 'Hıyan') (BOA MKT.MHM 637-3 p. 11). This is the only non-Muslim testimony in the *fezleke* on the beginning of the disorders. All the other descriptions are based on evidence from the Imams of the concerned mosques and other Muslims.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

they heard a shot during the previous Friday Prayer (on October 25), Duguid tried to demonstrate that, given the high level of distrust between the communities, confrontations started *spontaneously*.<sup>170</sup> Truly there was a high potential for spontaneous conflicts in the autumn of 1895, especially during the Friday Prayer. Due to rumors of Armenian attacks on mosques elsewhere, Muslims most likely were indeed extremely fearful of being caught during Friday prayer.<sup>171</sup> The *Ulu Cami* case, as reported by Meyrier and the Diyarbekir police, bear the hallmarks of this kind of situation. However, if incidents began almost simultaneously near *several* mosques in Diyarbekir, as stated in the *fezleke*, it seems highly unlikely that this could have been coincidental and the confrontations spontaneous.

Another possible explanation is that someone tried to trigger a Muslim response *secretly*. With all, or nearly all, Muslims occupied with their religious obligations, conditions for such a conspiracy would have been near perfect. While the perpetrators faced a low risk of disclosing their identity, the majority of Muslims would be left convinced that they were the victims, not the perpetrators. In one of the testimonies, we indeed find an unknown person actively stirring up the Muslims. Directly after four shots had been fired into the Fatih Mosque a voice was heard shouting 'What are you waiting for, the Christians have attacked and kill the Muslims'.<sup>172</sup> What clearer incentive could there have been for an attack on the Armenians? The *fezleke* also tells us that some people involved in the incidents *dressed up* in order to fake their ethnic identity. Such a ruse was not only employed by the man in Bahrampaşa Mosque: allegedly, near the *Ulu Cami* a Christian wearing a Muslim turban was also spotted, the man said to have been wounded (apparently by Christians) because he looked like a Muslim.<sup>173</sup> The *fezleke* wants to impress on us

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<sup>170</sup> Duguid (1973: 150) who, to reinforce his theory, apparently ignored some information from his source (PP96-1 Nr. 411/2) pointing at planning (see Verheij 1999: 122 note 163). In at least five towns in the Eastern provinces disorders started on Friday (Amasya, Bitlis, Merzifon, Gümüşhane and Muş). Bitlis, on 25 October 1895, was the first case of this kind. See, for a discussion of the massacre in Bitlis and the way it started, Verheij 1999: 97.

<sup>171</sup> The massacre in Bitlis was reported by the Ottoman Government as an Armenian attack on mosques (DDO p. 48, circulaire from Minister of Foreign Affairs Said Paşa, 27.10.1895; PP96-2 Nr. 105). The authorities in Bitlis imprisoned about 100 Armenians 'trying to make them admit that the Christians attacked the mosques' (PP96-2 Nr. 438/2). That the Armenians really did attack the mosque was considered 'most improbable' by the British Vice-Consul in Muş (PP96-2 Nr. 310/2).

<sup>172</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 637-3 p. 10.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11. Some time after the conflict, an army sergeant found a packet with 57 army epaulets, according to him, dropped accidentally on the street by Armenians, who supposedly wanted to dress up as soldiers (*ibid.*, p. 9). This subject of dressing up to fake

the idea that Armenians were the culprits in all these cases. It should be noted that the circumstances described show a remarkable similarity with the 'instructions' given in the Ohannes letter found by the police. The strange manipulations of ethnic identity prompt the idea that we should not exclude the possibility of a *Muslim* agency at work.<sup>174</sup>

In brief, the Ottoman evidence embodied in the *fezleke* contains too many ambiguous elements to enable one to draw definitive conclusions about the beginning of events. Many details evoke unanswerable questions. Differences in accounts given by the French Consul and Diyarbekir police are unexplainable. Equally important, little or no convincing proof is provided showing that the mosques actually were shot at by Armenians. The vague wording of the *fezleke* is of little help here either.<sup>175</sup> The very real possibility remains, therefore, that testimonies in the *fezleke* were carefully fabricated distortions of the truth.

It is not disputed that the local authorities acted fully on the assumption that Armenians had caused the conflict. In addition to the arrest and house search of prominent Armenians, a number of them were also arrested for having set fire to Muslim houses and 'caused the massacre'—including Thomas Mendilciyan Efendi, in whose house the incriminating letter was discovered—but released in the following June because, in the words of the British Vice-Consul, there was 'no proof whatever against them beyond their own statements'.<sup>176</sup> In court it was proven

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identity does occasionally appear in accounts of the massacre period. In a society characterized by deep divisions between different population groups, who each had their own typical garments, this was a productive way of manipulating evidence.

<sup>174</sup> The opinion of a contemporary veteran British observer, the British consul in Trabzon, should be recalled here. After, as he testifies, long hesitation, he wrote to his Embassy: 'From what I have heard and seen indeed there appears to be in all this a secret agency at work, which, while exciting the Mahommedan element, is paralyzing the action of the authorities. (...) I have given the subject my best attention, and I have arrived at only one conclusion. It is briefly this. The spies of the Palace infesting the country are the chief instigators of the massacres. In the absence of conclusive evidence, however, it is a mere conjecture on my part, but any unbiased mind, I believe, would think the same by giving some thought to all the circumstances attending the lamentable events in these regions' (Longworth to Herbert, 6.11.1895, in SB4, annex to Nr. 508).

<sup>175</sup> The *fezleke* summarized the incidents at the mosques as follows: 'They (the Armenians) became, by opening fire in the form of an attack, the reason for the start of the disturbances' (*hücum tarzında silah atmaları hadisenin sebeb-i zuhûru olmuştur*—BOA MKT. MHM 637-3 p. 12).

<sup>176</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 54 and 62. Respecting the fire, the *fezleke* similarly fails to present convincing evidence to substantiate its claim that the Armenians were responsible for this. The main evidence is circumstantial, with Armenians accused of hindering Muslims who wanted to extinguish the fire and, after the disturbances, some Armenians apparently arrested after being found with fabric drenched in oil.

that earlier confessions from the Armenians were forced, extracted by beating them.<sup>177</sup>

#### DIYARBEKIR AS A SPECIAL CASE: MUSLIM PROTEST

##### *Local Muslim Opposition*

It has been pointed out above that we know little about the state of mind of the Muslim population at the time of the massacres. Whereas Armenian (and Christian/Western) fears and grievances are expressed through a variety of diplomatic and religious (official and personal) and other, private sources, extant Ottoman documents are nearly always formal and represent the view of the authorities. A document published by Şevket Beysanoğlu, the *doyen* of Diyarbekir's local historians, is therefore of extraordinary importance. It is a lengthy telegram sent to the Sultan on 4th November, the day after the carnage. According to Beysanoğlu, this telegram was the work of a committee representing the notables of the town, including Piriñçizade Arif, Müftüzade Fazıl, Talat Efendi, İsmail Efendi and Süleyman Nazif.<sup>178</sup> The latter, who would later become a renowned Turkish poet, wrote the text, which runs as follows:

In order not to burden the Government to which we are bound with a moral responsibility, we have shown tolerance, to a degree that even astonishes our enemies, to the Armenians who for 4–5 years have made our homeland and every particle of soil—embellished with the patriotic blood of our martyred grandfathers—the playground for foreign intrigue.

Appreciating the glory and dignity of perfection manifested during the occupation by the Great Ottoman State, millions of Muslims living in Diyarbekir Province and on its neighboring lands, who 391 years ago pledged their allegiance to His Highness Sultan Selim I (who is in Heaven) and have found shelter in his mercifulness from that date onwards, have endeavored to prove that they are true Muslims and Ottomans by being part of all affairs and concerns of the State.

We know that malicious foreigners have made many accusations against Muslims in this region. Nevertheless we have both material and immaterial evidence that will reveal to friends and foes alike the true nature of these accusations. To Europe, and particularly to England which proclaims that we are disposed to perform every kind of evil act with fanatical compulsion,

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. Nr. 51. The governor subsequently had them returned to prison (ibid., Nr. 54).

<sup>178</sup> Beysanoğlu 2003: 726–727.



we show as evidence the still intact Armenian monasteries scattered throughout the mountains of Kurdistan.

If the cruelty and conservatism ascribed to us were really the case, then could Europe which earlier trembled before the superior fame of our weapons and crushing power, when everywhere was far from the painful influence of foreign intervention, have prevented us from razing those shrines to the ground?

Until now, we have adhered to one of Islam's just laws [i.e. to respect the religion of others, particularly 'people of the book'], and our faith is an assurance that we will continue to do so now and in the future, that any populace [*kavim*] living subserviently under the mercy and protection of the Government to which we are subjects should be protected against any attack.

It is understood from the rumors that are circulating and the dealings being discussed that the Six Provinces, among the important regions of our holy homeland, will be granted to the Armenians under privileges called 'reform' (*islahat*). This effort to separate these six provinces from our Ottoman homeland has overwhelmed us all with sorrow and has turned every Islamic house into an abode of lament. Since no solution or reason necessitates reform, and because we anticipate many acceptable improvements out of protection and clemency from our Government to which we are subject, we earnestly request that this reform not be left in the malicious claws of a small group of people who, instigating a number of harmful actions, have stirred up an armed revolt under pressure of hateful motivations. It is clear that the Armenians currently live under much happier conditions than the Muslims and are not as destitute and pitiful as they claim but, in reality, in this area own many places of work and have capital. Feeling discontented with their current advantages, they will surely strive passionately to acquire still more privileges and to realize other unnecessary benefits that are contrary to Islamic Law. Based on injustice and not on reform, they have made such plans containing unlawful and damaging thoughts their goal. Since the day we heard the painful news about plans being drawn up for the future of the Six Provinces, we have been worried and agitated. With each passing minute, all of us—men, women and children together—watch with feverish eyes how such events will unfold. When one forgets these pressures and fabrications, how can one explain, using theories about justice that never fail to be the subject of speeches by European statesmen, the abolishment of clear rights for Muslims and the assignment of privileges that are only suitable for minorities? And all the while remembering that Muslims have still not indulged in actions against Armenians that would infringe upon their rights to justice and fairness, although, according to official figures and practical evidence, Muslims are far superior in terms of power and numbers.

We also want justice. The intention of the Armenian traitors is to break the holy bond between Muslims in this region, people who are the bravest and most loyal subjects of the State and the Grand Caliphate. We cannot tolerate such actions. Like our grandfathers before us, our principal task is to work for the glory of the Caliphate and to augment its population. This is the road upon which we will travel, to death. If we remain silent, then we will

surely be crushed between the rightful scolding of our grandchildren and the curses of our grandfathers. From every corner of the world, the hopes and tender gazes of more than 150 million Muslims are focused upon us. Let Allah, his Prophet and the Caliph bare witness that we shall not refrain from sacrificing our own lives and those of our spouses and children for the sake of the task before us... We proclaim unanimously that we will spoil, with our blood, the lines and the pages of the privileges, which will be given to the Armenians...<sup>179</sup>

This document sheds clear light on key elements of the motivation of the group. Clearly, the Armenians are seen as traitors, discontent with their already superior position and desiring to overturn the status quo endorsed by Islam. The letter does not seem to support the provocation thesis as such—with no reference, for example, to the church protests—but rather expresses a sense of injustice and outrage at the path being followed. The reforms are regarded as a crucial step on the way to Armenian independence and needing to be prevented by all means available, including violence. In this regard, the final sentence is particularly ominous. Most strikingly—in fact, astonishingly—although the document was actually sent after the massacre, there is only reference to possible violent events in the future. It appears as if the text had been prepared in a vacuum—or beforehand—without, that is, any knowledge of the mayhem and killing that had supposedly just transpired. Perhaps, one is led to speculate, it was prepared even as the awful events were unfolding, in the very midst of the carnage.

In retrospect, therefore, the telegram appears more as a justification, as the testimony indeed, apology even, of individuals who have decided to take matters into their own hands (or at least justifying those who had and implying complicity). This would appear to have been an initiative made regardless of government decisions, but might actually be better interpreted as arising from them, notwithstanding the signatories' repeated stress of their loyalty to the Caliphate and Sultans. Indeed, this show of support is to the Caliphate as an institution, to the office of the Sultan in general, as an abstraction, and individually only in a historical sense (to Selim I). Supplication, esteem, reference even to the actual Sultan at the time, Abdülhamid II, are, one cannot help but observe, completely absent from the main body of the missive.

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid. pp. 727–729. I thank Emrullah Akgündüz for correcting the translation.

French Consul Meyrier learnt of another protest telegram dated December 30, 1895,<sup>180</sup> but it appears that he and his British colleague did not discover the identity of its authors until early the following March. On the 6th of that month, Meyrier reported to his ambassador about '*Un Parti de la Jeune Turquie composé d'une vingtaine des principaux meneurs dans les derniers événements*'.<sup>181</sup> A few days later Hallward wrote:

One of the principal elements of disorder here is the so-called 'Young Turk' party, which numbers several adherents in this town, among them some of the worst characters in the place. The *Vali* is also in league with them. It is difficult to take these individuals seriously, who combine patriotism with plunder, and who compare the present state of things in this country with that existing in France at the time of the revolution.<sup>182</sup>

According to British Vice-Consul Hallward, their idea was 'to foment disturbances in order to provoke European intervention and the downfall of the Sultan'; French Vice-Consul Meyrier described the goal of the group in identical terms.<sup>183</sup> Both Consuls supply names of members of the group, three of which—in another detail the significance of which seems difficult to exaggerate—correspond to those of the members of the committee mentioned by Beysanoğlu: Arif Efendi, Talat Efendi and Nazif Bey.<sup>184</sup> There seems to be no doubt that the historian and the Consuls refer to the same committee.

Researchers of the 'Young Turk' movement are aware that there was a cell in Diyarbekir at the time. However, they have apparently not noticed that some of the most influential people in the Muslim establishment were listed as members. Talat Efendi was Mayor of Diyarbekir at that time.<sup>185</sup> Piriçizade Arif (?–1909) was father-in-law and Süleyman Nazif (1870–1927) uncle to Ziya (Gökalp), later ideologist of Turkish nationalism, known to have joined the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki*), which emerged from the Young Turk movement, only after 1898.<sup>186</sup> Ahmet Cemil Paşa (1837–1902), another name mentioned by the

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<sup>180</sup> MY Nr. 98.

<sup>181</sup> MY Nr. 124.

<sup>182</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 1, 18. A source recently also noticed by a Turkish historian (Kırmızı 2007: 196).

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 18; MY Nr. 124.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 41.

<sup>186</sup> Hanoğlu 1995: 120–121. According to Hanoğlu, the cell in Diyarbekir was founded by Abdullah Cevdet, one of the founders of the CUP and a medical doctor in Diyarbekir in

Consuls, but unmentioned as a signatory to the telegram, was the most prominent figure among the group.

Members of the group whom the Consuls personally accused of involvement in anti-Armenian violence included Nazif Bey, Arif Efendi and Cemil Paşa. Hallward called Nazif a 'disturber of the peace and a most objectionable young man'.<sup>187</sup> Arif Efendi is said to have played 'a prominent part in the massacre'.<sup>188</sup> It was Cemil Paşa, however, at whom Meyrier and Hallward directed their most severe criticisms. An ex-governor of Yemen and probably at that time the most important and richest Muslim notable of the town, the Paşa was said to be 'known for his fanaticism'.<sup>189</sup> The Consuls considered him one of the main instigators of the disturbances.<sup>190</sup> They not only accused him of playing a prominent role in the disturbances of November 1895 but also of continuing his anti-Armenian politics thereafter. Thus, in April 1896, Cemil Paşa was said again to have sent telegrams to the Sultan warning of new disturbances should the reforms be executed.<sup>191</sup>

In May, as we will later see, when Pirinçizade Arif was already banned from the city, Cemil Paşa and his sons were said to have arranged with Kurdish tribes for a renewed attack on the Armenians.<sup>192</sup> After the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which brought the CUP to political prominence, some of Cemil Paşa's many children played important roles in the Kurdish Nationalist Movement. It is intriguing, therefore, that while in his recent book on the *Cemilpaşazadeler*, the author Malmîsanij, himself from the region, does not fail to mention Cemil Paşa's bad reputation according to the diplomatic correspondence of his time, he has learned that according to the family tradition Cemil Paşa did his best to limit the disturbances of 1895 and that a large number of Armenians took refuge in his house.<sup>193</sup>

On this note, it is important to state that there are clear indications that not all Muslims of Diyarbekir took part in the anti-Armenian violence. It is, however, impossible to say who these people were and whether they

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1894–95. Until 1898, it was reported, the cell had been barely operational, confining itself to the distribution of banned publications. See Jongerden 2012, in this volume.

<sup>187</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 26.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. Nr. 72.

<sup>189</sup> MY Nr. 30. See also FO 195/1930 Nr. 29.

<sup>190</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 29 and MY Nrs. 140 ('*Djemil Pacha qui a pris une grande part au pillage et aux massacres*', p. 186), 141, 146 ('*Djemil Pacha... l'organisateur en chef des massacres*', p. 191) and 151.

<sup>191</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 72.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. Nrs. 37 and 41.

<sup>193</sup> Malmîsanij 2004: 25–26.

belonged to any faction. Meyrier testified to the help he received from soldiers and local Muslims in defending the French Consulate. Some of these people received rewards from the French Government.<sup>194</sup> It is remarkable that, contrary to other towns in the eastern provinces, none of the consular reports make mention of participation of any religious leader, such as *şeyhs* or members of the *ulama*. Before the disturbances, for example, Meyrier had identified 'the Şeyh of Zilan' as a troublemaker, but he did not report on his or his follower's participation in the actual violence. This apparent lack of a role for the Muslim religious leaders may be further, albeit tangential, evidence for the Young Turk conspiracy theory.

Clearly more research is needed on the role of Diyarbekir's Muslim elite in the disturbances of 1895.<sup>195</sup> It seems safe to say, however, that some of the most important Muslim inhabitants of the town belonged to or had sympathies for the Young Turk opposition to Sultan Abdülhamid II, that they could mobilize a part of the Muslim population,<sup>196</sup> and that this opposition was a major player in the anti-Armenian unrest. This in itself is a fact with far-reaching implications, both of great importance to the history of the Young Turk opposition and completely at odds with the idea that the Ottoman government organized the massacres. So how did the authorities react?

### *The Governor and the Consuls*

From the very moment of his appointment, *Vali* Enis Paşa, the Governor-General of Diyarbekir, was in conflict with the local Christians. Soon after the massacre, French Vice-Consul Meyrier expressed his belief that the governor had organized it.<sup>197</sup> British Consul Hallward was equally certain and reported that the *Vali* cooperated with the 'Young Turk' faction.<sup>198</sup>

<sup>194</sup> MY Nr. 129. The contemporary French author Victor Bérard relates that, after Diyarbekir quietened down, Muslim notables came to visit Meyrier, and seeing the Consul crying they all wept together (extract from Bérard's *La politique du Sultan* (Paris, 1900) in Meyrier 2000: 228). It is unclear on what source Bérard's information is based, since in his diplomatic reports Meyrier only referred to this event with a few words (MY Nr. 94, p. 133).

<sup>195</sup> See Jongerden 2012, this volume.

<sup>196</sup> Possibly quite a lot of Muslims stayed away from the movement precisely because of its radical bent. The protest telegram of 4 November was undersigned by 400 people, while the smaller Armenian and Syrian communities managed to collect 1,200 signatures to protest against the *Vali*.

<sup>197</sup> MY Nr. 92.

<sup>198</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 1, 18. On the basis of the same source, recently also noticed by a Turkish historian (Kırmızı 2007: 196).

In mid-November 1895, Sultan Abdülhamid II dispatched two high-level commissions to the provinces to restore order. Commissioner Abdullah Paşa and two colleagues arrived in Diyarbekir on December 17.<sup>199</sup> From the first moment they met, the French Consul had a positive impression of Abdullah Paşa, a view shared by his British colleague. Thus a good relationship developed between the personal representative of the Sultan and the foreign representatives. This was not necessarily an advantage to Abdullah Paşa because of the Sultan's potential suspicion of contacts between his officials and the foreign powers. Both Consuls were equally satisfied with Division General Ziya Paşa, the highest military official in Diyarbekir.<sup>200</sup>

The dispatch of the Sultan's Commission would surely have placed the Vali in a delicate position regarding how he should respond to this attempt to impose central authority on his local power. All the indications are that the Vali continued on the same path, in opposition to the Sultan's envoy. He was said to have even secretly supported popular protest against Abdullah Paşa when more than 1,000 Muslims signed a petition to the Sultan objecting to the Commission.<sup>201</sup> Allegedly, in January 1896, Enis Paşa had already assumed the leadership of a 'committee for massacres' that had connections even in the neighboring provinces of Mamuretülaziz and Bitlis.<sup>202</sup> Abdullah Paşa disclosed to the French Consul that the *Vali* probably wanted to generate anti-Armenian riots to demonstrate to the Palace that his Commission was unable to prevent violence. At the same time, he would thus make his own role during the recent massacre appear more acceptable.<sup>203</sup>

During the first week of March 1896, the Young Turks were said to be planning an attack on the Armenians at the end of the Ramadan, with the *Vali* having promised to look the other way.<sup>204</sup> The French and British embassies renewed their diplomatic pressure on the Ottoman Government to dismiss Enis Paşa and ban some of the main Muslim notables from the town.<sup>205</sup> This seems to have had some success. Pirinççizade Arif was banished to Mosul (in present-day Iraq) soon afterwards.<sup>206</sup> In

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<sup>199</sup> MY Nr. 93.

<sup>200</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 48, 49, 72; MY Nrs. 86, 94 (p. 138), 99, 121, 152, 154.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 104.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 103.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 124.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.* Nrs. 122, 137; FO 195/1930 Nr. 53.

<sup>206</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 1, 2, 18; MY Nr. 127.

April 1896, when Abdullah Paşa left Diyarbekir, he took Süleyman Nazif Bey with him as secretary, ostensibly as an honor but in reality as a form of banishment.<sup>207</sup> Despite repeated promises of Ottoman ministers to dismiss him,<sup>208</sup> however, Enis Paşa stayed at his post. A relatively quiet period followed but, to the dismay of the Consuls, the *Vali* continued to show disregard for the plight of the Armenians.<sup>209</sup> There are signs that Enis Paşa deliberately frustrated lower officials who had tried to keep the peace during the massacres. An army officer who prevented Kurds from entering Cizre was summoned to Diyarbekir.<sup>210</sup> Another officer who likewise had defended the town of Silvan against a Kurdish attack was soon threatened with removal.<sup>211</sup>

As *Kurban Bayram (Eid al-Adha)*, the second religious festival of the year, approached, a new crisis appeared imminent. While the *Vali* preferred to stay in Silvan as guest of Hacı Reşid Ağa—thereby displaying his warm relations with a Kurdish leader known for his strong anti-Armenian position<sup>212</sup>—in Diyarbekir, Cemil Paşa and Mayor Talat Efendi were said to be taking preparations for a new assault.<sup>213</sup> The British Vice-Consul reported that at first he had not wanted to pay much attention to the rumors but then discovered that they were ‘well founded and extremely serious’, stating that ‘The plan was as follows: The telegraph wires will be cut, the British and French Consulates attacked, and then the Christians massacred’.<sup>214</sup> It was said that the ‘Young Turks’ convinced the ‘old Turks’ that it was necessary to ‘to finish the Christians, and consequently the Sultan’.<sup>215</sup> This was when Division General Ziya Paşa became the hero of the hour for the Consuls. The General ‘paraded the street day and night in person, practically doing police duty, and disarming and intimidating any suspicious characters whom he found’.<sup>216</sup> Upon the return of Enis

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. Nr. 26; MY Nr. 146.

<sup>208</sup> MY Nrs. 102, 123, 146; FO 195/1930 Nr. 26.

<sup>209</sup> He hindered relief activities, appointed Cemil Paşa as member of a commission to recover stolen goods (MY Nr. 146), and did next to nothing to recover kidnapped women and children.

<sup>210</sup> MY Nr. 107.

<sup>211</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 44. Moreover, Enis Paşa removed the Governor (*mütesarrif*) of Mardin immediately after the successful defense of the city against Kurdish attackers (MY Nr. 107); for the attack on Mardin see Annex B.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid. Nr. 41, MY Nrs. 151, 157.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. Nrs. 37, 41; FO 424/187 Nr. 126; MY Nr. 151.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. Nr. 37; FO 424/187 Nr. 126.

<sup>215</sup> MY Nr. 152.

<sup>216</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 41.

Paşa from Silvan, things started over again. The *Vali* was said to be occupied with organizing a new action group, this time composed of most of the higher bureaucrats of the town.<sup>217</sup> On June 20, ‘certain Turks’ distributed arms and powder to the Kurds, reportedly on the instigation of the *Vali*. Reports about the events in Van—where in the same month a conflict between Muslims and Armenians erupted—aggravated the situation.<sup>218</sup> Meyrier warned of a possible ‘catastrophe’.<sup>219</sup> Again the Consuls (and French missionaries) were to be the primary targets.<sup>220</sup> The French Consul assisted in discovering a powder depot in the house of a Muslim and complained that he had become almost like the town’s police chief.<sup>221</sup> British Consul Hallward wrote on the same day:

The present position . . . is that the Christians of this *Vilayet* after being deliberately massacred, plundered and maltreated in every conceivable way are after an interval of more than seven months still kept in a perpetual state of terror and fear of other outrages by a mere caprice of the Government, for the removal of Ennis Pasha and the appointment of a decent man would undoubtedly go for a long way towards tranquillizing this unfortunate province, and as long as he is here there will certainly not be anything like tranquillity.<sup>222</sup>

The French and British embassies again exerted strong pressure on the Ottoman Government to dismiss the *Vali*.<sup>223</sup> For some reason, presumably because of strict orders from the Sultan to his governor, the situation in Diyarbekir finally brightened somewhat. Even news of the capture of the Ottoman Bank in Istanbul by Armenian revolutionaries and the subsequent bloody massacre of Armenians in August 1896 there could not dislodge the relative peace that had returned.<sup>224</sup> On 7th November of that year, Enis Paşa was finally dismissed from his post.

Thus, in Diyarbekir, we are confronted with the exceptional situation of two foreign representatives strongly and consistently accusing the governor of the province not only of organizing the attacks on Armenians but also of cooperating with the most feared Muslim opponents of the Sultan.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid. Nr. 48; FO 424/187 Nr. 207; MY Nrs. 160, 162.

<sup>218</sup> MY Nr. 164. On Van see Verheij 1999: 88–89.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. Nr. 159; FO 424/187 Nr. 191.

<sup>220</sup> MY Nr. 160.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. Nr. 162.

<sup>222</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 48.

<sup>223</sup> FO 424/188 Nr. 45.

<sup>224</sup> FO 195/ 1930 Nr. 72. Nor did a telegram from Arif Efendi to his son that he would return to the city ‘in a high function’ cause much unrest (Ibid.).



During other conflicts in 1895 there were more instances of high officials who were not impartial or who openly favored the Muslims. However, no official stood accused of partiality and complicity to the extent of Enis Paşa. No other *Vali* in the eastern provinces is supposed to have been a 'Young Turk', at least, not to this author's knowledge.

Of course sources do reflect to a degree the mindset, position and role of their authors, and in this case particular caution is necessary regarding the impartiality of the consular documents. Although the reports of both Meyrier and Hallward attest to their professionalism, both Consuls were probably quite vulnerable to the many rumors that circulated in the town. Since the consular assistants and translators were Armenian, much of their information probably came from Armenian sources or was colored by the Armenian/Christian perspective.<sup>225</sup>

Many British reports on the massacre period of 1895 offer interesting insights into the undercurrents in the Armenian community, including the activities of the revolutionaries, but such detail on Armenian political life is largely absent in the consular reports on Diyarbekir. In this respect, the set of consular reports on the events in Diyarbekir parallel those of the Ottomans, in which information on the Muslim community is equally scarce.<sup>226</sup> Finally, and rather significantly it would seem, there is no indication whatsoever in the reports of the Consuls that the central government played a negative role. On the contrary, Abdullah Paşa, who supposedly had the strong backing of the Sultan, was highly praised. Orders from the central government appear to have been helpful in calming the situation.

### *The Role of the Kurds and the Hamidiye*

The Kurds, tribal and non-tribal, sedentary and (semi-)nomadic, were the predominant Muslim population group in the countryside of Diyarbekir Vilayet.<sup>227</sup> As observed, town Muslims during this period, although often

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<sup>225</sup> French Consul Meyrier, who saw the horrors of the massacres with his own eyes and was thoroughly shocked by the experience, appears as something of a partisan of the Christian/Armenian cause. Having arrived after the events, British Vice-Consul Hallward generally took a less emotional view of events.

<sup>226</sup> In the British case, one of the reasons for this particular situation in Diyarbekir was possibly that there was no American mission station in the town. The missionaries, who often knew several local languages, in other places often supplied the British consuls with a wealth of detailed information on the Armenian community.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 78.

'kurdophone', generally did not consider themselves Kurds and were not regarded thus.

In the city of Diyarbekir, Kurds from the countryside were apparently *not* involved in the 1st–3rd November massacre, although they probably wanted to take part.<sup>228</sup> Several times, groups of Kurds entered the city in the months thereafter, ostensibly to join in disturbances that did not materialize.<sup>229</sup> There was strong Kurdish involvement in the violence everywhere else in the vilayet, however. In several instances Kurds attacked or beleaguered towns. This occurred in towns like Çermik, Çüngüş, Palu, Hani, Lice, Silvan, Mardin and Cizre. In virtually all parts of the province, bands of Kurds were also responsible for attacking and plundering Armenian and Syrian villages.<sup>230</sup>

In view of the widespread impression that the Hamidiye were mainly to blame for the 1894–1896 massacres, I have tried to ascertain who these Kurds were (particularly to which tribes they belonged), and whether they were enlisted in Abdülhamid's cavalry. In the case of the northern part of the province, where the worst anti-Armenian violence took place, many sources allude to the role of Kurds although the names of tribes are rarely mentioned. Some names of individual Kurdish leaders who played important roles are given. The responsible Kurds in Silvan in particular were well known to the foreign consuls. Names that regularly appear are those of Hacı Reşid Ağa, Hakkı Bey, Sadık Bey and Muharrem Bey—the first of these, Hacı Reşid Ağa, in the words of Vice-Consul Hallward, 'perhaps responsible for more murder and plunder than any other Kurd in the *Vilayet*'.<sup>231</sup> As noted before, Kurdish tribes from Silvan had been involved

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<sup>228</sup> Meyrier's information on this subject is somewhat confusing. Evidently he was at first under the impression that Kurds from outside entered the town. In one of his first reports, written while disturbances were still continuing, he says that 'the Kurds from the countryside entered the city' (MY Nr. 34 p. 86) and that Kurds attacked the consulate five times (MY Nr. 54). Two days later he wrote '*les Kurds sont encore devant les murs de la ville*'. (MY Nr. 41 p. 90). In his main report on the massacres he noted that Kurds had taken part in the massacre, but that the tribal Kurds ('ces hordes sauvages') did not enter the town (MY Nr. 94 p. 131). British Consul Hallward later summarized: 'Christians were killed by the Muslims of the town aided by a few Kurds from outside' (FO 185/1930 Nr. 18).

<sup>229</sup> MY Nr. 101 p. 147 reporting that 2,500 armed Kurds entered the town; MY Nr. 125 p. 171 (in March 1896).

<sup>230</sup> For an overview of events in the countryside of Diyarbekir province, see Annex B.

<sup>231</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 24. Elsewhere he branded him 'the greatest criminal in the *Vilayet*' (Ibid. Nr. 39). According to Lehmann-Haupt 1910: 393 Hacı Reşid Ağa was leader of the Silvan tribe. Hacı Reşid Ağa had apparently great influence over the Bad(i)kanlı tribe, one of the tribes that were strongly involved in the Sasun conflict. In June 1896, for example, he instigated an attack of the Badikanlı on an Armenian village in the Silvan area (MY Nr. 107).

in the Sasun conflict as well, and their actions might well have been taken out of revenge for what, from their perspective, was the Armenian revolt some two years previously. It is noteworthy that the Kurdish attackers of villages very close to Diyarbekir were said to be from Sasun.<sup>232</sup> In Siverek, a Kurdish notable named Osman Ağa was considered to be the main perpetrator.<sup>233</sup> It remains unclear whether these leaders were tribal chieftains. Most likely they held no position in the Hamidiye.

In Mardin, however, involvement of the Hamidiye is certain. One Reşid Bey, from Mardin and an officer in the Hamidiye (not to be confused with his namesake in Silvan), was taken to Diyarbekir for his part in the assault on the Armenians of Tel Armen (Kızıltepe).<sup>234</sup> It seems that in Cizre, Mustafa Paşa tried to enter the city to attack the Christians but was repelled by the Ottoman army.<sup>235</sup> In fact, this apparently slight participation of the Hamidiye in Diyarbekir is not surprising, since most Hamidiye regiments were stationed in the west and south of the province, where few Armenians lived.<sup>236</sup> In just a few cases were Kurds called to account for their participation in the violence. Some Kurds from the central district and Çermik and Mardin districts, were brought to Diyarbekir to stand trial.<sup>237</sup> Most of the Kurds from Silvan, notably Hacı Reşid Ağa, continued to enjoy the trust and protection of the provincial government.<sup>238</sup>

As was the case with the urban Muslims, sources sometimes refer to Kurds who did not take part in the anti-Armenian violence or indeed even protected Armenians.<sup>239</sup> There are few clues as to who these Kurds were and why they avoided and shielded Armenians from the violence. Knowing that many Kurds were loyal to tribal leaders and would probably not act individually in protecting Christians, there must be patterns in this

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<sup>232</sup> ABC reel 695, 25.11.1895. On the attacks on the villages close to the city, see also Jongerden 2012: 74, in this volume.

<sup>233</sup> FO193/1930 Nr. 39, Hallward to Currie, 13.5.1896.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid. Nrs. 24 and 62 (called here 'the principal plunderer in the Mardin district'). See also BOA A.MKT.MHM 637-28 and 29. Reşid Bey probably belonged to the Kiki tribe.

<sup>235</sup> MY Nr. 107 ('*Conduite des musulmans à Mardin et à Djezireh*') pp. 158–159. The Ottoman officer responsible for the defense of Cizre was summoned to Diyarbekir upon complaint of Mustafa Paşa (ibid., p. 159). On Mustafa Paşa, see the contribution by Janet Klein 2012, in this volume.

<sup>236</sup> See the list of Hamidiye regiments in the Diyarbekir Vilayet in Atabay 2007: 586–590, 595; and Klein 2012: 154–155 (in this volume).

<sup>237</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 24 and 62.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. Nrs. 24, 26, 29. Sadık Bey from Silvan was arrested (Ibid., Nr. 29).

<sup>239</sup> In FO 195/1930 Nr. 91 Vice-Consul Hallward reports that in September 1896, Armenians of the village of Hüseyinan (now Sulubağ) fled to neighboring Kurdish villages in order to avoid the tax collectors. He added that there, 'at least they are not pressed.'

behavior. In Nusaybin, for example, a Hamidiye regiment of the Arabic Tay tribe was said to be involved in restoring order.<sup>240</sup> Various authors allude to the protecting role assumed by Milli chief İbrahim Paşa in 1895.<sup>241</sup> Remarkably, I found no reference to his role, in either the consular files on Diyarbekir or the collected Ottoman sources on the province. This might be explained just by the fact that İbrahim Paşa's power base in 1895, Viranşehir, was outside the province at that time.

In other parts of the Six Provinces there were instances of Kurds claiming that they attacked Armenians on the request of the Sultan. Some even claimed they could produce documents to prove this.<sup>242</sup> I did not come across such cases or documentation in Diyarbekir.

### CONCLUSIONS

Against a background of rising tensions between Armenians and Muslims, particularly since the 1894 events in Sasun, the 1895 crisis in Diyarbekir had two main immediate causes: Christian/Armenian protests against the local government and the proclamation of the reforms for 'the Six Provinces'. The protest that created much tension in the city is clearly a forgotten chapter in the story, particularly in Western/Armenian historiography. The involvement of revolutionary groups is plausible but still needs to be researched.

Regardless of whether they should be termed a 'provocation', the protests against the governor certainly were a factor stimulating Muslim anxiety. Delving deeper into the question whether the action by Armenians initiated the 1st–3rd November carnage by attacking the mosques, the Ottoman evidence is found to be ambivalent and unconvincing. Thus, it is difficult to comprehend the events in the city as an 'Armenian revolt', unless one wishes to adhere to the contemporary Ottoman view that all protest by Christians was in principle intolerable, and even peaceful protest a revolt. On the other hand, because events in Diyarbekir city cost the lives of a relatively high number of Muslims, they cannot be classified as the 'typical massacre' of Armenians that occurred in other cities in the eastern provinces in the autumn of 1895. During the ensuing confrontation with the Muslims elsewhere in the province of Diyarbekir, the Armenian

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<sup>240</sup> ABC reel 695, 25.11.1895.

<sup>241</sup> Jongerden 2012: 64, 74 (in this volume).

<sup>242</sup> Verheij 1999: 104–105, 125 note 208.

armed resistance did not amount to much and could not prevent scores of victims. At several locations these did amount to the 'typical massacres'. The violence extended to Syrians as well as Armenians.

Ironically, the second factor that triggered the crisis was the reforms pressed for so hard by the European powers. Intended to calm the situation down, they had exactly the opposite effect. To the Ottoman-Muslim mind of the day, they represented the first step towards Armenian independence. Stimulated by the pan-Islamist ideology of the period and fed by hearsay and intrigue upon the lack of clarification from the Porte, this interpretation, was certainly exaggerated, but all indications suggest that it was nevertheless real. The European powers themselves seem to have been largely unaware of the unsettling effects of their attempts at reform on the Ottoman social fabric. Equally, this aspect has failed to attract the attention of historians.

Plans for an attack against the Diyarbekir city Armenians in November 1895 were perceivable to some degree, although it does appear that the disturbances were just as much the result of the incredibly heated atmosphere in the town resulting from the two immediate causes mentioned above. The degree of distrust between Armenians and Muslims was such that even the smallest incident could have led to disaster. Although it may seem strange in retrospect, Muslims much feared Armenian attacks as well. As the response of Abdülhamid's special envoys demonstrate, disturbances could probably still have been avoided had a wise and proactive local governor been present. Because of the resolute action taken by local military authorities, seemingly better planned and potentially more dangerous initiatives by some of Diyarbekir's city Muslims fizzled out after November 1895. Diyarbekir's governor at the time was clearly not the right man to quell the unrest, and most particularly as he remained accused of being in league with some of the strongest advocates of violence in his province.

The most striking element during the Diyarbekir crisis is the role and position of the urban Muslim elite, part of which clearly acted in opposition to the Sultan. Both French and British sources reveal what they call the 'Young Turk' connections of important figures in Diyarbekir's society. Historians of the Young Turk movement seem to be unaware of the episode, although some of its main actors are well known and continued to play major roles in the movement later. At the same time, given the diffuse character of the opposition movement, with leading figures often moving in different directions, a warning should be issued against drawing general conclusions on 'the' role of 'the' Young Turks during the 1895

massacres. Before 1908 the Young Turks were generally supportive of the Armenian cause. The Diyarbekir case points at the existence of another, anti-Armenian current, that would, in time, be embraced by most of the CUP leaders. In this context, one wonders what traces the strong anti-Armenian position of the members of the Diyarbekir committee left on Ziya Gökalp, who was to play such an important role in the later development of Young Turk and Turkish nationalist thinking. In Diyarbekir, Muslim opposition developed as antipode of Armenian nationalism. Only later would it acquire Turkish and Kurdish colors.

In the countryside, where many more incidents of violence have been revealed than previously known, an element of Muslim opposition to the government can also be seen. Data is reasonably well documented for Palu where the former elite tried to win back lost privileges. No indication has been found that such opposition included anything like the new political-ideological inspiration that existed in the provincial capital. Neither has much evidence of Hamidiye involvement been revealed in the rural areas generally, notwithstanding the fact that Kurds featured much more heavily as identifiable perpetrators there than in urban environments.

The important question arises of whether Diyarbekir city was a special case or whether Muslims acted in clear opposition to the central government in other towns as well. To answer this question, clearly much more research into local history is necessary. For the time being, Diyarbekir does appear to be a unique case, but one casting serious doubt on the classical theory that Sultan Abdülhamid II directly organized the massacres. The year 1895, often seen as a bloody apogee of the Sultan's power, appears here much more like the collapse of his system. The Sultan himself appears to have been caught between his own inclination 'to teach the Armenians a lesson' and the multiple forms of other opposition (from the Powers, of the Muslim citizens) that were unleashed. In 1895, the Islamism that he had fostered so carefully for most of his reign to that point turned out to be a nearly uncontrollable force. Indeed, in the light of this account of events in Diyarbekir, those who use the designation 'revolt' for the Armenian position might be wise to contemplate whether the same characterization might be more fitting for some Muslims of the period, with Armenians as victims. Why this might have occurred in Diyarbekir and not in other cities would be a matter for further investigation. For now, one conclusion may safely be drawn. In the late 19th century, Diyarbekir, that black-walled, ancient city on the banks of the Tigris, was just as it remains today—a hotbed of political activism and stage upon which are written some of the tragic pages of history.

## REFERENCES (INCLUDING THOSE FOR ANNEX B)

*Source Abbreviations*

- BOA: Ottoman archives (see Documents, Ottoman Empire)  
 DDO: Şimşir, Bilâl N. 1999 (Vol. 3) (see Documents, Ottoman Empire)  
 FO: Foreign Office (see Documents, Great Britain)  
 HNP: Hüseyin Nâzım Paşa 1998 (see Documents, Ottoman Empire)  
 MY: Meyrier 2000 (see Documents, France)  
 OA: Osmanlı Atlası (see Books and Articles)  
 PP: Parliamentary Papers (see Documents, Great Britain)  
 SB1...SB4: Şimşir 1982–1990 (see Documents, Ottoman Empire)

*Documents, Archival Sources**Ottoman Empire*

## Unpublished documents

- BOA. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi—Prime Ministry, Ottoman Archives (Istanbul)  
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*All documents written by Hallward (British Vice-Consul in Diyarbekir) unless stated otherwise. Document numbers assigned by the author of this article (i.e. not official).*



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STATE, TRIBE, DYNASTY, AND THE CONTEST OVER DIYARBEKIR  
AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Janet Klein

With the beginning of Kurdish nationalism in the 20th century the city of Diyarbekir (Amed) has been a key site of struggle between Kurdish nationalists and the state as Kurdish nationalists have claimed the city as the capital of greater Kurdistan. However, Diyarbekir's role as a site of contest between center and periphery/state and tribe/Turkish nationalist and Kurdish nationalist has been much more complex than this over the past century. Indeed the city and its environs (the larger Diyarbekir province) has represented the battlefield over much larger issues, even if these were later regarded in competing nationalist histories as *national*. Central to these struggles, regardless of how they have been represented in competing nationalist discourses, has been the contest between state and local forces for authority, resources, power, allegiance, and only later, identity. A critical moment and place in the twists and turns of these events was turn-of-the-twentieth-century Diyarbekir, where the Ottoman state combined time-honored strategies of divide-and-rule with modern state-building technologies in its creation of a Kurdish tribal militia that it envisioned would serve as its proxy force in its eastern-most regions that were under threat—real or perceived—from within and without. The Hamidiye Light Cavalry, named after Sultan Abdülhamid II, who served as its chief patron, was an institution that transformed the Diyarbekir province along with the other regions in which it was active; and its tenure, designed to combat local and cross-border challenges to Ottoman authority, had far-reaching consequences beyond what its patrons had envisioned. This chapter examines the state's vision for the Hamidiye Light Cavalry and the unforeseen tensions that arose as this Kurdish tribal militia was put into play in the complex game of power that involved the Ottoman state, Kurdish tribes, Russia, the British, and settled Armenian and Kurdish villagers. As the Diyarbekir province was a focal point of the contest between center and periphery/state and tribe/Turkish nationalist and Kurdish nationalist, this paper will focus on the Hamidiye Light Cavalry in this context, will locate Diyarbekir in the larger story of Ottoman state-building at the turn

of the 20th century, and will examine the Ottoman state's efforts to co-opt a group that it ultimately sought to suppress.

Throughout the course of the twentieth century, the city of Diyarbekir became symbolic in the struggle for an independent Kurdish state as the capital of this would-be state. Kurdish nationalist maps today indicate Diyarbekir as the capital of an imagined independent Kurdistan, and Kurds from around the world monitor events in the city of Diyarbekir closely, as it has generally been the key site of protest, of demonstrations, of Newroz celebrations, and the center of contest between the Turkish state and Kurdish political parties. Kurdish nationalist discourse often projects the importance of Diyarbekir—or Amed—back in time, lending its importance historical significance and rootedness in the past. However, there are a few problems with this invented history. First, is the location of the city of Diyarbekir—or Amed—within the Ottoman province (*vilayet*) of Diyarbekir, for the city was the seat of the Ottoman province and was, since the time of its incorporation into the empire, strongly influenced by larger Ottoman political and social dynamics even if parts were in fact largely autonomous. Second, some of the key figures of the past who have risen to importance in Kurdish nationalist discourse—such as the Bedirhans as the primary example—were centered in other parts of the province, not the capital, and initially saw these other areas as the sites of contest with the state over local authority. And although these struggles have since been portrayed as nationalist, they were, in fact, chiefly about issues that had little to do with identity politics per se, although, as we will see below, these very struggles did help to shape and crystallize the emergent identities that developed as they played out.

The unit of analysis for this volume is the Ottoman province of Diyarbekir, but in the pages that follow I will demonstrate that we need to look at Diyarbekir within an even larger unit of analysis—"the six eastern provinces" (or, six *Armenian* provinces, as the Europeans dubbed the region)—and at the same time examine some micro-histories *within* the Diyarbekir province in order to understand what the various struggles that were unfolding at the turn of the twentieth century were actually about. Shifting our perspective will highlight the extent to which Ottoman administrative units were and were not meaningful both for the state and local inhabitants, and will help us to fine-tune our writing of provincial history by better appreciating the benefits and limitations involved. By following interconnected struggles for local power between various state and non-state actors on imperial, governmental, dynastic, and tribal levels the reader will emerge with a more nuanced understanding



of Ottoman provincial history and will also be able to locate the period when some of these struggles began to be waged using a nationalist idiom; this moment provides the context for the emergence of Diyarbekir's centrality to the Kurdish nationalist discourse that emerged later in the twentieth century.

Where do we locate the province of Diyarbekir in Ottoman history? The boundaries of the province had changed over time, but we can say that Diyarbekir has always occupied, among other things, a primary place in two distinct and overlapping Ottoman policy spheres—one as a region that had many parts subject to special arrangements between the state and Kurdish notables,<sup>1</sup> and the second—related to the first—as a province in the eastern borderlands, and, as such, a province whose importance was largely determined by perceived threats across the borders—earlier Iran, then later Russia. This external threat became magnified in the late nineteenth century following the Russo-Ottoman War, when a small Armenian revolutionary/nationalist movement emerged in the wider eastern Anatolia region; since there were some ties between these “rebels” and Russia, the central Ottoman government perceived a greater threat that linked the two. It is in this context that we see the emergence of the “six eastern provinces” as a strategic unit in Ottoman policy-making circles. This unit was not demarked administratively, but much like the *Olağanüstü Hal Bölgesi* (“State of Emergency Region”) of Turkey one century later,<sup>2</sup> the “six eastern provinces” became a military unit of focus under the jurisdiction of the Fourth Army after the region was targeted by Europeans for reforms that would benefit the Armenian population who lived there. Diyarbekir province occupied a central position in this larger unit whose Ottoman identity in official circles was one constituted by threats—rebellious Kurdish dynasties and tribes who enjoyed more authority on the ground

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<sup>1</sup> See Baki Tezcan, “The Development of the Use of ‘Kurdistan’ as a Geographical Description and the Incorporation of this Region into the Ottoman Empire in the 16th Century,” in Kemal Çiçek, ed., *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, Vol. 3, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), 540–553; Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> *Olağanüstü Hal Bölgesi* (OHAL), or Region of Emergency Rule, was created in 1987 by the Turkish military in response to the armed uprising of the PKK, which began in 1984. All local civil government was effectively subordinate to the OHAL “super governor,” i.e., military, administration. Although it was abolished in 2002 parts of the region still feel like they are under OHAL rule, and indeed are considered to be a security zone (*güvenlik bölgesi*). There have also been recent efforts by right-wing nationalist groups in Turkey to officially reinstate emergency rule in the Kurdish-inhabited regions. Diyarbakır was one of the last provinces from which emergency rule was officially lifted.

in many parts than did the state and its agents, and “seditious” or “treasonous” Armenian rebels, who threatened to sever a piece of the empire, apparently in cahoots with Russia, or so it was feared. It was the focus of international attention, precisely because of foreign interest in the “Armenian question,” such that it was designated in 1878 in the Berlin settlements following the Russo-Ottoman War as a region targeted for “reforms.” From the perspective of the Ottoman state, then, Diyarbekir, as part of the larger “six eastern provinces,” was a zone of military interest and activity particularly because of this unique combination of external and internal “threat.” But aside from wars with foreign countries—most notably with Russia 1877–78—the six eastern provinces, Diyarbekir included, did not comprise a zone in which the regular military was prominent. Instead, it was a fuzzy blend of state and non-state actors who came to the fore and whose organization impacted the region enormously from 1890—the year of its creation—forward. This was the Hamidiye Light Cavalry—a Kurdish tribal militia created by Sultan Abdülhamid II to serve as a proxy force to deal with these threats, real or perceived. And although, as the other articles in this volume indicate, there were many complex circumstances that faced inhabitants of the Diyarbekir province, I suggest that the dynamics exemplified by the power struggles that were exacerbated by this tribal militia’s existence form a central part of the story of Diyarbekir at the turn of the twentieth century.

#### THE HAMIDIYE LIGHT CAVALRY

The story of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry<sup>3</sup> began with a journey—the voyage in the spring of 1891 of select Kurdish chiefs and their retainers from the empire’s remote eastern borderlands to the capital to meet their sultan and caliph, Abdülhamid II. The tribal leaders had been chosen to gather their tribesmen into irregular cavalry regiments, which they would head.<sup>4</sup> The sultan named this organization, which would come to be widely

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<sup>3</sup> Parts of the following sections are adapted from my book, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), and my article, ‘Çevreyi İdare Etmek: Osmanlı Devleti ve Hamidiye Alayları’, in *Tarihsel Perspektiften Türkiye’de Güvenlik Siyaseti, Ordu ve Devlet*, edited by Evren Balta-Paker and İsmet Akça, (Istanbul: Bilgi, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> For the visit of the tribal chiefs to Istanbul see Russo 1995: especially pp. 34–37; Chermiside to White, Confidential Draft No. 16, May 5, 1891 (FO 195/1718); and Hampson to White, No. 108 Political, Erzurum, Nov. 14, 1891 (FO 195/1729).

regarded as one of his most prized projects, after himself—Hamidiye—to emphasize the personal relationship and bond of loyalty he wanted the Kurdish tribes to recognize not only to the empire, but to his person.

A number of objectives were to be accomplished through the formation of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry.<sup>5</sup> Şakir Paşa, who had served in the Ottoman diplomatic service in Russia and was a close advisor to the sultan, appears to be responsible for the idea for the militia. He thought that a Cossack-like institution for the empire's tribal peoples would help to address a number of issues on the Russian and Iranian frontier districts the central Ottoman government viewed as being of primary importance.<sup>6</sup> In spite of the centralizing reforms aimed at bringing the region closer within the grasp of the central government, promoted throughout much of the nineteenth century, significant segments of the population remained quite beyond the state's reach, not only in body, but also in spirit. This was the case not only for the mostly Kurdish mobile tribal population, whom the government was barely able to tax, let alone conscript, but also for the Armenian and Kurdish peasantry, for whom the state seemed largely redundant as they were already taxed by local notables and Kurdish *ağas*. The state was also wary of Russia's designs on the region, as Russia had been steadily moving southwards with its eye on the eastern regions of the Ottoman Empire. For several decades, the Russians had formed relationships not only with the Armenians, whose blossoming nationalist movement Russia sought to advance for its own ends,<sup>7</sup> but also with Kurdish tribal leaders as far in the interior of the Ottoman dominions as Dersim.<sup>8</sup> Thus, while the ostensible aim of the new tribal cavalry formation was to increase the forces in existence along the frontier regions, which could serve in case of need against an invasion by Russia, the Hamidiye Light Cavalry was a much more complex mission than this.

It was also to act as a check on this supposed Armenian-Russian alliance and the slow but steady spread of Armenian nationalism in the eastern regions, and particularly against Armenian revolutionary activities. Although they were minimal in the years immediately preceding the formation of the irregular cavalry units, they were on the rise around the

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<sup>5</sup> For varying interpretations on what the sultan hoped to accomplish in forming the Hamidiye see Duguid 1973; Kodaman 1979; Kévorkian 1995; Ergül 1997 and Aytar 1992.

<sup>6</sup> See Ali Karaca, *Anadolu İslahâtı ve Ahmet Şakir Paşa (1838–1899)*, (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1993), esp. pp. 173–182.

<sup>7</sup> Graves to Nicolson, No. 19, Erzurum, June 27, 1893 (FO 195/1804).

<sup>8</sup> Chermiside to White. Report A. Erzurum, Dec. 22, 1888 (FO 195/1617, FO 195/1652).

time the Hamidiye was created. In the following years, then, these activities only reinforced this aspect of the militia's *raison d'être* (although, as I will suggest below, the activities of the Hamidiye actually further antagonized the Armenian population and exacerbated the very conflict the organization was designed to quell).<sup>9</sup>

It is worthwhile to elaborate on this point, as it has been one of the most controversial in the literature on the Hamidiye. "Armenian" scholarship has generally presented the Hamidiye as being concrete evidence of a long-standing Ottoman policy to uproot and annihilate the Armenian population of the empire, particularly those who lived in historical Armenia and its environs. But proponents of this view have generally offered little evidence to support this claim, aside from citing the role of the Hamidiye in the Armenian Genocide, which took place during the First World War, and the massacres of Armenians that bloodied the region from 1894 to 1896, which, incidentally, Verheij has found to have been more the work of urban Muslims and also non-Hamidiye Kurds.<sup>10</sup> In other words, they are citing post-facto events in order to assert what the agendas of the militia's organizers were. Mapping the Hamidiye Regiments can help us to assess this, and other claims.<sup>11</sup> What we find is that while the state did not aim to annihilate the Armenian population of the eastern provinces, the Hamidiye was certainly put together with the so-called Armenian conspiracy in mind. Most of the regiments were in areas where there were substantial Armenian populations, and perhaps more significantly, around points where Armenian revolutionaries were active or which they traversed as they smuggled men and weapons into the empire from across the borders.<sup>12</sup> This is why, incidentally, although the initial plans for the Hamidiye also included Arab and Turkmen tribes, it was Kurdish tribes who formed the overwhelming bulk of these regiments. This is because they were the ones who lived along the threatened and fluid frontier, and

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<sup>9</sup> On the point of aggravating the Armenian revolutionary activity that the organization was supposed to combat, one British consul noted that the Armenian revolutionaries justified their activities, in part, because the state was empowering some Kurds to oust Armenians from their villages (Tyrrell to O'Connor, No. 44, Van, Sept. 28, 1904 (FO 424/206)).

<sup>10</sup> Verheij 1998.

<sup>11</sup> For the map see Klein (2011), Appendix A.

<sup>12</sup> See the map provided by Hratch Dasnabedian in his *Histoire de la Fédération révolutionnaire arménienne Dachnaksoutioun, 1890–1924*, transl. by Haroutiun Kurkjian, (Milan: Oemme Edizioni, 1988), 66; and see also Rouben [Minas Ter-Minassian], *Mémoires d'un Partisan Arménien: fragments*, transl. from Armenian to French by Waik Ter-Minassian, (Provence: Editions de l'aube, 1990), 47.

they were the ones who lived near and amidst the perceived Armenian threat.<sup>13</sup> Because the region as a whole was targeted by Europeans for reforms—as mentioned above—even places like Cizre and Mardin, which had fewer Armenians, were included in this wider venture.

Parts of the Diyarbekir province were central to the Hamidiye operation, namely the regions of Cizre, Mardin, and Viranşehir/Siverek. This is where important tribes were empowered as state proxies. However, a map of the Hamidiye tribes would indicate that the vast majority of them were located in the Erzurum and Van provinces, near the threatened and fluid frontier. This indicates that it was not simply areas with sizeable Armenian populations that were targeted for the project, but particularly those areas where Armenian revolutionary activity was the greatest, and especially those locales where people and weapons were trafficked across the borders with Iran and now especially with Russia. As such, we must examine other aims for the creation and perpetuation of this Kurdish tribal militia beyond the so-called Armenian conspiracy, however central it may have been to certain aspects of the organization when it was in its various stages of planning and implementation. These other reasons also indicate why there were no parallel organizations in heavily Armenian areas further west, but also why the Hamidiye did exist in regions such as the Diyarbekir province, which were further away from the empire's eastern borders, and, in fact, bled into the Aleppo province, which was actually in the territory of the Fifth Army.<sup>14</sup> We must, then, see the venture in terms of not only the state's concerns over the Armenian question, but also of its modernized vision of its "Kurdish policy," and indeed as part of its larger interest in conquering the "tribal zone"<sup>15</sup> in its periphery.

Like many of their contemporaries around the globe, the sultan and his advisors envisioned the militia project as part of a larger civilizing mission. It would be a means to bring the tribal population into the fold, "morally and materially" as they would have said, and to encourage the tribes to settle and become controllable and productive agriculturalists.<sup>16</sup> A parallel institution created around the same time was the Imperial School for Tribes, which was intended to bring the children of select tribal chiefs to

<sup>13</sup> For more on this see Klein (2002), esp. pp. 32–41.

<sup>14</sup> BBOA Y.MTV 110/36 (21 Teşrin-i Sani, 1310); BBOA Y.PRK.ASK 134/3 (4 Teşrin-i Sani, 1315); BBOA Y.PRK.ASK. 134/3 (29 Haziran, 1315).

<sup>15</sup> See Ferguson and Whitehead 1999.

<sup>16</sup> For more on the civilizing mission component of the project see Klein (2002), esp. pp. 73–84 and also Klein (2006).

Istanbul to become educated not only in military matters, but also in the curriculum of Ottoman civilization. Authorities hoped that they would return to their tribes, serve as loyal agents of the state, and act as models for others in their tribes to emulate. Although this school was meant primarily for the Arab population of the empire, it also had a significant body of Kurdish students, many of whom were the sons of Hamidiye chiefs.<sup>17</sup>

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the Hamidiye mission sought to build bonds of loyalty to the state and to the personage of the sultan. Many observers, foreign and Ottoman alike, later commented on the utter military worthlessness of the organization, and realized that it was not ever going to be a bonafide military organization. However, through the vast privileges the sultan and Zeki Paşa, whom he had placed in charge of the project, extended to Kurdish chiefs for their participation in the militia, it was hoped that at the very least in the event of a war with Russia, they would find it in their interests not to form alliances with the enemy.

As the chiefs who had been recruited by Zeki Paşa for the initial phase of the project made their way to the capital, they may have known that they were going to become part of a very important project. However, neither the chiefs nor the sultan and his advisors who created the regiments could have fathomed at the time the larger impact the Hamidiye Light Cavalry organization would have on the trajectory of life and politics in the region not only for the Hamidian period, but quite beyond. The Hamidiye organization played a key role in certain social, economic, and political transformations within Kurdish society quite beyond anything that had been envisioned by its creators or participants at the time of their formation.<sup>18</sup> The remainder of this chapter will focus primarily on these dynamics as they unfolded in the Diyarbekir province, but will also make reference to those in the other parts of the “six provinces” as they must be viewed in this larger context.

#### THE HAMIDIYE IN DIYARBEKIR

The tribes that were enrolled in the Hamidiye in the Diyarbekir province were the Milli, Miran/Keçan, Kiki, Tay, Bilikan, and Karakeçi/Şeyhan, and

<sup>17</sup> See Rogan 1996 and Akpınar 1997.

<sup>18</sup> As Joel S. Migdal puts it, “The . . . coalitional struggles [between states and opposing groups] . . . [take] their toll: state policy implementation and the outcomes in society have ended up quite different from the state’s original blueprints. Even the boldest state plans, as Scott has demonstrated in his discussion of the designs of modernism, can turn into disastrous follies” (Migdal 2001: 12).

Dekori<sup>19</sup> although a number of tribes that were based in provinces across the borders of the Diyarbekir province were—like many of those located within—mobile (or at least semi-nomadic), and their activities did not, then, correspond with administrative demarcations. As such, the Miran tribe often engaged in activities in the neighboring Van, Mosul, and sometimes even Bitlis provinces, and the other Hamidiye tribes in Diyarbekir were active in the regions across the borders where they were based—Aleppo, Zor, and Mamuretülaziz. Furthermore, although some of these tribes were supposed to be enrolled independently, the regiments headed by weaker tribes were frequently absorbed into those headed by tribes grown more powerful through this very venture, with the tribal chiefs of the latter assuming leadership of other tribes' regiments. In this fashion İbrahim Paşa, who headed the Milli tribe based in Viranşehir, absorbed a Karakeçi regiment and had authority over the Bilikan,<sup>20</sup> and Mustafa Paşa of the Miran based in Cizre-Botan sometimes concluded alliances with the Tay<sup>21</sup> and even seems to have assumed control over a Tay regiment.<sup>22</sup> These were not always friendly mergers, but were often contentious acquisitions.<sup>23</sup>

It might seem surprising that military regiments could behave in such a manner. After all, one aim of organizing the Kurdish tribes into regiments—in the eyes of some of its architects, and indeed the sultan himself—was to instill some “discipline” and order, to make the “tribal zone” more “legible” (in Scott’s words),<sup>24</sup> and to expand the arm of the state such that hierarchies were clear. Through this organization tribal leaders were to submit to higher *state* and *state-sanctioned* authorities. But this is not necessarily what happened, and the reasons for this comprise a

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<sup>19</sup> See the list I compiled based on records from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in France, the National Archives (formerly Public Record Office, PRO) in England, and Averyanov 1995 and Avriyanof 1926 (Translation, originally published in Tiflis, 1900 in my Ph.D. thesis (2002), Appendix A). Add to that the list of tribes enrolled or slotted to be enrolled in BBOA Y.PRK.ASK. 31/107 (1310/1892). It is exceedingly difficult to make a list of all the tribes that were *actually* enrolled, or in what capacity, or to confirm which regiment numbers were assigned to which tribes since there is some conflicting information in the various sources.

<sup>20</sup> ‘John Hugh Smith’s Diary of a Journey from Aleppo to Urfa by way of Deir Zor and the Khabur’ (in Sykes 1904, 287); Lamb to O’Conor. No. 2. Confidential. Erzurum., April 15, 1901 (FO 424/202, FO 195/2104) and Lamb to O’Conor. No. 24. Erzurum, Dec. 31, 1901 [FO 424/203; FO 195/2104].

<sup>21</sup> Jones to O’Conor. No. 9. Diyarbekir, Feb. 27, 1900 (FO 424/200, FO 195/2082); Jones to de Bunsen. No. 40. Harput, Oct. 10, 1900 [FO 424/200, FO 195/2082].

<sup>22</sup> Abdullah Yaşın, *Bütün Yönleriyle Cizre*, (Cizre: Dicle Kitabevi, 1983), 25.

<sup>23</sup> See also BBOA Y.PRK.ASK. 134/1 (August 28/ 1313) for more on the Miran-Tay dispute.

<sup>24</sup> Scott 1998.

fascinating slice of history that tells us much about local politics as well as empire-wide and center-periphery dynamics.

MUSTAFA PAŞA AND THE EXPANSION OF THE MIRAN “TRIBAL EMIRATE”

The career of Mustafa Paşa, head of the Miran tribe of Cizre, is a case in point. Mustafa Ağa, or Misto Ağa as he was known before he became a Hamidiye commander, was a notorious bandit in his region, and was on the government’s “most wanted” list for the numerous crimes he had committed, including theft, murder, and pillage.<sup>25</sup> But instead of being made to pay for his crimes, in 1891 Mustafa Ağa was invited to join the new tribal militia, and in the deal that he and many other Kurdish chiefs in similar positions were able to negotiate with Zeki Paşa he was not only granted a pardon for his crimes in exchange for raising two regiments for the new Hamidiye cavalry from his tribesmen,<sup>26</sup> but in the years to follow, was given numerous titles and ranks, gifts from the sultan, and, most importantly, complete freedom of action in his pursuit of wealth and power at the expense of his own and neighboring clients and other tribes.

Mustafa Paşa was one of the first to enroll in the militia. Before they saw the advantages enjoyed through their enrollment, most other tribes were reportedly wary of the government’s intentions in the venture, as they suspected—not without reason—that it was a veiled attempt to force them to submit to more rigid control, and they also believed that if they traveled to the capital for the induction ceremonies they would be held hostage there.<sup>27</sup> But Mustafa Paşa apparently found the deal too sweet to resist and he not only agreed to become part of the scheme, but solicited his services when officials were recruiting in districts further away, near the eastern borders of the empire. He was one of the few Hamidiye chiefs who would receive the rank of Paşa right from the start<sup>28</sup>—if ever—and

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Devey to White, No. 1 Confidential, Erzurum, Jan. 14, 1885 [sic: 1886] (FO 195/1552), and Boyadjian to Wratislaw, No. 4 Political, Confidential, Diyarbekir, Jan. 24, 1888 (FO 195/1617).

<sup>26</sup> Boyadjian to Hampson, Confidential, Diyarbekir, Feb. 24, 1891 (FO 424/169).

<sup>27</sup> Acting vice-consul Boyadjian to Acting Consul Hampson. Confidential. Diyarbekir, Feb. 24, 1891 (FO 424/169). According to Kamal Madhar Ahmad, some viewed the initiative as “demeaning,” while others, who were drawing on their past experiences with the Ottoman government, thought the venture might be some kind of entrapment, as the authorities “frequently resorted to trickery” in their dealings with the tribes (Ahmad 1994: 55 and n. 17).

<sup>28</sup> Chermiside to White. Confidential. Draft. No. 34. Istanbul. Aug. 21, 1891 (FO 195/1718).



he made good use of his rank and standing as he pursued his path to local empowerment, this time with state backing.

Support from the central Ottoman government was an essential element of Mustafa Ağa's rise, and indeed for the ascent of many other Kurdish tribal chiefs. As Martin van Bruinessen has put it, "Chieftains, as tribal ideology has it, reach and maintain their position due to a combination of descent, character ('manliness', i.e. generosity and courage) and consensus of the members of the tribe. In practice, however, their position is based on political skills and the support of outside allies. One of the major functions of a chieftain is to constitute a bridge between the tribe and the world outside, in which other tribes and the state (or states) are the most important actors. The recognition of a chieftain by the state—which in the case of the emirates took the form of sumptuous robes of investiture and beautifully calligraphed deeds of confirmation, and presently at the lowest level that of collusion with the regional *gendarmérie* commander—is the best possible prop of his position." Even in cases of conflict within the leading family of a tribe, "It is usual for both rivals to attempt to enlist the support of the most powerful external forces, i.e. neighbouring tribes and especially a powerful state in the region."<sup>29</sup> Mustafa Ağa had recognized this even before his rise as a Hamidiye Paşa. Sometime around early 1884 he became chief of the most influential tribe in his region through the patronage of the Diyarbekir *vali* (provincial governor). This development unfolded, however, much to the chagrin of other provincial governors, notably that of Van, whose "peaceful inhabitants" suffered from the "depredations" carried out by Mustafa Paşa while they were in their summer pastures in the Van province.<sup>30</sup> It was clear, with all of the mounting protests against his nefarious activities by the time the Hamidiye regiments were being organized, that Mustafa Paşa needed ever more powerful protection—the seal of approval by the sultan himself. With this, which he received in a grand ceremony in Istanbul in the spring of 1891, he expanded the role of the already powerful Miran tribe in the region and gained enormous local power for himself in the process.<sup>31</sup>

What did power mean in late-Ottoman Diyarbekir and nearby provinces for tribes such as the Miran, particularly their leaders or would-be

<sup>29</sup> van Bruinessen 2002: 169–170.

<sup>30</sup> FO 195/1552. Devey, Acting Consul for Kurdistan, to Sir W. A. White, Ambassador. No. 1. Confidential. Erzurum, Jan. 14, 1885 [sic: 1886].

<sup>31</sup> Yaşın 1983: 25 describes his meeting with the sultan in the capital. The account may be rather sensational, but it shows what a legend Mustafa Paşa came to be in Cizre, indeed to this day.

chiefs? While there is no essential “tribalness,”<sup>32</sup> it is helpful to think of the kind of power sought in terms of what Giddens refers to as access to and control over both authoritative and allocative resources.<sup>33</sup> This would hold true for most of the various kinds of tribes there were, and indeed there were many different varieties who engaged in diverse occupations, held different positions in the various sectors of the regional economy, and enjoyed lifestyles that ranged from settled to semi-nomadic, to fully nomadic. The Miran tribe itself was mostly nomadic, and followed a seasonal migration between the Mosul plain, where they wintered, to the south of Lake Van, where they had their summer pastures.<sup>34</sup> It seems that the Miran tribe also had authority over a number of settled or partially settled tribes in their “confederacy,” and thus had access to the agricultural goods produced by sedentary villagers, which were given through trade or tribute to the tribal *ağa*. In the spring season, the tribe would gather in the town of Cizre to conduct their annual business. Here they would sell their goods—wool, mohair, and sheep, for example—and would purchase the products they needed. The annual convention in the city was generally the only time the government had access to the Miran or migratory tribes like them, and it was then that they paid their taxes and also paid substantial tolls to cross the bridge there, as it was the only point of crossing when the Tigris was swollen by spring waters.<sup>35</sup>

Two related—albeit somewhat contradictory—trends in the nineteenth century affected the pursuit of resources for tribal Kurds. One was the expansion of the pastoral sector of the Ottoman economy, and as such, nomadic tribes and their livestock—mainly sheep—adopted an increasingly central position in regional economies.<sup>36</sup> The other was a transformation in property relations stemming from the global commercialization of agriculture, which was accompanied by a substantial rise in the value of land. The bankrupt Ottoman state, which was “setting in motion new policies to secure its domination and to ensure higher returns for its treasury,”<sup>37</sup> further added to this mix. This involved settling nomads

<sup>32</sup> See Asad 1978; Samira Haj 1997: 13–18; Tapper 1990; Beck 1990 and Shields 1992.

<sup>33</sup> Giddens 1985: 7.

<sup>34</sup> Sykes: 460, and Devey to White, No. 1, Confidential, Erzurum, Jan. 14, 1885 [sic: 1886], (FO 195/1552).

<sup>35</sup> Devey to White, No. 1, Confidential, Erzurum, Jan. 14, 1885 [sic: 1886], (FO 195/1552).

<sup>36</sup> Sarah Shields, *Mosul Before Iraq: Like Bees Making Five-Sided Cells*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), esp. Ch. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Samira Haj, “The problems of tribalism: the case of nineteenth-century Iraqi history,” *Social History* 16:1 (January, 1994), 55.

and attempting to take over regional trading centers and routes. It also resulted in the gradual transformation to private property, first with the development of the *tapu* system, a new kind of tenure based on leaseholding. Now individuals were to enjoy legal and heritable rights, with ultimate ownership remaining in the hands of the state.<sup>38</sup> In the long term, these trends produced a transformation in the social organization of tribes and settled communities and their relationships to land and to one another. For pastoral tribes, this entailed the shift to a predominantly agricultural economy, which meant a transition away from a nomadic lifestyle, as the shift in favor of private property and land-holding entailed an accompanying shrinkage in access to pastures. For sedentary villagers engaged in agriculture, the transformation helped bring down largely autonomous household or clan units, and cultivation was then carried out by dependent individuals and families who now worked as tenants and sharecroppers.<sup>39</sup> In the period under review, these changes were already taking place, and in many parts they were by no means peaceful. But the violence that unfolded was not simply the result of ethnic conflict—as outsiders saw it—or of the usual “tribal lawlessness,” as both foreigners and Ottoman officials regarded it. This was about a struggle for an advantageous position (or at least not an overtly *disadvantageous* spot) in the new land regime. It affected all people in the region. Many of the struggles between Hamidiye chief İbrahim Paşa of the Milli tribe in Viranşehir and the Diyarbekir notables that Joost Jongerden treats in this volume were related to these wider transformations. And the protests by peasants over land-grabbing that Nilay Özok-Gündoğan also analyses in this volume (and which I have examined elsewhere)<sup>40</sup> were additionally connected to these broader trends.

The Miran were also touched by these larger developments. As a powerful nomadic tribe it enjoyed a prominent position in the regional pastoral sector of the economy, and as such, its wealth resided mainly in its sheep. Since sheep were such a valuable commodity, they were attractive targets for pillagers, and with the growth of the pastoral sector came an

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<sup>38</sup> Haj, “The problems of tribalism,” 54–55.

<sup>39</sup> Again see Haj, *The Making of Iraq*, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Klein (2011), esp. Ch. 4, and Janet Klein, “Conflict and Collaboration: Rethinking Kurdish-Armenian Relations in the Hamidian Period (1876–1909),” *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, Nos. 1, 2 (July, 2007), 153–166 (also published in *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman Middle East and the Balkans: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz*, edited by Karl Barbir and Baki Tezcan, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Madison Center of Turkish Studies Publications Series, 2007), 153–166.

accompanying expansion of sheep-rustling activities. It was important, then, to be or be attached to a powerful tribe to protect one's investments, for after all a tribe's might—authoritative and “military”—could serve as a deterrent to would-be thieves. This power was also key to attracting business, as sheep merchants would entrust such tribes with the care of their animals as well. It was essential to protect their assets both in their camps as well as on their migratory routes. They needed to prevail over rivals to demonstrate their strength in order to deter attacks, to attract clients, and to diminish rivals' access to resources. For this, they needed a powerful leader. And often, as outlined above, a chief's power came from state backing. Enrollment in the Hamidiye Light Cavalry turned out to provide exceptional support for tribes such as the Miran in their inter-related pursuit of authoritative and allocative resources. And as we shall see presently, their affiliation with this tribal militia also helped to bring their leader—and hence, his tribe—to a hegemonic position in the region. Mustafa Ağa—now a Paşa—stepped up the expansion of his authority and acquisition of resources at the expense of neighboring tribes and clients soon after he enrolled in the Hamidiye, and it became clear to him, his victims, and outside observers alike that those who enrolled in the militia—particularly the more powerful tribes among them—benefitted greatly from their state backing.

One prize that many Hamidiye tribes sought was land, and much of it was usurped throughout the course of the period under review and beyond. This was true for the Miran as well even though they were a nomadic tribe; after all, they had sub-clans and clients who were settled, and they certainly saw the writing on the wall when it came to the value of land ownership. However, it seems that Mustafa Paşa was also interested in acquiring other kinds of wealth. He became infamous for raiding sheep, which would add to his tribe's already substantial flock, and he was a notorious scourge on the Cizre district, seizing goods from merchants and property from villages at will.<sup>41</sup> Mustafa Paşa also used his Hamidiye backing to extract money from villagers without fear of government sanction. One missionary at Cizre put together a list of exactions from three Cizre villages, as a sample he said would “serve as a good specimen of what is going on in all the villages about here during all the time [sic].:

1. By actual measurement of this year's tithes of grain the money equivalent was found to be 4,000 piastres. But Mustafa Pasha bought up the tithe from

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<sup>41</sup> Rassam to Acting-Consul Melvill. Translation. Mosul, Dec. 4, 1900 (FO 424/202).

the Government for 7,500 piastres. He then collected from the village 9,000 piastres hard money.

2. Upon this the villagers complained of him to the Government, which did nothing to the Pasha. But he upon hearing that they complained of him sent droves of sheep to eat up the late crops from five pieces of ground, such as cotton, millet, flax seed, etc. These crops were valued at 2,000 piastres.

These exactions taken altogether foot up 13,500 piastres. The total of taxes for the current year by the Government amount to about 14,000 piastres.

Monsureeyah<sup>42</sup> is a Christian village but one hour from the seat of Government at Jezireh, but the Government does nothing to protect it from the oppression either of Mustafa Pasha's following or of its own officials.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed some Christian villages in the Cizre district complained that they had been plundered by Mustafa Paşa and other local *ağas* so many times—with no assistance from the authorities despite their numerous complaints—that they would soon be forced to vacate their homes.<sup>44</sup> It was admittedly easier to usurp Christian land and property since Armenians in particular could be denounced as revolutionaries<sup>45</sup> and the Hamidiye were, after all, employed to counter these revolutionaries—real or imagined. And in Cizre, where the Armenian population was low, the

<sup>42</sup> Renamed Kurtuluş (I thank Jelle Verheij for this information).

<sup>43</sup> Andrus to Boyajian. Confidential. Cizre, Nov. 17, 1893 (FO 424/178, FO 195/1846). The amount listed by Andrus may actually be too small. Of course it should certainly be mentioned that the villagers were squeezed not only by Mustafa Paşa but by the government and other *ağas* of the region as well. Andrus also includes a list of government exactions, mentioning corrupt tax-collection practices, double collection of taxes from some villages, and the taking of food and supplies by gendarmes and other traveling officials. Appended to this is also a partial list of exactions for one village (Hasana, a mostly Protestant village of some 50 houses, presently named Koyunpınar) alone, which is a massive list of all the forced labor, animals, cash, and harvest taken by the various Şirnak *ağas* for the years 1891–1893. Incidentally, Mohammed Ağa (Muhammad Aghayê Sor) was one of the *ağas* who oppressed these villagers. The list is compared against a list from a decade earlier showing a doubling in the worth of exacted goods and labor. See also “Brief Epitome of Statement received from a Correspondent at Mosul respecting Asia Minor: Partial List of Exactions upon the Village of Mosoria (Kaïmakamlik of Jeziret) by the Government and by Mustapha Paşa, Kocher, in 1893 (Communicated by Evangelical Alliance, March 29, 1895)” (FO 424/181). “Monsureeyah” is the present-day village of Kurtuluş (north-west of Cizre, north of the Tigris). My thanks to Jelle Verheij for providing me with information on the village transformations and names (personal communication, Aug., 2010).

<sup>44</sup> Rassam to Mockler. Translation. Mosul. Feb. 21, 1895 (FO 424/182).

<sup>45</sup> As Captain Dickson noted, the Hamidiye, led by their officers, “make raids on the villages, ill-treat the people, take their cattle and sheep and crops, often killing an odd Armenian as well. These Kurds give as excuse for these raids—if excuse is needed—that the villagers are revolutionaries, or are harbouring revolutionaries, the latter excuse being often true, though quite against the wish of the Armenians” (“Report on the Armenian Position in the Van Vilayet,” enclosed with Dickson to Barclay, No. 4. Van, Sept. 24, 1906 [FO 424/210]).

“Armenian threat” was certainly imagined. But Hamidiye tribesmen also attacked numerous Muslims and their property, and not only in the context of tribal feuds. Mustafa Paşa, for one, assaulted a group of pilgrims on their way to Baghdad<sup>46</sup> and even “remodeled” a mosque in Cizre into his Hamidiye barracks; this seems to have been only one of fifteen such mosques Mustafa Paşa destroyed and used for building materials.<sup>47</sup> He also conducted an extensive river-raft racket through which he ordered his men to force raftsmen on the Tigris to pay a “toll,” and his mafia touched the lives of everyone, regardless of religious background. Sometimes the raftsmen were allowed to pass when they paid the toll, but other times they were pillaged anyway.<sup>48</sup> Mustafa Paşa’s control over the river traffic—and indeed over the camel or mule caravans coming from Samsun and Diyarbekir to the edge of the desert near Cizre—had far-reaching effects on the local economy. A German traveler wrote that during his winter in Mosul in 1901 there was a severe shortage of coal and wood in the city because Mustafa Paşa’s actions had forced prices to skyrocket.<sup>49</sup>

These activities were carried out by Mustafa Paşa and other tribal *ağas* with the intention of expanding their wealth and material holdings, but they were also meant to establish their predominance within their respective regions or lineages. One of the first things on Mustafa Paşa’s agenda when he became a Hamidiye chieftain was to secure his preeminence within his tribe. In the spring of 1893 it was reported that he caused the murder of several of his tribesmen, including among them one Gul Mehmed, a very influential figure in the tribe, but Mustafa Paşa was exonerated after a “thorough investigation,” strong evidence against him notwithstanding. Disappointed with the local government’s failure to prosecute, Gul Mehmed’s wife turned to her family in Deh<sup>50</sup> (in the Bitlis province) for help. The influential chief connected with her family joined forces with Muhammad Aghayê Sor, a powerful chief in the Şırnak region with ties to the Silopî section of Cizre as well, and together they sought revenge on Mustafa Paşa. In the spring, when Mustafa Paşa’s people crossed the Tigris, the two chiefs colluded to mount an attack during

<sup>46</sup> Vice-Consul Boyajian to Currie. Diyarbekir May 18, 1895 (FO 424/182, FO 195/1887).

<sup>47</sup> Vice-Consul Tyrell to O’Conor. No. 23. Van, Oct. 7, 1902 (FO 424/203, FO 195/2125).

<sup>48</sup> Jones to de Bunsen, Diyarbekir, May 8, 1900. Private. (FO 195/2082). See also French vice-consul (unsigned) to Constans, No. 9, Diyarbekir, March 12, 1900, (MAE Nantes: Diarbékir, 1900–1914).

<sup>49</sup> Paul Rohrbach, *Hatt-ı Saltanat Bağdad Demiryolu*, (Istanbul: Efhm Matbaası, 1332 [1915]), 61–63.

<sup>50</sup> Today’s Eruh (Jelle Verheij, personal communication).

which many lives were lost.<sup>51</sup> Although none of the chiefs were arrested, Mustafa Paşa prevailed in the whole feud, and Aghayê Sor was ordered “from high quarters to make peace with the said Paşa.”<sup>52</sup> In subsequent migrations Mustafa Paşa was able to obtain government troops as escorts through hostile territory,<sup>53</sup> while Aghayê Sor, Mustafa Paşa’s rival who lacked Hamidiye connections, was offered no such protection. In fact, not only did the non-Hamidiye *ağa* fail to obtain protection, but he was prevented by the government from seeking retribution or compensation when Mustafa Paşa stopped to raid some of Aghayê Sor’s villages on his way back to Cizre for the winter one year. According to the British consul, Aghayê Sor “wished to take revenge, but was restrained by the Government; he has never consented to form Hamidieh regiments and has usually been hostile to Turks.”<sup>54</sup> Mustafa Paşa, on the other hand, as the commander of “a Hamidieh regiment [sic: two Hamidiye regiments] is given a number of zaptiehs [gendarme] to accompany him to his summer quarters, and enable him to better ward off any attack from the Shernakh.”<sup>55</sup>

Mustafa Paşa continued to receive support in his feud with Aghayê Sor. In 1900, the British consul at Diyarbekir reported,

About a fortnight ago Fetta Agha and his brother Tahir Agha, a son-in-law of Mustapha Pasha, the Colonel of the Hamidihs in that region, carried off and imprisoned a native Christian, a dependent of Mohammed Aghai Sor, of the village of Sharnak,<sup>56</sup> who, by way of retaliation, sent his retainers to seize and detain three Moslem dependents of Tahir Agha, and then sent word to the latter that unless the Christian in question were released the Moslems would be detained in captivity; whereupon Tahir Agha set the Christian free, the Agha Mohammed giving up his three prisoners.

On hearing of this act of Mohammad Agha’s, Mustapha Pasha sent a band of men of the Tayan tribe with orders to attack and plunder a camp of the Hawaris, a Yezideh tribe subject to the authority of Mohammed Aghai Sor, and these orders were so effectually carried out that but few escaped to tell of the massacre of their fellow tribesmen by the followers of Mustapha

<sup>51</sup> Boyajian to Graves. Confidential (No. 34). Diyarbekir, Dec. 19, 1893 (FO 424/178; FO 195/1846).

<sup>52</sup> Acting Vice-Consul Boyajian to Currie. Diyarbekir, May 18, 1895 (FO 424/182; FO 195/1887).

<sup>53</sup> See Waugh to Currie. No. 2. Diyarbekir, April 6, 1898 (FO 424/196, FO 195/2025); Andrus to Boyajian. Confidential. Cizre, Nov. 17, 1893 [FO 424/178, FO 195/1846]; and Boyajian to Graves. Confidential. [No. 34] Diyarbekir, Dec. 19, 1893 (FO 195/1846).

<sup>54</sup> Maunsell to O’Conor. No. 43. Van, Oct. 30, 1899 (FO 424/199, FO 195/2063). See also Waugh to Currie. No. 2. Diyarbekir, April 6, 1898 (FO 424/196, FO 195/2025).

<sup>55</sup> Maunsell to O’Conor. No. 43. Van, Oct. 30, 1899 (FO 424/199, FO 195/2063).

<sup>56</sup> Now the capital of the province of Şırnak.

Pasha, who, after killing all the men they could find and burning the tents, threw the dead bodies into the Tigris, and finally drove before them the flocks of the tribe thus treacherously murdered. Mohammed Aghai Sor, enraged at the news of this outrage, assembled a band of his followers to the number of about 2,000, armed with rifles, to attack the tribe that had carried out these sanguinary orders of their Chief, Mustapha Pasha.

I have the honour to add that the latest news received was to the effect that the Kaïmakam of Djezireh [Cizre], on receiving word of the Agha Mohammed design, had started with a body of troops for the defence of the threatened Tayan tribe.<sup>57</sup>

Not only were the Hamidiye tribesmen linked to Mustafa Paşa *not* punished for the massacre, but their non-Hamidiye rivals were again actively prevented from seeking compensation or retribution and regular troops were sent to back the Hamidiye tribes. After nearly a decade in the Hamidiye, Mustafa Paşa even felt emboldened enough to capture and imprison brigadier-general Bahaeddin Paşa, who had been sent to Cizre to conduct an inquiry into Mustafa Paşa's attack on some twenty of Aghayê Sor's villages in the Silopi district during which these villages were burned and over one hundred people were reportedly killed. When asked by Zeki Paşa to explain his actions, Mustafa Paşa claimed that the brigadier-general had come to take advantage of women and girls in his tribe.<sup>58</sup> Mustafa Paşa, as a favored Hamidiye commander, received no punishment and Aghayê Sor, as one who was not only non-Hamidiye, but also hostile to Zeki Paşa's favored troops, received no protection.

It was trickier, however, when two Hamidiye tribes were feuding, as in the case when Mustafa Paşa's Miran tribe was engaged in a rivalry with at least one section of the same Tay tribe with whom they were partly, at least sometimes, allied, as we have seen above. In general, attempts by the government to mediate were more firm and sincere, and if one were to be punished it was often the weaker tribe or section, and since they were generally protected by Zeki Paşa, they petitioned to have their

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<sup>57</sup> Jones to O'Connor. No. 9. Diyarbekir, Feb. 27, 1900 (FO 424/200, FO 195/2082), brackets mine. The Tayan tribe was also a Hamidiye tribe, which seems to have concluded a sort of alliance with Mustafa Paşa, and between the two Hamidiye commanders, seem to have taken the whole region hostage. According to the British consul, the Tayan chief at Nusaybin, "having practically constituted himself a ruler, is exacting toll from the merchants and raising constructions in the city with the evident design of holding Nisibin as Mustafa Paşa holds Jezireh" (Jones to de Bunsen. No. 40. Harput, Oct. 10, 1900 [FO 424/200, FO 195/2082]).

<sup>58</sup> Jones to O'Connor. No. 16. Diyarbekir, May 8, 1900 (FO 424/200; FO 195/2082) and Laffont to Ambassador, No. 15, Diyarbekir, July 2, 1900 (MAE Nantes: E/116).



disputes referred to military courts rather than civilian courts.<sup>59</sup> After all, many regional governors and sub-governors were thoroughly resentful of the Hamidiye as they continually thwarted these governors' attempts to maintain the peace in their districts.<sup>60</sup> With such backing, Mustafa Paşa prevailed in his dispute with Abdurrahman Paşa of the Tay tribe,<sup>61</sup> and elsewhere in Hamidiyeland, as one observer referred to the region,<sup>62</sup> the weaker tribe or section was often the one put forth for punishment, if there were to be any consequences at all. Such was the case after a feud erupted elsewhere in the "six provinces" between the Cibran and Hasanan tribes, with the Cibran—also allied to the Bilikan—laying waste to certain Hasanan villages in the Hınıs region of the Erzurum province, notably the village of Zirnak. One victim petitioned the *vali*, who referred the matter to Mahmud Paşa, the brigadier in general command of the Hamidiye, who reportedly told the individual seeking redress that he "could not be expected to sacrifice a regiment of Hamidieh for the sake of one village." When troops were nonetheless sent to make arrests, those given up for punishment were members of the weaker (Bilikan) tribe.<sup>63</sup> In some cases, as mentioned above, the stronger tribe was actually able to absorb the weaker one—or at least parts of it—as the Miran did with at least some Tay sections and as İbrahim Paşa of the Milli had done with the Karakeçi. Even within the Hamidiye, then, there was a hierarchy. The poorer among them suggested that it was only the Hamidiye with the "horse and gun" who took all the wealth<sup>64</sup> from their salaries or raids.

Mustafa Paşa may have had "an atrocious reputation for all kinds of villainy,"<sup>65</sup> and it certainly seems that it was well deserved, but he was not simply the gangster of late-Ottoman Diyarbekir; he was a product of and helped to produce the historical exigencies in which he found himself—conditions in which empire-wide politics and local social processes

<sup>59</sup> BBOA Y.PRK.ASK. 134/1 (Aug. 28, 1313).

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Ebubekir Hâzım Tepeyran, former governor of Mosul province, who described the Hamidiye as being one of his most recurring "nightmares" in his memoirs (*Hatıralar ı (Canlı Tarihler*, Vol. 1), (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1944), 317).

<sup>61</sup> BBOA Y.PRK.ASK. 134/1 May 27/ 1312; BBOA Y.PRK.ASK. 134/1 Haziran 29/ 1312.

<sup>62</sup> Jones to O'Connor. No. 32. Kharput, Oct. 18, 1899 (FO 424/199, FO 195/2063).

<sup>63</sup> Lamb to O'Connor. No. 2. Confidential. Erzurum., April 15, 1901 (FO 424/202, FO 195/2104) and Lamb to O'Connor. No. 24. Erzurum, Dec. 31, 1901 [FO 424/203; FO 195/2104]. The attachments of the Bilikan tribe are a bit confusing, as some sources state that they (or sections of them) were attached to Milli in the Diyarbekir province and others that they were attached to the Cibran further east.

<sup>64</sup> Heard to O'Connor, No. 19. Erzurum, Nov. 23, 1907 (FO 424/213).

<sup>65</sup> In the words of Sykes: 460.

converged. He was pursuing his bid for local control and resources through the channels available to him at the time, and he used his position as a military broker<sup>66</sup> to carve out an especially advantageous position for himself. In this he certainly had the support of his patron, Zeki Paşa, who needed to justify his project to the sultan, particularly when it became the target of protests from numerous quarters within Ottoman society and abroad. Zeki Paşa's reports to the sultan continually referred to allegations against Mustafa Paşa and his Hamidiye cohorts as "non-sense" (*safsata*); indeed he frequently defended their activities, claiming that they were loyal, and essential for maintaining security in Kurdistan.<sup>67</sup> Zeki Paşa constantly exaggerated the threat that Armenian revolutionary activity posed to the empire in his reports to the sultan,<sup>68</sup> and as such justified the need for these military brokers who were otherwise so detrimental to the peace and security of the region. Local governors who attempted to curb the activities of the Hamidiye incurred the wrath of Zeki Paşa, who painted them as liars and traitors, and was sometimes able to achieve their dismissal from their posts.<sup>69</sup> Zeki Paşa also charged British and Russian consuls along with their "corrupt Christian [mercenaries]" of spreading malicious rumors about the tribal militia.<sup>70</sup> He also suggested that in this time of danger, it was important to win the hearts and minds of the Kurds so that they would not become disaffected and pose an even greater threat. As such, through the Hamidiye militia the state empowered one group that it ultimately wanted to suppress and incorporate in hopes of averting even greater threats. The Ottomans were not alone in making these kinds of "effort-bargains," but they certainly could not have foreseen the complex ways in which their own modern statebuilding efforts interacted with on-the-ground social and political processes already underway and often produced results that were disastrous not only to locals but also to the state itself. As Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe put

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<sup>66</sup> For more on military brokers prosecuting their own agendas see Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe 2006.

<sup>67</sup> BBOA Y.PRK.ASK. 96/26-1311.C.7 (4 Kanun-i Evvel 1309), reprinted in Kemal Süphandağ 2006: 256–259. I read the documents reproduced in this volume with caution. I had a few of the documents in my own collection and compared the author's transliteration of the documents and it appears in some cases he took some liberties "to modernize/*sadeleştirmek*" the language. Unfortunately I did not have the original of this document in my collection.

<sup>68</sup> See, for example, BBOA Y.PRK.ASK. 81/16: 1 (7 Nisan, 1308).

<sup>69</sup> Roqueferrier to Boulinière, Chargé d'Affaires. No. 9. Erzurum, Oct. 30, 1897 (MAE Nantes: E/115).

<sup>70</sup> BBOA Y.PRK. ASK. 91/97 (8 Haziran 1309).

it, “As is so often the case in the ‘tribal zone,’ the battles of empire are continually refought across the pages of military histories; the wars that military brokers prosecute in their shadows go largely untold.”<sup>71</sup> As the state sought to reconquer the eastern borderlands of which Diyarbekir was a central part, these military brokers like Mustafa Paşa were using their state backing to further their own position in a changed and changing social and economic environment. They were working to carve out an advantageous position for themselves in the new land regime, to protect and expand their material holdings, and related to this, they were working for local preeminence in terms of authoritative power. Mustafa Paşa’s ongoing feud with Aghayê Sor must be seen in this light, as should his battle with the famous Bedirhan family, which I will treat next. These contests for authority tell us much about the history of the Diyarbekir province, but also about processes unfolding in the region at large. Through the course of these struggles that were—at heart—about material gains and local authority, identity politics surfaced and began to transform the vocabulary of these struggles. It was the Bedirhan family who brought a new nationalist idiom into play—a nationalist idiom in which Diyarbekir would take on an increasingly central role.

#### THE BEDIRHAN-MIRAN RIVALRY IN CIZRE-BOTAN

While the struggle for local authority between Aghayê Sor and Mustafa Ağa of the Miran was longstanding, the feud between the Miran and the Bedirhans seems to have had even deeper—if not interconnected—roots. Bedirhan Bey was the ruler of the last of the Kurdish emirates, which existed when Kurdistan remained in a zone of semi-autonomy before Ottoman centralization efforts in the mid-nineteenth century. The Botan emirate under Bedirhan Bey was known for its size, security, and modernity, and also for its relative independence vis-à-vis the Ottoman state. But the level of autonomy that Bedirhan Bey sought and enjoyed was a challenge to the long-standing (albeit continually evolving) deal that the central Ottoman government had with Kurdish notables; a significant measure of free reign had been acceptable, but virtual independence had not. The central Ottoman government was finally successful in its campaign to destroy the Botan emirate in 1847, thus ending the quarter-century rule of one of

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<sup>71</sup> Bragge, Claas, and Roscoe 2006: 108.

Kurdistan's most famous *mîrs*. The central Ottoman government sought to re-conquer (or indeed conquer) Kurdistan as part of its modern state-building efforts, and it monitored the activities of Bedirhan Bey's male descendants closely to make sure that they did not use their widespread regional prestige to gather followers of any movement that might pose a threat to the unitary authority of the state.<sup>72</sup> But Mustafa Paşa held a more personal grudge against the Bedirhans. After all, as he consolidated his rule over the emirate, Bedirhan Bey had eliminated the powerful İbrahim Ağa of the Miran tribe, thus ending any hopes that the latter could put in a bid for leadership of the emirate. The tribes allied with Bedirhan Bey emerged victorious over those who sided with the Miran. A clear rivalry between the Bedirhan family and the Miran tribe—particularly Mustafa Paşa—evolved from this point. And Mustafa Paşa knew that the Bedirhan family continued to enjoy enormous esteem and support in the region and were pressing ahead with sporadic attempts to revive the family's emirate on some terms. As Mustafa Paşa gradually built—with state backing—a kind of new “tribal emirate” in which he held authority over the region the Bedirhan family had previously controlled, Bedirhan Bey's descendants joined Aghayê Sor in his fight against Mustafa Paşa, and then—at the turn of the century—mounted an active campaign against him, the whole Hamidiye organization and indeed the sultan who created the regiments, in the press, which would reach a much wider audience. And they began to do so using a new nationalist idiom.

The name of the journal the Bedirhan brothers (Abdurrahman and Mikdad Midhad) founded and used to disseminate their denunciations of Mustafa Paşa and the entire Hamidian regime is telling in this regard—*Kurdistan*. It was one of the many underground opposition publications to the Hamidian regime, and the Bedirhan brothers—as not only Kurdish notables but also Ottoman intellectuals—were active participants in the widespread movement to overthrow Sultan Abdülhamid II and to reinstate the Ottoman constitution. But their personal reasons for wanting this sultan gone can also not be ignored. After all, he had empowered the family's rival in the region they had ruled. In *Kurdistan*, Abdurrahman Bedirhan wrote,

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<sup>72</sup> Indeed this concern was clear to Zeki Paşa from the start. In a telegram to Şakir Paşa he tried to dismiss the importance of the Bedirhans while at the same time indicating that they posed a threat, sometimes allying with non-Hamidiye tribes for support (BBOA Y.PRK.ASK. 93/53-1311.M.12), in: Süphandağ 2006: 254–255; see note 63 above for comments on this volume).

... Before [Abdülhamid II] ascended the throne, the Kurds were knowledgeable and civilized people, having brotherly relations with Armenians and avoiding any kind of confrontation. Then what happened? Did [Kurdish] civilization and knowledge turn into barbarity, ignorance, and organized rebellion? Who else carries out the atrocities in Kurdistan but the members of the Hamidiye divisions, who are armed by the sultan and proud of being loyal to him. For example, there is Mustafa Pasha, the head of the Mîran tribe, within the borders of Diyarbekir [province]. He used to be a shepherd ten or fifteen years ago in his tribe, and was called 'Misto the Bald.' We do not know what he did to become a favorite of the sultan, but his talent in creating scandals appealed to the sultan, who thought that he would assist in shedding blood and hurting people. He made him a pasha and introduced him with the title of Commander of a Hamidiye division. Now imagine what such a man is capable of doing—a traitor whose own son has even become an enemy to him, and a person who has outraged his daughter-in-law. Would he not butcher the Armenians and pillage the Muslims?<sup>73</sup>

But instead of framing their disgust for the Hamidian regime that had given such license to Hamidiye rivals like Mustafa Paşa only in those terms, the Bedirhan brothers focused on what the militia and the sultan's wider policies meant for the Kurds at large, and indeed also for the Armenians.<sup>74</sup> They were concerned *as Ottomans* with the fate of the empire, and saw—as others did—how this militia was decreasing, rather than increasing, security in the region, thus giving European powers an excuse to meddle in internal Ottoman affairs, particularly in this region. But they were particularly concerned with the fate of the Kurds in the whole ordeal and began to carve out a new leadership role for themselves in the emerging Kurdish nationalist (although not necessarily separatist) movement—the same movement in which Diyarbekir would take on a special symbolic role. If traditional means of reclaiming their family's leadership role in

<sup>73</sup> Abdurrahman Bedir Khan, "Kürdler ve Ermeniler [Kurds and Armenians]," *Kurdistan*, No. 26, (1 Kânûn-i Evvel, 1316 [Dec. 14, 1900]), in Emin Bozarslan, *Kurdistan* reprint, Vol. 2, (Uppsala: Weşanxana Deng, 1991).

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, "Kürdlere," *Kurdistan* 25 (18 Eylül, 1316/ Oct. 1, 1900) [in Bozarslan, Vol. 2, p. 443], and "Kürdler ve Ermeniler," *Kurdistan* 26 (1 Kânûn-i Evvel, 1316/ Dec. 14, 1900); [Abdurrahman Bedir Khan], "Alayên Siwarên Hemîdi/Hamidiye Süvari Alayları [The Hamidiye Cavalry Regiments]," *Kurdistan* 28 (1 Eylül, 1317/ Sept. 14, 1901) [in Bozarslan, Vol. 2, pp. 490–495 for Kurdish and 497–502 for the transliteration of the Ottoman]; and Abdullah Cevdet's piece in *Droşak*, an Armenian journal: Bir Kürd, "Untitled?" *Droşak* (January, 1900), cited in Garo Sasuni, *Kürt Ulusal Hareketleri ve Ermeni-Kürt İlişkileri*, 15. yy'dan Günümüze, (Stockholm: Orfeus, 1986), pp. 223–224. "Bir Kürd" was one of Abdullah Cevdet's pen-names. Ironically, Mustafa Paşa's enemy coalition of Aghayê Sor and Mehmed Bedirhan were also guilty when it came to exploiting locals—both Christian and Muslim. Some of this evidence can be found in the report submitted by Mr. Andrus to Acting Vice-Consul Boyajian (Cizre, Nov. 17, 1893, in FO 424/178).

Kurdistan were of an age gone by, then perhaps a new, more modern, idiom would work.

#### EPILOGUE

The Bedirhans' ally, Aghayê Sor, had Mustafa Paşa assassinated in 1902, but the Miran chieftain's son, Abdülkerim, carried on a similar policy of building a "new tribal emirate" in his father's footsteps, although with slightly less success. The widespread coalition to bring down Sultan Abdülhamid II was successful in 1908 when the Young Turks managed to carry out a kind of regime change and reinstate the Ottoman constitution, which had been dormant since shortly after Abdülhamid II took power. The following year they achieved the deposition of the sultan they despised so much. The Hamidiye was also targeted for destruction, or at least reform, as it was one of the most despised of the institutions the sultan had created and supported. After all, it had become wildly unpopular not just among those, like the Bedirhans, who had seen their family's fortunes decline (and who were also members of the Young Turk movement), but also among Ottoman officers and soldiers in the regular army, who resented the favors the sultan heaped upon his favored Hamidiye troops; local governors, who resented Zeki Paşa's maneuvers to thwart their attempts to maintain peace and security in the region and who overruled their authority; and of course the numerous peasants and tribespeople, who—not affiliated with the Hamidiye or in subordinate positions in the militia—had seen their property stolen, lands appropriated, and lives lost at the hands of this militia so empowered by the state to act with impunity. With all this in mind, the new regime took steps to amend the program and curtail the activities of the state-sponsored militia.<sup>75</sup> The Hamidiye, now called the Tribal Light Cavalry Regiments (*Aşiret Hafif Süvari Alayları*),<sup>76</sup> was to be put on the chopping block. While the dismissal of Zeki Paşa and the military campaign against one of its key commanders, Milli chief İbrahim Paşa of the Diyarbekir province, represented the most drastic of these measures, more systematic steps were also taken to shrink the organization and the power of its tribal chiefs.

<sup>75</sup> For more on this process see Klein 2011, especially Chapter 3.

<sup>76</sup> Ottoman Government, *Aşiret Hafif Süvari Alayları Nizamnamesi*, (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Askeriyye, 1326/ 1910). The organization was later shortened to simply *Aşiret Süvari Alayları* (Ergül 1997: 81, citing Günay).

These measures included transforming the units into a reserve militia who would now be answerable to civil courts for civil offenses and to military courts only for military crimes, and also returning their government-issued rifles.<sup>77</sup> The new administration proceeded to arrest powerful Hamidiye chieftains and even began to evict them from the Armenian villages they had taken over.<sup>78</sup> But these steps, particularly the last one, prompted protest, and indeed rebellion, by a number of Hamidiye chiefs who feared their loss of privilege, status, state-sponsorship, and particularly their newly acquired landholdings.<sup>79</sup> In response to these measures, Kurdish chiefs engaged in various acts of rebellion, including crossing the border into Iran, as Hüseyin Paşa—the powerful Hayderan commander of several Hamidiye regiments—did in 1909, taking their animals (hundreds of thousands of sheep) with them. These acts shook the authorities, who feared that the flights of these chiefs would “denud[e] the Turkish frontier of its protectors,”<sup>80</sup> and when they added to this the greater fear of a widespread insurrection,<sup>81</sup> the government decided to appease Hüseyin Ağa and other disgruntled Hamidiye chiefs. To this end, the state abandoned its wider attempts to shrink, control, or disband the organization and to force the chiefs to return the lands they had usurped; they also released a number of Kurdish chiefs and other notables who had been convicted of crimes.<sup>82</sup> In fact, attempts to reinstate former criminals and to otherwise curry favors with them became widespread.<sup>83</sup> The dynamics

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<sup>77</sup> Dickson to Lowther, No. 31, Van, Nov. 3, 1908 (FO 195/2284), and *Takvim-i Vekayi* No. 91 (1 Kânûn-i Sâni 1324/ Jan. 14, 1909).

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Dickson to Lowther, No. 32, Van, Nov. 3, 1908 (FO 195/2284).

<sup>79</sup> It is important to note at the same time that in many places where lands were successfully restored to their original owners, relations between Kurds and Armenians were friendly (see Safrastian to Shipley, Bitlis, Sept. 29, 1909 (FO 424/221, FO 195/2318).

<sup>80</sup> Lowther to Grey, No. 69, Istanbul, Feb. 7, 1910 (FO 424/222).

<sup>81</sup> By 1914 the discontent among many Kurds had spread beyond the Hamidiye elements (see Smith to Mallet, No. 3, Van, Feb. 14, 1914 (FO 195/2458). Hamit Bozarslan also notes that the fear of losing their traditional authority combined with the threat of losing the lands they had usurped from Armenians pushed many Kurds towards revolt (“Tribus, confréries et intellectuels: Convergence des réponses kurdes au régime Kémaliste,” in *Modernisation Autoritaire en Turquie et en Iran*, edited by Semih Vaner, (Paris: Éditions L’Harmattan, 1991), 65).

<sup>82</sup> McGregor to Lowther, No. 41 confidential, Erzurum, June 21, 1910 (FO 424/224, FO 195/2347); Srabian to Bompard, No. 35, Erzurum, April 21, 1910 (MAE Nantes: AA E/120); Safrastian to McGregor, Bitlis, July 25, 1910 (FO 424/224); Matthews to Lowther, No. 41, Kharput, Sept. 5, 1910 (FO 195/2347); and Mugerditchian to McGregor and Fontana, No. 10, Diyarbekir, May 7, 1912 (FO 195/2405).

<sup>83</sup> Monahan to Lowther, No. 76, Erzurum, Oct. 28, 1912 (FO 195/2405), and Monahan to Marling, No. 61, Erzurum, Sept. 29, 1913 (FO 195/2450).

that surrounded the whole Hamidiye venture were clearly much larger than the sultan and the regime that created them. They survived not only into the next regime, but also into some of the Ottoman successor states that emerged after the empire's disintegration.

#### WHAT THE HAMIDIYE TELLS US ABOUT DIYARBEKIR'S HISTORY

In lieu of a conclusion, I would instead like to offer some thoughts on how we might view Diyarbekir through different lenses of analysis, and how doing so may help us fine-tune our approaches to provincial or regional history.

First, tracing the history of Diyarbekir *as a province* is an interesting task in and of itself. Events on the ground and in the wider world shaped the Ottoman state's view of its provinces and prompted shifts in the actual outlines of these provinces and even their names. Although the region had long been part of special administrative arrangements between the Ottoman state and Kurdish notables, it was not until the 19th century that the state created the province of Kurdistan; interestingly, it was *after* the state conquered the last great Kurdish-Ottoman dynasty in 1847 when this province was formed and so named. For some reason that is unfortunately unknown to us, however, in 1867 the province was renamed Diyarbekir. Indeed the Ottoman provincial *salname* for that year had the name "Kurdistan" crossed off and Diyarbekir written in its place. In 1867 or 1868, Mamuretülaziz was added to the former Kurdistan province and became the Diyarbekir Vilayeti.<sup>84</sup> Later, Mamuretülaziz was detached again and Diyarbekir became a smaller province and remained so until the end of the empire. From the aftermath of the Russo-Ottoman war, which concluded in 1878, Diyarbekir must be seen in the context of the politics of the "six eastern provinces," or region of "emergency rule." Tracing the changing administrative structure of Diyarbekir helps us to understand Ottoman history at large and particularly how local events as well as processes unfolding on foreign soil and in foreign diplomatic circles mutually impacted one another.

But this leads us also to three further points that are worth exploring here: As a second point, the Diyarbekir province—in whatever its incarnations—was structured as such and received special attention (for

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<sup>84</sup> Özoğlu, 61–62.



better or worse) in the context of Ottoman *military* concerns. Indeed, before Diyarbekir became one of the “six provinces” in the late 19th century, its predecessor—the province of Kurdistan—was also created for geo-strategic reasons, for its proximity and strategic location vis-à-vis Iran and Russia.<sup>85</sup> Diyarbekir’s location as one of the “six provinces” was also central in this equation. These provinces were seen as threatened both from external and internal enemies, real or perceived. They were largely under *military* rule, and the story I’ve outlined above with the Hamidiye illustrates this point aptly. Civilian governors found themselves very often overruled by Zeki Paşa, who was not only the commander of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry, but also the Fourth Army. Even after the fall of Zeki Paşa and the ancien regime it was clear that the central Ottoman government viewed Diyarbekir and the other five “eastern” provinces as part of a larger geo-strategic unit, and in this we see remarkable continuity in vision and practice between the Hamidian and post-1908 regimes, which have elsewhere been noted to be remarkably different, and because of the point that I will explore next—that of peoplehood and ethnicity—this continuity crossed over from empire to republic and remains in effect to this day; although the *Olağanüstü Hal Bölgesi* is no longer officially operational, these regions continue to be the primary focus of Turkish military attention and action, and indeed widespread “security zones.”

This brings us to the third point: Starting in the later part of the 19th century, Diyarbekir—as one of the “six provinces”—was also viewed in the context not only of *where* it was located, but also *who* inhabited the region. This point, particularly as it relates to violence, is, as Mann points out, a distinctive feature of modernity,<sup>86</sup> and indeed modern statecraft. The *who* that concerned the Ottoman state at this point, however, was not “the Kurds” as such but rather, “the Armenians,” although by the 20th century Kurdishness also joined Armenianness as a potential threat in the eyes of the state. This was a rather new feature for the post-1908 rulers of the empire. Their predecessors in the Hamidian regime were not blind to ethnic differences, and, in fact, as indicated above, even viewed Kurds as a backwards people in need of civilization and “management.” However, it was not until the post-1908 period when Kurdish identity began to appear as a threat to the territorial integrity of the empire, and even here it was a

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<sup>85</sup> Özoğlu, 62.

<sup>86</sup> Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 34, after Smith (1997).

rather slim peril until the republican period. As the push for recognition of Kurdish identity in Turkey expanded and was increasingly suppressed by a state using ever more brutal methods, Diyarbekir—particularly the *city* now—took on new importance as the capital of the Kurdish nationalist dream: an independent Kurdistan.

But as the Hamidiye venture I've described above also illustrates, the history of Diyarbekir was much more than a battle between state and societal elements for power in the region, and this brings us to our fourth point: Significant struggles were carried out on the ground for *local* power and especially resources between and among tribes and urban notables, and between peasants and their overlords. The fact that the state was drawn into these battles—or, perhaps more correctly, insinuated itself into these local struggles by harnessing them to its own ends—should not obscure us to the fact that very *local* politics were carried out on a daily basis. But they were complicated by state involvement, particularly for the backing the state gave to a select group of Kurdish tribes, whom it empowered for its own ends but whose empowerment changed and exacerbated many of the on-the-ground struggles already in play, not to mention the serious consequences of foreign interest in the Armenian question, which prompted these initiatives on the part of the state. And it was through these contests over resources, in fact, that the “peoplehood” part of the equation emerged and was magnified. Struggles became ethnic over time, and this dynamic in turn impacted the state's vision of the Diyarbekir province and the larger “six provinces” of which it was a part.

Comprehending these dynamics is crucial for understanding not only Diyarbekir's late-Ottoman moment, but also its journey from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first. The Mustafa Paşas and İbrahim Paşas of the past may be long gone, but the “security zone/tribal zone” dynamics that empowered them have resurfaced in the form of the Village Guards. Viewing Diyarbekir in this wider context is essential for understanding its history.

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A “PERIPHERAL” APPROACH TO THE 1908 REVOLUTION IN THE  
OTTOMAN EMPIRE: LAND DISPUTES IN PEASANT PETITIONS IN  
POST-REVOLUTIONARY DIYARBEKİR

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INTRODUCTION

Enemies of the Constitutional Regime and traitors of the *millet* and state destroyed our houses, seized our properties, harassed our wives and killed our children. Their oppression is way beyond the forbearance of human kind and comparable to the cruelty of the Mohacs and Chengiz Khan. . . . We demand to be rescued from the oppression of these notables whose acts overshadow the sun of liberty.<sup>1</sup>

Seven inhabitants of Dirkam village<sup>2</sup> in the Lice district (*kaza*) of Diyarbekir, Mehmed bin Hüseyin, Tahir bin Bekir, Hüseyin Ahmed, Ahmed Hüseyin, Mehmed Toylu, Nadir bin Hasan and, Ali bin Ömer wrote this petition to the office of Grand Vizierate on 25 March 1910. What brought about these references to an ancient memory of the Mohacs and Chengiz Khan along with the celebration of the “sun of liberty” of the modern Constitutional Regime (*Meşrutiyet*) in this petition? In the face of the unbearable oppression they faced, these seven fellow villagers went from Lice to Kulp, where there was a telegraph office, to convey their misery to the Grand Vizier in Istanbul. This is one among many petitions sent from the Diyarbekir countryside to either the Grand Vizier’s office or the Interior Ministry in the period immediately following the 1908 Constitutional Revolution. Petitioners from various villages went either to the closest district or to the Diyarbekir city-center to voice their grievances or demand redress for an unjust act in petitions which were then sent to the imperial capital. For the Diyarbekir *ahali*, as was the case in other parts of the Empire, the 1908 Revolution opened up a convenient milieu for the

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<sup>1</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 82/20, 18 Mart 1326 [31 March 1910].

<sup>2</sup> Currently Duruköy village in Lice district.

conveyance of their problems and complaints to the authorities of the central state through the writing of petitions. It is apparent that rural inhabitants of the province did not remain oblivious to the changes that emerged with the 1908 Revolution, but rather actively participated in this new political setting by deploying the discursive and ideological references of the Constitutional Regime (*Meşrutiyet*). Hence, petitions reveal the socio-economic issues that were flashpoints of conflict between the peasants, notables, and local state officials in the region. By looking at these petitions, extensive information pertaining both to the socio-economic and political topography of Diyarbekir and the nature of social conflicts and encounters between these actors at the turn of the century can be uncovered.

In this paper, I will focus on one of the acute social problems in the region in this period, namely land disputes. In the post-revolutionary context, peasant dispossession was a visible social problem in the region. Petitions provide us with a graphic account of the various ways in which dispossession unfolded locally. The dispossessed peasantry, however, by no means remained passive bystanders to these processes. Rather, peasants resisted dispossession with every possible means at their disposal, and petition writing was one of these means to which peasants resorted in this context. My research demonstrates how petitioners negotiated with and resisted local notables and state officials in their attempts to retrieve lost lands. Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of the region, regardless of their ethno-religious background, sought the intervention of the central state authorities in Istanbul in the disputes and demanded a just solution to their grievances. In this effort, petitioners frequently referred to the ideals of the new constitutional regime, liberty, equality and fraternity (*hürriyet, müsâvât* and *uhuvvet*) together with a notion of justice (*adâlet*) to defend the rightfulness of their cause. In this sense, the constitutional regime imprinted itself on the discourse of the petitioners who strategically deployed these ideals in such a way as to find solutions to their problems and demand justice from the new regime.

By examining land disputes through peasant petitions, I aim to introduce the peasantry to the historical analysis of early twentieth century Diyarbekir, a region whose history has long been dominated by studies on ethnic and religious conflict and nationalist paradigms. Inhabited mainly by Kurds and Armenians in the late Ottoman Empire, Diyarbekir has become a major setting for the historical analysis of Kurdish and Armenian nationalisms. The prevalence of studies on ethnic conflict and nationalism has gone hand in hand with a lack of case-studies and local-histories. In these analyses, non-elite sectors of society are visible only



when they revolt or become the victims of state violence and massacre. As a result, the experiences of the ordinary population of Diyarbekir get lost in the available historical accounts. Peasant petitions provide an important platform from which to approach analyzing how non-elite inhabitants of Diyarbekir's countryside experienced and responded to the drastic socio-economic and political changes of the period.

The 1908 Constitution opened up a new stage for peasant demands for restitution of their lost lands. For a large portion of the petitioners, the constitutional regime was a new actor that seemed to possess the power to create a change in their conditions. In this respect, the findings of this research speak to the existing literature on the 1908 Constitutional Revolution and bring forth new perspectives on the post-revolution regime from the "periphery." Focusing on the experiences of peasants in the Diyarbekir countryside will help us "provincialize" and "peripheralize" the urban- and elite-centered accounts of the 1908 Revolution.

#### "PROVINCIALIZING" THE 1908 REVOLUTION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed a series of constitutional revolutions in Russia (1905), Iran (1906), and finally the Ottoman Empire in 1908. Constitutionalism, as Sohrabi states, became the dominant revolutionary model in this era.<sup>3</sup> In each of these instances, creation of a strong representative legislative assembly was the most significant element of the constitutionalist ideology. In the Ottoman Empire, the 1908 Revolution culminated in the reestablishment of the 1876 Constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*) which had been in abeyance since 1878, and the founding of a new Ottoman Chamber of Deputies (*Meclis-i Mebusan*). These changes in the state apparatus, however, represent only a small part of the changes that occurred in the Empire during this revolutionary period. Tark Zafer Tunaya describes this era as a "laboratory of history," as the roots of many contemporary political concepts and/or debates in Turkey date from this era: parliamentary democracy, multi-party system, liberalism, feminism, socialism, the influence of army over civil politicians, and so forth.<sup>4</sup> Many of the studies on the 1908 Constitutional Revolution have focused exclusively on the institutional changes, party politics and ideologies of the revolutionary era. They present detailed analyses of the emergence

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<sup>3</sup> Sohrabi 1995: 1383.

<sup>4</sup> Özyüksel, Alkan and others 2008: no page number.

of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) as a secret organization, its initial clandestine organization in Europe and Macedonia and its subsequent transformation into the single most important political actor in late Ottoman, and then Turkish, political scene.<sup>5</sup> Other studies have focused on the economic background of the revolution, examining the changes in the economic conditions that prepared a suitable ground for the emergence of the CUP opposition movement.<sup>6</sup> Excluding the works of Donald Quataert, who proposed a social analysis of the 1908 Revolution,<sup>7</sup> early studies remain elite-centered, focusing on the actions of the soldiers, intellectuals, political parties and organizations, especially the CUP and the Sultan, and have failed to bring a social approach to the analysis of the Revolution.

Revisionist scholars writing in the last two decades however, have dealt largely with debating the bourgeois nature of the 1908 Revolution.<sup>8</sup> In his study of the two years immediately prior to the Revolution, Aykut Kansu criticizes conventional approaches to the 1908 Revolution which, under the impact of nation-state centered historiographies, tended to minimize the significance of this event in Turkish historiography in favor of emphasizing the importance of the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Advocates of “Kemalist” approaches to the revolution can be found in different schools of thought dominant in Turkish historical writing including modernization theorists, dependency and world-system approaches, and other “leftist” accounts. In contrast to these conventional approaches, Kansu argues that “1908 is one of the last examples of bourgeois revolutions to have taken place before the First World War.”<sup>9</sup> Kansu’s major contention regarding the bourgeois origins of the Revolution is open to debate. His analysis mainly centers on the CUP’s actions and activities leading up to the Revolution. However, his discussion of the tax-revolts and bread riots in various provinces of the Empire prior to the revolution has contributed to our scant understanding of the social background of the Revolution.<sup>10</sup> Kansu argues that the social discontents of various groups articulated in these tax-revolts demonstrate that the 1908 Revolution was more than “an attempt ‘at rescuing the state from its internal

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<sup>5</sup> Ahmad 1970: 19–36; Mardin 1971: 197–21; Hanioglu 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Findley 1986.

<sup>7</sup> Quataert 1979.

<sup>8</sup> Kansu 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Kansu 1997: 27.

<sup>10</sup> Kansu 1997: 29–72.

enemies and their external allies’<sup>11</sup> and hence, the Revolution voiced the expectations and demands of popular classes in society.

The insights of Ottoman labor historians who have focused mainly on the strike wave of 1908 also shed significant light on the social dimension of the revolutionary process. An outbreak of strikes in different regions of the empire immediately followed the 1908 Revolution and involved workers from various industries. Until the passage of a provisional strike law (*Tatil-i Eşgal Cemiyetleri Hakkında Kanun-ı Muvakkat*) by the government which aimed to prevent strikes, laborers in railroads, ports, tobacco factories, and various other sectors struck to demand pay increases and decreased work hours.<sup>12</sup> Apparently the frustrations of urban labor that had accumulated over years found a convenient moment to explode after the 1908 Revolution.

These studies on tax-revolts and the strikes together have introduced other actors than the CUP to the analysis of the 1908 Revolution. In this way they contributed to de-centering the Young Turks in historical accounts of the Revolution. Yet, their approaches to 1908 still contain numerous drawbacks. First, from a *spatial* perspective, their analyses focus mainly on urban areas, and remain confined to the discontent of urban dwellers as it appeared in the forms of either tax-revolts or strikes. Herein lies a tendency to prioritize the actions of the urban labor movement. The transformations in the rural sector, the anxieties and experiences of the rural producers and, broadly speaking, the role of peasants in the revolutionary processes have remained at the margins of the debate on 1908.<sup>13</sup> [Rare] studies on the role of peasants in the revolutionary processes have often times been limited to a narrow and reactive understanding of peasant agency that comes to surface only in times of agricultural depression.<sup>14</sup> This view precludes a variegated and multi-layered approach to the experiences of rural cultivating sectors within the context of these broad political changes.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Karakışla 1998; Mentzel 1994.

<sup>13</sup> As an exception to this pattern, see a recent article in Turkish which examines the anxieties of rural population about tax-collection in the provinces of Rumelia prior to the 1908 Revolution: Özbek 2009. Özbek discusses the rural discontent stemming from tax-collection as one of the factors that contributed to the alienation of the peasantry from the Ottoman rule.

<sup>14</sup> Quataert 1979.

Second, the literature has a *regional* bias favoring the port cities of Istanbul, Salonica (Thessaloniki), and Smyrna (İzmir) and their economically dynamic hinterlands.<sup>15</sup> A growing literature sheds light on how Arab provinces experienced and became a part of the political changes in the revolutionary context.<sup>16</sup> Here the focus has been on the political and economic elites of these provinces and their relations with the CUP. However, the eastern provinces of the Empire, populated predominantly by Kurds, Armenians and other eastern Christian communities have yet to find a place in mainstream writing on the revolution. By overlooking the Kurdish and Armenian provinces in their analysis of the 1908 revolution, mainstream writings have reproduced a long-lasting regional bias in Ottoman studies that have prioritized Istanbul, the Balkan provinces, and port-cities at the expense of the eastern “periphery.”

Third, studies on the 1908 Revolution suffer from a *temporal* shortcoming in the sense that they tend to examine the pre-revolutionary processes in isolation from the post-revolutionary context. This problematic separation also entails a prioritization of the pre-revolutionary events, changes, and processes at the expense of post-revolutionary developments. Analyses of the post-revolutionary era, as a reflection of the general pattern in the studies on the pre-revolutionary period, have centered on the actions and policies of the CUP, the counter-revolution in 1909, 1912 elections and broadly-speaking inter-elite conflicts.<sup>17</sup> Except for the studies on the strike wave of 1908, the question of how popular classes reacted to the new government and in what ways they adopted or resented the discourses of the new constitutional regime have not been elaborated. This temporal bias, in other words, have gone hand in hand with the lack of social approaches to the revolution and precluded a comprehensive analysis of the social bases of the revolutionary processes.

Existing works that focus on these provinces, including Diyarbekir, within the context of 1908, have been produced by scholars working within what can be termed “Kurdish” and “Armenian” studies. Written within the confines of nationalist historiography, these studies have centered their analysis on associations and organizations as well as political

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<sup>15</sup> In his analysis of the labor movements after the 1908 Revolution Mentzel briefly discusses the strikes on the Anatolian-Bagdad railway. His discussion is limited only to the striking workers and their negotiations with the railroad company, government and the CUP. Yet this analysis does not situate the post-1908 strikes within the context of the local dynamics and transformations. Mentzel 1994: 127–130.

<sup>16</sup> Kayalı 1997; Watenpaugh 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Kansu 1999.

ideologies, especially nationalism.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, in these works the focus has almost without exception been on the Kurdish associations established after 1908, participation of the Kurdish notables in the CUP, and the emergence of Armenian political parties, how they organized, and their relations with the new regime.<sup>19</sup> In other words, Kurdish and Armenian area studies have introduced these provinces as regional units into the analysis of the 1908. Yet, they have focused solely on the nationalist elites, and thus have failed to encompass broader social sectors in these regions. In this sense looking at rural discontent in post-revolutionary Diyarbekir will bring to light a rarely examined aspect of the 1908 Revolution. Taking peasant populations in Diyarbekir as dynamic actors who influenced and were influenced by empire-wide changes this paper offers a perspective from the “periphery” to our understanding of the 1908. In order to do so, in the next section I will draw a broad portrait of place of Diyarbekir and its population within the context of 1908.

#### DIYARBEKIR WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE 1908 REVOLUTION

From the mid-nineteenth century, Diyarbekir underwent a process of transformation in terms of its place in the administrative structure of the Ottoman state. Starting with the *Tanzimat* (Reorganization)<sup>20</sup> era the Ottoman state increasingly attempted to increase its presence in the provinces in both the fiscal and administrative realms. In this context, Diyarbekir became a part of the *Tanzimat* project and in 1846 a significant

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<sup>18</sup> There are, without doubt, innumerable social and political reasons behind this limited interest in the social history of the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. One main reason is the sensitive political implications of talking about the history of this region in the early twentieth century which witnessed the Armenian genocide. The genocide issue has defined the terms of contemporary debates and analyses and has left no room for approaches that would demonstrate the multiplicity of historical actors, complexity of their actions as well as totality of social relations. Another reason for the dominance of nationalist approaches in the historiography of the eastern regions is the war between the PKK and the Turkish army since the mid-1980s and the rising cultural demands of the Kurds within this context. Kurds increasingly engaged in writing of their own history and focused mainly on the origins of Kurdish nationalism and examined the conflicts between the Ottoman state and the Kurdish tribes, Kurdish revolts as well as Kurdish “nationalist” organizations and associations established at the turn of the century.

<sup>19</sup> Özoğlu 2004; Kutlay 1992; Malmısaniş 1999; Jwaideh 2006; Avagyan & Minassian 2005.

<sup>20</sup> *Tanzimat* (Reorganization) is a reform program (1839–1876) that contained regulations about administrative structure, law, taxation and education.

adjustment was made in the administrative structure of the province: Diyarbekir province became “*Kürdistan Eyaleti*” which consisted of Van, Muş, and Hakkâri sub provinces and the districts of Cizre, Botan and Mardin. Diyarbekir became the center of this new province. Hakan Özoğlu argues that this new regulation was a means for the central state to extend its authority in the Kurdish provinces that had hitherto been ruled by Kurdish notables.<sup>21</sup> Referring to the imperial order (*irade*) of 1846 and the State Yearbooks (*Devlet Salnameleri*) he demonstrates that between 1847 and 1867 *Eyalet-i Kürdistan* was ruled by the central Ottoman government.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, judging from the basis of the amount of annual funds that Kurdistan received from the central government (80,000 piasters), he argues that Kurdistan was a large province that enjoyed special privileges. Again referring to the State Yearbook of 1867 in which the name *Kürdistan* was replaced by Diyarbekir, he states that it was at this point that *Kürdistan Eyaleti* ceased to exist.

Due to the scarcity of monographic studies which could provide us with a detailed account of the implementation of the *Tanzimat* regime in Diyarbekir, our knowledge about the socio-economic and political changes that the region underwent within this context remains scant.<sup>23</sup> The extent of the penetration of Ottoman state power in the region at the time of the *Tanzimat* reforms is not well-known. Yet we know that the power configuration in the region entered a process of transformation. Destruction of the tribal confederations resulted in the emergence of “simpler forms of social and political organization” in the area.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, constant negotiation occurred between the Ottoman administration that claimed ever-growing shares of the tax-revenues from the region, and local power groups whose privileged economic and political position was challenged by the increasing power of the central state.<sup>25</sup>

The reign of Abdülhamid II (1876–1909) opened a new chapter in imperial policy towards the region.<sup>26</sup> The most salient characteristic of his eastern policy was defined by the growing penetration into and collaboration

<sup>21</sup> See, for example Özoğlu 2004; Bruinessen 1992.

<sup>22</sup> Özoğlu 2004: 62.

<sup>23</sup> For a study of the implementation of the *Tanzimat* regime in Diyarbekir province, see my dissertation: *The Making of the Modern Ottoman State in the Kurdish Periphery: The Politics of Land and Taxation, 1840–1870*, Binghamton University (2011).

<sup>24</sup> Bruinessen 1992: 181.

<sup>25</sup> For an analysis of the negotiations between the central state, local notables, and peasantry over the implementation of *Tanzimat* policies in land and taxation in Palu, see Özok-Gündoğan (2011).

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of the Sultan Abdülhamid II's policies in relation to debates over colonialism, and Orientalism, see Deringil 2003.

with local power structures in the region.<sup>27</sup> The creation of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry Units in 1890 was the most concrete product of Abdülhamid's eastern policy. As Klein demonstrates, the formation of these units as an armed group with material incentives drastically changed local power configurations in the region.<sup>28</sup> The existence of the Hamidiye units, in a way, increased those tribes' proximity to the Hamidian state while deepening their conflicts with other tribes. İbrahim Paşa of the Milli tribe and the Mustafa Paşa of the Miran tribe were two of the most important tribal chiefs that consolidated their power and wealth within this context.<sup>29</sup> Klein argues that Miranli Mustafa's career "exemplifies how tribes came to be the most powerful social and political units in Kurdish society in the nineteenth century, often through the patronage of powerful government officials, and also illustrates how the creation of the Hamidiye [Light Cavalry] accelerated the consolidation of power by certain tribes and leading individuals within those tribes."<sup>30</sup> By the turn of the century, Kurdistan was again mired in the process of the formation of "tribal emirates," but this time as the direct result of Abdülhamid's policies which empowered those tribes with Hamidiye connections.

The transformation of the local power structure in this way generated opposition in Diyarbekir. Opposition groups, as Jongerden states, were "essentially urban in character, composed of Kurdish notables and prominent families, with substantial rural possessions and major trading interests."<sup>31</sup> Milli İbrahim Paşa's expansion from Viranşehir towards Diyarbekir created anxiety among this group of notables, led by the Piriñçizades, another large-landowner family in Diyarbekir. Milli İbrahim Paşa's economic expansion in the areas of trade and land-ownership threatened the Piriñçizade family's interests.<sup>32</sup> As Jongerden demonstrates, in the closing years of the nineteenth century Diyarbekir saw increasing rivalry between these two major elite families, the Millis and the Piriñçizades, of different socio-economic origins, the former being rural whereas the latter urban, yet conflicting economic interests.<sup>33</sup> In 1905, on the eve of the revolution, Milli İbrahim Paşa reached the gates

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<sup>27</sup> Janet Klein presents a succinct analysis of governmental rationalities behind Abdülhamid II's establishment of Hamidiye Light Cavalry (Klein 2002).

<sup>28</sup> See Klein 2002: 96–190.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* Also see Bruinessen 1992: 185–189.

<sup>30</sup> Klein 2002: 130.

<sup>31</sup> Jongerden 2007: 244.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 247–251.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

of the city with his armed men, and the escalating tensions among the Diyarbekir notables culminated in the protests by the inhabitants of the city led by Arif Pirinççizade. They raided the post-office and telegraphed Istanbul demanding that the government prevent any further encroachment on Diyarbekir by İbrahim Paşa.<sup>34</sup> Their pleas received a response only after the 1908 Revolution when the government organized a military expedition against İbrahim Paşa, which eventually brought his rule to an end, and led to the government confiscation of his property.

In this way, the rise of Milli İbrahim Paşa as a Hamidiye commander and his fall after the 1908 Revolution with the assistance of his rivals, the Pirinççizades, is illustrative of the nature of the change in local power configuration in Diyarbekir by the turn of the century. The new era heralded the rise of the Pirinççizades who had solid connections with the CUP. The aforementioned Arif Pirinççi, his nephew Ziya Gökâl, and his son Fevzi Pirinççizade were well-known figures in local and state politics.<sup>35</sup> Their triumph over the Millis implied the rise of CUP politics and CUP related political actors in the city of Diyarbekir. As it was the case in other provinces of the Empire, the CUP found its allies in Diyarbekir and the Pirinççizades were among the most prominent supporters of the new regime.

After 1908, new political currents and the empire-wide political changes resonated strongly in Diyarbekir. Educated members of the Kurdish notable families established cultural and political organizations in Istanbul.<sup>36</sup> The Society for the Mutual Aid and Progress of Kurdistan (*Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti*- KTTC) was one of these associations established in Istanbul and had branches in other provinces inhabited by Kurds, including Diyarbekir.<sup>37</sup> The Cemilpaşazades were a Kurdish family who were active in the newly opened political space after the Revolution. In contrast to the Pirinççizades who had strong connections with the new regime, the Cemilpaşazades were known for their distance from and even opposition to CUP policies.<sup>38</sup> The 1908 Revolution generated both support and opposition among the Kurdish notables in Diyarbekir. In any case, how-

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<sup>34</sup> Klein 2002: 205.

<sup>35</sup> Jongerden 2007: 248. For the elite conflicts in post-revolutionary Diyarbekir, see in this volume, Joost Jongerden, "Urban Nationalists and Rural Ottomanists."

<sup>36</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Kurdish clubs and associations established in this period see Jwaideh 2006: 102–114; Özoğlu 2004: 77–84.

<sup>37</sup> Malmısanij 2004: 94.

<sup>38</sup> Malmısanij 2004: 95.



ever, local power configurations were once again recast in relation to the empire-wide changes ushered in by the Revolution.

Cemil Paşa was an Ottoman bureaucrat in the 1860s and also “a wealthy local notable who enjoyed a good deal of land.”<sup>39</sup> His descendents, Ekrem Cemilpaşa and Kadri Cemilpaşa became active in the KTTTC as well as in the two other Kurdish organizations founded after 1908.<sup>40</sup> Scholars still continue to debate whether these organizations were established with nationalist sentiments and supported Kurdish nationalism.<sup>41</sup> Regardless of their political and ideological orientations the very founding of these organizations attests to the repercussion of the Constitutional Revolution on the Kurdish provinces and specifically Diyarbekir. The 1908 Revolution opened up a space for the establishment of these cultural-political organizations together with the emergence of a revitalized Kurdish press. They were influential in the dissemination of the ideas, ideologies and the language of the constitutional regime in the region. In other words, Diyarbekir, notwithstanding its geographical distance from the western parts of the Empire where the revolutionary movement flourished, by no means remained aloof from or oblivious to these great political changes. Looking at the publications of the Kurdish organizations founded after the revolution and consular reports, Klein discusses the perceptions of the Kurdish notables of the new regime of the CUP.<sup>42</sup> Her analysis demonstrates that Kurdish notables’ reactions to the 1908 Revolution and the new regime were multifaceted and revealed differences between those in the provinces and those in Istanbul. Some of the Kurdish tribal chiefs wrote telegrams to the Kurdish associations or directly to government to show their support for the new regime. Some others, who felt like the new government would threaten their privileges that they acquired during the Abdülhamid era, were discontented with the changes that the revolution brought and hence there was a growing opposition in the provinces.<sup>43</sup>

We learn about the reactions of the Armenians to the Revolution from the studies on Armenian political organizations. Besides the rising Kurdish political activism in the form of cultural and political organizations, there was also an Armenian revolutionary movement in various

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<sup>39</sup> Özoğlu 2004: 104.

<sup>40</sup> Namely, *Kürt Teali Hevi Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Student Association of Hope, 1912) and *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (the Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan, 1918). See, Jwaideh 2006 and Özoğlu 2004.

<sup>41</sup> See for example Jwaideh 2006; Klein 1996; Özoğlu 2001.

<sup>42</sup> Klein 2002: 242–255.

<sup>43</sup> Klein 2002: 247.

parts of the eastern provinces. Leading up to the Revolution, the Armenian political parties and the CUP forged increasingly closer ties. After the Revolution a sense of optimism pervaded Armenian political groups as they expected the new regime to ameliorate the living conditions of the Empire's Armenian populations. They were furthermore hopeful that their lands and properties confiscated during the Abdülhamid era would be returned.<sup>44</sup> In the immediate period after the Revolution, on August 1, 1908, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Dashnaksuthiun*) conveyed their written demands to the CUP that included the return of the recently usurped Armenian lands to their previous owners.<sup>45</sup>

Thanks to the limited secondary literature, we know how Kurdish notables and Armenian political parties positioned themselves *vis-à-vis* the new regime after the constitutional revolution. However, our knowledge regarding the reactions of the broader sectors of society to the 1908 Revolution does not go beyond sweeping generalizations that depict the initial enthusiasm of the “masses” about the new regime and their eventual disappointment. Citing the British consul in Diyarbekir, Klein states that “in Diyarbekir . . . people were universally in favor of the constitution, with the exception of ‘fanatics and corrupt officials.’”<sup>46</sup> She also states that “the central government took ardent steps to popularize its ideology and gain support in the region and for this aim they “dispatched telegrams and delegates to ‘explain to the populations the true significance of the constitutional government.’”<sup>47</sup> Klein's own work, which is based primarily on European consular reports, has greatly contributed to our understanding of the reactions and responses of the local population to the 1908 Revolution and their expectations from the new regime. Yet, we still do not have comprehensive insight into the ways in which CUP propaganda influenced the non-elite population and how, if ever, they adopted, appropriated or reinterpreted the ideals, ideologies and policies of the new regime in their search to remedy their everyday problems. In order to have a complete picture of the local dynamics within the context of these empire-wide changes, we need to go beyond an approach which focuses solely on local notable groups such as Kurdish tribal elites and established organizations—such as Armenian revolutionary parties or Kurdish associations. Taking the non-elite groups as anonymous, homog-

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<sup>44</sup> Avagyan & Minassian 2005: 33–34.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>46</sup> Klein 2002: 191.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

enous and hence nameless renders them invisible in historical accounts. We now have the kind of historical documents which can help us retrieve the voices of non-elite groups that have been lost in the elite-centered histories of the eastern provinces. The analysis of petitions generated in post-revolutionary Diyarbekir can present us with a microscopic and relational picture of how the above-mentioned empire-wide changes inscribed themselves upon the lives of the peasant populations of Diyarbekir in the period in question. In the next section, I will introduce these petitions and discuss how they might present us with invaluable information regarding the feelings, expectations, and discontent of commoners in post-revolutionary Diyarbekir.

#### SPIRIT OF THE PETITION(ER)S IN THE POST-REVOLUTIONARY DIYARBEKİR

Petitions, as Van Voss states, “were used by subjects including quite humble subjects in various cultures and political settings to voice their demands.”<sup>48</sup> Petitioning the sultan and other organs of the central bureaucracy certainly did not start with the 1908 Revolution. In the Ottoman Empire, petition-writing was a well-established and institutionalized aspect of the bureaucratic apparatus.<sup>49</sup> The development of the Empire’s communication network with the expansion of the telegraph beginning in the mid-nineteenth century most likely facilitated petition writing by speeding up the conveyance of messages from the districts and provinces to the central bureaucracy in Istanbul. The petitions used for this article attest to the frequency by which the telegraph system was utilized by the petitioners. Except the ones which were sent by the Syriac, Chaldean and Armenian patriarchs in Istanbul on behalf of their communities in Diyarbekir, of the seventy petitions in question here, almost all of them were sent by wire. Telegraph lines were extended to Diyarbekir in the mid-nineteenth century,<sup>50</sup> and by 1892 there were 11 telegraph offices in

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Complaints sent to the Sultan and to different bodies of the central state were recorded in various registers. Starting with 1649 personal matters were recorded into Registers of Complaints (*Şikâyet Defterleri*) and into Registers of Administrative Orders (*Ahkâm Defterleri*) after 1742. For the nineteenth century there were also Register of Petitions (*Arzuhâl Defterleri*). See *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi* (Istanbul: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2000) and Shaw 1975). For a discussion on the petitions in the early Republican Turkey, see Akın 2007.

<sup>50</sup> By 1861, Diyarbekir was integrated to the imperial telegraph network (Yazıcı 1992: 201).

the various districts of the province.<sup>51</sup> The telegraph line was an essential tool of Abdülhamid's attempt to extend his authority throughout the Empire. But the very same line was also used by the population to communicate with the Sultan. Yakup Bektaş states: "Believing that their complaints would not be conveyed because of the bureaucracy and inefficiency of local administrators, groups of people in many towns, including Diyarbekir, Ankara, Sinop, Trabzon, Sivas, and Kayseri, marched to the telegraph stations in unruly crowds and demanded to be put into direct communication with the sultan."<sup>52</sup> It can be argued that the construction of telegraph lines in the Ottoman Empire and their extension to Diyarbekir facilitated the transmission of local problems and demands to the central authorities in Istanbul and hence ensured a more direct relationship between the petitioners and the state.

It is known from other historical contexts, like the French Revolution and the Revolution of March 1848, revolutionary situations "went hand in hand with waves of petitioning."<sup>53</sup> In his analysis of the role of peasant petitions in the context of the 1905 Russian Revolution, Verner states that peasants intensify their negotiations with the authorities during the revolution. 1905 Revolution, he argues, "dramatized the state authority at all levels" and

[T]he resultant decline of legitimacy in the eyes of its subjects not only weakened the web of social relations on which autocracy was based but it also engendered an expectation on the part of the politically and socially disadvantaged that the body politic and social system could be thoroughly reordered. Through their petitions and other actions, many peasants were acting upon these expectations and joining what amounted to a context for political space.<sup>54</sup>

In the petitions sent from Diyarbekir, as will be discussed in greater detail below, there is a similar emphasis on the period of Sultan Abdülhamid as a source of injustice and oppression together with a celebration of the new constitutional regime as the instigator of justice for the poor peasantry. Leaving aside the use of a celebratory language about the new regime as a rhetorical strategy for the moment, I want to emphasize that the frequency of peasant petitions after the 1908 Revolution attests to a will on the side of the Diyarbekir peasants to be a part of, and benefit

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<sup>51</sup> Okan 2003: cviii.

<sup>52</sup> Bektaş 2000: 695.

<sup>53</sup> Heerma-Van Voss 2001: 5.

<sup>54</sup> Verner 1995: 67–68.

from the reconfigured political space after the Revolution. Besides, from a bureaucratic point of view, the Revolution opened up a concrete space for petition-writing by reinstating the 1876 Constitution. Article 14 of the Constitution on petition writing reads:

One or several persons belonging to the Ottoman nationality have the right of presenting petitions to the competent authority on the subject of infractions of the laws or regulations committed either to their personal prejudice or the prejudice of the public welfare and may in the same way address in the form of a complaint signed petitions to the Ottoman General Assembly to complain of the state functionaries or employees.<sup>55</sup>

For the Diyarbekir *ahali* the reinstatement of the 1876 Constitution which included this specific clause on petition-writing must have also opened up a convenient space for the articulation of their concerns before the state authorities. This does not mean that the peasants of Diyarbekir did not write petitions before the revolution. As stated before, commoners frequently sent telegraphs to Sultan Abdülhamid using the telegraph lines.<sup>56</sup> However, as the analysis of the petitions below will demonstrate, the language used in the petitions sent after the 1908 Revolution perfectly reflect the atmosphere and the language of the new era. In that sense these petitions differ from the petitions sent in the pre-revolutionary context, the custom of praying for the health and well-being of the Sultan was dropped in favor of a conspicuous adoption of and reverence to the Constitutional Regime (*Meşrutiyet*), the Constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*) and the principles of the new era: “liberty, equality, fraternity and justice.”<sup>57</sup>

Petitions are documents that mirror the “encounter of identity and the authority.”<sup>58</sup> The analysis of petitions can provide us with invaluable information about the sender who complains about a certain issue, requests redress for an unfair act or demands justice, but it also gives us clues about the relation between the petitioner and the state institutions and authorities. Van Voss states that “[t]o be effective, a petition has to mention the ruler or the ruling body it is addressed to, the request, perhaps a motivation and certainly the name (and often some other qualities

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<sup>55</sup> For the full text of the English translation of the 1876 Constitution, see “The Ottoman Constitution, Promulgated the 7th Zilbridje, [*sic*] 1293 (11/23 December, 1876), *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol., No, 4, Supplement: Official Documents (Oct., 1908), p. 369.

<sup>56</sup> See note 48.

<sup>57</sup> Of the seventy petitions that I have examined there was not any single use of honorifics or prayers referring to Sultan.

<sup>58</sup> de Costa 2006: 670.

of the petitioner.)”<sup>59</sup> This was the case for the petitions sent from Diyarbakir in the period under question. Any petitioner who desired his/her demand’s appearance before the authorities imprints his/her identity in the petition in at least two different ways. First, by looking at the ways in which the petitioner describes himself/herself one can acquire concrete information about his/her social status together with the petitioner’s ethnic and religious identity. In the case of notables the usual way of description was to refer to the family title (*lâkap*), or the name of the tribe, as in the case of “Odabaşızade Mahmud”<sup>60</sup> or “Hacı Ömerzade Osman from Alikan tribe.”<sup>61</sup> In other instances, petitioners would refer to their occupation, whether merchant or muleteer. We also see that members of the religious establishments use their religious titles such as general deputy of the Syriac (*Süryani-i Kadim*) patriarch, or Chaldean archbishop (*mutran*). In one of the rare instances of a female petitioner, the petitioner described herself as “Ali’s sister Adile Hanım,” making a clear reference to a male relative.<sup>62</sup> When a petitioner possessed a distinguishable social status within the community, he/she identified him/herself in relationship to this status. On the other hand, petitions written by commoners with no religious authority, family reputation or specific occupation, the petitioner identified himself/herself with a first name and a village of origin.

Looking at the signatories can also provide us with other information about the identity of the sender. The petitions in question were written by either a single individual for an individual matter, or by one person in the name of village community or a group of people who came together and sent a collective petition which contained the signatory of each petitioner. In the case of group petitions, the ways in which petitioners identified themselves in relation to their co-petitioners or their fellow townsmen reflected their own perceptions of the concerns raised, and whether they viewed their concerns as being either a private or public matter. In the case of the petitions written by a single individual, depending on the content of the petition, the sender signed the petition individually. Yet, it was common for individual senders to claim to represent the inhabitants of a certain village, as was the case in a petition sent from the district of Derik

<sup>59</sup> Heerma-Van Voss 2001: 6.

<sup>60</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/10, 30 Mart 1327 (12 April 1911).

<sup>61</sup> BOA.DH.H 15/4, 17 Teşrinievvel 1326 (30 October 1910).

<sup>62</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 28-1/44, 16 Şevval 1327, (31 October 1909).

which was signed by Ali and Resul in the name of the inhabitants (*ahali*) of Fetini village.<sup>63</sup>

Large numbers of petitions were written collectively claiming to voice shared concerns or grievances. In this respect, the status of the village headmen within the power configuration in the village is critical. They seem to play a significant role in sending petitions in the name of the village community to voice their demands. In some instances headmen wrote petitions on behalf of villagers to defend them from growing encroachment or oppression of notables. In others we see the names of the village headmen in the same petition with the notables of the locality. In August 1909, headmen of four villages came together with the chiefs of Helecan and Kiki tribes and petitioned the Ministry of Internal Affairs to complain about the non-settled tribes (*gayrimeskûn urban*) who, they claim, “usurped [their] possessions and killed [their] animals.”<sup>64</sup> In order to be effective the petitioners had to address the ruling authority.<sup>65</sup> The great majority of the petitions sent from Diyarbekir in the post-revolutionary period addressed the Ministry of the Interior (*Dahiliye Nezareti*). Although less in numbers there are some petitions which were sent to the Grand Vizier’s office (*Sadaret*) and a few were sent to the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies (*Meclis-i Mebusan*). The usual procedure was to send the petition either from the city centre (*vilayet merkezi*) or the closest district (*kaza*) directly to the Ministry in Istanbul. Then, the Ministry would write to the Diyarbekir Governorate asking for the investigation of the issue raised in the petition and the communication of the result to their office. In some other instances, petitioners did not directly send their petitions to the related office but used available connections located in Istanbul such as religious authorities or merchants to convey their message to the Ministry. It was a widespread practice for Armenian, Syriac and Chaldean patriarchs or their deputies to write to the Ministry to voice the demands and grievances of the members of their communities settled in Diyarbekir. Merchants operating in Istanbul played a similar role in forwarding the demands of their fellow villagers or the members of their ethnic/religious community back home to the state authorities. It seems, however, that at some instances petitioners’ demands had to pass various different layers of authorities before they reach Istanbul.

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<sup>63</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 14-1/59, 11 Ramazan, 1327 (13 September 1909). Currently Fetini is called Pınarcık.

<sup>64</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 1-1/73, 12 Ağustos 1325 (25 August 1909).

<sup>65</sup> Heerma-Van Voss 2001: 6.

In one instance the Chaldean archbishop (*mutran*) of Cizre penned a petition to the Interior Ministry in September 1909 to voice the problems of the Chaldean community around Van. The tribes, he states, attacked the Chaldeans, usurped three hundred and sixty animals, killed three shepherds and wounded three people. His petition demands from the Ministry an end to the oppressions of these tribes, which he claimed greatly horrified the “Christian *ahali*.”<sup>66</sup> The *mutran* also sent a copy of the same petition to the Deputy of the Chaldean patriarch in Istanbul, who then forwarded it to the Ministry.<sup>67</sup> The ministry, in turn, sent an order to the Diyarbekir governorate asking for an investigation of the matter. Here the significant point is that a social problem in the Van region is communicated to Chaldean *mutran* in Cizre first, and then to the Deputy Patriarch and eventually to the Ministry. The demand of the Chaldean community passed three different layers of authority. Significantly, Chaldeans in Van were able to convey their grievances to the Ministry by using every means available. Moreover, this entire correspondence between the petitioner and these offices took place in just two days, 17–18 September 1909. This case also illustrates how telegraph line was influential in facilitating and speeding up the transmission of demands of the local population to the central bureaucracy.

At some other instances, however, petitioners bypassed the local authorities to reach directly the offices of the central bureaucracy in the capital city. Petitioners’ appeal to the central bureaucracy frequently entailed complaints about the various organs of the local bureaucracy who they claim, supported, facilitated or in some ways participated in local notables’ oppression. In 1909, Nişan Köseyan from Palu wrote to the Grand Vizierate about three notables, Tayfur, Haşim and Said *Beys*, who, he claims, confiscated their harvest.<sup>68</sup> Initially, they applied to the governorate, yet, he complained, the district official did not implement the decision of the Governorate. The petitioner then sought redress from the Grand Vizierate for the negligence or the misconduct of the local authorities.<sup>69</sup> Three headmen, Emin, Abdi, and Musa from Mardin wrote a petition with the chief of the Kiki tribe Abdürrahim and chief of the Helecan tribe Osman to the Interior Ministry. They complained about the local

<sup>66</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 12-2/30, 4 Eylül 1325 (17 September 1909).

<sup>67</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 12-2/30, 4 Eylül 1325 (18 September 1909).

<sup>68</sup> Although the letter is signed by one person, Nişan Köseyan, the narrative is in first plural pronoun.

<sup>69</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 15-2/49, 9 Eylül 1325 (22 September 1909).



government, which remained oblivious to their outcry in the face of growing attacks perpetrated by non-settled tribes that usurped and destroyed their animals.<sup>70</sup> It seems that in both instances petitioners first used the local channels to find a solution to their problem and when they realized that it was not working, they appealed to a higher authority and also complained about the actions of the local government before the central authorities.

The local population of the Diyarbekir effectively used petition-writing as an instrument in their search for a solution to problems originating in their locality. As the examples above demonstrate petitioners' aim to find a solution by writing petitions was not a non-systematic, coincidental, or one time attempt without any pre-designed aims and targets. Using the available local connections, by keeping up with the path of the correspondence and making references to the previous correspondence and orders and by using "the perceived fissures within the ruling classes"<sup>71</sup> to complain about the ones who did not meet their expectations in terms of instituting "justice," petitioners deployed every possible means to convey their message to the authorities. In this sense, petition-writing was a political act, and the petition was an arena of encounter between the Diyarbekir *ahali* and the local and central authorities. Their frequent recourse to petition-writing as an instrument to seek solutions to their problems from the constitutional regime can help us integrate the rural population of Diyarbekir as political actors into the revolutionary context of the 1908.

Petitioners, while taking these steps to convey their messages to the authorities, also deployed rhetorical strategies to better express their points and to attract greater attention of the rulers. The language used in the petitions provides clues about the various ways in which petitioners sought to gain the support of state elites and also convince them of the seriousness of the matter being raised. Furthermore, the issues raised in the petitions and the contents of the petitions themselves demonstrate how empire-wide structural forces transformed peasant petitioners' livelihoods and how they perceived and interpreted these changes. However, here one significant caveat is necessary. When reading these petitions, it is not always clear whose voice we are reading.<sup>72</sup> Petitioners most likely

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<sup>70</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 1-1/73, 12 Ağustos 1325 (25 August 1909).

<sup>71</sup> Heerma-Van Voss 2001: 6.

<sup>72</sup> Heerma-Van Voss 2001: 8.

received help from professional scribes or from other literate persons. Scribes used standard phrases, expressions and templates, which means that petitions were subjected to a filtering process. The petitions examined here possess a common structure and style beginning with words of respect and deference for the authorities being addressed, and ending with standard phrases requesting a solution to their problem. Moreover, the language and style of the petitions reveal the local character of these texts. With “wayward and humble scribal scripts”<sup>73</sup> together with unfinished sentences, unstructured grammar and spelling mistakes, the style of the petitions reveal the imprint of the local scribes.

Nevertheless the body of each petition is devoted to the individual narrative of each petitioner. In this sense it is not impossible to differentiate the voice of the scribe from that of the petitioner. Here, I agree with John Chalcraft, who, in his analysis of peasant petitions in nineteenth-century Egypt suggests that, “[i]nstead of the complete erasure implied in the claim that ‘subaltern cannot speak,’ peasants arguably did convey elements of their moral economy through petitions, especially manipulating the meaning of and adding content to officially sanctioned discourse.”<sup>74</sup> The petitions in question here, despite being written by (and hence filtered through) the pen of professional scribes, do contain significant elements that pertain to how commoners perceived the ruling classes, how they appropriated and reinterpreted elite discourse in ways to defend their rights, and the various ways in which petitioners legitimated their land claims. By analyzing the narratives found in peasant petitions that deal with disputes over land, I argue that it is possible to derive invaluable insights into the nature of the dispute, the actors involved as well as the nature of the conflict between the different parties over land. In this sense, petitions reveal more than the rhetorical strategies used by the petitioners. They can also give us clues about the dynamics of conflicts over land, and, more broadly, local power relations. The most striking characteristic of the petitions written in this period is their frequent references to the principles and ideological tenets of the constitutional regime; liberty, equality, and fraternity (*hürriyet*, *müsâvât* and *uhuvvet*). The very first sentence of a petition written by Mustafa about a land dispute between the village of Mirkulyan<sup>75</sup> and Behrampaşazade Arif Bey reads: “There is no

<sup>73</sup> Chalcraft 2005: 303.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Currently Çeltikli in Bismil district of Diyarbakır province.

justice, liberty and equality of the Constitutional Regime (*Meşrutiyet*) for us.” After this introduction Mustafa gives a detailed account of Mustafa Bey’s encroachment upon and usurpation of the village’s land. The striking contrast between the initial reference to the principles of the new regime and the subsequent account of the unequal treatment and oppression the villagers faced, seems an intentional attempt on the petitioner’s part to attract the attention of the addressee to their situation.<sup>76</sup>

It is also stated in this as well as other petitions that the ordinary, poor people must also get their fair share from the new regime. Writing in 1912 from the town of Viranşehir, İskender complains about the infamous Kurdish brigand [Milli] İbrahim. İskender states that from 1895 onwards İbrahim continuously usurped the lands of the entire district (*kaza*), parts of the Zor district, along with other lands not open to agriculture, and registered them year after year in his and his sons’ names. According to İskender, Milli İbrahim’s land registrations were in direct contravention to all existing legislation and yet were approved by the administrative and legal offices. This resulted not only in the “destruction of twenty five thousand tribes people’ (*aşair*) accustomed agriculture but also their suffering in the courts (*mahkemelerde süründürmekte*).” “The oppressed cultivators” expected the Constitutional Regime to annul these registrations, but a decision of the Interior Ministry ordered that the lands be given to İbrahim’s son. İskender ends his long petition with a very clear demand: “Helpless cultivators should be partaking of the justice of the Constitutional Regime (*Meşrutiyet*).”<sup>77</sup> The recurrent emphasis in the petitions on the need for poor commoners (*fukara ahali*) to benefit from the new regime reflects the sense among much of Diyarbekir’s population that the new regime needed to be responsive to the demands of the people and find “just” solutions to their problems.

In addition to the three pillars of the constitutional regime (liberty, equality, and fraternity) petitioners also referred to two other concepts in order to legitimate their demands: justice (*adalet*) and rights and law (*hak/hukuk*). In his petition sent from Diyarbekir, a muleteer by the name of Bekir claims that sixty-three of his animals were stolen in Saray district of Van province. He complains about the district official (*kaymakam*) of Saray, who, according to Bekir, did not protect his “legal rights.”<sup>78</sup> “In this

<sup>76</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 76-2/10, 1 April 1326 (14 September 1910).

<sup>77</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/18, 5 Şubat 1327 (18 Şubat 1912).

<sup>78</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 28-1/24, 13 Teşrinievvel 1325 (23 October 1910).

era of Constitutional Regime (*meşrutiyet*) if the rights of us and those like us who serve the public good (*umumun menfaati*) are not protected, this will damage trade; life and law (*hukuk*) are the guardians of one another other." Apparently, Bekir bases his demands on a discourse of "law," "rights," and public good within the constitutional era.

As the new regime was associated with "justice," the end of inequalities and the protection of the oppressed peasants from the local notables in these petitions, the old regime of Sultan Abdülhamid, pejoratively referred to as *istibdad* (despotism), represented repression, corruption and lawlessness. The seeds of the oppressive notables were "sown during *istibdad*,"<sup>79</sup> they "stuck to them like leeches and sucked their blood during *istibdad*,"<sup>80</sup> or they were the "relics of the *istibdad*."<sup>81</sup> It seems that in seeking a solution to their problems from the new regime petitioners not only adopted the language of the constitutional era, but also strategically positioned themselves on the side of the new regime in its clash with the regime of Abdülhamid. Emphasizing their resentment of the old regime, however, was more than a mere rhetorical strategy. As the greater portion of the petitions deal with land conflicts, and this was the period during which dispossession became a chronic problem in the region, Abdülhamid's regime was portrayed as an era of profound misery. Furthermore, the old regime was represented as protectors of oppressive notables while the new regime was portrayed as the institutor of justice for commoners. In order to emphasize the oppressiveness of the old-regime notables, petitioners employed popular metaphors. Their oppression was comparable to the suffering felt under the "Mohacs and Cengiz's [Khan],"<sup>82</sup> to Hülagu [Khan],<sup>83</sup> or to Pharaohs.<sup>84</sup>

By looking at the frequent references to the constitutional regime and its principles in these petitions I do not argue that these ideas necessarily constituted an essential element of the local population's socio-political horizons. To be able to have a better grasp of the extent of the dissemination of these ideas among the local population a sense of the "private discourse that characterized peasants' dealings with each other" is necessary.<sup>85</sup> At this point we do not have the necessary historical materials

<sup>79</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 15-2/49, 9 Eylül 1325 (22 September 1909).

<sup>80</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/31, 28 Eylül 1328 (11 October 1912).

<sup>81</sup> BOA.DH.H 5/4, 27 Eylül 1326 (10 October 1910).

<sup>82</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 82/20, 18 Mart 1326 (31 March 1910).

<sup>83</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 28-1/44, 13 Teşrinievvel 1325 (26 October 1909).

<sup>84</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/19, 16 Rebiyülevvel 1330 (5 March 1912).

<sup>85</sup> Verner 1995: 71.

to delve into the everyday conversations among the inhabitants of the province. Nonetheless, we know that, as discussed above, the repercussions of the empire-wide socio-economic and political changes were felt in Diyarbekir. A lively political atmosphere featuring Kurdish political clubs, Armenian revolutionary organizations as well as a growing press flourished throughout the revolutionary process of 1908. Furthermore, improved communication and transportation systems, migration and return migration, and the press facilitated the mobility of people and ideas and opened channels that helped to spread these concepts and ideas among the local population. In this sense, the widespread use of the language of the new era reflected the empire-wide political changes within this provincial context.

In terms of the content and the nature of the demands voiced, however, petitions are very much reflective of local conflicts and power relations. Petitioners appropriated the principles of the new regime, reinterpreted them in such a way that they could raise the problems they faced in their everyday lives and defend their rights. Commoners, local notables, and the members of the provincial bureaucracy appear as the primary parties to local disputes discussed in these petitions. The oppressive behavior of the notables, the conflicts between nomadic tribes and settled cultivators, and the unlawful acts of state officials are among the issues that petitioners frequently raise. However one issue pervades in the complaints of petitioners: land disputes. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will examine how dispossession unfolded in the region and the ways in which petitioners claimed their land rights in the petitions.

#### PEASANT DISPOSSESSION AND RESISTANCE

Analysis of these petitions demonstrates that growing dispossession of the peasantry<sup>86</sup> was a chronic source of dispute in the region in the post-revolutionary period. Peasants appealed to the central bureaucracy in Istanbul with the hopes of retrieving their lands, which they claimed were lost to

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<sup>86</sup> I am using the term peasantry mainly to refer to the settled agricultural populations of the Diyarbekir countryside who were increasingly dispossessed within the above-mentioned context. Petitions do not allow me further elaborate on this category by referring to their differences in terms of their relationship with the land, the forms of labor deployed, or the degree of market integration. Being aware of the problems associated with using this term to refer to these different groups, I am still deploying the concept as a means of communication to refer to the dispossessed agricultural population in the region.

local notables in the Abdülhamid era. The frequency of the land disputes in the petitions written after 1908, however, does not necessarily mean that the land issue emerged as a new problem in the region only after the revolution. Rather, with the coming of the new regime, peasants found a newly opened venue to express their discontent with the local notables, whose acts were supported and facilitated by the policies of the Hamidian state.

In her study on the Hamidiye Light Cavalry, Janet Klein discusses the emergence of an “agrarian question” in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire inhabited predominantly by Kurds and Armenians in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Centered primarily around the growing dispossession of peasants in the face of increased “land-grabbing” undertaken by Kurdish tribal chiefs, the agrarian question entailed shifting power relations and increasing struggles between local notables, state officials and the peasantry. However, the emergence of land as a significant source of social conflict in the region was not the product of the post-revolutionary period. The move towards accumulation of lands in the hands of powerful individuals and families and the transformation of agrarian property relations in line with this pattern was an ongoing process dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. The centralization policies of the Ottoman state within the scope of the Tanzimat played a key role in transforming land tenure systems and land relations throughout the empire. In this period, a process marked by the transformation of land tenure regimes began in the eastern provinces of the Empire, including Diyarbekir. The Ottoman Land Code of 1858 was a key aspect of the *Tanzimat* reforms that altered social relations revolving around the ownership, possession and use of land. The Land Code “would gradually transform use rights on land into exclusionary land rights.”<sup>87</sup> It entailed a process of “registration of lands throughout the Empire, in accordance with the categories specified in the Land Law.”<sup>88</sup> In the absence of a monographic study, our knowledge about how the Land Code was implemented in Diyarbekir remains limited. Yet, studies on southern Kurdistan have demonstrated that the Code facilitated the registration of lands in the name of the large landowners. Otman Ali argues that “[w]ith the introduction of the *tapu*, the *ağas* and the city magistrates found an opportunity to defraud the

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<sup>87</sup> Terzibaşoğlu 2001: 53.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

peasants of large quantities of land.”<sup>89</sup> The centralization policies of the state coupled with the growing commercialization of agriculture helped to bring about an increase in the value of land.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, the region was gradually entrapped in a web of social conflicts revolving around the issue of land.

Emerging in the 1890s as the result of policies of the Hamidian state that entailed greater cooperation with the Kurdish notables, the Hamidiye Light Cavalry became a critical actor in the agrarian relations in the region. As Klein’s study demonstrates, the establishment of the Hamidiye brigades as a privileged power group in the 1890s helped to facilitate the Kurdish notables’ land grab. The Hamidiye chiefs’ accumulation of land directly contributed to the growing dispossession of the Kurdish and Armenian peasantry. By the beginning of the twentieth century, “numerous Kurdish and Armenian peasants became dispossessed of their lands and other properties and were reduced to tenancy or forced to emigrate.”<sup>91</sup>

The 1908 Revolution opened a new chapter in the agrarian question. The new regime was eager to differentiate itself from its predecessor Sultan Abdülhamid. Immediately after the proclamation of the Constitution, Klein states, “the central government and many of its local governors appeared intent on bringing about a just resolution to the “agrarian question” and took a number of energetic and even aggressive measures in this regard.”<sup>92</sup> It was within this context that petitions from the Diyarbekir countryside flooded the capital. Both Armenian and Kurdish peasants demanded from the new regime a solution to their problems, and petitioned local and central authorities requesting the return of their lands.

The petitions reflect the enthusiasm of peasants that the new era could offer the potential to retrieve their lost lands. Furthermore, they demonstrate the strategies petitioners deployed to render their claims legitimate in the eyes of the authorities. Each petition contains a narrative of how the problem that the petitioner is raising emerged, which parties were involved, and the ways in which dispossession came about. One

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<sup>89</sup> Othman Ali 1997: 286.

<sup>90</sup> Klein 2002: 264–270. Klein bases her analysis on the studies on Southern Kurdistan, such as Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Iraq, 1900 to 1950: A Political, Social, and Economic History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953); Albertine Jwaideh, “Mithat Paşa and the Land System of Lower Iraq,” in George Makdisi (ed.), *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A.R. Gibb* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963); Samira Haj, *The Making of Iraq 1900–1963: Capital, Power and Ideology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997).

<sup>91</sup> Klein 2002: 299.

<sup>92</sup> Klein 2002: 308.

commonly used tactic involved describing the force and violence that turned peasants into laborers on their own lands or expelled them from their lands altogether. Taceddin, writing from Bulanık<sup>93</sup> on 6 July 1911, complained about the “feudal lords” (*derebeyi makulesi*) Yusuf Ağa and his brother Halid, settled in Diyarbekir, who “came to the village armed and with six servants and in contravention of law and order, forced his entire family to migrate with all their animals.”<sup>94</sup> Taceddin demanded from the “Constitutional Regime” the return of his family’s lands. Notables used force to usurp lands in other ways. In another case the dispossession occurred after the 1908 Revolution. Ohannes complained about a group of notables from Palu, Necib and his brothers Hasan and Hüsnü, who came to their village “in this era of the Constitutional Regime” with forty-fifty men and grabbed their lands and started to cultivate on these lands.”<sup>95</sup> In another case from Ahsis<sup>96</sup> village in Palu, Abdürrahim complains about a certain Osman Bey who he claimed “committed numerous crimes during the *istibdad*” but was “honored with a pardon and increased his oppressive acts year by year.” Osman Bey came to their village and sent hundreds of his animals onto their “cultivated lands” which they possessed with a title-deed and destroyed their harvest.” Osman Bey in this way attempted to convert their agricultural lands into pasture.<sup>97</sup> Thus, it seems that using outright force was one of the widespread methods of dispossession.

In other instances, notables employed various tricks or engaged in outright fraud in order to register lands in their own names. For example, in a petition written in 1909, Ali and Resul demanded that action be taken to stop the conduct of one Hacı Osman Reşo who had seized the lands of the inhabitants of the Fetini village.<sup>98</sup> Hacı Osman Reşo was a local notable who, for his own enrichment, used fraud to register the lands of the “poor commoners (*fukara ahali*)” in his and his son’s name. Ali and Resul complained not only about Hacı Osman’s seizure of their lands, but also his confiscation of their harvest, which he had sent elsewhere. Hacı Osman Reşo employed a commonly used tactic to dispossess peasants from their land. He first seized sixteen parcels of lands in the village and, with the support of government officials, registered these lands in his own

<sup>93</sup> A district in the *sancak* (subprovince) of Muş (Bitlis vilayet).

<sup>94</sup> BOA.DH.H 15/19, 23 Haziran 1327 (6 July 1911).

<sup>95</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/31, 28 Eylül 1328 (11 October 1912).

<sup>96</sup> Presently Kavakdere in Karakoçan district of Elazığ province.

<sup>97</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/23, 21 Mayıs 1328 (3 June 1912).

<sup>98</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 14.1/59, 5 Eylül 1325 (19 September 1909).



name as well as that of his son. Through these means he was able to gain official ownership over the village, reducing the peasantry to laborers on their own lands. According to the petition, after acquiring their lands Hacı Osman Reşo continued his oppression of the local peasantry by selling off their harvest. Before writing this petition, villagers marched in the streets of Mardin to convey their complaints to the governor to no avail. Ali and Resul's complaint also concerns local officials who cooperated with and facilitated Hacı Osman Reşo's fraud. They therefore demanded the transfer of the case to an impartial court in the provincial center of Diyarbekir.

In another instance, the headman of the Mirkulyan village, Mustafa, wrote in the name of the village's population whose lands were taken through fraudulent means by Behrampaşazade Arif Bey. According to the petition, Arif Bey conducted fake transactions with the village in the name of Reşid Ahmed and Mehmed who had been dead for many years.<sup>99</sup> The government official that was sent to investigate the case was a relative of Arif Bey and did not record their statements in the interrogation reports. Local government officials decided to "evacuate" six households in the village and settled in them "vagrants (*serseriler*)" who were brought by Arif Bey to the region. Mustafa claimed the villagers themselves were turned into "refugees in the desert." After two months, Arif Bey countered with his own petition sent to the Interior Ministry. Seeking to use his authority, he also sent a copy of his petition to one of the Diyarbekir deputies in the Ottoman parliament (*Meclis-i Mebusan*), [Pirinççizade] Fevzi Bey, and requested his help. We understand from his petition that after Mustafa's petition, the district official decided in favor of the villagers and evacuated the families settled by Arif Bey in the village whom he refers to in the petition as "my farmers." This decision, Arif Bey says, resulted in the loss of his harvest worth thousands of *liras* and caused the immiseration of "his farmers." Here it is striking to see that those whom are depicted as "vagrants" in Mustafa's petition appear as "miserable farmers" in Arif Bey's account. The case continued for almost a year with the Interior Ministry eventually reaching a provisional decision that included the resettling of Arif Bey's "miserable farmers" in the village.

For the peasants, however, justifying their land rights was usually a challenging task. In a majority of cases, peasants did not possess a title deed or any other formal document to prove their rights. As stated, in the Ottoman Empire the 1858 Land Code codified individual land ownership.

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<sup>99</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 76-2/10, 1 April 1326 (14 September 1910).

From the second half of the nineteenth century, Diyarbekir experienced a general move towards the codification of land ownership. At the end of the nineteenth century, Yalman argues, “much of the land belonged to influential families and personages who had had foresight and power to register it in their lands.”<sup>100</sup> However, formal or written transactions were not always the rule in the region. Verbal transactions or various forms of extralegal means of appropriating land, including violence, often sufficed to obtain land. Moreover, in the absence of systematic land surveys, ambiguous markers such as “a slight ridge, an outcrop of rock, a tree, a white stone or anything else that appears permanent” were used in demarcating land, making it more difficult for the peasantry to dispute the borders of lands.<sup>101</sup> As we see above, within this particular historical context land was accumulated in the hands of local notables through (often) violent means with the backing of state officials. The regime of private ownership of land with reference to title deeds, law and legality was in the process of being “made” by the elite groups in the region. In this case, petitioners had to deploy other strategies to prove their rights to these lands.<sup>102</sup> In the absence of a legal document that could prove their possession rights, or in the presence of fake title deeds attesting to other peoples’ ownership rights, petitioners sought to demonstrate other aspects of their relationship to their lands in order to reclaim their perceived historical and moral rights over these lands. Accordingly, inheritance, labor spent, and their fulfillment of duties to the state demonstrated by paying taxes became appropriate bases upon which dispossessed peasants presented and legitimated their claims to state authorities. One way of proving their claim to land was to refer to the historical rights of possession. Peasants underlined the fact that they had possessed/worked these lands long periods of time or “from time immemorial” (*min el kadim*).<sup>103</sup> Often their language was peppered with a dramatic tone such as when the aforementioned petition of Ali and Resul claimed that their lands “have

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<sup>100</sup> Yalman 1977: 113.

<sup>101</sup> Yalman 1977: 115.

<sup>102</sup> Here, I am not taking peasant dispossession for granted. Talking about dispossession does not imply that it was the case at each and every instance in all parts of the province. Yet, since the petitions are sent usually by the dispossessed peasantry, they give us more clues about dispossession than other issues which might complicate the narrative on peasant dispossession and reveal the differences among the commoners. There is not a systematic study on transformation of property relations in the region. Existing studies, (Bruinesses, Klein, Arslan) discusses peasant dispossession but does not examine other examples such as peasant differentiation, inter-sectoral transitions or peasant resistance.

<sup>103</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 115/45, 10 Şaban 1328 (4 Ağustos 1326).

been blended with the bones of their ancestors for thousands of years.”<sup>104</sup> Reference to inheritance was not always a mere rhetorical strategy. In some instances petitioners defended real inheritance rights even if they were lost in the above-mentioned context.<sup>105</sup> For example, İbrahimyan Mifro wrote a petition in 1910 demanding the return of the lands he had inherited from his father. Because his lands and other properties had been seized earlier by local Kurdish notables, he and his family were forced to leave their village of residence. He requested the government’s help to return to their lands in the village where they were born.<sup>106</sup>

In addition to historical rights over land, peasants also emphasized the labor that they spent to make their lands flourishing and prosperous. For example, writing from Viranşehir, Hamid el Hüseyin and İsa protested the actions of people who had forced one hundred households to leave their lands which they had cultivated and made prosperous “with their bare hands.” Petitioners say that they also built a well and constructed some forty houses on these lands.<sup>107</sup> In two petitions written at different times, they carefully emphasized their effort and labor in this manner. In other cases, peasants also deployed conventional rights vs. duties discourse by referring to the fact that they performed their responsibilities by paying their taxes to the local government. Thus, one significant way of claiming possession over land was to be able to demonstrate that it was cultivated and hence, it produced surplus for the government in the form of tax.

Yet, without doubt there were exceptions to this pattern. Peasants did not always lack official documents. In other words, having a title deed did not always afford protection from dispossession. In this case and in many others, dispossessed peasants usually did not go to the court because notables had official documents and, regardless of how they may have acquired them, the documents would be advantageous to the notables at any potential trial. Therefore claimants preferred that disputes be solved through administrative measures rather than through the courts. A certain Garabet states that in various villages of Palu a group of notables had seized the lands of the local population during the Abdülhamid era. With the start of the constitutional Regime, those who possessed a sales contract (*mabeyn senetleri*) but not a title deed rushed to the local government seeking to end the oppressive behavior of these notables

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<sup>104</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 14.1/59, 5 Eylül 1325 (19 September 1909).

<sup>105</sup> Klein 2002: 308–310.

<sup>106</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 70.1/5, 19 Safar 1328 (2 March 1909).

<sup>107</sup> BOA.DH.H. 31/12, 6 Receb 1329 (3 July 1911).

through the restitution of their lands, and a regranteeing of the title deeds for them.<sup>108</sup>

When peasants did possess title deeds, or any other kind of official document, they tended to emphasize their official ownership rights and adopted the language of legal land ownership. For example, Yerasimo from the village of Heftgerm<sup>109</sup> gives an account of how three pieces of land, which provided for the subsistence of the entire family were under attack by Abdürrahim. Abdürrahim stole Yerasimo's animals and broke into his house to seize his lands. Yerasimo claimed that he held the title-deed of these lands and what Abdürrahim was doing was illegal. He also protested the actions of local officials who backed Abdürrahim and annulled Yerasimo's title deeds. "The devastation of peasants like us, does not harm state order, yet, *millet* cannot live without law. From this point of view," he says, "I demand the restoration of my rights."<sup>110</sup> Here Yerasimo's claim to land on the basis of having title-deeds, and his reference to the notion of property rights and law was a tactic that peasants frequently deployed when they were in a position to prove their legal rights. It seems that peasants did not categorically reject the language of private property in their claims. When they had an official document, especially a title-deed, they carefully emphasized this fact, and claimed their rights on that basis by stating that they possessed the land with a title-deed (*batapu*). The prevalence of references to title-deeds in the petitions illustrates that land registration, individual land ownership and hence the language and practices of private property were prevalent in Diyarbakir by the turn of the century.

Another case in point concerns the lands that the Sadettin Cebavi *medrese* (*madrasah*) possessed in Diyarbakir. The head (*postnişin*) of the *medrese* petitioned the governor complaining about Halil Ağazade İsmail, who usurped the lands of the *medrese* by force. Ömer emphasizes that Halil Ağazade İsmail did not have "any kind of valid *sened*." Disputes revolving around *vaqf* (T. *vakıf*) lands require a more comprehensive analysis. The significant point to state here is that Ömer defends the rights of the *medrese* over the lands by emphasizing the legality of their claims and illegality of İsmail's acts. He also claims that in the era of the Constitutional Regime their legitimate rights (*hukuk-u meşrua*) should have

<sup>108</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 28-1/45, 15 Teşrinievvel 1325 (28 October 1909).

<sup>109</sup> Currently Sankamış village in the central district of Diyarbakır.

<sup>110</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/50, 6 Mart 1329 (19 March 1913).

been free from intervention in accordance with the Constitution (*Kanun-ı Esasi*).<sup>111</sup>

Regardless of how they reclaimed their lands, whether by employing discourses of property rights or moral economy, there is an emphasis on “justice” and “rights.” As stated before, a sense that the ordinary people were entitled to the new notions of justice and equality being forwarded by the new regime pervades in these petitions. At various instances they, as “poor commoners” requested their shares from the justice of the constitutional regime. However, at some points the discourse of morality and rights went hand in hand with a less deferential, and sometimes even a more acrimonious tone. In the aforementioned petition written by Mustafa about the land dispute between the village of Mirkulyan and Behrampaşazade Arif Bey, Mustafa expresses the determination of village inhabitants to retrieve their lands by saying: “We shall shed our blood but shall not leave our rightful property.”<sup>112</sup> The tone of the petition demonstrates villagers’ sense that they had nothing left to lose but their lives in this confrontation. It is worth pointing out that the petition is written to the Interior Ministry and the use of this forceful tone, which includes a threat of violence, demonstrates the determination of these peasants to encourage the state to take their side in this confrontation. The nature of the tone deployed, however, differed from one context to another. In Hamid el Hüseyin and İsa’s petition, the two petitioners emphasize that when faced with these injustices, they pleaded for justice with a telegram but received no reply. Therefore, they end their petition with a question: “Where are we supposed to go? Are we simply going to leave the Empire?”<sup>113</sup> Kuloğlu Yorgi’s aforementioned petition about Abbas Çavuş who, he claims, encroached upon their orchard is striking in its threatening tone. If their rights are not protected, petitioners say, they will have to leave their sect.<sup>114</sup> Petitioners’ recourse to this tone (which usually comes at the very end of the petition) attests to the shakiness of their support for the legitimacy and rightfulness of the new regime. By combining deferential language with a more bellicose tone in their petitions, these petitioners underscored their loyalty to the constitutional regime while at the same time underscoring their

<sup>111</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/24, 6 Haziran 1328 (22 June 1912).

<sup>112</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 76.2/10, 1 Nisan 1326 (14 September 1910).

<sup>113</sup> BOA. DH.H 31/12, 6 Receb 1329 (3 July 1911).

<sup>114</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 107/67, 8 Haziran 1326 (21 June 1910). It is not clear what they mean by leaving their sect and why they think it would help them attract the attention of the Ottoman authorities.

readiness to confront the state if their “rightful” demands went unfulfilled. According to James Scott, “[m]ost acts of power from below, even when they are protests—implicitly or explicitly—will largely observe the ‘rules’ even if their objective is to undermine them.”<sup>115</sup> Yet, within the context of growing encroachment upon their livelihoods, petitioners, despite their use of deferential tones and their deployment of the language and principles of the new regime in their petitions, gave clues to their willingness to employ other means to claim their rights. In other words, peasant petitioners neither clung solely to the “hidden transcripts” contained in the petitions, nor did they pour into the streets in the form of riots or revolts. Rather, they stood at a juncture between demanding their rights using the language of the ruling elites in creative ways and demonstrating their willingness to sever their ties to new the regime by openly challenging it.

Regardless of the tone used, the petitions demonstrate the endless struggles of the peasantry to retrieve their lands. In most of the petitions, however, no information exists regarding the results of their appeals. In other cases, however, it is possible to see how the return of petitioner’s lands actually materialized on the ground. The struggles of peasant petitioners sometimes bore fruit when the government decided in favor of the restitution of their land rights and facilitated the return to their villages. However, peasants who attempted to repossess their lands often times faced harsh opposition and interference from notables and local government officials. The headman of the Azıklı village (in Siverek district)<sup>116</sup> claimed that village lands, which had been usurped by Osman Ömer Ağa from Beşiri notables during *istibdad*, were restituted during the constitutional era. However, Osman Ağa usurped their lands again. Furthermore the district official supported this act and gave their lands back to Osman Ağa. Therefore the petitioner demanded that officials guilty of oppressing “poor cultivators” be brought under the “talon of the law.”<sup>117</sup> In another instance we see that the lands sold by the government to Armenians in the village of Sumaklı in Siverek district turned into a matter of dispute between Armenians and Kurds, who tried to prevent the Armenians from moving into the disputed village. In this document the Armenian Patriarch, writing in the name of the Armenian villagers, stated that the villagers paid 400 *liras* and purchased the village at a government auction.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Scott 1992: 93.

<sup>116</sup> Presently belonging to the Ergani district of Diyarbakır.

<sup>117</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/15, 14 Ağustos 1327 (27 August 1911).

<sup>118</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/69, 7 Rebiülevvel 1332 (3 February 1914).

The government drew the borders of the village and gave them title deed. However, when the Armenian villages attempted to move into the village, they were prevented from doing so by a group of Kurds- Bedo, Ahmo, and Haso, who also claimed rights over these lands. The local government decided in favor of the Armenians who subsequently moved into the village and began to cultivate the lands. Yet, the Kurdish group continued their attacks. They came to the village armed, started to till the lands and even built a house there. The case turned violent and one Armenian was killed. The Armenian patriarchate's account of these events, however, was challenged by the deputy of the Diyarbekir governor in a letter to the Interior Ministry. According to the deputy, the disputed land were given to a certain Garabet in 1912, but the aforementioned Bedo's claims rested on the basis of an earlier title deed dating back to 1891. Meanwhile, according to this account, the case went to the court where Bedo's earlier title deed was ignored in contravention of the law, and the lands were given to Garabet. Thus, the deputy governor requested legal action be taken against the government official responsible for the situation. The deputy governor's account regarding the murder of the Armenian is even more striking. He claims that this incident was not at all related to this land dispute, but rather occurred as a result of a disagreement between nomadic tribes-people and village inhabitants over animal grazing on village lands. The truth regarding this dispute is obscured by these conflicting accounts. Yet, this dispute clearly exemplifies the type of land conflicts that emerged in the region during this era where the procedures, concepts and social-relations related to land rights were defined, redefined, and negotiated among the various parties involved. As seen from the conflicting accounts regarding Garabet and Bedo's ownership rights, the possession of a title deed by no means implied a clear cut solution to a dispute over land. Violent confrontations between competing land claims persisted. Furthermore, it seems that the account of the Armenian Patriarch reflected a common pattern. That is, Armenians who attempted to return to their lands after the government's decision allowing them to return were either prevented from doing so by those who had previously forcefully usurped or legally purchased their lands. Another land dispute case from Çüngüş further exemplifies this issue.<sup>119</sup> In a petition written by Süleyman, Cemal, Ahmed and Ömer about the four petitioners complained about the granting of a title deed for their lands to a

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<sup>119</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/70, 7 Mayıs 1330 (20 Mayıs 1914).

monastery. They claimed that these lands were originally owned by a certain Bağdasar but after his death they escheated to the government. The petitioners, in turn, purchased these lands from the government. In the period immediately preceding their petition, however, their lands were taken by the government and the title deed granted to the monastery without any legal procedures by the office of Imperial Registry (*defter-i hakani*). The petitioners demanded the return of their lands which they claimed had been rightfully and legally purchased. It seems that the initial enthusiasm of dispossessed peasantry for the new regime usually did not translate into the restitution of their lands. Those who wanted to return to their lands either faced the resistance of the usurpers, backed in most cases by the local officials and the (central) government, or were met by the claims of other parties who acquired the lands after they were confiscated. Petitions not only demonstrate dispossession and peasant resistance, but also record the disappointment of the peasantry with the new government. For the dispossessed peasantry, then, “there [was] no justice, liberty and equality in the Constitutional Regime.”<sup>120</sup>

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Huricihan İslamoğlu suggests situating the analysis of the emergence of individual ownership in land within the context of the formation of centralized states. In this sense, she argues, that “politics of property was inseparable from the politics of central administration.”<sup>121</sup> Since the mid-nineteenth century, with the Tanzimat reforms, and specifically with the Land Code of 1858, which codified individual ownership in land, the Ottoman central state aimed at greater control over agricultural surplus. In the case of the eastern provinces of the Empire, available scholarship on the Southern Kurdistan demonstrates how Ottoman centralization policies facilitated and consolidated the development of large landownership. In the case of Diyarbakir we lack a monographic study which could present us with the complexities of the implementation of the Land Code in the region. We know, however, that in the 1880s, with the establishment of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry, the Ottoman state intended to increase control over the region and in this way recast local power configurations.

<sup>120</sup> BOA.DH.MUI 76-2/10, 1 Nisan 1326 (14 September 1910).

<sup>121</sup> İslamoğlu 2004a: 18.



Within this context, the region was trapped in a web of social conflicts and struggles revolving around land. The policies of the central state embodied in the creation of the Hamidiye units, triggered these land disputes and thus facilitated the emergence of new large-landholding groups in the region, usually at the expense of a dispossessed peasantry.

Peasants, however, did not just remain passive observers to these changes. After the 1908 Revolution within the newly configured political space they sought to retrieve their lands. Petitioning the central authorities was but one way of peasant's resistance to growing encroachment of the local notables. In contemporary scholarship however, their voices have been lost because analyses have been limited mainly to the nationalisms and ethnic conflicts in the region. Yet, the voices of peasants have survived in the Ottoman archives through the petitions they sent to the authorities. Looking at these petitions, this chapter has presented a bottom-up approach to the processes of state-centralization, transformation of property relations in land tenure and dispossession. As we have seen, peasants defended their rights over these lands with reference to their historical, moral and at times legal conception of "rights."

The 1908 Revolution constituted the setting within which these petitions were sent from Diyarbekir. The new regime initially seemed willing to take measures to restore the stolen lands. Yet narratives of the peasants who attempted to return to their lands reveal that the process did not work smoothly on the ground. Returnees faced the interference of those who usurped their lands, or their claims competed and conflicted with those who purchased these lands from the usurpers. This was a period during which law and legality were being made and remade by the elites. Accordingly in many cases there were contradictory documents, title-deeds and statements. In any case, restitution was a multifaceted issue which entailed multiple parties, manifold discourses and competing claims.

Finally, in their search for a solution to dispossession, peasants deployed various rhetorical strategies in the petitions. As we have seen, the 1908 Revolution imprinted itself in the language used by the petitioners. Petitioners deployed the language of the new regime in their writings to the authorities in Istanbul. All in all, what we see here is not a passive acceptance of dispossession as destiny by the peasants, but rather constant negotiation and struggle for livelihood by creatively using the ideological references and language of the era in line with the spirit of the new regime. Peasants inscribed their concerns situated in the locality;

and conveyed their outcry to Istanbul on behalf of the “*miserables*” (*sefiller*): “Helpless cultivators should be partaking of the justice of the Constitutional Regime.”<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> BOA.DH.H 31/50, 6 Mart 1329 (19 March 1913).

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SOME NOTES ON THE SYRIAC CHRISTIANS OF DIYARBEKIR IN THE  
LATE 19TH CENTURY  
A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF SOME PRIMARY SOURCES<sup>1</sup>

Emrullah Akgündüz

INTRODUCTION

The Syriac Christians are among the oldest communities of Diyarbekir. Quite when and how they first settled and spread in the area is not certain, but it is probable that they came during the period of Early Christianity—in the first four centuries CE, when the city was known as ‘Amida’ (or variants thereof)—as part of the Christianization of Mesopotamia. Most likely they came via the Kingdom of Edessa (Syriac, *Orhāy/Ourhoi* Kurdish, *Riha*), today’s Şanlıurfa, around 150km southwest of Diyarbekir and generally recognized as home to the Middle Aramaic dialect, Syriac.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, continuing southwest from Diyarbekir/Amida through Urfa/Edessa for another 250km or so, one arrives at the coastal city of Antakya/Antioch, one of the earliest Christian centers and of fundamental importance to the development of the religion. Diyarbekir/Amida became an important Christian center in its own right—the bones of the Apostle (‘Doubting’) Thomas were reputedly brought there for burial, for example—and it is likely that some of the early Christians formed the basis of the nineteenth century Syriac-speaking (Christian) communities of Diyarbekir.<sup>3</sup>

Very little has been written about the Syriac Christians of Diyarbekir. Most of the literature on Diyarbekir focuses on the Kurdish and Armenian populations, while most of the research on the Syriac communities does not address the Syriac Christians of Diyarbekir. Until recently, Syriac scholars have tended to concentrate on the Tur-Abdin region, some 100km to the southeast of Diyarbekir, in modern day eastern Mardin and Şırnak—the monastery of Dayro d-Mor Hananyo / Deyr al-Zaffaran<sup>4</sup> just

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank my supervisor Heleen Murre-van den Berg and the editors of this volume Jelle Verheij and Joost Jongerden, as well as my brother Emre Akgündüz and Andy Hilton for their invaluable feedback during the writing of this article.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the spread of Christianity in Edessa, see, e.g., Segal 1970: 62–110.

<sup>3</sup> Şimşek 2003: 123–126; Gillman and Klimkeit 1999: 24–25.

<sup>4</sup> Also Dayro d-Kurkmo / Kurkmo Dayro (Syriac), or Deirulzafran (Arabic).

outside Mardin was seat to the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate for most of the second millennium (until 1933)—or else they have been mostly interested in biblical studies, and unconcerned with more recent history.

Based on Ottoman sources, this article aims to make a contribution to our knowledge of the social, cultural, economic and political condition of the Syriac community of Diyarbekir in the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the city still had all the four Syriac (religious) communities within its borders (Orthodox and Catholic, and Church of the East and Chaldeans). The Ottoman sources provide us with a unique viewpoint, which, unlike many of the internal Syriac sources—such as the manuscript colophons—helps us to understand much better the way in which the Syriac Christians dealt with the authorities. Particularly, they shed light on the under-researched disputes between the various communities that belonged to the Syriac group, as well as the relationship between Syriac and Armenian Orthodox Christians.

The Syriac Orthodox community, also known as the Jacobites or the *Süryani Kadim* (Ancient Syriac), were the largest Syriac community in Diyarbekir. The city was also populated by Syriac Catholics, the Catholic counterpart of the Syriac Orthodox, which had developed from 1783, along with communities identified as the 'Nestorians' (*Nesturi*), or the Church of the East (which had broken off from the Orthodox line in 431), and the Catholic counterpart of the Church of the East, the Chaldeans (which developed from 1552).<sup>5</sup> From the late seventeenth century onwards, Diyarbekir became the center of the emerging Chaldean movement, with several patriarchs resident in the city. In the early nineteenth century, however, the Chaldean patriarchate merged with that of Alqosh (in today's Iraq), a town located thirty kilometers north of Mosul, leading to the shift of the center of the Chaldean Church, first to Alqosh, then to Mosul and later to Baghdad.<sup>6</sup> Throughout this contribution, my emphasis will be on the Syriac Orthodox community, primarily because the sources available to

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<sup>5</sup> See the schemata at <http://www.aramnaharaim.org>.

John Joseph argues that the majority of the native Christians of old Persia and the Mesopotamia were members of the East Syrian Church, and notes that they were also known 'stigmatically' as Nestorians. Despite the pejorative connotation of the term among outsiders, however, the Ottomans referred to the Church of the East as '*Nesturis*' in their official documents and the community also referred to itself similarly. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, due to the heightened awareness of the stigma attached to the name 'Nestorian', and particularly because of the close contact with the missionaries of the Church of England, the name 'Church of the East' became the preferred designation. See Joseph 1961: 3–6.

<sup>6</sup> See more on the Chaldean Patriarchate: Murre-van den Berg 1999; Lampart 1966.

me are mostly related to this group. Where the sources permit, information will be given on the other Syriac communities as well.

#### SOURCES AND METHODS

To my knowledge, the only book that directly discusses Diyarbekir and its Syriac community is Mehmet Şimşek's *Süryaniler ve Diyarbekir* (Syriacs and Diyarbekir), to which I will refer throughout. In this contribution, I focus mainly on the provincial *salnames* and the Mardin Collection as primary sources from the period that can shed some light on the subject at hand. The Mardin Collection is a collection of over 150 texts found in the Kırklar Church in Mardin.<sup>7</sup> The collection consists mainly of correspondence (court orders, petitions, etc.) between the Ottoman authorities, both local and central, and the Syriac Orthodox community.<sup>8</sup> While the *salnames* offer us the Ottoman perspective of Diyarbekir, the Mardin collection provides us with a Syriac viewpoint. It consists of mostly Ottoman Turkish documents that were preserved in the Dayro d-Mor Hananyo / Deyr al-Zaffaran monastery, in the archives of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate. The Mardin collection, therefore, was not one compiled by a researcher in the Ottoman archives, but rather one preserved by a non-Muslim community. This makes it an invaluable and unique source in understanding a non-Muslim community's perspective and institutional relationships during the turmoil of the nineteenth century. A further stage of research would entail also a detailed reading of both Syriac sources of the nineteenth century (manuscript colophons as well as literary and theological productions) and Western travelers' accounts.

*Salnames* are the official yearbooks of the Ottoman Empire. They were published by both central and local Ottoman authorities, and included all the year's economic, statistical, historical and industrial data. The first *salname* was published in 1847 by Grand Vizier Koca Reşid Paşa. There were different types of *salnames*, such as the military *salnames* (listing the names of all the soldiers occupying even the lowest ranks in the army), the state *salnames* (listing the names of all the civil servants), and the

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<sup>7</sup> Located in the center of the city, the late sixth century Mor Behnam (Saint Behanan), in Syriac, or *Kırklar Şehit Kilisesi* (Forty Martyrs' Church), its Turkish name, is the second most important Christian site in the vicinity (after the nearby monastery).

<sup>8</sup> Pictorial images from the collection have been published by Gabriyel Akyüz (Akyüz 2001), though only with brief explanations. I am currently preparing with a selected texts for publication.

province *salnames* (giving the names of everyone employed in the provincial administration, official or communal). The provincial *salnames* also included the population figures of a province along with its economic data. Diyarbekir was one of the provinces that published *salnames*. The yearbooks for Diyarbekir between the years 1869–1906 are currently available, although with a few years missing.<sup>9</sup>

The benefit of using *salnames* is that the method used to prepare them remained unchanged through the years, enabling useful comparisons of data over time (subject to periodic adjustments in parameters, such as related to population counts). Also, although they are generally provincial in nature, some of the *salnames* do distinguish within this, both between the city of Diyarbekir and its *sancaks*, and also between the different resident communities. Against this, the fact that they were official documents prepared by the government means that all the information was presented from the perspective of the Ottoman government, which has obvious limitations. Sometimes Syriacs are counted under ‘Armenians’, as part of the same nation (*millet*), while other *salnames* only distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims, and not between the various communities among the non-Muslims. Moreover, the *salnames* were not always exact. For instance, as one compares different *salnames*, it becomes clear that in some, certain sections were directly copied from the previous yearbooks (probably this was because new data were not collected for that year, and officials copied data from the older *salname* rather than leave it blank). In this article, I only refer to the *salnames* in which the census data are provided for the Syriac communities separately. These are the three provincial *salnames* of 1870–71 (1287), 1894–95 (1312), 1901/02 (1319), and the state *salname* of 1897–98 (1315).<sup>10</sup> The figures from the Empire-wide census of 1881–93 are also used. In addition to the Diyarbekir *salnames*, I also use the data from the state *salnames* gathered by Kemal Karpat in his book on the Ottoman Population from 1830–1914 (Karpat 2003).

The information analyzed here is organized into five sections, on demographics, economics, education, press activities, and the social relations both among Syriac Christian communities and between them and other

<sup>9</sup> Sertoğlu 1986: 294–6.

<sup>10</sup> Parenthesized dates refer to the year of the Hijri (Arab, Muslim) calendar used by the Ottomans. This was running some 583 years in arrears of the Gregorian (now, common civil) calendar in the late 19th century. With the annual *Salnames* following the Hijri year of 354/5 days, as opposed to the 365/6 days of the Gregorian, they usually extended across two Gregorian years (the exception coming roughly every 33 Gregorian years, when the Hijri year happened to fall within the Gregorian year, e.g. in 1878 and 1911).



groups living in Diyarbekir at the end of the nineteenth century. First, however, the subject is introduced with a brief historical review of the Christian population in Ottoman Diyarbekir.

THE SYRIAC POPULATION IN DIYARBEKIR IN THE THIRD QUARTER  
OF THE 19TH CENTURY

An examination of the records of Diyarbekir's population during the nineteenth century reveals strong fluctuations. Both the total number of inhabitants and the (relative) proportions of Muslims and Christians in these records show considerable variation, partly reflecting actual changes and partly just reflecting changes in population record-keeping. These statistical effects are hardly surprising given that Ottoman population figures were not based on direct counting, but derived second-hand, mainly from tax, occupational and property records of the heads of households and male family members. After 1831, along with tax considerations, the Ottoman administrators became interested in population counts to determine possible conscripts for the army, and after 1882, they also started calculating the number of females. Outside the state, the various churches also kept population related records. Church records were based on baptism and death certificates maintained by ecclesiastical officials of their own congregations. These sometimes mention Muslim population figures, but cannot be used as an authoritative source for them.

Reviewing the four sets of population figures given in the *salnames* (three provincial and one state), as well as those of the Imperial census conducted during this period, is a rather complex affair due to the variety of parameters. Comparisons are to be made not just between the macro religious groupings of Muslim/Christian and ethno-religious groupings of Armenians, Syrians, etc., but also include ethno-religious groupings that are subsumed under or cut across these, and comparisons across time that are further delineated by specifications of space (essentially, urban or rural). These complications will become clearer as we proceed.

The first population count in the Diyarbekir *salnames* is from the year 1870–71 (1287). In the section on population data, we learn that a new method was employed in this census, but that this (unexplained) method could only be used within the city of Diyarbekir.<sup>11</sup> According to

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<sup>11</sup> Diyarbekir *Salnameleri* 1999, Vol. I: 135.

this *salname*, there were 1,434 Syriac Orthodox, 976 Chaldeans, and 174 Syriac Catholics resident in the city of Diyarbekir at that time. There were thus about 25% more Orthodox Syrians than Catholic Syrians in the city. This may perhaps be regarded as the single most important piece of information in the 1870–71 Diyarbekir *salnames* from the perspective of demographics, and stands in need of little elaboration. Among the non-Muslims, the Armenian Orthodox (Apostolic Armenians) were in the majority, followed closely by the Catholics, i.e. the Armenian Catholics, the Syriac Catholics, the Chaldeans and the Greek Catholics. However, if we consider every Catholic community separately, then the Syriac Orthodox was the second largest non-Muslim group of the city. Finally, there was a small number of Protestants and of Jews.

The issue of a Catholic grouping introduces notions of definition. Syrians are assumed to have comprised an identifiable ethno-religious group, in Diyarbekir as elsewhere, and these notes certainly do not attempt a revision of that—even if it seems clear, for example, that they did not all speak Syriac.<sup>12</sup> It must be noted, however, that the importance of religious denomination would have cut across ethnically-based communal identities. The Syriac Orthodox would have had a theological closeness to the Apostolic Armenians (with both part of a one and a half millennia tradition of Oriental Orthodoxy). How this would have played out in daily life is difficult to tell—certainly it did not prevent the two communities from having different schools.<sup>13</sup> Equally, by virtue of their religious affiliation to Rome and related theological matters, including ritual practice, the Catholics might also be considered a single community. Certainly Ottoman surveys did regularly take this approach with respect to the Catholics (although not with respect to the Orthodox). This may suggest a greater link to the emerging proto-nationalism on the part of the two dominant Orthodox communities than of the smaller and more segmented Catholic communities.

Between the years 1881/82 and 1893 the first official census for the whole Ottoman Empire was conducted, with population counts for different tribes and previously uncounted regions. According to this census, in the *kaza* of Diyarbekir, there were 4,046 ‘monophysites’, a term used by the Ottomans to refer to the Syriac Orthodox. In addition, there were 2,560 Catholics, which included the Armenian Catholics, the Syriac

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<sup>12</sup> E.g. See the section on press activities, below.

<sup>13</sup> See the section on education, below.

Catholics and the Chaldeans. As for the whole *sancak* of Diyarbekir, there were 5,909 Syriac Orthodox, and 2,945 Catholics (including but not limited to Syriacs).<sup>14</sup> This suggests whereas there were more Catholics (of all ethnicities) than Syriac Orthodox in the city (in 1870–71), in the wider areas of the *kaza* and *sancak*, the reverse was the case. Relative to the Syriac Orthodox, that is, Catholics as a whole were more urbanized. That this was the case for Syriac Catholics also is revealed by locally-produced figures recorded shortly after the completion of the Empire-wide census.

The next detailed population count—in the Diyarbekir *salname* from the year 1894–95 (1312)—records 4,096 Syriac Orthodox, 925 Chaldeans, and 376 Syriac Catholics in the *kaza* of Diyarbekir. This is a ratio of around 3:1 Orthodox to Catholic among the Syriacs—compared to the 1¼:1 city ratio (in 1870–71)—thus confirming the relative urbanization among the Syriacs of Catholics as compared to Orthodox. Like the 1870–71 *salname*, this one from 1894–95 also lists all the different religious groups in the city. It seems that the city's Syriac population had risen since 1870–71, with increases in the numbers of all the Syriac communities—except one. The number of Chaldeans stayed more or less the same, suggesting, in the context of a rising population generally, a stagnating community.

The 1894–95 *salname* also gives figures for the province (*vilayet*). Of the provincial population of 398,785, 314,720 were Muslim and 84,065 non-Muslim.<sup>15</sup> This converts to a ratio of very nearly 80 percent Muslim to 20 percent non-Muslim. Interestingly, cadastral surveys carried out in the early sixteenth century reveal a very similar picture. According to the first *tapu tahrir* (land register) from 1518, the Diyarbekir province population of some 60,000 was also around 20 percent Christian. The area would seem to have had a fairly settled religious balance over the four centuries of Empire. This was a deeply rooted cultural mosaic—if not exactly a melting pot homogenizing peoples, as events were later to show.

The next census in the state *salnames* is from the year 1897–98 (1315). Based on this census, Diyarbekir province in 1897–98 had 329,843 Muslims and 84,906 non-Muslims. Of these 84,906 non-Muslims, 20,082 were Syriac Orthodox and 1,473 were Chaldeans.<sup>16</sup> There was an increase in the population of Diyarbekir on the numbers from 1895 for both the Muslim and the non-Muslim populations, but with the former growing by four

<sup>14</sup> Karpat 2010: 280–283.

<sup>15</sup> Diyarbekir *Salnameleri* 1999, Vol. IV: 166.

<sup>16</sup> Karpat 2010: 330–31.

percent, as compared to a non-Muslim growth of one percent. This difference can probably be explained by the 1895 violence. Estimates for the number of dead in the 1895 violence in the city are put at between 70 and 200 for Muslims and 300 and 1200 for the non-Muslims.<sup>17</sup> We should be careful, however, not to over-emphasize the importance of the urban center. Most of the people lived in rural areas, and most production and economic activity went on there, notwithstanding the city's importance as a trading center. Only in terms of culture was the city clearly dominant, with its schools and journals and hotbed of societies and community meeting places of all kinds.

The last population count in the Diyarbekir *salnames*<sup>18</sup> is from the year 1901–02 (1319). Although this *salname* differentiates between different religious groups, unfortunately it does not distinguish between the different *sancaks* of Diyarbekir. The total Muslim population in the province of Diyarbekir at the turn of century was 314,720 and the total non-Muslim (mainly Christian) population 84,065—still approximately 80 percent Muslim to 20 percent non-Muslim. 22,748 were Syriac Orthodox and 1,439 Chaldeans. There was also a total of 11,165 Catholics (the Syriac Catholics were not counted separately).<sup>19</sup> The total population in the district of Diyarbekir at that time is given as 161,237, comprising 121,587 Muslims and 39,640 non-Muslims—approximately 75 percent to 25 percent. The number of Armenian Orthodox is determined at 46,237 in the province and 26,784 in the district—approximately 12 and 16 percent respectively.

Compared to the numbers from 1897, this data shows a considerable increase—approximately twelve per cent—in both the Muslim and non-Muslim populations. This figure is so high as to suggest counting procedures as a major factor. The relative increases—between Muslim and non-Muslim are probably more revealing. Despite the violence, the Christian (Armenian/Syriac) population increase still matched that of the Muslim (Turks and Kurds). Strikingly, the numbers of Chaldeans actually declined, which indicates further stagnation of this community (and/or a wave of emigration).

In conclusion, between the years 1870 and 1901, the Syriac Orthodox was the largest Syriac community and the second largest Christian community after the Armenians. The Syriac population was rising during this period

<sup>17</sup> See Verheij 2012: 105–106 in this volume.

<sup>18</sup> The next *salname* with a population count is from the year 1323 (1905). However, the numbers are exactly the same as in this one.

<sup>19</sup> Diyarbekir *Salnameleri* 1999, Vol. V: 293.

just like the rest of the population (except for the Chaldeans). There is no mention of the Church of the East, which means that their numbers were either too insignificant, or, they were counted along with the Chaldeans or the Syriac Orthodox. It should be emphasized, again, that the trustworthiness of all population figures, including those of the Ottoman *salnames*, is questionable and, indeed, still debated. So far, detailed counts of population figures in the Ottoman archives have not been made available.

#### SYRIAC NEIGHBORHOODS AND SYRIAC RURAL SETTLEMENTS

There were a number of Syriac rural settlements in the vicinity of Diyarbakir. One list was prepared before the period of his patriarchship by the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch Abdullah (Metropolitan of Diyarbakir between 1885 and 1906). According to Patriarch Abdullah, there were twenty-two Syriac Orthodox settlements around Diyarbakir in 1870, viz.: Bamatmi (currently Kutlu), Bamidan, Başnik (Bağdere), Bragola, Darsal (Düzevler), El Kafiya, Fum (Kumluca), Gandika, Halhal (Çitlibahçe), Hanşe, Hazan, Hazro, Kabasakal, Kara Kilise (Dökmetaş or Akçadamar), Küniyet, Malaha (Çakırlar), Mir Ali (Alibey), Silvan, Şımşım (Ormankaya), Safiya, Salimiye (Gönendi) and Talgaz (Sazlıçökek).<sup>20</sup> In addition to the Patriarch Abdullah's list, Patriarch Afrem Barsaum, in a letter sent to the British Prime Minister in 1909, noted that there were thirty Syriac Orthodox villages in Diyarbakir, nine villages in Silvan, and ten in Lice. Şımşek also mentions the Diyarbakir vicinity villages of Kahbiye (currently Bağıvar), Karabaş, Kırırbıl, and Garukiye (Çarıklı) as Syriac.<sup>21</sup>

Referring to the period between 1785 and 1850, İbrahim Yılmazçelik (1995) lists the following thirteen neighborhoods in Diyarbakir as where the non-Muslim population of the city used to reside: Bekçiyan, Hacı Maksud, Köprüyan, Küçük Kinisa, Meryem-i Kebir, Meryem-i Sağır, Meryemun, Molla Hennan, Mor Habib, Rumiyan, Sarraf İskender, Şemsiyan and Yahudiyan. The center of the Syriac Orthodox community in the city was the Church of Meryem Ana, also known as the Church of the Virgin Mary

<sup>20</sup> New Turkish names provided by Jelle Verheij. Of the settlements for which new Turkish names are not given, Hazro, Kabasakal and Silvan were not renamed, while the remainder—Bragola, Küniyet, Gandika, Bamidan, Hazan, El Kafiya, Hanşe and Safiya—have not been identified. See Verheij's 'A Provisional List of Non-Muslim Settlements in the Diyarbakir Vilayet around 1900' (Annex A in this volume).

<sup>21</sup> Şımşek 2003: 135.

or the Church of Mar Yağub, which is located in the district of Lale Bey.<sup>22</sup> The Chaldean Church in Diyarbakir, Mar Pethyun (Mar Petyun Kilisesi), is located in the Özdemir neighborhood. Bearing this in mind and taking account of the etymology of the names of the neighborhoods listed above, it can be inferred that the Syriacs of Diyarbakir were, by and large, located in the neighborhoods of Lale Bey, Özdemir, Mor Habib, Meryem-mun, Meryem-i Kebir and Molla Hennan.<sup>23</sup>

İbrahim Yılmazçelik counts 13 Diyarbakir city non-Muslim quarters, alongside 65 Muslim and 42 mixed quarters. We should consider these numbers with some care, however, and a brief explanation of the reasons for this will serve as an example of the difficulties faced by scholars in this field. The source for Yılmazçelik's list of Muslim, non-Muslim and mixed quarters was the *Seriye Sicilleri* (Court Orders). These court orders were written by a *kadı* (judge of an Islamic court). Every new *kadı* marked the beginning of a new chapter in the Court Orders volume, which would have four sub-sections. In the first section, the *kadı* wrote down all the *fermans* and *berats* (Imperial edicts and charters) sent down from Istanbul. In the second section, all the court orders were recorded. Comprising the conclusion, the third section was where the *kadı* wrote down remarks and notes for his successors. Finally (reading with front-to-back directionality), the fourth section comprised the introduction. The *kadı* used this to introduce himself, inscribe some prayers, and also his appointment document. In order to map their jurisdiction, *kadı*s, would some times write a side-note to these introductions listing all the districts for which they were responsible. The list provided by Yılmazçelik is based on these side-notes. They are not the most reliable source of information, however. First, they were not an official requirement, and were probably just copied, most likely dating, in fact, from long before the 19th century. Preparing lists of districts had always been an important part of the *tapu tahrir* (land registers), and the side-note lists in the Court Orders were prepared in the same way as those in the land registers. It is highly likely, therefore, that the first Court Orders list, which was probably repeatedly copied over the years with small updates, itself derived originally from the *tapu tahrir* registration, the latest of which for Diyarbakir was made in the seventeenth century.

<sup>22</sup> The (supposed) site of the relics of Thomas.

<sup>23</sup> It is probable that the modern neighborhoods of Özdemir and Lale Bey include most or all of the old neighborhoods listed (most neighborhoods in the city were renamed during the Republican period).

A second problem is related to categorization. These lists, like Yılmazçelik's compilation, usually have three sections, for Muslim districts, non-Muslim and mixed districts, but the method used by the Ottomans to decide whether or not which category a village should be placed was problematic. If a district had a Muslim majority, which means there might have been non-Muslims mixed with them as well, then that district was labeled as Muslim. The same was true for the non-Muslim districts. The mixed districts, however, were not truly mixed, as one would expect, but segregated. A district was considered mixed if Muslims lived in one part, and non-Muslims on the other. The category of mixed districts comprised therefore of segregated districts, which might easily have a large majority of one or the other of the religions and, among Christians especially, of their sub-divisions. By way of an assessment of the significance of these complications, therefore, we might conclude that the Syriac population was indeed most likely concentrated in the six neighborhoods given, but that it is difficult to surmise very much beyond that.

#### ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE SYRIAC CHRISTIANS OF DIYARBEKIR

Diyarbakir's economy during the nineteenth century was based on agriculture, animal husbandry and small business manufacturing.<sup>24</sup> Using the civil (*örfi*) tax *tevzii* registers,<sup>25</sup> Yılmazçelik has mapped the guilds of Diyarbakir between the years 1792 and 1823. According to Yılmazçelik, there were multiple guilds. He mentions only a few of them, namely Cullah, Habbaz, Attar and Kazgancı. Yılmazçelik argues that the numbers of Muslims and non-Muslims in these guilds were generally evenly balanced, but that in wax and jewelry manufacturing especially, non-Muslims (Christians) were in the majority.<sup>26</sup> From among the Christians, it is unfortunately not possible to be very certain about the economic activities of the Syriacs. This is because of the possibility of classification issues, with the Ottoman sources sometimes including the Syriacs under Armenians. However, it is known from travel notes and other sources that the Syriac artisans mostly specialized in silver production and silverware, especially filigree, and cotton cloth production, in particular *puşu* (a type

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<sup>24</sup> Şimşek 2003: 166.

<sup>25</sup> These registers were prepared twice a year, showing the sums due and names of taxpayers.

<sup>26</sup> Yılmazçelik 1995: 310.

of shawl).<sup>27</sup> Martin van Bruinessen states that ‘silver- and goldsmiths, jewelers and druggists could be found in almost any Ottoman city—although there may have been more jewelers here [in Diyarbekir city] than elsewhere, given the reputation of the city’s Süryani (Jacobite) jewelers in later times.’<sup>28</sup> In addition, *salname* records for the Syriac Orthodox center of Mardin reveal that the Syriac population there was very active in cloth and shoe manufacturing.<sup>29</sup>

Looking at the data gathered from the *salnames*, however, the city underwent a major economic crisis in the years 1874–76. There was a sudden drop in production and exports (out of the province), a price crash and increased supply in foodstuffs. This indicates a major drop in the personal income of the population. It is likely that the Syriac Christians of Diyarbekir were equally affected by this economic crisis, given that, even if their production capabilities and wealth were maintained, the income, and thus the buying power, of their neighbors in the city and surrounding area generally decreased. This does not necessarily mean the economic status of the Syriac Christians in Diyarbekir changed relative to that of other communities, however, for the worse or for the better. Meanwhile, from 1877 until the early twentieth century, production volumes in the province as a whole stayed more or less the same—during which period, as recorded, there was a steady rise in population. A fixed production volume in combination with increasing population indicates gradually worsening economic conditions for the province as a whole, which presumably included.

#### EDUCATION AMONG THE SYRIAC CHRISTIANS OF DIYARBEKIR DURING THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The main source of information about the educational condition of the Syriacs of Diyarbekir is the series of *maarif salnames* (education yearbooks), in which the lists of all the schools in each province were published. The *maarif salnames* for the years 1898 (1316), 1899 (1317) and 1901 (1319) list a total of five Diyarbekir community (Christian) schools. The

<sup>27</sup> For more on the Syriac *puşu*, see Taşğın 2005: 95–109.

<sup>28</sup> Van Bruinessen 1988: 42.

<sup>29</sup> Özçoşar 2008: 292.



Table 4: Community (Christian) schools in Diyarbekir and numbers of students, 1898–1901\*

School	Community	Male Students			Female Students			Founding Date
		1898	1899	1901	1898	1899	1901	
<i>Ermeni Mektebi</i>	Armenian	265	215	245	–	–	–	Unknown
<i>Süryani Mektebi</i>	Syriac Orthodox	85	61	51	–	–	–	1870 (1287)
<i>Rüşdiye Mektebi</i>	Chaldean	15	17	13	–	–	–	Unknown
<i>Protestant Mektebi</i>	Protestant	75	58	65	55	33	30	1860 (1277)

\* Excluding the Capuchin school

Source: Maarif *salnames* 1898 (1316), 1899 (1317) and 1901 (1319)

Capuchin school run by a Catholic missionary group is only mentioned by name, but student numbers are given for the other four (Table 4).<sup>30</sup>

Information on this subject is also available from the Diyarbekir *salnames*, according to which there were nine non-Muslim schools immediately following the royal decree of 1869.<sup>31</sup> Of the five non-Muslim schools in the city, the Capuchin only appears in the *maarif salnames* after 1899, suggesting the disappearance during the following thirty years of perhaps five, and certainly four of the nine schools listed in 1869. What happened to these schools is unknown. However, the two Syriac schools did remain intact. The Syriac Orthodox School was within the vicinity of the Meryem Ana Church. It did not have an extensive staff, and probably did not need one considering the low number of students.

The number of students attending the Syriac Orthodox and the Chaldean schools declined between the years 1898 and 1901. The numbers involved at the Chaldean school are too small to warrant an explanation, but the 40% drop in students enrolled at the Syriac Orthodox does appear significant. Placed in the context of decreases in student numbers at the other schools—a 7.5 percent drop at the Armenian school and 27 percent at the Protestant, combined with the fact that three-quarters of the numerical changes recorded were negative, a wider pattern is suggested.<sup>32</sup> One possible explanation would be a fall in the birthrate in the period after the economic crisis of the late 1870s, but that seems unlikely as the effects

<sup>30</sup> Şimşek 2003: 180–181.

<sup>31</sup> The Nationality Law of 1869, which created a common Ottoman citizenship.

<sup>32</sup> Three-quarters of the numerical changes: eight changes—the two changes 1898–1899 and 1999–1901 for each of the four sets of figures, i.e. three schools (excluding the Chaldean) and including separate figures for males and females at the Protestant school—of which six were negative.

would have had to extend for more than a decade to impact on school figures, and the general population figures do not seem to support this. Alternatively, it is possible that the Muslim schools were becoming more popular among Christians. Certainly the Ottoman education system was developing in general during the latter part of the nineteenth century—indeed, Diyarbekir had a small teacher training college by 1901<sup>33</sup>—but detailed information on Ottoman schools and student numbers in the Diyarbekir *salnames* is lacking, so this possibility has to remain pure conjecture.

A more likely explanation for the drop in student numbers would be the ongoing social impact of the violence at the end of 1895. School numbers, one would postulate, had plummeted—due to the disruption of normal life, the decimation of property and livelihoods, and personal injuries and death (of parents, family members and the children themselves even)—and this was still continuing to take its toll two and three years later as families were leaving the city, or not sending their children to school, or at least not to the Christian schools, from fear and impoverishment. This would explain the big drop in the 1898–99 figures—by almost a quarter for the three main schools—and, also, as things began to return to a semblance of normality again, the subsequent stabilization and first signs of recovery—there was an overall rise of a little over five percent for the 1899–1901 period. It might also explain the schools number discrepancy between the nine schools recorded in the Diyarbekir *salnames* from after 1869 and the four or five of the *maarif salnames*—half of the Christian schools failed to reopen after the flare up. They may even have been targeted themselves amid the destruction of property.<sup>34</sup> If the drop in school numbers in 1898–9 and then settling thereafter was a continuing effect of the 1895 violence, then one would have to assume that before this drop, in the years 1896–98, there had been a very much greater educational problem in the Christian community. The four schools listed might easily, for example, have had double or treble the number of students before the violence as after.

There is another way to read the figures, however, which does not demand any major hypothetical scenario, however convincing: the overall numerical declines appear significant, but actually were not. First, there are significant rises in the later (1899–1901) period for the boys at

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<sup>33</sup> With one trainer and seven student teachers (Berker 1945: 142).

<sup>34</sup> On the 1895 violence see Verheij 2012 in this volume.

the Armenian and Protestant schools, offsetting most of the previous (1898–99) falls and suggesting, therefore, no general trend. Second, the major portion of the overall fall in numbers at the Protestant school is due to female students in just one year (1898–99), for which there must have been, one would assume, a specific reason (and possibly *not* related to the violence). Taking this figure out of the equation leaves less than striking reductions in the Protestant and Armenian schools—from a total of 340 (male) students, to 310. Combined with the short time frame of just three years (1898–1901), the conclusion to be drawn from these considerations would be that the figures do not necessarily show very much more than the usual cycles of social life and fluctuations of a small sample. They might even be explained by something as simple as one bad winter, let alone the 1895 violence. Indeed, it might be suggested, the violence would have had immediate effects on local Christian education, as traumatic as the events themselves, in which case one would expect an immediate shock—like the closure of half the community schools, perhaps—and, probably, a subsequent recovery, possibly quite slow, possibly quite fast. What would not necessarily be expected from this scenario, one might venture, is for the drop still to be in evidence three to four years later.

The idea that there is no very interesting overall pattern to be explained, however, only throws into greater clarity the sudden fall in the numbers of boys at the Syriac Orthodox school in particular, for which the above considerations appear less than helpful. Unlike in the cases of the Armenian and Protestant schools, the fall in Syriac student numbers slowed down during the period in question but did not bottom out, going from a drop of just under thirty percent for the year 1898–9 to fifteen percent for the two years 1899–1901. And insofar as the violence concerned the Muslim and Armenian communities primarily, with the Syriacs implicated and involved and getting caught up in events, but not at the center of the communal tensions, then this becomes even more difficult to understand. Perhaps the Syriac Orthodox drop *was* due to the education provided at that time, at the Syriac school and at the Muslims schools (especially if the Syriac school was having difficulties in functioning, precisely because of the violence), or perhaps there was (also) an (exacerbating) population dip in the number of Syriac Orthodox boys of school age. Whether—and the extent to which—the overall 40 percent drop was due to the presence of other schools that were more attractive specifically to Syriac Orthodox parents at that time, therefore, and/or the (male) school-age population of this community in particular declined—temporarily, or as part of a more long-term trend—is difficult to tell.

Certainly there was a choice open to Syriac Orthodox parents. In addition to the community schools, there were also schools run by the local Ottoman government that were open to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Şimşek quotes an advertisement, dated 1909 and placed in a local newspaper by the Ottoman high school in the city. This advertisement lists all the necessary information for prospective applicants to the school, along with the conditions for the non-Muslim students. According to this advertisement, the non-Muslims were to be exempt from Quran and Islamic catechism classes, but not from the Turkish language, history or geography classes.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, there is no way to tell how many Syriac Christian students attended these Ottoman schools.

As for the education provided at the Christian schools generally, we can say that foreign languages were a strong feature. Beysanoğlu quotes a hand-written book by Akif Tütenk, which specifically mentions the Syriac Orthodox school in Diyarbekir. According to this, the Armenians taught French in their schools, while the Protestants and the Syriac Christians taught English.<sup>36</sup> And Aziz Günel, who also specifically mentions the Syriac Orthodox school, adds that the languages taught there were Syriac, Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Persian and French. In any case, like Christian children everywhere in the Middle East, Syriac Christian children were very much raised to be multilingual.

#### PRESS ACTIVITIES OF THE SYRIAC CHRISTIANS OF DIYARBEKIR DURING THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Starting from 1910, the Syriac Christians published two periodicals in Diyarbekir. These periodicals were written in the Ottoman Turkish language, but using the Syriac alphabet. An important feature of the Syriac periodicals from this period generally was their reliance on mimeography rather than type-setting. Almost all of the Syriac journals at that time were hand-written and then printed.<sup>37</sup> The two journals published in Diyarbekir were no exception. Trigona-Harany claims that ‘the decision to use the Syriac alphabet appears to have been ideological rather than practical—a conclusion based both on the need for the guide printed in

<sup>35</sup> Şimşek 2003: 183.

<sup>36</sup> Beysanoğlu 1963: 700.

<sup>37</sup> With the exception of el-Hikmet. See: Trigona-Harany 2009: 290.

'Awakening' (*İntibâh*)<sup>38</sup> and on the editorial appeals in 'Guide of the Assyrians' (*Mürşid-i Âsûriyûn*)<sup>39</sup> for Syriacs who did not know 'their' language to at least employ the Syriac alphabet when writing in other languages.<sup>40</sup> Quoting Avram Galanti in his book, 'The Local Press in Turkey and Journalism in Diyarbakır' (*Türkiye'de Bölge Basını ve Diyarbakır Gazeteceliği*), Tütengil states that the non-Muslims were not allowed to publish using the Ottoman alphabet because it was the alphabet of the Quran. However, there is nothing in Ottoman (civil) law to substantiate this claim.

The first Syriac periodical was 'The Star of the East' (*Kevkeb Medinho*), which was first published in 1910. This was a literary journal, published and owned by Naim Faik. Naim Faik emigrated to the United States in 1912, but he continued to publish the journal from there. Using the subscription records, Trigona-Harany concludes that this journal was the most popular Syriac periodical from the late Ottoman period.<sup>41</sup> The second journal, published from 1913, was titled 'Bugle' (*Şifuro*). In its description it reads '*tenvir-i efkara hadim*', which literally means 'servant to the illumination of the thinking [people]'<sup>42</sup> All in all, the Syriac community in Diyarbakır was clearly active in education and intellectual life. People like Naim Faik, Aziz Günel and Tuna Başaranlar, all of whom were born in Diyarbakır during the late nineteenth or the early twentieth centuries, were the fruits of the intellectual activity of the Syriac community in Diyarbakır.

#### INTER- AND INTRA-RELATIONS OF THE SYRIAC CHRISTIANS OF DIYARBEKIR DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Within the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire, whereby peoples or nations (or religious communities) were categorized for administrative purposes, the Syriac Christians were subject to the Armenian *Millet*.<sup>43</sup> The

<sup>38</sup> *İntibâh* was a Syriac Orthodox periodical published in the United States by Cebur Boyacı between 1909 and 1915. From 1916 onwards, it reappeared under the name *Bethnahrin*.

<sup>39</sup> A Syriac Orthodox periodical (the first known Syriac periodical) published in Harput by Âşûr Yûsuf between 1909 and 1914.

<sup>40</sup> Trigona-Harany 2009: 287–300.

<sup>41</sup> Trigona-Harany 2009: 294.

<sup>42</sup> Şimşek 2003: 195–7.

<sup>43</sup> As numerous texts from the Mardin collection suggest, this was just a technical subordination, as the Armenians were only an intermediary between the Syriac Christians and the Ottoman administration, and not always even that. The Syriac Orthodox repeatedly received *firman*s and *berats* directly from the Porte, and submitted petitions directly to the Sultan, i.e. without the mediation of the Armenians. In other words, the formal hierarchy

Syriac Orthodox stayed as part of the Armenian *Millet* until the nineteenth century, during which the Syriac Catholics (the Catholic counterpart of the Syriac Orthodox) were recognized as a separate *millet* as part of the waves of recognitions granted to the Uniate churches (Eastern Catholic, previously Eastern Orthodox churches). The Syriac Orthodox, however, remained part of the Armenian *Millet*.<sup>44</sup> Almost all the Eastern Churches, including the Church of the East, the Chaldeans and the Syriac Orthodox, were on a constant quest during the nineteenth century to acquire recognition as a separate *millet*.<sup>45</sup> The Syriac Orthodox also tried to gain recognition as a separate community, but did not succeed.<sup>46</sup>

### *Armenians*

Unfortunately, the sources used here do not provide any specific information on relations between the Armenian and the Syriac communities of Diyarbekir during the nineteenth century. However, we do know that relations worsened at the (higher) political level as the Syriac Orthodox pressed their demands on the Ottoman Porte to be recognized as a separate *millet*, and this becomes especially clear when the Mardin Collection texts from the previous centuries are compared with those from the nineteenth century. Generally, the Syriac Orthodox seem to have been content to accept their position as *hadims* (lit. servant) of the Armenian *Millet* within the Ottoman system before the 19th century but then started to challenge the Armenian Patriarchate, probably not only because of the Syriac community's quest to become a separate *millet*, but also because of the claims of the Armenians. One of the disputes took place in Jerusalem in 1889, as the Armenians tried to take over one of the rooms in the Syriac Orthodox chapel in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The language used in the petitions submitted by the Syriac Orthodox has quite a harsh tone, as they accuse the Armenians of taking advantage of the Syriac Christians' lack of political power.<sup>47</sup> However, these clergy-level political tensions do not indicate strained relations between the Armenians and the Syriac

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established by the *millet* system was just an additional avenue of communication between the Syriac Orthodox and the Ottomans.

<sup>44</sup> Özçoşar 2008: 56.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.: 66; Trigona-Harany 2009: 95–113; Masters 2001: 44–6; Frazee 1983: 207–209, 293–304. On the history of Syriac Christianity, see also Murre-van den Berg 2007: 249–69.

<sup>46</sup> Document no. 6 in the Mardin collection is a petition submitted by the Syriac Orthodox patriarchate, requesting separate *millet* status.

<sup>47</sup> Akyüz 2001: 71.

Orthodox of Diyarbekir. On the contrary, during the mounting enmity between the Muslims and the Christians during the late nineteenth century and the violence of 1895, the Syriac Orthodox of the city sided and suffered with the other Christians there.<sup>48</sup>

### *Muslims*

Considering the tension between the Muslims and Armenians which eventually led to the violence of 1895, it is likely that the relations between the Syriac Christians and the Muslims in Diyarbekir also deteriorated. A couple of legal attempts recorded in the Mardin collection to gain redress for damaged community property testify perhaps to the troubles at the time, but perhaps also to the continued functioning of social relations. Despite the brutal mayhem, that is, the Patriarch still saw fit to pursue matters through legal channels. One incident dates from 1896 (1314), the year following the violence.<sup>49</sup> The collection includes a court order in which the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch sues a group of Muslims who transgressed the property of the Syriac Orthodox in Diyarbekir and cut down a large number of trees. Another law-suit filed by the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch in Diyarbekir in the year 1898 (1316) sues a group of Muslims who forcibly took control of a field and a mill located near the ancient cemetery outside the Mardin Gate and belonging to the Syriac Orthodox community.<sup>50</sup>

Probably the most interesting text in respect of Syriac/Muslim relations, however, dates from long before the violence of 1895, although it is not unrelated to it. It is a report submitted by the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch to the Ottoman court in the year 1878 (1295). In this report, the Syriac Orthodox give an account of the assaults by Kurdish tribes on several villages in Midyat. The indication is that the tensions between Armenians and Muslims during the nineteenth century spilled over to Syriac/Muslim relations, albeit with a lot less severity and violence. The report also indicates, however, that the Syriac clergy were cooperative with the Ottoman authorities in the face of the increased violence. Afrem Barsaum notes that in 1895, the year of the Armenian/Muslim conflict, Patriarch Abdülmesih II arrived in Diyarbekir, from where, due to the tense atmosphere, he sent a telegraph to Sultan Abdülhamid II asking for protection. The

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<sup>48</sup> See Verheij 2012: 103, 106 in this volume.

<sup>49</sup> Akyüz 2001: 111.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*: 113.

Sultan responded by sending the Patriarch a *firman* promising safety for the Syriac community. As word got out in the city about this decree, Christians from different denominations took refuge in the Church of Meryem Ana.<sup>51</sup> This, of course, would have further linked the Syriacs to the Armenians in the eyes of Muslims. However, different sources indicate that this cooperation of the Patriarch was disapproved of by the Syriac community and led to strained relations between the community and clergy.<sup>52</sup>

One last thing to note in connection with the two different sets of documents (court orders) related to the incidents of 1896 and 1898 in the aftermath of the 1895 violence was that they survived in the Syriac archives. The Syriac Orthodox usually did not keep documents on 'trivial' law-suits in their archives, yet these were preserved. This can be understood against the background of the Ottoman common law system, which was heavily geared towards precedent. The preservation of a document from a court case about transgression of property usually occurred out of fear that the transgressors might act again in the future. The mere fact that the Syriac Orthodox even bothered to file these documents may indicate that they (still) did not feel very secure in their relations with the Muslims.

#### *Intra-relations among the Syriac Christians*

Texts from the Mardin collection show that there was a fairly constant tension between Syriac Catholics and non-Catholics. For instance, the first text, document no. 23 in the Mardin Collection from the year 1838 (1254),<sup>53</sup> is a petition submitted by the Syriac Orthodox, requesting a ban on the burial of Syriac Catholics in Syriac Orthodox cemeteries. A similar affair is documented in nos. 35, 36 and 37 from the Mardin Collection from the year 1865 (1282).<sup>54</sup> These concern a petition submitted by the Syriac Orthodox requesting a halt to the construction of a Syriac Catholic church in the village of Göllü, based on the claim that the land being used belonged to the Syriac Orthodox. Spats like these between the different Syriac communities were by no means confined to Diyarbakir. In another incident involving the Syriac Orthodox and the Catholics, this in 1842, the Syriac Orthodox in Damascus were granted a *firman* prohibiting the Syriac Catholic from using the Syriac Orthodox churches and

<sup>51</sup> Barsaüm 1996: 60.

<sup>52</sup> See Verheij 2012: 103 (in this volume).

<sup>53</sup> Akyüz 2001: 31.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*: 44–7.



monasteries.<sup>55</sup> The tension between the Syriac Orthodox and the Syriac Catholic continued to grow, apparently, as seen in 1877 (1294), when there was a major dispute over five churches in Syria over which both sides claimed ownership.<sup>56</sup> Another disagreement between the Syriac Orthodox and Catholic occurred in Mosul in the year 1884 (1302), once again over the ownership of a church, this time, the church of Meryem Ana.<sup>57</sup> These disputes may have soured relations in Diyarbekir as well, although we do not have enough sources to tell for sure. It would be surprising, however, if the tensions inherent in the original split between the two Syriac factions, fermented with decades of problems in general during the nineteenth century, and spiced with the specific details introduced here did not add up to a picture of problematic relations between these sibling communities in Diyarbekir during the century's final decades.

Another major dispute from the nineteenth century strangely involved nearly all the different Syriac communities except the Syriac Catholics. According to documents nos. 112–24 in the Mardin Collection,<sup>58</sup> the Church of Mar Yaqub, which once belonged to the Church of the East, was taken over by the Chaldeans. However, the Church of the East donated the Church to the Syriac Orthodox thus preventing the Chaldeans from acquiring official validation for their claims. The Syriac Orthodox ended up owning the Church. The sources do not allow us to determine which side first sought the help of the other, whether it was the Church of the East that asked the Syriac Orthodox to take over the church of Mar Yaqub to deny it to the Chaldeans, or the Syriac Orthodox who wanted to take over the church and asked the Church of the East to help them. Whatever might have been the case, there was clearly an alliance between the two non-Catholic churches, the Church of the East and the Syriac Orthodox, against a Catholic church, namely the Chaldeans. Claims made by the different Syriac Churches to be the original and the older Church is a recurring theme found in both the documents of the Mardin Collection and other sources, from the nineteenth century and earlier. Although perhaps primarily confined to political squabbles, this kind of incident, like the disagreement over the burial rights, leads one to infer that everyday relations between the Syrians of various denominations were probably also affected by the same, ongoing tensions.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: 70.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*: 83–5, 87, 89, 90–1.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*: 93.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*: 120–33.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Research on the Syriac Christians during the Ottoman period is, by and large, still in its infancy. Even though the amount of literature on this subject has been increasing at a promising rate over the past decade, there are still very many blank areas waiting to be filled. Since most literature on the Syriacs is either general or focuses on the Tur Abdin area, the Syriac Christians of Diyarbekir have been under-researched, and constitute one of these blind spots in the research.

The figures from the *salnames*, though providing a good starting point, do not allow many definite conclusions on the population of the Syriacs in Diyarbekir. The Syriac Christians comprised the largest non-Muslim community of Diyarbekir after the Armenians, with Catholics, consisting of both Syriacs and Armenians (and Greeks, missionaries, etc.), cutting across this ethnic divide and also counting as a community, which made them also one of the larger non-Muslim groups. Among the Syriacs in Diyarbekir, the Orthodox community was the largest, in the city marginally in 1870, but coming to dominate two decades later, as they did also in the province as a whole. Syriacs, like the other Christian communities, were concentrated in Diyarbekir city, where their numbers combined to match those of the Muslims. In the province generally, Syriacs comprised just ten percent or so of the population.

Data on economic conditions of the Syriac Christians of Diyarbekir seems to be particularly scarce, thus making it difficult to develop any conclusive arguments. The province apparently underwent a major economic crisis around 1875, which probably affected the Syriac Christians as well. Their involvement and reputation in the fields of silver (filigree) and cloth (*puşu*) suggests a certain level of wealth in the community, and most probably commensurate with a concentration of their numbers in the urban center. The urban concentration should not be over-emphasized, however. There were some 20–40 Syriac villages in the area, and the gross population of Syriacs in the rural areas was four times that of the urban (in the city). The Diyarbekir region, like the Ottoman Empire generally, had not experienced industrial revolution, and the rural-agriculture / urban-industry divide had not yet emerged. Small ‘cottage’ industry in the villages probably accounted for most Syriac manufacturing production at this time. However, it is difficult to tell how significant the economic power of the Syriac Christians in Diyarbekir really was.

The intellectual and cultural life of the Syriac Christians of Diyarbekir is another field that requires further research. The Syriac Orthodox of

Diyarbakir published two periodicals, one of which was the most popular Syriac journal of the time, and the emergence of writers of note from this milieu testifies to Syriac intellectual activity. The *Maarif salnames* show us that the Syriac Christians also had their own schools, even though the number of the students attending these schools after the 1895 violence was not very high and decreased over the next few years. The conclusions that can be drawn from this decrease are unclear, but include the possibility that it was an ongoing effect of the 1895 violence (and thus further evidence of the Syriac inclusion in this).

Finally, sources on the relations of the Syriac Christians with other Christians and between different communities of Syriac Christians themselves appear quite revealing. The polarization between the Catholics and the non-Catholics among the Syriac Christians, and the disagreements between the Syriac Orthodox and the Armenians at the level of the clergy most likely both fueled the pursuit of separate *millet* status. In addition, the increased tension between the Muslims and the Armenians also affected relations between Syriac Christians and Muslims, although the Syriac clergy were still willing to work with the Ottoman authorities.

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## RELATIONS BETWEEN KURDS AND SYRIACS AND ASSYRIANS IN LATE OTTOMAN DIYARBEKIR

David Gaunt

Many sources written at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries observe the close relations between the Syriac and Assyrian Christians and the Kurds.<sup>1</sup> This relationship appears to have been unique and did not encompass other non-Muslim peoples. The British intelligence officer Edward Noel records a Kurdish saying comparing the attitude to Armenians and the Nestorian Assyrians: “Between us and them [Assyrians] there is but a hair’s breadth, but between us and the Armenians a mountain.”<sup>2</sup>

To a considerable degree, the Syriac and Assyrian memories of modern history are intertwined with that of the neighbouring Kurds. Some observers indicate that they felt that previously there had been a balance of power between the Christians and the Kurds, but that this balance had decisively tilted to the disadvantage of the Christians in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. However, the relationships—both the conflicts and the neighbourliness—have been as yet inadequately researched. Many of these relations were cultural, economic and social, dealing with integration and co-existence. Some of them had to do with conflicts over land, property and local power. But as Martin van Bruinessen has concluded, the Christian “relations with the Kurds are rather obscure in many cases . . . [Research] does not do justice to the complexity of the historical relations between both ethnic groups.”<sup>3</sup> It is the intention of this article to attempt to identify and describe the development of the almost kaleidoscopic relations between Kurds and Syriacs and Assyrians in Diyarbekir province in the late Ottoman Era. Each perspective and each period

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<sup>1</sup> I use the terms “Syriac” and “Assyrian” to denote ethnic collectives made up of several Christian groups with a historical background as speakers of Aramaic dialects living in Mesopotamia and its proximity. The terms cover members of the Syrian Orthodox Church (who Europeans often called Jacobites and in the Ottoman Empire were called *Süryânî*, or *Süryânî-i Kadîm*, or *Yakûbî*); the Syrian Catholic group that emerged in early modern times; the Church of the East or Nestorian, called *Nestûrî* by the Turks; and the Chaldean Catholic Uniate Church or *Keldânî*. Using either one of the names is controversial which is why I use both here.

<sup>2</sup> Noel 1920.

<sup>3</sup> Bruinessen 1992: 107.

in time forms its own temporary and easily shattered pattern. Because it is based on Syriac and Assyrian sources, the research presented here can only illuminate one perspective on the history of these relationships.<sup>4</sup>

#### POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT

Diyarbakir had one of the greatest concentrations of Syriac and Assyrian ethnic populations among Ottoman provinces. The word “Assyrian” was used by Armenian sources (in the form *Aisor* or *Asour* or *Asshur*) for all of the Aramaic-speaking Christians and the Russians borrowed this word from them in the nineteenth century. It came into British usage when the Archbishop of Canterbury established the Mission to the Assyrians in 1886, a mission that concentrated on the Nestorians in the Ottoman Empire and Iran. The Nestorians quickly adopted the term as a form of self-identification. Some of the few public uses of the term “Assyrian” by Syrian Orthodox journalists before World War I were made by Asur Yusuf of Harput, who published the newspaper *Mürşid-i Âsûriyûn* (Guide of the Assyrians)<sup>5</sup> from 1909, and Naim Faik, who fully adopted the term after leaving Diyarbakir for the United States in 1912. Ottoman officials never used “Assyrian” at that time as the people were instead classified by religious denominations. Syriacs and Assyrians were thus treated as separate groups, such as the predominant Syrian Orthodox Church (also called Jacobite), the much smaller Chaldeans (who had broken away from the Nestorians in early modern times), Nestorians (who were very few in this province), Syrian Catholics and Protestants. It is not possible to give exact statistics for the number of the Assyrians in the province. One reason for this is the general eccentric quality of the Ottoman statistical publications. The figures for the different groups appear and disappear erratically between counts. There is a standing doubt about whether non-Muslim peoples were underestimated for political reasons. In addition, the statistics divide the non-Muslim population into various categories, which sometimes disappear completely from one census to another without

<sup>4</sup> For a short general survey, see Kieser 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Harput (close to Elaziğ) is situated some 120 kilometers northwest of Diyarbakir. By the nineteenth century, the Syrian Orthodox in Harput spoke Armenian and used the Armenian-language word “*assouri*” as a means of self-designation. See Southgate 1856: 80–87; Pym & Socin 1881.

explanation. Furthermore, one of the categories is quite simply “Protestant,” with Armenians, Syriacs and Assyrians all mixed together.

In the final analysis, the problems of numbering the population originated in the illiterate and non-statistical nature of life in Kurdistan. No one was in a position to know quite how to make a census. Asked by Russian diplomats about the size of his church in 1912, Mar Shimun, the leader of the Nestorians, made a guesstimate of 150,000 for the Ottoman Empire and Iran, which seems close to the mark.<sup>6</sup> Asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church in 1908 made the claim of 250,000 church-members living in Turkey, which seems a large exaggeration.<sup>7</sup> The only church that actually surveyed and published a detailed census of its membership was the Chaldean Catholic, and even in this case figures for many villages had to be rounded off to the nearest hundred.<sup>8</sup> Most church leaders had no exact idea of the size of their congregations. It is possible that the Roman Catholic tradition of keeping church registers influenced the Chaldean leadership, but only the figures for the diocese of Siirt, headed by the famous scholar Addai Sher, give the impression of an exact count of congregations (for instance Siirt 824, Kotmès 826, Tall 59, etc.). And even here, of the 200 Chaldean parishes listed, there appear to have been exact counts for only 13, and in three cases the rounded-off figure followed by a question mark making it unsure if even the compiler believed in the count.<sup>9</sup> Church registers might have existed for a few villages, but obviously not for the majority. If those leaders who had most interest and need had only vague ideas of the size of their following, how can one expect the Ottoman authorities, or occasional foreign observers, to have more accurate estimates?

However, the available figures if used with care can probably give insight into the relative proportions the various groups had in the total population, and they give some idea of the geographic spread of the settlements. According to the 1914 official Ottoman census, the entire Diyarbakir province (which was then very much larger than in present-day Turkey) had 55,890 Orthodox Gregorian Armenians, and 9,960 Catholic Armenians. The same census divided the Syriac and Assyrian peoples into 37,976 Syrian Orthodox (plus 4,133 so called “*Eski*” or Old Syrians—which terminologically ought to have been a synonym) resulting in 42,109. On

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<sup>6</sup> Genis 2003: 339.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Taylor 2005: 99.

<sup>8</sup> Tfinkdji 1914.

<sup>9</sup> This list is reprinted in Gaunt 2006: 429–432.

top of this there were a reported 5,944 Chaldeans, but strangely the Syrian Catholics, who were many in Mardin, were not even mentioned.<sup>10</sup> And there were 7,376 recent Protestant converts of mixed background. These figures differ from those given by some probably well-informed Christian sources. The French Dominican missionary and scholar Jacques Rhétoré supplied the following figures for the Christian population of Diyarbekir in 1914: 60,000 Gregorian Orthodox and 12,500 Catholic Armenians; 84,725 Syrian Orthodox, 11,120 Chaldeans, 5,600 Syrian Catholics, but only 725 Protestants. Some of the French scholar's figures are close to the Ottoman census, but they diverge for the Syrian Orthodox and the Chaldeans, which he reckons as making up more than double the figure provided by the Ottoman census, and quite naturally he includes the Syrian Catholics. But if the census figures for the Protestant community seems extremely large, Rhétoré's seem inexplicably low, perhaps revealing an anti-Protestant bias.<sup>11</sup> J. C. J. Sanders has made a scientific and source critical analysis of the various historical attempts to reckon the size and extent of the Christian communities—but unfortunately, however, it does not deal with the entire Diyarbekir province, but only those parts east of the Tigris River.<sup>12</sup>

After the end of the First World War a delegation to the Paris Peace Conference gave figures for Diyarbekir's pre-war "Assyro-Chaldean" population (which thus ought to cover all Assyrian and Syriac denominations), and this gave a total of 117,000 living in 336 named towns and villages.<sup>13</sup> This list obviously mixes the religious groups, but it is possible to differentiate some pre-war figures for two churches in the province: the Catholic Chaldeans and the Syrian Orthodox. In 1914 Joseph Tfinkji, a Chaldean priest in Mardin, was given the task of enumerating the size of the whole Chaldean church, which had a small and stagnating presence in the province's south. He published figures by diocese and found in Diyarbekir diocese 4,180 believers in nine congregations, and in Mardin diocese 1,670 in six congregations. All of these figures were based on approximations. Many of the Chaldean families were newcomers and had moved westwards from other provinces and settled in urban areas. They were well represented in the towns of Diyarbekir and Mardin, but very few lived in farm villages.<sup>14</sup> The Syrian Orthodox patriarchate submitted a list of its

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<sup>10</sup> It is possible that the census term "Eski" is a mistake and that what is meant is the Syrian Catholics, but this is impossible at the moment to ascertain (Karpas 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Rhétoré 2005: 136–138.

<sup>12</sup> Sanders 1997.

<sup>13</sup> *La question Assyro-Chaldéenne devant la conférence de la paix* 16 July 1919: 15–16.

<sup>14</sup> Tfinkji 1914: 451–525.



congregations and families to the Paris Peace Conference (Table 5). This specified the villages by *kaza* (district) and thus gives an idea of the distribution of the Syrian Orthodox congregations in the province which reveals concentrated settlements in the southeast, in the *kazas* of Midyat (also known as the Tur Abdin),<sup>15</sup> Nusaybin and Cizre, and east of Diyarbakir along the left bank of the Tigris River in the *kazas* of Diyarbakir merkez, Silvan (then known as Miyafarkin) and Beşiri.<sup>16</sup> The population figures are given for each village, but they are most often rounded off to the nearest hundred, or on rare occasions to the nearest fifty. Even numbering the villages is somewhat difficult as, on the one hand, throughout late Ottoman times villages were sometimes abandoned because of violence and some entire villages converted to Islam, and on the other hand, because new Christian settlements had sprouted up in the south between Nusaybin and Cizre.<sup>17</sup>

Table 5: Statistics on the number of Syrian villages and families, submitted to the Peace Conference in Paris by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, 1919

Names of <i>kazas</i>	Number of Syrian villages	Number of families
Diyarbakir vicinity	30	764
Silvan (Miyafarkin)	9	174
Lice	10	658
Derik	1	50
Siverek	30	879
Viranşehir	16	303
Mardin	8	880
Savur	7	880
Nusaybin	50	1,000
Jezire (Cizre)	26	994
Beşiri	30	718
Bafaya (= present Ömerli district ?)	15	282
Midyat	47	3,935
Total	278	11,535

Source: *La question Assyro-Chaldéenne devant la conférence de la paix*, 16 July 1919

<sup>15</sup> Of uncertain origin, the name “Tur Abdin” is sometimes translated as “the Mountain of Worshippers”.

<sup>16</sup> Gaunt 2006: 24. de Courtois 2004: 196 contains some errors.

<sup>17</sup> Anschütz 1985. For an attempt to list all the non-Muslim villages in the Diyarbakir *vilayet* around 1900 see “A provisional list of non-Muslim settlements in Diyarbakir” by Jelle Verheij (Annex A in this volume).

For many centuries the various Christian communities of northern Mesopotamia had lived comparatively isolated from the Western world. Then, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, they were “rediscovered” by travellers, missionaries and diplomats. At the moment of their re-emergence on to the international scene they were perceived as the last remnants of a more glorious historical past, now threatened with extinction because of the neglect of the Ottoman government or the violence of the surrounding nomadic tribes. Sometimes observers, influenced by racial thinking, insisted that the Assyrians and Kurds were from the same racial group. Mark Sykes, for instance, wrote of the Syrian Orthodox (whom he called Jacobites), “[A]ccording to their own account [they] are Kurds and are divided among the surrounding tribes... In appearance and language the Jacobites differ not in the slightest from the Kurds; indeed, at first glance it would seem probable that they are of the same race. I learned that one tribe in the vicinity numbered Christians, Yezidis and Moslems among its members.” In the Christian village of Midin (now officially Öğündük, situated half-way between Midyat and Cizre), he interviewed peasants who frankly told him that “they were really Kurds of Kurdish race” and he concluded by agreeing with them.<sup>18</sup>

#### INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

By late Ottoman times, tales were often told of how inter-ethnic neighbourliness had traditionally been good, but had declined during living memory. Some argued that before, even in times of extreme conflict, certain codes of honour had been respected, but that now women and children were seized and sold as slaves, houses pulled down and growing crops burned. It appeared as if there was an underlying plan aiming to displace the Mountain Nestorians who were divided into autonomous tribes termed *aşiret*. “Ashiret clans carry arms, and have little to distinguish them from their wild Kurdish neighbours, with whom they are perpetually at war. They are fairly well able to take care of themselves, are just as wild and keen on raiding as the Kurds, have perpetual blood-feuds and inter-tribal warfare among themselves and the Kurds: it often happens that a Kurd and an Assyrian clan will ally themselves against another Kurd tribe or against another Kurd and Assyrian combination.”<sup>19</sup> What held for

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<sup>18</sup> Sykes 1915: 354–356.

<sup>19</sup> Dickson 1910.

the tribes was also partially true for the farmers who had to be on watch at all times to defend themselves from physical attack. The Syriac and Assyrian heroes were portrayed as fierce warriors.

As a strong sign of the high degree of cultural and social integration we can name the formal existence of Syrian Orthodox sections inside large Kurdish tribal confederations in the Tur Abdin region. Ziya Gökalp notes that the following Kurdish tribal confederations in the Midyat kaza had non-Muslim sub-sections. Two Christian tribes belonged to the state-loyal Dekşuri confederation—the Arnas (Kurd and Syriac/Assyrian sections) and Şemika (Kurd, Syriac/Assyrian, and Yezidi sections). Three tribes belonging to the state-oppositional Heverkan confederation included Christians—the Alikan (Kurd and Syriac/Assyrian), the Mızızah (Kurds, Syriac/Assyrian, Yezidi), and the Dumanan (Kurd and Syriac/Assyrian).<sup>20</sup> In addition, there is information that the Dekşuri confederation in the 1890s elected Midyat's Syrian Orthodox headman Hanne Shafer as its paramount chief. The Dekşûrî dominated Midyat as well as the northern part of Midyat kaza up to the Tigris River, while the Heverkan had its power-base in the southern part. In several villages, the Christians were split by allegiance either to the Dekşuri or to the Heverkan.<sup>21</sup> It was not uncommon for some Syrian Orthodox warriors to turn up fighting as volunteers in the Kurdish rebellions that marked the years of Young Turk rule, and when captured Kurds and Christians would be imprisoned together.

There was a definite division of labour between the permanently settled craftsmen and the nomads. Most of the Christians were permanently settled and they formed the bulk of craftsmen, while Kurds were both settled farmers and nomadic herders. The tribes tended flocks of goats and sheep and seasonally migrated between pastures. Their major commercial product was raw wool. They seldom developed crafts. Thus the nomads became dependent on the Christians for craft products and if they had imported wares, they had usually bought these from Christian merchants. Metal work, cooking-ware, carpentry, ceramic pottery, saddle making and other leatherwork, and the making and dyeing of cloth and the tailoring of clothes and many other products were in the hands of Christians. This was true even of the clothing that was characteristically Kurdish. Much like feudal landowners, the basis of the economy of most

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<sup>20</sup> Gökalp 1992: 87–89.

<sup>21</sup> Hinno 1998.

Kurdish *ağas* came from taxing or extorting the Christian peasants who lived in the villages that they controlled.

Another sign of the integration of Assyrians was the adoption of the Kurdish language in specific areas. This was particularly noticeable among the villages that were located east of Diyarbekir and close to the flow of the Tigris River. Syriacs, Assyrians and Armenians living in the Beşiri kaza were reported to be wholly Kurdish speakers. Also, in the important craft center of Kerburan (now Dargeçit), Christians used Kurdish in every-day life. There are two ways to see this integration. It could have been that the indigenous Christians adopted Kurdish and forgot their previous Aramaic or Armenian languages, or it is possible that persecuted non-Muslim groups that already spoke Kurdish—such as the Yezidis or the obscure *Şemsi* (sun worshippers) converted to Christianity to come under protection as *dhimmis*. In Midyat, most Syriacs and Assyrians were multilingual, speaking Arabic and Kurdish as well as a local Aramaic dialect. There was even a small amount of literature dating back to the early eighteenth century at the monastery of Mor Gabriel (east of Midyat) that was written in Kurdish but using the ancient Syriac alphabet. As a rule these were religious hymns, but one is an epic poem dealing with the complex relations between a Christian leader who succeeded in avoiding entrapment by plotting Kurdish chiefs.<sup>22</sup> In Mardin and the large village of Azak, which is now İdil in Şırnak province, the Christians spoke unique variants of Arabic. In fact, the only region where a variant of the old Aramaic language was in common use was the central part of Tur Abdin, where a dialect known as Turoyo has survived into the present. Even some of the Kurds spoke Turoyo. A family chronicle from Midyat records that the *ağas* of the Mala Osman had become good friends and had “mixed with the Suriyani and they learned our language and they began talking it even in their homes and with their sons and they assimilated the traditions of Tur Abdin.”<sup>23</sup> The term “Mala Osman” indicated one of the two leading clans of the Heverkan tribal confederation. According to van Bruinessen, this section was rather new and not universally respected.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps their origin was Yezidi and their memory of persecution might have contributed to their alliance with the Syrian Orthodox. At the start of World War I, the Mala Osman *ağas* were the Çelebi and Alike Batte of Mizizah (now Doğançay),

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<sup>22</sup> Kreyenbroek 1995: 29–53.

<sup>23</sup> Safar 1970: 82–83.

<sup>24</sup> Bruinessen 1992: 101–103.

the Haco, who lived near Nusaybin, and Sarohan of Mor Bobo (now Günyurdu) in the Raite forest. Many of them actively protected their neighbouring Assyrians during the World War period by hiding them in their villages or escorting them to defensible places. Another group that assimilated into the Syriac and Assyrian communities, was made up of Armenians who had fled from more northerly parts during the Hamidian massacres and after. The large Syrian Orthodox village of Midin (Öğündük) contained a section named Sanhatkar, which was populated by assimilated Armenian craftsmen who had fled from Palu, then a district in the northern part of Diyarbekir province.<sup>25</sup> Assimilated Armenians could also be found in the craft centre of Kerburan (nowadays Dargeçit) and the administrative town of Midyat.

The Syriacs and Assyrians did not just have close relations to certain local Kurdish tribes. They had very good contacts with the Yezidis who practiced an indigenous non-Muslim religion. Often called “devil-worshippers” their beliefs were an eclectic mix of many oriental religions. The Muslims did not consider them to be people of the book who should be protected. Thus they were subject to extreme pressure to convert. The Yezidis were subjected to the same sort of physical attacks and forced displacement as the Christians and came to form more or less personal inter-religious bonds. These were particularly important during 1915 and 1916 when the Yezidis of Sincar sheltered hundreds of fleeing Christians and smuggled arms and food to some besieged villages. Another marginal group with Syriac and Assyrian contacts was the Mahalleme, who lived in a block of villages northeast of Mardin and spoke a unique Arabic dialect.<sup>26</sup> Long-standing legend has it that these villages were originally Syrian Orthodox communities, but the people had converted en masse to Islam after a conflict with their bishop. They maintained personal relations with their Christian relatives, and the Mohalleme Şeyh Fethullah played a crucial role as a mediator in solving conflicts between Kurds and Christians, as he was respected by both sides. In the autumn of 1915, Fethullah was instrumental in making lasting truces between Kurdish aggressors and Christian defenders at the villages of Aynwardo (now Gülgöze just north of Midyat), Hah (now Anıtlı) and Kfar-Gawze (now Gercüş).

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<sup>25</sup> Tuncay 2007: 41–47.

<sup>26</sup> Jastrow 2003.

In contrast with the Armenians who had a long-standing political movement for autonomy, and even the Kurds with an active cultural awakening,<sup>27</sup> there were few Ottoman Syriac or Assyrian intellectuals with a political interest. One of the few was Naim Faik a schoolteacher from Diyarbekir and his political message was ambiguous. He did not stress independence or autonomy. At first he emphasized the need to cooperate and assimilate with the Ottoman model and work with the Young Turk regime. His theme was the necessity of uniting the various peoples split by religious differences. He addressed an assembly of Syriacs and Assyrians gathered at Harput: “[I]f we desire progress, then we must unite.”<sup>28</sup> Obviously this was a realistic standpoint given the relatively small size of the population and its division into several independent churches. What was new for the Diyarbekir context was that he began to toy with a concept of nation for an entity that was greater than just his Syrian Orthodox co-religionists. With the term “*Süryani*” (Syriac) he encompassed all persons in some way descended from the ancient church of Antioch, which would therefore include the Syrian Catholics. A cautious writer as long as he remained on Ottoman soil, he avoided the term “Assyrians” and his vision excluded the Nestorians and Chaldeans. He made no calls for unity among all the “Assyrian” peoples. Instead, when he felt the need to connect into a larger community he would refer to Ottoman citizenship. But in exile in America he bloomed as a propagandist for the Assyrian identity. Fâik’s journal *Kevkeb Madenho* (Star of the East) was published in Diyarbekir until 1912 when he migrated to Paterson, New Jersey. Previously, his writings in the Ottoman Empire revealed him as a loyal-cut Ottoman patriot praising the “glorious Ottoman constitution”. Fâik wrote in Ottoman Turkish and it is uncertain whether he knew the local Aramaic dialect. But almost immediately once he arrived in America, Fâik changed his self-identification and urged all brothers to unite under the Assyrian umbrella. “These brothers are Nestorians, Chaldeans, Maronites, Catholics, Protestants . . . I remind these groups that their pasts, their race, their blood and flesh, their tongue . . . We must work to exalt the name of the Assyrians . . . Our primary goal is to secure the rights of the Assyrians.”<sup>29</sup> One of his famous poems is “Wake, Son of Assyria, Awake”, published in 1920. In the United States, the immigrants managed to renegotiate their denominational conflicts and united behind the term “Assyrian.” There

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<sup>27</sup> Malmîsanij 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Çıkkı 2004: 133–136; Trigona-Harany 2009: 1.

<sup>29</sup> Çıkkı 2004: 67.

were strong concentrations in Worcester, Massachusetts (mostly from Harput), Modesto, California (mostly from Urmia in Iran) and Chicago, Illinois. Emigrants from Diyarbekir province concentrated in the New York and New Jersey area. Diaspora organizations, publications (such as *The Assyrian Progress* and *The New Assyria*) and even churches (in New Jersey and Massachusetts, where the Jacobite congregations called themselves “Assyrian Apostolic Churches”, while, the Chicago Chaldeans had an Assyrian Catholic Church) adopted the term “Assyrian”.<sup>30</sup> Only after World War II does it appear that the ethnic identification of Assyrian became controversial when applied to members of the Syrian Orthodox Church: the Syrian patriarch instituted a campaign in 1946 to eradicate its use.<sup>31</sup>

#### A SPIRALLING CONFLICT

There is some difference of opinion as to the level of inter-ethnic warfare in eastern Anatolia. The Anglican Minister W. A. Wigram, who was close to the Nestorian mountaineer-tribal people, reported a major breakdown of the balance of power during the reign of Abdülhamid II. According to Wigram, the Kurds no longer observed the customary etiquette of tribal war and had become increasingly destructive. He co-authored a book on a journey through northern Mesopotamia just before World War I broke out. The Assyrian tribesmen told him that lately endemic inter-ethnic and inter-religious fighting assumed more brutal proportions. He wrote that among the Muslim and Christian tribesmen the situation was “by no means intolerable a generation ago . . . arms were approximately equal; and the Christians, though outnumbered, had strong positions to defend, and were of good fighting stock, as men of Assyrian blood should be. So, until Abdülhamid’s day, the parties were fairly matched on the whole; and generations of ‘cross-raiding’ had evolved an understanding in the matter, capable of summary statement as ‘Take all you like, but do not damage what you leave; and do not touch the women.’ Thus livestock were fair lot, and so were carpets and other house-furniture, and arms of course. But the house must not be burnt, and standing crops and irrigating channels not touched, while a gentlemanly brigand would leave the corn-store alone. Women were never molested when a village of *aşirets* was raided,

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<sup>30</sup> On the diaspora communities, see: Shoumanov 2001; Donabed 2003; Donabed, Sargon & Donabed 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Makko 2010: 1–29.

until a few years ago. And this was so thoroughly understood that it was not necessary even to guard them. . . . Of late things have changed for the worse in this respect. Women are not always respected now; and the free distribution of rifles among the Kurds has done away with all the old equality. This was done, when the late Sultan raised the '*Hamidiye*' battalions; partly for the defense of his throne, partly perhaps with the idea of keeping the Christians in subjection. Now when to odds in numbers you add the additional handicap implied in the difference between Mauser [rifles] and flintlock, the position becomes impossible; and the balance has since inclined steadily against the Christian tribes."<sup>32</sup>

At about the same time Wigram was writing, the British upper-class politician and military officer Mark Sykes observed the exact opposite. The latter maintained that the degree of violence was mild and seldom bloody. He described the raids almost as if they were English foxhunts. Even the possession of more deadly modern weapons was not a problem, since their very existence resulted in greater caution. "In March and April, north, south, east, and west—all Jezire (Upper Mesopotamia)—is at war, not because the people are bloodily minded, not because they are rapacious, not because they are savage; but because it is such fun. In the spring of the year, when the grass is rich, the camels sleek, the sheep fat, the horses swift, what better sport is there than a foray into your neighbour's pastures?—a twenty hours' ride, a wild swoop on some unguarded herds of camels, and a vainglorious homeward flight, or perhaps a thirty-mile battle over hill and dale, with 500 young bloods aside; yelling, whooping, brandishing lances, firing from the saddle, tumbling over neck and crop in the dust when a horse misses its footing, surrendering or fleeing when the action comes too close? Now and again a man is killed, it is true; but that is a rare event which adds the necessary spice of danger to the glorious pastime of desert battle."<sup>33</sup> The difference in view is in part explained by the missionary Wigram's sympathy for the Nestorians as fellow Christians, and the adventurer Sykes, romantic sympathy for traditional nomadic Kurdish and Arab tribes. Part of the explanation may also lie in the fact that they dealt with different peoples in different regions. But among all the foreign observers, Sykes is among the few that de-emphasize the degree of conflict between Muslims and Christians. Those with long expe-

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<sup>32</sup> Wigram & Wigram 1914: 167–168.

<sup>33</sup> Sykes 1915: 302.



rience of the area—missionaries and foreign consuls above all—stressed the debilitating effects of tribal warfare on the Christian communities.

Throughout the nineteenth century and culminating in the genocide of World War I, Diyarbekir province was marked by increasingly brutal violence. The violence grew from simple small-scale cattle stealing into full-blown battles with thousands of fighters ranged against large contingents of Ottoman regular soldiers. The battles were no longer a matter of stealing or protecting flocks of sheep, but rather aimed at bringing new territory under control. Several factors were at play. One was the ambition of certain local Kurdish chiefs to create enlarged emirates by conquering or coercing their neighbours. An other was the systematic attempt by the Ottoman leadership to bring the previously autonomous emirates of Kurdistan under direct government control. The balance of power between the Kurdish emirs and the Ottoman authorities had tended to shift over time, but now the government tightened its grip over the region, finally succeeding in incorporating some of the tribes as Cossack-like cavalry units, the so-called Hamidiye regiments, into government rule.

Large-scale military violence dated back to the Egyptian revolt of Mohammed Ali Paşa, which had resulted in the Egyptian invasion of Anatolia and occupation of Syria (1831–1840). This debacle exposed the basic weakness of the Ottoman state and encouraged some Kurdish emirs and *dere beys* (valley lords) to begin aggrandizing their territorial control. One or two even came out in full revolt. The most successful rebel at this early stage was Mohammed Paşa the emir of Rowanduz. Although Rowanduz was distant from Diyarbekir, these events started a domino-effect and the violence that originated outside in the long run penetrated that province's southern parts. To meet this challenge, Reşid Paşa was sent with a large army, which was reinforced with troops from Mosul and Baghdad. His task proved to be the first step in a general policy of suppressing all of the semi-autonomous hereditary emirates in Kurdistan.<sup>34</sup> Reşid already had a track record in the Diyarbekir region, having temporarily suppressed the Milli confederation in 1834 and put down an army mutiny in Mardin in 1832.

Mohammed Paşa of Rowanduz had inherited his emirate in 1814. Ambitious and aggressive, he removed or assassinated his closest rivals, including relatives. Once secure in command, he began in the 1820s to attack and subdue the neighbouring tribes from the Iranian border up to the

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<sup>34</sup> Jwaideh 1960.

Tigris River. His vision had a religious aspect and his actions resulted in the extermination or ethnic cleansing of the Yezidis of Shaikhan<sup>35</sup> in 1831–32, while a fatwa by a local mufti declared his campaign to be a jihad. Although the Yezidis definitely suffered most, Christian villages that were in the way were also massacred and plundered. Afterwards, he moved against the weak emirate of Bahdinan (along the present Iraqi-Turkish border) which had a large Christian minority. The emir of Bahdinan called for help from the Nestorian tribes, who sent several thousand warriors, but after they were warned by the governor these pulled out of the fight. This caused bad feelings as the emir and the Nestorian chiefs had formerly been on very good terms. Bahdinan was easily taken, making Mohammed Paşa the master of a vast territory including the towns of Zaho and Dohuk, and from there he marched west towards Cizre, which he also seized. His invasion then continued deep into Diyarbekir province with forays as far away as Hasankeyf, Mardin and Nusaybin, and he besieged the large Christian village of Azak (İdil). It was rumoured that he was in contact with the invading Egyptian army in order to co-ordinate operations. But in 1834 Reşid Paşa arrived leading a superior Ottoman army and managed to convince the emir to surrender. The results of the campaigns of the emir of Rowanduz were the spreading of the Kurdish-Ottoman conflict westwards into Tur Abdin, the introduction of fatwas of jihad to motivate combating the Yezidis and Christians, and, not least, the disproportional, high level of destruction employed against the Yezidis, displacing the survivors westwards.

The next major confrontation between the central government and an ambitious local prince came when the emir of Botan, Bedirhan Bey, in the 1840s built up a large territorial coalition centred on his main town Jezire-ibn-Omar (Cizre), which was a fortress on an island in the Tigris River. The historical emirate of Botan was a mostly mountainous area now in Şırnak province. The Ottomans continued to lose battles against the Egyptian occupiers of Syria, and Bedirhan took advantage of Ottoman military weakness to expand his sphere of influence. The crushing of the emirs of Rowanduz and Bahdinan and the Yezidis of Shaikhan left a vacuum of power. Even the neighbouring emirate of Hakkari, just to the northeast, was in turmoil, split over a disputed succession to leadership resulting in a breach between the Hakkari Kurds and the head of the Nestorian tribes, the Mar Shimun. Bedirhan rose quickly from insignificance, and at the

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<sup>35</sup> Presently in Iraq, SE of Duhok.

height of his power, his state extended “from the Persian line on the east to far into Mesopotamia on the west, and from the gates of Diyarbekr to those of Mosul.”<sup>36</sup> Bedirhan used the problem of the disputed succession to the emirate of Hakkari as a pretext for an invasion. Up until then it was said that the so-titled Mar Shimun, as the combined secular and religious head of the Nestorian tribes, was also the second in command to the emir of Hakkari and ruled in his absence. During a first invasion, in the summer of 1843, the Christian mountain people were singled out for massacre and an estimated seven to ten thousand killed in what one missionary termed a “war of extermination.”<sup>37</sup> Hundreds of refugees were captured and held as slaves and the Mar Shimun fled to Mosul, where he resided in the British consulate. To begin with, Bedirhan had the support of anti-Mar Shimun oppositional Nestorians in Tkhuma valley and the large village of Aşıta,<sup>38</sup> but in a second invasion in 1846, even these allied communities were massacred, giving evidence of a near genocidal intent. It is a matter of speculation as to why Bedirhan targeted the Nestorians and also the Yezidis, but Christian sources accuse him of rabid religious hatred and state that he was known for his Muslim piety and under the influence of a local *şeyh*. Bedirhan’s operations were not confined to Hakkari, but through a large network of tribes also encompassed much of Tur Abdin, which was brought under his control. One of his victims there was Bishop Gorgis of Azak, who was murdered along with a priest and eight members of the congregation in 1847.<sup>39</sup> The emir appeared to be preparing to form an independent state. He established a rifle and ammunition factory, formed a standing army and minted his own coins. The Assyrians, however, had contact with the British through missionaries and England put pressure on the Ottoman government to put a halt to Bedirhan’s campaigns. An army sent to defeat him had considerable difficulty with several heavy battles in and around Cizre, but after some time he surrendered, in 1847, and was exiled to Crete. His heirs continued to claim influence over much of the Mardin sancak, however.<sup>40</sup>

After Bedirhan had been brought under submission, other Kurdish chiefs took his place and rose to prominence in the power vacuum.

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<sup>36</sup> “Account of the visit of Dr. Wright and Mr. Breath to Badr Khan”, in *The Missionary Herald*, 41-11 (November 1846), 381.

<sup>37</sup> “Letter of Dr. Grant July 5, 1843” printed in *The Missionary Herald*, XXXIX, no. 11 (November 1843), 434.

<sup>38</sup> Now Çıgılı in the Çukurca district of Hakkari province.

<sup>39</sup> Aboona 2008: 257; *Al-Hikmat* (Jerusalem), Vol. 4, no. 8 (1930), p. 456.

<sup>40</sup> Hakan 2007.

Among them, sources name a certain Yezdan Şir as emir of Jezire-ibn-Omar (Cizre), who invaded Tur Abdin in 1855 and “savagely killed and enslaved the Syriac people, making them homeless and raped their property, [and] destroyed their houses.” Ultimately the invasion proved successful and the invaders burned the “green and dry” crops, pulled down houses and kidnapped women and children. The Christians attempted to defend themselves, but were defeated and the tribes of Botan continued to intervene in the Tur Abdin for another thirty years.<sup>41</sup> In 1877, against the background of the ongoing Russo-Ottoman War, two of Bedirhan’s sons attempted to revive the emirate. Using Kurdish soldiers returning from the front they rebelled and occupied a vast stretch of territory extending to Mardin, Midyat and Nusaybin and including Tur Abdin, which they held for about eight months.<sup>42</sup> The “liberation” of Tur Abdin started after an appeal to the reigning Sultan resulted in the arrival of an Ottoman army under general Shevket Bey. The latter sought and received the support of the Christians of Midyat, who supplied warriors, scouts and advisors, which proved crucial in combatting tribal opponents. The Ottomans brought canons and heavy armament. The neighbouring Kurdish tribes promised to stay neutral and not help the chiefs of Botan. After this defeat of the last influential emirate in Diyarbekir’s vicinity, the Sultan rewarded the leading family of Midyat, the Safars, with an honorary Paşa title for their role. A young son of the Safar family, Hanne, as one of the few who knew Ottoman Turkish served as advisor to the Ottoman general. Up until his death in the 1915 genocide, he was the leading contact between the Christians and the Ottoman authorities, reportedly with an office in the administrative building, and became a member of the ruling council of the Kurdish Dekşuri tribal confederation.

The next twist in the increasing violence came in connection with the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877–78.<sup>43</sup> At this time, the government called on Kurdish tribes to fight at the front. If they volunteered they were equipped with up-to-date Martini-Henry rifles (a breach-loading rifle standard in the British army since 1871). When the war was over they were asked to return the rifles, but this seldom happened. Thus the strongest Kurdish tribes had effective weapons while those Assyrians who had guns often had home-crafted flintlock rifles. By this time the position of the hereditary

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<sup>41</sup> Safar 1970. See also Aydın-Verheij 2012: 40 (in this volume).

<sup>42</sup> Bruinessen 1992: 181.

<sup>43</sup> Armenian sources also point to these years as a turning-point. See Astourian, Stephan H. 2011: 63–64.

princely houses had been shaken, and in their place the Kurdish *şeyhs* emerged.<sup>44</sup> Since the *şeyhs* were religious leaders, they could use their role as mediators in tribal conflicts to build up followings. This had the effect of developing religious differences into tribal warfare between the Kurds and Assyrians and making co-operation over religious boundaries more difficult. One of the most important *şeyhs* was Übeydullah of Nehri, in Hakkari, who in 1879 quite possibly started the first Kurdish proto-nationalist revolt. Although his field of activity, the Ottoman-Iranian border, was outside of Diyarbekir province, his nationalist operations exacerbated inter-ethnic tension, and began a behind-the-scenes collaboration between certain Kurdish leaders and the Ottoman government. Interestingly, Übeydullah portrayed himself as the protector of local Christians. His army included a contingent of mountain people headed by a bishop.<sup>45</sup> “Some of the Hakkari Nestorians, but not with the approval of the patriarch, were among his fighting men; he had succeeded in pressing about three hundred of them into his service. In spite of all his good intentions Übeydullah was not always able to stop his hordes from molesting and plundering the Christian population.”<sup>46</sup>

One innovative step in the Ottoman policy of binding the loyalty of selected Kurdish tribes was the establishment of the irregular Kurdish cavalry detachments, on the model of the Russian Cossack regiments.<sup>47</sup> This began in 1892 in certain border regions. In return for loyalty to the Sultan, these tribes received special privileges. They were termed “Hamidiye” regiments as they were under the personal protection of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Their chief was given a military officer’s grade, and the warriors were supplied with smart uniforms and military armament. These regiments proved a greatly disturbing factor for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. As military regiments they were outside civil authority and courts of justice, and as irregular troops they were outside normal forms of military discipline. Thus they could act, more or less, with impunity inside the territory where they were based.

Two powerful Hamidiye forces influenced the condition of the Assyrians in Diyarbekir. On one side was the Milli confederation, centred on the western town of Viranşehir, which had three regiments led by İbrahim

<sup>44</sup> McDowall 2003: 50–59.

<sup>45</sup> Jwaideh 1960: 235–6.

<sup>46</sup> British Parliamentary Papers 100 (1881) Cmd. 2851 no. 56; and Wilson, Samuel G. 1896. *Persia: Western Mission*. Philadelphia, pp. 111–113.

<sup>47</sup> Klein 2012 (in this volume).

Paşa and his sons.<sup>48</sup> On the eastern side were the Kocher and Miran confederation, centred on Cizre and led by Mustapha Paşa and his son, which had two regiments. In addition there were a few smaller tribes with a single regiment, such as the Karakeçi, the Kiki-Kikan and the Bucak. Although they all expressed loyalty to the Sultan, this did not hinder their continual tribal feuds with one another. When tribal wars broke out, the brunt of the aggression was directed at burning and plundering the Christian villages under the protection of the enemy tribe. A French consular diplomat working in Diyarbekir attested to the destructive effect of the tribal warfare: "It is difficult for me to describe the deplorable situation in which the province's Christian populations, especially those who live in the countryside, find themselves. Oppressed to no end, stripped of their belongings, they are forced, in order to gain some form of protection from the Kurdish *ağas* and beys of their region, to work for these people and to accept the harshest conditions of slavery. Despite that, they pay a great deal for their protection and yet are still the most frequent victims of rivalries between Kurdish chieftains, who when wanting to inflict reprisals, find nothing better to do than to kill and pillage each other's fellahs—meaning Christians—and vice versa."<sup>49</sup>

There are indications that the Assyrians fought together with the Kurds. For example, the consul in Diyarbekir wrote in 1904 that "Since the beginning of the present year, the Beshiri (Beşiri) and Midyat kazas have been in a desperate situation because of the rivalries among the many Kurdish tribes living there. . . . The Christians and Yezidi that live there have been singled out and denounced to the Sublime Porte as disruptive elements who could cause the Government a great deal of embarrassment. I must not allow you to remain unaware that the situation of the Armenians and Jacobites, and of those Yezidi, is very different from that of other Christians scattered among that vilayet's Kurdish tribes: while the latter are reduced to the most brutal slavery, the ones from Beshiri and Midyat have the privilege of being equal to the Muslims."<sup>50</sup> They were obliged to follow their *ağas* and to take up their causes and even to help them in tribal warfare.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Jongerden 2012 (in this volume).

<sup>49</sup> Diplomatic Dispatch from Diyarbekir, number 2, January 9, 1901. Cited in de Courtois, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>50</sup> French diplomatic dispatch #10 June 3, 1904 cited in De Courtois, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–145.

<sup>51</sup> Joseph, John. 2000. *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East: Encounters with Western Christian Missions, Archaeologists, and Colonial Powers*. Leiden: Brill, p. 111.

Prior to the Armenian and Assyrian genocide during World War I, anti-Christian felling culminated in widespread massacres in eastern Anatolia in 1895–96. The epidemic-like spreading of the pogroms and the participation of local officials in the agitation indicates a degree of organization, but it is hard to prove that the central government initiated them. The Sultan's government did, however, participate in a cover-up and was rather passive in pursuing the perpetrators. A French consul stationed in Diyarbekir warned that the Ottoman's "Armenian Question" concealed a universal Christian dimension. "This state of affairs affects all Christians regardless of race, be they Armenian, Chaldean, Syrian or Greek. It is the result of a religious hatred that is all the more implacable in that it is based on the strength of some and the weakness of others. We might even say that the 'Armenian issue' is foreign to this matter, for if the Armenians are indeed the worst treated, it is because they are the most numerous and because it is easy to portray the cruelty with which they are subjected as a form of repression necessary for public safety."<sup>52</sup> In November 1895 deadly ethnic riots erupted in Diyarbekir with the torching of the bazaars. Mobs struck mainly against the large Armenian community with a thousand deaths and two thousand shops destroyed. But 167 Assyrians also perished, 89 of their homes were plundered and 308 shops were plundered and burned.<sup>53</sup> Observers listed massacres in and the destruction of 85 Assyrian villages and towns throughout Diyarbekir province. In two small districts, the losses amounted to 84 murdered Assyrians, with 10 of their women raped, 14 taken captive, 100 people forced to convert, and 577 houses burned.<sup>54</sup> With a few exceptions, such as Diyarbekir with its over a thousand killed in a few days,<sup>55</sup> these riots gave the appearance of being as focused on destroying property as outright killing, and thus like the contemporary anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian Empire.

Christians and Kurds reacted differently to news of the Young Turk revolution of 1908. The Syriacs and Assyrians, like the other non-Muslim peoples, welcomed the secular ideological statements implying the offer of full Ottoman citizenship in a near future. This was part of the promise of the revolution and it opened the door for non-Muslim political rights.

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<sup>52</sup> French vice-consul in Diyarbekir report no. 2 February 9, 1895 cited in de Courtois 2004: 101.

<sup>53</sup> Meyrier 2000: 134–135.

<sup>54</sup> Manuscript in Alpheus N. Andrus papers, American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

<sup>55</sup> See Verheij 2012 (in this volume).

But the Kurds, especially those with Hamidiye regiments, found themselves without the patronage of the Sultan and feared a loss of power and influence. The Kurdish *şeyhs* also rejected the revolution because of its secular character, and they combined their defence of religion with a slight scent of Kurdish separatism.<sup>56</sup> From 1908 a series of Kurdish revolts began, in which the Syriacs and Assyrians were caught. The embryonic Assyrian press commented on the increase of violence since 1908. The fortnightly *Mürşid-i Âsûriyûn* (Guide of the Assyrians) published in Harput since 1909 attributed the conflicts to Kurdish chiefs who strove for autonomy under the belief that there had been a Kurdish empire dating back to the time before Adam. A letter to the editor from a reader in Hasankeyf complaining of the sacking of villages and monasteries said that the cause was “no government” and that the aggressors could act with impunity. But the paper also published an article on Tur Abdin in 1913 revealing that although Kurds led the raids, some Syrian Orthodox were united with them and actually took part in the attacks against their own co-religionists.<sup>57</sup>

#### KURDISH PROTECTORS OF ASSYRIANS

Mark Sykes had a conversation with İbrahim Paşa the legendary leader of the Milli confederation. The latter stated that when he took over headship of the clan from his father Mahmud, he reinstated the “traditional customs of the tribe”, which were robbing caravans, protecting Christians and plundering the merchants of Diyarbekir. He encouraged Christians (according to Sykes Armenians and Chaldeans) to take refuge in the vicinity of his city, Viranşehir. “While other tribes and chiefs plundered and massacred Armenians, İbrahim protected and encouraged Christians of all denominations. It is estimated that during the great Armenian massacres [1894–1896] he saved some 10,000 Armenians from destruction.”<sup>58</sup>

In Tur Abdin, many Syrian Orthodox were associated with the two major confederations in the region—the Dekşuri, which was loyal to the Ottoman government, and the Heverkan, which stood in opposition. It is possible that more Christians were aligned with the Dekşuri than the Heverkan. The head family of the important town of Midyat, the Safars, were also leading members of the Dekşuri confederation and

<sup>56</sup> Jwaideh 1960: 301–315.

<sup>57</sup> Cited from Trigona-Harany 2009: 143–145.

<sup>58</sup> Sykes 1915: 321–324.



participated in its tribal council meetings. A family chronicle relates that about 1894, Hanne Safar was selected by the council to be the chief of the entire Dekşuri confederation for the coming four years. There was some opposition to electing a Christian to rule the tribes, and on his way to the council meeting in Gercüş, Hanne Safar and his escort were waylaid by a Kurdish *ağa* named Aliko who opposed Safar's nomination. But a combined force of Kurdish tribesmen and Christian warriors managed to free the hostages after a short while. During his short captivity, according to the chronicle, Safar asked Aliko why he was opposed to him. The latter replied, "According to the interpretation of our *şeyhs*, it is not possible for a Christian to take responsibility for our matters and manage our issues and solve our problems." Then Safar asked if he had any other reason than religion, and the *ağa* retorted, "Is there any greater than this?" Whether or not this conversation actually took place, the chronicle goes on to let Hanne Safar hold a monologue on the unimportance of faith in tribal politics: "I personally do not see a good reason to withdraw my nomination because I am religiously different from you. Why do you mix religion and the affairs of the world? The Dekşuri party is a clan party, based on the principles of co-operation, solidarity and brotherhood. It is a party which was established to preserve the rights of its clans and keeping borders and limiting influence and preserving pastures and water and protecting their territory from invasion and to help those under attack. So what does religion have to do with this?"<sup>59</sup> Quite possibly this argument corresponded with the sentiments of the other Kurdish *ağas* who pressed for Safar's candidacy. But it also shows a polarity between political thinking, choosing between selecting the most capable or influential leader, or a dogmatic rejecting of any form of non-Muslim leadership.

Belonging to the Dekşuri or Heverkan confederations was a personal choice. Another personal choice was made by the many Tur Abdin families that employed Yezidi Kurds or Mahalleme as servants. However, there were also formalized contractual relations. One example is that of the town of Midyat which reached a mercenary agreement with the Kurdish families of Mahmado and Nahrozo. After the uprising of Bedirhan Bey in 1839–42, they were allowed to settle in Midyat and were paid through a special town tax, the "*khafirtî*". In return the Kurdish mercenaries would help in the defence of the town against external enemies.

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<sup>59</sup> Safar 1970: 136–146. Unpublished manuscript cited with the permission of the Safar family.

A similar type of formal agreement was probably in place in the sub-provincial capital Mardin. This was an important merchant town dominated by Armenian and Syriac/Assyrian families, but also with considerable Muslim presence. The lingua franca was a dialect of Arabic. A few large Muslim clans (probably a mix of Kurd and Mahalleme) lived inside the town walls among them were the Mişkin, the Daşi, and the Mendilkani who were traditional protectors of the Christians. During the Hamidian massacres, some Kurdish tribes planned an attack against Mardin in November 1895. These plans had support even among some of the Muslims who lived in the town, but tribes from outside would form the main body of aggressors. Ahmed Ağa, the leader of the Mişkin is reported to have said to a group of conspirators that his clan was responsible for defending all Christian households from the gate in the town wall up to the minaret. "We cannot break that promise. If any one of you takes a step over that border, we will cut off his head." The Mişkin, Daşi, and Mendilkani took up their weapons and fired on the attacking Kurdish tribes. They managed to hinder three separate attempts to storm the town during the period 5–16 November, 1895.<sup>60</sup>

#### BREAKDOWN

The picture of Kurdish-Assyrian relations has up to this point in the text shown a high degree of integration between the Kurds and Syriacs/Assyrians. But the picture needs to be qualified. Relations seem to have been best in the extreme southeast of Diyarbekir province, and this was probably not typical for the entire province and definitely not for the city of Diyarbekir and its vicinity. There, the Hamidian massacres were full-scale for villages not tempered by any protecting clans. The anecdotal evidence names only the Christians in the kazas of Midyat and Beşiri as being equal to the Kurds.

The complicated structures that intertwined the Assyrians and Kurds broke down to great extent during World War I and resulted in a genocidal catastrophe and a near permanent rift between Kurds and Christians. This breakdown can probably attributed to a new factor in domestic Ottoman politics, namely, the radical nationalistic policy of displacing Christians from their homelands by force, and which became one of the first

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<sup>60</sup> Makdisi Habib Jarwe's written deposition on the massacres of 1895, printed in Armale, Ishak. 1919. *Al-Qusara fi Nakabat al-Nasara*. Beirut, pp. 40ff.

political genocides.<sup>61</sup> But even so, despite the weakened bonds of Kurdish-Christian loyalty, the Syriacs and Assyrians had slightly better chances of survival than the Armenians. Rhétoré completed his statistical estimates for population loss for the entire Diyarbekir province up to 1916 when he made his computation. He found that the losses for Gregorian Armenians were 97 per cent of the original population and for Armenian Catholics 92 per cent. Losses for the Syrian Orthodox were slightly less, at 72 per cent. When he specified the Mardin sancak, which included Tur Abdin, he found that the Syrian Orthodox loss of population was 57 per cent.<sup>62</sup> These are very high figures, but they indicate that the eradication of the Syriac and Assyrian people, although horrific, was not total.

To a great extent, local Kurdish tribes were caught up in an anti-Christian policy initiated and orchestrated by the government. This made it almost impossible to stand neutral. Death squad militia—in Mardin called the *Al Khamsin*—were recruited among non-tribal urban Muslims in Diyarbekir, Cizre, Mardin and Nusaybin. They were given uniforms and military weapons and an officer led the unit. Often they could handle the massacring of a normal-sized village by themselves. However, if it was a large village, or if they expected resistance, they would call for a collection of warriors from nomadic tribes to a certain date and place, before attacking. It was hard to avoid such a summons. The vali of Diyarbekir, Reşid Bey, sought out and recruited two outlawed bandits of the Rama tribe—Mustafa and Omar. They were promised complete amnesty if they became the governor's personal assassins. They were responsible for hundreds of murders and dozens of attacks on towns and villages such as Hasankeyf and Kerburan (now Dargeçit) along or near the Tigris River. One they had accomplished these tasks they were liquidated on the vali's orders.<sup>63</sup>

When plans for eliminating the Christian population came it was impossible for government loyal Kurdish confederations to oppose the government. Thus the *Milli*, who under İbrahim Paşa's leadership were famous for their protection in 1895, participated in the 1915 massacres under his son's chieftaincy. The same was true for the *Dekşuri*, despite the fact that they had Assyrian sub-sections and close relations with the Christians of *Midyat*. But the *Heverkan* leaders promised to shield their clients. Thus the sections headed by the families of Çelebi Ağa, Alike Bette, Sarokano

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<sup>61</sup> For more on the genocide, see Gaunt 2006; Üngör 2012 (in this volume).

<sup>62</sup> Rhétoré 2005: 136–138; See Gaunt 2006: 301–303 for more calculations.

<sup>63</sup> Demirer 1983. See also Üngör 2012: 281–283 (in this volume).

and Sarohan helped Christians by escorting them to defensible villages, or took them into their own villages. One branch, however, turned on its initial promise of help, the one led by Hassan Haco in the district east of Nusaybin. It appears that he was pressured by the authorities to participate or be punished. Other chiefs who protected Assyrians in the Tur Abdin were Haco of the Kurtak clan and Musa Fatme of the Dayran clan.<sup>64</sup> After the World War was over, it proved nearly impossible for survivors and refugees to return to their farms. The only major exception was Çelebi Ağa, who had endured the war in prison and helped many Syriacs and Assyrians to return to their lands in the villages of Boqusyono (renamed Alagöz), Mizizah (Doğançay) and Zaz (İzbırak).

This article has shown the worsening of Kurdish Christian relations in the southern part of Diyarbekir province. At the start of this story the balance of power was apparently rather equal. Both sides were prepared for attack or defence. But during the nineteenth century the scales tipped in the favour of some Kurdish tribes. Turning points were the rise of powerful Kurdish emirates that managed to conquer large expanses of territory, the Ottoman response of sending well-equipped armies to suppress the emirates and the arming of certain loyal tribes with modern weapons. All of these measures proved to the disadvantage of the Christian inhabitants. The Syriacs and Assyrians became increasingly dependent on short-term alliances with either the Ottoman officials or local Kurdish tribal confederations. This meant that the Christians became trapped with no peaceful strategic options. Either they participated in the struggles of the central government to repress the tribes, or they joined Kurdish tribal revolts that arose in the face of centralizing tendencies. In the end, the Syriacs and Assyrians became hostage to the steadily increasing local violence. A new twist came in World War I when a surprising alliance emerged: that between the central government, with its genocide policy, and a majority of Kurdish tribes who had ambitions to settle on Christian property. Only a fraction of the tribes that a generation before had made protection of Christians a point of honour could and did risk giving some type of protection. Even such a catastrophe as the genocide of 1915 could not entirely break all bonds between Diyarbekir's Christians and Kurds. But the two groups were never again on the same level of equality as in earlier Ottoman times and the surviving Syriacs and Assyrians emerged as a badly broken and defenceless minority.

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<sup>64</sup> Gaunt 2006: 211, 240, 271.

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DISASTROUS DECADE:  
ARMENIANS AND KURDS IN THE YOUNG TURK ERA, 1915–25

Uğur Ümit Üngör

INTRODUCTION

Between 1913 and 1950, Diyarbekir went through a process of enormous demographic, political, and socio-economic change that affected hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants in many ways. In this period, two successive Turkish-nationalist regimes carried out comprehensive programs of nation state building, including ethnic and cultural homogenization, as well as infrastructural modernization in the region. This chapter will discuss how nation state building affected Diyarbekir by focussing on the mass violence directed against Armenians and Kurds. The first section will introduce the central problem: to what extent was state-sponsored mass violence a product of any top-down decision making process versus local initiatives? The second section will provide an overview of the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians in Diyarbekir. Section three will discuss the mass violence against Kurds in Diyarbekir province in 1925. In the conclusion these two phases of mass violence will be related to each other in an attempt to understand them in their mutual coherence.

In this chapter I will argue that from 1913 to 1950, Eastern Turkey, in particular Diyarbekir province, an ethnically heterogeneous space, was subjected to various forms of nationalist population policies aimed at homogenizing the region and including it in a Turkish nation state. The chapter will highlight the role played by the Unionists and Kemalists in the identification of the population of the eastern provinces as an object of knowledge, management, and radical change and detail the emergence of a wide range of new technologies of population policies, through mass violence. It also builds upon the work of other scholars who evolved the thesis that clear administrative, political, and ideological continuities can be observed between the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) of 1913–1918, and the Republican People's Party (RPP) of 1919–1950.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A brief note about terminology is in order. In this chapter I will follow Zürcher's use of the term 'Young Turk era' to bundle together the Committee of Union and Progress

On the eve of the Young Turk seizure of power on 23 January 1913, Diyarbekir province was a profoundly multi-ethnic region with a complex, ranked ethnic system: Christians were privileged but inferior, whereas Muslims were the dominant element and the demographic majority. Young Turk population policies would fundamentally reshape this social structure into an (ostensibly) unranked, homogeneous, modern nation. The boundaries of this social body were defined by a blend of principles of ethnicity and religion: the ideal citizen would be a secular Sunni Turk. Deviations, from its secularism, Sunni nature, and Turkish character were to be corrected through cultural assimilation in the best, but physical destruction in the worst case. By 14 May 1950, when the Kemalist dictatorship was voted out of office, the human map of Turkish society, including Diyarbekir province, had radically been altered. In this chapter, the whole temporal range of these two regimes will not be addressed. Rather, the discussion will gravitate around the decade following the Ottoman Empire's entry into the First World War. This decade runs from 1915 to 1925 and saw unprecedented levels of both inter-state and intra-state political violence. The focus will be on the Armenian and Kurdish populations of Diyarbekir province, which were affected existentially (albeit in different ways) by this fateful and disastrous decade.

Any discussion of genocide needs to bring to the forefront an understanding of how processes of mass violence function. In the past decades scholars have succeeded in making headway in understanding processes of mass violence orchestrated by states or political elites. The first publications on genocide date from the 1970s, but the number of publications has risen ever since. Nowadays, with three expert journals and specialized research institutes mainly in North America and Europe, genocide studies can rightly be seen as a respectable specialism. Three important questions are central in this field of inquiry. First of all: what are the causes of genocidal processes? In other words, how does a process of systematic destruction of a social category of humans begin? Secondly: how does a genocidal process develop? There are strong indications that, once such a process is launched, it develops its own dynamic. How exactly does that come into existence, from the collective down to the individual level? Finally,

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(*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) and its descendant the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*), which ruled the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic in the period 1913–1950 (Zürcher 1992). This chapter will build upon this argument and argue that a strong continuity of the forms and institutions of mass violence can be observed between the CUP era (1913–1918) and the Kemalist era (1919–1950).



it is important to investigate the consequences of violence. How do perpetrator, survivor, and bystander groups continue to live with each other after genocide? How do they cope (or not) with traumatic events? Useful research has addressed all these questions in different cases of genocide, and by now there is also sophisticated knowledge of particular aspects of genocides. Cases studies and comparative studies have elucidated how a more or less 'normal' civic society can collapse into a persecution society, what moves ordinary perpetrators of the killings, the power and attraction of charismatic dictators, the gender-specific aspects of the violence, etc.<sup>2</sup>

An important and hitherto neglected aspect in the study of mass violence is the relationship between central decision-making processes and the local outcomes of those processes. Why do some genocides not develop in an isomorph way in different areas but manifest a significant regional heterogeneity? How can this variance in intensity and development be explained? Older models of genocidal processes utilized an interpretative framework that explained this discrepancy through the behaviour of central powerholders. In this top-down interpretation regional delays and intensifications are explained as the function of elite willpower. This theory has recently been criticized by scholars who deem bottom-up theories more appropriate for explaining local differences. According to them, it is often the local elites who initiate the first phase of persecution and afterwards a certain radicalization develops from the interplay of center and periphery.<sup>3</sup> The relationship between these two processes, central policy and local results, is undoubtedly more complex than this dichotomy, but a comprehensive theory of genocidal processes should integrate this axis of tension of direction from above versus local initiatives. This chapter attempts to contribute to this debate by focussing on the local dimension of mass violence.

How can these models be applied to the mass violence in Turkey during the first half of the twentieth century? First of all, it is important to recognize that in the 'Young Turk era' (1913–1950) three large-scale processes of violent persecution were orchestrated: the persecution and murder of the Armenians (and Syriacs) in 1915, the expulsion of Greeks from 1914 to

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<sup>2</sup> For three recent volumes on the state of affairs in genocide studies see: Bloxham & Moses 2010; Totten & Bartrop 2009; Stone 2008.

<sup>3</sup> For this recent debate see: Christian Gerlach, "Extremely Violent Societies: An Alternative to the Concept of Genocide," in: *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 8, no. 4 (2007), 459–76, and the subsequent discussion forum in vol. 9, no. 1 (2008).

1924, and the persecution and deportation of Kurds in the 1920s and 30s.<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere I have argued that the conduct of local elites was decisive for the development of these persecutions.<sup>5</sup> But how can these differences be explained? Was the Armenian genocide less centrally guided than conventionally accepted? Which mechanisms account for these differences and changes? In order to provide possible answers to these questions, the violence needs to be understood in its local context. The next section will discuss that local context.

### DIYARBEKIR BEFORE THE GREAT DISRUPTION

It did not take long for ideas of nationalism and population policies to gain currency among new upcoming classes of Ottoman Muslim military officers, intellectuals, bureaucrats, and experts, divided by profession and background but united in ethnic nationalism. The ideology of population policies was the common source from which the various policies were derived. The spread of nationalism and population policies reached the Ottoman Empire and deeply influenced its political elites. Of paramount importance was the emergence of the Young Turk party in the late nineteenth century, a nationalist revolutionary movement that engaged in a power struggle with its liberal, religious, and monarchist competitors as well as with ethnic minority parties. The movement grew in power, emerged victorious in the bloody coup d'état of 1913, and installed a dictatorship with totalitarian ambitions that never shunned the use of violence against its opponents and parts of its own population. The Young Turks were convinced that the only way the Ottoman state could survive was as a nation state, which meant that a profound ethnic homogenization needed to be organized.

In this process, the eastern provinces came to hold a special place (and for this reason are worthy of special attention in this study). The East differed in terms of geopolitical position, economic development, and ethnic composition far from the utopian ideal of the Young Turk vision. As a result, it would be subjected to a series of population policies with high levels of violence. Within the eastern provinces, Diyarbekir province stands out as particularly significant from the perspective of violence studies: in the time span of a decade, it saw two very destructive phases

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<sup>4</sup> For a lucid overview see: Kieser 2006b. See also: Gingeras 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Üngör 2011b.

of mass violence against ethnic minorities. Before moving on to the section discussing the violence, it might be relevant to sketch the social and political landscape in Diyarbekir province shortly before the outbreak of the First World War.

Deeply embedded within the social structure of Diyarbekir were overlapping and competing networks of rich, influential families of Muslim notables who had historically played the role of local power wielders in the city. These were for example the Cizrelizade and Ekinci families, who lived near the central square Balıkçılarbaşı. The very powerful Piriñçizade dynasty lived near the Great Mosque, the Ocak family near the Melik Ahmed Mosque, whereas the Cizrelizade lived in a large mansion next to the Iskender Paşa Mosque. Their neighbors were the powerful Ekinci family on one side, and the Iskender Paşa family on the other. Several important Kurdish dynasties such as the Zazazade and Cemilpaşazade, as well as major chieftains from Hazro, Kulp and Lice had houses in the Ali Paşa neighborhood. They often commuted between their region of origin and the city. The Cemilpaşazade were in particular important as pioneers of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>6</sup> To various degrees, all these local elites were connected to each other through multiple familial ties: the Cizrelizade were in-laws of the Yasinzade, the Müftüzade were related to and partly overlapped with the Direkçizade, several women of the Zazazade had married into the Gevranizade family, the Cemilpaşazade were relatives-in-law of the Azizoğlu, and the powerful Piriñçizade dynasty was connected to most of these families through marital ties.<sup>7</sup>

The ebb and flow of Diyarbekir city's politics was often decisive for provincial politics as well. The tension between these families could rise to boiling point as they engaged in fierce competition over access to local state resources. This often resulted in forms of corruption and nepotism, witnessed by the British traveller David Fraser, who argued in 1909 that in Diyarbekir "misgovernment is at its height, and within its walls there is neither justice for the righteous nor protection for the weak."<sup>8</sup> Competition within the urban landed notable class coupled with relatively weak central state authority produced these conditions.

The Ottoman Empire's gradual loss of power on its peripheries fueled inter-ethnic polarization between Muslims and Christians, both in the lost

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<sup>6</sup> Özoğlu 2004: 103–7.

<sup>7</sup> Diken 2005: 134–5, 204–5, 209.

<sup>8</sup> Fraser 1909: 180–1.

territories and in the residual empire. In Diyarbekir, far away from the direct heat of the troubles on the Balkans and in the Caucasus, tensions between Muslims and Christians had been profound since 1895 (see Jelle Verheij's chapter in this volume) and now materialized even further. In the city, national discussions on identity and ideas on population politics had already fueled competition and conflict between the ethnically organized political factions. Well before the First World War, Müftüzade Şeref Uluğ had proposed declaring an economic boycott against the "treacherous Armenians" in order to strengthen Muslim economic power.<sup>9</sup> Many Diyarbekir Armenians, in their turn, adhered to the Dashnaksutian party that desired Armenian autonomy. Concretely, its program aimed at more freedom and more decentralization in the Ottoman administration of the eastern provinces, the introduction of Armenian as educational and official language, and an end to injustice, usurpation, and expropriation committed mostly by certain Kurdish tribes against (Armenian) peasants.<sup>10</sup> Kurdish nationalism, though not as organized and established as its Armenian counterpart, also existed in the province. On 19 September 1908 Kurdish nationalists founded the Diyarbekir office of the 'Kurdish Assistance and Progress Society' in the city.<sup>11</sup> According to its statutes, it aimed to observe the constitution, pursue the notion of Ottomanism, end tribal warfare, and maintain "harmony and good relations between their compatriots the Armenians, Nestorians, and other Ottoman subjects".<sup>12</sup>

The Committee of Union and Progress had not remained idle in Diyarbekir province either. The first CUP office in Diyarbekir was opened on 23 July 1908 by Ziyâ Gökâlp, who after all was a native of the region, and was also its representative in the party's Central Committee.<sup>13</sup> Gökâlp began publishing the newspaper *Peyman*, which adopted a relatively moderate tone and emphasized coexistence of the various Ottoman subjects.<sup>14</sup> But after the catastrophic defeats of the Balkan wars the atmosphere changed and interethnic relations polarized. The CUP dictatorship exerted its influence in this province through a network of mainly urban Kurdish members. The most influential CUP members in Diyarbekir were those

<sup>9</sup> Uluğ 1905: 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Politisches Archiv Auswärtiges Amt* (henceforth PAAA), Holstein to Bethmann-Hollweg, 22 May 1913.

<sup>11</sup> Tunaya 1997, vol. 1: 430–4.

<sup>12</sup> *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti Nizamnamesi* (Istanbul: Kasbar, 1324), p. 1, article 1.

<sup>13</sup> Beysanoğlu 1956: 11–12.

<sup>14</sup> Mehmed Mehdi, "Türklük ve Osmanlılık," in: *Peyman*, vol. II, quoted in: *Ibid.*, pp. 99–101, 105.

related to the wealthy and powerful Piriñçizâde dynasty, who owned large estates in the province, including the rice fields west of Diyarbekir city. Reportedly, the Piriñçizade dynasty owned 30 villages in the vicinity of Diyarbekir city.<sup>15</sup>

One of their kinsmen was deputy Aziz Feyzi (1879–1933), the son of Piriñçizade Arif, who had adhered to the Kurdish Assistance and Progress Society. According to a German report, Feyzi had undertaken a study trip to Germany in 1911.<sup>16</sup> On behalf of many other Diyarbekir notables, he vehemently protested in the Ottoman parliament against the proposed government plan of expropriating the powerful landowners, and in time Feyzi became a Young Turk hardliner. He had held fierce and hostile discussions with Armenian member of parliament Vartkes Serengulian (1871–1915), in which he accused Vartkes of Armenian separatist designs.<sup>17</sup> He became more and more fanatic in his anti-Armenian sentiments, and reportedly had Ohannes Kazazian, a Catholic Armenian from Mardin and his political rival in the elections, assassinated in 1913.<sup>18</sup> Given his reputation, Aziz Feyzi's assignment to Diyarbekir caused unrest and anxiety among Armenian politicians there.<sup>19</sup> Other CUP sympathizers in Diyarbekir were Piriñçizade Sıdkı (Tarancı), Yasinzade Şevki (Ekinci), his brother Yasinzade Yahya (Ekinci), Müftüzade Şeref (Uluğ), and less prominent others.<sup>20</sup>

The loss of the Balkans in 1913 reverberated throughout Ottoman society, including distant Diyarbekir. As if that had not been traumatic enough, vague talks of and slow but deliberate steps towards a reform plan to 'solve' the Armenian question, by which European 'inspectors' would be appointed to ensure more Armenian and Kurdish autonomy, triggered even more concern and fear among Muslims, including those in Diyarbekir. Right after the signing of the London Treaty (on territorial adjustments arising out of the conclusion of the war), Diyarbekir's governor sent a report to the government that talk of a reform plan was causing turmoil and social unrest among Diyarbekir's ethnic groups. According to the governor, rumors of reform were "causing much excitement and alarm among the Islamic population". Speculative reports in local newspapers

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<sup>15</sup> Malmîsanij 1998: 41.

<sup>16</sup> PAAA, R14084, Mutius to Bethmann Hollweg, 14 June 1914.

<sup>17</sup> Tunaya 1997 vol. 1: 600–1.

<sup>18</sup> Rhétoré 1919: 59–60.

<sup>19</sup> Minassian 1995 vol. 1: 90, footnote 27.

<sup>20</sup> Malmîsanij 1998: 41.

such as *Diyarbakir* about the alleged endorsement and possible implementation of a reform plan were “offending the sentiments and minds of Muslims and were lately giving rise to tumult.” Governor Hamid Bey argued that the Muslim middle class in Diyarbakir had faith in the government, but could not remain “indifferent to such a question affecting the life and and future of our homeland (*istikbâl-ı memleketimiz*)”. The Muslims, he concluded his report, would reject such a reform plan and he “began expressing the possibility that terrible consequences (*fena neticeler*) could emerge from it in the future”.<sup>21</sup>

The final reform plan envisaged the formation of two provinces from six vilayets (Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Mamuretülaziz, and Sivas), and assigned two European inspectors to oversee Armenian affairs. The reform package was signed into law in February 1914. In the spring of 1914, finally, the backlash by Muslims eventuated as expected by the governor. In another report, he mentioned clashes and riots between Muslims and Christians in the bazaar and inner city of Diyarbakir. The Muslims expressed their hatred of Armenians by painting anti-Christian graffiti on walls and insulting Christian symbols such as crucifixes with “repulsive profanity”. The governor concluded that the situation in Diyarbakir was firmly “unfavorable for Christians”, and that Christian communities were “in complete despair.”<sup>22</sup> The ones responsible for the organization of a climate of anti-Armenian hatred were local CUP powerholders. In the summer of 1914, as the European crisis was deepening, the Ottoman civil inspector Mihran Boyadjian was travelling to Diyarbakir and encountered the Young Turk political hardliner Pirinçizade Aziz Feyzi on the way. Aziz Feyzi quite openly threatened the Armenians in a bitter condemnation:

On the road, we often spoke about politics in the car. Feyzi Bey did not fail to slip in, in his conversations, several threats against my coreligionists. “The Armenians,” he repeated, with bitterness, “have misbehaved towards us in our days of distress during the Balkan Wars. Patriarch Zaven, the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin and Nubar have sought to appeal to foreign intervention; that will cost you dearly my friend, your future is in danger.”<sup>23</sup>

Finally Aziz Feyzi warned: “You will see now, what it means to demand reforms.”<sup>24</sup> The radicalization of political elites heralded a general deep

<sup>21</sup> *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi* (henceforth BOA), DH.KMS 2-2/5-7, document 7, Diyarbakir governor to Interior Ministry, 26 March 1913.

<sup>22</sup> BOA, DH.SYS 23/4, document 2, Diyarbakir governor to Interior Ministry, May 1914.

<sup>23</sup> Yeghiayan 1991: 479.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 480.

crisis of interethnic relations in Diyarbekir, which had now reached the threshold between hatred and violence. That threshold was crossed when in August 1914, the grain market of Diyarbekir became the scene of mass plunder as many Muslim merchants joined in seizing the opportunity to loot the stores of Christians and set fire to their shops. Soon it became known that the Young Turk loyalist police chief, Memduh Bey, had “allowed Kurds and Muslims to pillage Armenian stores”.<sup>25</sup> According to Mihran Boyadjian, Memduh Bey had started the fire himself to create opportunities for pillage.<sup>26</sup> Not only was the participation of local Muslims widespread, but the inaction by local authorities implied tacit approval of the pogrom.

The war and ensuing violence in the Balkans triggered a severe radicalization in Young Turk thinking and politics. Their perception that the catastrophe of the Balkans should never be allowed to happen to the remaining territories of the Ottoman Empire, especially the eastern provinces, would give birth to unprecedented forms of population politics. One major outcome of these processes was a deep fear, or perhaps a complex, of loss. The fear of losing territory was a persistent phobia of both late Ottoman and Turkish political culture. Some Ottomans foresaw the looming cataclysm. In his 1913 book on the Balkan wars, Aram Andonian wrote with considerable concern that “the principle of nationality” had spelled disaster in the Balkans and was utterly untenable in the eastern provinces, where most Armenians lived.<sup>27</sup> Andonian had planned to write a second volume to his book. He was never able to do so due to the wartime fate of Ottoman Armenians: deportation and murder.

#### THE DESTRUCTION OF DIYARBEKİR'S ARMENIANS

The genocide of Ottoman Armenians developed out of the dynamic interplay of two alternate forces and processes: the Young Turk Revolution and the First World War.

A major event that contributed to the radicalization and brutalization of Ottoman-Turkish politics was the Young Turk Revolution of 23 January 1913. The Young Turk regime was never elected into power, but seized it

<sup>25</sup> *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 44/234, Emniyet-i Umûmiye Müdüriyeti (Ali Münif) to Diyarbekir, 13 September 1914.

<sup>26</sup> Yeghiayan 1991: 480.

<sup>27</sup> Andonian 1999.

through a violent coup d'état. It proceeded to install a single-party dictatorship by silencing or destroying all opposition and filling the ranks of the Ottoman state bureaucracy with loyal Young Turks. Moreover, the revolutionary regime had been born in the midst of a total war, a conjuncture that substantially reduced traditional constraints on state power and greatly heightened the potential and willingness of Young Turk leaders to deploy massive coercion in their bid to transform a multi-ethnic Ottoman society into a homogeneous Turkish nation state. The revolution in turn engendered profound fears of counter-revolution based on internal instability and external threats, a combination of factors which gave birth to a permanent state of emergency. Throughout their rule, the Young Turks attempted to ward off this permanent political crisis by using coercion and violence against parts of their own population. Furthermore, violence became a normal tool of statecraft for the regime since it never enjoyed widespread support among the population.<sup>28</sup>

The Young Turk Party, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), came to power in 1913, and a generation of Young Turk officers and politicians continued to rule Turkey arguably up to 1950. The regime that ruled from 1913 to 1918 has often been called a "triumvirate", consisting of the Young Turk nationalists Mehmed Talat (1874–1921), Ismail Enver (1881–1922), and Ahmed Cemal (1872–1922). There is some truth to this claim, Talat became Minister of the Interior and later Grand Vizier, Enver was promoted to Minister of War, and Cemal became Minister of the Navy and later Viceroy of Syria. However, a more accurate and sophisticated account of the regime would be that the Young Turk Party consisted of an inner circle of about 50 men. This core was comprised of certain factions, dominated mostly by Talat and Enver, and to a lesser extent by Cemal. Local party bosses called "Responsible Secretaries" or "Inspectors", as well as Young Turk Provincial Governors wielded considerable, relatively autonomous, power. The doctors Bahaeddin Şakir (1874–1922) and Mehmed Nazim (1872–1926) were also influential and exercised power from behind the scenes. The party ideologue, the sociologist Mehmed Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924), was an intimate member of the inner circle and his nationalist ideas were highly influential in the shaping of CUP population politics. But the Young Turk dictatorship was not a perfectly harmonious force. There was considerable rivalry, division, and intrigue within the dictatorship, most notably between Enver and the army versus Talat and the

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<sup>28</sup> Gawrych 1986.



Interior Ministry. Bureaucrats at all levels competed to satisfy their superiors' desires and invent solutions to lingering problems and questions. In addition to rivalry, ideology too was contested at times.<sup>29</sup>

Secondly, and most importantly, the outbreak of the First World War was an unexpected but fatal development for the Ottoman Christian minorities. World War I was not an incidental event for the Ottoman Empire. Powerful cadres in the Young Turk Party's radical nationalist wing consciously sought a belligerent route. Participation in the war was seen as a radical solution to many of the Empire's problems.<sup>30</sup> The regime forged an alliance with Germany and pulled the ill-prepared country into a devastating war. From the first day of the war, Young Turk dictatorial rule became more repressive towards domestic oppositional groups. Discordant behavior was dealt with systematically and ruthlessly. The war also released constraints on population policies, giving the regime a window of opportunity to launch large-scale programs of ethnic homogenization: the deportation of Armenians and Kurds (among others) coupled with the settlement of Turks served this purpose. As the war became more brutal on the eastern front and in the trenches of Gallipoli (Çanakkale), the persecution was radicalized. Defeats triggered new waves of persecutions, especially in the eastern provinces. The blanket deportation orders of 24 April 1915 and 23 May 1915 signified an intensification of the anti-Armenian measures, escalating in the summer of 1915 into genocidal destruction.<sup>31</sup>

The genocide of the Armenians developed from several phases of radicalization. It consisted of a set of overlapping processes that geared into each other and together generated an intended and coherent process of destruction. These processes were mass executions, deportations, forced assimilation, destruction of material culture, and the construction of an artificially created famine region.<sup>32</sup> It heralded the coming of a new era and stipulated the parameters of a formative Turkish nation state, or an

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<sup>29</sup> For two contrasting views on the periodization of Turkish nationalism, see: Hanioglu 2006 and Zürcher 2000: 173: "a peculiar brand of Ottoman Muslim nationalism, which was to a very high degree reactive. It was defined in a particular and antagonistic relationship between Muslims who had been on the losing side in terms of wealth and power for the best part of a century and Ottoman Christians who had been the winners. . . . But the nation for which they demanded this political home was that of the Ottoman Muslims—not that of all of the Ottomans, not only that of the Turks and certainly not that of all the Muslims in the world."

<sup>30</sup> Aksakal 2008: 153–87.

<sup>31</sup> Bloxham 2002: 101–28.

<sup>32</sup> Libaridian 1987: 206.

empire with a dominant Sunni Turkish core and a marginalized periphery. This shaping of such a future was a vitally important aim and outcome of the genocide and precluded potential future ethno-majoritarianist claims by minorities. This interpretation suggests that the Armenian genocide not only influenced but shaped the contours of the Turkish process of nation formation.<sup>33</sup>

In terms of historical development, four major stages of escalating persecution led to the destruction of Ottoman Armenians. The first phase was the threat of invasion by the British in the west and the Russians in the east. It is no exaggeration to state that the effect of these threats on the Ottoman political elite was nothing short of apocalyptic. It fueled a fear of disappearance among the Ottoman elites and spurred persecutions in the winter of 1914–15. The second phase developed out of this panic, when the regime arrested the Armenian political, intellectual, cultural, and religious elite of the empire and had most of them executed by late May 1915. This effectively decapitated a community of their leaders. The third phase followed when the regime ordered the general deportation of all Ottoman Armenians to the Syrian desert. We know now that the deportations escalated into mass murder and cost the lives of about a million Armenians. What made the massacres genocidal is that the killings became categorical, in that all Armenians, loyal or disloyal, were deported and massacred. A fourth phase was the designation of open-air concentration camps along the lower Euphrates river in contemporary Syria, and the massacres in Der Zor region in 1916.<sup>34</sup> This radicalization at the center metastasized into the periphery as Diyarbekir province witnessed a most violent rule under its wartime governor, Dr. Mehmed Reşid.

On 25 March 1915 the governor of Diyarbekir, Hamid Bey, was relieved of his duties and replaced by the Circassian (*Adige*) military doctor Mehmed Reşid (Şahingiray).<sup>35</sup> When Reşid acceded to the governorship of Diyarbekir province, he brought with him thirty mainly Circassian Special Organization operatives, such as Çerkez Harun, Çerkez Şakir, and Çerkez Aziz.<sup>36</sup> They were joined in Diyarbekir by more troops released from the local prison.<sup>37</sup> This way, Reşid absorbed more effective power than the

<sup>33</sup> For an interpretational analysis of the Armenian genocide see: Bloxham 2005.

<sup>34</sup> For a narrative history of the Armenian genocide see: Kévorkian 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Kieser 2002.

<sup>36</sup> Mehmed Reşid, *Mülâhazât* (Istanbul, 1919), transliterated in Bilgi 1997: 89, footnote 28. According to Abidin Nesimî, son of the then mayor of Lice, Hüseyin Nesimî, the number of volunteers Reşid employed was 20 (Abidin Nesimî 1977: 39).

<sup>37</sup> Yeghiayan 1991: 151.

average Ottoman governor. In his case, it was certainly true that “[i]n the provinces party bosses of one kind or another often exercised substantial control, amounting in some cases, [...] to virtual autonomy”.<sup>38</sup> Upon arrival in Diyarbakir, Reşid and his men faced a poor rule of law, a serious desertion problem, and an anxious population. The bazaar, for example, was buzzing with rumors that the Russians had invaded Istanbul.<sup>39</sup> The Muslims feared an invasion of Diyarbakir by the Russian army, whose reputation as a valiant fighting corps had preceded its offensive into the south. The Christians were torn between fear and hope: whereas one moderate group (such as the clergy) was terrified that a Russian incursion might trigger reprisals, another, discordant group (such as nationalists) expressed audacious beliefs that it was possible to defend themselves against the brutal policies of the CUP dictatorship.<sup>40</sup>

In power, Reşid quickly organized a committee for the “solution of the Armenian question”. This council was named “Committee of Inquiry” and had a “Militia Unit” at its disposal.<sup>41</sup> According to a German charity worker the committee, drawn up of a dozen CUP loyalists, was “a sham committee for the solution of the Armenian question” and served only one purpose: to eliminate the Armenian political parties.<sup>42</sup> It was headed by Colonel Cemilpaşazade Mustafa Nüzhet Bey, and consisted of deputy Pirinççizade Aziz Feyzi, postal clerk İbrahim Bedreddin, Majors Rüşdü Bey and Yasinzade Şevki (Ekinci), his brother Yasinzâde Yahya (Ekinci), representative of the the ‘Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants’ (*İşkân-ı Aşâir ve Muhacirîn Müdüriyeti*, henceforth İAMM) and chairman of the Diyarbakir branch of the ‘Society for National Defense’ Veli Necdet, police chief Memduh Bey, militia commander Şevki Bey, and Müftüzade Şeref Uluğ, son of the mufti. On orders of Reşid they selected

<sup>38</sup> Macfie 1998: 128.

<sup>39</sup> Armalto 1970. This detailed chronicle was written in 1919 in Arabic by the Syriac priest Ishaq Armalto and provides a very valuable account of Diyarbakir province before and during the war. The book has recently been translated into Swedish: *De Kristnas Hemska Katastrofer: Osmanernas och Ung-turkarnas Folkmord i norra Mesopotamien 1895 / 1914–1918* (Stockholm: Beth Froso Nsibin, 2005), translated by Ingvar Rydberg. This author has used an unofficial Turkish translation by Turan Karataş (Sweden, 1993), p. 28.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>41</sup> Süleyman Nazif, “Doktor Reshid,” in: *Hadisat*, 8 February 1919. It is possible that the establishment of these provincial committees was an empire-wide undertaking. There is evidence that in other provinces similar organizations were set up. *Yale University Library*, Ernst Jäckh Papers, file 49, folio 1354, “Anlage Abschrift”.

<sup>42</sup> PAAA, R14087, director of the Deutscher Hilfsbund für christliches Liebeswerk im Orient (Frankfurt am Main) Friedrich Schuchardt to the Auswärtiges Amt, 21 August 1915, enclosure no. 6.

the following civilians and appointed them Captain: Zazazade Hacı Süleyman (by profession a butcher in the Diyarbekir bazaar), Halil (also a butcher), Cercisağazade Abdülkerim, Direkçizade Tahir, and Pirinççizade Sıdkı (Tarancı). The following volunteers were nominated Lieutenant: Halifezade Salih (Kalfagil), Ganizade Servet (Akkaynak), Muhtarzade Salih, Şeyhzade Kadri (Demiray), Piranizade Kemal (Önen), Yazıcızade Kemal, Zaza Alo Efendi, and Hacı Bakır.<sup>43</sup>

The Russian breakthrough in Transcaucasia and the Allied landings on Gallipoli were the final drop for the Young Turk elite. At this stage, moral thresholds were crossed both on the national and provincial level. Talat Paşa had assumed supervision of and therefore responsibility for the deportation of an entire population. The murderous initiations by Reşid in Diyarbekir, too, had violated taboos as entire village populations could now be targeted for destruction. The relationship between these two developments remains a chicken-and-egg enigma. However, it is possible to reconstruct at least some elements of this momentum. Rafael de Nogales Mendez was a Venezuelan officer in German service, operating in the Ottoman army as a mercenary. In the spring of 1915 he had witnessed the massacres of Christians in Van and Bitlis, committed by Halil Paşa and Tahir Cevdet Bey.<sup>44</sup> He visited Diyarbekir in late June and had the opportunity to speak to Reşid in private. According to Nogales, Talat had personally ordered Dr. Reşid to unleash hell on Diyarbekir province with a telegram containing a mere three words: "Burn—Destroy—Kill" (*Yak—Vur—Öldür*). Although this order was most probably destroyed (assuming it existed at all), there was clearly no instruction for Reşid to desist. Moreover, Reşid admitted himself that he had merely obeyed Talat's order, who allegedly had confided to him, "j'assume la responsabilité morale et

<sup>43</sup> Beysanoğlu 2003: 793–94; Bilgi, *Dr. Mehmed Reshid*, pp. 26–27. See also Naayem, 1921: 182–83. Reverend Naayem was a Chaldean priest of Urfa, where he witnessed the killing of his father and the persecution of the Christians. Disguised as a Bedouin Arab, he narrowly escaped with his life.

<sup>44</sup> Halil (Enver Paşa's uncle) and Cevdet (Enver's brother-in-law) swept through Van and Bitlis after their defeats on Persian territory and in Van. During their retreat, they massacred the Armenian inhabitants of Bitlis, Van, and the plain of Muş. For an eyewitness account see Knapp 1919.

matérielle”.<sup>45</sup> Reşid interpreted the order as approval of his policy, characterized by American consul Jesse Jackson as a “reign of terror”.<sup>46</sup>

By the end of May, Reşid had imprisoned Diyarbekir’s entire Christian elite in the provincial bastille, where some had already died under torture. Dr. Reşid administered the *coup de grace* to the elite in the last week of that month. On Sunday 25 May 1915 Major Rüşdü handcuffed 807 notables including Bishop Tchilgadian, and led them through the Tigris Gate. On the shores of the Tigris the men were loaded on seventeen large Tigris rafts under the pretext that they would be deported to Mosul. Philipos Arpiarian was provincial director of the Ottoman Agricultural Bank who had worked in Harput, Trabzon, and was stationed in Diyarbekir when he was arrested in May 1915. When the deportation was announced, he sent the following letter to his family:

My Dears,

What is going to become of us is now clear. I will probably be sent toward Mosul, together with all my compatriots. Now it is left for you to be brave and endure every difficulty. What can we do? Fate brought us to this. Only continue to pray for us.

As for my journey, bring me one of the boy’s sheets, a small rug, pillow, and two or three underclothes. My blue jacket and vest. In addition to this, my summer jacket, trousers, and whatever else is suitable to wear. I must not forget, also, a lot of cheese, choerag, and prepare a box of halvah.

Use your judgment and put all this together in the best way you can. Give these to Haji Garabed so he can bring to me. He is our servant. Bring a cognac bottle filled with *oghi (raki)* with you so you can pass it secretly to me. Do not be too late. All of you come so that I can see you for the last time.

Kisses to you, your father . . . Philipos Arpiarian.<sup>47</sup>

The goods never reached Arpiarian but were stolen by the militia. Arpiarian was placed on a raft and taken away with the other notables. Militiamen accompanied the notables on the rafts as they sailed one hour downstream to the “intersection of two rivers” (*serê du avê*), a violent torrent where the Batman creek joins the Tigris. This area was the home of

<sup>45</sup> Rafael de Nogales, *Four Years Beneath the Crescent* (London: Sterndale Classics, 2003), p. 125. This book was first published in Spanish as *Cuatro años bajo la media luna* (Madrid: Editora Internacional, 1924), later published in German as *Vier Jahre unter dem Halbmond: Erinnerungen aus dem Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Verlag von Reimar Hobbing, 1925). See also Nogales 1974.

<sup>46</sup> *National Archives*, RG 59, 867.4016/77, Jackson to Morgenthau, 5 June 1915, in: Ara Sarafian 2004: 84.

<sup>47</sup> Tashjian-Quiroga 2002: 67.

the Reman tribe, south of Beşiri. At this gorge, Major Rüşdü had all rafts moored by the left bank of the river and ordered the Christians to compose reassuring letters to their families in which they were compelled to write that they were safely underway to Mosul. The men were then stripped of their clothes and valuables and massacred by Rüşdü's men. In carrying out the hands-on killing the militia was assisted by Kurdish tribesmen loyal to Reman chieftain Ömer, who had been induced by Aziz Feyzi. All men were slaughtered and dumped in the river, with the exception of Bishop Tchilgadian, who was forced to witness the bloodbath as a form of psychological excruciation before being led back to Diyarbekir.<sup>48</sup> After the massacre, Ömer and Mustafa were invited to Aziz Feyzi's house, where they celebrated their accomplishment. The men were later received at the governorship, where Reşid congratulated them for their bravery and patriotism.<sup>49</sup> Reşid also appealed to the Interior Ministry to have his militia rewarded and awarded medals for their outstanding performances. His wish was granted by the Directorate for General Security, and the militia members received financial benefits and were decorated with medals.<sup>50</sup>

On 30 May the process was repeated with 674 Christians and thirteen rafts. This time, the murder was supervised by Veli Necdet and fifty militiamen. On arrival at the Reman gorge the victims were robbed of a total of 6000 Turkish pounds and stripped of their clothes. They were killed and thrown in the river as Ömer's tribesmen and the militia lined up on both banks with their guns. Those that managed to swim and rise to the surface were shot dead. Back in Diyarbekir city, the militiamen sold the expensive clothing they had taken from the victims at the market.<sup>51</sup> Among those killed were Onnik Kazazian, a wholesaler from Istanbul who happened to be visiting Diyarbekir, and his friend Artin Kassabian, the

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<sup>48</sup> Qarabashi 2002: 128. This important diary was originally written in Aramaic under the title *Dmo Zliho* ("Shed Blood") by Na'man Qarabashi, a native of the village of Qarabash (Karabaş). During the war Qarabashi was a theology student at the Syriac monastery Deyr-ul Zaferan. Along with Armalto's account it is one of the very few survivor memoirs. However, his account suffers from victim bias in at least two ways: the myth of extreme cruelty on the part of the perpetrators, and the myth of resistance by the victims. Nevertheless, his account is factually correct and will be utilized, albeit with caution.

<sup>49</sup> *Épisodes des massacres* 1920: 28–30.

<sup>50</sup> BOA, DH.EUM.MEM 67/31, 27 July 1915. Deputies Aziz Feyzi and Zülfü Bey, and militia Major Şevki were decorated with honorary medals for their "great achievements". BOA, DH.KMS 43/10, 11 January 1917. According to a British intelligence report, "Deputy Feyzi was received by the Kaiser and decorated with the Iron Cross". GB National Archives, FO 371/4172/24597, no. 63490, folio 304.

<sup>51</sup> PAAA, R14087, director of the Deutschen Hilfsbundes für christliches Liebeswerk im Orient (Frankfurt am Main) Friedrich Schuchardt to the Auswärtiges Amt, 21 August 1915, enclosure no. 6.

former interpreter of the French vice-consulate. Other victims were the noted bankers Khatchadur Dikranian and Tirpandjian.<sup>52</sup> The same fate befell Mihran Basmadjian, graduate of the Euphrates College in Harput, Dikran Chakidjian, and Nalband Hagop, all of them Dashnakists, as well as Hagop Hovsepien, the negotiator Stephan Matossian, the former provincial interpreter and secondary school teacher Dikran Ilvanian, member of the municipal council and representative of Singer Missak Shirikdjian, all of them members of the democratic liberal Armenakan party.<sup>53</sup> To the dismay of Holstein, the German vice-consul at Mosul, a week later the rafts arrived empty. Holstein later found out that the Christian convoys had been “completely slaughtered” (*sämtlich abgeschlachtet*) and he had witnessed their corpses floating downstream: “For several days, corpses and human limbs have been floating down the river here”.<sup>54</sup>

After the elimination of the Armenian elite of Diyarbekir, Reşid quickly expanded the violence to genocidal proportions. Having massacred the bulk of the male elite, the rest of the Diyarbekir Armenians were now targeted by categories. On 1 June he had his militia evacuate 1060 Armenian men and women of the Armenian neighbourhood Hançepek and escort them to the Diyarbekir plain through the Mardin Gate. The people were gathered and a proclamation was read out loud, offering the Armenians their lives in exchange for conversion to Islam. Although the decision was not unanimous, the victims refused, whereupon they were stripped of their clothes and belongings. The militia and local Kurdish villagers then massacred them with rifles, axes, swords, and daggers. Many women were raped, some were sold as slaves to the highest bidders. The corpses were either thrown in wells or trenches, or left on the plain to rot, “the men on their stomachs, the women on their backs.”<sup>55</sup> It did not take long for Talat to issue the following deportation order for the Diyarbekir Armenians: “All Armenians living in villages and towns of the province, will be resettled to Mosul, Urfa and Zor, with no exceptions. Necessary measures will be taken to secure their lives and property during the deportation”.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, the İAMM ordered the “documentation of the names

<sup>52</sup> Report of M. Guys to the French embassy, Istanbul, 24 July 1915, in: Beylerian 1983: 48, document no. 58; Yeghiayan 1991: 48; Krikorian, *Armenians*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>53</sup> *Épisodes des massacres* 1920: 22–23.

<sup>54</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 169, Holstein to Wangenheim, 10 June 1915.

<sup>55</sup> Edward W.C. Noel, *Diary of Major E. Noel on Special Duty in Kurdistan* (Basra: n.p., 1919), part 1, pp. 10–11.

<sup>56</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 54/87, Talat to the (sub)provinces of Trabzon, Mamuretülaziz, Sivas, Canik, and Diyarbekir, 21 June 1915. For a study of the dispossession of Ottoman Armenians Üngör and Polatel 2011.

and places of the Armenian villages, the number of deportees, and the abandoned property and ploughland".<sup>57</sup> The massacres and deportations then quickly spread throughout the province, and by the end of the war, Armenian life in Diyarbekir had effectively been destroyed.

#### THE ASSAULT ON DIYARBEKİR'S KURDS

The destruction of the Diyarbekir Armenians in 1915 was followed by westward deportations of, and by extensive campaigns of mass violence against Kurds. The victims of Young Turk mass violence were Kurdish tribesmen who had allied themselves structurally or loosely with a wide current of resistance against Young Turk rule.

Three major waves of deportations struck the Kurdish population of the East. The first generation of deportees deported in 1916 suffered perhaps the most amidst the harsh conditions of the First World War and the seasons. The second cohort, deported right after the establishment of the Republic from 1925 to 1927, did not stay away from their native regions very long and many deportees returned within a year or two. The third deportation was organized after the consolidation of the Kemalist single-party dictatorship in 1934 and was more sophisticated and by categories. Only when the dictatorship was ousted from power in 1950 were Kurds no longer deported. The deportations displayed a distinct process of evolution from the first to the last phase. Turkish social engineers accumulated experience and as they muddled through, learnt from their prior mistakes and thus sophisticated and perfected the craft of deportation.

There are manifold reasons why the Young Turk government engaged in large-scale deportations of Kurds. First, there were direct political reasons, namely to thwart possible alliances between Kurdish tribes and the Russian army. Second, there were economic considerations: many Kurdish tribes were (semi-)nomadic and in order to tax them more effectively, they needed to be sedentarized. Nationalist assimilation was a third concern of the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior. In their efforts to "nationalize", i.e. "Turkify", the empire, the Kurds were targeted for cultural and linguistic assimilation, and political absorption into the Turkish nation. The combination between a long-term ideological program and short-term war exigencies drove the CUP to deport hundreds of thousands of

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<sup>57</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 54/15, İAMM to the provinces of Adana, Haleb, Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, and Diyarbekir, 14 June 1915.



Ottoman Kurds. The Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants (İAMM, renamed AMMU in 1916) supervised the deportation of these people. Those Kurds who had fled west from the Russian occupation were incorporated in the deportation program as well.

Altogether, war exigencies, economic considerations, and assimilation policies led Ottoman Kurds to be deported *en masse*. Following the deportation of Armenians, on 2 May 1916 Talat issued the following order to the governor of Diyarbekir:

It is absolutely not allowable to send the Kurdish refugees to southern regions such as Urfa or Zor. Because they would either Arabize or preserve their nationality there and remain a useless and harmful element, the intended objective would not be achieved and therefore the deportation and settlement of these refugees needs to be carried out as follows.

- Turkish refugees and the turkified city dwellers need to be deported to the Urfa, Maraş, and Anteb regions and settled there.
- To preclude that the Kurdish refugees continue their tribal life and their nationality wherever they have been deported, the chieftains need to be separated from the common people by all means, and all influential personalities and leaders need to be sent separately to the provinces of Konya and Kastamonu, and to the districts of Niğde and Kayseri.
- The sick, the elderly, lonely and poor women and children who are unable to travel will be settled and supported in Maden town and Ergani and Behremaz counties, to be dispersed in Turkish villages and among Turks. [...]
- Correspondence will be conducted with the final destinies of the deportations, whereas the method of dispersion, how many deportees have been sent where and when, and settlement measures will all be reported to the Ministry.<sup>58</sup>

The deportation of Kurds had now begun, first of all targeting the Kurds deemed ‘disloyal’ by the CUP. When a group of mounted Kurds from Ahlat attempted to defect to the Russians, their deportation to Diyarbekir was ordered.<sup>59</sup> Ahmed İzzet Paşa tried to prevent these deportations, suggesting to Talat that “tribal cavalry units” should be established instead.<sup>60</sup> His efforts had limited success as the İAMM improvised a makeshift solution. In May, it authorized the temporary settlement of Kurdish chieftains and tribesmen in areas close to the front. This was a local solution between

<sup>58</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 63/172–173, Talat to Diyarbekir, 2 May 1916.

<sup>59</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/275, İAMM to Diyarbekir, 3 November 1915.

<sup>60</sup> Ahmet İzzet Paşa 1992, vol. 1.: 257.

deployment in the war and deportation to the west.<sup>61</sup> Since hundreds of Armenian villages were empty, Kurds perceived as more soundly loyal to the government were to be settled immediately. In Diyarbekir province, Kurds enrolled in the tribal units were settled in the empty Christian villages around Mardin and Midyat.<sup>62</sup> İAMM planners further authorized 280 members of the Zirki tribe to settle with their families in empty villages in Derik district.<sup>63</sup>

Most Young Turk directives reveal that nationalist assimilation was the propelling force behind the deportations. German officials had understood what the CUP was pursuing in the war. A German teacher wrote in September 1916,

The Young Turks have the European ideal of a unitary nation-state in mind. They fear the Christian nations, the Armenians, Syriacs, Greeks, for their cultural and economic superiority and view their religion as an obstacle to Turkifying them in peaceful ways. Therefore they must be exterminated or forcibly Islamized. The non-Turkish Mohammedan races, such as Kurds, Persians, Arabs etc., they hope to Turkify through administrative measures and Turkish school education with reference to the common Mohammedan interest.<sup>64</sup>

When initiating the deportations, Talat personally paid attention to the efficiency of the project: the deported people needed to be “Turkified”. In January 1916 he requested specific information on the Kurds living in more than a dozen provinces and districts. Talat wrote, “How many Kurdish villages are there, and where? What is their population? Are they preserving their mother tongue and original culture? How is their relationship with Turkish villagers and villages?”<sup>65</sup> In April he checked again, this time

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<sup>61</sup> *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 64/80, İAMM to the provinces of Erzurum, Sivas, Mamuretülaziz, and Mosul, 20 May 1916.

<sup>62</sup> *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 57/328, İAMM to Bitlis, 7 November 1915.

<sup>63</sup> Dündar 2002: 143.

<sup>64</sup> *PAAA*, R14093, Das Geheime Zivil-Kabinet des Kaisers (Valentini) an den Reichskanzler (Bethmann Hollweg), 10 September 1916, enclosure no. 3: “Dem Jungtürken schwebt das europäische Ideal eines einheitlichen Nationalstaates vor. Die christlichen Nationen, Armenier, Syrer, Griechen, fürchtet er wegen ihrer kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Ueberlegenheit und sieht in ihrer Religion ein Hindernis, sie auf friedlichem Wege zu turkifizieren. Sie müssen daher ausgerottet oder zwangsweise islamisiert werden. Die nicht-türkischen mohammedanischen Rassen, wie Kurden, Perser, Araber usw. hofft er auf dem Verwaltungswege und durch türkischen Schulunterricht unter Berufung auf das gemeinsame mohammedanische Interesse turkifizieren zu können”.

<sup>65</sup> *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 60/140, Talat to the provinces of Konya, Kastamonu, Ankara, Sivas, Adana, Aydın, Trabzon, and subprovinces of Kayseri, Canik, Eskişehir, Karahisar, Niğde, 26 January 1916.

asking how and where which convoys were being deported, and whether the Kurdish deportees had begun speaking Turkish.<sup>66</sup> These examples of correspondence indicate the nature of the deportations: they were a large-scale attack on Kurdish culture and language, constituencies that could define the Kurds as a nation and therefore potentially pose a threat.

As in the case of the deportations of Armenians the year before, Diyarbakir city became a hub for deportation. The local İAMM officials were appointed by the İAMM headquarters in Istanbul but were subject to the governors. They enjoyed more rights than other officials as they had clearance to send ciphers without prior authorization.<sup>67</sup> Whereas in 1915 Armenians were concentrated in the city to be deported to the south, in 1916 Kurds were sent off to the west. For the Diyarbakir Kurdish elites, the deportations were a one-way trip out of their native province as no Kurd was allowed to (re-)enter the province. According to historian Hilmar Kaiser, Diyarbakir became a zone of “Turkification”:

Besides the ‘turkification’ of human beings, whole regions or critical localities were targeted as a second major aspect of the government’s program. Therefore, whole districts were designated as a ‘turkification region.’ Consequently, Ottoman officials did not allow Kurdish deportees arriving from the eastern borders areas in the province of Diyarbakir [...] to remain there, as Muslims from the Balkans had been earmarked as settlers for these regions.<sup>68</sup>

This strategy for Diyarbakir regulated a segregation of refugee-deportees from Bitlis into ethnic Kurds and ethnic Turks. The Kurdish refugees were not allowed to stay in Diyarbakir but forced to march on westward, whereas the Turkish ones were immediately settled in and around the provincial capital.<sup>69</sup> The official deportation order for Diyarbakir’s indigenous Kurds fell on 20 May 1916, eighteen days after Talat’s national guidelines for deportation. The AMMU ordered “Kurdish tribes to be deported collectively to predetermined settlement areas”.<sup>70</sup> First they were deported to Urfa,<sup>71</sup> but after half a year Urfa became too full and they were rerouted

<sup>66</sup> *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 62/187, Talat to Sivas, 16 April 1916; *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 62/278, Talat to Adana, 9 April 1916.

<sup>67</sup> *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 72/222, AMMU to provinces, 13 February 1917.

<sup>68</sup> Kaiser 2001.

<sup>69</sup> *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 63/187, İAMM to Urfa, Maraş, Antep, 4 May 1916.

<sup>70</sup> *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 64/77, İAMM to the provinces of Diyarbakir, Mamuretülaziz, Sivas, Erzurum, Mosul, 20 May 1916.

<sup>71</sup> *BOA*, DH.ŞFR 69/7, AMMU to Diyarbakir, 14 October 1916.

back to Diyarbekir and settled around Siverek.<sup>72</sup> For all Kurdish deportees the general rule was applied that no one was allowed to return to Diyarbekir without prior authorization from the Ministry.<sup>73</sup> The settlements were to be permanent: deportees arriving at their places of destination were ordered to immediately register at the local population registry before being settled.<sup>74</sup> By the end of the First World War, large numbers of Diyarbekir Kurds had been deported from their homelands.

Policies such as these only served to alienate many Kurds from the Young Turk regime. Certain sections and classes of Kurdish society felt marginalized by the regime's ham-fisted methods and Turkish-nationalist ideology. The Kurdish resistance that arose in opposition of the regime culminated in the 1925 Şeyh Said resistance movement.<sup>75</sup> The movement gave the Turkish government a pretext to silence all criticism of the press and the opposition.<sup>76</sup> They exploited the incident and endowed it with propagandistic value by fueling the panic and linking it to larger narrative frameworks about the ostensible innate insubordination of Kurds. Built into their system of domination was the tendency to proclaim its own normalcy. Thus, to acknowledge resistance as a mass phenomenon would have amounted to an acknowledgement of the possibility that something might have been wrong with that system. On 3 March 1925, the day after its inauguration, the İnönü government proclaimed the Law on the Maintenance of Order.<sup>77</sup> It gave the government sweeping authority to wield power as it saw fit. At the same time, the government prolonged martial law and reinstated the Independence Tribunals, one in Ankara, another in Diyarbekir.

This development, the abolition of parliamentary politics and *trias politica*, marked a caesura in which a radical core of men around Mustafa Kemal assumed dictatorial powers in the country. The ghost of Young Turk radicalism haunted the newly proclaimed Turkish Republic and xenophobia reigned superior. As a result, especially in May 1925, this radi-

<sup>72</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 74/22, AMMU to Diyarbekir, 3 March 1917.

<sup>73</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 63/283, İAMM to Mamuretülaziz, 11 May 1916.

<sup>74</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 77/188, İAMM to Niğde, 19 April 1917; BOA, DH.ŞFR 85/262, AMMU to Diyarbekir, 28 March 1918.

<sup>75</sup> The abolition of the caliphate was the apogee of Young Turk nation formation that drove Kurds to resist the regime (Bruinessen 1992: 280).

<sup>76</sup> Toker 1968: 127–33.

<sup>77</sup> The law was accompanied by the 'Directive on Censorship to be Applied in the Eastern Region under Martial Law' which silenced all significant publications in the eastern provinces (Tuncay 1995).

calization at the center reverberated in the eastern provinces, as a wave of mass violence swept across Diyarbekir province.<sup>78</sup> In a country-wide circular of 25 February 1925, the government had already promised “severe measures” against the insurgents, though repeatedly declaring the local population to be essentially “naive, innocent, and patriotic”.<sup>79</sup> The counter-insurgency warfare that followed after the reconquest of Diyarbekir province was total: villages were torched, civilians as well as combatants summarily executed. The killings followed the methods of the destruction of the Armenians, a decade ago in the same region. Upon invading a village, the villagers were routinely disarmed, stripped of their belongings (including gold teeth), and collectively tied by their hands with rope. They were then taken to trenches and cliffs, where they were executed with machine guns. Another method was cramming people into haylofts and sheds and setting fire to the buildings, burning the people alive.<sup>80</sup>

Two men in particular were the executioners of both clear orders and vague directives from above. Major Ali Haydar (1884–?)<sup>81</sup> was assigned to pacify the northeastern districts of Pasur (later renamed Kulp), Hazro, and Lice. He inflicted cruelty upon the population to wreck morale and produce quick results in order to receive approval from his superior, General Mürsel Bakü. When his troops were ambushed and decimated in one battle, he abandoned his men and fled to Lice with his four bodyguards. Enraged and frustrated, he unleashed terror in broad daylight in the small town. At his arrival in Lice he randomly arrested 17 men from the market, took them away to a nearby ditch and had them shot dead one by one. He then moved on to the village of Serdê (now Serenköy), a known hotbed of Şeyh Said adherents, and committed a second reprisal massacre. At least fifty-seven unarmed civilians were tied together with rope and mowed down with machine gun fire. The corpses were left to rot in the sun as Ali Haydar’s units marched on to the next village. Acts of violence perpetrated by the Major’s troops included stoning, beheading, and torture with hot irons and boiling water.<sup>82</sup> The Zirki tribe of Lice was targeted for supporting Şeyh Said, and their villages (Bamitni (Kurlu), Barsum (Alataş), Zara (Çağlayan), Matbur and Çaylarbaşı) were destroyed and the inhabitants murdered. The tribe’s large mansion and cemetery were levelled,

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<sup>78</sup> Bozarslan 2007: 36–51.

<sup>79</sup> Interior Ministry to all provinces, 25 February 1925, quoted in: Koylan 1946: 171.

<sup>80</sup> Zinar Silopî (pseudonym of Cemilpaşazâde Kadri Bey) 2001: 92.

<sup>81</sup> Şimşek 2001: 85.

<sup>82</sup> Serdî 1994: 254–7.

and all livestock was seized, slaughtered, and cooked as provisions for the soldiers. According to survivors, the same units that had destroyed the town's Armenian population a decade ago, had been sent to the Kurdish villages with similar instructions. This unit was known among the population as the "butcher battalion" (*kasap taburu*).<sup>83</sup> The attack on certain tribes announced that the killings targeted certain categories associated with the enemy: according to official reports, in the Lice district Major Ali Haydar "had annihilated most of the *şeyhs*".<sup>84</sup>

In the north-western districts of Hani, Piran (later renamed Dicle), Palu, and Ergani, Major Ali Barut commanded the army units. Ali Barut became infamous for robbing his victims before killing them. In his districts too, indiscriminate massacres were committed. In the Palu district, they invaded the village of Güllüşkür (presently Muratbağı) and robbed all the houses of their movable property, including cattle. One group of soldiers lashed together and murdered the inhabitants with bayonets, whereas another group burnt the village to the ground. In Erdürük (Gökdere), a large village of more than 100 households, a total of 200 people were crammed into a large stable and burnt alive. According to survivors, the nauseating smell of burnt human flesh lingered in the village for days. Even villages that had never joined Şeyh Said but stayed loyal to the government suffered the same fate. The villagers of Karaman, for example, welcomed the Turkish army with water and buttermilk, but its population was nevertheless massacred and its property seized.<sup>85</sup> As a result of this campaign of carnage, panic and disbelief spread throughout the countryside of northern Diyarbekir. People fled into the hills, caves, and mountain valleys to reach safety; in vain, because army units pursued them into these remote sites as well. According to official army reports, while hunting down a group of survivors on Çotela (renamed Akçakara), a mountain north of Pasur/Kulp, army units had slaughtered 450 people and burnt 60 villages, rendering the mountain bare of settlement.<sup>86</sup> When the violence halted in the early summer of 1925, the bodycount was considerable. Precise data is lacking, but according to one account, during the 1925 campaign altogether 206 villages were destroyed, 8,758 houses burnt, and approximately 15,200 people killed.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with Nihat Işık conducted by Şeyhmus Diken, published in Diken 2005: 259–61.

<sup>84</sup> *Genelkurmay Belgelerinde Kürt İsyamları* 1992, vol. 1: 313.

<sup>85</sup> Kahraman 2003: 165, 176.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>87</sup> Ghassemliou 1965: 52.

## CONCLUSIONS

Scholars of mass violence have argued that local dynamics can influence the course and intensity of genocidal processes. Local political or social elites can expedite and intensify, or delay and resist genocidal destruction steered from above.<sup>88</sup> Political elites can recruit local powerholders for their ends, and conversely local powerholders can manipulate political elites to further their own interests. The potential of powerful local families to mobilize dozens or in some cases hundreds of potential killers can contribute to them being favored by the center. Mass murder can develop from this mutual dependence and tacit pact: local elites depend on the center to secure a power base, and the center depends on local elites to carry out genocide. This dynamic can give rise to a mobilization process in which men participate in mass killing in exchange for economic and political benefits granted by the regime. Thus, ethnic hatred may significantly contribute but not necessarily satisfactorily explain the mobilization of perpetrators. Rather, maintaining and increasing power for local actors can shape patterns of recruitment for and participation in genocide.

The Ottoman province Diyarbakir served as a platform for exemplifying how local dynamics shaped the Armenian genocide at the provincial level. The competition between urban elites was a major factor that contributed to the intensity of the violence in Diyarbakir. Before the war, the main families in the city were engaged in a fierce struggle for political and economic power. Such a structural factor could easily be manipulated by the CUP dictatorship for its own ends as collaboration would be rewarded. The war put even more pressure on this field of competition as resources became scarcer and passivity posed a threat to one's livelihood. Leading families emerged victorious from this competition by volunteering in the Special Organization militias, by being more ruthless in their competitive efforts, and by actively collaborating with the campaign the CUP regime deemed most salient: the murder of their Armenian neighbors. The genocide then emerged as an opportunity for perpetrators to solidify kin ties. When, during the genocide, a man like Pirinççizade Aziz Feyzi proved to be a most ruthless tormentor of Armenians, it is likely that in his eyes he was only pursuing the interests of his family amidst the difficult conditions of war. From this subjective perspective, the genocide evolved not as a clear evil but rather as the shadow of virtue.

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<sup>88</sup> Examples of local studies of genocide are: Dulić 2005; Fujii 2009; Pohl 1996; Lower, 2005.

If governor Mehmed Reşid's conduct and family ties can explain the ferocity of the Armenian persecutions in 1915, why were so many civilians killed in the anti-Kurdish campaign of 1925? One report mentioned that a gendarmerie major, who was on short leave from Diyarbekir, told a friend that "he was disgusted with the work he had had to do and that he wanted to be transferred. He had been in the eastern provinces all through the period of tranquilisation and was tired of slaughtering men, women and children."<sup>89</sup> A British diplomat travelling in the region after the war noted about the killings,

No doubt the repression of the 1925 rising was accomplished with a brutality which was not exceeded in any Armenian massacres. Whole villages were burnt or razed to the ground, and men, women and children killed. Turkish officers have recounted how they were repelled by such proceedings and yet felt obliged to do their duty. No doubt also that whenever there is any further attempt at rebellion it is repressed with an equally heavy hand.<sup>90</sup>

At least two explanations seem to account for the level of violence. First of all, Turkish military officers viewed the population of the eastern provinces as inherently treacherous and anti-Turkish, hence threats to security against which Turkish state and army personnel had to be permanently on guard. Such a colonial attitudinal climate would prove to be highly conducive to the harsh treatment of the civilian population of the East and the committing of atrocities. Second, the same Young Turk military officers who had been in wars since 1911 stayed on in the army of the Turkish Republic and were thoroughly brutalized by 1925. The barbarization of warfare, manifesting itself in indiscriminate killings, was a legacy of the previous wars, especially the Balkan wars. These had been ethnic in scope and annihilatory in military ethic: in the Thracian theatres of war, battling the enemy had included massacring enemy civilians and destroying enemy villages. By 1925 this had become a customary practice and distinctions between combatants and non-combatants were hardly made.<sup>91</sup>

It would not be correct to reduce the violence discussed in this chapter to 'merely' destructive processes. These violent forms of population politics heralded the coming of a new era and stipulated the parameters

<sup>89</sup> PRO, FO 424/267, p. 125, no. 72, Hoare to Chamberlain, 14 December 1927.

<sup>90</sup> PRO, FO 424/272, p. 116, no. 68, Edmonds to Henderson, 21 May 1930, "Notes on a Tour to Diarbekir, Bitlis and Mush."

<sup>91</sup> For similar processes in German military culture see: Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). For a set of comparative essays see: George Kassimeris, *The Barbarisation of Warfare* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006).



of a formative Turkish nation state, or an empire with a dominant Sunni Turkish core and a marginalized periphery. The destruction of Armenians and removal or assimilation of Kurds represented the essence of the organization of inclusion and exclusion in the eastern provinces. More precisely, inclusion in the nation was defined by exclusion. As the Armenians and Kurds were deported, the residual population became a vague Turkish-Ottoman-Muslim in-group. By excluding Armenians and Kurds from a certain region the Unionists and Kemalists both delineated a tentative ethno-territorial conception of the new society they envisioned. In other words, they not only defined the social location of the nation but also its territorial location: the motherland was those territories where the excluded were no longer living. Turkey *was* where Armenians and Kurds were *not*. This was not a precise geometric border, but a provisional ethnic space. This shaping of such a future was a very important aim and outcome of the violence, and precluded potential future ethno-majoritarianist claims by minorities. This interpretation suggests that the violence not only influenced but shaped the contours of the Turkish process of nation formation.

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## ANNEXES



## ANNEX A

### PROVISIONAL LIST OF NON-MUSLIM SETTLEMENTS IN THE DIYARBEKIR VILAYET AROUND 1900<sup>1</sup>

Jelle Verheij

It seems that till date no attempt has been made at reconstructing the complicated ethnic structure of Diyarbekir province shortly before the 1st World War. Surprisingly, we know more about earlier periods. Several historians have used the Ottoman *tahrir defters* of the 16th and 17th centuries to produce village lists, specifying the population by religion.<sup>2</sup> Similar work has been done for the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century.<sup>3</sup>

My initial intention was to prepare a list of all villages of the Diyarbekir vilayet around 1900, both Muslim and non-Muslim. A lack of sources on Muslim population prompted us to restrict this project to the non-Muslim villages only.

In the last decade, several authors published very useful materials on the distribution of Christians in the area. For the Armenian settlements the monumental work of Kevorkian and Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire Ottoman à la veille du génocide* (1992) is indispensable. Using both sources of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul and the rich depository of local histories in Armenian, they tried for the first time to produce a full list of Armenian settlements in the Ottoman Empire. More recently Gaunt, Şawoçe and Donef did pioneering work by publishing and analyzing several lists of the Syriac population.<sup>4</sup> The list presented below is

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Demet Varlı for her assistance in locating sources and George Aghajyan for his very useful comments and additions to the draft version of this list.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. İlhan M. Mehdi, *Amid (Diyarbakır): 1518 Tarihli Defter-i Mufassal*, Ankara: 2000); Nejat Göyünç, *XVI. yüzyılda Mardin sancağı*, Ankara, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> İbrahim Yılmazçelik, *XIX. yüzyılın ilk yarısında Diyarbakır (1790–1840)*, Ankara, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors. Muslim-Christian relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I*, Piscataway, New Jersey, 2006.

largely based on these two publications, to which are added a number of other sources, notably the work of the Russian Consul in Van, Mayewsky.<sup>5</sup>

Listing of *yezidi* villages have not been systematically pursued. Whenever in one of the sources used a *yezidi* village was mentioned, it was included.

In 1959 the Turkish government decided to abolish all “foreign” (non-Turkish) names in the republic and embarked on one of the most comprehensive programs for geographical name change in modern history. All Arabic, Armenian, Kurdish, Greek, Syriac and other non-Turkish place names were replaced by new Turkish names. In the territory of the former Diyarbekir *vilayet*, where few place names were Turkish, roughly 90% or more of the village names were changed. Since there are no publicly available lists of all changes, and modern maps give only new names, the historical, pre World War I geography was thus effectively wrapped in mystery.

Interestingly, Kevorkian and Paboudjian made no attempt at all to match the names of the Armenian settlements they listed with the new names. Gaunt and his team did identify a number of Syriac villages, but apparently failed to find all of them. In view of this situation, in the list presented here, we tried to include as much as possible the current Turkish names. Like its predecessor, the Turkish Republic often changes internal borders and provincial subdivisions. In the list the most recent subdivision is applied, including the changes created by Law Nr.5747 of March 2008.<sup>6</sup> In matching the names mentioned by 19th century European sources and the Turkish versions of old and new names, an extra handicap is certainly that the European sources used very weird transliterations, usually adapted to the French language, the diplomatic language of those days.

This list should be considered as provisional, and should be compared and combined with Ottoman data, as soon as detailed sources surface from the archives.

The borders and subdivisions of the Diyarbekir Vilayet changed many times during the nineteenth century. Here the subdivisions are used as they were around 1900, based on the provincial *salname* (yearbook) of

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<sup>5</sup> Bayraktar, Bayram (ed). *20.yüzyıl döneminde Rus General Mayevsky'nin Türkiye gözlemleri. Van-Bitlis Vilâyetleri askeri istatistiği*, İstanbul, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> “Büyükşehir Belediyesi sınırları içerisinde ilçe kurulması ve bazı kanunlarda değişiklik yapılması hakkında kanun” (Law on the creation of districts within Greater Municipality borders and changes in some laws), published on 6.3.2008.



1318 [1900–1901]. Although smaller than before, the province then still spanned an impressive track of land, from Palu in the North to areas now being part of Iraq and Syria. Interestingly, some areas currently included in Diyarbekir province, were then excluded (notably the Kulp area).

Towns typically had a mixed population of Muslims and Christians. Many of the villages listed may have had a mixed non-Muslim/Muslim population as well, but sources on Christian settlements tend to ignore the Muslim element. It should therefore be kept in mind that in all places mentioned Muslims, mostly Kurds, may have been present as well.

In the tables below for each settlement with a Non-Muslim population the following data are supplied: (a) the traditional name according to official Turkish sources (b) the current name according to Turkish official sources (c) the current administrative status (d) the name as given in the sources (e) the ethnic/ religious group (f) the current district the settlement belongs to (g) instances where the settlement is mentioned by one of the authors in this volume.

No official names are given for settlements which currently are in the territory of Syria and Iraq.

#### EXPLANATIONS

(a) + (b) *Traditional and current name according to Turkish official sources*

*Abbreviations used for official sources*

- DV Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Dahiliye Vekâleti, Vilâyetler İdaresi Umum Müdürlüğü, [name lists for each province], issues *Diyarbekir Vilâyeti* (1959), *Elâzığ Vilâyeti* (1960), *Mardin Vilâyeti* (1960), *Siirt Vilâyeti* (1960)
- IM2002 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, İçişleri Bakanlığı, İller İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü. *Türkiye Mülki İdare Bölümleri* (2002).
- NS35 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Direktörlüğü, *Genel Nüfus Sayımı. 20 İlkteşrin 1935. Kati ve mufassal neticeler.*
- NS80 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *Genel Nüfus sayımı. İdari bölünüş 12.10.1980. Census of population by administrative division.* Ankara, 1981.
- NS90 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, *Genel Nüfus sayımı. İdari bölünüş 1990. Census of population, administrative division.* Ankara, 1991.
- TCA *Türkiye Coğrafya Atlası.* İstanbul, D.B.R. Dergi Yayıncılık, 2004.

- TMYK Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, İçişleri Bakanlığı, *Türkiye’de Meskûn Yerler Kılavuzu*. Ankara. 1946–1947, 2 vols.
- TOP Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Harita Genel Müdürlüğü, topographic maps 1:200.000 (1946–1953) (seen in reprint *Codex Kultur Atlas Türkei*. Grundholzen, Codex Verlag, 1965).

*Other sources*

- AN Anschütz, Helga. *Die syrische Christen vom Tur’Abdin. Eine altchristliche Bevölkerungsgruppe zwischen Beharrung, Stagnation und Auflösung*, Würzburg, 1985. (Untitled map of Tur Abdin area)
- GZ Map “*Villages and Monasteries in the Gâzartâ Region*” (origin unknown, published on the internet by www.aina.org). The region called Gâzartâ is roughly the Eastern part of the current province of Şirnak).

(c) *Current administrative status*

*Abbreviations used*

- PC Centre of Province
- DC District centre
- V Village (“*muhtarlık*”)
- N Neighborhood of town
- M sub-village settlement (“*mezra*”)

Note: The Municipal Law of 2008 attached a number of villages around Diyarbakır to Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality. These villages are now formally town neighborhoods (N), but are here still classified as villages.

(d) *The name as given in the sources*

*Sources on ethnic groups*

- GA Gaunt, David. *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I*. Piscataway, NJ, 2006.
- GA-B Gaunt, David (see above) pp. 422–428: *Nombre des villes, bourgs et villages, habités totalement ou partiellement par les Assyro-Chaldéens en 1914 dans tout le vilayet de Diarbekir et le sandjak d’Ourfa*. (List presented by the Assyrian-Chaldean delegation to the post World War I Peace Conference in Paris)
- GA-C Gaunt, David (see above) pp. 429–: List of locations inhabited by Chaldeans, prepared by Joseph Tfindkji (*L’Église chaldéenne catholique autrefois et aujourd’hui*, 1914).

- KP Kévorkian, Raymond and Paboudjian, Paul B., *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire Ottoman à la veille du génocide*. Paris, 1992.
- MA Bayraktar, Bayram (ed). *20.yüzyıl dönemecinde Rus General Mayevsky'nin Türkiye gözlemleri. Van-Bitlis Vilâyetleri askeri istatistiği*, İstanbul, 2007. (Reedition, in latin alphabet of Ottoman translation of General Mayewsky's Russian original).
- MC Préfecture apostolique des capucins en Mésopotamie et dans l'Arménie seconde, in: *Les Missions Catholiques 20/970* (1888), pp. 292–296.
- TE Teotig [Theotoros Labjindjian]. *Koghkota Trkahay Hokevorganoutyan yev ir Hodin Aghedali 1915 Darin* ("Golgotha of the Armenian Clergy and her Flock during the Calamitous Year 1915"). First published in 1921. Used edition: ed. Ara Kalayjian. New York: St. Vartan's Press, 1985 (Data from this source were provided by George Aghjayan).

the number after the abbreviation is the relevant page number

(e) *Ethnic/ religious group*

*Abbreviations of ethnic/ religious groups*

*Armenians*

- ARM Gregorian (orthodox) Armenians and unspecified Armenians  
 ARM-K Catholic Armenians  
 ARM-P Protestant Armenians

*Greek-Orthodox*

- GRK Greek-Orthodox Christians of various denominations

*Syrian Christians*

- KLD Chaldeans (*Keldani*) = Catholic East Syrians  
 NES East Syrians (*Nesturi*, "Nestorians")  
 SYR Syriac Orthodox (*Suriyani*) and unspecified Syriac Christians  
 SYR-K Syriac Catholics  
 SYR-P Syriac Protestants

*Others*

- JWS Jews  
 PRT Protestants unspecified (mostly Armenians and Syrians)  
 YEZ Yezidis

(f) *The current district the settlement belongs to*

The current administrative division differs considerably from the Ottoman one.

Unless otherwise stated under a table, the modern districts mentioned under (f) belong to the current province of Diyarbakır.

(g) *Instances where a settlement is mentioned in this volume*

Name of the author

1. *Diyarbakır Central Subprovince (Merkez Sancak)*

Table 1.1: Diyarbakır central subprovince (*merkez sancak*)—Diyarbakır central district (*merkez kaza*)<sup>7</sup>

(a) Area West of the Tigris						
Traditional name	Current Turkish name	Adm status	Name variants in sources	Ethnic group	Current district	References in this book
DİYARBEKİR	Diyarbakır	PC	Dyarbékır (KP397)	ARM ARM-K SYR KLD NES GRK JWS	Diyarbakır	all authors
Alipınar (TMYK) Alipınar (TOP, DV)	Alipınar	N	Ali-Pounar (KP399) Alipounor (GA-B422) All-Poir (GA-C429)	ARM SYR KLD	Diyarbakır ( <i>incorporated in Diyarbakır town</i> )	Jongerden Verheij
Çanklı (DV)	Çanklı (DV)	M	Charukhiye (GA213) Tjarchié (GA-B422) Djarokhié (GA-C429)	SYR KLD	Diyarbakır	Akgündüz
Çölgüzeli (TOP) Çölgüzeli (DV)	Çölgüzeli	V	Vari Geozli (TE)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
Dahlehavar (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Yemişalan	M	Hawar-Dejla (GA225) Havara-Dejla (GA-B422)	SYR	Diyarbakır	

<sup>7</sup> Teotig (TE) recorded 18, mostly Syriac populated, villages in the central district of Diyarbakır with an Armenian population of only 1 Armenian family. These villages have not been listed as Armenian populated here.

Table 1.1 (*cont.*)

Traditional name	Current Turkish name	Adm status	Name variants in sources	Ethnic group	Current district	References in this book
Derbeşür (TMYK, DV) Delbeşür (TOP)	Sarıdallı	V	Deyr-Bashur (GA218) Darbashour (TE)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	
Garbiçanakçı (TOP, DV)	Batıçanakçı	V	Tchakanian, Tchako (KP399) Chanaqchi (GA213) Tjanakeji (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	
Serapgüzeli (TOP, DV)	Serapgüzeli	M	Gösli (GA221) <i>identification not certain; might also apply to nearby Çölgüzeli (see above)</i>	SYR	Diyarbakır	
Hashavar (TMYK, TOP) Hashaver (DV)	Yeşildallı	V	Hawar-Khase (GA225) Havara-Hasse (GA-B425)	SYR	Diyarbakır	
Zımnıkilise (TOP) Kilise (DV)	Akçadamar	V or M	Kara-Kilissa (KP399) Kara-Kilissa (GA-B422). <i>Identification not completely certain. Might also be Dökmetaş, north of Diyarbakır.</i>	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	Akgündüz
Kırte (TMYK, DV) Kırte (TOP)	Ağaçgeçit	V	Qarte (GA247) Kerti (GA-B422)	SYR	Diyarbakır	
Mihsöğlü (TOP)	? ( <i>possibly does not exist anymore</i> )	?	Maqsi-Oglu (GA238) Mekdessi-Oglou (GA-B422)	SYR	Diyarbakır	
Selimi (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Gönendi		Sélimi, Sélemi (KP399) Selimi (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	Akgündüz
Şeyhkent (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Dokuzçeltik	V	Chehkend (GA-B422)	SYR	Diyarbakır	
Sirimi (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Gömmetaş	V	Sirmi (GA260) Sirimi (GA-B422) Sirumi (TE)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	

Table 1.1 (*cont.*)

Traditional name	Current Turkish name	Adm status	Name variants in sources	Ethnic group	Current district	References in this book
Uçkuyu (TMYK) Üçkuyu (TOP, DV)	Üçkuyu	V	Utchkuyu, Ancha-Kiugh (KP398)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
Zavra (TOP)	?	M	Zurafe (GA271) <i>Identification not certain</i>	SYR	Diyarbakır	
Zimmeğik (TOP) Zimieğik (DV)	Elidolu	V	Hayeghig, Zumi-yeghig (TE)	ARM	Diyarbakır	

## (b) Area East of the Tigris

Anşat (TOP) Anşeh (DV)	Güvercinevleri	M	Ancha (GA-B422) Anshe (TE)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	
Arzioğlu (TMYK) Arzioğlu (TOP) Orzuoğlu (DV)	Kervanpınar (NS90, IM2002) Kervanpınarı (DV)	V	Arzoghlu (KP398) Arzi-Oghlou (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	
Aşağı-/ Yukarıangevir (TMYK) Aşağı-/ Yukarıangevir (TOP) Aşağıyangevir (DV)	Aşağı, Yukarıkılıçtaşı	M	Ayngevri (TE) Aincor (GA-B422, <i>identification not certain</i> )	ARM SYR ?	Diyarbakır	
Bağçecik (TMYK) Bahçecik (TOP, DV)	Bahçecik (DV, IM2002) Bağacık (NS90)	V	Baghtchadjig Baghtchadjak (KP398) Bagdjaoljik (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	
Bozpınar (TOP, DV)	Bozpınar (TCA)	M	Bos-Pouar (GA-B422) Bozpınar (TE)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	
Büyükkadı (TMYK, DV) Büyükkadıköyü (TOP)	Büyükkadı	V	Kadié (GA-B422) Kadikeoy (TE)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	
Çirnik (TMYK) Çirnik (TOP, DV)	Pınardüzü	V	Jevri, Djernig (KP399) Harnek (GA-B422) <i>identification not certain</i> GA-B not certain	ARM SYR ?	Diyarbakır	

Table 1.1 (*cont.*)

Traditional name	Current Turkish name	Adm status	Name variants in sources	Ethnic group	Current district	References in this book
Daraklı (TMYK, DV) Taraklı (TOP)	Taraklı	M	Taraklı, Taré-Kol (KP398) Daraklı (GA214) Deragli (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	
Haciosman (TMYK) Abbas (TOP)	Haciosmanköy	V	Abbase (GA200)	SYR	Diyarbakır	
Holan (DV) Ulam (TOP) Olam (TMYK)	Santoprak	V	Holan (GA-B422)	SYR	Bismil	
İrincil (DV) Mezraairincil (TOP)	Yiğitçavuş	V	Irinjil (TE)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
Kabasakal (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kabasakal (DV), later changed in Kozan (NS90, IM2002)	V	Kaba-Sakal (KP399) Cabasaccal (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	Akgündüz
Kâbi (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Bağıvar	V	Kiabi, K'apig, Tahib (KP399) Ka'biye (GA230) Kabié (GA-B422)	ARM SYR PRO	Diyarbakır	Akgündüz Verheij (Annex B)
Kamişek (TOP, DV)	Gevendere	V	Kamisheg (TE)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
Karabaş (TMYK, DV, TOP)	Karabaş	V	Kara-Bach (KP398, GA-B422) Qarabash (GA245)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	Akgündüz Üngör Verheij (Annex B)
Kavus (TMYK) Kavs (DV) Kavis (TOP) Kıtırbıl (DV)	Yayıçi	M	Kaves (GA-B422)	SYR	Diyarbakır	
	Eğlence (DV) ( <i>does not exist anymore, now Dicle University campus</i> )	—	Kiterbèl Gheterpel (KP398) Qatrabel (GA247) Keterbel (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	Akgündüz Jongerden Verheij (Annex B)
Köşk (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Köşk	M	Koshk (GA235, TE) Keuchk (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	

Table 1.1 (*cont.*)

Traditional name	Current Turkish name	Adm status	Name variants in sources	Ethnic group	Current district	References in this book
Mullacabir (TMYK, DV) Mollacebar (TOP)	Davran (DV)	M	Mulla-Tjabir (GA-B422) Mollajaber (TE)	ARM SYR	Bismil	
Şarabi (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Nahırkıracı	V	Charapi, Chérab (KP398)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
Satı (TMYK, DV), Satıköy (TOP)	Satıköy	V	Satou-Keuï, Sati-Keuï (KP398) Sa'diye (GA250) Satié (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	Verheij (Annex B)
Simakı (TMYK) Simaki (TOP) Simaki (DV)	Erimli	V	Zermanik, Zémi-Aghig, Yéghig (KP398)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
Tavaklu (TMYK) Tavuklu (TOP)	Tavuklu	V	Tavogli (GA-B422) Tavoughli (TE)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	
Tilâle (TMYK) Tilalu (TOP) Tilâle (DV)	Karaçalı	V	Tavalou, Tilalou (KP398)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
Tılğaz (TMYK) Tilgaz (DV, TOP)	Sazlıçökek (DV)	M	Tilkhas, Télkhas (KP398) Telgaz (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Diyarbakır	Akgündüz
Yabancı (DV) Yamacı (TOP)	Yabancı (DV)	M	Yabajı (TE)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
Yukarıangevir (TMYK, DV) Yukarıangevir (TOP)	Yukarıkılıçtaşı	V	Yérindjil, Yérendjil (KP398)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
Zorava (TMYK, DV) Zorova (TOP)	Atgeçen	M	Zorava (KP398)	ARM	Diyarbakır	
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Cherang (GA214)	SYR	Diyarbakır	



Table 1.2: Diyarbekir *sancak*—Siverek *kaza*

Siverek	Siverek	DC	Sévèrèk (KP400) Siwerak (GA261) Severek (GA-B423)	ARM SYR	Siverek (Şanlıurfa)	Akgündüz Üngör Verheij, Annex B
Bahçecik (TOP, DV) <i>in Şekerli bucağ of Siverek or Bahçecik (TOP, DV) in Hilvan district (Şanlıurfa) (flooded by the Atatürk dam)</i>	Bahçecik	M or V	Bagdjajik (GA-B423)	SYR	Siverek (Şanlıurfa)	
Bekçeri (TMYK, DV) Beyçeri (TOP)	Beyçeri (DV, NS90) Bekçeri (IM2002)	V	Bekdjeri (GA-B423)	SYR	Siverek (Şanlıurfa)	
Çatak (TOP) Çat (DV)	Çat (DV) Çatak (TCA)	M	Tchakagh, Tchatak (KP400) Tjatag (GA-B423) <i>Identification GA-B not certain</i>	ARM SYR?	Siverek (Şanlıurfa)	
Göllüandari (TMYK, DV) Güllü (TOP)	Çağdaş	V	Gori, Golli (KP400)	ARM	Siverek (Şanlıurfa)	
Hadro (TMYK, DV) Hadra (TOP)	Kayalı	V	Boudjah (GA-B423) Hédro (GA-B423) <i>Is not the current subdistrictcentre of Bucak (old name: Fak)</i>	SYR	Siverek (Şanlıurfa)	
Hallukent (TOP) Halokent (DV)	Emenli (DV)	M	Halokend (GA-B423)	SYR	Siverek (Şanlıurfa)	
Harbibelik (TOP) Hırbıbelek (DV)	Değirmenoluk (TCA)	M	Kharbi, Khibik (KP400) Krbik (GA-B423) <i>Identification not certain</i>	ARM SYR	Siverek (Şanlıurfa)	
Karabahçe (TOP, DV) Kucak (TOP, DV)	Karabahçe Kucak (DV) Kepirkucak (NS90, IM2002)	V V	Karabaghtché (KP400) Koudjak (GA-B423) <i>Identification not certain, more identical names in Siverek en Hilvan districts</i>	ARM SYR	Siverek (Şanlıurfa) Hilvan (Şanlıurfa)	
Orgız (TOP) Orguz (DV)	Atamar (DV) Atamer (NS90, IM2002)	V	Ourbiche (GA-B423) <i>Identification not certain</i>	SYR	Hilvan (Şanlıurfa)	

Table 1.2 (*cont.*)

Sümaki (TOP) Simaki (DV)	M	Simakhi, Simag (KP400) <i>Identification based on map in KP392, not completely certain</i>	ARM	Siverek (Şanlıurfa)	Özok
<i>not identified</i>	?	Mezré, Méghré (KP400) Mzreh (GA-B423)	ARM SYR		
not identified	?	Ochin (KP400)	ARM		
not identified	?	Amespine (GA-B423)	SYR		

Note: The majority of villages listed by GA-B under Siverek (p. 423), were around 1900 actually part of the neighboring districts Hisnimansur (Adiyaman) and Kahta of Mamuretülaziz province. These villages are not included here.

Table 1.3: Diyarbekir *sancak*—Silvan *kaza*

(a) Central part, presently belonging to Silvan district						
Miyafarkin (TOP) Silvan (TMYK, DV, TOP)	Silvan	DC	Maiyafarkin (KP401) Miyafarkin (GA240) Miafarkine (GA-B422, GA-C429) Farkin (MA431)	ARM SYR SYR-K KLD NES GRK	Silvan	Akgündüz Gaunt Jongerden Verheij (Annex B)
Aslo (TOP, DV)	Darköprü	V	Aslou, Aslo (KP402) Aslo (GA-B422) Asilu (MA435)	ARM SYR	Silvan	
Atşa (TMYK, DV) Atşo (TOP)	Susuz	V	Aşta (MA434) Attché (GA-B422, GA-C429)	ARM KLD	Silvan	
Azidin (TMYK) Azdin (TOP) Azdin (DV)	Ayrancı	M	Izdin, Azdi (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Babadın (TMYK) Babudin (TOP) Babodin (DV)	Bellibahçe	V	Babadin (MA434) Bavodine (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Silvan	
Bahçe (TOP, DV)	Bahçe	V	Bahdjan, Bachka (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Bakuz (TMYK) Bakoz (TOP) Bakus (DV)	Onbaşlar	V	Bakous, Ba-Khous (KP402) Bochas (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Silvan	
Başat (TMYK) Boşat (TOP, DV)	Boyunlu	V	Bouchat, Bochat (KP402) Bochatt (GA-C429)	ARM KLD	Silvan	
Başbüyük (TMYK, DV) Başbüyük (TOP)	Başbüyük (DV) Başbüyük (NS90, IM2002)	V	Bachi-Buyuk, Bach- Boyok (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Başimt (TOP) Başimt (DV)	Boğazoba (DV)	M	Bachmut, Ba-Chement (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	

Table 1.3 (cont.)

Başnik (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Bağdere	V	Bachinik, Bachnegh, Bachnik' (KP402) Bachirik (GA-B422) Bachnic (GA-B423)	ARM SYR	Silvan	Akgündüz
Bayik (TMYK, TOP)	Yayıklı (TCA)	M	Payik (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Bülbül (TMYK, DV)	Gündüz (DV, NS90)	V	Bil-Bil (KP402, MA434), Bel-Bel (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Bülbük (TOP)	Gündüzköy (IM2002)					
Dassinan (TOP)	Sarıkuşak (DV)	M	Dassina, Dassena (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Dasinan (DV)						
Dirrik (TOP)	Düzalan	V	Derek, Takheg (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Dirikiamoreşso (DV)						
Dirun (TOP)	Dutveren	V	Deïroun, Déroun (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Derun (DV)						
Feran (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Beypınar (DV, NS90)	V	Firan, Féra, Froun (KP402) Fera (MA434)	ARM	Silvan	
	Beypınarı (IM2002)					
Ferhant (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kayadere	V	Firkhend, Farhandi (KP402) Ferhand (MA433) <i>MA does not mention ARM, only Kurds</i>	ARM	Silvan	
Görmez (TMYK, TOP)	Görmez (IM2002)	V	Germo (GA-B422)	SYR	Silvan	
Gülemiran (TMYK)	Doluçanak	V	Mirèk, Koulé-Miran (KP402) Gulémiré (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Silvan	
Gölemiran (TOP)						
Gölemiran (DV)						
Gündecano (TMYK)	Yeşerdi (DV)	M	Ghoundadjano, Kontétchano (KP401)	ARM SYR	Silvan	
Gündücano (TOP, DV)			Kunda-Jano (GA-B427) <i>According to both sources in Beşiri</i>			
Gündereşo (TMYK)	Karaköy	M	Racho, Ghendi-Decho (KP402) Gundi Reşo (MA431) <i>MA does not mention ARM, only Kurds</i>	ARM	Silvan	
Gündüreşo (TOP)						
Gündireşo (DV)						
Güzeldere (TMYK, DV)	Güzeldere (DV)	M	Guzel-Déré (GA-B422)	SYR	Silvan	
Güzeldir (TOP)						
Hacıcan (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Karacalar	V	Hadji-Djan, Hadjidja (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	Verheij (Annex B)
Hacıçerkez (TMYK, DV)	Toklar (DV)	M	Hadji-Tcherkès, Hadji-Tcharkaz (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Hacıçerkes (TOP)						

Table 1.3 (cont.)

Halin (TMYK)	Yuva (DV,	V	Hélèn (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Helin (TOP, DV)	NS90) Yuvaköy (IM2002)		Hélin (KP402, MA434)			
Hileli (TOP)	Gündüzlü (DV)	M	Hleli (TE)	ARM	Silvan	
Haşter (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Otluk	V	Hatcher, Adeché (KP402) Hoştar (MA434)	ARM	Silvan	Verheij (Annex B)
Hopansiltene (TMYK) Silteni (DV)	Tarımova (DV)	M	Sultan, Salt'an, Haltan (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Hüseynan (TMYK, DV) Hüseyinağa (TOP)	Sulubağ	V	Hassin-Agha, Hassinan, Housseyna (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	Verheij
Kavşan (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Erikyazı	V	Kavehan, Gavchan (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Kazahan (TMYK) Karuh (TOP)	Kumluk	V	Kouroukh, K'ourèch (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Kazagan (DV)						
Kilis (TOP)	Akyol	V	Kilis, K'lessa (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Kilisi (DV)			Kelisi (MA434)			
Kinyat (TMYK, DV)	Köprülübağ	M	Kebmiad, K'eniad, Ginniat' (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Kimyad (TOP)						
Korit (TMYK)	Umur (DV)	V	Korik, K'orit (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Körit (DV)	Umurköy					
Kudık (TOP)	(IM2002) ?					
Küreyşin (TMYK)	Şanlı	V	Pourichan, P'érouchan (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Korişan (TOP)						
Kurte (TMYK)	Yolarası	V	Kort, Gourté, Ghourt'i (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Kurti (TOP)						
Kürti (DV)						
Melekan (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Akçaköy (DV) Akçay (TCA)	M	Makan, Mayan, Mahran (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Mezraa (TOP)	?	M	Mezra, Mezré (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Mezrea (TOP)	Bademli	V	Mezre (TE)	ARM	Silvan	
Bademli (TMYK)						
Mezreiabdülkadir (NS80)						
Miralyan (TOP)	Alibey	V	Mir-Oulian, Mer-Elias, Miralia (KP402) Mir Alié (GA-B422) Miramya (MA434)	ARM SYR	Silvan	Akgündüz
Miraliyan (DV)						
Pirehalan (TMYK, DV) Pirhalan (TOP)	Eskiköy	V	Pir-Halou, Piréghalan (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Pirema (TMYK)	Sarıbuğday	V	Pirma, Piraman (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Pireman (TOP, DV)						
Salikan (TMYK, TOP) Selikan (DV)	Eşme	V	Salinkan, Salega (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	

Table 1.3 (cont.)

Şefkat (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Çardak (DV) Çardakköy (NS90, IM2002)	V	Chemkèt, Chevk'at (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Şehdamdan (TMYK)	Kutlualan (DV)	M	Gheh-Davoud (GA-B422)	SYR	Silvan	
Şeyhdavudan (TOP, DV)						
Tevdeşt (TOP)	?	M	Navdacht (GA-B422, GA-C429)	SYR KLD	Silvan	
Nevdeşti (TCA)						
Tirik (TOP)	Özlüce	M	Tirkévank', Dergé-Van (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Tikovonk (DV)						
Tirbesupi (TOP)	Akdere	V	Tirbessibi, T'erbé-Sebi (KP402)	ARM	Silvan	
Türbeisipi (DV)						
Zeri (TOP)	Güçlü	V	Ziri, Zéra (KP402) Zéré (GA-B422, GA-C429)	ARM SYR KLD	Silvan	
Ziri (DV)						
Zinzin (TOP)	Üçbaşamak	V	Zinzin (KP402) Zenzen (KP402, MA434)	ARM	Silvan	
Zinzin (DV)						

(b) Northern part, currently belonging to Kocaköy, Hazro and Kulp districts

Ayindar (TMYK, DV)	Kavaklıboğaz	V	Aîn-Bérik, Aynaprig, Ayndav (KP402)	ARM	Hazro	
Cinoko (TOP)	Ağartı	V	Tcherouk, Tcherek (KP402)	ARM	Hazro	
Cımoki (DV)						
Dersil (TOP, DV)	Düzevler	M	Dersil, Dersel (KP402)	ARM	Hazro	Akgündüz
Eğrek (TOP)	Günalan	V	Ekirak, Akrag (KP402)	ARM	Kocaköy	
Akrek (DV)						
Hazro	Hazro	DC	Hazro (KP402) Harzo (GA-B422)	ARM SYR	Hazro	Üngör
Hunduf (TMYK)	Koçbaba	V	Haknaf (KP402)	ARM	Hazro	
Hondof (TOP, DV)						
Şerefkan (TMYK, DV)	Ünal	V	Cherfikân, Charafiga (KP402)	ARM	Kulp	
Şerefikân (TOP)						
Şihân (TOP)	Terdöken	V	Cheïkhan, Chékhan (KP402)	ARM	Hazro	
Şeyhan (DV)						
Tahtan (TOP)	<i>Nowadays probably part of Hazro town</i>	?	Tahtan, Dadach (KP402)	ARM	Hazro	
Tercilgön (TMYK)	Yarhisar (DV)	M	Terdjil, T'erdjil (KP402)	ARM	Hazro	
Tercil (TOP, DV)						

(c) Southern part, currently belonging to Bismil district

Alluz (TMYK, DV)	Aluç	V	Alouzé (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil	
Allos (TOP)						
Arapkent (TMYK, DV)	Bayındır	V	Arakend (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil	
Arabkend (TOP)						

Table 1.3 (cont.)

Aşağıfetle <i>and/or</i> Yukarıfetle (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Aşağıdolay and/or Yukarıdolay	V	Feclé (GA428)	SYR	Bismil
Belli (TMYK, TOP, DV) Ekkö (NS80)	Belli	V	Belli (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
Dervişi (TMYK, TOP) Derviş (DV)	Hasanpınar	V	Derveci, Dervich- P'eylivan (KP402)	ARM	Bismil
Gündiabdi (TMYK) Gündüabdi (TOP, DV)	Arikgöl	V	Gunda-Abdi (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
Hirbehanna (TMYK) Hirbehanne (TOP) Hirbehanna (DV)	Alplar (DV)	M	Harbé-Hanna (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
İsapınar (TMYK, DV) İsapınarköy (TOP)	İsapınar	V	İsa-Powar (GA226) Yssa-Pouar (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
Karapınar (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Karapınar (DV)	M	Kara-Pouar (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
Matar (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Pınarbaşı	V	Matri (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
Mulladavudan (TMYK, DV) Molladavudan (TOP)	Davutlar	M	Mola-Davouda (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
Sadi (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kurudere	V	Sadié (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
Seledun (TMYK) Salladon (TOP) Saladun (DV)	Balcılar	V	Sildoun (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
Zeri (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Sarıköy	V	Zari, Zoré (KP402) Zré (GA-B428)	ARM SYR	Bismil
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Serperé (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Frdilek (GA-B428)	SYR	Bismil

Table 1.4: Diyarbekir sancak—Lice kaza

Lice	Lice	DC	Lidjé, Lidja (KP402) Lije (GA235) Lédjé (GA-B423)	ARM SYR SYR-K KLD	Lice	Jongerden Özok Üngör Verheij (Annex B)
Abdos (TOP)	Kalkanlı (TCA) ?	M	Andou (KP402)	ARM	Genç (Bingöl)	
Antak (TMYK, DV) İntak (TOP)	Kabakaya	V	Aintak, Ant'ag, Ant'agh (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Bemitni (TMYK) Bamitni (TOP, DV)	Kutlu	V	Yamoutni, Pamoto'né, Palindjné (KP402) Bamêtni (GA-B423)	ARM SYR	Lice	Akgündüz Üngör

Table 1.4 (cont.)

Biryas (TMYK, DV) Berbas (TOP)	Çalıbükü	M	Birbas, Bar-Bech (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Comelâş (TMYK) Comelas (TOP) Comalaş (DV)	Daralan	V	Djomélik, Djomé (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Dibni (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Döger	V	Dibéné, Debné (KP402)	ARM	Dicle	
Fum (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kumluca	V	Foum (KP402, GA-B423), Op'oum (KP402)	ARM SYR	Lice	Akgündüz
Halhal (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Çitlibahçe	V	Helhel, Hal-Hal (KP402) Halhel (GA-B423)	ARM SYR	Hazro	Akgündüz
Hani	Hani	DC	Hayni (KP402)	ARM	Hani	Akgündüz Üngör Verheij Annex B
Harbakni (TMYK, DV) Harbekni (TOP)	Bakanlar (DV, TCA)	M	Harbekne (GA-B423)	SYR	Lice	
Herak (TOP, DV)	Çıralı (DV)	M	Hérak (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Herkin (TOP)	?	M	Herkin, Herk'i (KP402)	ARM	Genç (Bingöl)	
Hezan (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Savat	V	Hazan, Hézan (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Kervas (TMYK) Kerves (TOP, DV)	Yalaza	V	Kervas, Garvas, Garas (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Mizak (TOP, DV)	Kılıçlı	V	Mizak, Mrzag (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Nenyas (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Ortaç	V	Ninaiş, Nounias (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Nurşin (TOP)	Doğanlar (TCA) ?	M	Nourchin, Norchèn (KP402)	ARM	Genç (Bingöl)	
Piçar (TMYK, TOP) Piçer (DV)	Güldiken	V	Pechar, Bétchar (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Sarmis (TMYK) Sarmis (TOP, DV)	Damar	V	Sarnis (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Şatih (TMYK, DV) Şatih (TOP)	Çanak	M	Chatik, Chat'hik, Chad-Hayk' (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Şikâkân (TOP)	Şikaka (TCA)	M	Chikakan, Chegaga (KP402)	ARM	Lice	
Şimşim (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Ormankaya	V	Chemchan, Cham-Cham (KP402) Chemchem (GA213, GA-B423)	ARM SYR	Hazro	Akgündüz Üngör
Tavsalayırız (TMYK) Riz (TOP) Tavsalariz (DV)	Sağgözek (DV) Sağgöze (IM2002)	V	Riz (KP402)	ARM	Genç (Bingöl)	
Zara (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Gökçe	V	Zara (KP402)	ARM	Lice	Üngör
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Zermanik, Djoumayig (KP402)	ARM	?	

Table 1.4 (cont.)

<i>Not identified</i>	?	Mellaha (GA-B423)	SYR	?
<i>Not identified</i>	?	Yabtin (GA-B423)	SYR	?
<i>Not identified</i>	?	Hererdem (GA-B423)	SYR	?
<i>Not identified,</i> <i>perhaps erroneous</i> <i>recurrence of Başnik</i> <i>in Silvan kaza</i>	?	Bahnic (GA-B423)	SYR	?

Table 1.5: Diyarbekir sancak—Derik kaza

Derik	Derik	DC	Dirèk, Dèrik (KP400) Derike (GA216) Derek (GA-B423) Déréké (GA-C431)	ARM SYR KLD	Derik (Mardin)	Üngör Verheij (Annex B)
Beyrük (TMYK, TOP) Beyrök (DV)	Böğrek	V	Beyrog, Bayrouk (KP400)	ARM	Derik (Mardin)	Verheij (Annex B)
Deşi (TOP, DV)	Kocatepe	V	Deshi (TE)	ARM	Derik (Mardin)	
Meşkinan (TMYK)					Mazıdağı (Mardin)	
Halılan (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Duraklı	V	Khalila (TE)	ARM	Mazıdağı (Mardin)	
Piran	Ömürlü	V	Piran (TE)	ARM	Mazıdağı (Mardin)	
Selmi (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kuyulu	V	Sulme (TE)	ARM	Derik (Mardin)	

Table 1.6: Diyarbekir sancak—Beşiri kaza

Beşiri was situated in the southeastern corner of the Diyarbekir sancak and had a common border with the Garzan *kaza* of the province of Bitlis. There seems to be confusion on the exact location of the district around 1900. A contemporary Ottoman atlas<sup>8</sup> shows the Batman River as the border between Diyarbekir and Bitlis and therefore as the eastern border of the Beşiri district, which is most likely wrong, since many villages given by multiple sources as belonging to Beşiri, including the district centre Elmedin, were situated on the East bank of the Batman River.<sup>9</sup> It might well be that the underlying cause of the confusion is a border change between the provinces of Diyarbekir and Bitlis at some date. Notably Kévorkian and Paboudjian reckoned many villages in Beşiri to the neighbouring district of Garzan of Bitlis.<sup>10</sup>

We assume that the Beşiri district around 1900 was the triangle between Garzansuyu (today called the *Yanarsu Çayı, TCA*) to the East, the Tigris to the South and a line just West of the Batman River in the West. The northern border was probably the *Değirmendere (TOP)*. More research is needed however to establish the borders and trace the changes that possibly took place.

<sup>8</sup> Osmanlı Atlası (XX. Yüzyıl başları) by M. Nasrullah, M. Rühdü and M.Eşref. (İstanbul, 2003) p. 81.

<sup>9</sup> British Map FO881-8362x 'Dasht-i-Kiri position', 1904 (Dasht-i-Kiri was the name of the mountain chain northeast of present Batman).

<sup>10</sup> And strangely showed some of them south of Siirt on their accompanying map (p. 503).



Table 1.6 (cont.)

Elmedin (TMYK, TOP) <i>Was the centre of the Beşiri kaza. Does not anymore exist; was located on the Eastern bank of the Batmansuyu, close to the location of the present city of Batman, inundated by the Batman River (Siirt İl Yıllığı 1973)</i>		–	Elmadin, Elmédi (KP401) Almedina (GA210) El-Medine (GA-B427)	ARM SYR	Batman	Gaunt Verheij (Annex B)
Amso (TOP)	Güvercin	V	Deir-Hamza, Bé-Khamsa (KP401) Derke-Amo (TE)	ARM	Batman mkz (Batman)	
Aşağıazik (TMYK, TOP)	Samanlı	M	Azig-Varin, Azik-Achaghi (KP401) Azık Aşağı (MA430) Azek (GA-B427) <i>In GA-B no distinction between Aşağı- and Yukarıazik</i>	ARM NES SYR?	Beşiri (Batman)	
Aşağıkeferzo (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Yenipınar	V	Kefrzo, Kafërzo (KP401) Kafarzo-Sufla (GA-B427) Gavazu Aşağı (MA429) <i>KP makes no distinction between Aşağı and Yukarıkeferzo</i>	ARM SYR	Beşiri (Batman)	
Baharzik (TMYK) Baharzik (TOP, DV)	Örmegöze	V	Baharsah (MA430) Bahurzuk (TE)	ARM NES	Beşiri (Batman)	
Barsıl (TMYK) Barsıl (TOP) Barsıl (DV)	Çevrimova	V	Barousli, Baresèl, Barisil (KP401) Barsel (GA-B427)	ARM SYR	Beşiri (Batman)	
Basorik (TMYK, DV) Basoruk (TOP)	Kayabağı	V	Bassorig (KP401) Bassourké (GA-B427) Basur (MA430)	ARM SYR	Batman mkz (Batman)	
Bazbut (TMYK, DV) Bazburt (TOP)	Atbağı	V	Bazbout (TE)	ARM	Beşiri (Batman)	
Beredris (TOP)	Mağaralı (DV)	M	Baradresh (TE) <i>Identification not certain</i>	ARM	Hasankeyf (Batman)	
Bileyden (TMYK) Bileyder (TOP, DV)	Binatlı	V	Bladour, Blédar (KP401) Blior (GA-B427) <i>Identification with GA not certain</i>	ARM SYR?	Batman mkz (Batman)	
Çandır (TOP)	Ünlüce (TCA)	M	Djander, Ghant'ar, Ghondi (KP401) Chnaderik (GA-B427) <i>Identification with GA not certain</i>	ARM SYR?	Batman mkz (Batman)	
Cinasker (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Yontukyazı	V	Djenasgir, Djenazgar (KP401) Genesfer (GA-B427) Canasker (MA429)	ARM SYR	Beşiri (Batman)	
Davudi (TMYK, DV) Aşağıdavudi, Yukarıdavudi (TOP)	Yolağzı	V	Davoudié (GA-B427) Davdi (MA429)	ARM SYR	Batman mkz (Batman)	

Table 1.6 (cont.)

Gedük (TMYK, TOP) Geydük (DV)	Deveboynu	V	Gédouk-Keuï, Gédouk-Kiugh, Gondek (KP401) Gueduk (GA-B427) Kedik (MA429)	ARM SYR	Beşiri (Batman)	
Girisiran (TMYK) Kersivan (TOP) Giresiran (DV) Gündük (TOP)	Balpınar Yeşilöz	V	Giressira, Kré-Siran (KP401) Kiresepra (GA-B427) Gounduk (TE)	ARM SYR ARM	Batman mkz (Batman) Batman mkz (Batman)	
Hathatik (TMYK, DV) Hadhatih (TOP)	Doğankavak	V	Hadhadk' (KP505) <i>According to KP in Garzan kaza (Bitlis vilayet)</i>	ARM	Beşiri (Batman)	
Haznamir (TMYK, DV) Haznemir (TOP)	İnpınar	V	Haznamir (KP505) <i>According to KP in Garzan kaza (Bitlis vilayet)</i>	ARM	Beşiri (Batman)	
Helkami (TOP) Alkami (DV) İluh (TMYK, TOP) Batman (DV)	Yediyol Batman	V PC	Halkamié (GA-B427) Algami (MA429) Eulaha, Eloun, Eléh (KP401) Yliga (GA-B427) <i>Identification with GA not certain</i>	ARM SYR ARM SYR?	Batman mkz (Batman) Batman mkz (Batman)	Verheij (Annex B)
İrmi (TMYK, TOP, DV) Kanikul (TMYK) Kanikol (TOP) Kanirevah (TMYK) Kanireval (TOP) Kelhök (TMYK) Melhük (TOP) Kerhök (DV)	Erköklü Esence Ağılıcık (TCA) ? Kuşçukuru	V V M v	Ermi (MA429) Ermi (TE) Kanikoul (KP505) Kani-Kulna (GA-B427) Kanireval (GA-B427) Kalhok (KP505) <i>According to KP in Garzan kaza (Bitlis vilayet)</i>	ARM ARM SYR SYR ARM	Batman mkz (Batman) Beşiri (Batman) Beşiri (Batman)	
Kiridi (TMYK) Kireydi (TOP) Kiredi (DV) Kirik (TMYK, TOP)	Kösetarla Bıçakçı	V V	Krédi-K'ertig (KP401) Kiridié (GA-B427) Kerik (MA429) Keruk (TE)	ARM SYR ARM	Batman mkz (Batman) Batman mkz (Batman)	
Kobin (TOP)	Beşiri	DC	Koubin Kougın (KP505) Gubin (MA430) <i>MA does not mention ARM. According to KP in Garzan kaza (Bitlis vilayet)</i>	ARM		
Kocan (TMYK, DV) Gocan (TOP) Körük (TMYK) Korik (TOP) Körökköy (DV)	Kocalar Aydınkonak	V V	Zorkan Godjan (GP401) Kodjan (GA-B427) K'orig, Gorik' (KP401) Kureké (GA-B427) <i>Identification GA-B not certain</i>	ARM SYR ARM SYR?	Bismil (Diyarbakır) Batman mkz (Batman)	

Table 1.6 (cont.)

Maymuni (TMYK) Meymuni (TOP)	Demirbilek	V	Memounia (GA-B427)	SYR	Batman mkz (Batman)
Mezaraş (TMYK, TOP)	Yakacık	V	Meghravach (KP401) <i>Identification not certain</i>	ARM	Beşiri (Batman)
Serkari (TOP)	—		Serekanie (TE). <i>Identification not certain.</i> <i>Place does not anymore exist.</i>	ARM	Eruh (Siirt)
Şihçoban (TMYK) Şeyhçoban (TOP)	Şeyhçoban (TCA)	M	Cheikh-Tchoban (KP401)	ARM	Batman mkz (Batman)
Şikestan (TOP)	Kırmaş (TCA)	M	Şikusnin (MA430) Shikesdek (TE)	ARM	Batman mkz (Batman)
Sinan (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Sinanköy	V	Sinan (KP401, MA430) Sinoné (GA-B427) <i>Identification with GA not certain</i>	ARM SYR?	Bismil (Diyarbakır)
Tahari (TMYK, DV, TOP)	<i>Uğrak</i> <i>Probably</i> <i>presently</i> <i>incorporated</i> <i>in Beşiri town</i>	?	T'akhori (KP505) <i>According to KP in Garzan kaza (Bitlis vilayet)</i>	ARM YEZ	Beşiri (Batman)
Tapi (TOP)	Alaçlı (TCA)	M	T'ap'i (KP505) <i>According to KP in Garzan kaza (Bitlis vilayet)</i>	ARM	
Tilmerç (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Demiryol	V	Telmergé (GA-B427) Telmerez (MA429)	ARM SYR	Batman mkz (Batman)
Tilmis (TMYK, TOP) Tilmiz (DV)	Akça	V	Talmassas (GA-B427) Tilmiz (MA429) <i>Identification with GA not certain</i>	ARM SYR?	Batman mkz (Batman)
Yukarazık (TOP) Yukarazık (DV)	Değirmenüstü	V	Azig-Vérin, Azik-Youkari (KP401) Azek (GA-B427) <i>GA-B makes no distinction between Aşağı- and Yukarazık</i>	ARM NES SYR?	Beşiri (Batman)
Yukarkeferzo (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Yarımtaş	V	Kefrzo, Kaferzo (KP401) Kafarzo-Oulia (GA427) Gavazu Yukarı (MA429) <i>KP makes no distinction between Aşağı- and Yukarkeferzo</i>	ARM SYR	Beşiri (Batman)
Zekiran (TOP)	Seğirkan (TCA)	M	Zarikoura, Zikarlou (KP401) <i>Identification not certain</i>	ARM	Batman mkz (Batman)
Zercil (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Danalı	V	Zerdjili, Tchertchèl (KP401) Zerjel (GA-B427)	ARM SYR	Beşiri (Batman)
Zivink (TOP)	Kışlacık (TCA) ?	M	Zevek (MA430, GA-B427) <i>Identification not certain</i>	ARM SYR	?
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Marvan, Mérévan (KP)	ARM	
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Terego-Amo (KP401)	ARM	?
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Echcastik (GA-B427)	SYR	?

2. *Mardin Subprovince* (Mardin Sancağ)Table 2.1: Mardin *sancağ*—Mardin central district *Mardin merkez kaza*

Mardin	Mardin	PC	Mardin (KP413, GA-B424, GA-C431, MC292)	ARM ARM-K ARM-P SYR SYR-K SYR-P KLD SYR	Mardin mkz (Mardin)	Akgündüz Gaunt Özok Üngör Verheij Annex B
Benabil (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Bülbül	V	Benebil (GA208, GA-B424)	SYR	Yeşilli (Mardin)	
Büherki (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Eryeri	V	Bekhaire (GA08) Békiré (GA-B424)	SYR SYR-K	Mardin mkz (Mardin)	
Çiftlik (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Çiftlik (DV) Çiftlikköy (NS90, IM2002)	V	Der-Eliya (GA216) Tjeftelek (GA-B424)	SYR	Mardin mkz (Mardin)	
Dara (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Oğuz	V	Dara (GA214)	SYR-K	Mardin mkz (Mardin)	
Göllü (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Göllü	V	Goliye (GA221) Golié (GA-B424)	SYR SYR-K SYR-P	Mardin mkz (Mardin)	Akgündüz Verheij (Annex B)
İbrahimiye (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Işıklar	V	Brahemiye (GA212) İbrahimié (GA-B424)	SYR	Kızıltepe (Mardin)	Verheij (Annex B)
Kalitmera (TMYK) Kaletülmara (TOP) Kalitmara (DV)	Eskikale	V	Qal'at-Mara (GA244) Kalet-Mara (GA-B424)	SYR-K SYR-K SYR-P	Mardin mkz (Mardin)	Verheij (Annex B)
Kızıltepe	Kızıltepe	DC	Til-Armèn, Tèlermèn (KP413) Tel-Arman (GA261) Tellarmène (GA-C431)	ARM-K SYR-K KLD	Kızıltepe (Mardin)	Verheij (Annex B)
Mansuri (TMYK, DV) Mansori (TOP)	Yalım	V	Mansuriye (GA237) Mansourié (GA-B424)	SYR SYR-K	Mardin mkz (Mardin)	
Maserti (TOP, DV)	Ömerli	DC	Ma'sarte (GA238) Maassarté (GA-B424)	SYR	Ömerli (Mardin)	

Table 2.2: Mardin *sancağ*—Midyat *kaza*

(a) Northern part, presently belonging to Batman province (districts Gercüş and Hasankeyf)

Barlat (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kayalar	V	Barlat (GA206)	(o.m.?) SYR	Gercüş (Batman)	
Derhaf (TMYK, TOP, DV)	İncirli	V	De'ir-Avv (GA427)	SYR	Hasankeyf (Mardin)	
Difni (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Üçyol	V	Dufne (GA219) Défné (GA-B427)	SYR	Hasankeyf (Mardin)	
Gercüş	Gercüş	DC	Kfar-Gawze (GA233) Kerjoz (GA-B427)	SYR KLD	Gercüş (Batman)	Gaunt

Table 2.2 (cont.)

Hasankeyf	Hasankeyf	DC	Hasno (GA224) Hassan-Kêf (GA-B427)	ARM SYR PRT	Hasankeyf (Mardin)	Gaunt
Îrdeva (TMYK) Îrdeva (TOP) Erdeva (DV)	Başarköy	V	Ylova (GA-B427) <i>Identification not certain</i>	SYR	Gercüş (Batman)	
Îrdi (TMYK, TOP) Erdi (DV)	Yamanlar	V	Yardo (GA269) Yerd (GA-B427)	SYR	Gercüş (Batman)	
Îrmuni (TMYK) Îrmoni (TOP) Ermuni (DV)	Yassıca	V	Armun (GA201) Abrimona (GA-B427)	SYR	Gercüş (Batman)	
Kefri (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Anca	V	Kafro-Elayto (GA231) Kefré (GA-B427)	SYR	Gercüş (Batman)	
Marvani (TMYK) Mervani (TOP, DV)	Akyar	V	Marwaniye (GA238)	SYR	Gercüş (Batman)	
(b) Southern part, presently belonging to Mardin province (districts Dargeçit, Midyat) and Şırnak province (İdil district)						
Midyat	Midyat	DC	Midiat (KP415, A-B427) Médéath (GA-C431)	ARM SYR KLD NES	Midyat (Mardin)	Gaunt Verheij (Annex B)
Araban (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Karalar	V	Araben (GA-B427)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Arbay (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Alayunt (DV, IM2002) Alayurt (NS90)	V	Arbaya (GA201) Arbaya (GA-B427)	SYR	Dargeçit (Mardin)	
Arnas (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Bağlarbaşı	V	Urdnus (GA201) Azbas (GA-B427)	SYR SYR-P	Midyat (Mardin)	
Ayinverd (TMYK) Ayınvert (TOP, DV)	Gülgöze	V	Ayn-Wardo (GA202) Aain-Ward (GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	Gaunt
Baçin (TMYK) Bacin (TOP, DV)	Güven	V	Bajenne (GA203)	YEZ	Midyat (Mardin)	
Bahvar (TMYK, TOP)	Gülveren	V	Behvoir (GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Bakısyian (TMYK, DV) Bakısyian (TOP)	Alagöz	V	Boqusyono (GA211) Bagssian (GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Basak (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Basak (DV) Başakköy (NS90) Basakköy (IM2002)	V	Bashok (GA206) Bassac (GA-B427)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Basibrim (TMYK) Basbirin (TOP, DV)	Haberli	V	Basibrin (GA206) Basserine (GA-B427)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Bati (TMYK, DV) Batıköy (TOP)	Bardakçı	V	Bote (GA211) Bati (GA-B427)	SYR SYR-K	Midyat (Mardin)	

Table 2.2 (cont.)

Çelik (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Çelik (DV) Çelikköy (NS90, IM2002)	V	Chelik (GA213) Tjélek (GA-B427)	SYR	Dargeçit (Mardin)	
Derkop (TMYK) Dirkup (TOP) Derkup (DV)	Karagöl	M	Der-Qube (GA218) Beir-Kébé (GA-B427)	SYR	Dargeçit (Mardin)	
Dersalib (TMYK) Dersalip (TOP, DV)	Çatalçam	V	Dayro da Şlibo, Dersalip (GA215) Deir-el-Salib (GA-B427)	SYR	Dargeçit (Mardin)	
Dirvan (TOP) Divanki (DV)	Çörekli (DV)	M	Daywanke (GA203)	YEZ	Midyat (Mardin)	
Enhil (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Yemişli	V	Anhel (GA200, GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Goçan (TOP) Koçan (DV)	Koçan (DV)	M	Kochanes (GA203)	YEZ	Midyat (Mardin)	
Habisnas (TMYK) Hapisnas (TOP, DV)	Mercimekli	V	Habses (GA222) Habsnas (GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Hah (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Anıtlı	V	Hah (GA223) Hk (GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	Gaunt
Halah (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Narlı	V	Ahlah (GA200)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Harabiya (TMYK) Harabya (TOP, DV)	Yenice	V	Kharabya (GA203)	YEZ	Midyat (Mardin)	
Harapmişki (TMYK, DV) Harapmeşk (TOP)	Uğrak	V	Haraba-Mechké (GA-B427)		İdil (Şırnak)	
Heşterek (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Ortaca	V	Shterako (GA258)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Kedil (TMYK) Hedil (TOP, DV)	Kayı	V	Hedel (GA225) Hodle ? (GA-B426)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Keferbi (TOP, DV)	Güngören	V	Kafarbe (GA231, GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Keferizi (TMYK) Keferzi (TOP, DV)	Altıntaş	V	Kfarze (GA234) Kafarzé (GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Kefnas (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Çayırılı	V	Kavnas (GA203)	YEZ	Midyat (Mardin)	
Kerburan (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Dargeçit	DC	Kfar-Boran (GA232) Kerboran (GA-B427)	ARM SYR SYR-K SYR-P	Dargeçit (Mardin)	Gaunt
Kivah (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Mağara (DV) Mağaraköy (IM2002)	V	Kiwakh (GA203)	YEZ	İdil (Şırnak)	
Meşti (TOP) Mişti (DV)	Taraklı (DV)	M	Meshte (GA239) Mechté (GA-B427)	SYR	Dargeçit (Mardin)	

Table 2.2 (cont.)

Midih (TMYK, DV) Medih (TOP)	Oğündük	V	Miden (GA239) Meddé (GA-B427)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	Gaunt
Mizizan (TMYK, DV) Mizizah (TOP, DV)	Doğançay	V	Mizizah (GA240) Mzezak (GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	Gaunt
Rizök (TMYK, DV) Rizok (TOP)	Oymak	V	Rjoké (GA-B427)	SYR ?	İdil (Şırnak)	
Salhi (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Banıştepe	V	Saleh (GA256) Saliha (GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Sari (TMYK, TOP, DV) Sarıköy (TOP, DV)	Sarıköy	V	Sare (GA257) Sari (GA-B427)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Serigir (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kuyulu	V	Shehirkán (GA258) Cherrigan (GA-B427)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Taka (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Oyuklu	V	Taqa (GA203)	YEZ	Midyat (Mardin)	
Temerzi (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Uçarlı	V	Tamarz (GA261) Tamziri (GA-B427)	KLD	İdil (Şırnak)	
Zaz (TMYK, TOP, DV)	İz bırak	V	Zaz (GA270, GA-B427)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Zengan (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Karabayır	V	Zangan (GA270)	SYR	Dargeçit (Mardin)	
Zimmarih (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Bozburun	V	Zinawrah (GA271) Zenarek (GA-B427)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
<i>Not identified.</i> <i>Possibly erroneous repeat of GA-B Arbaya (see above)</i>		?	Arbaïe (GA-B427)	SYR	?	
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Aylouz (GA-B427)	SYR	?	
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Chabsand (GA-B427)	SYR	?	
<i>Not identified.</i>		?	Harab-Allé (GA-B427) <i>Possibly erroneous repeat of Harabali/Harapali in Nusaybin kaza (see 2.4.a)</i>	SYR	?	
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Suleh (GA-B427)	SYR	?	
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Yenquels (GA-B427)	SYR	?	

Table 2.3: Mardin *sancak*—Avine *kaza*

Savur	Savur	DC	Savour (KP415, GA-B424) Sawro (GA257)	ARM ARM-K SYR	Savur (Mardin)
Avine (TMYK, TOP)	Sürgücü	V	Owena (GA244)	SYR	Savur (Mardin)
Sürgücü (TOP, DV)			Avine (GA-B424)		
Bafava (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kayadere	V	Bafayya (GA205)	SYR	Ömerli (Mardin)
Hirbahacı (TMYK)	Gölbashi	V	Bafava (GA-B424)	SYR	Verheij (Annex B)
Harabehacı (TOP)			Kherbé (GA-B424)		Savur (Mardin)
Hirbehacı (DV)					
Killit (TOP)	Dereiçi	V	Qelesh (GA247)	SYR SYR-K	Savur (Mardin)
Killit (DV)			Kellêt (GA-B424)	SYR-P	Verheij (Annex B)
Kırkdirek (TMYK, TOP) Kirdirek (DV)	Kırkdirek	V	Kordilik (GA-B424)	SYR	Savur (Mardin)
Tizyan (TOP, DV)	Elmabahçe	V	Tezian (GA-B424)		Mardin mkz (Mardin)

Table 2.4: Mardin *sancak*—Nusaybin *kaza*

(a) Northern part, area presently within the borders of Turkey

Nusaybin	Nusaybin	DC	Nissibin (KP415, GA-B425) Nisibin (GA241) Nisibe (GA-C431)	ARM ARM-K SYR KLD JWS	Nusaybin (Mardin)	Gaunt Verheij Annex B
Aznavur (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Sınırtepe	V	Aznavr (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Badip (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Dibek	V	Beth-Debe (GA211)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Birgüriye (TMYK, DV) Birigüriya (TOP)	Balaban	V	Birgüriya (GA211)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Dellaniükasır (TMYK)	Oyalı	V	Bergorié (GA-B425)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Alyan Delavikasır (TOP) Dalavakasır (DV)						
Dirpu (TOP) ?	?	?	Tdbo (GA-B425)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak) ?	
Girefş (TMYK)	Kaleli	V	Girefshé (GA221)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Efşi (TOP, DV)			Kerefché (GA-B425)			
Giribiya (TMYK, DV)	Söğütlü	V	Grebya (GA222)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Girebya (TOP)			Kerpia (GA-B425)			
Girimara (TMYK, DV)	Çığdem	V	Keremaré (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Girimira (TMYK)	Girmeli	V	Giremira (GA221)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Girmeli (TOP, DV)			Krémira (GA-B425)			
Gündük (TOP)	Gedihan (TCA) ? ? Gedikli ?	?	Kundek (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Gündükşükro (TMYK)	Odabaşı	V	Qritho di'Ito (GA248)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Gündüşükürü (TOP)						
Gündükşükürü (DV)						



Table 2.4 (cont.)

Habap (TOP, DV)	Güzelsu	V	Hebob (GA225) Habab (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Hacurrul (TMYK) Hacirlu (DV)	Gürkaynak	V	Hachirlu (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Harabali (TMYK) Harapali (TOP, DV)	Ucköy (DV) Üçköy (NS90, IM2002)	V	Harabali (GA201, GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Harabkefri (TMYK) Keferi (TOP) Harapkefri (DV)	Elbeğendi (DV)	V	Kafro-Tahtayo (GA232) Kafro (GA-B425)	SYR	Midyat (Mardin)	
Harapmişkin (TMYK) Harapmişki (TOP, DV)	Dağıcı	V	Kharaba-Mishka (GA234) Harab- Mechké (GA-B425) Haraba-Mechké (GA-B427)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Kinnik (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Bakacık	V	Knaneke (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Kölika (TOP)	?	?	Koleké (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin) ?	
Marin (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Eskihisar	V	Marine (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Merbab (TMYK) Mirbab (TOP) Merbab (DV)	Günyurdu	V	Mar Bobo (GA238) Merbab (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	Gaunt
Mezri (TOP) Mezrimihoke (DV)	Çilesiz	V	Mrzé (GA-B425) <i>Identification not certain</i>	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Pazar (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Pazarköy	V	Bazar (GA208) Bazaré (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Pirali (TOP)	Ocaklı (TCA) ?	M	Peroulé (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Saraç (TOP) Sourouj (AN)	?	M	Seruja (GA257) Seroujé (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Sederi (TMYK) Seyderi (TOP) Sideri (DV)	Üçyol (DV)	V	Sederi (GA257)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Serkani (TMYK, DV) Serkan (TOP)	Çığır	V	Srganée (GA-B425)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Servan (TOP)	Sirvan (TCA)	M	Sirouan (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Şeyhadir (TOP)	Şehhaddin (TCA)	M	Cheih-Hader (GA-B425)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Telsakam (TMYK) Telsekan (TOP) Telsakan (DV)	Özbek	V	Tel-Sefan (GA-B425)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Tezharap (TMYK, TOP, DV)	İkiztepe	M	Tizharab (GA-B425)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	
Tilhasan (TMYK) Telhasan (TOP) Hasantepe (DV)	Hasantepe	V	Tel-Hasan (GA263)	SYR	Nusaybin (Mardin)	

Table 2.4 (cont.)

Tilminar (TMYK)	Tepeüstü	V	Tel-Manar (GA264, SYR GA-B425)	Nusaybin (Mardin)
Telminar (TOP, DV)				
Tilyakup (TMYK)	Tepealtı	V	Tel-Ya'qub (GA264) SYR	Nusaybin
Telyakup (TOP, DV)			Tel-Yacoub (GA-B425)	(Mardin)
(b) Southern part, area presently within the borders of Syria				
Chalmouniye (AN)	?	?	Shelumiye (GA258) SYR	Syria (Al Hasakah province)
Chouti (AN) ?	?	?	Qewetla (GA248) SYR Khoutilé (GA-B425) <i>Identification not certain</i>	Syria (Al Hasakah province) ?
Dukir (TOP)	?	?	Duger (GA219) SYR	Syria
Dougueur (AN)			Douger (GA-B425)	(Al Hasakah province)
Girgeşnino (TOP)	?	?	Gerke-Shamo SYR (GA221)	Syria
Guirke Chamou (AN)			Kergué-Chamo (GA-B425)	(Al Hasakah province)
Guir Cherâne (AN)	?	?	Gershiran (GA221) SYR	Syria
			Gerchiran (GA-B425)	(Al Hasakah province)
Guir Dahoul (AN)	?	?	Gerdahol (GA211) SYR	Syria
			Kerdahoul (GA- B425)	(Al Hasakah province)
Helva (TOP)		?	Helwa (GA225) SYR	Syria
Heloua (AN)			Lilan (GA-B425) <i>Identification with "Lilan" by GA seems doubtful</i>	(Al Hasakah province)
Maharka (TOP)	?	?	Mharkan (GA239) SYR	Syria
Mahreikane (AN)			Mahreké (GA-B425)	(Al Hasakah province)
Qoubik (AN) ?	?	?	Kubibe (GA235) SYR	Syria (Al Hasakah province)
Telcihan (TOP)	?	?	Teljihhan (GA263, SYR GA-B425)	Syria
Tell Djihâne (AN)				(Al Hasakah province)
Tell-Khatoun (AN)	?	?	Tel-Khatun (GA263) SYR	Syria
			Tel-Hatoun (GA-B425)	(Al Hasakah province)
Tel-She'ir (GA264)	?	?	Telşair (TOP) SYR	Syria
Tel-Cheir (GA-B425)			Tell Chain (AN)	(Al Hasakah province)

The following villages have not been identified: Dirhab (GA219), Khezna (GA234), Laylan (GA235), Quwwal (GA248), Siha Sabha (GA259), Tel-Aryawon (GA263); Amchaoula, Astouran, Benodeké, Biazé, Chmohené, Chomiah, Derouné-Kolteké, Halvat, Karparer, Kenké-Kanek, Kerzerine, Kerzoyne, Kopeké, Krdim, Kre Super, Kundéré-Déré, Lima, Mahricat, Mendaré, Mla Abbas, Sndé, Sporé, Tel-Husni, Terbessé, Vavarde (all GA-B425). Most if not all Christians of these villages were Syrian Orthodox.

Table 2.5: Mardin *sancak*—Cizre *kaza*

The territory of the 19th century *kaza* of Cizre is currently divided between three countries: Turkey, Syria and Iraq.

## (a) Settlements presently in Turkey (various districts of Şırnak province)

Cizre	Cizre	DC	Djéziré (KP415) Jezire (GA227) Gziro (GA427) Djeziret-ibn-Oumar (GA-B426) Gézirah (GA-C431)	ARM SYR SYR-K KLD NES	Cizre (Şırnak)	Gaunt Klein Özok Verheij Annex B
Ayinser (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Pınarbaşı	V	Ayn-Sare (GA202) Aisaré (GA-B426)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Babek (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Üçok	V	Babeqqa (GA205)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Besbin (TMYK, TOP) Bespin (DV)	Görümlü	V	Baspin (GA207) Besbine (GA-B426)	KLD	Silopi (Şırnak)	
Cerrahi (TMYK, DV) Cerrahı (TOP)	Yuvalı	V	Djerahi (KP415) Jarahia (GA226) Djerahié (GA-B426)	ARM KLD	İdil (Şırnak)	
Derajiri (TOP) ?	Güneşli (TCA) ?	M	Deyr-Takhtayta (GA218) Deir-Tahtaia (GA-B426) <i>Identification not certain</i>	KLD	Şırnak mkz (Şırnak)	
Derajuri (TOP) ?	Özburun (TCA) ?	M	Deyr-Elayta (GA218) Deir-Elaia (GA-B426)	KLD	Şırnak mkz (Şırnak)	
Deştadarı (TOP)	Deştadarı (TCA)	M	Dashta-Dere (GA214) Dachte-Dare (GA-B426)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Finikiravi (TMYK, DV) Finikravi (TOP) ?	Damlarca ?	V	Fénék (GA-B426) <i>Identification not certain</i>	SYR	Güçlükonak (Şırnak)	
Fraabat (TMYK) Ernabat (TOP, DV)	Çavuşköy	V	Arnabad (KP415) <i>Probably also to be identified with Der Babat (GA-B426)</i>	ARM SYR?	Cizre (Şırnak)	
Garisan (TOP, DV) Girikbedro (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Darı Çiftlikköyü (DV, IM2002) Çiftlikköy (NS90)	M V	Garisa (GA220) Guerektha d'Badro (GA222) Gurcnébédro (GA-B426) Guirguébadro (GA-C431)	SYR KLD	İdil (Şırnak) Silopi (Şırnak)	
Hazak (TOP, DV)	İdil	DC	Azakh (GA276) Azék (GA-B426)	SYR SYR-K	İdil (Şırnak)	
Hendek (TMYK) Hendekköy (TOP) Handek (DV)	Hendek (DV) Hendekköy (NS90, IM2002)	V	Khandaq (GA234) Kendek (GA-B426)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Herbül (TMYK) Herbul (TOP) Harbul (DV)	Aksu	V	Harbol (GA224, GA-B426, GA-C431)	KLD	Silopi (Şırnak)	

Table 2.5 (cont.)

Hessana (TOP) Hassane (DV)	Kösreli (DV, NS90) > Koyunören (IM2002)	V	Hassana (GA224) Hossana (GA-B426)	PRT NES	Silopi (Şırnak)	
Kefşin (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kayalı	V	Kafshinne (GA232) Cafchené (GA-B426)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Küfah (TOP)	Kevah (TCA)	M	Kuvakh (GA235) Koufek (GA-B426)	SYR	İdil (Şırnak)	
Mansuri (TOP) Masuri (DV)	Kurtuluş (DV)	M	Mansuri (GA236) Mansourié (GA-B426, GA-C431)	KLD PRT	Cizre (Şırnak)	Klein
Nehrivan (TOP, DV)	Kavallı	V	Nehrivan (GA241) Nahravan (GA-B426) Nahrwan (GA-C431)	KLD	Silopi (Şırnak)	
Ömerin (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kocapınar (DV, IM2002) Dicle (NS90)	V	Emerin (GA220) Amrine (GA-B426)	SYR KLD	Cizre (Şırnak)	
Şah (TOP, DV)	Çağlayan	V	Shakh (GA258) Chakh (GA-B426, GA-C431)	KLD PRT	Cizre (Şırnak)	
Takyan (TOP, DV)	Buğdaylı	V	Takian (GA-B426) Takiann (GA-C431)	KLD	Silopi (Şırnak)	
Telkabin (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Başköy	V	Tel-Qebbin (GA264) Tel-Kebbine (GA-B426) Tel-Kebbin (GA-C431)	KLD	Silopi (Şırnak)	
Tellibel (TMYK) Tilbel (TOP) Tilibel (DV)	Uğur (DV) Uğur (NS90, BZ2002)	V	Tel-Bal (GA263) Telibel (GA-B426)	SYR	Cizre (Şırnak)	
Vahsad (TMYK) Vahset (TOP) Vahsat (DV)	Verimli	V	Wastta (GA269) Vahssed (GA-B426) Wahsad (GA-C431)	KLD	Silopi (Şırnak)	
Yukarıdiran (TOP)	?	M	Deran (GA-B426)	SYR	Şırnak mkz (Şırnak)	
Yukarıdiran (TOP)	?	M	Deran (GA-B426)	SYR	Şırnak mkz (Şırnak)	

## (b) Settlements presently in Syria

Aşağı Mezraa (TOP) Mazraat Bala (AN)	?	?	Mazre (GA239) Marzé (GA-B426)	SYR-K KLD	Al Hasakah province (Syria)	
Birabeyt (TOP) Brâbite (AN)	?	?	Berebt' (KP) Bara-Betha (GA206) Bara Beïta (GA-B426)	ARM KLD	Syria (Al Hasakah province)	
Goundek Cheïkh (AN)	?	?	Goundek-Cheykh (KP415)	ARM	Syria (Al Hasakah province)	
Hakamiye (AN)		?	Hanewiye (GA224) Hané (GA-B426) <i>Identification not certain</i>	SYR	Syria (Al Hasakah province)	

Table 2.5 (cont.)

Miraziz (TOP)	?	?	Mir-'Aziz (GA240)	SYR	Al Hasakah province (Syria)
Mir Aazi (AN)			Mirazez (GA-B426)		
Pirik (TOP)	?	?	Perek' (KP415)	ARM-K	Syria
Peirik (AN)			Berke (GA210)	KLD?	(Al Hasakah province)
Şabani-Hr (TOP)	?	M	Sha'baniye (GA258)	SYR	Syria
			Chabanié (GA-B426)		(Al Hasakah province)
Tildar (TOP)	?	?	T'eldar (KP415)	ARM KLD	Syria
Tildán (AN)			Tel-Dare (GA263)		(Al Hasakah province)
			Teldare (GA-B426)		

## (c) Settlements presently in Iraq

Peşhabur	Peshabur	?	Pesh-Khabur (GA244)	KLD	Northern Iraq
			Pechabour (GA-B426, 431)		
Zaho	Zaho	?	Zakho (KP415, GA-C432)	ARM KLD	Northern Iraq

A number of settlements could not be located. These include:

(A) From GA: "Ided" (GA226, SYR-K), "Kavel-Karre" (GA232, SYR)

(B) From GA-B426: "Beir-Mar-Avraham" (SYR); "Bosnaie" (SYR); "Chak" (SYR);<sup>11</sup> "Dayazé" (SYR); "Ekval" (SYR); "Handak" (SYR);<sup>12</sup> "Hodlé" (SYR); "Kardié" (SYR); "Kenzumere" (SYR); "Kéyouyé" (SYR); "Kochtana" (SYR); "Maraké" (SYR); "Mosié" (SYR); "Raz" (KLD);<sup>13</sup> "Tafes" (SYR); "Tsché" (KLD + other SYR).<sup>14</sup>

(C) From KP415: "Djeder" (ARM), "Khntouk" (ARM), "Mezer" (ARM), "Sèv-Tchader" or "K'éotcher" (ARM).

The villages of "Akol" (GA-B426, GA-C431; KLD), "Haltoun" (GA-B426, GA-C431, KLD) and "Mar-Sevricho" (GA-B426) / "Mar-Sauriché" (GA-C431) were located in the area between Şimnak town and Elki (new name: Beytüşşebap) and probably at the end of the 19th century belonged to the Siirt *sancak* of Bitlis province, and not to Diyarbekir *vilayet*. Possibly some of the non identified villages listed above were located in the same, poorly explored, area.

## 3. Maden Subprovince (Maden Sancağı)

Table 3.1: Maden *sancak*—Maden central district Maden merkez kaza

Maden, Ergani	Maden	DC	Arghana-Madèn (KP404) Argana Maden (GA-B423)	ARM SYR	Maden (Elazığ)	Jongerden Verheij (Annex B)
Bademli (TMYK, DV)	Bademli	V	Payam, Payanle (KP404)	ARM	Ergani	
Payamlı (TOP)						
Dicle (TMYK, TOP)	Dicle	DC	Piran (KP404)	ARM	Dicle	
Piran (DV)						
Eğil	Eğil	DC	Eghil, Ankgh (KP404)	ARM	Eğil	

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps erroneous second mentioning of "Chakh" (Çağlayan) in the same source.

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps erroneous second mentioning of "Kendek" (Hendekköy) in the same source.

<sup>13</sup> As "Baz" in GA-C431.

<sup>14</sup> In GA-C431 as Esché.

Table 3.1 (cont.)

Gölcük (TOP)	Sürek <i>or,—not anymore existing—location nearby</i>	?	Geuldjuk, Göljuk, Dzovk' (KP404)	ARM	Sivrice (Elazığ)
Heridan (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kırkpınar	V	Aypéga, Hirédan (KP404)	ARM	Dicle
Pirnos (TMYK)	Tekevler	V	Pirnous-Khan (KP404)	ARM	Maden (Elazığ)
Pirnos (TOP, DV)					
Telbağdad (TOP)	Küçük (TCA) ?	M	Til-Baghdad (KP404)	ARM	Dicle
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Topelan (KP404)	ARM	?
<i>Not identified</i>		?	Gap'lan (KP404)	ARM	?

Table 3.2: Maden *sancak*—Palu *kaza*

Palu	Palu	DC	Palou (KP407, GA-B423)	ARM SYR	Palu (Elazığ)	Jongerden Özok Üngör Verheij Annex B
Abrenk (TMYK, DV)	Köprüdere	V	Abrank (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Oratek (TOP)						
Arthan (TMYK)	Soğukpınar	V	Art'ekhan (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Arthian (TOP)						
Arthian (DV)						
Avlağı (TOP, DV)	Avlağı	V	Awlaghi, Avlavou (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Bağın (TMYK, TOP)	Bağın (TCA)	M	Barena, Baghin (KP408)	ARM	Alacakaya (Elazığ)	
Beşaret (TMYK)	Arılar (TCA)	M	Bécharret, Bacharat' (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Beşaretköy (TOP)						
Çınaz (TMYK)	Saraybahçe	V	Tchinaz, Chnaz (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Mezraa (TOP)						
Çınaz (DV)						
Dümürçü (TMYK)	Demirci	V	Démirdji (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Demirci (TOP, DV)						
Gülüşkür (TOP, DV)	Muratbağı	V	Gulichguer, Guluchguer (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	Üngör
Habap (TMYK)	Ekinözü	V	Havav (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	Verheij (Annex B)
Habab (TOP)						
Hebap (DV)						
Halalköm (TMYK)	?	?	Halal-Kom, Hazar-Kom (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Halalkomu (TOP)						
Haraba (TMYK, TOP)	Örencik	V	Kharaba, Kharabark' (KP408)	ARM	Palu (Elazığ)	
Hoşmat (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Çakırkaş	V	Kochmat, Khochmat' (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
İsabey (TMYK, TOP, DV)	İsabey	V	Isabèg (KP408)	ARM	Karakoçan (Elazığ)	
Kaçar (TOP)	Kaçar	M	Kasir, Khadjar (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Kacar (DV)						
Kamışlı (TOP)	Kamışlı (TCA)	M	Khamechli (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	

Table 3.2 (cont.)

Karınca (TMYK) Karıncaköy (TOP, DV)	Karıncaköy	V	Mrtchman-Mégré (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Kavak (TMYK, TOP) Kavakköy (DV)	Kavakköy	V	Hawak, Kharagélig (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Fahribey (TMYK) Fahribeyköy (TOP, DV)	Fahribey	V	Kervakeui, Kèngerli (KP408)	ARM	Palu (Elazığ)	
Kengerli (NS35) Kovancılar (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Kovancılar	V	Zèth, Tsèt (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Künbet (TMYK) Kümbet (TOP, DV)	Kümbet	V	Koumpèt (KP408)	ARM	Karakoçan (Elazığ)	
Kürdikân (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Gümüşkaynak	V	Kourdikh, K'ourdik'an (KP408)	ARM	Palu (Elazığ)	
Kurumezraa (TOP)	?	?	Tchäiri-Mégré (KP408)	ARM	Palu (Elazığ)	
Nacaran (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Baltaşı	V	Nadjaran, Khalikran (KP408)	ARM	Palu (Elazığ)	
Nepşi (TOP)	?	?	Nbchi, Mimchin (KP408)	ARM	Palu (Elazığ)	
Sekerat (TOP) Sekrat (DV)	Yazıbaşı	V	Sekerat, Sakrat' (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Şenova (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Şenova	V	Nirkhin, Nkhri, Nrkhin (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Serin (TOP)	<i>does not anymore exist</i>	?	Sérin (KP408)	ARM	Alacakaya (Elazığ)	
Siğam (TMYK) Siğam (DV)	Pinartepe	?	Saghman, Segham (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Tavdik mezraa (TOP)	Tevdik (TCA)	M	Tawtig, Tawt-i Mégré (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Tepe (TOP, DV)	Karakoçan	DC	Tépé-Keui, Tapa, Tépé (KP408)	ARM	Karakoçan (Elazığ)	
Tilk (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Gümeçbağlar (DV, IM2002) Gömeçbağlar (NS90)	V	Til (KP408)	ARM	Palu (Elazığ)	
Tırha (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Keklikdere	V	Terki, T'rkhé (KP408)	ARM	Palu (Elazığ)	
Uzunoba (TOP) Uzunova (DV)	Uzunova	V	Ouzoun-Ova (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	Verheij (Annex B)
Uzunovamez (TMYK) Uzunoba mezra (TOP)	?	?	Ouzoun-Ova Mezné (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Yarımcı (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Yarımcı	V	Yarindjé, Yaremdja, Armdjan (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Yeniköy (TMYK, TOP, DV)	Yeniköy	V	Nor-Kiugh (KP408)	ARM	Kovancılar (Elazığ)	
Yığ (TMYK) Yığköy (DV)	Bulgurcuk	V	Okhi, Okhou, Oghou (KP408) ( <i>identification by G. Aghjayan</i> )	ARM	Karakoçan (Elazığ)	

Table 3.3: Maden *sancak*—Çermik *kaza*

Çermik	Çermik	DC	Tchermoug (KP408)	ARM	Çermik	Jongerden Verheij Annex B
Çüngüş	Çüngüş	DC	Tchenkouch, Chènkouch (KP408)	ARM	Çüngüş	Özok Verheij Annex B
Adis (TMYK) Adış (TOP) Adış (DV)	Değirmensuyu	V	Adich (KP411)	ARM	Çüngüş	Verheij (Annex B)



## ANNEX B

### DIYARBEKIR AND THE ARMENIAN CRISIS OF 1895—THE FATE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE<sup>1</sup>

Jelle Verheij

Like other major conflicts in the autumn of 1895, the crisis in Diyarbekir had a profound influence on the situation elsewhere in the eastern provinces, triggering new shockwaves of anxiety.<sup>2</sup> The effect in Diyarbekir province itself was immediate. Directly after the massacre in the city, the countryside around the urban centre, until then relatively calm, was also gripped by violence. This Section attempts to give a summary of events in the other towns and rural areas of Diyarbekir Vilayet. This is pioneering work and should not be assumed to be definitive. Certainly more sources need to be unearthed and much more research is required. It is likely that various local factors were at work, at district and even village level, each of which need to be analyzed thoroughly in order to ascertain the full picture of events in the province as a whole. That will not be done here. A closer look is taken at one case, however, the events in Diyarbekir's most northerly district of Palu.

Information on the situation in the countryside is available in both Ottoman and foreign sources, but identifying places is particularly complicated because of the lack of detailed maps and the Turkification of place names around 1960, when all non-Turkish traditional names were abolished.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the sources of this Annex see the references of my article "Diyarbekir and the Armenian Crisis of 1895" in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> In the town of Muş (in the neighboring province of Bitlis), for example, news of the violence in Diyarbekir caused immediate tension (PP96-2, Nr. 246 p. 124).

<sup>3</sup> See Annex A for an attempt to list all non-Muslim settlements in the Diyarbekir Vilayet, with their old and new names.

THE CENTRAL SUB-PROVINCE (*MERKEZ SANCAK*) OF DIYARBEKIR*The Central District (Merkez Kaza) of Diyarbekir*

Most of the forty plus Christian villages in the central district of Diyarbekir were situated to the east of the Tigris river. The majority of these were Syriac or mixed Armenian–Syriac.<sup>4</sup> During the massacre in Diyarbekir city, groups of Kurds started to attack these villages. Apparently, the first attack was on the Protestant village of Kıtırbıl, by an *ağa* of the Tirkan tribe, north of Diyarbekir.<sup>5</sup> The beleaguered inhabitants held out for two days. Very few of the local men seem to have survived. The village was pillaged and burned.<sup>6</sup> Other villages in the same area, notably Kabi (currently Bağıvar)<sup>7</sup> and Karabaş,<sup>8</sup> saw the same fate. In Satıköy, many people were said to have perished when the church in which they had taken refuge was set on fire.<sup>9</sup> Few villages seem to have escaped attack, although information on villages at a greater distance from the capital is scarce.<sup>10</sup> Initial estimates of the number of victims in the area ran as high as 3,000.<sup>11</sup> Some months later, the British Consul in Diyarbekir estimated that between 800 and 900 Christians had lost their lives.<sup>12</sup>

*Lice*

The town of Lice had a sizeable Armenian population. About one-quarter of the villages in the district was Armenian.<sup>13</sup> The reports of the foreign

<sup>4</sup> Of the 297 villages in the central district as listed in the *Osmanlı atlası* (OA, p. 83), 21 were Syrian, 14 mixed Syrian-Armenian, and 6 Armenian. See Annex A.

<sup>5</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 24, 62; BOA A.MKT.MHM 637-32. Another source claims that nomadic (*göçer*) Kurds from Sasun were involved in the attack (ABC reel 695, 25.11.1895).

<sup>6</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 49, 62. More than 70 women and children were kidnapped.

<sup>7</sup> This village was ‘thoroughly pillaged and destroyed’ on 3 November 1895 (ABC, reel 695, 25.11.1895). When American missionaries Rendel and Helen Harris passed through Kabi in July 1896, they found the village in ruins and hardly populated (Harris & Harris 1897: 125).

<sup>8</sup> This mixed Armenian-Syriac village was attacked by Kurds on 2–3 November 1895. There were possibly 20 victims and approximately 100 houses burned (ABC, Letter from Missionary Andrus, Mardin, 25.11.1895).

<sup>9</sup> Gaunt 2006: 250. Gaunt reports that this ‘pogrom’ took place on 1 October 1895, which seems quite unlikely. Should probably be November 1.

<sup>10</sup> MY Nrs. 63, 66, 94. According to Hallward, of the 770 Christian houses in these villages, 500 were burned down (FO 195/1930 Nr. 18).

<sup>11</sup> MY Nr. 63.

<sup>12</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 18.

<sup>13</sup> There were 133 villages in Lice (OA p. 83); 30 or more had a (partly) Christian population (see Annex A).

representatives in Diyarbekir provide virtually no information about the district. From short descriptions in Ottoman reports, one can deduce that there were disorders with loss of life. The *fezleke*, for example, accuses Armenians of spreading discontent to Lice.<sup>14</sup> In the first half of November 1895, both the towns of Lice and Hani were beleaguered by Kurds. In Hani this resulted in 'some casualties'.<sup>15</sup> In Lice Armenians shot at Muslims from their houses, which probably means that they were attacked.<sup>16</sup> The situation in these villages was probably quite serious.<sup>17</sup>

### *Siverek*

The district of Siverek was predominantly a Muslim district, with an Armenian minority in the district centre (37%) and a few Armenian villages.<sup>18</sup> Just one day after the start of the massacre in Diyarbekir town, and probably under the influence of the events in the provincial capital, clashes between Muslims and Armenians erupted. There was apparently great loss of life among the Armenians. Sources mention between 700 and 1,500 Armenian victims. Unfortunately, details are scarce.<sup>19</sup> Vice-Consul Hallward held Osman Ağa, a prominent Kurd, responsible for the massacre,<sup>20</sup> while the Ottomans accused a band of Armenians.<sup>21</sup> Some Armenians were arrested and brought to Diyarbekir, but apparently no Muslims were arrested.<sup>22</sup>

### *Silvan and Beşiri*

About one-third of villages in the district of Silvan were Christian (Armenian and/or Syrian). The total Armenian population of town and villages numbered about 14,000.<sup>23</sup> Together with Palu (in Ergani Sancak, see below), Silvan was among the districts of Diyarbekir hit hardest by the

<sup>14</sup> BOA A.MKT.MHM 637-3 p. 7. On this document see p. 110.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 636-17 (1) (on Hani) and 636-20 (9) (on Lice).

<sup>16</sup> Beysanoğlu 2002–2003, vol. 2: 732.

<sup>17</sup> In a British report, Lice figures among districts which were worse off than others (FO 195/1930 Nr. 2).

<sup>18</sup> Kevorkian-Paboudjian 1992: 400.

<sup>19</sup> A rather sketchy account of the massacre in Siverek can be found in the memoirs of the protestant pastor of Siverek (Hartunian 1968: 11–21).

<sup>20</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 39.

<sup>21</sup> DDO Nr. 46, Said Paşa to Ottoman Embassy in London, 4.11.1895 (p. 67).

<sup>22</sup> BOA A.MKT.MHM 637-44.

<sup>23</sup> Of 221 villages in Silvan (OA p. 83) at least 75 were fully or partly inhabited by Christians (Annex A). On population size see: FO 195/1930 Nr. 94.

violence. On two occasions, Ottoman troops apparently repulsed attacks from Kurds on the district centre of Farkin itself,<sup>24</sup> but the countryside was less fortunate. According to Vice-Consul Hallward, who personally visited the area, 23 villages with a total of 1,045 houses were completely burned, and 'enormous quantities of grain and agricultural stock' taken. Hallward coordinated the rebuilding of 35 villages and distribution of oxen and agricultural tools.<sup>25</sup> It was said that 4,000 Armenians had been killed, died afterwards or disappeared.<sup>26</sup>

The report by the Ottoman Commission of Investigation states merely that 'in some villages of Silvan, there were 'small and unimportant' (*ufak tefek*) incidents'.<sup>27</sup> Other reports from Silvan, however, speak of acts of extreme cruelty inflicted on the Armenian villagers.<sup>28</sup> In April 1896, six months after the attacks, more than 10,000 completely destitute people, unable or afraid to return to their villages, still hid in Farkin and two villages in the vicinity, Haşter (renamed Otluk) and Hacican (Karacalar).<sup>29</sup> Reportedly 7,000 people converted to Islam to save their lives.<sup>30</sup> Perpetrators in the Silvan area were Kurds, presumably locals. Both British and French sources singled out the notable Hacı Reşid Ağa from Farkin as one of the main instigators. Reşid Ağa is described as very influential and on good terms with *Vali* Enis Paşa, like other Kurdish leaders in the area.<sup>31</sup> Allegedly the aggressive anti-Armenian position of many Silvan Kurds was related to their involvement in the conflict with the Armenians of Sasun a year earlier.<sup>32</sup> Many of them had their summer pastures in the mountains of Sasun. Sources indicate, however, that some Kurds were also friendly to the Armenians.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 62. One of the attacks is mentioned in an Ottoman source as well (BOA A.MKT.MHM 636-20 (9)).

<sup>25</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 18, 53, 79, 91.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 18.

<sup>27</sup> Report of Ottoman Commission of Investigation, in: Beysanoğlu 2002–2003, vol. 2: 732.

<sup>28</sup> American missionary source, cited in Kieser 2000: 201.

<sup>29</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 29; MY Nr. 146.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 1.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* Nrs. 18, 24, 26, 29, 31, 39; MY Nrs. 148, 157.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* Nr. 29. Kurds from Sasun were involved in attacks on Armenian villages very close to Diyarbekir (ABC, reel 695, 25.11.1895).

<sup>33</sup> See p. 135 note 239.

Beşiri was a district to the southeast of Silvan,<sup>34</sup> roughly 20% Armenian.<sup>35</sup> No specific information was uncovered on the events in this area in 1895. Vice-Consul included Beşiri in a list of districts 'most affected', but without providing details.<sup>36</sup> A reference to kidnappings also suggests that violence took place here.<sup>37</sup>

### *Derik*

Derik was the southernmost district of Diyarbekir *sancak* and is currently part of Mardin province. There were only few Armenians in the district, concentrated in the district centre and, the neighboring village of Beyrük (now Böğrek) and some other settlements. Reportedly, Kurds tried to enter Derik on 10th November, but were repelled by government troops.<sup>38</sup>

### THE SANCAK OF MARDIN (CENTRAL DISTRICT OF MARDIN AND DISTRICTS OF NUSAYBIN, SAVUR AND CIZRE)

Most Christians in the sancak of Mardin were Syriac, who were particularly numerous in the Tur Abdin area, East of Mardin. There were only a few isolated Armenian communities in the central district of Mardin town and in the town of Nusaybin. The largest Armenian settlement was Tel Armen ('Armenian Hill'), at present part of the town of Kızıltepe ('Red Hill'). Armenians in the Mardin area were predominantly Catholic and Protestant, not Gregorian.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the low number of Armenians, developments emanating from the 'Armenian Question' also came to affect Mardin. During the first days of November, news arrived of attacks on Syriac villages to the northeast of Mardin (notably Killit in Savur district) and the plain to the west of the city. The Armenian Catholic enclaves of Tel Armen and İbrahimiye suffered particularly badly. Kurdish tribesmen attacked, plundered and

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<sup>34</sup> Not the same territory as the current district of Beşiri, in Batman province (see additional information in Annex A). The district centre was Elmedin, then a village on the banks of the Batman Su, to the west of İluh (now the city of Batman).

<sup>35</sup> In Beşiri lived about 4,000 Christians ( FO 195/1930 Nr. 94); at least 38 (Annex A) out of 173 villages (OA p. 83) were Armenian and/or Syrian.

<sup>36</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 18.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Nr. 44.

<sup>38</sup> Gaunt 2006: 216.

<sup>39</sup> Kévorkian & Paboudjian 1992: 413, 415.

nearly completely burned down both places.<sup>40</sup> From the high hill of Mardin, smoke from the burning houses of Tel Armen could clearly be seen. During the following days, Syriac villages closer to Mardin were attacked, perhaps by the same Kurds. In Göllü more than 50 people were killed. From all sides villagers fled to the town.

On 8th November, the Kurds reached the outskirts of Mardin. The town had seen tensions before, after the burning of the market a year earlier (when Enis Paşa had been acting *Vali*). This time, however, on the initiative of local Muslim leaders, attempts at anti-Christian actions were suppressed. Government forces, Muslims and Christians jointly took to the defense as 1,500 or more Kurds attacked the city twice but were repelled.<sup>41</sup> On 11 November, they understood that they would not succeed and departed. On the same day, government troops were able to reach the important monastery of Deyr-ul-Zaferan, seat of the Syrian Patriarch and which had been besieged for five days, as well as the two neighboring villages of Kalitmara (currently Eskikale) and Bafava (Kayadere).<sup>42</sup> Disturbances east of Mardin continued well into November. In mid-November authorities and inhabitants of the district town of Midyat managed to repel a fresh Kurdish attack.<sup>43</sup> The Christian quarters of Nusaybin and Christian and Yezidi villages between Nusaybin and Cizre were plundered.<sup>44</sup> The town of Cizre was effectively protected by an Ottoman army regiment.<sup>45</sup> No forced conversions to Islam were reported from Mardin.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 18; ABC reel 695, 25.11.1895; ABC reel 699, 20.11.1895. Plundered goods were found as far away as Resulayn (renamed Ceylanpınar) in the sub-province of Zor (BOA A.MKT.MHM 637-38).

<sup>41</sup> MY Nr. 107; FO 195/1930 Nr. 18. Said Nursi, the founder of the Nurcu religious movement was in Mardin at the time and witnessed the events (Selim 2006; includes some interesting details on the situation in the town).

<sup>42</sup> ABC reel 695, 25.11.1895, and reel 699, 20.11.1895; MY Nr. 107.

<sup>43</sup> A month later reports circulated on a massacre in Midyat (MY Nr. 106). This was probably only a rumor.

<sup>44</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 18, 43 (on the town of Nusaybin) and Nr. 1 (on villages); ABC reel 695, 25.11.1895.

<sup>45</sup> MY p. 107.

<sup>46</sup> Gaunt (2006: 43-44) suggests that Syrians fared relatively poorly in certain areas, primarily Diyarbekir city, as opposed to others, primarily Mardin city, depending on whether they were protected by their 'Muslim neighbors' essentially on the basis of their integration into local society.

## THE SANCAK OF MADEN

*Maden Central District*

The central district of Ergani counted only a small number of Armenian villages, but there were sizeable Armenian minorities in the towns of Ergani and Ergani Maden. Both of these towns saw disturbances during the first half of November 1895, but details are few.<sup>47</sup> Exceptionally, in Maden, several gendarmes were punished for their role in anti-Armenian violence.<sup>48</sup>

*Palu*

After Silvan, the district of Palu had the second largest Armenian population in Diyarbekir's outlying districts.<sup>49</sup> As in Silvan, the 1895 events were also particularly violent and bloody. Events in Palu have been somewhat better documented than those elsewhere in the province, enabling a higher degree of interpretation.<sup>50</sup>

Armenians in Palu, particularly in several villages in the vicinity of the towns Habab (Ekinözü)<sup>51</sup> and Uzunova, were prosperous and vocal. American-inspired Protestantism had gained considerable ground in the Palu villages, fuelling Muslim resentment and suspicion. The American missionaries from Harput, 'coming and going', were deeply mistrusted by the Muslims.<sup>52</sup> There are signs that there were also nationalist and revolutionary activists among the Armenians there, particularly in Habab.<sup>53</sup>

Palu was characterized by a strong traditional feudalism. The Beys of Palu, the Çemşidbeyzade, who had ruled the district for centuries were no longer formally in charge, although they remained influential. Many of the Armenian villages, including Habab, were part of their traditional

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<sup>47</sup> BOA A.MKT.MHM 636-17 (1).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 637-9.

<sup>49</sup> British Vice-Consul Hallward estimated that there were 15,000 Armenians in the *kaza* of Palu. The district counted some 37 Armenian villages (Annex A), from a total of 321 (Osmanlı Atlası: 83).

<sup>50</sup> Particularly useful is a source, probably a letter by an Armenian from the district, in *Les Massacres* 1896: 179-214. Offering a rare local Muslim perspective are the reminiscences related by Bekir Ali of his father and other relatives from Palu, recently published in the newspaper 'Milliyet' (Demirel 2008).

<sup>51</sup> Renamed Ekinözü.

<sup>52</sup> Demirel 2008.

<sup>53</sup> In November 1894, the Ottoman authorities reported a 'secret' meeting in Habab where a paper ('probably a program of revolution') was drawn up (PP95-1 Nr. 35/2).

fiefdoms. Quarrels over land rights were an important backdrop to the Armenian-Muslim tension in this area. Reportedly, in 1894, the Ottoman Government had banned the collection of tithes by the Beys.<sup>54</sup>

According to a rare non-official Muslim source from Palu, serious trouble began after the incidents in Sasun and Talori. During the night, bands of Armenians roamed through the town discharging their guns and shouting curses. In the spring of 1895, Armenians of Habab and several neighboring villages complained to the Sultan and the Grand Vizier of harassment by the Beys.<sup>55</sup> According to the Armenians, the Government did nothing more than side with the accused, but the Beys and their supporters were strongly annoyed and believed the Government supported the Armenians. In late October 1895, the same day that news arrived of the promulgation of reforms, word spread of a violent conflict between Muslims and Armenians in Kiğı, some 80 kilometers to the north. As an Armenian source put it, this created fear amongst the Armenians and turbulence among the Muslims.<sup>56</sup> During the days that followed, the Beys claimed the full harvest of the year; the Armenians refused.

Between 2nd and 10th November, troops of Kurds<sup>57</sup> and Turks from the vicinity attacked nearly all the Armenian villages in the area. Houses were plundered and often torched afterwards. Only in a few villages, including Habab, did the Armenians put up effective resistance. It appears that where they offered resistance more people also fell victim. Armenians accused the Beys of supporting the attacks.<sup>58</sup>

On the morning of 11th November, a large crowd of Kurds and Turks from the villages appeared in the town of Palu. At first the Ottoman army succeeded in defending the town, but the *Müfti*, who was with the assailants, reportedly convinced the commander to abandon his resistance.<sup>59</sup> The attackers poured into the town, broke into houses and businesses, killing Armenian men outright. Two days of terrible carnage left hundreds of Armenians dead. All the signs are that this was an attack planned and

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<sup>54</sup> Les Massacres 1896: 182.

<sup>55</sup> BOA. DH.MKT 426-19.

<sup>56</sup> Les Massacres 1896: 181.

<sup>57</sup> Attacks by Kurds are also attested in an Ottoman document (BOA A.MKT.MHM 636-17 (1)). Unfortunately no details are supplied.

<sup>58</sup> İbrahim Bey, the chief heir of the Çeşidbeyzadeler, offered Armenians protection in his house. Armenians claim that this as well was inspired by bad motives, since he asked for considerable amounts of 'protection money', while failing to prevent his own staff from harassing the thousands of refugees in his villages.

<sup>59</sup> Les Massacres 1896: 199-201. On the role of the Müfti, see also FO 195/1930 Nr. 18. Hallward called him 'one of the worst men in Palou'.



executed by the Muslims, but the Ottoman Investigation Commission accused Armenians of 'groundlessly firing on mosques, *mescits*<sup>60</sup> and Muslims'. The subsequent phrase that 'they did not go further than causing small and unimportant incidents and did not stage an important event' seems to be an admission that the Armenians were not guilty of serious violence.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, the provincial government blamed Kurds for entering the town and causing disorder.<sup>62</sup>

The total number of victims in Palu and its villages has been reckoned to be as high as 1,500,<sup>63</sup> but later the figure of 900 seems to have gained acceptance.<sup>64</sup> Most casualties occurred in the centre of Palu, along with Habab (70) and Uzunova (40).<sup>65</sup> There is no word on Muslim casualties. Enormous damage was also caused in the area. Six Armenian villages in the Palu district were reportedly completely burnt to the ground while seven more villages were partly razed. Very few Armenian households escaped plunder, and 44 churches were said to be destroyed or damaged.<sup>66</sup> As in Silvan, large numbers of people converted to Islam in an attempt to save their lives. Hallward estimated their numbers to be 3,000.<sup>67</sup> Some of the worst 'outrages on women' were considered to have occurred in here.<sup>68</sup> Unrest continued for months after November 1895, and even during the summer of 1896, when the situation in Diyarbekir town finally started to calm down, reports from Palu continued to speak about oppression by the Beys.<sup>69</sup>

Compared to Diyarbekir city, the case of Palu shows both some interesting parallels and differences. On the Armenian side, people protested and called for change, provoked perhaps by Armenian revolutionary groups. On the Muslim side, the local elite took the lead, fearing loss of power through reforms. Anger over land conflicts with the Armenians also played a role. It is unclear whether they received much support from local state officials. At the time of the crisis, Palu was governed by an interim governor who was possibly weak. Armenian sources accuse him of being

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<sup>60</sup> Mescit: small place or workshop, the Islamic variant of a chapel.

<sup>61</sup> Hocaoğlu 1976: 237–238.

<sup>62</sup> BOA MKT.MHM 636-20 (9).

<sup>63</sup> Bliss 1896: 445 (1,540 victims).

<sup>64</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 18. The same number is mentioned by Harris & Harris 1897: 146.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* Figure for Uzunova included 32 women and girls who reportedly threw themselves into the Euphrates to escape sexual assault.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 1 and 18.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* Nrs. 18 and 62.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* Nrs. 29, 53, 62.

an accomplice in the attacks, but that makes little sense considering the Ottoman attempt to prevent an attack on the town.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps the biggest difference from Diyarbekir was that the local Muslim elite, although their relations with the central government appear troubled, did not appear to belong to any organized oppositional movement.

### *Çermik and Çüngüş*

The district of Çermik, in the far northwest of the vilayet, only had three locations with an Armenian population: the towns of Çermik and Çüngüş, and the village of Adış (now Değirmensuyu). Çüngüş, a wealthy town with extensive vineyards and specializing in raisin and wine production, was one of the few towns in the Ottoman Empire with an Armenian majority.<sup>71</sup>

Çermik suffered from non-specified disturbances, probably only plundering.<sup>72</sup> About 150 Armenians from both Çüngüş and Adış were attacked and said to have been killed by Kurds. The rest, even including the Armenian Bishop,<sup>73</sup> saved their lives by converting to Islam.<sup>74</sup> A letter secretly written by the Bishop to the Patriarch has been preserved. Because Armenian accounts are quite rare, part of his account is quoted here to give a first-hand impression of the events:

While we are in such sore straits, how can we write particularly of our losses? Perhaps you have heard that our incomparable Monastery was thoroughly plundered. Nothing remained. After being plundered, it was burned, pulled down to the foundation and became a complete ruin. Of all its great wealth not the slightest thing remains. Also the village of Adish, with three hundred Christian houses, was plundered together with the valuables of the church, and the people fled to Coonkoosh (*sic*). They were tortured to death on the road. Their most modest women wearing only a skirt, barefooted and bareheaded, reached only to fall into the fire with the Choonkoosh people, and lost both their honor and their modesty by leaving them trampled under foot.

In like manner the Gregorian and Catholic churches of Choonkoosh were plundered and reduced to ruins. The Protestant Church was burned and the pastor killed with torture. All the houses of Christians were plundered and

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<sup>70</sup> Les Massacres 1896: 198–200.

<sup>71</sup> According to Kevorkian & Paboudjian 1992: 408, the Armenians in Çüngüş town numbered 10,200 out of a total population of 12,650.

<sup>72</sup> BOA A.MKT.MHM 636-17 (1).

<sup>73</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. Nr. 18.

many were burned; and the people in need even of dry bread, with little clothing and without bedding, are suffering on the bare ground.

This is sufficient for the present. I have written secretly from the school belonging to the mosque.

Your humble servant,

Minas Vartabed Adigian, at present called Dede Abdullah,  
so named by my godfather the *Imam* Mustafa Effendi<sup>75</sup>

The surviving Armenians of Çüngüş converted back to their former religion in April 1896, by resolute action of the District Governor (*kaymakam*) of Çermik. This energetic official called all the converts to the Armenian Church, ordered them to remove their turbans and declared that they were once again Armenian.<sup>76</sup> Recent research shows that Ottoman authorities were generally against mass conversions,<sup>77</sup> but this kind of overt positive action appears to have been rare. Other converts back to Christianity acted on their own accord when they believed it was safe to do so.

#### SUMMARIZING REMARKS

The enormous scope of the violence in the autumn of 1895 is startling. In the wake of the massacre in Diyarbekir city, few places in the province populated by Armenians (indeed Christians in general) escaped attack. Within a few weeks, widespread destruction was caused to Armenian property and many villages were completely ruined. With the exception of the villages of Palu, the Armenian village population appears to have been intimidated, unable to muster any effective resistance. Apparently, rural Diyarbekir saw no Armenian militancy of the kind displayed during the Zeytun revolt. As stressed before, detailed research is needed into all the local circumstances, but the picture at present is one of rural Armenians who were no match for their Muslim, mainly Kurdish, opponents.

It is very difficult at this stage to say how many people died during this violence. Hallward estimated that about 8,000 Armenians lost their lives in the vilayet, adding that he could not vouch for the accuracy of his information.<sup>78</sup> He also attempted to specify numbers of victims for many of the districts (Table 3). When we take into account mortalities resulting

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<sup>75</sup> ABC, reel 504, 30.1.1896.

<sup>76</sup> FO 195/1930 Nr. 29. The old bishop reconverted in Diyarbekir (FO 195/1930 Nr. 24).

<sup>77</sup> Deringil 2009.

<sup>78</sup> FO 424/187 Nr. 26.

from exposure, hunger and disease (which were probably considerable) and emigration triggered by the massacres, it is not surprising that Ottoman population statistics for the province shows a decrease in the Christian population in Diyarbekir Vilayet around 1895: from 46,202 in 1892/3 to 44,893 in 1897/8 (a loss of almost 3%).<sup>79</sup>

In many parts of Diyarbekir province, mass conversion to Islam took place. Estimates of the number of converts ran as high as 25,000. Generally it is assumed that most 'converts' eventually managed to reconvert to their former religion.<sup>80</sup>

Table 3: Estimates by British Vice-Consul Hallward in Diyarbekir of the Christian population and number of victims of the conflict in 1895

Location	Number of Victims	Christian Population
Diyarbekir city	1,100	
Diyarbekir central district	800–900	'770 Christian houses'
Silvan district	< 4,000 <sup>a</sup>	20,000
Palu district	900	14,800
Çüngüş town	150	'about 700 Armenian houses'
Siverek town	700–800	3,500

<sup>a</sup> '... 4,000 disappeared: killed, died of cold &c., or escaped elsewhere.'

Source: FO 424/187 Nr. 26.

<sup>79</sup> Karpat (Turkish translation) 2003: 196, 198. From a table in McCarthy 1983: 38 it can be inferred that these figures date from before and after the crisis of 1895. Data for the Ottoman population at that time should be treated with caution (see p. 88 note 8).

<sup>80</sup> FO 195/1930 Nrs. 18, 29.

ANNEX C

TELEGRAPHS FROM DIYARBEKIR  
AND PIRINÇÇIZADE ARIF EFFENDI'S SPEECH

A) TELEGRAPHS FROM THE OCCUPANTS OF THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE  
IN DIYARBEKIR<sup>1</sup>

*Telegraph 1 (1905, precise date unknown)<sup>2</sup>*

To the General of *Mabeyn-i Hümayun*<sup>3</sup> your Highness Gazi Edhem Paşa, Before the foundation of *Nizam-i Cedid* [the New Order] our ancestors were the cavalries of our eternal state. Back then the Milli tribe made a living by animal husbandry and banditry, and consisted only of *hazele* [treacherous people, traitors]. After compulsory military service was extended to the public, we became soldiers. Now some of us are *mustahfaz*, (guards) some of us reservists, and some of us non-commissioned officers (*sinf-i sani*). Our children are at the barracks under military conscription. We are all natural-born soldiers. The pure soil of our land has become more fertile by blending with the blood boiling in our veins. When it is necessary, our children, the appointed soldiers of victory will sacrifice their lives for the sake of His Highness. The rebellious actions of the Milli tribe [constitute] a big stain on the virtuous name of the soldier. That group of rebels, who dared to kill the naturally loyal Nizamiye units, the real soldiers of the Eternal State, and seized the arms which were entrusted to them by His Highness, cannot be named 'soldiers', the highest and most magnificent title of the Ottomans. That the robber *Şarkıyen* tribe from the Yezidis who are yearning to shed Muslim blood, killed one lieutenant and twenty privates from Urfa Cavalry Battalion and seized their arms in 1321 [and that] Hüseyin Kanco from the Dinan tribe killed seven privates from the Mardin garrison and seized their arms in 1318 in the presence of İbrahim Paşa, who is known as a loyal Muslim soldier, is registered in the

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<sup>1</sup> Translations by Nilay Özok-Gündoğan.

<sup>2</sup> Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Ziya Gökalp'in ilk yazı hayatı* (Istanbul, *Diyarbakir Tanıtma Derneği*, 1956), pp. 156–157.

<sup>3</sup> *Mabeyn-i Humayun*—the private apartments of the palace, staffed by the male officers of the household and where the Sultan received visitors on ordinary occasions.

records of the War Office at Constantinople (*Bab-i Seraskeri*). Their assault on the Battalion of Gendarmerie has also been officially confirmed. Their detestable murders of soldiers are countless.

İbrahim Paşa is the enemy of the *sadat*,<sup>4</sup> *ulema*,<sup>5</sup> *sheiks*,<sup>6</sup> and the entirety of obedient subjects as well as of security and order. Giving military titles and arms to these brigand gangs which lack hierarchy, discipline and obedience has destroyed the security and peace of the people. İbrahim Paşa is the great guardian of the descendants of the Ebu Cehil of the *Cahilliye* era. The fact that he did not send any of his eight sons to the Imperial Tribal Schools (*Aşiret Mektepleri*) is a proof not only of his lack of trust but also of his aversion to and evasion from the knowledge of civilization. Each of his sons, who were destined to ignorance and savagery at the age of eight, are the commanders and rulers of a huge regiment now. While a reply to the *sadat*, the learned and the sheiks and the notables and commoners who are natural-born soldiers of our homeland was denied, decreeing praiseworthy titles to this infidel who violated the security and order of three Imperial Provinces (*Vilayat-i Şahane*) sent the whole loyal population of Diyarbakir into deep sorrow.

İbrahim Paşa's wrongdoing and his insolence in [displaying] brutality and oppression always stem from his receipt of this kind of applause (*nuvazisname*). Since we are natural-born soldiers, considering your Highness as the father of all soldiers, active and reserves, we request from you, for the sake of our most holy and magnificent commander, removal of İbrahim Paşa and his sons who have foregone the honor of soldierhood by brigandage and murder.

[Two hundred and fifty signatures]

*Telegraph 2 (1907, precise date unknown)*<sup>7</sup>

The degree of the disloyal İbrahim Paşa's terrifying brutality and oppression prevails in a terrible manner, worse than cholera, plague and Black Death. For fifteen years he has received the approval and testimony of the predecessors of the noble (*eslaf-i culat-i izam*) and various official committees and now the Governor of the Province and the administrative commit-

<sup>4</sup> *Sadat*—plural of *seyit*, a descendant of the prophet Muhammed.

<sup>5</sup> *Ulema*—a learned religious person.

<sup>6</sup> *Sheik*—a saintly person, head of a mystical order.

<sup>7</sup> Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Ziya Gökalp'ın ilk yazı hayatı* (İstanbul, *Diyarbakir Tanıtma Derneği*, 1956), p. 157.

tee. Twice, by arousing unprecedented anxiety and excitement among the entire population of the province, he led them to take refuge in and seek the mercy of the Sultan and thus disturbed his highness. After conducting long inspections it became obvious and certain that the complaints of the population reflect the reality. Our rightful concern which entails the uncovering of the truths religiously, legally and officially, and which goes beyond our self [interest] and pertains to the interests of the state and the people has not been contemplated in a conscientious manner. Reducing all these facts to petty crime and creating the need for investigation and inspection will not yield any results other than making requests of which the main aim is to guarantee our present condition and future to be futile. As stated before, so long as the Sultan Caliph does not give his blessing to the realization of our request, dispersing the gathered people will be out of our imagination and hence impossible. We state that we are ardently looking forward to the issuing of the order by His Highness. Otherwise, with the unification of the population of the province, we will attempt to exterminate the oppression of İbrahim Paşa, who pretends to be powerful using government power and influence but in reality is easy to discipline using minimal force against his gang. We beg for the justice. The decision is yours.

[Three hundred and fifty signatures]

B) COPY OF THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY PİRİNÇİZADE ARIF EFENDİ, FROM THE HACEGAN, FORMER MAYOR AND ZİYA GÖKALP'S UNCLE, TO THE PARLIAMENT ON THE SUPPRESSION OF MİLLİ İBRAHİM PAŞA<sup>8</sup>

The brigand (Şaki) İbrahim Paşa was a famous rebel in Diyarbekir. When he was in Aleppo, on his way to Medina, constitutional monarchy [*Meşrutiyet*] was declared [a week after 23 July, 1908]. He revolted and attempted to flee and arrived at Viranşehir. He surrounded the battalions which were already there. He attempted to destroy them by dehydration and starvation. News arrived at Diyarbekir and the Grand Vizierate ordered the conscription of the reserve armies in the province by telegram.

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<sup>8</sup> Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Ziya Gökalp'in ilk yazı hayatı* (Istanbul, *Diyarbakir Tanıtma Derneği*, 1956), p. 158. Transcription Nilay Özok-Gündoğan. This copy was taken from a file belonging to Ziya Gökalp's late brother Nihat Gökalp (Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Diyarbakir Tarihi, Anıtları ve kitabeleri ile Cumhuriyet Dönemi*, Vol. 2 (Diyarbakir, *Diyarbakir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür ve Sanat Yayınları*, 2001), pp. 773-778.

Gathering the battalions and the provision of their uniforms and various supplies required some time. Besides, since it was unacceptable to leave the battalions surrounded, the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress and the people wished and the Governor and the Commander proposed to gather the battalions in the district of Derik, which was eight hours from Viranşehir, and call up the Voluntary Reserve Battalions immediately. To gather these troops, I was appointed by the deputy of the district official together with Hacı İbrahim (teacher at the Mesudiye medrese) and Aziz Sabri Efendi (from Lice, the former district official of Hulle).

I arrived that day and in two days gathered two thousand Reservist and Volunteer soldiers. I have sent name tag registers to the Province. I kept the real ones and the copies were sent to the document office of the Province.<sup>9</sup> As the copies included below demonstrate I have sent rifles and ammunitions sufficient for one battalion of volunteers together with Reserve Officers and one battalion of volunteered cavalries.

On the order of the Ministry of Defense, the forty-seventh regiment of Hamidiye cavalry composed of the [Arabic] Tay tribe with eight hundred cavalymen, two hundred volunteer cavalymen from Aznavur<sup>10</sup> district, a thousand cavalymen and eight hundred soldiers from Mardin Reserve Battalion came together and arrived at Derik. With the Regular Army [*Nizamiye*] and Derik Reserve Battalion, there gathered more than two thousand, five hundred soldiers. We did not get any money from the Derik Fund and since its tithe has not been auctioned yet, I required the arrival of a contractor. In their answer [people from] Mardin said that they would send the money we needed but until it arrived we had to make do with what we had on us. No money came from Mardin. For the food and shelter needs of the soldiers, I had to be thrifty.

Then the Commander of the Regular Army in Diyarbakir, General Emin Paşa came to Derik. Two days later we learned that as a result of the assault of the imperial soldiers, the Rebel İbrahim had flown from Viranşehir and taken refuge in the mansion of Huseyin Kanco in Hilili vilage [unidentified, eds.] four hours from Derik. The General moved with the available soldiers and arrived at the village of Dişi [new name Erdem, eds.]. He wrote a letter to İbrahim Paşa asking him to surrender his arms, which belong to the state. In the reply that he received he [İbrahim Paşa]

<sup>9</sup> These copies have not been located.

<sup>10</sup> The name 'Aznavur' came from the Circassians who were settled there. Renamed Sınırtepe, it is now in the district of Nusaybin, on the border with Syria.



said that he was going to Istanbul for the opening of the Parliament and that he could not surrender then.

Two hours after writing this reply, İbrahim Paşa left the mansion with one thousand soldiers and arrived at Sincar. The next day soldiers went to the mansion and saw that a few hundred Yezidi families were living as nomads in an area one hour away from the mansion. For their protection the General appointed and sent two units of reserve soldiers.

Thousands of soldiers from Karakeçi (44th Regiment of the Light Cavalry) tribe and (Arab) Şammar and Anaze tribes, which had been appointed for the destruction of the *Millis* on the orders of the Ministry of Defense, attacked these families and partly stole their animals. The next day, first Mardin and then Diyarbekir Reserve Units assaulted these tents and brought a lot of horses and various goods. As has been the case elsewhere, hundreds of Kurds joined the plundering when possible.

The abovementioned General ordered the immediate gathering and admonition of the Majors of the Units and the collection of the goods. Some officers allotted a few horses and sent them to their homes.

I took back the bills of the supplies that I gave to the Imperial Soldiers in Derik and arrived at Derik. With those that came from Viransehir ten units of regular and reserve soldiers and four Cavalry Regiments gathered.

It is the soldiers who are supposed to arrest the plunderers, it is not my business! But I informed the Governorate of Diyarbekir of plundering with the letter presented below.<sup>11</sup> I left my deputy there and set off. I arrived twenty days ago. The Province sent the copy of my telegram to the Ministry of Interior Affairs on September 16 [September 29, 1908]. To return the animals plundered, both sides constituted committees as a result of the orders of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defence.

If I had even smallest part in the plundering, then I would not have dared to complain about the Officers and the Kurdish Chiefs. After I came from Derik there were the parliamentary elections. I gained the majority, winning forty-two votes out of fifty-eight (indirect voters) and I headed to Istanbul. As it is the case for the most of the parliamentarians, there arrived a lot of telegrams complaining about me. Some of these complaints that came prior to July of this year were from those discontented with my acts as mayor of Diyarbekir. Some others were from those who

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<sup>11</sup> This copy was not located, either.

lost the elections when I was running and from the rebel *Millis* for whose punishment I gathered soldiers.

Since I represented these people I did not deign to respond to them using the press. I postponed suing them for slander. In every country there are malevolent people, it is natural. In a speech I delivered when we were discussing the treatment of the ‘The Island Guests’<sup>12</sup> at the Parliament, I said, ‘Among the documents that Rebel İbrahim left in his tent after he ran away were letters from “The Island Guests” and about the cruelties of despotism [*hûnî-i istibdattan*]. But the Governor of Diyarbekir Suleyman Paşa was sluggish in sending them to his office.’ The Governor was extraordinarily furious because of this reference to his ‘sluggishness:’ Since ‘this letter was requested three times from Diyarbekir and Arif Paşa did not state that existed such a document’ he [the governor] had the people and the Committee of Administrative Assembly write two telegrams. As they are my fellow townsmen, I did not feel the need to reject their statements against the common knowledge.

Hence it was known that the district official of Viransehir collected and kept the documents. The Governor did not think that these telegrams were adequate and he wrote a telegram here [in Istanbul]. It reads: ‘Since I investigated these misbehaviors, which are worse than the *Millis*, with the folks that I brought from Diyarbekir and from Siverek, I request the transfer of this investigation to the committee there.’

Those people whom he calls ‘folks’ [*hempa*] demonstrated their help and service and they arrived earlier. I haven’t had contact with anybody from Siverek. Only the governor and the commander (Emin Paşa) were supposed to appreciate all my services before the military. However, it is so sad to see that in their response to the interrogation letter of the ministry of internal affairs, they appreciated those officials who we were responsible for theft.

I think everybody except the Governor will agree that I have been occupied with commerce and agriculture since my early age and I have protected my honor. The complaints of some of the mischief-makers were confuted by General Emin Paşa before the ministry of internal affairs and ministry of defense. The truth is the truth; it cannot be distorted using malevolent influence and the Committee of Investigation cannot be a tool

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<sup>12</sup> The term ‘Island Guests’ (*Ada Misafirleri*) refers to Britain, France, Italy and Russia, which kept occupying forces on Crete from 1897 to 1908. After the declaration of the constitutional monarchy, they pulled back their forces.

for slanderers. For I have never gone to either Viranşehir or any of the villages that constitute Viranşehir except Kasır [unidentified, eds.]. Since it is the best description and I did not have a better word in mind I arbitrarily used the term 'sluggishness.' Is it fair to attract that much anger and slander? Judgment is to be made by public opinion.

The former Minister of Internal Affairs, Hakkı Bey, appointed an oppressive soldier governor to Diyarbekir. The most important sign of this is his behavior in parliament. Hence in order to protect my legitimate rights before the Advisory Council of the State [*Şurayı Devlet*], if any assault or provocation occurs, I will publicize it. I state that all the complaints about me are just slander. I refuse and confute all of them. I also advise anybody who has a problem to go to court.

Ten-twelve days after the decease of the Brigand [*Şaki*] İbrahim, which ended his uprising, Suleiman Paşa arrived at Diyarbekir. At that time Mümtaz Efendi of Cizre had worked as the director for a few years and earned more than two million (in gold) which he kept in a stone store room, and he also had jewelry and other valuable things amounting to the half of the wealth he has. This was officially stated to the provincial treasurer and he informed the Minister of Finance. The office of treasurer of the province (defender) were ordered to send a committee composed of legislative and administrative members to Viranşehir as well, to find out the wealth of the late Rebel. The committee was employed on a wage of five hundred *guruş*.

The committee arrived at Derik and, while they were waiting for the arrival of the soldiers and gendarmerie from Governor Paşa, they extended their stay there for fifty days. Meanwhile, İbrahim Paşa's other three sons and his *harem* went to Viranşehir and had a chance to hide the jewelry and the money. Although the committee went to Viranşehir, they could not find any trace of this money or jewelry.

There are approximately 150 villages that constitute Viranşehir. All of them are prosperous and the inhabitants engaged in agriculture. Since they have fertile lands everywhere, there are a few thousand stocks of grain in every village. Following the declaration of constitutional monarchy in 324 [July 23, 1908], all the inhabitants of the village left their harvest behind and went after the arrival of the Rebel İbrahim to Viranşehir where they joined the uprising. After the flight of İbrahim, some of them left with him and some others hid.

In these 150 villages, 80–100 hundred thousand kilogram's of the harvest were left unattended. The *mutasarrıf* [governor of the sancak] and the *kaymakam* [district officer] of Viranşehir requested soldiers for the

protection of border of this village on Çölağzı [See explanation in Aydın-Verheij on page 24]? The Governor did not to send soldiers. Besides, the Hurşid Ağa battalion which had been there for a long time had been sent to Diyarbekir. Since there were left just 50–60 cavalymen from the regular army, the new and old provisions entirely came under the control of the *Urban* [Bedouin] plunderer and the Tribes. This situation continued until October 28, 1908.

Then, the inhabitants of this village said, ‘You did not protect our grains’, and they demanded grain from the government for fodder and for seeds. They were given grain from the stock of grain which was confiscated from İbrahim Paşa and became the property of imperial treasury.

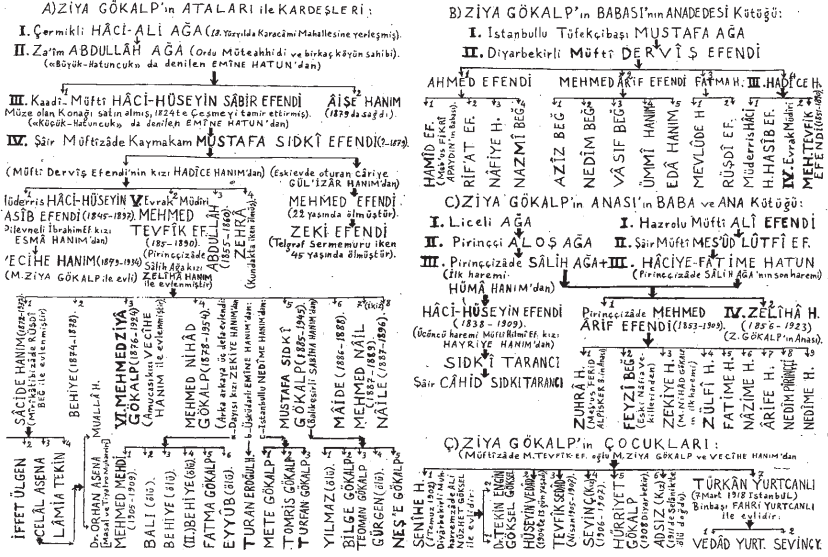
Viranşehir is a twenty-hour distance from Diyarbekir. If the Vali Paşa had bothered to go there after their arrival, these millions of liras which were extraordinarily vital for the imperial treasury would not have been spent for them. It would not even have been necessary to distribute grain to the villages. Moreover, these mischief-makers would not have dared to slander.

With this, I kindly attract the attention of the Grand Vizier Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa and the Minister of Finance and end my speech.

ANNEX D

FAMILY TREE OF ZIYA GÖKALP

Ziya gökalp Ailesi Kütüğü



(Source: Ziya Gökalp ve açılan Ziya Gökalp Müzesi. İstanbul, Diyarbakır Tanıtma Derneği, 1956)









## NAME AND SUBJECT INDEX

- Abdülaziz (Sultan) 33n77
- Abdülhamid II (Sultan) 18, 49, 56, 60, 61, 63, 69, 80, 86, 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 100, 109, 110, 126, 129, 130, 134, 137, 138, 147, 150, 168, 169, 170, 186, 187, 189, 190, 192, 193, 200, 202, 207, 235, 251, 257
- Abdulkerim (of Miran, son of Mustafa Paşa) 170
- Abdülmecid II (Sultan) 35, 45n140
- Abdullah (Syriac Orthodox Metropolitan of Diyarbekir) 225
- Abdullah Ağa 68, 69
- Abdullah Cevdet 69n66, 69, 70, 70n73, 71, 71n74, 71n75, 72, 127n186, 169n74
- Abdullah Paşa (Marshall) 109, 111n26, 130, 131, 133
- Abdurrahman Paşa 165
- Abdurrahman Bedirhan 168, 169
- Addai Sher 243
- Administration. See Provincial Administration
- Ahmed Ağa (chieftain of the Mişkin) 262
- Ahmed Cemal 276
- Ahmed Cemil Paşa (ex-Governor of Yemen) 127, 128, 131n209. See also Cemilpaşazade
- Ahmed İzzet Paşa 285
- Al-Khamsin 263
- Alevi 22, 25, 81
- Ali Haydar (Major) (1884-?) 289, 290
- Ali Nüzhet Görsel 59, 73
- Alike Bette (family) 248, 263
- Aliko (Kurdish ağa) 261
- Andonian, Aram 275
- Arabic (language) 20, 25, 44, 69, 85, 232, 248, 249, 262, 279n39, 300
- Arabs 6, 9, 18n4, 20, 25, 49, 63, 79, 81, 87, 136, 286, 348
- Aramaic 11, 25n34, 217, 241n1, 242, 248, 250, 282
- Archbishop of Canterbury 242, 243
- Arif Behrampaşazade 198, 205, 209
- Armalto, Ishaq 279n39
- Armenakan Party 283
- Armenian (language) 44, 85, 89, 242, 248, 272, 300
- Armenian Church & Patriarchate 87, 191, 210-1, 234, 299
- Armenians 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 36, 46, 58, 62, 64, 85, 89, 94, 152, 180, 184, 189, 190, 202, 210, 217, 221, 222, 224, 227, 242, 243, 248, 249, 258, 259, 260, 263, 267, 268, 269, 303, 334, 344
- Economic importance 90, 91, 272, 283
- History 20, 21, 87, 89, 91-92
- Participation in administration 43, 46, 90, 92
- Relations with other Christians 10, 218, 227, 233-5, 239, 241
- and Revolution of 1909 189, 190
- Rural 22-23, 41, 62, 86, 89-90, 91, 151, 203, 210-1, 333-344
- Urban 46, 90, 91, 262
- Violence against (with exception of 1894-6, WWI) 40-1, 48, 57, 161, 272. See also Education, Nationalism
- Armenian "Constitution" (*Nizamname*) 46-47
- Armenian Massacres of 1895-96. 1, 4, 7, 8, 55, 57, 58, 59, 61n23, 73-4, 75, 81, 82, 85-139, 152, 224, 230, 231, 235, 236, 239, 249, 259, 260, 262, 263, 272, 279n39, 333-344
- For the Sasun revolt and massacre of 1894, see also Sasun in Place Index
- Armenian revolutionary movement 92-93, 99, 117-118, 132, 161. See also and Armenian Revolutionary Federation
- Armenian Revolutionary Federation 93n23, 190, 272, 282, 283
- Arpiarian, Philipos 281
- Artin Kassabian 119, 282
- Assyrians (*Asuri*). See Syriacs
- Asur Yusuf (of Harput) 242
- Atmanki 27, 65
- Aşiret ("tribe")
- in general 16n1, 26-27, 44, 45, 95, 246, 251, 263, 272, 284
- specific tribes: see Tribe (*Aşiret*) Index
- Azizoglu (family) 271
- Bahaeddin Paşa 164
- Bahaeddin Şakir 67n56, 110, 151, 168n72, 276
- Basmadjian, Mihran 283

- Bedirhan (Mir, Bey of Botan Emirate)  
31, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 60, 148, 167, 168,  
169, 170, 254, 255, 256, 261. See also  
Mir
- Behram Paşa (leader of the *Milli*  
tribe) 29. See also *Milli* in Tribe Index
- Behrampaşa Arif. See Arif Behrampaşa
- Beysanoğlu, Şevket 109n118, 124
- Bérard, Victor 129n194
- Berlin Conference & Treaty 4, 6, 88n7,  
92, 94, 150
- Bisari Koloz 62
- Boyardjian (British Vice Consul—1895) 101
- Boyardjian, Mihran 274, 275
- Brant, James (British Consul) 22, 23n22,  
29–30, 39
- Cadastre 69, 159, 202, 208, 223, 226
- Catholics 11, 21, 24–5, 27, 43n131, 64, 85,  
88n8, 90n13, 101, 104, 106, 113, 218, 222–4,  
229, 234, 236–9, 241n1, 242–3, 244, 250–1,  
263, 273–4, 303, 337, 342
- Çelebi Ağa (from Midyat) 263, 264
- Celili family (Mosul) 28n42
- Cemil Asena 59, 71n77, 75
- Cemilpaşazade 65, 76n100, 127, 128, 131,  
131n209, 188, 189, 271, 279, 289n80
- Cemilpaşazade Mustafa Nuzhet Bey. See  
Mustafa Nuzhet Bey
- Cercisağazade 280
- Chakidjian, Dikran 283
- Chaldeans (Catholic Eastern Syrians). See  
Catholics
- Cizrelizade (family) 271
- CHP. See Republican People's Party
- Combatant-non-combatant distinction  
289, 292
- Committee of Union and Progress,  
(CUP) 11, 58, 61, 66n55, 67n56, 69, 70,  
71, 72, 77, 79, 80, 82, 86, 128, 182, 183, 184,  
185, 189, 190, 267, 274, 276, 279, 284, 285,  
286, 291  
in Diyarbekir 57, 59, 69, 70, 71, 73,  
127n186, 138, 188, 272, 273
- Communications. See Telegraph
- Constitution. See Law
- Constitutional Regime (*Meşrutiyet*) 2, 61,  
71, 77, 179, 180, 181, 184, 193, 197, 198, 199,  
200, 204, 207, 208, 209, 210, 212, 214, 347,  
350, 351
- Consul (Consulates) 45, 47, 76, 107, 108,  
133, 134, 136, 189, 190, 253, 258  
American 281  
British 22, 29, 31n57, 42n123, 42n233,  
45, 45n139, 75, 81, 88n8, 92, 101, 102,  
106, 108, 109, 118, 123, 123n174, 127,  
128, 129–133, 134, 134n228, 152n9, 163,  
164n57, 190, 255, 334, 335, 336–7, 344  
French 45, 100, 101, 102, 102n56, 103–5,  
108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 118, 119–20, 123,  
127, 128, 129, 129–33, 134n228, 258,  
259, 283  
German 102n56, 283  
Russian 166, 300  
Cossack Regiments 62, 151, 253, 257  
Crimean War 40, 41, 92n20  
Cuinet, Vital 88n8  
CUP. See Committee of Union and Progress  
Çelebi Ağa 263, 264
- Dashnaksutiun. See Armenian  
Revolutionary Federation 93n23, 190,  
272, 282, 283
- Daşi 262
- Defense of the Fatherland Society 73
- Derviş Paşa (Governor of Van) 28n40
- Derviş Paşa 44
- Dikranian, Khatchadur 283
- Direkçizade (family) 271, 280
- Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes  
and Immigrants, in 1916 renamed  
AMMU 272, 283, 285, 286, 287
- Diyarbekir, administration 16–19, 57, 68,  
149n2, 171, 186, 212, 220, 233n43, 272  
centralisation 15, 16, 30–34, 37–42,  
45–7, 48–9, 60n21, 89, 167, 202, 203,  
212, 213, 272  
composition of the population 20–28,  
85, 85n3, 85–91, 93n26, 95, 98, 107,  
133, 161, 218–9, 221–7, 243–4  
economy & industry 158, 227–8, 238  
neighbourhoods 225–7  
(not all references to the city and/or the  
region of Diyarbekir are included)  
press 44, 233
- Education 46, 47, 228–232
- Ekinci (family) 271
- Ekrad Beyliği* ("Kurdish Emirate") 17
- Emigration 86, 88, 109, 250–251
- Emirate. See Mir
- Enis Paşa (Governor of Diyarbekir). See  
Mehmed Eniş Paşa
- Enver Paşa 276, 280n44
- Epidemics 91
- Famine 36, 48, 49
- Fettah Bey (from Garzan) 41
- Fires (in Diyarbekir city) 104, 109,  
123n176, 275

- Fraser, David 271  
 Freedom and Entente Society 72, 73  
 Ganizade 280  
 Genocide 2-4, 185n18, 253, 255, 256, 259, 262, 263, 264, 268-70, 275, 277, 278, 283, 291, 299  
 Gevranizade(family) 271  
 Gökalp, Ziya. See Ziya Gökalp  
 Gorgis (Bishop) 255  
 Grand Vizier 120, 179, 195, 196, 219, 276, 340, 347, 352  
 Grant, Asahel 35n84  
 Greek (language) 44n133, 300  
 Greeks (Greek-orthodox, *Rum*) 20, 21, 30, 43n131, 59, 79, 85, 106, 110, 113, 222, 238, 259, 269, 286, 300, 303  
 Guilds 227  
 Gul Mehmed 161  
 Hacı Ali Ağa 68  
 Hacı Reşid Ağa (from Silvan) 131, 134, 135  
 Hacı Osman Reşo 204, 205  
 Haco (of the Kurtak clan) 264  
 Hafız Ömer 114  
 Hafız Paşa (Çerkes Hafız) Paşa (Governor of Diyarbekir) 30n49, 32-34, 35, 40  
 Halifezade 280  
 Halil Ağazade İsmail 208  
 Halil Paşa (Army Commander) 280, 280n44  
 Hallward (British Vice Consul) 101, 106, 107, 108, 110, 118, 120n165, 127, 128, 129, 132, 133, 135, 334n10, 335, 336, 339n49, 340n59, 341, 343, 344  
 Hakkı Bey (Kurdish ağa) 134  
 Hamid Bey (Governor of Diyarbekir) 274, 278  
 Hamidiye Cavalry (Regiments) 49, 55, 56, 57, 60, 62, 63, 65, 74, 93, 94, 96fn, 134, 138, 147, 154-5, 156, 157, 159, 160-74, 187, 188, 202, 203, 213, 252, 253, 257, 260, 348 and agrarian issue 203, 213 and Armenian-Christians 56, 57, 58, 75, 81, 82, 113, 134-6, 152-3, 252, 257, 260, 262 establishment of 61, 61n25, 150-1 objective of 62, 147, 150, 151-2, 154, 212  
 Hanne Safar 261  
 Haşım Bey 196  
 Hassan Haco (from Nusaybin) 264  
 Hawaris 163  
 Helecan 27, 195, 196  
 Hezakil Efendi 113  
 Historiography on Armenian Question and Massacres of 1895-96: 97-100, 152, 184 on 1908 Revolution 182-185  
 Hnchakian Revolutionary Party, Hnchaks 93n23, 94, 95, 96, 118  
 Holstein (German Consul in Mosul) 283  
 Horatio (Bishop) 36  
 Hovsepian, Hagop 283  
 Hüseyin Paşa (chief of the Hayderan) 171  
 Hüseyin Kanco 345, 348  
 Hüseyin Nesimi (Mayor of Lice) 278n36  
 Hüseyinzade Ali 69  
*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Cemiyeti*. See Freedom and Entente Society  
*İşkân-ı Aşâir ve Muhacirîn Müdüriyeti* (IAMM). See Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants  
 İbrahim Bedreddin 279  
 İbrahim Temo 67, 70, 72  
 İlvanian, Dikran 283  
 İmdat Cemiyeti. See SOS Society  
 İshak Sukuti 69  
 İsmail Efendi (notable of Diyarbekir) 124  
 İsmail Paşa 32  
 İskender Paşa (family) 271  
*İttihad ve Terakki*. See CUP  
*İttihad-i Osmani Cemiyeti*. See Society for Ottoman Progress  
 Jackson, Jesse 281  
 Jacobites. See Syrians, Western  
 Jews 20, 21, 25, 79, 102n156, 121n168, 222, 227, 259, 303  
 Kassabian (Kasapyan) (*Dragoman of French Vice-Consulate*) 119, 282-283  
 Kazazyan (Kazazian), Hosep 113  
 Kazazyan (Kazazian), İstapan 113  
 Kazazyan (Kazazian), Ohannes 273  
 Kazazyan (Kazazian), Onnik 282  
 Kidnappings 108, 116  
*Kızılbaş* 22  
 Kurdistan Consulate (of Great Britain) 45n139, 92  
 Kurdistan Province 6, 18, 45n139, 172, 173, 186. See also Kurdistan in Place Index  
 Kurds 20, 22, 23, 25, 26n36, 27, 30, 36-8, 49, 55, 81, 86, 87, 88n8, 91, 95, 148, 169, 171, 173, 180, 184, 185n18, 188, 202, 224, 241, 246-50, 259

*Kurds (Cont.)*

- campaigns against—in 1830s and 1840s 31–34, 36–38  
 deportations of—during WWI 2, 277, 284–8  
 during Russian-Ottoman War of 1828–29 31  
 in battle of Nizip 34–35  
 relations with Armenians 91, 92, 152, 161, 166, 169, 210, 211, 241, 275  
 relations with Syriac Christians 11, 241, 246–9, 251, 252, 254, 257, 261, 263  
 role in Armenian Massacres of 1895 105, 108, 109, 115, 131–6, 138, 152, 166, 169, 171n79  
 under Abdülhamid II 49, 62, 93, 95, 97, 251, 252, 260  
 Kurt İsmail Paşa (Governor of Diyarbekir), 43–44  
*Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (KTTC). See Society for the Mutual Aid (Assistance) and Progress of Kurdistan  
 Laws, Constitution (1876) (*Kanun-ı Esasi*) 181, 193, 209  
 Land Code (1858) 43, 44, 61n23, 202, 210, 205, 212 (see also Cadastre)  
 Law on the Maintenance of Order (1925) 288  
 Municipal Law (2008) 302  
 Nationality Law (1869) 229n31  
 Province Law (1869) 43n127  
 Provincial Municipal Code (1877) 61n24  
 Provisional Strike Law (1908) 183  
 Layard, Austin Henry 38  
 London Treaty 273  
*Mahallemi, Mahalmi* 25, 249, 261, 262  
 Mahmado (Kurdish family in Midyat) 261  
 Mahmud II (Sultan) 30, 31, 32, 34, 35  
 Mahmud Han (Mir of Müküs). See Mir—Emirate of Müküs  
 Mardin Kazaroğlu (Garzan) 41n117  
 Maronites 250  
 Mar Shimun 243, 254, 255  
 Matossian, Stephan 283  
 Meclis-i mebusan 66, 181, 195, 205  
 Mehmed (Mohammed) Ali Paşa (Governor of Egypt) 30, 34, 35, 253  
 Mehmed Bedirhan 169n74  
 Mehmed Eniş Paşa (Governor of Diyarbekir) 102, 110, 119, 129, 130, 131, 131n211, 132, 133, 336, 338  
 Mehmed Hurşid Paşa 42n123

- Mehmed Nazim 276  
 Mehmed Resid [Şahingiray] Paşa (Governor of Diyarbekir) 31–32, 33, 35, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 292  
 Mehmed Şir (Bey of Şirvan) 41  
 Mehmet Talat Paşa. See Talat Paşa  
 Mehmed Ziya Gökalp. See Ziya Gökalp  
 Memduh Bey 275, 279  
 Mendilciyan, Thomas 114, 123  
 Mendilkani 262  
 Meryem Ana Church 225, 229, 236, 237  
 Meyrier, Gustave 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 127, 128, 129, 132, 133, 134n228  
 Midhat Paşa 43  
 Mikdad Midhad Bedirhan 168, 169  
 Military service, conscription 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 221  
*Millets* 20–21, 43, 46, 47, 233–4, 239  
 Milli İbrahim Paşa 55–82, 136, 155, 159, 165, 170, 187, 188, 199, 260, 263, 345–9, 351–2  
 and protection of Christians 63–64, 74–5, 81, 260, 263  
 sons of Milli İbrahim Paşa, (Abdulhamid, Mahmud, Halil and Temur) 63  
 Mir (Kurdish chiefs, *beys*), Mirates 16, 27, 31, 31, 32n65, 35, 38, 40, 41, 42, 60, 60, 168, 253, 254, 255, 256  
 Diyarbekir 22–23, 32, 35  
 Emirate 17, 22–23, 27, 28, 31, 36, 37, 59, 156, 157, 167, 187, 253, 254, 255, 264  
 Emirate of Bahdinan 254  
 Emirate of Botan 27, 33, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41n18, 60, 167, 168, 170, 254, 256  
 Emirate of Hakkari 27, 36, 37, 38, 254, 255  
 Emirate of Müküs 27, 32, 36, 37, 38  
 Emirate of Rûdvan 31n31  
 Emirate of Rowanduz (Sorani) 31, 253  
 Emirate of Şemdinan 38  
 Emirates (*‘beyliks’*) of Northern specifically Palu 339–340.  
 Mir İshak, Mir Zig. See Mir—Emirate of Rûdvan  
 Miran 27, 154, 155, 156–60, 164, 165, 167–70, 187, 258  
 Mirza Ağa (of Silvan) 32n60  
 Mişkin 262  
 Mohammed Ağa (from Şirnak) (Muhammad Aghayê Sor) 161n43, 162, 163–164, 167, 168, 169n74, 170  
 Mohammed Paşa (Mir of Rowanduz). See Mir—Emirate of Rowanduz  
 Mufti Hacı Huseyin 68

- Müdafaa-i Vatan Cemiyeti. See Defense of the Fatherland Society
- Müftüzade (family) 271
- Müftüzade Fazıl 124
- Müftüzade Şeref [Uluğ] 272, 273, 279
- Muhacir* (Muslim refugees) 100n47
- Muharrem Bey (Kurdish ağa) 134
- Muhtarzade 280
- Mursel Bakü (General) 289
- Musa Fatme (of the Dayran clan) 264
- Mustafa (of the Rama tribe) 263
- Mustafa Akif Tütenk 59, 71n77, 73, 232
- Mustafa Paşa 9, 135, 155, 156, 157, 160–70, 174, 187
- Mustafa Nuzhet Bey 279
- Naayem, Joseph (Rev.) 280n43
- Nahrozo (Kurdish family in Midyat) 261
- Nakşibendi (religious order) 37n97, 95n30
- Nalband Hagop 283
- Nationalism 2, 15, 47, 58n14, 59, 80, 185, 213, 270
  - Armenian 46, 47, 79, 138, 151, 180, 224
  - Kurdish 38, 147, 180, 185n18, 189, 271, 272
  - Turkish 58, 69073, 80, 127, 277n29
- Naim Faik 233, 242, 250
- Nazif Bey. See Süleyman Nazif Bey
- Nestorians (*Nesturi*). See Syriacs, Eastern
- Newspapers (journals) 44, 57, 68, 70n73, 72, 85, 100, 168, 169n74, 232–3, 239, 242, 250, 272, 273
- Nihat Gökalp 59, 69, 70n74, 71n48
- Noel, Edward 241
- Nogales Mendez, Rafael de 280
- Nomadism, Nomads 16n16, 23, 24, 26, 27, 42, 44, 153, 155, 158–160, 201, 284, 334n5
- Nurullah bey (Mir of Hakkari) 36, 37, 38, 39. See also Mir—Emirate of Hakkari
- Omar (of the Rama tribe) 263
- Osman Ömer Ağa (from Beşiri) 135, 210, 335
  - Mala Osman Ağa 248
- Ottoman Bank, capture of 132
- Ottoman-Russian wars 30, 31, 41, 48, 48n152, 89, 91, 92, 92n20, 149, 150, 151, 154, 173, 256, 278, 279, 280, 284, 285
- Paris Peace Conference 244, 245
- Patriarch
  - Armenian 91, 103, 113, 191, 299, 342
  - Chaldean, Syriac 24, 103, 194, 243, 245, 251, 257, 338, 211n15, 211n16
- Peasants 39, 41, 42, 44, 49, 62, 91, 94, 151, 159, 170, 174, 180, 181, 183, 185, 191, 192, 213
  - and dispossession/land disputes 180, 200, 201, 201–212, 213
  - and petitions, 192, 193, 197, 198, 200, 201, 202, 203–212, 213
- Piranizade 280
- Pirinçizade (family) 65, 187, 188
- Pirinçizade Sıdkı [Tarancı] 273, 280
- Pirinçizade, Arif 55, 56, 61n24, 65, 66, 67, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 81, 82, 124, 127, 128, 130, 132n224, 187, 188, 273
  - speech delivered by 347–351
- Pirinçizade, Feyzi (1879–1933) 59, 66, 67, 68, 70, 205, 273, 274, 279, 282, 282n50, 291
- Pogroms of 1895. See Armenian Massacres of 1895–96
- Pollington, Viscount 30n49
- Protestants 21, 25, 43n131, 45–6, 85, 88n8, 106, 113, 161, 222, 229, 231, 232, 242–4, 250, 303, 334, 335n19, 337, 339, 342
- Provincial administration 17–19, 37, 38, 40, 42, 43–44, 46, 48, 110
- Qarabashi, Na'man 282
- Railways 77, 184
- Reforms (for Six *Vilayets*) 92, 94, 95, 96, 110, 119–120, 273–274
- Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) 267, 268
- Reşid Bey (Kurdish ağa from Mardin) 135
- Revolution of 1908 70, 71, 77, 128, 170, 173, 179, 180–5, 188, 189–93, 197, 201–3, 213, 259, 347, 351
- Rhétoré, Jacques 244
- Riots 57, 73, 75, 108, 111, 130, 210, 259, 274
  - bread and food riots 75, 182
- Russia-Ottoman War (1877–1856) 41, 48, 91, 256. See also Ottoman-Russian wars
- Rüşdü Bey 279, 281, 282
- Sadettin Ceyavi *Medrese* 208
- Sadık Bey (Kurdish ağa from Silvan) 134, 135n238
- Safar (family, Midyat) 256, 261
- Safar, Hanne 256, 261
- Said Bey 196
- Şakir Paşa 110, 151, 168n72
- Salnames* (Ottoman Yearbooks) 21, 22n20, 186, 219–220, 221, 223–225, 228–30, 238
- San Stefano (Yeşilköy), Treaty of 94
- Sarohan 264

- Sarohano 263  
 Schools (education) 43, 44, 46, 47, 62,  
 68, 72, 73, 85, 90, 153-4, 185n20, 220,  
 222, 224, 228-32, 239, 250, 272, 283, 286,  
 343, 346  
 Selim III 30  
 Şemsi 25, 248  
 Senihe Görsel 59, 78  
 Serengulian, Vartkes (1871-1915) 273  
 Şevket Bey (Army commander) 256  
 Şevki Bey 279  
 Şeyh Azrail (Cizre) 37n97  
 Şeyh Fethullah 249  
 Şeyh İbrahim (Cizre) 37n97  
 Şeyh Mehmed of Zilan 95, 95n30, 129  
 Şeyh of Şammar 45, 33n71  
 Şeyh Said 2, 41, 42, 288, 289, 290  
 Şeyh Salih (Cizre) 37n97  
 Şeyh Übeydullah 41, 257  
 Şeyhs (Shaikhs) 41-42, 49, 94n27, 290,  
 260  
 Şeyhzade (family) 28, 29, 31  
 Shipley 81, 171n79  
 Shirikdjan, Missak 283  
 Six "Armenian *Vilayets*" 88n7, 148, 149,  
 172, 173  
 Society for National Defense 279  
 Society for Ottoman Progress 69, 79  
 Society for the Mutual Aid (Assistance)  
 and Progress of Kurdistan (*Kürt Teaviin  
 ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, KTTC) 70n73, 188,  
 189, 272, 273  
 SOS Society 73  
 Southgate, Horatio 36, 48n150  
 Süleyman Nazif Bey 36n89, 124, 127, 127,  
 128, 131, 279n41  
*Suriyani* (Syrian Orthodox). See Syriacs,  
 Western  
 Sykes, Mark 1, 25n33, 25n34, 26n36, 59,  
 63, 64, 81, 246, 252, 260  
 Syriacs (Syrian Christians, Assyrians)  
 General 2, 11, 22, 24, 36, 46, 85, 106,  
 108, 129, 134, 241-264, 259  
 Eastern—(Nestorians, *Nesturi*) 21, 24,  
 25, 27, 37, 38, 39, 85, 218, 241, 242,  
 243, 246, 250, 251, 252, 254, 255, 257,  
 272, 303  
 Western—(Syrian Orthodox, Old |Syr-  
 ians, *Suriyani*) 20-1, 22, 24, 36, 38,  
 46n144, 85, 106, 112, 217-239, 241n1,  
 242-51, 259, 260, 263, 264, 303, 326,  
 334n4, 335, 338  
 Tahir Cevdet Bey (Army commander)  
 280  
 Talat Efendi (Mayor of Diyarbekir) 124,  
 127, 131  
 Talat Paşa 59, 276, 280, 283, 285, 286, 287  
 Tanzimat 6, 7, 15, 35, 37, 44, 46, 47,  
 48, 49, 60n21, 66, 96n36, 185, 186,  
 202, 212  
 Taxation 33-34, 35, 36, 39-40, 91, 94,  
 109, 135n239, 160-161, 161n43, 183, 221,  
 261, 284  
 Tax revolts 75, 182, 183  
 Taylor, J.G. (British Consul) 31n57,  
 42n123  
 Tayfur Bey 196  
 Tchilgadgian (Bishop of Diyarbekir) 281,  
 282  
 Telegraph 44, 129n196, 131, 179, 188, 191,  
 191n49, 192, 193, 196, 235  
 occupation of 75-77, 82, 345-7  
 Tirpanđjian (banker) 283  
 Turkish (language) 232, 250, 287, 300, 333  
 Turks, Turkomans, Turcomans, Türkmen  
 20, 22, 32, 44, 285, 287  
 Tribe(s). See *Aşiret*  
*Turyoyo* 248. See also Aramaic  
 Urban Muslims 20, 44, 85-86, 95n32, 263  
 Vartkes Serengulian 273  
 Veli Necdet 279, 282  
 Wigram, W.A. 251, 252  
 Wilhelm II (German Emperor) 98n42  
 World War I 2, 6, 253, 259, 262, 264, 268,  
 271, 272, 275, 277, 284, 288, 299, 300  
 Yasinzade (family) 271  
 Yasinzade Şevki [Ekinci] 273, 279,  
 282n50  
 Yasinzade Yahya [Ekinci] 273, 279  
 Yazıcızade 280  
 Yezdan (İzzeddin) Şir Bey 40, 256  
 Yezidis 23, 25, 31, 32, 38, 62, 81, 246, 247,  
 248, 249, 254, 255, 258, 261, 300, 338,  
 345, 349  
 Young Turks 127, 131, 137-138, 178, 183,  
 247, 250, 259, 267, 268-293. See also  
 CUP  
*Yurtluk-Ocaklık* (specific administrative  
 statute) 17  
 Zaven (Patriarch) 274  
 Zaza (Zazaki, Dumili, Kırdkî) 20, 22, 85  
 Zazas 20, 25, 67, 81, 85n3  
 Zazazade (family) 271, 280  
 Zazazade Hacı Suleyman 280

- Zeki Paşa 61, 74, 154, 156, 164, 166,  
168n72, 170, 173
- Ziya Gökalp 55-82, 127, 138, 188, 247, 272,  
276, 347, 353  
and agrarian possessions 69, 75  
and Armenian genocide 58, 59, 72, 81  
and CUP 57, 69, 70, 71, 72, 80, 82, 127,  
272, 276  
and occupation telegraph office  
75-77  
and Turkish nationalism 67-8, 71  
Ziya Paşa (General) 109, 130, 131





## PLACE INDEX

- Abdulaziz Mountain (Cebel-i Abdulaziz)  
(in Syria) 26
- Adana 284n57, 286n65
- Adiř (Değirmensuyu) 342
- Adıyaman (see also Hisn-i Mansur) 20
- Ahlat 285
- Ahmedi (Mount) 1
- Ahsis (Kavakdere) 204
- Akçadamar. See Karakilise
- Akçakal 17
- Akçakale 26
- Akçakara Dağı. See Çotela Mountain
- Alatař. See Barsum
- Aleppo 30, 49, 153, 155, 347. See also  
Halep
- Alibey. See Mirali, Miraliyan
- Alipařa Mosque (Diyarbakir city)  
115n148, 271
- Alıpınar 73, 75, 105
- Alqosh (in Iraq) 218
- Alyoz (Alos) (village in Çermik district)  
68
- Amasya 122n170
- Amid, Amida, Amed, see Diyarbakir
- Anatolia 15, 30, 34, 48n153, 67, 86, 91, 251,  
253 (see also Asia Minor)
- Andok (Mount) 93
- Ankara 2, 192, 286n65, 288
- Ankara 88
- Antakya. See Antioch
- Anti-Taurus (Mountain range) 22
- Antioch (Antakya) 217
- Arapkir 96n37
- Arapřeyh Mosque (Diyarbakir city)  
115n148, 121
- Arbo (Tařköy) 38n103
- Armenia 19, 87, 111, 113, 114
- Arzn (Erzen) 89
- Asia 87, 88, 92
- Asia Minor 87 (see also Anatolia)
- Ařita (Çıđlı) 255
- Aspuzi 33n76, see also Malatya
- Assyria 19, 250
- Atak 17, 22, 32n60
- Aydın 286n65
- Ayinverd, Ayn-Wardo (Gülgöze) 249
- Ayntab, Anteb (Gaziantep) 34, 285
- Azak, Azakh (İdil) 248, 254
- Azıklı (presently in Ergani district) 210
- Aznavor (Sınırtepe) 348
- Baban 27
- Bacervan 69
- Bafava, Bafaya (Kayadere) 245, 338
- Bağdere. See Bařnik
- Bağhdad 30, 218, 253
- Bağıvar. See Kabi, Kahbiye
- Bahdınan (in Iraq) 32, 254
- Balıkcılarbařı (neighborhood in Diyarbakir  
city) 271
- Balkans 89, 90, 91, 184, 272, 273, 274, 275,  
292
- Bamidan (unidentified village) 225
- Bamitni, Bemitni, Bamatmi (Kutlu) 225,  
289
- Barsum (Alatař) 289
- Bařkale 38
- Bařnik (Bağdere) 225
- Batman 6, 18, 23, 93, 95. For the town of  
Batman see also İluh
- Batman River 281, 337n34
- Battalgazi, see Eskimalatya
- Bayburt 96n37
- Behrampařa Mosque (Diyarbakir city)  
115n148, 121
- Behremaz (unidentified location) 285
- Bekçıyan (neighborhood in Diyarbakir  
city) 225
- Beřiri 89, 210, 245, 248, 258, 262, 282, 337
- Beyrük (Böğrek) 337
- Bingöl (for city of Bingöl, see also  
Çapakçur) 18, 22
- Bingöl (Lake) 64
- Bragola (unidentified village) 225
- Bismil 22, 198n74
- Bitlis 18, 23, 28, 40, 71, 88, 93, 96n37,  
121–122, 130, 280, 284n57, 287, 333n2
- Black Sea 33, 95
- Böğrek. See Beyrük
- Bořat 17
- Botan 27, 31, 32, 35, 40, 60, 155, 167, 186,  
254, 256
- Bulanık 204
- Bursa 88

- Çağçağ (River) (in Syria) 26  
 Çağlayan. See Zara  
 Çakırlar. See Malaha  
 California 251  
 Çanakkale 277  
 Canik 283n56, 286n65  
 Çapakçur (Bingöl) 17, 33n73  
 Çanklı. See Garukiye  
 Caucasus 78, 87, 89, 91, 272  
 Çeltikli, see Mirkulyan  
 Çemişkezek 17  
 Çermik 17, 22, 67, 73, 134, 135, 342  
 Chicago (Illinois) 251  
 Çiğli. See Aşıta  
 Cilicia 44, 45, 88, 88n7  
 Çitlibahçe. See Halhal  
 Cizre (Cezire ibn-Omar) 9, 17, 20, 24, 27,  
 30n49, 37n97, 40, 64, 131, 134, 135, 153, 155,  
 156, 158, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 186, 196,  
 245, 246, 252, 254, 255, 256, 263, 338, 351  
 Çöl-i Kebir 42  
 Constantinople 48n150  
 Çotela (Mountain) (Akçakara Dağı) 290  
 Crete (Island) 255, 350  
 Çukurca (in Hakkari) 255n38  
 Çüngüş 22, 23n23, 89, 101n50, 134, 211,  
 342-343, 344  
 Damascus 65, 94, 236  
 Dara (Oğuz) 25  
 Dargeçit, see Kerburan  
 Darsal, Dersil (Düzevler) 225  
 Değirmensuyu. See Adış  
 Deh, Dih (Eruh) 162  
 Deir-ez Zor (Zor, in Syria) 155, 278, 283,  
 285, 338n40  
 Derik 24, 25, 63, 194, 245, 286, 337,  
 348-349, 351  
 Dersim (Tunceli) 22  
 Deyr-ul Zaferan Monastery (Dayro  
 d-Kurkmo, Kurkmo Dayro,  
 Deyr-al-Zaffaran, Deirulzafran)  
 217-218, 219, 282, 338  
 Dirkam (Duruköy) 179  
 Dişi (Erdem) 348  
 Diyarbekir (Diyarbakır, Diyar-ı Bekir,  
 Amid, Amed, Amida) *passim*  
 Doğançay. See Mizizah  
 Dökmetaş. See Karakilise  
 Duhok (in Iraq) 254  
 Düzevler. See Dersil  
 Edessa, see Urfa  
 Eğil 17, 22, 35  
 Egypt 30, 35, 63, 253  
 Ekinözü. See Habab  
 El Kafıya (unidentified village) 225  
 Elazığ 6, 18, 20, 33, 204n95, 242n5, 251  
 (see also Mamuretülaziz, Mezre,  
 Harput)  
 Elmedin 337n34  
 England. See Great Britain  
 Ephesos 21  
 Erdem. See Dişi 348  
 Erdürük (Gökdere) 290  
 Ergani 17, 73, 104, 210n15, 285, 290, 335,  
 339  
 Ergani Maden (Maden) 18, 72, 285, 339  
 Eruh. See Deh, Dih  
 Erzincan 18, 61, 74, 96n37  
 Erzurum 18n6, 22, 45n39, 48n153, 88,  
 96n37, 153, 165, 274, 284n57, 286n61,  
 287n70  
 Eskikale. See Kalitmara  
 Eskimalatya (Battalgazi) 33n76  
 Eskişehir 286n65  
 Espayirt, Espayert 27  
 Euphrates River 278, 341n65  
 Europe 46, 87, 88, 90, 182, 268  
 Fatih Mosque (Diyarbekir city) 115n148,  
 116, 122  
 Fetini (Pıncık) 195, 204  
 France 94, 95, 96n36, 139-140, 350n12  
 Fum (Kumluca) 225  
 Gallipoli (Çanakkale) 277, 280  
 Gandika (unidentified village) 225  
 Garukiye (Çanklı) 225  
 Garzan 23, 31, 32, 41, 41n17  
 Gaziantep, see Ayntab  
 Genç 17  
 Gercüş (Kfar-Gawze) 249, 261  
 Germany 140, 273, 277  
 Gökdere. See Erdürük  
 Göllü (in Mardin district) 338  
 Great Britain 92, 94, 95, 96n36, 140-142,  
 255, 278, 350n12  
 Greece 89  
 Gülgöze. See Ayinverd, Ayn-Wardo  
 Gülüşkür (Muratbağı) 290  
 Gümüştane 96n37, 122n170  
 Günyurdu. See Merbab, Mirbab, Mor Bobo  
 Habab (Ekinözü) 339-341  
 Habur (Peşhabur) 17  
 Hacı Maksud (neighborhood in Diyarbekir  
 city) 225

- Hacican (Karacalar) 336  
 Hakkari 18, 21, 27, 36, 37, 38, 39, 45, 186, 254, 255  
 Haleb 18, 21, 25, 48n153, 88, 284n57  
 Halhal (Çitlibahçe) 225  
 Halilbegli 40n13  
 Hançepek (neighborhood in Diyarbekir) 283  
 Hani 17, 22, 32, 134, 290, 335  
 Hanşe (unidentified village) 225  
 Harput 17, 33, 48n150, 107, 233n39, 242, 281, 283  
 Harran 26  
 Hasakah (in Syria) 26  
 Hasana, Hesana (Kösreli, later Koyunpınar) 161n43  
 Hasankeyf (Hisnkeyf) 17, 30n49, 254, 260, 263  
 Haşter (Otluk) 336  
 Hazan (unidentified village) 225  
 Hazo (Kozluk) 17, 93  
 Hazro 17, 22, 32, 39, 121n168, 225, 271, 289  
 Heftgerm (Sarıkamış) 208  
 Hilili (unidentified village between Viranşehir and Kızıltepe) 348  
 Hıms 165  
 Hısn-ı Mansur (Adıyaman) 34  
 Hıyan (unidentified location) 121n168  
 Hizan 27  
 Hüseyinan (Sulubağ) 135
- İbrahimiye 337  
 İdil. See Azak  
 İlicak 22, 32  
 İlkis (= Boşat in Silvan district ?) 17  
 Illinois 251  
 İluh (Batman) 337n34  
 Iran (Persia) 21, 30, 31n59, 32, 60, 62, 218n5, 242, 243, 251  
 Iraq 6, 18, 19, 25, 31, 32, 60, 130, 218  
 İsabegli 40n13  
 İskender Paşa Mosque (in Diyarbekir) 271  
 İskenderun 49  
 Istanbul 19, 34, 47n147, 63, 72, 75, 88, 90, 95, 101, 102, 103, 105, 108, 114, 132, 150n4, 184, 191, 195, 201, 279, 282, 287. See also Constantinople  
 Italy 350n12  
 İzmir, Smyrna 184
- Kabasakal 225  
 Kabi, Kahbiye (Bağıvar) 225, 334  
 Kalitmara (Eskikale) 338  
 Karabaş 225, 282, 334  
 Karacadağ (Mountain range) 23, 26, 27, 49, 65  
 Karacalar. See Hacican  
 Karacami (Diyarbekir neighborhood) 68  
 Karahisar-ı Şarki (Şebinkarahisar) 96, 286n65  
 Karakilise (Dökmetaş or Akçadamar) 225  
 Karakoçan 205n95  
 Karaman (in Palu district) 290  
 Kasır (in district Viranşehir) 351  
 Kastamonu 285, 286n65  
 Kavakdere. See Ahsis  
 Kayadere. See Bafava  
 Kayseri 88, 192, 285, 286n65  
 Kemah 6  
 Kerburan (Dargeçit) 24, 25, 248, 249, 263  
 Kfar-Gawze. See Gercüş  
 Kiği 340  
 Kih (probably Genç, see also there) 17  
 Killit (Dereçi) (village in Savur district) 25, 337  
 Kırklar Church (Forty Martyr's Church, Mor Behnam, St. Behanan Church, in Mardin) 219  
 Kırubıl 73, 75, 105, 108, 225, 334  
 Kızıltepe 26 (see also Tel Armen)  
 Konya 285, 286n65  
 Köprüyan (neighborhood in Diyarbekir city) 225  
 Kösreli. See Hasana  
 Koyunpınar. See Hasana  
 Kozluk (district) 93, 94, 95. For Kozluk town see Hazo  
 Küçük Kinisa (neighborhood in Diyarbekir city) 225  
 Kulp (Pasur) 17, 22, 93, 179, 271, 289  
 Kumluca. See Fum  
 Küniyet (unidentified village) 225  
 Kurdistan (Central) 19, 27  
 Kurdistan 6, 18, 45, 92, 125, 149, 166, 167, 172, 173, 186, 187, 189n39, 202, 203n89, 212, 243, 253  
 Kutlu. See Bamitni
- Lale Bey (neighborhood in Diyarbekir city) 226  
 Lemnos 72  
 Lice 22, 23n23, 41, 73, 134, 179, 225, 245, 271, 278n36, 289, 290, 334-335, 348
- Macedonia 182  
 Maden. See Ergani Maden  
 Malabadi bridge 74, 95n30  
 Malaha, Malahano (Çakırlar) 225

- Malatya 6, 18, 20, 32, 33, 34. See also  
Eskimalatya
- Malta 70, 72
- Mamuretülaziz 18, 33n77, 88, 130, 155,  
172, 274, 283n56, 286n61, 287n70
- Mansuri (Kurtuluş) 161, 161n43
- Mar Pethyun, Church of (Diyarbakir) 226
- Mar Yaqub, Church of (Diyarbakir) 226,  
237
- Maraş (Kahramanmaraş) 96n37, 285,  
287n69
- Mardin 6, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31,  
33, 35, 40, 42, 43n131, 44, 45, 63, 65, 74,  
101, 102, 107, 134, 135, 153, 186, 196, 205,  
217, 219, 228, 244, 249, 254, 255, 256, 262,  
263, 273, 286, 337–338, 345, 349
- Mardin Gate (in Diyarbakir city) 235, 283
- Massachusetts 251
- Matrani (Kuşlukbağı) 75
- Mazgird, Mazgirt 17
- Medina 347
- Melik Ahmed Mosque (in Diyarbakir)  
271
- Merbab, Mirbab, Mor Bobo (Günyurdu)  
249
- Meryem Ana, Church of (Church of the  
Virgin Mary, Diyarbakir) 225, 236, 237
- Meryem-i Kebir (neighborhood of  
Diyarbakir city) 225, 226
- Meryem-i Sağır (neighborhood of  
Diyarbakir city) 225, 226
- Meryemun (neighborhood of Diyarbakir  
city) 225, 226
- Merzifon 122n170
- Mesopotamia 19, 64, 251, 252, 255
- Mezre 33. See also Elazığ
- Middle East 87, 88
- Midin (Öğündük) 246, 249
- Midyat 20, 24, 26, 27, 40n113, 42, 245, 246,  
247, 249, 256, 258, 260, 261, 262, 263,  
286, 338
- Mihrani 17
- Mirali., Miraliyan (Alibey) 225
- Mirkulyan (Çeltikli) 198, 205, 209
- Miyafarkin, Miyafarikin, Farkin (Silvan  
city) 17, 95, 245, 336. See also Silvan
- Mizizah (Doğançay) 248
- Modesto (California) 251
- Molla Hennan (neighborhood in  
Diyarbakir city) 225, 226
- Mor Habib (neighborhood in Diyarbakir  
city) 225, 226
- Mosul (in Iraq) 6, 26, 28, 31, 36, 42,  
48n150, 49, 60, 74, 75, 130, 155, 161n43,  
162, 165n60, 218, 237, 253, 254, 255, 281,  
282, 283, 286n61, 287n70
- Motki, Mutki 23n25
- Mudros 72
- Müküs, Moks (Bahçesaray) 27, 32, 36
- Muratbağı. See Gülüşkür
- Muş 18, 23, 28, 93, 122n170, 186, 280n44,  
333n2
- New Jersey 250, 251
- New York 251
- Niğde 285, 286n65
- Nizip 34, 35, 42, 47
- Nusaybin 17, 24, 25, 26, 44–45, 65, 136,  
164n57, 245, 249, 256, 263, 264, 337, 338,  
348n10
- Öğündük. See Midin
- Ömerhan (Ömerli) 27
- Ömerli (district) 245
- Otluk. See Haşter
- Özdemir (neighborhood of  
Diyarbakir) 226
- Palu 17, 35, 39n108, 73, 86, 101n50, 107,  
134, 196, 204, 207, 290, 333, 335, 339–342,  
343, 344
- Pasur. See Kulp
- Paterson (New Jersey) 250
- Penbek (unidentified location) 17
- Persia. See Iran
- Pertek 17
- Pertekrek. See Pertek
- Piran (Dicle) 22, 290
- Pınarcık. See Fetini
- Pornak 69
- Raite Forest 249
- Rakkah (in Syria) 26
- Resulayn (Ceylanpınar) 26, 27, 338n40
- Rıdvan, Rızvan 23, 31
- Rowanduz (in Iraq) 31n59, 60, 253, 254
- Rumelia 15, 183
- Rumiyan (neighborhood in Diyarbakir  
city) 225
- Russia 30, 48, 62, 88, 89, 90, 81, 90, 91, 92,  
94, 95, 96n36, 151, 278, 350n12
- Safiya (unidentified village) 225
- Sağman 17
- Salonica (Selanik, Thessaloniki) 68,  
102n56, 184
- Samsun 33, 88, 162. See also Canik
- San Stefano (Yeşilköy) 92, 94

- Şanlıurfa. See Urfa  
 Saray (in Van province) 199  
 Sarıkamış (village in Diyarbakir). See Heftgerm  
 Sarraf İskender (neighborhood in Diyarbakir city) 225  
 Şark Nahiyesi 22  
 Sa'sa' Mosque (Diyarbakir city) 115n148, 121  
 Sasun (Sason) 23n25, 32n63, 58, 93–95, 134n231, 135, 136, 334n5, 336, 340  
 Satıköy 334  
 Savur (Avina, Avine) 17, 24, 25, 245  
 Şemdinli 38  
 Şemsiyan (neighborhood in Diyarbakir city) 225  
 Serdi, Serdê (Serenköy) 289  
 Serenköy. See Serde  
 Shaikhan (in Iraq) 254  
 Siirt 6, 17, 20, 243  
 Silopi 162  
 Silvan 22, 23n23, 32, 73, 95, 107–108, 131, 132, 134, 135, 225, 335–336, 339, 341, 344.  
 For Silvan town, see also Miyafarkin),  
 Sin Mosque (Diyarbakir city) 114, 115n148  
 Sincar (Mountain range, region, in Iraq) 17, 25, 26, 31, 31n57, 32, 60, 64, 249, 349  
 Sinop 192  
 Şirnak (Şirnak) 6, 18, 60, 161n43, 162, 163, 217  
 Şirvan 41  
 Sivas 65, 88, 192, 274, 283n56, 286n61, 286n65, 287n70  
 Siverek 17, 22, 23, 26, 27, 63, 64, 74, 86, 112, 135, 153, 210, 245, 288, 335, 344, 350  
 Sırtepe. See Aznavur  
 Smyrna. See İzmir  
 Soran 27, 31  
 Şükürlü 69  
 Sulubağ, see Hüseyinan  
 Sumaklı 210  
 Suruç 49  
 Syria 6, 18, 19, 30, 237, 253, 276, 278, 348n10  
 Talori 93, 94n27, 340. See also Sasun  
 Taşköy, see Arbo  
 Tel Afar (in Iraq) 26, 32  
 Tel Armen (Kızıltepe) 25, 135, 337–338  
 Tel Tamir 26  
 Tercil 17, 22, 23  
 Tiflis (Tbilisi) 155  
 Tigranakert 89. See also Diyarbakir  
 Tigris (River) 5, 21, 24, 27, 89, 106n81, 161n43, 162, 164, 244, 247, 248, 254, 263, 281  
 Tigris Gate (in Diyarbakir city) 281  
 Tkhuma Valley (in Hakkari) 255  
 Trabzon 36, 88, 95, 123n174, 192, 281, 283n56, 286n65  
 Transcaucasia 30, 87, 89, 280  
 Tunceli 18, 22, 151. See also Dersim  
 Tur Abdin (Mountain range, region) 11, 23, 24, 25, 38, 217, 238, 245, 248, 254, 255, 256, 260, 261, 263, 264, 337  
 Turkey 87, 293  
 Ulu Cami (Great Mosque, in Diyarbakir city) 104, 120–121, 122, 271  
 United States of America 46, 88, 90, 233, 250–251, 268  
 Urfa (Şanlıurfa, Edessa, Riha) 6, 18, 24, 25, 26, 63, 64, 65, 74, 217, 280n43, 283, 285, 287, 345  
 Urmiya (district, town, in Iran) 251  
 Urmiya Lake (in Iran) 21, 151  
 Uzunova (in Palu district) 339, 341  
 Van 18, 28, 32n65, 48n152, 58, 60, 71, 88, 132, 153, 155, 157, 158, 186, 196, 199, 274, 280, 284n57  
 Viranşehir 26, 27, 63, 64, 65, 66, 71, 74, 153, 155, 159, 187, 199, 207, 245, 257, 260, 347–352  
 Worcester (Massachusetts) 251  
 Yahudiyan (neighborhood in Diyarbakir city) 225  
 Zaho (in Iraq) 254  
 Zara (Çağlayan) 289  
 Zeytun (Süleymaniye, in Maraş district) 96, 343  
 Zilan (Yeniçağlar) 95. See also Şeyh Mehmed of Zilan in General Index  
 Zirnak (Kuşluca) 165



## TRIBES (*AŞİRET*) INDEX

- Alikan 247  
Anaze, Aneze 29, 33n66, 42, 44, 349  
Arnas 247
- Badikanli 134n231  
Bekari 26  
Bilikan 154, 155, 165, 165n63  
Bucak 258
- Cemikan 65  
Cibran, Cibranlu 32n60, 165, 165n63  
Cubur 26
- Dekori/Dekari 27, 155  
Dekşuri 27, 40n113, 247, 256, 260, 261, 263  
Dumanan 247
- Hacikan 65  
Hasanan 165  
Hasanlu 32n60  
Hedrik, Xedrik, Xedrikan, Hedrikan 65, 74, 75  
Heverkan 247, 248, 260, 261, 263  
Heverki 27, 40n113
- Karakeçili, Karakeçi 22, 27, 154, 155, 165, 258, 349  
Kecan 154  
Kiki, Kikikan 26n36, 27, 42, 135n234, 154, 195, 196, 258
- Kırgıcı, Sürgücü, Sürgücü 27  
Kumneşan, Kumnehşan 65  
Kuran 65
- Mahmutki 27  
Milli 26, 29-30, 31, 35, 42, 55, 62, 63, 76, 154, 155, 159, 170, 187, 188, 253, 257, 260, 263, 345. See also General Index  
Miran 154  
Mizizah, Mzizah 247
- Ömergan 42
- Rama, Reman 263, 282  
Rojki 32n60
- Şammar 26, 33, 42, 42n123, 44, 45, 349  
Şarkıyen 345  
Şeyhan 154  
Şemika 247  
Şerabi 26  
Şikaki 42  
Şikan 65
- Tay, Tayan 26, 33n66, 136, 154, 155, 163, 164, 165, 348  
Tirkan 334  
Torınan 62
- Zirki 32n60, 286, 289